

Guilford County, North Carolina **Recovery Plan**

State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2021 Report

Covering the period from 6/1/2021 through 7/31/2021

Guilford County, North Carolina
2021 Recovery Plan

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To be included and completed as obligations and expenses are incurred after July 31, 2021

GENERAL OVERVIEW

1) Executive Summary

Activity through July 31, 2021

Guilford County, North Carolina, received \$52,169,876 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) support on June 1, 2021. The Guilford County Board of Commissioners formally appropriated these funds into a special revenue fund on July 15, 2021. **As of July 31, 2021, the County has not spent any of its State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) allocation.** (Note: Guilford County's fiscal year runs from July 1 of one calendar year to June 30 of the following calendar year.)

While Guilford County has not spent SLFRF dollars as of July 31, 2021, the Board of Commissioners allocated \$718,000 of these funds in its 2021-2022 budget, adopted on June 17, 2021, to accelerate work to **reduce racial disparities in maternal health and infant mortality** ([Every Baby Guilford](#)) and **reduce harm cause by opioid misuse** by expanding capacity and services of the Guilford County Solution to the Opioid Problem ([GCSTOP](#)) program. The Board also allocated up to \$500,000 of its SLFRF funding to establish adequate time-limited staff support for the administration, oversight, data collection and analysis, and evaluation of SLFRF funding and to identify and evaluate innovative and transformational long-term community investments.

More information about these and other SLFRF-funded programs will be included in the next report, which will cover activity from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Looking Forward

As described in other sections of this document, the County has prepared a COVID Recovery Funding Plan that includes engaging residents in a **deliberate and thoughtful process to solicit community voice** regarding the best use of its SLFRF allocation for long-term recovery. Efforts are also underway to evaluate the best ways to **leverage and maximize additional recovery support** expected from the federal and state governments. The North Carolina General Assembly is finalizing its budget negotiations which will include additional pandemic-related funding for local governments. A state budget is expected by the end of September 2021. The County expects its planning efforts to conclude in late Fall 2021, with SLFRF funding decisions being made shortly thereafter.

Progress on the County's community engagement activities and approved projects related to SLFRF dollars can be found online at: [COVID Recovery Plan](#).

2) Uses of SLFRF Allocation

As discussed in Section 1, Guilford County did not obligate or spend any SLFRF dollars as of July 31, 2021. Some SLFRF funds are included in the County's 2021-2022 fiscal year budget, which began on July 1, 2021.

Guilford County has initiated its COVID Recovery Plan to help develop a well-supported blueprint for spending SLFRF dollars for a strong and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn. This plan was reviewed by the Board of Commissioners at a work session on July 15, 2021 and initiated shortly thereafter. Portions of this plan are expected to be paid for from the County's SLFRF allocation.

This plan is structured according to the following principles:

- Center community voice in decision-making;
- Honor County values of equity/inclusion, accountability, service excellence, and transparency/communication;
- Build on foundation of existing County and regional efforts;
- Maximize funding by cross-mapping initiatives against more restrictive funding streams and State/Federal opportunities;
- Invest in best practices by adding capacity, infrastructure, and expertise early; and,
- Focus on sustainability with one-time uses or by establishing a path to sustainability

The County's plan is divided into three broad categories: (1) Near-Term Growth and Recovery, (2) Long-Term Growth and Recovery, and (3) Existing Projects & Community Support.



