

PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

August 2014

Report No. 2014-09

Follow-up Report: Social Services Administration

In 2011, the General Assembly directed the Program Evaluation Division to study the consolidation of administrative functions of social services programs among county departments of social services. PED's subsequent report, **Statutory Changes Will Promote County Flexibility in Social Services Administration**, identified alternative structures for administering social services programs that could improve efficiency and reduce administrative costs, including

- contracting for administration of social services programs;
- utilizing regional approaches;
- consolidating the governance of social services administration; and
- consolidating governance and administration by establishing a consolidated human services agency.

PED found that statutory and perceived barriers inhibited counties from considering different structures. Only Wake and Mecklenburg counties exceeded the population threshold necessary to establish a consolidated human services agency (see Exhibit 1).



Because administering programs at the county level is considered a major strength of North Carolina's social services system, PED recommended that the General Assembly

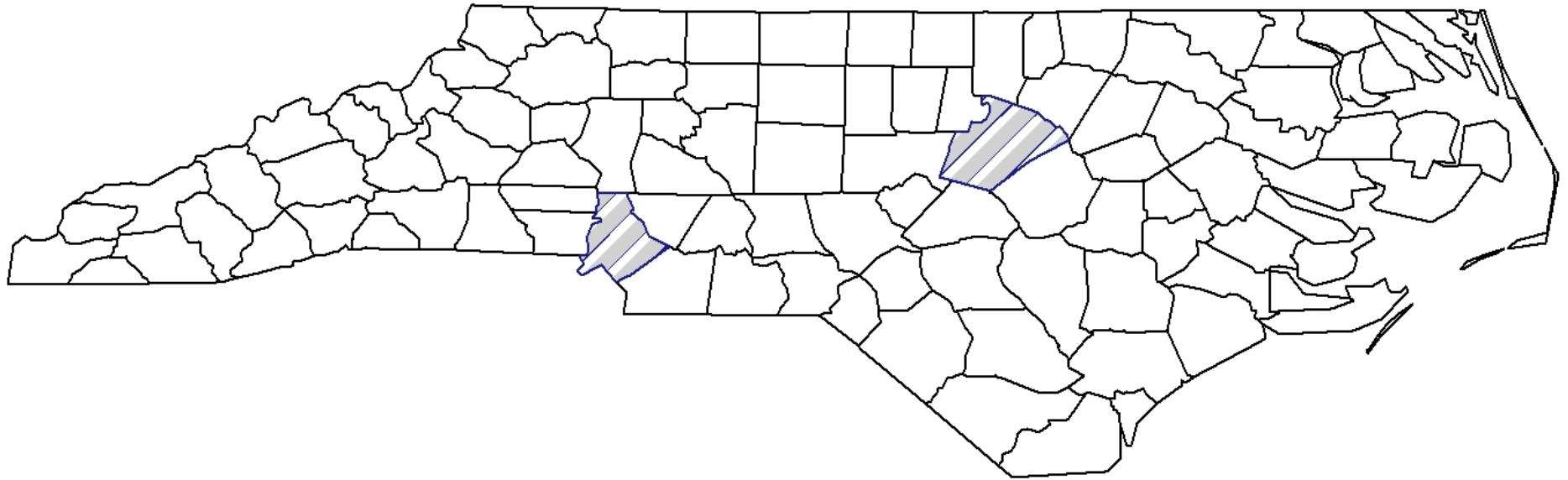
- eliminate population threshold to establish a consolidated human services agency,
- authorize district departments of social services, and
- direct the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a plan to simplify and streamline supervision of county departments of social services.


Based on PED's report recommendations, Session Law 2012-126 eliminated the population threshold. In response, several counties made changes to how they organize and govern their local human services agencies, executing one of three DHHS consolidation authority options (see Exhibits 2 and 3):

- **Option 1:** The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) assumes powers and duties of one or more governing boards responsible for overseeing local human services (4 counties);
- **Option 2:** The BOCC creates a consolidated human services agency by combining two or more county human services agencies and appoints a consolidated human services board to govern the consolidated human services agency (9 counties); and
- **Option 3:** The BOCC creates a consolidated human services agency by combining two or more county human services agencies and becomes the consolidated human services board that governs the consolidated human services agency (11 counties).

PED's report was chosen as the recipient of a 2013 Impact Award by the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES). Impact Awards are presented to offices that release reports with documented policy impact.

