



LENOIR COUNTY, NC

Invites Your Interest in the Position of

SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR





Position Closes August 26, 2026

Are you a social services professional who is an emotionally intelligent, visible, and approachable leader that builds trust through integrity, consistent communication, engagement, and professionalism? If so, the Lenoir County Department of Social Services, located in Kinston, NC, is seeking a collaborative and relationship-focused **Social Services Director** to champion organizational excellence and build upon its recent momentum. Having successfully cleared a state Corrective Action Plan, stabilized its Child Welfare program, significantly improved staffing and workloads, and fostered a positive workplace culture, Lenoir County DSS is primed for its next chapter. With a local poverty rate of 22.1%, this department plays an essential role in connecting residents with life-changing resources.



Blue pinwheels outside the Lenoir County Department of Social Services (left) symbolize the community's commitment to preventing child abuse, while DSS employees participate in the annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Walk, raising awareness and supporting efforts to prevent elder abuse in Lenoir County. These efforts exemplify the department's commitment to protecting vulnerable residents through more than 70 programs and services.

About the Role and Agency:

Reporting directly to the Board of Social Services, the **Social Services Director** serves as the executive officer to the Board, providing strategic leadership and administrative oversight for one of the County's largest and most complex departments. Partnering with County leadership, the DSS Board, state officials, community partners, and an experienced Executive Leadership Team, the next **Director** will lead a dedicated staff and passionately serve a community known for its resourcefulness and creativity. Furthermore, the **Director** will aggressively advocate to strengthen services and identify future program and funding opportunities that benefit the residents of Lenoir County.



Through more than 70 programs and services, the Lenoir County Department of Social Services (DSS) is dedicated to improving the lives of Lenoir County residents by providing economic assistance, employment services, child support enforcement, professional social work services, and numerous specialized programs that address a wide range of social and economic needs. Learn more about the department by [visiting the County's website](#).

Lenoir County's **Social Services Director**:

- Manages a **\$14.34M** budget (2027) and leads a department of 146 employees.
- Oversees vital community services including public assistance, child welfare, foster care, adoption, and adult protective services with the support of seven direct reports—spanning administration, business operations, personnel, and program management.
- Exemplifies the department's mission and fosters a professional, compassionate culture dedicated to protecting resident dignity and enhancing the quality of life for children, families, seniors, and adults in need.

As a critical leader for the community, the **Director** provides steady, reliable stewardship when it matters most. Because crises don't keep business hours, this role serves as a dependable beacon of leadership, ensuring the agency is prepared to respond to emergencies and protect vulnerable residents 24/7/365.

Key Position Priorities:

- **Community Engagement & Partnerships** - Build and strengthen relationships with residents, state officials, elected leaders, employees, and community partners, such as the Chief of the Kinston Police Department (KPD), Greene Lamp Community Action, the Kinston Housing Authority, and Lenoir Community College while fostering an agency culture of trust, accountability, and open communication.
- **Workforce Development & Organizational Culture** - Preserve the department's positive momentum by supporting employee retention, maintaining a healthy organizational culture, and ensuring every division receives the leadership, training and development and recognition to excel.
- **Strategic Operations & Fiscal Stewardship** - Provide strategic operational and fiscal leadership by ensuring compliance, maximizing available funding, maintaining effective oversight of departmental programs and services, and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.
- **Executive Leadership & Team Alignment** - Develop and maintain a cohesive Executive Leadership Team that promotes collaboration, consistency, communication, accountability, and professional growth.

About the Organization:

Lenoir County operates under a Commissioner-Manager form of government. The County is governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners. This elected board establishes policy and sets the County's strategic direction, while the County Manager is responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations and implementing the Board's priorities. Guided by its mission to create *a vibrant physical, social, and economic environment for its citizens and businesses – that helps inspire the spirit and realize dreams*, Lenoir County is committed to delivering high-quality, responsive public service.

With approximately 512 full-time authorized positions and 190 part-time positions, the County delivers a broad range of services through 16 departments such as Social Services, the Sheriff's Office, Health Department, Emergency Medical Services, and the Detention Center. The recommended [FY2026-2027 budget](#) is approximately \$105.1M (\$87.6M General Fund) and maintains the current tax rate of 67.5¢, continues the County's compensation strategy, supports capital and maintenance priorities, and limits unnecessary expansion of government operations. More information about the organization can be found [here](#).

Qualifications:

Minimum qualification requirements include:

- Master's degree in social work and two years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services; OR,
- Bachelor's degree in social work and three years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services, one of which must have been in Social Services; OR,
- Graduation from a four-year college or university and three years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services, two of which must have been in Social Services; OR,
- An equivalent combination of training and experience.
- Experience in Social Services budgeting and personnel administration under the State Human Resources Act or prior experience as a County Director of Social Services ***is preferred***.

The Successful Candidate is:

- a compassionate leader who balances accountability with support by establishing clear expectations, recognizing accomplishments, and supporting employee growth and retention;
- an experienced social services professional with strong Child Welfare knowledge and the ability to provide effective leadership across all departmental programs and services;
- an effective communicator who fosters transparency, promotes open and consistent communication throughout the organization, and effectively advocates for the department with employees, state officials, community partners, and County leadership;
- an organized and effective leader who balances competing priorities, uses data to inform decisions, and ensures every division receives the leadership, support, and oversight needed to succeed; and,
- a person of integrity who cares about the residents of Lenoir County, understands the community's unique challenges, and is committed to addressing community needs while being a responsible steward of public resources.

