

Fiscal Year 2027 Work Plan Regional Integration of Sustainability Efforts (RISE) Coalition

Background and FY2027 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 was 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, or Coalition.

In FY2025, 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 biennial 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 group discussion and a regional sustainability survey conducted in FY2026. These topics include:

- Regional Air Quality Planning
- Resilience Hubs
- Turning Sustainability Goals into Action
- Green Business

In general, the FY2027 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 training
- Encourage innovative development within the region
- Maintain a clearinghouse of best practices and a library of technical tools
- Maintain program websites and resources
- Administer the CLIDE Awards Program for FY2027
- Conduct a sustainability-focused professional certification workshop
- Collaborate as a group on regional sustainability projects and initiatives

Summary of FY2026 RISE Coalition Accomplishments

- Maintained membership of eleven (11) 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.

- Maintained relationships with six (6) local universities.
- Planned and hosted a webinar on the topic of Sustainable Procurement and a webinar on the topic of Energy Efficiency in collaboration with NCTCOG's Regional Energy Management program.
- Conducted a regional training workshop for the LEED Green Associate Exam
- Held quarterly public meetings in October, January, May, and July.

Summary of FY2025 Center of Development Excellence Accomplishments

- Conducted four (4) Lego Visioning Exercises at the request of regional stakeholders
- Distributed four (4) Center of Development Excellence newsletters
- 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 FY2027 Work Plan. NCTCOG will identify the appropriate staff to work on the activities identified by the Coalition. Key contacts for FY2027 are included in the Work Plan and may change depending on the focus areas.

FY2027 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 four (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 grant applications, with assistance from members, as appropriate. NCTCOG may or may not serve as lead applicant depending upon grant specifics.

Task 2. Regional Air Quality Planning

NCTCOG staff will collaborate with Coalition members to support ongoing discussions and activities related to regional comprehensive air quality action planning. As sustainability experts, the RISE Coalition will serve as a sounding board for these 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 Action Plan; supporting members on their own air quality action planning efforts; and providing a platform for collaboration on ongoing regional air quality 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 Action Plan
- Assist members with their own air quality 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 air quality 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.
- Establish a regional set of Green Business Certification standards.
- Promote the NCTCOG Regional PACE Program.
- Support relevant efforts completed under the Regional Energy Management Program.
- 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, chambers of commerce, 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.
- Two (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 four (4) regional sustainability newsletters – Includes: researching relevant news, events, and funding opportunities; preparing newsletter; and sharing with newsletter subscribers.

Task 5: Administer CLIDE Awards Program

NCTCOG will coordinate and administer the biennial Celebrating Leadership in Development Excellence (CLIDE) Awards Program, recognizing private and public development programs and projects that exemplify the Principles of Development Excellence: Activity Centers, Development Diversity, Educational Opportunity, Efficient Growth, Efficient Mobility Options, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Communities, Housing Choice, Pedestrian Design, Quality Places, Resource Efficiency, and Implementation.

Deliverables:

- Coordinate application submittals.
- Organize and coordinate jury panel to score applications.
- Presentation to awardees at NCTCOG General Assembly.
- Publish award winners on program website.

Task 6: Sustainability-Focused Professional Certification Workshop

NCTCOG will organize and host a one-day workshop providing Continuing Education credits for a sustainability-focused professional certification, such as the LEED Green Associate certification. This workshop will be open to all RISE participants, with a reduced cost for RISE cost-sharing members.

Deliverables:

One (1) sustainability-focused professional certification 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 7: 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 FY2028 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 FY2027 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	\$20,000	• 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 Air Quality Action Planning	\$10,000	• Connect members with funding and other mechanisms to implement measures outlined in the Dallas-Fort Worth Air Quality Improvement Plan: Comprehensive Action Plan • Assist members with their own air quality 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 air quality action planning by providing a platform for collaboration amongst members.
Task 3: Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building	\$15,000	• 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. • Establish a regional set of Green Business Certification standards. • Provide additional capacity building opportunities as is feasible and budget permitting.
Task 4: Educational Resources	\$15,000	• 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: Administer CLIDE Award Program	\$35,000	• Coordinate application submittals. • Organize and coordinate jury panel to score applications. • Presentation to awardees at NCTCOG General Assembly. • Publish award winners on program website.
Task 6: Sustainability-Focused Professional Certification Workshop	\$20,000	• Coordinate workshop speakers/trainers, promote attendance, and host and run training workshop. • Share workshop materials and recording with attendees.
Task 7: Conduct Regional Virtual Sustainability Survey	\$5,000	• Develop regional sustainability survey. • Coordinate and send virtual survey announcements. • Host virtual survey. • Compile and publish virtual survey results and factsheet.
Total	\$120,000*	

*Cost shares are anticipated to be supplemented by internal funding from NCTCOG to support the growth of the program.

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>

Key NCTCOG Staff Contacts:

- Corinne Buckley, Planner II, NCTCOG Environment & Development Department, (817) 704-2510, cbuckley@nctcog.org
- Crysta Guzman, Sr. Planner, NCTCOG Environment & Development Department, (817) 695-9107, cguzman@nctcog.org
- Cassidy Campbell, Program Manager, NCTCOG Environment & Development Department, (817) 608-2368, ccampbell@nctcog.org
- Susan Alvarez, PE, CFM, Director, NCTCOG Environment & Development Department, (817) 704-2549, salvarez@nctcog.org
- Lori Clark, Senior Program Manager, NCTCOG Transportation Department, (817) 695-9242, lclark@nctcog.org
- Jenny Narvaez, Program Manager, NCTCOG Transportation Department, (817) 608-2442, jnarvaez@nctcog.org