

# Board of County Commissioners

**Work Session**  
November 6, 2025



# Flexible Workplace Program

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# Objectives

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- **Context and Background** – Review the history of flexible workplace discussions, historic commissioner interest, and lessons learned from COVID-19.
- **Development of Model** – Outline the evolution of the County's flexible workplace model and pilot framework.
- **Current State** – Highlight current progress and implementation considerations for the County's flexible workplace approach, including alignment with Board priorities, policies and perspectives
- **Standards and Definitions** – Establish professional standards, expectations, and proposed definitions and classifications.
- **Comparative Insights** – Share high-performing examples and best practices from leaders in the organization.
- **Discussion** – Engage in questions and conversation regarding the County's flexible workplace direction.
- **Next Steps** – Identify immediate next steps and any requested Board action.



# 2017-2022: Strategic Foundations, Pandemic Disruption, and Proof of Concept

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- In 2017, the Board of Commissioners identified flexible work as a strategic priority, recognizing its potential to enhance service delivery and employee well-being.
- Before 2020, remote work was largely absent, though the Board's early focus reflected a forward-thinking recognition of future workforce needs.
- The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated adoption, prompting a rapid, county-wide shift that sustained operations during crisis conditions.
- Employees demonstrated adaptability and accountability, confirming that flexibility can support productivity and continuity. However, this period also reinforced the need for a standardized, county-wide policy.

## Organizational Excellence



*Guilford County provides the highest possible level of services by being a fiscally sound organization that values a high performing, professional, and innovative workforce.*

### Meet the needs of today's workforce by continuing to implement staff engagement strategies

- Continue employee biometric screening program and develop individual, departmental, and/or county-wide wellness plans based on results. (1.1.1)
- Offer creative and flexible benefit options that meet needs of employees and county. (1.1.1)
- Explore and implement telecommuting, flexible scheduling, and revised departmental operating hours as means to enhance citizen services and work-life balance for employees. (1.1.3)
- Develop and implement an employee service award program, an employee recognition program, and an employee appreciation event. (1.1.6)

*Image Excerpt from Guilford County FY2018 Adopted Budget*



# 2023: Program Design and Pilot Development 5

**Building on the lessons of the pandemic, HR launched a collaborative effort in 2023 to design a formal Flexible Workplace Program framework and test its feasibility through a structured pilot.**

- A project team developed the core FWP components, including training, agreement forms (via SimpliGov), position eligibility reviews, and monitoring strategies.
- The Department of Social Services (DSS) was selected as the pilot site (Nov 2023–Mar 2024) for its size, complexity and space constraints.
- The pilot confirmed that flexibility was already embedded in many divisions and that service delivery remained stable throughout implementation.
- Feedback reinforced the importance of managing space capacity and maintaining clear performance expectations under hybrid work models.

