

Proposed Engagement Plan

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

Background

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund from which Guilford County Government will receive \$104,339,752 in two tranches, \$52,169,876 in May 2021 and again in May 2022. It is critical to the long-term success of our community that we carefully evaluate and plan for transformational one-time investments in our county that build a more resilient and equitable ecosystem of support for our residents. The Guilford County Board of Commissioners has requested that staff develop a plan to engage the public regarding investment priorities for this historic one-time funding. Guilford County Government intends to use the results of this engagement process to directly inform the programs and priorities ultimately finalized for this funding.

What is an engagement plan?

An engagement plan outlines a set of specific outreach and participation strategies with assigned roles and a timeline for new or reoccurring projects that will impact the community.

Do we need to engage our broader community?

How do we know and assess if we should incorporate some level of community engagement?

Yes	No	Does our project have potential environmental, economic, safety and/or health impacts on the community?
Yes	No	Have community members voiced interest, concerns, or opposition to our project?
Yes	No	Would public participation help our project achieve equitable outcomes for our community members?
Yes	No	Will we be asking the community to provide additional funding for our project (i.e. assessment, tax increase, bond referendum, etc.)?

If the answer to at least one of the above questions is a yes, then we need to create an engagement plan. As we assess possible uses of the ARPA funding, we recognize that community investments have the potential for significant long-term impact, the community has expressed great interest in our investment strategy, and more engagement would assist us in formulating a plan that would result in a more equitable investment strategy.



What we know and don't know about this project.

What are we seeking to do for the community?

We would like to hear from a diverse cross-section of stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how the pandemic has impacted them, how they are individually viewing recovery, and what current and future priorities they might have for this historic one-time funding. We would like to use this diverse set of perspectives and opinions to develop a path forward that is centered on stakeholder and resident voice and supplemented by current data and trends.

What are the anticipated impacts?

We believe, with a thoughtful and intentional engagement process, this historic one-time funding could result in transformational investments that positively impact community disparities in health, housing, employment, and transportation.

What is the current level of community awareness about this and its impact?

We do not have concrete data regarding community awareness. Given that, we enter this process under the assumption that it is our responsibility to appropriately educate stakeholders on the allowable uses of this funding, the implications for the one-time nature of this funding, and the potential impacts that we hope for and anticipate.

What are the possible consequences/outcomes of not engaging the community?

By not engaging the community, we severely limit the breadth of perspectives and opinions available to us during the final planning, design, and decision-making process. Building practical empathy is critical to aligning solutions and outcomes with actual community needs.

How can our timeline accommodate a community engagement process?

By entering our current pause-and-plan phase, we are extending our decision-making timeline to September/October. This would allow for ample time to conduct all engagement activities, report back to the Board of Commissioners on findings, and receive/interpret final guidance from the Treasury in September.

It should also be noted, for this funding, that the Treasury has defined the obligation date as December 31, 2024 and the expenditure date as December 31, 2026. This means we have until the obligation date to make all final determinations for expending the funds and we have until the expenditure date to finish spending the funds.



Identifying who to engage.

Taking into careful consideration current levels of engagement, the potential experienced impact, and the amount of influence over outcomes, we have chosen to focus our engagement process on the following primary stakeholder groups:

- City & Town Managers
- City & Town Councils
- County Commissioners
- County Employees
- County Residents
- Nonprofit Service Providers
- Private Industry

These stakeholder groups will be individually targeted and assessed, and careful consideration will be given to how the data is collected so that we might report results in a disaggregated fashion.

Representation

We will work with a vendor to conduct a County Resident survey with 800 to 1,600 guaranteed responses that are equally distributed across County Commissioner districts and reasonably reflect the demographic composition of Guilford County. We define demographic composition here as accounting for geographic dispersion, age, gender, and race/ethnicity at a minimum.

Figure 1: Level of Engagement & Impact Experienced

Current level of engagement	Box 1: Minimally impacted, highly engaged	Box 2: Highly impacted, highly engaged
	Box 3: Minimally impacted, minimally engaged	Box 4: Highly impacted, minimally engaged
Level of impact experienced		

Figure 2: Level of Engagement & Outcome Influence

Current level of engagement	Box 1: Low influence, highly engaged	Box 2: High influence, highly engaged
	Box 3: Low influence, minimally engaged	Box 4: High influence, minimally engaged
Level of influence on project outcome		

