

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



. . . an association of, by, and for local governments . . . assisting members in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and recognizing regional opportunities for improving the quality of life in North Central Texas



What is NCTCOG?

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a voluntary association of, by, and for local governments, and was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

The underlying concept of the North Central Texas Council of Governments is that the general purpose units of government (the local governments), which are closest to the people, should exercise the basic initiative and leadership and have the primary responsibility for dealing with those problems and needs which require action on an areawide or regional basis.



NCTCOG helps its member governments to do better together what they are either unable or less able to do alone. NCTCOG also enables local governments to do together what they are not individually empowered

to do – that is, to work in concert on issues and problems which originate outside their boundaries or which extend over many separate jurisdictions. NCTCOG is an organization through which individual governmental units can coordinate their efforts. It is not in itself a government nor does it seek to become one.

Who are NCTCOG's members?

Membership in the Council of Governments is voluntary and is determined by passage of a resolution, the payment of dues, and is open to the following eligible members:

- A. Any county in the North Central Texas State Planning Region as determined by the Office of the Governor, State of Texas.
- B. All incorporated cities, municipalities, towns, and villages within the North Central Texas State Planning Region, as determined by the Office of the Governor, State of Texas.
- C. Independent School, Hospital, Water and Sewer, and other special-purpose Districts within the North Central Texas State Planning Region, as determined by the Office of the Governor, State of Texas.
- D. Each member is entitled to one (1) voting representative, but may send as many delegates as desired to Council meetings. The voting representative is an elective public official appointed by and from the governing body of the member government.

What is NCTCOG's legal authority?

NCTCOG, the first organization of its kind in Texas, was created on January 20, 1966 by state enabling legislation. The state enabling legislation and the adopted bylaws leading to the development of NCTCOG are very clear – that this Council of Governments exists to serve the local governments of this region. By promoting intergovernmental cooperation and coordination and by carrying on regional planning programs, NCTCOG both complements and supplements local governments.

NCTCOG is a political subdivision of the State of Texas, but has no regulatory power or other authority possessed by cities, counties, or other local governments.

NCTCOG's decisions are not binding on member governments, but are considered and adopted as members' needs require. As a political subdivision, NCTCOG is subject to state laws governing open meetings, access to public records, and conduct of public officials.

How is NCTCOG governed?

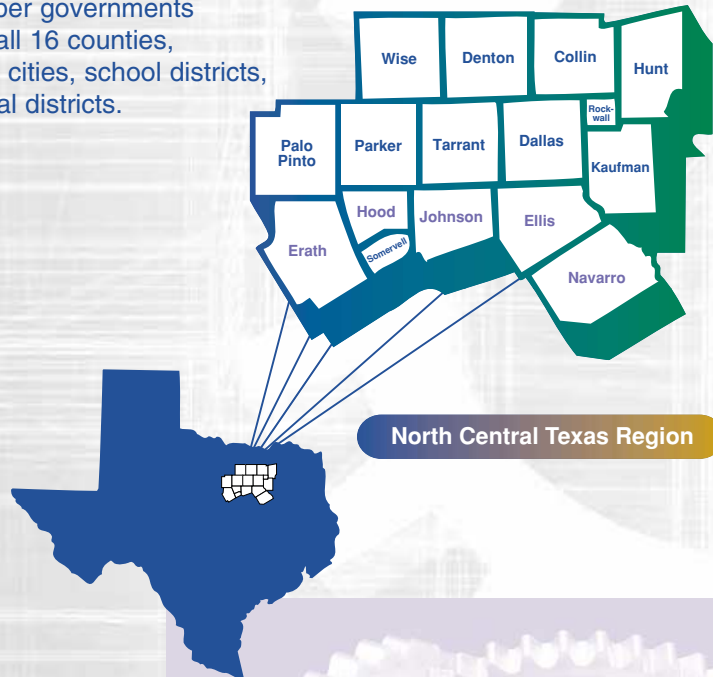
Each member government appoints a NCTCOG voting representative from its governing body. These voting representatives make up the General Assembly, which annually elects the Executive Board. The Executive Board, composed of 13 locally elected officials, is the policy-making body for all activities undertaken by the Council of Governments – including program activities and decisions, regional plans, and fiscal and budgetary policies. The Board is supported by technical, study, and policy development committees and a professional staff headed by Mike Eastland, Executive Director.