Near-Term Growth & Recovery

- Open Request for Proposals (RFP) for collaborative projects within QCT's that fall within an eligible use
- Focus on Qualified Census Tracts (QCT's) which are in Central and Southwest Guilford County
- Project should have a near-term delivery and impact with funding deployed in this fiscal year



Long-Term Growth & Recovery

- Centered on extensive community engagement process and economic analysis
 - Demographically & geographically representative resident survey
 - Meetings with residents, County staff, and non-profit and private industry stakeholders
- Seek consultant for engagement, analysis, and recommendations
- Sequenced to allow for coordination with additional State and Federal funding streams and hand-off to County staff



Existing Projects & Community Support

- Eviction Prevention & Diversion: *mediation, training, case management, and housing stability*
- Vaccine Hesitancy & Strategy: *data analysis, intercept interviews, & embedded researchers*
- Extensive Broadband Research: *availability, adoption, and digital inclusion*

The County's **Near-Term Growth and Recovery** work is designed to identify critical needs and provide support for initiatives that produce positive near-term and sustainable impacts primarily in Qualified Census Tracts. A Request for Proposals to the community will be released in early September, with funding allocations anticipated by mid- to late-fall.

The County's **Long-Term Growth and Recovery** work is designed to identify opportunities for additional transformational support in QCT's and in areas across the county that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. This is expected to be complex systems-level work that builds on Near-Term initiatives, an engaged community voice, and new levels of stakeholder collaboration to produce long-term fundamental change in our county.

The Long-Term Growth and Recovery effort will begin with an extensive community engagement effort to hear from residents and incorporate their voices into funding decisions. Initiatives include a county-wide resident survey and intensive localized engagement efforts with residents, private and non-profit business sections, and area government partners. Additional work will focus on building a comprehensive understanding of our community's broadband assets and gaps, as well as how the pandemic has impacted our county. Our community engagement work will expand our knowledge about our residents' experiences during the pandemic and their thoughts and perceptions around impact and investment priorities. The engagement will also help identify existing efforts underway external partners and the optimal intersection of SLFRF resources with various community projects and initiatives.

As of late August 2021, the County is in the selection phase for vendors to assist with a **broadband infrastructure, gaps, and action plan analysis**; a **pandemic impact analysis of our local economy and workforce**, and a **consultant to assist with community engagement efforts**. Design of our **resident survey** is near completion, as well.

Finally, the County is continuing its **Existing Projects and Community Support** to advance recovery and growth. These programs were initiated before Guilford County received its SLFRF allocation and have been supported by local funds or available non-SLFRF federal and state funds. Activities include, among others:

- **General Public Health Response and Vaccination Efforts**

County teams continue to respond to the pandemic by providing COVID-19 vaccinations through its own clinics and support of community events and operating and supporting community testing and contact tracing activities. In addition, on August 26, 2021, the Guilford County Board of Commissioners, acting in its capacity as the Board of Health, implemented a mandatory masking rule for indoor business and public spaces throughout the County. The Public Health Department is charged with educating business owners and residents about the new requirement and enforcing compliance, where necessary.

The County is also working with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro on a vaccine messaging and support analysis to explore COVID-19 vaccination rates and causes for disparities in vaccination by race, ethnicity, national origin, sex and gender, disability status, age, income, geography, and other socio-economic and cultural factors. This

assessment will be used by the County and related organizations to determine priorities, make improvements, and allocate resources for health messaging and better vaccine coverage especially in vulnerable populations and those with existing health disparities. The study will identify drivers of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy; identify influential messengers, partners, and community gatekeepers in communities of color; and develop culturally appropriate and community-acceptable approaches to improving vaccination availability, accessibility, and confidence in these communities based on resident input.