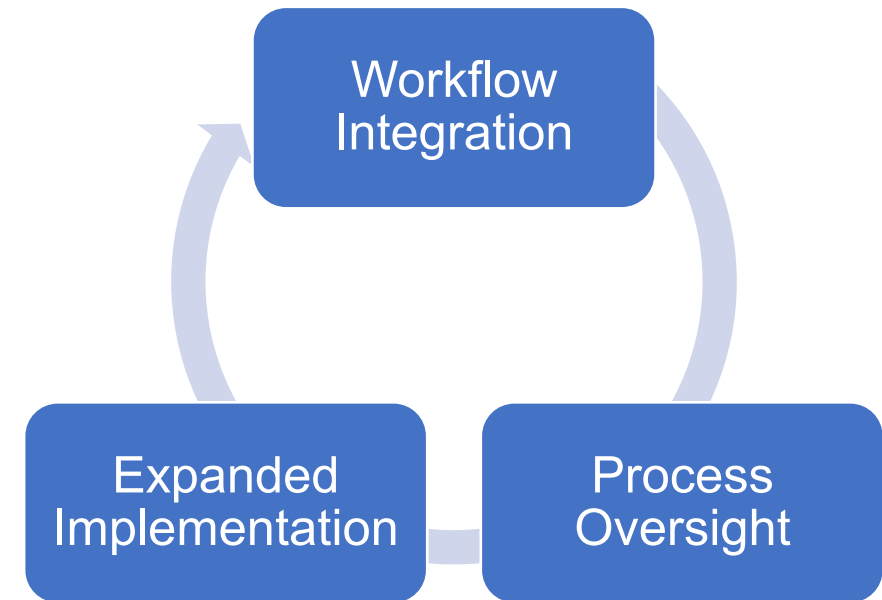


# 2024: Process Improvement, Pilot Expansion, and Challenges

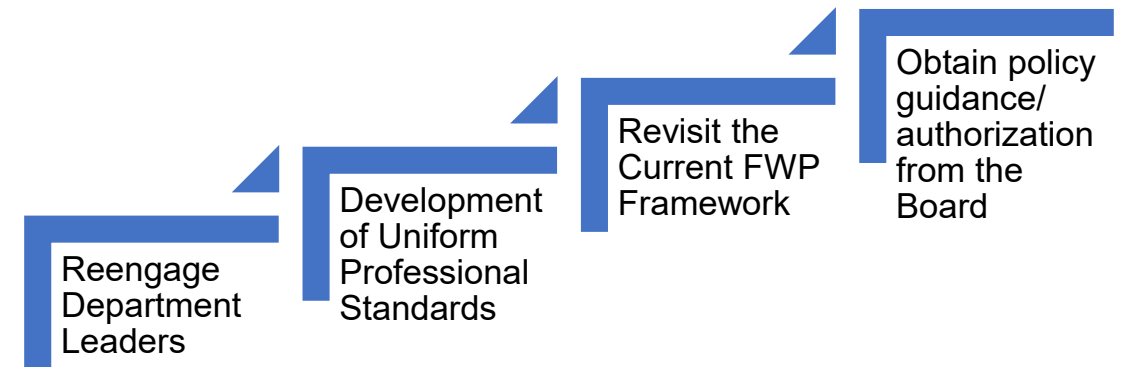
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**Following the success of the pilot, the County expanded the program in 2024 while addressing technical issues and navigating challenges that arose.**

- HR, IT, and EMS collaborated to resolve data and system integration issues in SimpliGov, strengthening workflow accuracy and approval routing.
- Introduced a multi-level approval process to enhance oversight and documentation consistency.
- Expanded implementation to Child Support Services and HR, maintaining alignment in training and agreements.



- HR conducted preparatory meetings with department directors (February–May 2025) to build shared understanding, review pilot insights, and assess departmental readiness for broader rollout.
- County Management directed the development of new professional standards for remote work, emphasizing accountability, conduct, and performance expectations.
- HR is revisiting the FWP framework to incorporate updated standards, definitions, and position classifications, along with feedback from participating department.
- Board guidance will shape the County's next steps toward formalizing practices, ensuring leadership alignment, and enhancing oversight across departments.



# What are the Merits of the Flexible Workplace Model? 8

**Operational  
Continuity  
and  
Resilience**

**Productivity  
and  
Effectiveness**

**Employee  
Engagement  
and Retention**

**Talent  
Acquisition**

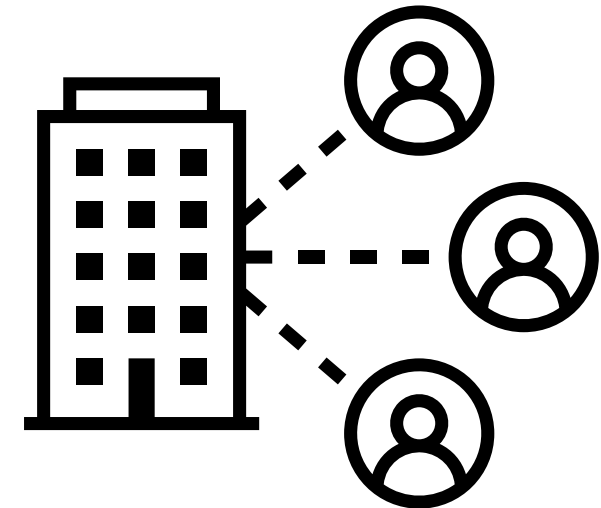
**Space  
Efficiency  
and Fiscal  
Stewardship**