How is NCTCOG's work conducted?

The **Executive Director**, appointed by the Executive Board as the chief executive/administrative officer, is responsible for supervision of the **professional staff** and the day-to-day operations of the agency. To supplement staff work, NCTCOG contracts with appropriate consultants to carry out specific projects. NCTCOG also makes use of available talent in the region through its **committee structure** – elected and appointed officials, representatives from business/industry, education, and lay citizens.

What area does NCTCOG serve?

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered around the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. NCTCOG has over 230 member governments including all 16 counties, numerous cities, school districts, and special districts.

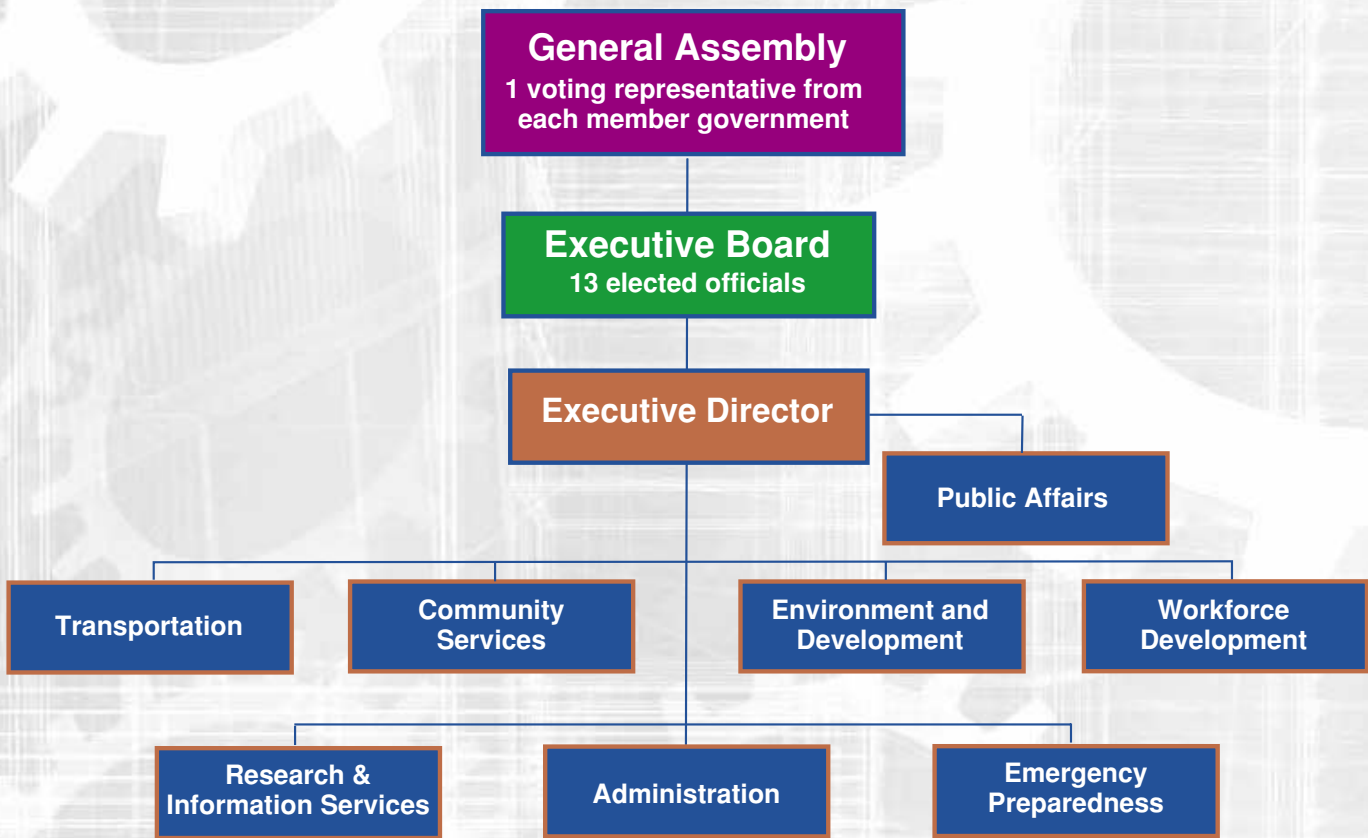


How is NCTCOG financed?

All local governments who are members of NCTCOG pay an **annual dues** which entitles them to a basic core of services. In addition, Texas provides some **state financial assistance** to encourage regional planning. These funds are supplemented by **state and federal grants** to permit NCTCOG to undertake specific programs and planning studies. On request from either individual or groups of local governments, NCTCOG undertakes special projects (outside the realm of basic core services) on a **fee-for-service** basis.

Organizational Chart

North Central Texas Council of Governments



. . . About NCTCOG's Departments

Executive Director's Office

Agency Management is the responsibility of the Executive Director's Office and includes providing staff support to the Executive Board. As the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer, the Executive Director's primary mission is to effectively and efficiently carry out the policies and directives of the Executive Board and supervise the day-to-day activities of the agency. The Executive Director's office maintains all records of the Board, including the official minutes, resolutions, bylaws, and committee appointments. This office also manages the Texas Review and Comment System, the Urban Fellowship Program, and several local government professional roundtables.

The Public Affairs Division, under the direction of the Executive Director's Office, facilitates effective communication to promote coordination among, and participation by, local governments and their officials in North Central Texas. This division serves as a distribution point for NCTCOG related reports, maps, and information; provides information to media representatives across the region; and provides staff with public information tools, and graphics design services.

Agency Administration

