

Governor Cooper Announces COVID-19 Funds Disbursed to Counties for Public Health and Essential Services: NC

Pandemic Recovery Office Disburses Funds, Adds Key Leadership to Coordinate State Response to the Virus

Raleigh
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Today, Governor Roy Cooper announced that \$85.4 million in federal funds provided for COVID-19 relief to counties will be disbursed this week. Three large counties, Guilford, Mecklenburg and Wake, have already received funds directly from the federal government, and 59 other counties that have completed certification will receive funds this week from the state-administered Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) that was passed by Congress. Counties are encouraged to support municipalities with the funding as needed.

“Everyone is working hard to make ends meet, including county governments as they finalize their budgets,” Governor Cooper said. “These funds will help communities respond to the COVID-19 crisis with testing, personal protective equipment and more.”

Though the federal government did not require that the state share any of the \$3.56 billion in the CRF to North Carolina local governments, Governor Cooper’s COVID-19 budget proposal recommended \$300 million be allocated to counties and municipalities. Ultimately, the unanimously approved and bipartisan budget that Governor Cooper signed included \$150 million for counties which have the flexibility to share monies with their municipalities as county commissioners deem appropriate. The full distribution of funds is listed [here](#) by county, along with instructions to counties about how the funds may be used.

The CRF funds may be used for medical needs including the COVID-19 related expenses of public hospitals and clinics, including testing; public health expenses, such as personal protective equipment and other medical supplies, as well as the cost of cleaning public areas and facilities such as nursing homes; payroll expenses for public safety or healthcare employees dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 emergency; and expenses to comply with public health measures, including teleworking, distance learning, food delivery, paid leave for public employees, expenses for maintaining prisons, and protecting the homeless population.

By state law, the 97 remaining counties will receive a base amount of \$250,000, with more distributed by population. This quick disbursement of funds was coordinated by the state Office of State Budget and Management and the new [North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office](#) (NC PRO).

NC PRO is a temporary office that coordinates and oversees funds made available through federal and state COVID-19 recovery legislation, including the CRF. The office offers technical assistance for entities which receive funds and ensures proper reporting and accounting of all funds. The office will also work on the state's economic recovery and strategic plan as North Carolina rebuilds from this pandemic. Two staff members will help lead the office's recovery efforts:

Stephanie McGarrah will serve as Executive Director of the Office. A native of western NC, McGarrah most recently worked with the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) to help identify, measure and address health care workforce shortages across the state. Prior to that, she served as Vice President of Policy at the North Carolina Healthcare Association (NCHA) and as a consultant for UNC Health and taught and conducted policy research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. From 2007 to 2013, Stephanie served as Assistant Secretary at the North Carolina Department of Commerce. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from UNC-Chapel Hill and a Master degree in public policy from Duke University.

Dwayne Patterson will serve as the Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer for NCPRO. A Kinston native, Patterson most recently served as Director of the Division of State Parks and Recreation. Formerly, Patterson served as the executive director for CREST, a regional non-profit agency that serves intellectually and developmentally disabled adults. His public service positions include serving as the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Chief Deputy Secretary for the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Chief Financial Officer for the Warren County and Durham public school systems. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in accounting from N.C. State University.

For questions about how CRF funds may be used, go to the [NCPRO website](#) for more information.