# Professional Standards and Expectations for Flexible Workplace Arrangements

**General Expectations for Flexible Workplace Arrangements: To preserve service delivery and performance standards, the following expectations should apply to all employees participating in remote or hybrid schedules:**

- Availability
- Meeting Attendance
- Task Completion and Accountability
- Supervisor Oversight & Monitoring
- Professional Presence
- On-Site Coverage Expectations



# Proposed Categories and Definitions

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| Work Location Categories     | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Onsite - Agency Stationed    | Positions in this classification perform their duties entirely in-person, with no eligibility for remote work. Positions in this category typically require an assigned, dedicated workspace at a primary County office site. The workspace is fixed and exclusive to the employee, reflecting the need for consistent access to County systems, files, and infrastructure. These roles are inherently tied to the County's internal support functions and require the employees' presence during core business hours.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Onsite - Satellite Stationed | Positions in this classification are stationed at facilities operated and managed by partner agencies rather than Guilford County. Employees may work from a shared or functional workspace provided by the partner agency, depending on the nature of their assignment. These roles typically involve direct service, collaboration, or program support in community locations where the County maintains an operational presence through partnership agreements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Onsite - Hybrid Eligible     | Positions in this classification require a consistent onsite presence but allow for opportunities to work remotely from an alternate location. Based on the scope of responsibilities, employees may be authorized to work remotely for up to 50 percent of their scheduled work during a 2-week period; this represents the maximum allowable threshold and not a standard expectation. Examples of eligible positions include professional or administrative role's that require both in-person collaboration and independent work that can be performed remotely. Remote work in this category is not guaranteed, requires advanced supervisory approval, and remains contingent upon continued satisfactory performance and adherence to operational expectations. |



# Proposed Categories and Definitions (cont.)

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| Work Location Categories | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Remote                   | <p>In select instances, positions may receive this classification based on the scope of work. Employees in this classification are expected to perform their duties primarily in a remote capacity, with in-person presence required when operational needs dictate. This classification is generally reserved for assignments where daily onsite interaction is not essential, but organizational priorities still require periodic attendance at a County-managed or partner facility. While remote work is the standard expectation for this classification, it is not guaranteed and is contingent upon the express approval of both the Department Head and the County Manager, as well as the employee's continued ability to meet established performance and service delivery standards. Working remotely more than 50% of the employee's schedule during a 2-week work period.</p> |
| Field Based              | <p>This classification represents roles primarily engaged in service-delivery functions that require movement between locations or performance of duties outside a conventional office setting. These positions are often roving or mobile in nature and may involve work across community sites, client locations, County-managed facilities, or other designated operational areas. Unlike most onsite roles, positions in this classification are not tied to a fixed workspace. Due to the nature of their work, employees in this group do not maintain a dedicated office but instead utilize common areas, shared stations, or docking spaces as needed to support their assignments.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                            |



**At the direction of County Manager, outreach was conducted to comparable local governments to better understand how other organizations structure remote and hybrid work, particularly regarding employee residence distance from the worksite.**

## **Durham County**

- Offers remote/hybrid options determined at the departmental level.
- Department heads collaborate with HR to define arrangements based on operational needs.
- No specific distance parameters were established for employee residence, with exception for public safety.

## **City of Raleigh**

- Provides flexible work up to two (2) days per week for office-based employees; in select instances, some roles may be classified as fully remote.
- Continual Policy review.
- No policy restricting distance from office for office-based staff; public safety and public-facing roles follow operational expectations.
- Remote work is permitted in select instances but is tightly regulated and contingent on departmental approval for eligible positions.
- Policy authorized by the City Manager following consultation with City Council.