Agency Administration provides operational and financial management services for the agency. The department is responsible for fiscal management including accounting, budgeting, grants administration, financial reporting to state and federal agencies, and fiscal monitoring. Contractor auditing, treasury management, purchasing, building lease and maintenance coordination, records management, operation of a centralized mailroom and print center, and executive oversight and administrative support of regional shared services projects

and initiatives are also coordinated within this department.

Human resource management is handled within Agency Administration and includes the coordination of employee recruitment, orientation, training, and performance administration; personnel and management policies and practices; benefits and compensation; and personnel records.

Community Services

The Department of Community Services has program responsibilities for the North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging; Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Number Planning and Administration; Criminal Justice Planning and Funds Allocation; Regional Training, both Law Enforcement and Non-Law Enforcement; Auto Theft Prevention; and Public Safety Radio Communications.

9-1-1 Emergency Communications provides 9-1-1 service and administration by implementing systems upgrades and maintenance through the timely replacement of 9-1-1 equipment; rural addressing and database maintenance; public education and training of Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) personnel, and GIS mapping. The program also plans for required network, wireless, and Internet Protocol (IP) solutions that will take the region into the Next Generation of 9-1-1.

Regional Training: Law Enforcement Training through the Regional Police Academy provides basic and advanced peace officer training to local law enforcement officers, corrections personnel, and telecommunicators. Local Government Training offers programs to meet the specific training needs of member governments through the regional training center, as well as on-site at local agencies.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) supports an accessible, coordinated system of social services for older adults and their family caregivers who live in the 14 counties surrounding Dallas and Tarrant. The program's mission is to enhance older adults' wellbeing, independence, and choice.

Criminal Justice planning helps local agencies develop community plans, allocates funds, and provides technical assistance to existing and potential grantees seeking grants for federal and state funds. The program is implementing LEAP – Law Enforcement Analysis Portal. LEAP will allow law enforcement agencies across the state to receive information from other agencies' Records Management Systems after conducting Cross-Jurisdictional Crime and Link Analysis of people, places, events, vehicles, weapons, and stolen/recovered property.