About the Community:

Located in eastern North Carolina, approximately 75 miles east of Raleigh, Lenoir County offers a welcoming blend of small-town charm, regional connectivity, and a strong sense of community. The county seat, Kinston, serves as the cultural and economic center, complemented by smaller towns such as La Grange, Pink Hill, and Grifton. With a population of approximately 55,000 residents, Lenoir County provides an affordable cost of living and a diverse community, with a balanced mix of families, professionals, and retirees.

Residents and visitors have access to a wide range of recreational, cultural, and entertainment opportunities that contribute to the area's overall quality of life. Outdoor enthusiasts can take advantage of boating, fishing, and kayaking along the Neuse River, as well as the county's numerous parks, walking trails, and greenways. A popular destination is [Neuseway Nature Park](#), a 55-acre riverside park that combines recreation with hands-on learning. The park includes the Ellis Planetarium, a 52-seat dome theater offering shows on the night sky and space exploration; the Exchange Nature Center, which features native wildlife exhibits, aquariums, and interactive experiences such as a saltwater touch tank; and a Health and Science Museum with engaging, hands-on exhibits for all ages.



Photo Visit Kinston

The Kinston Riverwalk (top) runs along the Neuse River, offering a scenic space for residents and visitors to walk, bike and enjoy waterfront views, along with opportunities for boating, fishing and kayaking; Neuseway Nature Park (middle) provides a riverside destination that blends recreation with hands-on learning, featuring trails, exhibits and family-friendly activities for all ages; the Neuse River in Kinston (below) highlights the natural beauty and recreational opportunities that define the area.





Mother Earth Brewing (top left), Grainger Stadium (top right) and BBQ on the Neuse (below) in Kinston highlight the city's vibrant mix of craft brewing, historic baseball and renowned Eastern North Carolina barbecue, offering residents and visitors a taste of the community's culture and local flavor.

Downtown Kinston has experienced steady revitalization, evolving into a vibrant hub with a growing mix of local restaurants, breweries, shops, and gathering spaces. Notable destinations include Chef & the Farmer, a nationally recognized farm-to-table restaurant, Mother Earth Brewing, a popular local brewery, and [Grainger Stadium](#), home to minor league baseball and a hub for community events. Complemented by coffee shops, boutiques, art spaces, and seasonal farmers markets, the area offers a lively and walkable environment for both residents and visitors. Downtown Kinston also hosts a variety of festivals and events throughout the year that bring the community together. Highlights include the [BBQ Fest on the Neuse](#), which celebrates eastern North Carolina's barbecue tradition with food, music, and vendors, along with a range of seasonal holiday events, such as the "Turn on the Holidays" tree lighting ceremony and the Kinston Christmas Parade. Additional events—including farmers' markets, art walks, and cultural celebrations—further highlight local talent and heritage while creating regular opportunities for residents and visitors to gather and connect.



Photo BBQ Fest on the Neuse

Conveniently located near Greenville, New Bern, and within a short drive of North Carolina's Crystal Coast beaches, Lenoir County offers both accessibility and a relaxed pace of life. With its combination of affordability, outdoor amenities, cultural assets, and a community focused on growth and improvement, Lenoir County provides a high quality of life and a meaningful place to live, work, and be involved.



Kinston Music Park (left) offers a lively outdoor gathering space for concerts and community events that celebrate the city's musical roots; the South Queen Street sign in downtown Kinston (right) points to the heart of a revitalized district filled with local shops, dining and a welcoming small-town atmosphere that draws visitors and residents alike.

Salary and Benefits:

The hiring range for this position is \$114,805-\$126,722. Beginning salary is commensurate with experience. Lenoir County provides a rich benefit package that includes Health and Dental Insurance, County contribution to Health Savings Plan, Paid Holidays, Sick and Annual Leave. Additionally, as a County employee, the **Social Services Director** participates in the North Carolina Local Government Employees' Retirement System (NCLGERS), which includes a 6% pre-tax employee contribution. Supplemental retirement savings opportunities include participation in a 401 (k) plan with a 2.5% County Contribution based on salary, as well as 457 and Roth 401 (k) plans. The County may recognize prior service through adjusted leave accrual rates and initial leave balances, consistent with established policies. Learn more about Lenoir County's employee benefits by [visiting the County's website](#).

Please note: There is no residency requirement for this position.

To apply, please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/developmentalassociates> and click on the title of **Social Services Director – Lenoir County, NC**.

- **If you have accessed this position from within the Government Jobs portal**, simply hit the green “Apply” button in the upper-right corner to begin your application.
- All applications must be submitted online via the Developmental Associates application portal (link above) – NOT the County's employment application portal or any other external website.
- Resumes and cover letters must be uploaded with the application.
- Applicants should apply by **August 26, 2026**.
- The hiring team will invite successful semi-finalists to participate in virtual interviews and skill evaluations on **September 17-18, 2026**. Candidates are encouraged to reserve these dates for virtual meetings should they be invited to participate.
- Candidates considering applying for this position may request additional information by directing inquiries to hiring@developmentalassociates.com.

Lenoir County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



*Farm equipment sits inside a Lenoir County barn, reflecting the county's rich agricultural heritage and the rural communities the next **Social Services Director** will serve through programs that strengthen families, support vulnerable residents, and improve quality of life.*



Developmental Associates, LLC manages the recruitment and selection process for this position. To learn more about our selection process, visit <https://developmentalassociates.com/client-openings/>, select “Client Openings,” and scroll down to “Important Information for Applicants.”