



COVID Premium Pay

Presented by

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Strategy and Innovation



Request

- **Request that the Board of County Commissioners approve:**
 - Buncombe County COVID Premium Pay Policy



Background

- September 2021: Board of County Commissioners approved \$1,040,000 of ARPA funds for COVID premium pay
- September – November 2021: staff has been awaiting further guidance from the Federal Government on use requirements
 - Federal guidance still not finalized, but UNC’s School of Government has provided preliminary guidance including the need for a board approved policy



Policy Overview

- **One-time** monetary **payment** for active, eligible employees
- Only eligible for staff that incurred specific **COVID-19 risk** and interacted with the public **March 10, 2020 – March 10, 2021**
- Documentation of risk and eligibility is required
- Prorated based on start date and weekly scheduled hours
- Federal Guidance states a threshold of 150% NC state average annual wage to encourage use of funds for lower wage workers
 - County will provide exception for qualifying **high-risk first responders or public health duties**



Eligibility

- **Core COVID** (up to \$3,000) – employee worked at least 75% of every day on critical County COVID response including coordination, planning, and execution.
- **High-Risk** (up to \$1,500) – employee was front-line staff and their job required them to have direct customer contact at least 50% of every day (*ex. First Responders*).
- **Medium-Low Risk** (up to \$1,000) – employee worked at least 50% of every day and their job required them to have indirect customer contact (*ex. Front counter staff providing mandated services to the public*).
- **COVID Reassignment** (prorated at \$1.44 per eligible hour up to \$1,000) – employee was reassigned to a vaccine site, testing site, or delivered COVID-19 supplies to the community where direct customer contact was required.



Organizational Impact

- 757 employees are eligible to receive payment
- Projected ARPA Funding: \$1,029,000
- Projected NC Department of Public Health COVID Funding: \$120,000



Next Steps

- Approval of formal policy
- Distribute payment to eligible employees on the last pay period this month