# Benchmarking: Remote & Hybrid Work Policies (cont.)

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## Wake County

- Departments decide on where employees may live, with out-of-state arrangements coordinated through Payroll to ensure compliance with legal and tax requirements.
- Allows two (2) to three (3) remote workdays per week for eligible positions.
- Remote work is permitted in select instances but is tightly regulated and contingent on departmental approval for eligible positions.

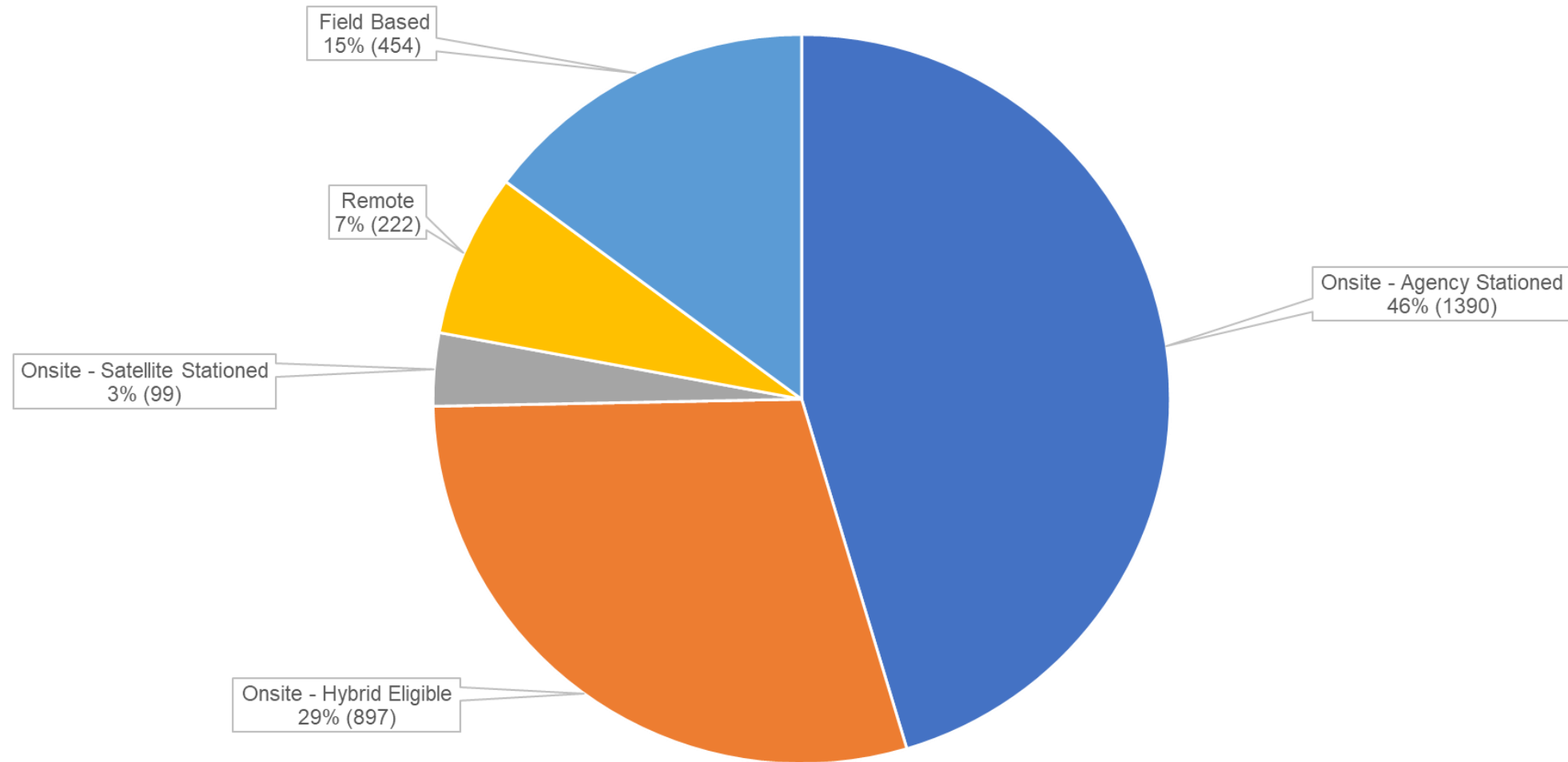
## City of Greensboro

- Employees must be able to physically report to City-assigned location within three (3) hours
- Department Directors have sole discretion to approve remote work for two (2) calendar days or less, per week.