Public Safety Radio Communications plans, administers, and implements public safety radio projects throughout the region. One program administers requests for 800 MHz frequencies, while planning for the future use of the 700 MHz frequency for 42 counties across the North Central Texas, East Texas, and Northeast Texas regions. A second program focuses on implementing Level Four of interoperable communications among public safety agencies, and includes the development of regional communications procedures for agencies responding to calls for assistance, calling for assistance, or maintaining public safety assets at the scene of a major incident. A third program prepares for transition from communications level four to levels five and six, which are major advances in the evolution of achieving the most complete long-term interoperable communications solution. Assisting with all interoperability activities is the Regional Interoperable Communications Governance Committee.

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Community Services, continued

Automobile Theft Prevention (Reduce Auto Theft in Texas) is a statewide program that coordinates cooperative efforts to spread the message of how to protect vehicles from being stolen through heightened public awareness.

Emergency Preparedness

The Emergency Preparedness Department was established in July 2002. The primary mission of the department is to enhance lasting partnerships and proactive Emergency Preparedness initiatives through advocacy, communication, and collaboration.

The department

- works to strengthen emergency preparedness efforts in the North Central Texas region by acting as a convener, coordinator, communicator, and advocate for training, planning, partnering, and funding opportunities from local, state, federal, or private resources; and
- helps to identify deficiencies and strategies for improvement in areas such as communications, equipment, training, drills and exercises, and regional mutual aid issues.

A regional Emergency Preparedness Planning Council (EPPC), comprised of elected officials from participating governments, serves in an advisory and support capacity and provides general policy direction. The department facilitates a large number of committees that assist in the development of grant and program policies and implementation from a wide range of state and federal grant programs, which benefit many different disciplines in the region; and serve as subject matter experts to help determine operational and logistical priorities for the region.

Environment and Development

Sustainable Environmental Excellence – or SEE – is the overall theme for NCTCOG's environment and development initiatives. SEE was first used as the title of a regional conference hosted in the fall of 2001. SEE is intended to guide NCTCOG's efforts, and ultimately the region's, in planning for the future of this growing and changing area in a collaborative and cost-effective way for the benefit of North Central Texas. The SEE initiatives are grouped into three strategic issues: SEE Less Trash, SEE Safe Clean & Green Regional Environmental Corridors, and SEE Development Excellence.

The SEE Less Trash vision is that purchased materials are reused and recycled wherever possible, illegal dumping is significantly reduced, and remaining waste is handled in a safe manner at permitted facilities. The Department of Environment and Development is helping the region realize this vision by providing support and guidance to several committees and initiatives, as well as by administering local project funding from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

NCTCOG has adopted the SEE Safe Clean & Green Regional Environmental Corridors vision and strategic plan with specific objectives to help the region achieve safe corridors where flooding is reduced, clean corridors where water quality meets or exceeds state standards, and green corridors where ribbons of greenways are tied together for ecological benefits and recreational and mobility opportunities. This includes issuance of the design manual for integrated Storm Water Management (iSWM) with implementation guidance, assistance

with renewed state storm water permits for large/medium cities and first-time permits (Phase II) for more than 100 small cities, pursuit of the top ten strategies for mitigating hydrologic/flooding hazards, and continued progress on several Trinity studies with the USACE such as Big Fossil Creek watershed, West Fork/Clear Fork, and City of Dallas.

The vision to SEE Development Excellence reaches across a broad range of specialties to aid the region in sustainable development and redevelopment efforts. This initiative includes the Center of Development Excellence, which promotes quality growth in North Central Texas; Vision North Texas, a unique public-private partnership with the Urban Land Institute's North Texas District Council and the University of Texas at Arlington; the biennial CLIDE (Celebrating Leadership in Development Excellence) Awards; the Regional Public Works Program, which facilitates innovative, cost effective public works services; the Regional Codes Coordinating Initiative, which promotes the standardization of model construction codes; and the Texas Community Development Program (TCDP), a state-run program (coordinated locally by NCTCOG) that provides funding to smaller communities to meet infrastructure needs.

