

“Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic.

Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**2025 Impact Report
from the NC Budget & Tax Center**



Letter from the Executive Director

When I look back on 2025, I am filled with awe for the tenacity, creativity, and connection that my colleagues and our partners maintained amid federal chaos, deep cuts, and state legislative inaction as households face growing cost pressures.

But I am not surprised.

Like so many in our state, we love North Carolina. We hold fast to the idea that we can come together to build the communities that we all deserve — and that our policies should reflect care for every person regardless of who they are, where they come from, or what income they have.

As we kicked off 2026, I was reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s call for the necessary combination of power and love to secure justice. Those words reflect the work that our organization is leading, supported by our beloved community of funders, partners, program alumni, staff, and Board.

2025 presented sharply what has always been true — we cannot allow power to grow unchecked or unmoored from the will of the people and care for one another.

It was a year in which we expanded the reach of our research, deeply listened to the stories and lived realities of people across the state, and adapted our work to priorities emerging from communities. That included expanding our capacity to engage in federal policy debates, deepening our connections with administrative policy to understand and communicate the fallout from the federal shutdown and the absence of a state budget, and deepening partnerships to shape the demand for the policies we deserve.

I write this as January 2026 has already felt like a year, but we move forward with resolve. We believe our work can build the power that we need for a more just future — because at the NC Budget & Tax Center (BTC) we love what we do, and we believe that policies can strengthen our communities when oriented to care and designed with love.

— Alexandra Sirota, Executive Director

Our Theory of Change

Since becoming independent in 2022, the NC Budget & Tax Center has grounded its approach to policy change in data and analysis that reflect community realities, document how policy choices affect daily life, and equip people to engage meaningfully in the policy process.

Through trusted partnerships and collaboration, we build shared understanding of how decisions about public revenue — how much we have and who pays — shape equitable economic outcomes and community well-being across North Carolina.

We bring together directly impacted people and partners to turn that understanding into action, advancing policies rooted in care, equity, and opportunity. Together, we hold policymakers accountable for budget and tax choices that reflect people's priorities and support anti-racist outcomes.



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Progress in 2025

In 2025, we saw growing evidence that our strategic approach is working. More people and partners connected their priorities to the state budget process, engaged elected leaders, and pushed back on policies that put profits and the wealthy ahead of people — including the deeply unpopular H.R.1.

New partners joined our programs to protect food assistance, advance family tax credits, and elevate cash assistance as a pathway out of poverty. Policymakers, both publicly and privately, also raised concerns about agendas that create chaos, uncertainty, and fail to meet their responsibility to the people.

While much work remains, 2025 strengthened our foundation and provided greater stability to test and expand our model.

By the Numbers

- 226+ media hits mentioning BTC, our people, our products, and our partners in outlets across NC
- Hosted 5 text banks in 2025, reaching 207,642 people across the state of NC
- 19 young adults went through our 2025 Summer Policy institute, bringing our alumni network to 111
- 110+ publications created by our team
- 70+ presentations and trainings for more than 2,000 people across the state on a variety of topics
- 2 new staff members joined the NC Budget & Tax Center, expanding capacity on community building and public policy



Our Policy Context

For nearly 15 years, North Carolina has been a testing ground for the anti-tax, anti-government policy experiments of powerful national interests, from tax cuts to attacks on public benefits, voting rights, and public education. Successfully pushing back on tax cuts first enacted in 2013 and protecting key public services would not only reshape our state's future but also challenge a national agenda that divides us and minimizes the value of what we can do together.

North Carolina ended 2025 without a state budget as residents faced rising costs, stagnant wages, and instability in public programs and services. Division within the legislative majority created a rare opening: the House sought to slow personal income tax cuts and fund modest, though insufficient, raises for public educators, while the Senate pushed deeper tax cuts for wealthy households and profitable corporations.

Without changes to state law, these cuts will continue through at least 2030, compounding federal threats to Medicaid, food assistance, child care, and cash assistance. State leaders have already moved to reduce Medicaid provider payments to address budget shortfalls. Child care center closures are accelerating as subsidy rates lag behind costs. SNAP access is increasingly constrained, and privatization efforts in public education and other public institutions continue through largely unaccountable processes.

In this context, BTC is analyzing policy impacts, connecting with communities and partners, and building the narrative and people power needed to shift public policy away from narrow measures of productivity and profit — and toward outcomes that reflect shared well-being.

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Join the Movement

None of this work happened by accident. Every data point shifted the narrative. Every policymaker engaged and community voice amplified strengthened our shared vision.

This progress is powered by people like you. Our community is our strength — and budgets should reflect dignity, well-being, and opportunity for all North Carolinians.

As pressures grow, the NC Budget & Tax Center will continue to show up with joy — delivering rigorous analysis, clear storytelling, and a steadfast commitment to economic justice so everyday people shape the conversation.

Join us — or stay engaged — in advancing this work. Your support sustains independent research, fuels rapid response, and strengthens a statewide network pushing for opportunity and justice. Monthly contributions help ensure this work remains steady and responsive for the long haul.

Progress is built collectively.

Truth is defended together.

Lasting change requires investment.

Thank you for being part of this work.



Centering Well-Being in Policy Debates

The NC Budget & Tax Center, informed by community surveys, polls, and listening to lived experiences, launched a two-year campaign in 2025 to align to the state budget process — centering the power of public policy and investment to expand well-being and opportunity.

We combined national research, global case studies, and community workshopping to advance a people-centered narrative prioritizing well-being over profits and growth alone. Short videos sharing this message reached more than 97,000 people and lifted up hopeful visions of well-being across the state.

We engaged directly in communities — sharing accessible information about federal proposals affecting food assistance and health coverage — and mobilized North Carolinians to weigh in with their members of Congress.



Watch the video

We also connected more people to the state budget process through:

- Our Dollars, Our Future, where residents presented priorities to legislators
- Real-time text updates throughout the budget debate
- Rapid-response analysis exposing how tax cuts drove unsustainable policy choices

As reflected in the “By the Numbers” highlights, your support helped defend against immediate threats while building momentum toward a better future.

NC Budget & Tax Center Team



The NC Budget & Tax Center staff members, joined by Dr. Darrick Hamilton at the 2026 Economy for All event. To learn more about our staff and board members, visit NCBudget.org/our-team

Contact us at info@ncbudget.org