- Remote work for three (3) calendar days or more must be approved by ( Assistant, Deputy or City Manager).
- Policy authorized by the City Manager following consultation with City Council.



# Guilford County Work Location Status (2025)

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■ Onsite - Agency Stationed ■ Onsite - Hybrid Eligible ■ Onsite - Satellite Stationed ■ Remote ■ Field Based



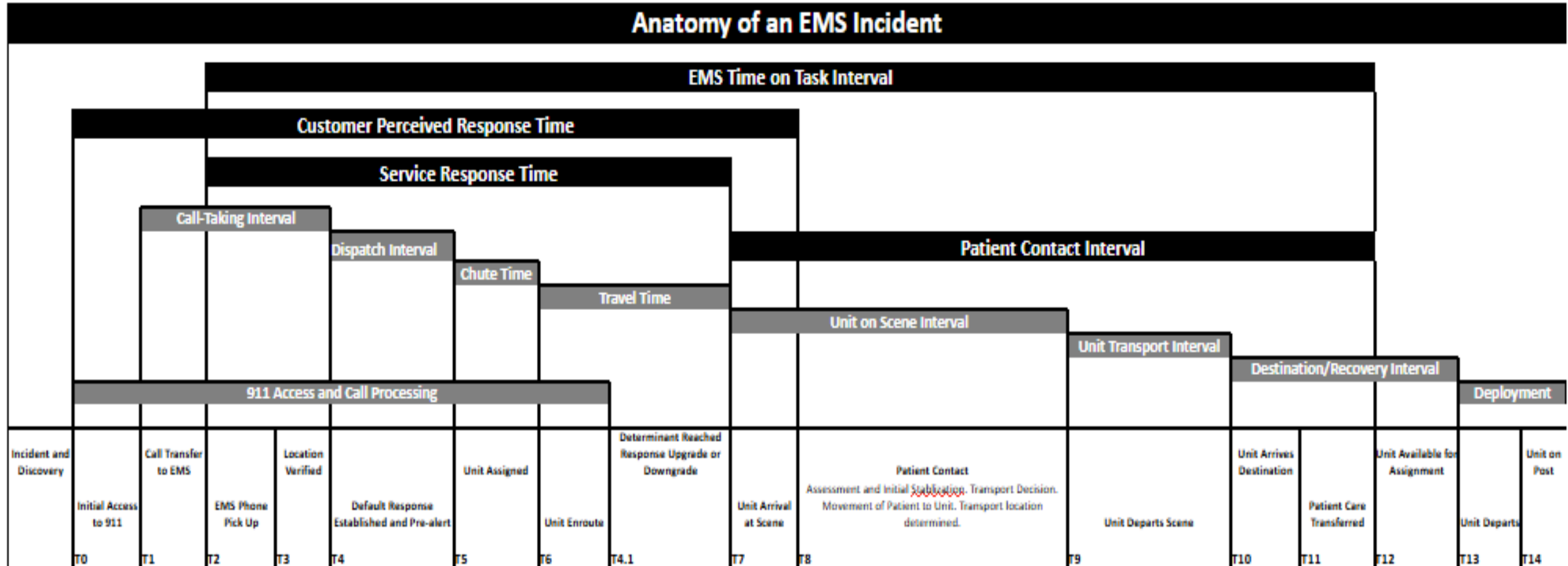
# High Performing Departmental Examples

## **The majority of Emergency Services staff are field-based**

- EMS Operations
  - Fire Operations
  - Fire Marshal's Office
  - Maintenance
  - Logistics
- 
- **Hybrid Option**
    - Senior Managers
    - Emergency Management is required to have one day a month for COOP
    - Administrative Support staff (which is limited)

