

2026 FEDERAL ACTION PLAN
(Board-Adopted January 2026)

ISSUE	PRIORITIES
LOCAL-FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster relationships with members of Congress representing the state and region to ensure the continuation of local-federal partnerships and to highlight the priorities and issues impacting Central Pines' 7-county region. • Maintain non-partisan advocacy for regional priorities across the federal government and continue to serve as a resource to federal agencies. • Provide education on the role that Central Pines, and other regional councils, can take to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of federal funds at the local level. • Oppose legislation and regulations that impose unfunded mandates on local governments.
REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure support and funding for the "Connected Region" initiative led by Central Pines in partnership with local governments and community stakeholders to advance comprehensive land use coordination and increase the impact of federal dollars for transportation and housing. • Support regional funding for disaster preparation, assistance, and mitigation to improve coordination, and federal policy changes that expedite the access to and use of federal disaster assistance funds.
PUBLIC HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Central Pines' Area Agency on Aging, focusing on increased funding and local flexibility to meet the real and urgent needs of our region's rapidly growing older population and the rising costs of service delivery. • Secure additional funding for the Veterans Directed Care program to continue to enable local veterans at risk of nursing home placement to live independently and choose services that best meet their goals and overall well-being. • Collaborate with Congress and federal agencies to secure funding for the regionalization of local water systems, enhancing community and economic development by addressing critical water infrastructure needs. • Support initiatives and federal funding to protect and preserve the region's natural environment, promote sustainable land use and resource management, and improve region-wide resilience.

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote programs to help local communities adapt to emerging technologies and upskill the workforce for regional industries including, but not limited to, the advanced manufacturing, energy, research, construction, and technology sectors. Preserve and enhance Economic Development District (EDD) initiatives and Economic Development Administration program funding that is an essential resource used by Central Pines to positively impact smaller, rural communities. Support the region's institutions of higher education, research organizations, and major regional events (such as the FISU World University Games Summer 2029) which drive economic activity, strengthen workforce development, and sustain regional growth through coordinated infrastructure and community planning.
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for sustained federal transportation funding opportunities to improve regional connectivity and mobility, including active transportation hubs and transit-oriented development; greenways and pedestrian improvements; road safety; public transit and buses; and other public transportation infrastructure. Advance federal initiatives and funding that increase and preserve the quantity and quality of affordable housing and public infrastructure to meet the demands of sustained regional growth and reduce the cost-burden on older adults, rural residents, and others most impacted. Provide support for the region's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Rural Planning Organizations RPOs.
GRANT ADMINISTRATION AND MEMBER SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure additional federal resources for regional priorities through Central Pines' Grant Assistance Program including competitive grants, congressionally directed spending/community funded projects, and other funding requests. Protect local-federal partnership by ensuring stability, predictability, clarity, and local expertise in the federal grantmaking processes and systems. Monitor and support federal legislation and programs that encourage greater regional collaboration and local project coordination. Direct federal agencies to include regional councils and councils of governments as eligible entities for federal funding opportunities when local governments agencies are listed as eligible entities.