

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

2025 RECOVERY PLAN REPORT



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From the Desk of Chairman deViere

Cumberland County is proud to share our latest American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Annual Recovery Plan, a reflection of the progress we have made together and the meaningful ways we are investing in our community's future. The \$65.1 million in federal recovery funding entrusted to us has created opportunities not only to address urgent needs, but also to lay the groundwork for long-term resilience and prosperity.

From the earliest days of the pandemic, the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners committed to a transparent and community-driven approach. We have worked side by side with residents, nonprofit partners, business leaders, and staff to ensure every dollar is thoughtfully allocated to meet the real and evolving needs of the people we serve. Through community listening sessions, surveys, and direct engagement, we have centered your voices in our decisions.

This year's report highlights how those investments are continuing to make an impact across our county. We have directed resources into key priority areas, including:

- Strengthening public and employee health to protect essential services
- Investing in skilled trades training and small business growth to create economic opportunity
- Expanding affordable housing options to meet demand for safe, quality living
- Improving water and sewer infrastructure, including our work in the Gray's Creek community
- Increasing broadband access to bridge the digital divide
- Advancing opioid education and prevention to address a critical public health issue
- Opening an employee childcare center to better support our dedicated workforce
- Growing the Ignite Internship Program, which has already launched over 75 young people into public service careers

These investments are rooted in our values of Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, and Excellent Customer Service, and these values continue to guide how we serve and how we lead.

The ARPA Sub-Committee, chaired by Vice Chairwoman Veronica B. Jones with Commissioners Pavan Patel and Dr. Jeannette M. Council, continues to provide thoughtful oversight, ensuring our projects align with strategic goals and deliver measurable results. Their leadership and collaboration with County staff are vital to our continued success.

The progress shared in this report is only possible because of the strong sense of partnership that defines Cumberland County. Together, we are building more than just recovery, we are building momentum. We are shaping a future that is inclusive, resilient, and full of promise for every resident.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, thank you for your trust and commitment to a stronger Cumberland County.

In Service,

Kirk J. deViere

Chairman, Cumberland County Board of Commissioners



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cumberland County, North Carolina, received a total of \$65,168,690 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) support, with the first tranche of \$32,584,345 received on June 1, 2021, and the second tranche of equal value received in June 2022. The County's approach to utilizing these funds, promoting economic recovery, and addressing pandemic related challenges has been overseen by the Board of County Commissioners, who established a three-member ARP Committee, Vice Chairwoman Veronica B. Jones, Commissioner Pavan Patel, and Commissioner Dr. Jeannette M. Council, responsible for project planning and expenditure recommendations. Transparency in the process has been maintained through the public posting of all meeting minutes on the County's ARP webpage ([Agendas, Minutes and Videos \(cumberlandcountync.gov\)](#)). Funding Allocation: The Board of County Commissioners, at its regular meeting on December 16, 2024, approved Budget Ordinance Amendment B250829, allocating the use of the SLFRF distribution for the following specific purposes:

1. Public Health: A portion of the funds has been allocated to bolstering public health initiatives to combat the pandemic's ongoing challenges, to include vaccinations, and testing. Recognizing the adverse economic effects caused by the pandemic, a portion of the funding has been directed towards supporting individuals and businesses adversely affected by the crisis by providing financial assistance.
2. Negative Economic Impacts: A portion of the funding has been directed towards supporting individuals and industries adversely affected by the pandemic, by providing rental assistance and job training programs.
3. Public Sector Capacity: A portion of the funding is being utilized to return County staffing levels to pre-pandemic levels to maintain standard service levels and to provide excellent customer service.
4. Revenue Replacement: With the pandemic causing disruptions to the County's revenue streams, a portion of the funding has been used to offset lost revenues and maintain essential services during these challenging times.

