

Fiscal Year 2026 Work Plan Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition

Background and FY2026 Work Plan Priorities

The North Central Texas Stewardship Forum (Forum) began as an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant-funded effort dedicated to bringing together North Central Texas (NCT) governmental and quasi-governmental organizations to share best practices, lessons learned and resources to ease the burden of developing and supporting sustainability and environmental initiatives. At the conclusion of the grant, participating cities and EPA acknowledged the value the Forum brought to communicating and collaborating to achieve environmental goals. Since 2014, the Forum has continued to collaborate to advance regional sustainability and stewardship initiatives. The Forum rebranded in FY2020 and expanded its composition and scope to meet the increasing challenges of rising global temperatures and is now referred to as the Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition.

In FY25, the Center of Development Excellence (CDE) was integrated into the RISE Coalition. The CDE is a regional program in North Central Texas that is built on collaborative partnerships with a variety of stakeholders including local governments, businesses, private sector professionals and organizations, non-profits, and the public. The CDE aims to create a North Central Texas region that is resilient, sustainable, and provides a high quality of life for residents by providing resources, training, and regional forums to share information, best practices, and technical assistance. Guided by the Principles of Development Excellence, key efforts of the CDE include supporting the goals outlined in the North Texas 2050 framework; administering the regional CLIDE Award program; and providing a regional clearinghouse of best practices, technical tools, and training that support sustainable development.

The Coalition establishes this Work Plan to continue advancing regional sustainability initiatives. This work plan serves to establish regional collaborative efforts to engage local governments on a broader scale and foster peer exchange on key topics, identified through a regional sustainability survey conducted in FY25. These topics include:

- Regional Climate Action Planning

In general, the FY2026 Work Plan supports activities that seek to:

- Align regional partner initiatives
- Leverage regional resources and share best practices
- Provide networking and capacity building opportunities
- Identify funding opportunities for projects
- Provide mentorship, educational opportunities, and trainings
- Encourage innovative development within the region
- Maintain a clearinghouse of best practices and a library of technical tools
- Maintain program websites and resources
- Conduct a regional training workshop
- Collaborate as a group on regional sustainability projects and initiatives

Summary of FY2025 RISE Coalition Accomplishments

- Maintained membership of 9 local government entities.
- Maintained a partnership with and supported the expansion of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan to include 16 counties with additional measures.
- Cultivated relationships with six local universities.
- Planned and hosted a workshop on the topic of Advancing Campus Sustainability and a webinar on the topic of Influencing Communities on Sustainability in collaboration with NCTCOG's Regional Energy Management program.

- Held quarterly public meetings in October, January, May, and July.

Summary of FY2025 Center of Development Excellence Accomplishments

- Administered the CLIDE Awards Program for FY25
- Conducted 4 Lego Visioning Exercises at the request of regional stakeholders
- Supported and maintained website resources and toolkits

Administrative Support

The Coalition will utilize the NCTCOG as a partner and in an administrative capacity to support the activities outlined in the FY2026 Work Plan. NCTCOG will identify the appropriate staff to work on the activities identified by the Coalition. Key contacts for FY2026 are included in the Work Plan and may change depending on the focus areas.

FY2026 Key Tasks

Task 1: RISE Coalition Administrative Support and Coalition Meetings

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will support the Coalition participants with administrative needs associated with meetings. Coalition participants will identify the frequency of regular meetings to discuss business and what participants they desire to attend these meetings. Additional administration support includes, but is not limited to: maintenance and updating of a Coalition website; interested parties contact list; maintaining the voting member roster; maintaining nonvoting member list; recruitment activities; developing presentations and presenting at meetings/conferences/etc.; coordination of email communication with Coalition members; searching for, coordinating development of, and submitting grants on behalf of the Coalition; and, other administrative duties that arise. Support activities may be constrained by the available budget.