To advance these SEE initiatives, NCTCOG's Department of Environment and Development supports numerous committees composed of local government officials and staff, representatives of business, industry, and nonprofit organization, as well as private citizens. These committees, along with the Department of Environment and Development, will continue to work to SEE an even better future for North Central Texas.

Research and Information Services

The mission of NCTCOG's Research and Information Services (RIS) Department is three-fold: (1) to provide objective information and analysis on the development of the region for use in area planning and economic development activities; (2) to support the information service needs of NCTCOG; and (3) to assist local governments in the implementation of information technology. RIS provides general technical assistance and research on current and future populations as well as employment changes, land use information, and development trends. The Department also develops and supports Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Internet technology for NCTCOG and the region. Information on the region and RIS activities is provided to the public through a variety of publications and via the Internet World Wide Web.

Computer and Network Operations

The goal of Computer and Network Operations is to provide the technological foundation upon which the majority of NCTCOG's programs depend. The group accomplishes its goal by designing, installing, and providing post-installation support of the agency's local and wide-area networks, desktop computers, centralized file storage, and email, web and database servers. The RIS staff currently provides technological support to over 500 NCTCOG and North Central Texas Workforce users.

Research and Regional Demographic Information

The RIS department supports a variety of demographic needs across North Central Texas. Included in the research efforts are annual population estimates, development monitoring, and long-range forecasts. This information is used by local, state, and federal organizations to coordinate public infrastructure investments in the areas of transportation, water, sewer, and other public facilities. The research staff also serves as the NCTCOG liaison with the U.S. Census Bureau and is responsible for coordinating efforts on several Census programs for NCTCOG members.

Technical Services

This program provides on-going support to NCTCOG and member governments implementing GIS, custom data processing and analysis, and Internet technologies. This includes its iCommunities Internet mapping services, development of customized GIS analysis of severe storm impacts in support of regional emergency planning, hazard mitigation, debris management, select fee-for-service projects, custom demographic radius reports, custom maps, and general demographic information assistance.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

The GIS program supports GIS efforts throughout NCTCOG and the region and coordinates these efforts with state and federal organizations. Within NCTCOG, this includes updating software, purchasing and installing new hardware, data development, database management, and coordination of many of the agency-wide efforts in GIS. Support for our region is realized through cooperative purchases of data such as aerial photography and planimetrics, the coordinating of the regional GIS meetings and training, standardization of a region-wide GIS dataset, and support for cities establishing a GIS through its yoUR GIS program.

Shared Services

This program brings together technology, hardware, software, and staff into one central data center to reduce the capital and operational costs for local governments. Currently the cities of Grand Prairie, Arlington, and Carrollton are running their Accounting and Human Resources systems in this data center.



Transportation

NCTCOG, through designation by the Governor of the State of Texas and in accordance with federal law, serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. NCTCOG's Executive Board provides coordinated regional policy direction and fiduciary oversight to the MPO process while the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), comprised of local elected officials and representatives of the region's transportation providers, serves as the region's independent transportation policy body. Staff support to NCTCOG and the RTC is provided by the Transportation Department.

NCTCOG's transportation planning activities focus primarily on the Metropolitan Area, defined as that portion of the region expected to be contiguously urbanized during the 20-year planning horizon. This area includes all of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Rockwall, and Tarrant Counties, and contiguous portions of Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, and Parker Counties. The Metropolitan Area lies fully within the region's air quality non-attainment area as designated by the Environmental Protection Agency, which includes the entire nine counties listed above.

As the MPO, NCTCOG and the RTC are responsible for planning and implementing transportation programs and projects aimed at reducing congestion, enhancing mobility, and improving air quality. Included in these activities are the development of the federally required Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation

Improvement Program (TIP), a Congestion Management Process, and the Unified Planning Work Program. The MPO also conducts an Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the MTP and TIP to ensure that the implementation of identified transportation projects and programs in the non-attainment area result in positive air quality benefits to the region.