As of June 30, 2025, Cumberland County has obligated 100 percent of its SLFRF allocation. Of this amount, \$53.5 million has already been expended on various projects and initiatives in alignment with the approved purposes. The transparent planning process and active involvement of the ARP Committee helped in the process, fostering more efficient resource deployment. Opportunities to leverage the funds for the County's long-term recovery and resilience have been recognized and pursued diligently. Cumberland County, North Carolina, has made significant strides in utilizing the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund to respond to the pandemic's impact and promote economic recovery. The allocation of funds for public health, mitigating economic impacts, and revenue replacement demonstrates a strategic and comprehensive approach to addressing the community's needs. As progress continues and challenges are met with innovative solutions, the County is poised to emerge stronger and more resilient in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Funding Allocation: The Board of County Commissioners, at its regular meeting on May 20, 2024, approved Budget Ordinance Amendment B241196, allocating the use of the SLFRF distribution for the following specific purposes:

- 1. Public Health:** A portion of the funds has been allocated to bolster public health initiatives to combat the pandemic's ongoing challenges, to include vaccinations, and testing. Recognizing the adverse economic effects caused by the pandemic, a portion of the funding has been directed towards supporting individuals and businesses adversely affected by the crisis by providing financial assistance.
- 2. Negative Economic Impacts:** A portion of the funding has been directed towards supporting individuals and industry adversely affected by the pandemic, by providing rental assistance and job training programs.
- 3. Public Sector Capacity:** A portion of the funding is being utilized to return County staffing levels to pre-pandemic levels to maintain standard service levels and to provide excellent customer service.
- 4. Infrastructure:** To improve the County's overall resilience and enhance public services, a portion of the funds has been invested in critical infrastructure projects, including water/sewer projects and digital infrastructure.
- 5. Revenue Replacement:** With the pandemic causing disruptions to the County's revenue streams, a portion of the funding has been used to offset lost revenues and maintain essential services during these challenging times.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

USE OF FUNDS

Cumberland County's strategy for the utilization of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) aims to support a strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic challenges. The County has identified key goals and areas of focus to address the diverse needs of its communities, populations, and By employing a comprehensive approach, the intended and actual uses align with these goals and contribute to a resilient and prosperous recovery.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- **COVID-19 Vaccinations:** The County covered self-funded claims costs for vaccinations, ensuring widespread access to vaccines, and promoting community immunity.
- **COVID-19 Testing:** Self-funded claims costs for COVID-19 testing are being addressed, facilitating early detection and containment of the virus.
- **Medical Expenses:** The County covered self-funded claims costs for COVID-19 treatment, ensuring that medical care is accessible and affordable for affected individuals.
- **COVID-19 Assistance to Small Business:** Financial assistance was provided to eligible small businesses, with priority given to those employing low to moderate-income individuals. This support helped businesses recover and protected local jobs, contributing to economic stability.



NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS

To address the negative economic impacts of the pandemic, Cumberland County is implementing projects that directly support individuals and businesses affected by the economic downturn:

- Rental Assistance: The County provided rental assistance to individuals who were negatively affected by the pandemic, helping them maintain housing stability during challenging times.
- Trade and Job Training Program: A partnership with Fayetteville Technical Community College (H.O.P.E. Program) enables accelerated job training, connecting participants to high-demand employment opportunities in various trades. This program empowers individuals to gain new skills and access better job prospects.
- County Internship Program: The Cumberland County Ignite program is open to high school juniors and seniors (16 years or older), college, and graduate level students/graduates. Highschool students are able to participate during the summer cohort and college/graduate/recent graduates are able to participate in all three cohorts (spring, summer, and fall).

PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY



The County rehired public sector staff, covering salary and benefit costs to restore employment levels to pre-pandemic levels. This measure bolsters the County's ability to provide essential public services effectively.

- Gray's Creek Water & Sewer Project: The establishment of a community water system in the Gray's Creek area addresses public health issues caused by contaminated groundwater, ensuring access to safe drinking water for residents and businesses.
- Broadband Expansion Project: Partnering with an internet service provider, the County aims to expand fiber optic internet access to rural areas, bridging the digital divide and promoting access to essential online services and opportunities.