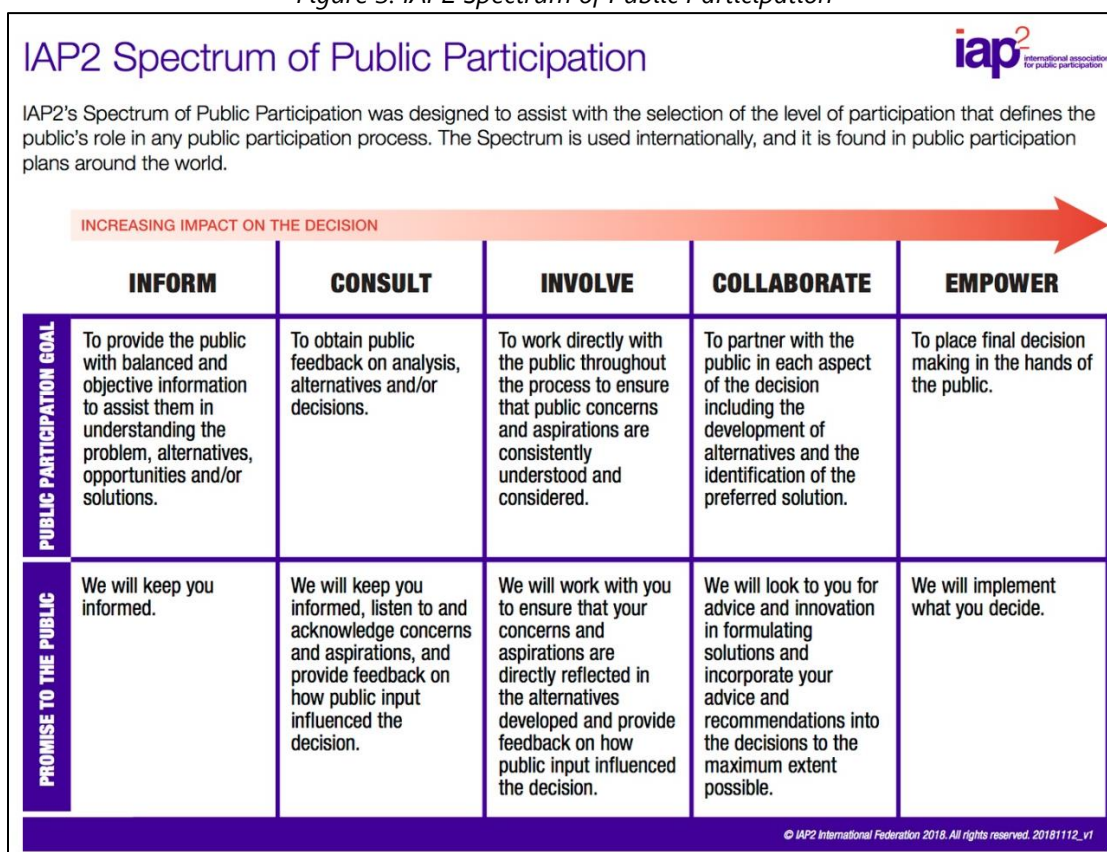


Choosing the right community engagement strategies.

Our engagement strategies should seek to be dynamic, adaptive, and responsive to resident needs and circumstances. We should carefully weigh the need for engagement, the best way to reach our identified stakeholders, and the operating constraints brought on by the ongoing pandemic.

Additionally, we should strive to be transparent about the level of influence and control community members can exercise through their input and involvement. We should set realistic expectations to prevent disappointment and frustration as we move forward.

Figure 3: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Barriers, challenges, and opportunities.

The following list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to provide you with an overview of some of the barriers, challenges, and opportunities taken into consideration while developing this engagement strategy.

- The ongoing pandemic presents a tremendous challenge for conducting in-person engagement sessions due to individual and organizational risks.
- The County has an existing executed contract with ETC Institute to conduct a resident survey that we can quickly and easily pivot to collect stakeholder feedback for this process.
- There are transportation, language, technological, institutional and physical barriers that limit access to information and active engagement for socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, community members with disabilities, youth, the elderly, and communities of color.
- We have a culturally and racially diverse community that requires varying methods of information sharing and engagement opportunities. One strategy does not work for all.
- We can leverage existing relationships with community members/groups to reach out to and build new relationships with disengaged and underrepresented populations.

What does success look like?

Assessing our efforts is an integral part of improving our outreach and engagement strategies. It helps us to understand what we are doing well and how we can improve. It also keeps us accountable to ourselves and the community.

If our outreach and engagement efforts are successful, what outcome will we see?

The primary outcome of this outreach and engagement effort should be a cohesive plan for the equitable and transformational investment of this one-time funding to address both short and long term needs expressed by stakeholders and identified through combined analysis.