Federal legislation requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations have in place a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. This is accomplished by developing plans, policies, programs, projects and partnerships that are focused on the region's development, implementation and operation of an integrated intermodal transportation system. Performance measures are used to ensure that the transportation system provides for the safe and efficient movement of both people and goods.

The MPO is expediting transportation and air quality improvements across the region through the use of innovative local and State transportation financing strategies that leverage scarce transportation dollars and streamline the delivery of sustainable development and air quality program projects.

Implementation of projects and programs by NCTCOG staff that are directed specifically at improving air quality and reducing congestion are also a significant MPO responsibility. These activities, referred to as management and operations, are carried out by NCTCOG in cooperation with local

governments, transportation providers, and the private sector to deliver near-term mobility and air quality benefits to the region. The MPO establishes regional policies directed towards the construction and operation of revenue generating facilities, including toll roads and managed lanes, to address regional transportation funding needs. NCTCOG provides financial systems to monitor the revenues from these facilities and works closely with local governments and transportation providers to allocate these funds to construct additional transportation improvements.

In order to carry out this comprehensive, multimodal transportation and air quality improvement program, the NCTCOG Transportation Department is organized into nine program areas: Transportation Planning; Transportation Project Programming; Congestion Management, Safety and Security; Air Quality Planning and Operations; Information Systems; Development, Freight and Aviation; Community Outreach; Fiscal Management and Transit Operations; and Program Administration. In addition to Transportation Department staff, the MPO is supported in its federal directive through various technical committees and task forces comprised of local government staff, transportation providers, private sector representatives, and citizens. Public participation and comments on all aspects of the MPO process are solicited and encouraged on an ongoing basis.

Workforce Development

NCTCOG's Workforce Development Department administers publicly funded employment, training, and support programs. The Workforce Development Department provides staff support to the North Central Texas WorkForce Development Board by providing planning, coordination, management, and oversight services.

The Board consists of 38 volunteer members who oversee and provide policy guidance for workforce development programs in a 14-county area. The Board's geographical area of responsibility includes Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, and Wise counties. The Board contracts with NCTCOG to provide staff support and administer the day-to-day operations of the programs. As grant recipient and fiscal agency, NCTCOG is responsible for an annual workforce development budget in excess of \$50 million.

Workforce services are delivered through a network of 15 WorkForce Centers located throughout the 14-county service area. WorkForce Centers provide employers with skilled workers and assists job seekers in finding rewarding careers. Additional programs such as child care services and customized business related training are also available.

Programs provided through the WorkForce Centers include the Workforce Investment Act for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Choices (the employment and training component of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program), Food Stamp Employment and Training, Veterans Services, Reintegration of Offenders (RIO), and Child Care Services. Financial support for these programs is provided through state and federal funds as well as grants applied for and received by the North Central Texas Workforce Development Department.

Program services are provided to a large number of customers. In one program year alone, the department served 116,942 customers, including 15,486 veterans, and provided 1.6 million days of child care services, enabling parents and caregivers to work or participate in additional job training.



Are there other COG's?

There are approximately 670 regional councils of governments in the United States, and all 250 metropolitan areas of the country have established councils. In addition to being called councils of governments, some are called regional development commissions or regional planning commissions. In Texas, there are 24 councils of governments serving contiguous areas across the state. While each is unique in its specific structure and programs, all have the same general purpose and a similar set of goals.

