COVID Premium Pay

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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