

North Carolina Association of Coordinators of Veteran Affairs

SCO Trailblazers

Betting on a Better Future

Annual Conference

March 18 - 20, 2026



Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort

777Casino Drive

Cherokee, NC 28719

Conference Agenda

Registration – 2nd Floor in front of Locust/Maple

Meetings will be held in Locus/Maple

Tuesday March 17	4:00pm – 6:00pm	Board Meeting – Birch Room
Wednesday March 18	8:00am – 10:30am	Breakfast - Registration
Wednesday March 18	10:30am – 11:00am	Opening Presentation of Colors – Smokey Mountain High School National Anthem – Victoria Moore & Kalyn Allen Welcome – Velma Smith, President Charity – SAFEchild NC Housekeeping
Wednesday March 18	11:00am – 12:00pm	Kristian Hooker – WCU Student share GI Bill experience
Wednesday March 18	12:00pm – 1:30pm	Lunch
Wednesday March 18	1:30pm – 2:30pm	VR&E – Tyreka J. Dugger, Supervisory Counselor, Deanna White, Counselor
Wednesday March 18	2:30pm – 3:30pm	Steven Marty – Q&A
Wednesday March 18	3:30pm – 4:30pm	Friendly Feud – SCO Edition
	Dinner on your own	
Thursday March 19	8:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast
Thursday March 19	9:00am – 10:00am	NCTAP – Clara Cooke, Manager
Thursday March 19	10:00am – 11:00am	National Guard – Sherrita Ried, Education Specialist
Thursday March 19	11:00am – 12:00pm	Panel Seasoned SCOs
Thursday March 19	12:00pm – 1:30pm	Lunch
Thursday March 19	1:30pm – 2:30pm	UNC System Office – Brad Wrenn, Program Manager, Military/Veterans Student Success
Thursday March 19	2:30pm – 3:00pm	Break
Thursday March 19	3:00pm – 4:00pm	NC State Approving Agency – Timothy Freeman, Executive Director and Program Specialists
Thursday March 19	4:00pm – 5:00pm	State Meeting – Dr. Brandyy Wade, Treasurer
Thursday March 19	6:00pm – 10:00pm	Bowling Night – 2 nd Level of bowling alley. Dinner, Games, Prizes
Friday March 20	8:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast
Friday March 20	9:00am – 10:00am	VA Debt Management – Nicole Haselberger, Assistant Chief
Friday March 20	10:00am – 11:00am	Giveaway & Closing Remarks

Charity for 2026 conference is [SAFEchildNC](#), Raleigh NC

SAFECHILD'S CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER Where Every Child Deserves Calm, Comfort & Safety How You Can Help SAFEchild? Your involvement makes meaningful changes possible. By giving, advocating, or connecting one more person to our mission, you help prevent abuse, strengthen families, and ensure children have the support they need all year long. To donate, scan the QR code, or visit: safechildnc.org/donate THANK YOU for helping us provide lifesaving services in our Children's Advocacy Center! SAFEchild's Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) provides a warm, child-centered space where children who may have experienced abuse can safely share their stories with trained professionals who protect their dignity. At the CAC, a child tells their story one time, in one calm, supportive interview — preventing the retraumatization that happens when children are asked to repeat painful details to multiple agencies. By bringing law enforcement, child protective services, medical providers, and advocates together under one roof, the CAC ensures a coordinated, compassionate response that surrounds families with safety and support.

If you can, please bring an item from SAFEchild wish list to help support the children they serve.

Books ([Amazon Wish List Link Here](#))

The following books and more are given to children and parents participating in a SAFEchild program.

- Good Moms Have Scary Thoughts (Urgent Need!)
- What About Us
- The Care and Keeping of You 1
- Harold and the Purple Crayon
- The Runaway Bunny
- High Five Discipline: Positive Discipline for Happy, Healthy, Well-Behaved Kids
- My Body Belongs to Me, From My Head to My Toes
- Celebrate Your Body (and Its Changes, Too!)

We also need new or gently used children's picture books.

Snack Items ([Amazon Wish List Link Here](#))

We provide snacks during parenting classes and also for children who have an appointment at the SAFEchild Advocacy Center.

- Bottled water
- Individually packaged snacks, such as: Pirates Booty; Goldfish crackers; veggie chips; animal crackers; pretzels; applesauce. **No snacks with peanuts please.**
- Granola bars (e.g., Z-Bars, kids Cliff Bars)
- Disposable coffee cups WITH LIDS
- Compostable paper plates and cutlery
- Goldfish crackers
- Applesauce pouches
- Chips

Children's Play Items ([Amazon Wish List Link Here](#))

- Paperboard Puzzles (10-piece up to 50-piece)
- Crayola Model Magic
- Bubble Sensory Fidget Toys and Rubik Cubes
- Infant Teething Toys
- Bubbles
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Playground ball set
- Crayons

Executive Board & Conference Committee 2025-26

President, Conference Chair – Velma Smith

Past President – Tiffany Ingram

President Elect – Jay McDougal

Secretary – Morgan Whisenant

Treasurer – Dr. Brandy Wade

Membership Chair – Feleta Morton

Web Liaison – Candice Quackenbush