REVENUE REPLACEMENT

To maintain essential services and recover from revenue losses, Cumberland County allocated funds to cover staffing and payroll costs for the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center. This ensured the continuity of public services during the recovery phase.



Provision of Government Services: The funds were utilized to cover staffing/payroll costs of the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center. The funds covered salaries and corresponding fringe benefit expenses for those employees beginning in April 2022 until available funds were exhausted. Covered salaries were based on Cumberland County's pay schedule and the fringe benefits were based on the Board of Commissioner adopted benefits ordinance.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

The County utilizes surveys and related documents to gather written feedback from the community. An online survey was conducted to solicit opinions on the uses of the proposed ARP funding. The responses from the survey, combined with feedback from in person meetings, were compiled into a dashboard available on the County's website, providing transparency on the engagement process.

ORAL FEEDBACK

To facilitate open dialogue, the County conducts community meetings, issue specific listening sessions, and stakeholder interviews. These in-person meetings were held in various municipalities within the County, enabling direct interactions with community members and capturing their thoughts and concerns.

DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS

The County employs digital campaigns to reach a broader audience and encourage participation. Virtual meetings and online platforms serve as accessible spaces for residents to share their input, especially for those who may face barriers to physical attendance.

ONGOING COMMITMENTS

Community engagement is an ongoing process for Cumberland County. The Board of County Commissioners regularly dedicates time during monthly meetings to accept public comments, fostering continued involvement from residents. Moreover, County staff actively engage with the community through local radio stations to promote the ARPA agenda and specific programs, encouraging widespread participation and understanding of available assistance. The County's dedication to community engagement ensures that SLFRF funds are used effectively, and in accordance with the community's aspirations and priorities.

Incorporating Existing Community Assets

In addition to the ARP-specific feedback, Cumberland County references other community assessments to inform the design of programs targeting negative economic impacts. Reports such as the Community Health Assessment, which identifies health needs and strategies, and the Homeless Strategic Plan and Gap Analysis, aid in shaping services and interventions to better meet community requirements.

Several community in-person community meetings were conducted in various municipalities within the County as well as a virtual meeting:

[American Rescue Plan Meeting \(Godwin\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[American Rescue Plan Meeting \(Gray's Creek\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[American Rescue Plan Meeting \(Spring Lake\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[American Rescue Plan Meeting \(Fayetteville\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[American Rescue Plan - Virtual Meeting \(youtube.com\)](#)

MEETINGS

As of June 30, 2025, the specific workforce practices for infrastructure projects, including the Pheonix Place Permanent Supportive Housing Project, Gray's Creek Water & Sewer Project Phase I, and Broadband Expansion Projects, have not been finalized.

Consequently, detailed information on the utilization of labor standards such as project labor agreements, community benefits agreements, prevailing wage requirements, and local hiring is not available at this time.

The County's commitment is shown through our funding and partnership with the FSU Innovation and Entrepreneurship HUB (Historically Underutilized Businesses). This partnership will aid in increasing access to technical assistance and counseling services to help local businesses meet their business planning needs. Additionally, ARP staff continued to participate in various training to include the Minority Participations Programs and Public Contracting courses through the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government. These courses analyze federal and state laws that encourage participation in public contracts by HUBs, (Minority Women Business Enterprise) MWBEs, and DBEs (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise). Cumberland County intends to use these principles in the future to continue practicing nondiscrimination in the award and administration of County contracts.

It is important to note that Cumberland County recognizes the significance of strong labor standards in promoting effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects while supporting economic recovery through robust employment opportunities for workers. The County is committed to ensuring that workforce practices adhere to principles of fairness, equitable compensation, and the creation of job opportunities for local residents.

LABOR PRACTICES

Moving forward, Cumberland County intends to develop and implement appropriate labor practices for its infrastructure projects. The policies related to labor standards and workforce practices will be thoroughly evaluated and recommended for approval to the Board of County Commissioners at a future date.

