

339 New Leicester Hwy., Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806
p: 828.251.6622 | 800.727.0557
f: 828.251.6353 | w: landofsky.org



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Nathan Ramsey
Mobile: (828)768-3216 or Email: nathan@landofsky.org
Land of-Sky Regional Council
Thursday, September 14, 2023

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) has conferred three National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Awards to Land of Sky Regional Council for the following projects: INspire: Recovery to Career, Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Evidence Based Health Promotion Programs, and Regional Stormwater Services Program – MS4 Information Management System.

“The annual Impact Awards program honors NADO members for their creative approaches to advancing regional economic development and improving quality of life. These projects have made significant impacts on their regions and demonstrate the diversity of services and program delivery provided by regional development organizations across the country.

The 2023 class of awardees consists of 108 projects from 71 organizations spanning 28 states. These projects will be recognized at NADO’s [Annual Training Conference](#) in Cleveland, OH in November.”

INspire: Recovery to Career

INspire: Recovery to Career, a community-based initiative operated by Land of Sky Regional Council in Western North Carolina, offers vital peer support services to aid in reintegrating individuals into the workforce post-treatment programs or incarceration. Established in 2021, INspire strives to fortify the region’s recovery ecosystem by giving those affected by substance use disorder access to mental health services, employability skills and job training to foster sustainable employment. Led by Certified Peer Support Specialists with personal reentry experience, the program provides specialized assistance to participants requiring extra guidance to address local resources, such as housing, support groups and licensing. Notably, the initiative has welcomed over 450 referrals, with 410 participants successfully connected to employment services. These services span job searches, procuring work-related supplies, and pursuing certified training in fields like Advanced Manufacturing, CNA/phlebotomy/medical assistance, and CDL training. Partners include Southwestern Commission, Dogwood Health Trust, VAYA Health, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, NCWorks Career Centers, RHA Health Services, October Road, Sunrise Recovery, Oxford House, and many others.

Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Evidence Based Health Promotion Programs

Motivated by a diverse region and client base, Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) staff worked with state and regional partners to make Area Agency on Aging (AAA) programming inclusive and welcome to all. Beginning in October 2021, LOSRC staff created resource guides, training modules, and a newsletter focused on evaluating diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in AAA programming. Through this process, LOSRC staff evaluated their own programming and have incorporated inclusive language throughout their program materials and public communication and outreach efforts. These professional development and leadership learning opportunities on diversity, equity, and inclusion have caught the attention of other AAA programs in North Carolina and have been recognized by national organizations like the National Council on Aging, where LOSRC staff presented on their work at the 2023 National Council on Aging Age + Action Conference. Prioritizing mutual respect, empathy, and understanding in program delivery, LOSRC's work has improved relationships with their communities and offers a model for other AAA programs around the country that are looking to advance these practices in their own regions. Partners include Land of Sky Regional Council's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program, NC Center for Health and Wellness, High Country Area Agency on Aging, Centralina Area Agency on Aging, Appalachian State University, UNC Asheville, NC Department of Health and Human Services, NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, and many others.

Regional Stormwater Services Program – MS4 Information Management System

Recognizing the need for greater technological capacity at rural community wastewater systems, Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) developed a plan, secured funding for, hired a contracted web developer, and implemented the MS4 Information Management System in our region. The MS4 Information Management Information System is a low-cost alternative for smaller jurisdictions that do not use a digital asset management system for stormwater infrastructure. The system is built on the Esri GIS platform and centrally hosted and managed by LOSRC. Proactive stormwater management is crucial to protecting water quality. LOSRC aimed to map all the stormwater systems in the region and used this to provide a simple field-based mobile app to support inspections and maintenance. Communities can access the platform anywhere and is designed to be used on a tablet or smartphone in the field. The system consists of inspection forms (ArcGIS Survey123), a locationally aware mobile map (ArcGIS Field Maps), and the stormwater system inventory (ArcGIS Online). Survey123 is also a web-application that provides a data dashboard to review and report on the information collected with the inspection forms. LOSRC funded and deployed this technology across multiple jurisdictions for a fraction of the cost of typical management systems. This project demonstrates the economy of scale that a regional organization can provide to its members.

To learn more about the 2022 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award and Transportation Excellence Award Winners visit [2023 Impact Award Recipients - NADO](#) and [2023 NADO Awards \(arcgis.com\)](#)

###