Deliverables:

- Support up to 4 meetings and/or conference calls per year of the Coalition that are open to the public – Includes: Coordinating and sending meeting announcements; Preparing agendas, sign-in sheets, etc.; Hosting the meetings; Preparing meeting materials, including coordinating speakers and/or presentations; and taking meeting notes and publishing meeting summaries.
- Maintain/update website, Coalition roster updates, contact list management, presentations, etc.
- Support coordination with outside entities on complementary efforts and support local government activities.
- Develop presentations and present at meetings.
- Coordinate development and submittal of grants, with assistance of members, as appropriate. NCTCOG may or may not serve as lead applicant depending upon grant specifics.

Task 2. Regional Climate Action Planning

NCTCOG staff will collaborate with Coalition members to support ongoing discussions and activities related to the regional Climate Action Plan. As sustainability experts, the RISE Coalition will serve as a sounding board for regional climate action planning efforts. Activities may include connecting members with funding and other mechanisms to implement the measures outlined in the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan: Comprehensive Climate Action Plan; supporting members on their own climate action planning efforts; and providing a platform for collaboration on ongoing regional climate action planning efforts.

Deliverables:

- Connect members with funding and other mechanisms to implement measures outlined in the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan: Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

- Assist members with their own climate action planning efforts, including maintaining communication on data sources and methodology used for greenhouse gas emissions inventories and reviewing plan elements.
- Support a regional uniform approach to climate action planning by providing a platform for collaboration amongst members.

Task 3. Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building

NCTCOG will support the Coalition to provide networking and capacity-building, defined as opportunities that strengthen skills and abilities through collaboration and partnerships. NCTCOG will work to establish partnerships with universities, non-profit organizations, and other entities across the region and state to help strengthen connections with emerging sustainability professionals and support building an employment pipeline. Additional capacity-building opportunities and events will be explored as is feasible.

Deliverables:

- Establish at least one partnership between the RISE Coalition and a local university.
- Coordinate with university partner(s) to organize networking opportunities between the university, students, and RISE Coalition participants.
- Provide additional capacity-building opportunities as is feasible and budget permitting.

Task 4. Educational Resources

NCTCOG will support the Coalition to leverage regional resources and share best practices through coordination and development of educational resources. Webinars and workshops focused on specific topics that the Coalition participants desire to host for the benefit of the region, would be identified by the Coalition participants and coordinated by NCTCOG. The purpose of these webinars and workshops is to foster conversations, peer exchange, explore best practices, and build capacity of local government staff and leadership on topics of interest to the Coalition participants or to reduce harmful emissions in the region. NCTCOG will also coordinate and conduct the Lego Visioning Exercise as requested by regional stakeholders. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Webinars and Workshops: two (2) webinars or workshops will be hosted focusing on the key topics of interest and will include presentations from topical experts as defined through input from the Coalition members. Webinars or workshops will be open to the public and all stakeholders. A dedicated roundtable discussion time will be incorporated at the end of each webinar or workshop and will serve as an opportunity to share what the Coalition is doing with non-governmental stakeholders. Webinars or workshops will be recorded and posted to the Coalition Website Toolkit and/or the Conserve North Texas website.
- 2) Website Toolkit: develop website resources and tools for local governments on a variety of sustainability planning and project related elements. For example, posting educational webinars, links to sustainability related organizations (i.e. USDN, etc.), sustainability planning frameworks (i.e. APA, etc.), climate toolkits, topical resources (i.e. urban heat island, emission reduction strategies, mitigation and adaptation strategies, etc.).
- 3) Lego Visioning Exercise: as requested, NCTCOG will conduct the hands-on Lego Visioning Exercise for regional stakeholders. The exercise leans on concepts of sustainability and community design to help participants understand and visualize the challenges of a rapidly growing metropolitan area. Potential participants include city officials and city managers, city council members, citizen groups, and schools and universities.
- 4) Newsletter: send out a quarterly regional sustainability newsletter. Newsletters will include regional news and updates, upcoming events, and new and upcoming funding opportunities.

Deliverables:

- Research and post appropriate resources and educational materials to the existing Coalition's website.