The County is aware of the potential impact these projects can have on the local labor market, and it seeks to maximize the positive outcomes for workers and communities. By implementing strong labor standards, the County aims to foster a skilled and well-compensated workforce, promote job security, and contribute to a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery.

As Cumberland County progresses with its infrastructure projects, it will be important for stakeholders to closely monitor the development of labor practices. The County is dedicated to promoting transparency and public engagement throughout this process, ensuring that labor practices align with the values of fairness, equity, and community benefit. Subsequent reports will provide a comprehensive description of the workforce practices adopted for these infrastructure projects, and they will highlight the County's commitment to supporting workers and promoting economic recovery through its endeavors.

LABOR PRACTICES

USE OF EVIDENCE

Cumberland County is committed to incorporating evidence-based interventions and rigorous program evaluations into its SLFRF program. The County recognizes the value of evidence in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of its initiatives while targeting those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTIONS

The County prioritizes the allocation of SLFRF funds for evidence-based interventions. These interventions are designed to be rooted in proven strategies and approaches that have demonstrated positive outcomes in similar contexts. By adopting evidence-based practices, Cumberland County aims to maximize the impact of its programs and projects, ensuring that resources are directed towards interventions that have a track record of success.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Rigorous program evaluations are integrated into the scopes of projects funded by SLFRF. These evaluations are designed to systematically assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of initiatives implemented with the support of federal recovery funds. By conducting robust evaluations, Cumberland County seeks to generate data-driven insights that will inform future decision-making, enhance program design, and optimize resource allocation.

USE OF EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE STANDARDS AND PUBLIC FACING TOOLS

Cumberland County makes use of evidence standards and public-facing tools to track and communicate the use of evidence and evaluation for Fiscal Recovery Funds. Evidence dashboards and evaluation policies are among the tools employed by the County to provide transparent and accessible information to the public regarding the evidence-building strategies adopted for the SLFRF program.

LEARNING AGENDAS

To further support its evaluation efforts and create an evidence-building strategy, Cumberland County considers the implementation of a Learning Agenda. This Learning Agenda, whether narrowly focused on SLFRF or encompassing the County's broader policy agenda, will guide the systematic acquisition of knowledge, insights, and evidence from ongoing programs and initiatives. By proactively identifying knowledge gaps and research questions, the Learning Agenda enables the County to prioritize evaluation efforts and continuously improve the efficacy of its programs.

Project inventory

In the Project Inventory section of the Recovery Plan, Cumberland County explicitly identifies whether SLFRF funds are being used for evidence-based interventions and whether projects are subject to rigorous program evaluations. This transparency ensures accountability and demonstrates the County's commitment to using evidence to inform decision-making and policy implementation.

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

Cumberland County tailors its programs and interventions to specifically benefit low to moderate-income residents, individuals and entities residing in Qualified Census Tracts, unemployed and underemployed individuals, and those most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. By focusing on these vulnerable populations, the County aims to ensure that the benefits of its SLFRF program are equitably distributed and effectively address the needs of those who require the most support.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Project Name	Expenditure Category	Adopted Budget	\$ of Adopted Budget Expended	Project Status
Covid-19 Vaccinations	Public Health	\$72,086.00	\$72,086.00	Complete
Covid Testing	Public Health	\$166,000.00	\$166,000.00	Complete
Medical Expenses	Public Health	\$961,914.00	\$961,914.00	Complete
Covid Small Business Assistance	Public Health	\$2,217,520.00	\$2,217,520.00	Complete
Rental Assistance	Negative Economic Impacts	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00	Complete
FTCC Hope Program	Negative Economic Impacts	\$2,000,000.00	\$1,310,651.08	In progress (65.5% Complete)
Public Sector Staff Workforce: Rehiring Public Sector Staff	Negative Economic Impacts	\$38,605,663.00	\$35,776,646.71	In Progress (92.7% Complete)
Ignite Internship (Pilot)	Negative Economic Impacts	\$174,053.00	\$174,053.00	Complete
Clean Water (Gray's Creek)	Infrastructure	\$8,093,895.00	\$1,470,504.45	In Progress (18.2% Complete)
Broadband	Infrastructure	\$283,987	\$16,541.36	In Progress (5.8% Complete)