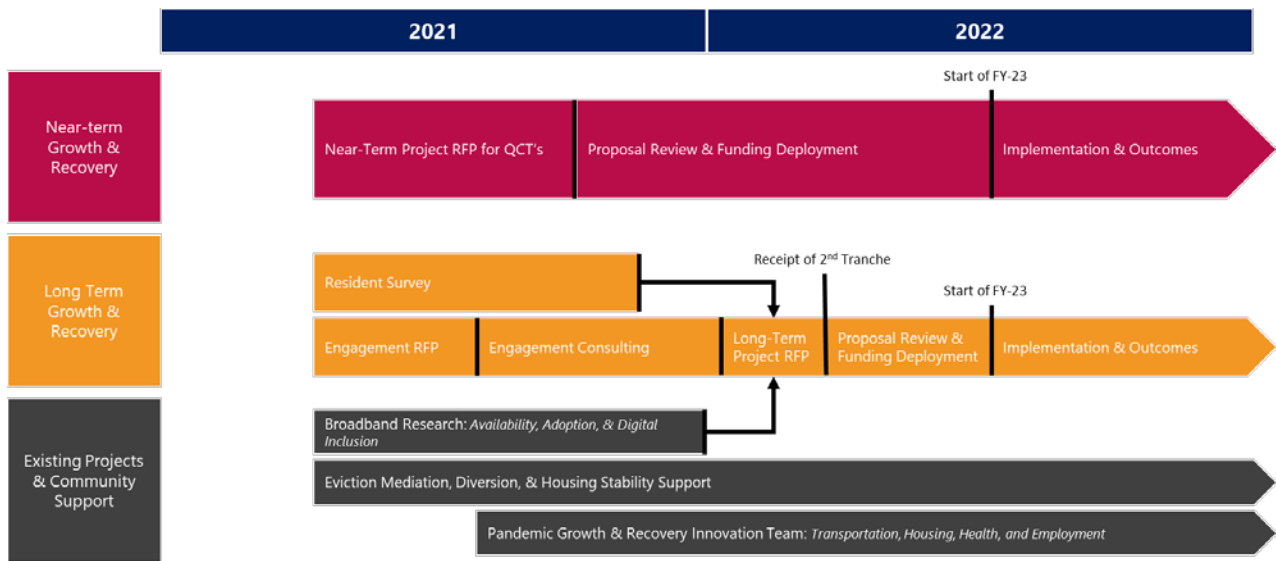
- **Emergency Rental Assistance**

As of July 31, 2021, the County has spent approximately \$2.9 million of ERAP, ERAP2, and local rental support funds to help residents avoid eviction. These allocations generally represent funding provided to residents outside of the municipal limits of the City of Greensboro. Greensboro, which has about 55% (299,000) of total county residents, received its own allocation of ERAP funds.

- **Eviction Prevention and Diversion**

Guilford County is using part of its ERAP funding to partner with the Center for Housing and Community Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro on an Eviction Prevention and Diversion initiative to preserve tenancy, reduce cost-burden, strengthen community efficacy, and assure landlords of being reimbursed for rental arrears. Interventions to address housing instability in Guilford County during the pandemic has three key components: 1) a triage system of housing counseling and resource navigation that will guide tenants through options to address rental arrears, address cost burden, and connect with existing resources in the community (including but not limited to the ERAP and other COVID-19 resources); 2) an eviction mediation service that facilitates a resolution to pending or eminent evictions; and 3) a training program to build capacity in vulnerable and low-income renter communities to address the factors which may lead to eviction and/or housing instability

A high-level implementation timeframe for the County’s COVID Recovery Plan is presented in the following chart.



Specific next steps for the County’s plan are presented in the following chart.

Phasing	Description	Timeline									
		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	+		
Phase 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop & deploy resident survey Issue Near-Term Growth & Recovery RFP Issue Long-Term Growth & Recovery Consulting RFP Contract for broadband research 	■	■	■							
Phase 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and evaluate resident survey results Engage consultant to lead and facilitate extensive community engagement & economic analysis Hire central support & innovation team staff Receive & consider Near-Term Growth & Recovery proposals for impact in QCT's 		■	■	■						
Phase 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and evaluate engagement & economic analysis results Develop Long-Term Growth & Recovery investment priorities for community proposals Determine governance structure for proposal consideration Deploy Near-Term Growth & Recovery funding 				■	■	■				
Phase 4:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue Long-Term Growth & Recovery RFP Receive & consider Long-Term Growth & Recovery Proposals Deploy Long-Term project funding in FY 23 Adopted Budget Receive & consider innovation team updates & proposals for reducing community & organizational disparities in housing, transportation, health, & employment 						■	■	■		

Upon completion of the individual phases identified above, specific spending initiatives will be approved. These initiatives will be included in future editions of this Recovery Plan.