- 2 webinars or workshops per year that are open to the public – Includes: Coordinating and sending workshop announcements; Preparing agendas, sign-in sheets, etc.; Hosting the workshops; Preparing workshop materials, including coordinating speakers and/or presentations; and publishing workshop recordings.
- Post webinar recordings and regional workshop information to the Coalition’s website and/or Conserve North Texas website.
- Coordinate Lego Visioning Exercise, as requested.
- Maintain library of technical tools, case studies, and website resources on the Center of Development Excellence website.
- Send at least 4 regional sustainability newsletters – Includes: Researching relevant news, events, and funding opportunities; preparing newsletter; and sharing with newsletter subscribers.

Task 5: Regional Training Workshop

NCTCOG will organize and host a one-day training workshop highlighting regional sustainability topics. This workshop will be open to all RISE participants, with a reduced cost for RISE cost-sharing members.

Deliverables:

- 1 sustainability training workshop – Includes: Coordinating and sending workshop announcements; Preparing agenda, sign-in sheets, etc.; Hosting the workshop; and Preparing workshop materials, including coordinating speakers/trainers and/or presentations; and sharing workshop recording with attendees.

Task 6: Conduct Regional Virtual Sustainability Survey

NCTCOG will conduct a regional sustainability survey annually that examines the state of sustainability in North Central Texas. Through the survey, NCTCOG will gather information about the current state of sustainability in North Central Texas; foster discussions between communities about shared goals and challenges; explore potential future initiatives and opportunities for collaboration; and identify regional priorities to be incorporated into future webinars and RISE FY2027 Work Plan.

Deliverables:

- Develop regional sustainability survey.
- Coordinate and send virtual survey announcements.
- Host virtual survey.
- Compile and publish virtual survey results and factsheet.

Estimated FY2026 Budget by Task

The completion of the full work plan is contingent upon receiving the full amount of funding from members.

Task	Estimated Budget Total	Deliverables
Task 1: Administrative Support and Hosting Coalition Meetings	\$30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 4 meetings and/or conference calls per year. • Maintain/update website, Coalition roster updates, contact list management, presentations, etc. • Support coordination with outside entities on complementary efforts and support local government activities. • Develop presentations and present at meetings. • Coordinate development and submittal of grants, with assistance of members, as appropriate.

Task 2: Regional Climate Action Planning	\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Connect members with funding and other mechanisms to implement measures outlined in the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan: Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.</u> • <u>Assist members with their own climate action planning efforts, including maintaining communication on data sources and methodology used for greenhouse gas emissions inventories and reviewing plan elements.</u> • <u>Support a regional uniform approach to climate action planning by providing a platform for collaboration amongst members.</u>
Task 3: Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building	\$20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish at least one partnership between the RISE Coalition and a local university. • Coordinate with university partner(s) to organize networking opportunities between the university, students, and RISE Coalition participants. • Provide additional capacity building opportunities as is feasible and budget permitting.
Task 4: Educational Resources	\$20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and post appropriate resources and educational materials to the existing Coalition's website. • Coordinate webinar/workshop presenters, promote attendance, and host and run 2 webinars or workshops per year. • Post webinar/workshop recordings and regional workshop information to the Coalition's website and/or Conserve North Texas website. • Conduct Lego Visioning Exercises at the request of regional stakeholders. • Maintain library of technical tools, case studies, and website resources on the Center of Development Excellence website. • Send at least 4 regional sustainability newsletters.
Task 5: Regional Training Workshop	\$35,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate workshop speakers/trainers, promote attendance, and host and run training workshop. • Share workshop materials and recording with attendees.

Task 6: Conduct Regional Virtual Sustainability Survey	\$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop regional sustainability survey. • Coordinate and send virtual survey announcements. • Host virtual survey. • Compile and publish virtual survey results and factsheet.
Total	\$120,000	

Current Websites:

- **Center of Development Excellence:** <http://www.developmentexcellence.com>
- **Center of Development Excellence General Information:** <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/development-excellence/center-of-development-excellence>
- **CLIDE Awards:** <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/development-excellence/clide-awards>
- **RISE Coalition General Information:** <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/development-excellence/rise-coalition>
- **RISE Coalition Committee Information:** <https://www.nctcog.org/envir/committees/regional-integration-of-sustainability-efforts-ris>
- **FY2021-2023 Project (GHG Inventory) Website:** <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/quality/air/emissions-inventories/local-regional-greenhouse-gas-emission-inventory>

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