



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: 12/7/2021

New Business

Department: Strategy & Innovation

Presenter(s): Heather Parkinson, Strategy & Innovation Supervisor

Contact(s): HR@buncombecounty.org

Subject: COVID Premium Pay, Policy for ARPA Fund Usage

Brief Summary:

In September 2021, the BOC approved \$1,040,000 in ARPA funding for COVID premium pay for Buncombe County employees who met certain criteria. Since then, staff has been awaiting further guidance from the Federal Government on eligibility requirements for COVID premium pay. Unfortunately, specific Federal guidance has not been provided; however preliminary guidance has provided staff with enough information to proceed with allocating funds to employees. Furthermore, legal staff from UNC's School of Government have provided additional guidance, including the need for a Premium Pay policy to be adopted at the BOC level. The final policy is included in the packet. Below is a synopsis of the proposed criteria for the COVID Premium Pay policy:

This payment is intended to reward County employees who worked in high-risk, public-facing positions during the first 12 months of the pandemic (March 10, 2020-March 10, 2021), prior to a time when vaccines were available to reduce the risk of infection. The following tier levels have been established for this payment:

- Core COVID (up to \$3,000) – employees who worked at least 75% of every day in the time period on critical County COVID response including coordination, planning, and execution.
- High-Risk (up to \$1,500) – employees were front-line staff and their job required them to have direct customer contact at least 50% of every day in the time period (*ex. First Responders*)

- Medium-Low Risk (up to \$1,000) – employees worked at least 50% of every day in the time period 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 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.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action: Staff recommend that the Board take the following actions: Approve the resolution approving the COVID Premium Pay policy for County Employees

County Manager's comments and Recommendation: Recommends Approval