3) Promoting Equitable Outcomes

As discussed in other sections, Guilford County is implementing a broad community engagement effort to ensure staff hears and learns from all parts of our community. This community voice will be used to design an equitable and sustainable recovery and growth plan.

While a formal equity strategy will be developed as part of our current planning process, the County is working to incorporate equity into the design and implementation of its current programs. Examples of current work include:

- Extensive work with partners at UNC-G to identify several areas of high poverty and housing cost burdens within the City of High Point for intensive Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) education and outreach. This collaborative work resulted in nearly 70% of approved ERAP applications being received from and 63% of actual assistance paid to residents from three high-priority zip codes that are in or adjacent to the Qualified Census Tracts (QCT's) in the City of High Point. Additional approved applications and assistance are associated with areas in or near other QCT's in the County. This is an on-going project.
- Engaged UNC-G for an analysis to explore COVID-19 vaccination rates and causes for disparities in vaccination by race, ethnicity, national origin, sex and gender, disability status, age, income, geography, and other socio-economic and cultural factors. This is an on-going project.
- Contracted with a national survey firm for an initial broad-based community survey that will be demographically representative of County residents, allowing for the identification of pandemic-related issues and challenges at the QCT and other hyper-local levels.
- Specific requirements built into our RFP's to identify and address equity concerns, such as a requirement for our broadband study vendor to conduct an analysis and assessment of the County's role and next steps in advancing digital equity and inclusion and our economic analysis vendor to identify how the pandemic has negatively impacted different groups in our County.

The County's emphasis on promoting equitable outcomes will continue with projects funded from SLFRF dollars. For example, the County plans to use some of its SLFRF allocation to accelerate its Every Baby Guilford program discussed in Section 1. Using a racial equity lens, Every Baby Guilford is building a radically inclusive collective action movement that builds collaborative solutions, centers the community (people, parents, children, and families), and works together with community members, frontline caregivers, health care systems civic and government leaders, faith-based organizations, and city and county officials to disrupt

longstanding racial disparities and health outcomes for Black mothers and their babies in Guilford County.

In addition, in mid-June 2021, the Board of Commissioners added a new Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Manager position to the County Administration team. This position will work across the county to incorporate the Board’s core values of equity and inclusion throughout the county’s operations, policies, and decision-making processes, including those used to allocate SLFRF dollars and evaluate impacts.

4) Community Engagement

At the time this interim Recovery Report was prepared, the County was finalizing the contract for a broad community engagement initiative and the design of a county-wide resident survey. Future iterations of this report will include more details about these and other engagement activities that are approved by the County and funded with SLFRF dollars.

In addition to the evolving community engagement work, County staff has met multiple times with teams from area municipalities, chambers of commerce, and other community stakeholders to discuss high-level needs, opportunities to collaborate on joint long-term interests, and the County’s COVID Recovery Plan. Elected officials from county and municipal governments have also met to discuss collaboration opportunities.

Locally known as *OneGuilford*, this inter-organization initiative aims to build a new level of collaboration across entities to share resources (ARPA/SLFRF and others) to effectively address joint interests for long-term and equitable recovery, particularly for issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries and/or where innovative partnerships can enhance an entity’s capacity for amplified impact.

Results from a series of conversations and meetings with elected officials and their staff over the last several months generated the following municipal investment priorities.

Summary of Municipal Investment Priorities

Safe and Reliable Water and Sewer Infrastructure	Connected & Sustainable Transportation Infrastructure
Revenue Replacement for Lost Municipal Fees	Housing Access and Affordability
Enhancing Recreation and Tourism for Economic Development	Age-Friendly Growth and Development
Affordable and Reliable High-Speed Internet	Safe and Modern Schools
Small Business Support	Non-Profit Support

Municipal priorities will be incorporated into other information gathered from our engagement with other stakeholders. The County’s high-level plan for gathering additional community feedback is outlined in the following table.

	Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	*Purpose	Timeframe
Past	City & Town Managers	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	March
Past	City & Town Councils	Virtual Meeting	Consult	April
Past	County Commissioners	Virtual & In-Person Info Session	Inform	May
Future	County Employees	Virtual Meeting	Consult	July
Future	County Residents	Survey	Consult	June - August
Future	City & Town Managers	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - October
Future	County Residents	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - October
Future	County Employees	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - October
Future	Non-Profit Service Providers	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - October
Future	Private Industry	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - October
Future	County Commissioners	Virtual & In-Person Meeting	Empower	October - November

**IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation classifications for level of engagement and decision making.*

Actionable Long-Term Strategies & Investment Priorities

5) Labor Practices

As of July 31, 2021, no infrastructure projects are being pursued. The County may pursue infrastructure projects based on the findings of its community engagement efforts and analysis of needs in QCT’s and other areas of the county.

6) Use of Evidence

Guilford County will prioritize the allocation of SLFRF funds for evidence-based interventions and projects that include rigorous program evaluations as parts of their scopes. More information will be provided in future reports for projects funded through SLFRF dollars.

7) Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Guilford County, North Carolina, received \$52,169,876 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) on June 1, 2021. The Guilford County Board of Commissioners formally appropriated these funds into a special revenue fund on July 15, 2021. **As of July 31, 2021, the County has not obligated or spent any of its SLFRF allocation.**

A summary of the approved ***planned*** expenses as of July 31, 2021 is included after the following table which includes only ***actual*** expenses as of July 31, 2021.

NOTE: While the County did not spend any SLFRF dollars as of July 31, 2021, the County has received and spent approximately \$100,000,000 of other federal and local revenues since Spring 2020 to provide responses to the pandemic. Expenses include local economic support, support for area non-profits, vaccination programs, food distribution events, childcare and extended learning programs, and a host of other response and recovery initiatives. You can see how the County has allocated and spent other sources of funds online here: [COVID-19 Pandemic Response Dashboards](#).

Actual Expenditures from June 1, 2021 through July 31, 2021			
Note: Funds were accepted formally by Board of Commissioners on July 15, 2021			
Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health	\$0	\$0
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts	\$0	\$0
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities	\$0	\$0
4	Expenditure Category: Premium Pay	\$0	\$0
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure	\$0	\$0
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement	\$0	\$0
7	Administrative and Other	\$0	\$0
Total		\$0	\$0

Approved PLANNED Expenditures as of July 31, 2021		
Category		PLANNED Expenditures
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health	
1.11	Substance Use Services <i>Reduce harm caused by opioid misuse by expanding capacity and services of the Guilford County Solution to the Opioid Problem. See <u>GCSTOP</u>.</i>	\$250,000
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities	
3.13	Social Determinants of Health: Other <i>Infant Mortality Reduction program to reduce significant racial disparities in infant deaths. See <u>Every Baby Guilford</u>.</i>	\$468,000
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement	
6.1	Provision of Government Services	See Note
7	Administrative and Other	
7.1	Administrative Expenses	\$250,000
7.2	Evaluation and data analysis	\$250,000
Total PLANNED		\$1,218,000

Note: Preliminary calculations indicate the amount of revenue replacement for 2020 available to Guilford County is approximately \$24 million. Clarification of eligible revenues to include in the calculation is ongoing. No allocation of these funds have been made to governmental services as of July 31, 2021. Once a final number is calculated (likely to be in mid-September 2021), the Board of County Commissioners will determine if and how to allocate funds to governmental services in accordance with SLFRF restrictions and legislation.