What are some indicators (what we can see and measure) that let us know that we have achieved our engagement goals?

- Total number of engagements with our identified set of primary stakeholders.
- A sample of stakeholders that is reasonably representative of the demographic composition of Guilford County account for, at a minimum, geographic dispersion, age, race/ethnicity, and gender.



Our engagement plan and timeline.

Considering our barriers, challenges, opportunities, and goals, we propose the following stakeholder engagement plan and timeline:

	Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	*Purpose	Timeframe
Past	City & Town Managers	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	March
Past	City & Town Councils	Virtual Meeting	Consult	April
Past	County Commissioners	Virtual & In-Person Info Session	Inform	May
Future	County Employees	Virtual Meeting	Consult	July
Future	County Residents	Survey	Consult	June - August
Future	Non-Profit Service Providers	Survey	Consult	June - August
Future	Private Industry	Survey	Consult	June - August
Future	City & Town Managers	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - September
Future	County Residents	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - September
Future	County Employees	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - September
Future	Non-Profit Service Providers	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - September
Future	Private Industry	Virtual & In-Person Meetings	Consult	August - September
Future	County Commissioners	Virtual & In-Person Meeting	Empower	September

**IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation classifications for level of engagement and decision making.*

The above plan would leverage existing relationships to provide our stakeholders with multiple opportunities to participate in virtual meetings, in-person meetings, and online surveys to hopefully accommodate any challenges with technology, transportation, and personal communication preferences.

Staff will leverage an existing contract with ETC Institute to quickly pivot into a statistically valid and representative survey to be distributed to county residents, non-profit service providers, and private industry stakeholders.

Staff proposes an extensive consulting partnership (outlined in Attachment A) to assist with comprehensive stakeholder input and engagement, deep analysis of county data, and formulating actionable strategies that synthesize the information collected to guide Guilford County's short-term recovery and longer-term future.



ATTACHMENT A

Request For Proposals (RFP)

Guilford County Government seeks to retain a firm or firms qualified to provide research, resources, expert advice, document production, stakeholder engagement, policy and strategy development, and related services. This work will support the County's resident engagement and planning process for the strategic use and investment of the American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Our long-term intention is to encourage a strong economic recovery and to lay the foundation for a more resilient, equitable, and prosperous future for the county. With the formulation of a cohesive and intentional investment strategy, we aim to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis with strength and to propel our county into the future.

This document constitutes a Request for Proposal ("RFP"), in a competitive format, from qualified firms. This request is an offer by the County to underwrite, in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP, the services proposed by the successful firm(s), by contract.

The respondents ("Respondents") to this RFP shall provide a proposal, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein, to provide all or part of services to the County as described in the Scope of Work.

Project Overview

The global pandemic had a severe impact on Guilford County's economy. While Guilford County has made immense progress in reopening and revitalizing its economy there is still much more work to be done to support a strong economic recovery and to lay the foundation for a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient economic future.

As Guilford County emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, County leadership—in coordination with community stakeholders—will be leading a process to develop a strategy and a set of clear goals and objectives for Guilford County's recovery that will benefit our county in the near term and advance us into the future. While the county's economy will be one important focus of this strategy, other key topics will include priorities such as: (1) creating a more accessible and resilient housing market; (2) investing in state-of-the-art infrastructure; (3) building a leading education system that provides opportunity to all county residents; (4) developing a transportation system that improves connectivity across the county and region; (5) enhancing social supports, mental health, and public health countywide—especially to address the public health, mental health, substance use, and other health and socioeconomic challenges that may have been exacerbated by the pandemic; (6) bolstering County's fiscal strength over the short- and long-term; (7) making Guilford County an ever more just, equitable, and inclusive county; and (9) such other priorities as may be added during the development of a comprehensive work plan.



This project will focus on four core areas: (1) facilitating a comprehensive public input and stakeholder engagement process (including facilitating a series of community conversations and engaging a stakeholder council or councils), along with organizing feedback received through this process into both quantitative and qualitative summary findings and supporting materials; (2) producing a deep analysis of Guilford County's economy, workforce, and industrial base informed by research, data analytics, and stakeholder engagement, including an examination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; (3) facilitating discussions with Guilford County Government departments about their pre-existing strategic visions, to inform the broader strategic planning process, along with organizing feedback received through this process into high-level summary findings and supporting materials; and (4) developing actionable strategies that synthesize the information collected and prepared through this project to guide Guilford County's short-term recovery and longer-term future. Given the unprecedented opportunities provided by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and other potential federal funding sources, this project will identify investments that provide substantial economic, social, and community value and can be initiated with expenditures obligated by December 31, 2024 in accordance with federal ARP requirements.