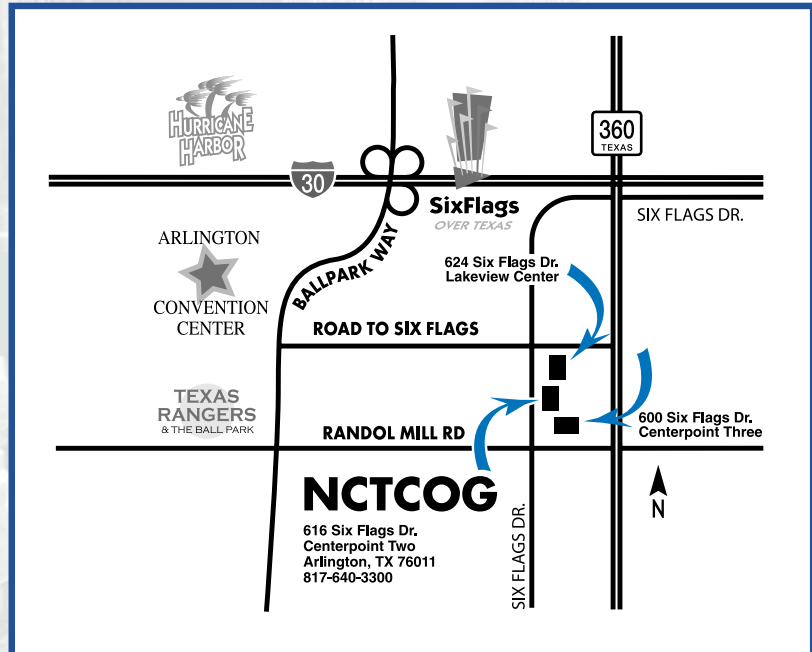
Is more information available?

Yes. NCTCOG is a public organization and, although it exists primarily to serve local governments, information about the Council of Governments' programs and activities is available.

NCTCOG's main offices are in **Arlington at 616 Six Flags Drive** in the Centerpoint Two building across the street and approximately one block south of the entrance to the Six Flags Over Texas amusement park. NCTCOG's Regional Training Center is north of the main offices at 624 Six Flags Drive in the Lakeview Center building. The departments of Environment and Development and Workforce Development are located in the Centerpoint Three building, 600 Six Flags Drive, south of the main offices.

Inquiries concerning NCTCOG should be addressed to:

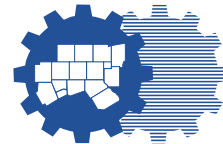
R. Michael Eastland
Executive Director
North Central Texas
Council of Governments
P. O. Box 5888
Arlington, Texas 76005-5888
(817) 640-3300 (metro)



Mission Statement

We are an association of, by, and for local governments. We assist our members in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and recognizing regional opportunities for improving the quality of life in North Central Texas.

North Central Texas Council of Governments



Values:

REGIONALISM

We believe regionalism is the cornerstone of our existence, and that our unique regional perspective provides us the vantage point to address issues that extend beyond traditional boundaries. It is our goal to be the catalyst for building consensus from diverse viewpoints and maximizing regional unity.

GOVERNANCE

We feel that policy decisions are best made by the level of government closest to the people. Therefore, we directly involve local governments in our decision-making process, which is made up of an executive board of local elected officials with support from numerous study, technical, and policy committees.

SERVICE

We seek to provide high quality service to our members. Our charge is to work with our local governments and other service providers to identify the most useful and beneficial plans, services, and products to satisfy their needs, and, then, to provide them in a courteous and timely manner.

EMPLOYEES

We value our employees and respect both individual excellence and dedicated teamwork. We support the principles of professional development, fair and consistent personnel practices, and competitive compensation.

ETHICS

We maintain the highest standards of professional integrity in providing competent, technically sound products and services. Honesty and impartiality are minimum standards for all our dealings with our members, the general public, other agencies, and each other.

INNOVATION

We recognize that our members are best served by our ability to anticipate the consequences of dynamic change. We, therefore, will help local governments find innovative solutions to both existing and future challenges facing North Central Texas.



North Central Texas Council of Governments

616 Six Flags Drive (main offices)
Arlington, Texas 76011

P. O. Box 5888
Arlington, Texas 76005-5888

817-640-3300 (metro)
817-640-7806 (fax)
www.nctcog.org