

Strategic Plan Implementation

Reported January 2026

Strategy	Milestones	Goal
Support projects that lead to job creation and new investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds for projects with job creation and private capital investment outcomes ✓ Engaged in major economic development projects with EDPNC and Commerce 	Attract and retain jobs and investment
Invest in site preparation and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds for projects to develop industrial sites (SITE Program) 	
Encourage regional (or multi-county) projects that improve regional competitiveness and have regional impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Funded regional AdvanceNC strategy through SPARC 	
Invest in local skill training capacity (facilities, equipment, trainers, talent) that meets business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds for projects with related outcomes 	Strengthen the talent pipeline
Increase opportunities for work experience that lead to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds for projects with related outcomes ✓ Continued implementation of the Golden LEAF Scholarship Program Rural Internship Initiative 	
Provide scholarships to improve the skills of rural citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds to provide for community college and college and university scholarships 	
Invest in local skill training capacity (facilities, equipment, trainers, talent) that meets business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Through Golden LEAF Schools, increasing the capacity of school districts to provide education to middle school students that meets business needs ✓ Community college healthcare training leverage; other healthcare training projects (Methodist, ECU, UNC-P) 	
Communicate Golden LEAF's mission to stakeholders, potential grantees, funders, and allies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued direct outreach to community colleges and rural economic development entities 	
Measure economic impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued evaluation and monitoring of awarded projects 	Raise awareness of Golden LEAF across North Carolina as an independent, innovative, proactive, bold, and aggressive facilitator of

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Institutionalize strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reviewing strategic plan at annual Board retreat ✓ Considering updates as needed 	economic growth
Maintain and enhance a culture of No Wrong Door for grant seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to enhance internal processes to respond to and track inquiries 	
Increase the number of healthcare professionals in rural and tobacco dependent communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds for projects with related outcomes ✓ Community college healthcare training leverage; other healthcare training projects (Methodist, ECU, UNC-P) 	Improve community economic competitiveness
Facilitate the extension of critical infrastructure, including broadband	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds for projects with related outcomes 	
Support rural leadership development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued local government leadership initiative through the UNC School of Government ✓ Continued conversations with NC Association of County Commissioners and League of Municipalities regarding leadership and capacity development in rural communities 	Increase local leadership capacity
Increase community capacity to identify, design, and seek funding for projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Training workshops held for applicants for CBGI in the North Central Prosperity Zone 	
Support an integrated, strategic approach to identify future agricultural opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implementing NC Ag Leads, a strategic plan for agriculture in North Carolina, in partnership with the NC Farm Bureau, NC Department of Agriculture, and the NC Chamber. ✓ Considering projects related to NC Ag Leads recommendations 	Enhance the agriculture ecosystem
Increase agricultural exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implementing NC Ag Leads, a strategic plan for agriculture in North Carolina, in partnership with the NC Farm Bureau, NC Department of Agriculture, and the NC Chamber. ✓ Considering projects related to NC Ag Leads recommendations 	Increase agricultural output with a focus on expanding value-added operations
Invest in research to support and expand agriculture production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awarded funds for projects with related outcomes ✓ Implementing NC Ag Leads, a strategic plan for agriculture in North Carolina, in partnership with the NC Farm Bureau, NC Department of Agriculture, and the NC Chamber. 	

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Support projects that increase agricultural output and value- added agriculture	✓ Awarded funds for projects with related outcomes	
Leverage in- and out-of-state funders for special initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued funding to the N.C. Housing Finance agency to leverage LIHTC and other state and federal funds for construction of affordable housing in targeted rural communities. ✓ Enhancing relationship with VA Tobacco Commission to explore cross-border economic development opportunities 	Increase funding impact through leveraging resources with strategic partners
Support the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems	✓ Continue to monitor previously awarded projects to gain knowledge of best practices for projects in rural areas and role of Golden LEAF	Increase locally owned businesses

Potential Future Action

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Identify gaps in rural talent pipeline and provide targeted scholarships	-- No major activities to date	Strengthen the talent pipeline
Fund institutional partners that dedicate additional funding for special initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- No major activities to date -- Potential SPARC projects 	Increase funding impact through leveraging resources with strategic partners