This work will culminate in a set of formal recommendations and reports to guide Guilford County's recovery and future—with an eye towards what Guilford County can advance and achieve by 2030. This work will meet all statutory requirements for Guilford County while also addressing the broader challenges of recovering from the global pandemic, strategically utilizing federal stimulus funds, and building a more resilient and prosperous future.

Background

Guilford County Government seeks to include and partner with as many local municipal, county, non-profit, and private stakeholders as possible and practical. Other stakeholders and municipal leaders will be key partners throughout this process.

This work will be conducted in concert with Guilford County Board of Commissioners leadership.

Scope of Work

The project will focus on four core tasks: (1) facilitating a comprehensive public input and stakeholder engagement process (including facilitating a series of community conversations and engaging a stakeholder council or councils), along with organizing feedback received through this process into both quantitative and qualitative summary findings and supporting materials; (2) producing a deep analysis of Guilford County's economy, workforce, and industrial base informed by research, data analytics, and stakeholder engagement, including an examination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; (3) facilitating discussions with Guilford County Government departments about their pre-existing strategic visions, to inform the broader strategic planning process, along with organizing feedback received through this



process into high-level summary findings and supporting materials; and (4) developing actionable strategies that synthesize the information collected and prepared through this project to guide Guilford County's short-term recovery and longer-term future. **Respondents can provide responses to any portion or all four of these tasks.**

Task 1. *Facilitating a comprehensive public input and stakeholder engagement process (including facilitating a series of community conversations and engaging a stakeholder council or councils), along with organizing feedback received through this process into both quantitative and qualitative summary findings and supporting materials.*

Topics respondent(s) should be prepared to cover include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitating a comprehensive, inclusive, and engaging strategic planning process through public input, stakeholder engagement, and council consultation;
- Holding a series of roundtable discussions and public meetings across the county;
- Developing and maintaining feedback tools through the County website and producing data and analytics reporting on the feedback received through these channels;
- Partnering with local municipal, county, non-profit, and private stakeholders to develop strategies and receive public input;
- Meeting with and receiving input from key stakeholders;
- Involving Guilford County Board of Commissioners leadership proactively; and
- Producing summary finding reports on the recommendations and consensus garnered through the course of these meetings.

Task 2. *Producing a deep analysis of Guilford County's economy, workforce, and industrial base informed by research, data analytics, and stakeholder engagement, including an examination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.*

Topics respondent(s) should be prepared to cover include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of (1) the current state of Guilford County's economy, workforce, and industrial base and (2) the global pandemic's short-term and long-term impacts on Guilford County's economy, workforce, and industrial base;
- Evaluating the global pandemic's broad-based impacts on Guilford County, including its education system, transportation system, health system, housing market, and social services;
- Assessing the effectiveness of and need/potential for adapting Guilford County's existing policies, programs, and institutions; and
- Assessing how the global pandemic negatively impacted different demographic groups;

Proposals—at a minimum—should include the following deliverables for this task:

- A professional, public-facing analysis of:



- Guilford County's economy, workforce, and industrial base;
- The global pandemic's broad-based impacts on Guilford County, including its economy, workforce, industrial base, education system, transportation system, health system, housing market, and social services; and
- The effectiveness of Guilford County's existing policies, programs, and institutions.

Task 3. *Facilitating discussions with Guilford County Government departments about their pre-existing strategic visions, to inform the broader strategic planning process, along with organizing feedback received through this process into high-level summary findings and supporting materials.*

Topics respondent(s) should be prepared to cover include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitating inter-departmental discussions and strategic planning processes in a professional and streamlined manner; and
- Guiding and coordinating department-specific strategic business plans.

Task 4. *Developing actionable strategies that synthesize the information collected and prepared through this project to guide Guilford County's short-term recovery and longer-term future.*

Topics respondent(s) should be prepared to cover include, but are not limited to:

- Developing a plan and vision for our county's recovery and future. While the county's economy should be a central focus, other topics may include such priorities as: (1) creating a more accessible and resilient housing market; (2) investing in state-of-the-art infrastructure; (3) building a leading education system that provides opportunity to all county residents; (4) developing a transportation system that improves connectivity throughout the county and within the broader region; (5) enhancing social supports, mental health, and public health countywide—especially to address the public health, mental health, substance use, and other health and socioeconomic challenges that may have been exacerbated by the pandemic; (6) bolstering local fiscal strength over the short- and long-term; (8) making Guilford County an ever more just, equitable, and inclusive county; and (9) such other priorities as may be added during the development of a comprehensive work plan.