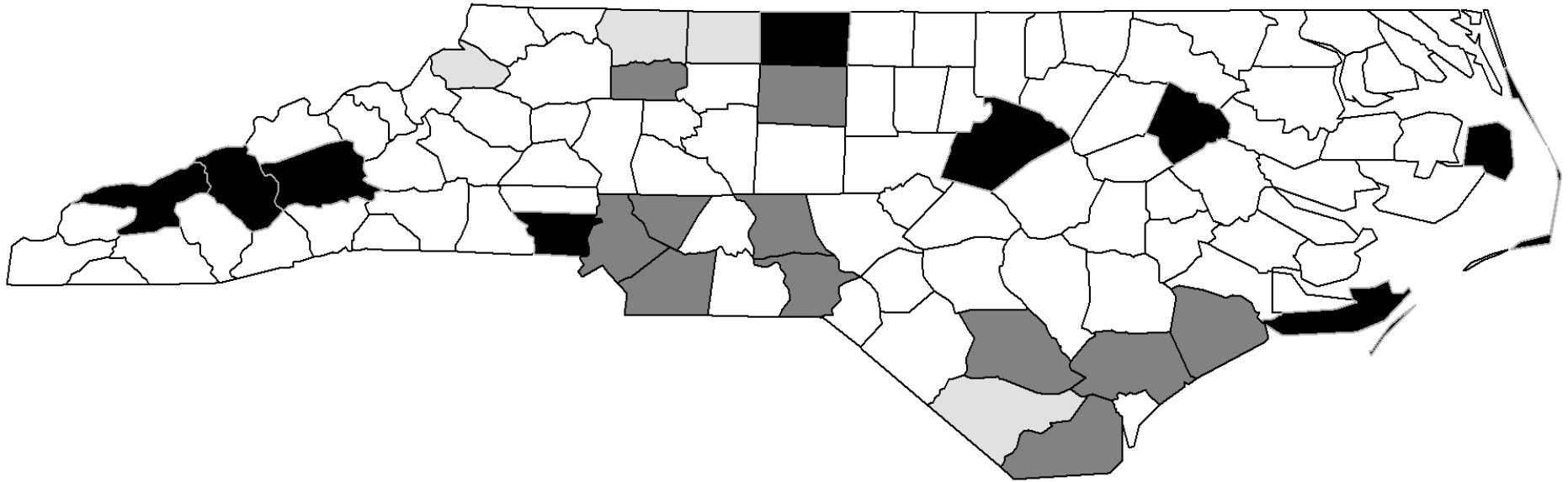
Exhibit 1: Human Services Agency Consolidation Prior to Statutory Changes






 Consolidated human services agency

Source: UNC School of Government.

Exhibit 2: Human Services Agency Consolidation as of May 30, 2014



-  Option 1: BOCC assumes powers and duties of one or more governing boards responsible for overseeing local human services
-  Option 2: BOCC creates consolidated human services agency by combining two or more county human services agencies and appoints board to govern agency
-  Option 3: BOCC creates consolidated human services agency by combining two or more county human services agencies and becomes board that governs agency

Note: BOCC stands for the Board of County Commissioners.

Source: UNC School of Government.

Exhibit 3: Consolidation Authority Options for Human Services Agencies

	Option One	Option Two	Option Three
Organization	The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) does not change the overall organization of the agency or agencies involved.	The BOCC creates a new agency called a consolidated human services agency (CHSA) by combining two or more county human services agencies.	The BOCC creates a new agency called a consolidated human services agency (CHSA) by combining two or more human services agencies.
Governance	The BOCC directly assumes the powers and duties of one or more of the governing boards responsible for overseeing a local human services agency (i.e., local board of health and/or county board of social services).	The BOCC appoints a new consolidated human services board that serves as the CHSA's governing board.	The BOCC becomes the governing board when it directly assumes the powers and duties of the consolidated human services board.
Counties Electing	<p>Option 1A: Abolishes social services board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – Columbus, Surry, Watauga <p>Option 1B: Abolishes public health board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – None <p>Option 1C: Abolishes social services and public health boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – Stokes 	<p>Option 2A: Consolidated human services agency includes social services and public health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – Buncombe, Carteret, Edgecombe, Gaston, Haywood, Rockingham, Swain, Wake <p>Option 2B: Consolidated human services agency includes social services but not public health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – None <p>Option 2C: Consolidated human services agency includes public health but not social services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – Dare 	<p>Option 3A: Consolidated human services agency includes social services and public health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – Bladen, Brunswick, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Pender, Richmond, Onslow, Union, Yadkin <p>Option 3B: Consolidated human services agency includes social services but not public health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – Cabarrus <p>Option 3C: Consolidated human services agency includes public health but not social services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counties – None

Source: Program Evaluation Division.

For more information on this follow-up report, please contact the lead evaluator, Carol Shaw, at carol.shaw@ncleg.net.