Project Name	Expenditure Category	Adopted Budget	\$ of Adopted Budget Expended	Project Status
Direct Costs to Administer ARPA Funds	Administration	\$2,093,572.00	\$814,301.67	In Progress (38.9% Complete)
Provision of Government Services	Revenue Replacement	\$10,000,000.00	\$10,000,000	Complete
Pre Pandemic Pay	Public Health	\$38,605,663.00	\$35,776,646.71	In Progress (92.7% Complete)

END OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PROJECT INVENTORY

Project Name	Expenditure Category	Adopted Budget	Project Description	Use of Evidence
Project AR101 - COVID-19 Vaccinations	Public Health	\$72,086	Reimburse Cumberland County for self-funded claims for vaccinations.	SLFRF funds are used to support evidence-based interventions for COVID-19 vaccinations based on proven public health strategies.
Project AR102 - COVID-19 Testing	Administration	\$166,000	Reimburse Cumberland County for self-funded claims for COVID-19 testing.	SLFRF funds are utilized for evidence-based interventions to support widespread and accessible COVID-19 testing.
Medical Expenses	Public Health	\$961,914.00	Cumberland County's self-funded claims costs for COVID-19 treatment.	SLFRF funds are directed towards evidence-based interventions for medical expenses related to COVID-19 treatment.
Rental Assistance	Negative Economic Impacts	\$500,000.00	Provide rental assistance to eligible households in the County negatively affected by the pandemic and struggling to maintain their rental payments.	SLFRF funds are used for evidence-based interventions targeting low to moderate income households within Qualified Census Tracts.

Project Name	Expenditure Category	Adopted Budget	Project Description	Use of Evidence
FTCC Hope Program	Negative Economic Impacts	\$2,000,000.00	Support the "Hope, Opportunity, Prosperity through Education" (HOPE) Program, providing accelerated training for high-demand trades through on-the-job training with local businesses. Funds also support the Cumberland County "Ignite" Internship Program.	SLFRF funds are allocated to evidence-based interventions focused on increasing social and economic mobility for program participants.
Public Sector Staff Workforce: Rehiring Public Sector Staff	Negative Economic Impacts	\$38,605,663.00	Restore public sector staff employment levels to pre-pandemic status through salary and benefit coverage.	SLFRF funds are allocated to evidence-based interventions supporting the restoration of public sector staff workforce.
Clean Water (Gray's Creek)	Infrastructure	\$8,093,895.00	Create a community water system in Gray's Creek area to address unsafe drinking water provided by individual wells.	SLFRF funds are allocated to evidence-based interventions targeting clean drinking water infrastructure improvement.
Broadband	Infrastructure	\$283,987	Partner with an internet service provider to expand fiber optic internet access into rural/remote areas of the County, providing internet access to approximately 2,017 homes.	SLFRF funds are utilized for evidence-based interventions targeting broadband infrastructure expansion for underserved communities.

Project Name	Expenditure Category	Adopted Budget	Project Description	Use of Evidence
Provision of Government Services	Revenue Replacement	\$10,000,000.00	Cover staffing/payroll costs of the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center to restore employment levels to pre-pandemic status.	SLFRF funds are allocated to evidence-based interventions supporting the provision of essential government services.
Direct Costs to Administer ARPA Funds	Administration	\$2,093,572	Cover administrative costs for managing ARPA funds, including salary and benefits for program managers and finance accountants, supplies, materials, advertising, and other operating expenses.	SLFRF funds are allocated to evidence-based practices for efficient fund management and administration.

END OF PROJECT INVENTORY