The abovementioned plan and vision should consider:

- The use of American Rescue Plan funds and other federal funding sources;
- Social equity and economic opportunity for historically disadvantaged communities;
- Best practices from other jurisdictions;
- Partnerships to leverage private and philanthropic funding;
- Opportunities to integrate adaptation, and resilience;
- Existing visions, goals, and objectives of the organization and local stakeholders;



- A need to satisfy any statutory requirements.

Proposals—at a minimum—should include the following deliverables for this task:

- A professional, public-facing initial report/brief of high-level principles, focus areas, priorities, and recommendations for guiding Guilford County's recovery, future, and use of federal stimulus funds. This project should be guided by findings from key stakeholder engagement sessions;
- A professional, public-facing interim report/brief of recommendations for Guilford County's recovery, future, and use of federal stimulus funds; and
- A professional, public-facing final report that incorporates this analysis as well as policy, programmatic, institutional, and structural recommendations to guide Guilford County's short-term recovery and future. Among other objectives, this final report must meet all applicable federal and state statutory requirements.

Qualifications

Respondent(s) should have strong abilities in the following areas applicable to each the above Tasks.

Task 1. Facilitating a comprehensive public input and stakeholder engagement process (including facilitating a series of community conversations and engaging a stakeholder council or councils), along with organizing feedback received through this process into both quantitative and qualitative summary findings and supporting materials.

- Hosting and facilitating both virtual and in-person panel discussions, public hearings, and government body meetings;
- Conducting interviews and workshops with various stakeholders;
- Producing data analysis using digital public survey and feedback tools;
- Soliciting public input via accessible and innovative methods; and
- Managing strategic planning processes that involve public, private, and community leaders.

Task 2. Producing a deep analysis of Guilford County's economy, workforce, and industrial base informed by research, data analytics, and stakeholder engagement, including an examination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

- Conducting quantitative and qualitative economic, policy, and program analysis;
- Conducting economic sector and industry analysis;
- Managing strategic planning processes that involve public, private, and community leaders;
- Presenting complex data findings in a simple to understand and visually compelling manner; and



- Presenting complex data findings through clear and accessible written materials.

Task 3. Facilitating discussions with Guilford County Government departments about their pre-existing strategic visions, to inform the broader strategic planning process, along with organizing feedback received through this process into high-level summary findings and supporting materials

- Facilitating inter-departmental and inter-agency discussions and strategy development; and
- Coordinating department and agency-specific strategic plans.

Task 4. Developing actionable strategies that synthesize the information collected and prepared through this project to guide Guilford County's short-term recovery and longer-term future.

- Managing strategic planning processes that involve public, private, and community leaders; and
- Writing high-quality, visually compelling reports that incorporate public input; stakeholder engagement; economic, policy, and program analysis; best practices from other jurisdictions; and strategic analysis and planning.

Project Timeline

The project will begin immediately upon selection, will include periodic intermediate work product, and must be completed by December 31, 2021. The successful Respondent(s) will enter into a contract for services with the County. The actual scope of work in such contract(s) will be negotiated. The duration of the initial contract between the County and the successful Proposer is expected to begin upon the date of contract approval.

Budget

Proposers to this RFP shall provide a proposed fee structure for providing services necessary to complete the proposed scope items. Proposers shall include a total, maximum price to accomplish the scope items incorporated in the proposal. Fee structure proposals shall include, but are not limited to costs for specific task items from the Scope of Work along with an estimate regarding the duration and number of hours to complete each task. Additionally, proposers shall provide a personnel schedule which includes job title and billing rate for any work which may be undertaken under this contract. Proposers shall also provide job titles and rates for any subcontractors that the respondent is including in this response. If the Proposer contemplates any purchases or pass-through charges during the engagement, any mark-up rate above actual cost shall be identified as a separate line item in the budget. The County reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services. In addition to showing how you will meet the requirements outlined above, Proposers should also provide information regarding the following:



- Research & Analytics: Provide an overview of how you determine success. What are the analytic tools or services that you use to successfully complete each task, as well as this project as a whole, and what type of information will you be reporting back to the County as it relates to meeting our objectives?
- Travel and Administration: The Proposer should estimate any travel costs expected to incur during contract period. Travel and per diem expenses shall not exceed rates authorized by the County's Travel and Expense Policy.

