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SECU Foundation

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SECU Foundation Provides New Pilot to Benefit Public Charities in Rural North Carolina

Raleigh, N.C. – To expand its reach in rural North Carolina counties, SECU Foundation has announced a new capacity building pilot program to support public charities in the Northwest, Northeast, and Sandhills regions of the state. Funding of up to \$186,000 from the Foundation will support implementation of the Rural Opportunity Grant (ROG) program by an ROG facilitator and three state universities serving as regional anchor sites, each tasked with providing oversight, capacity building coaching, and assessment of the program within their region. Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke will anchor the Northwest region, the Northeast region, and the Sandhills region, respectively.



L to R: Dr. Ashley Allen, UNC-P Interim Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences; and Mary Beth Locklear, Director, UNC-P Office for Regional Initiatives.

The Rural Opportunity Grant program will provide select non-profits in these economically distressed areas with the opportunity to increase capacity needed to create and sustain a high-impact project identified through the program as a key regional challenge. The execution of the multi-faceted pilot over an 18-month period involves the collaboration of SECU Foundation, SECU Advisory Board volunteers, and representation from numerous leaders in regional communities and educational entities with expertise in rural areas of the state. SECU Foundation first introduced capacity building grants in 2017 to serve as an intermediary program to help non-profits strengthen their organization, expand services, and position themselves for long-term sustainability.



Jo Anne Sanford

“Expanding the reach of our Foundation throughout North Carolina is a top priority for us,” said Jo Anne Sanford, SECU Foundation Board Chair. “We have not had many grant requests from organizations in the Northwest, Northeast, and Sandhills regions of the state. This new Rural Opportunity Grant program will help us identify economic and social needs issues specific to these regions. With the help of Foundation and university leaders, identified non-profits will have the chance to strengthen resources and enhance the tools needed to take their mission to the next level.”

“Communities across North Carolina benefit from the presence of State Employees’ Credit Union branches as well as the work supported by the SECU Foundation,” remarked Dr. Sharon Paynter, ECU Assistant Vice Chancellor for Economic and Community Engagement. “East Carolina University is pleased to join with SECU Foundation in the Rural Opportunity Grant program. We are hopeful that together the university and rural communities can develop affordable housing solutions that create jobs, support workforce development, and drive local economies forward in eastern North Carolina.”



Dr. Sharon Paynter

About SECU and the SECU Foundation

A not-for-profit financial cooperative owned by its members, SECU has been providing employees of the state of North Carolina and their families with consumer financial services for over 83 years. The Credit Union also offers a diversified line of financial advisory services including retirement and education planning, tax preparation, insurance, trust and estate planning services, and investments through its partners and affiliated entities. SECU serves over 2.5 million members through 271 branch offices, 1,100 ATMs, 24/7 Member Services via phone, a website, www.ncsecu.org and a Mobile App. Members can also follow and subscribe to SECU on Facebook and YouTube. The SECU Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded by the contributions of SECU members, promotes local community development in North Carolina primarily through high impact projects in the areas of housing, education, healthcare and human services. Since 2004, [SECU Foundation](#) has made a collective financial commitment of over \$200 million for initiatives to benefit North Carolinians statewide. In addition to the website, highlights are also available on the SECU Foundation Instagram page.