# Anatomy of an EMS Event

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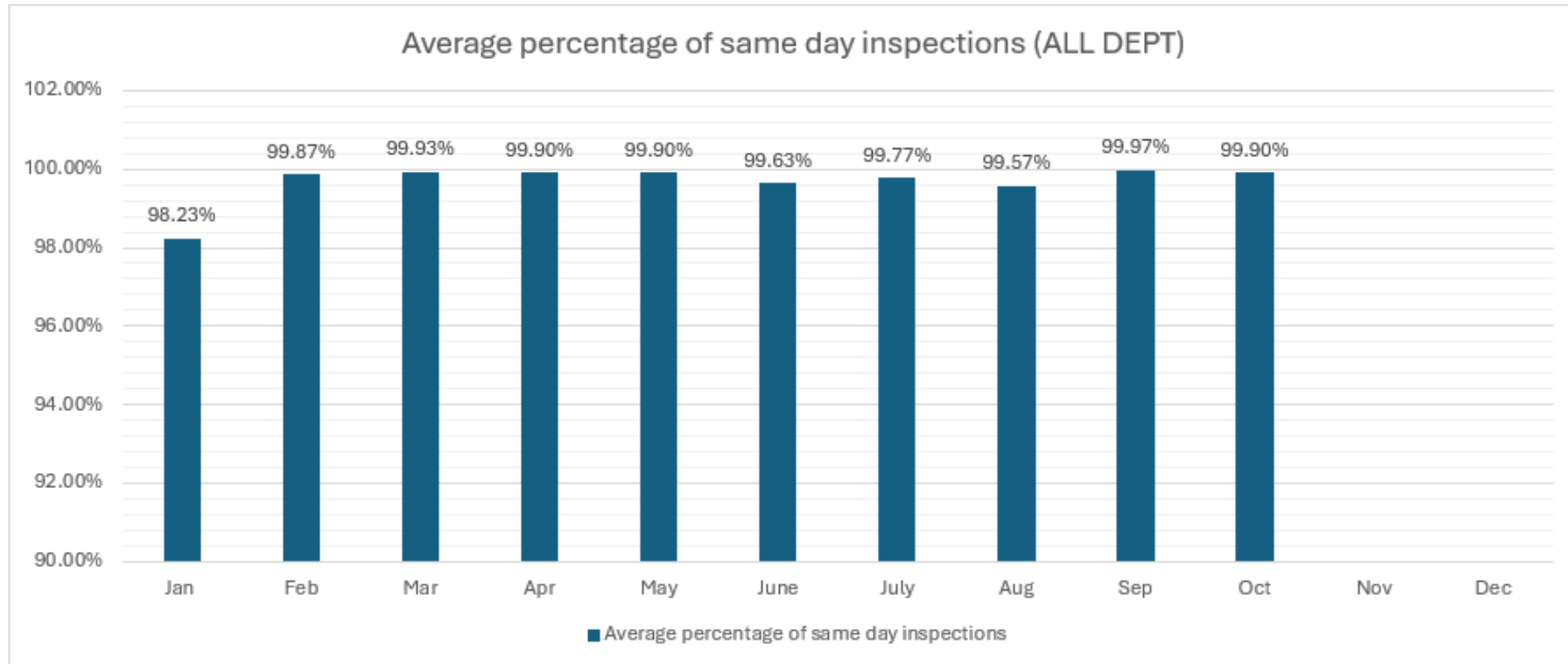


# How Do We Measure?

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Performance goal is to complete all inspections on the date the inspection is scheduled.



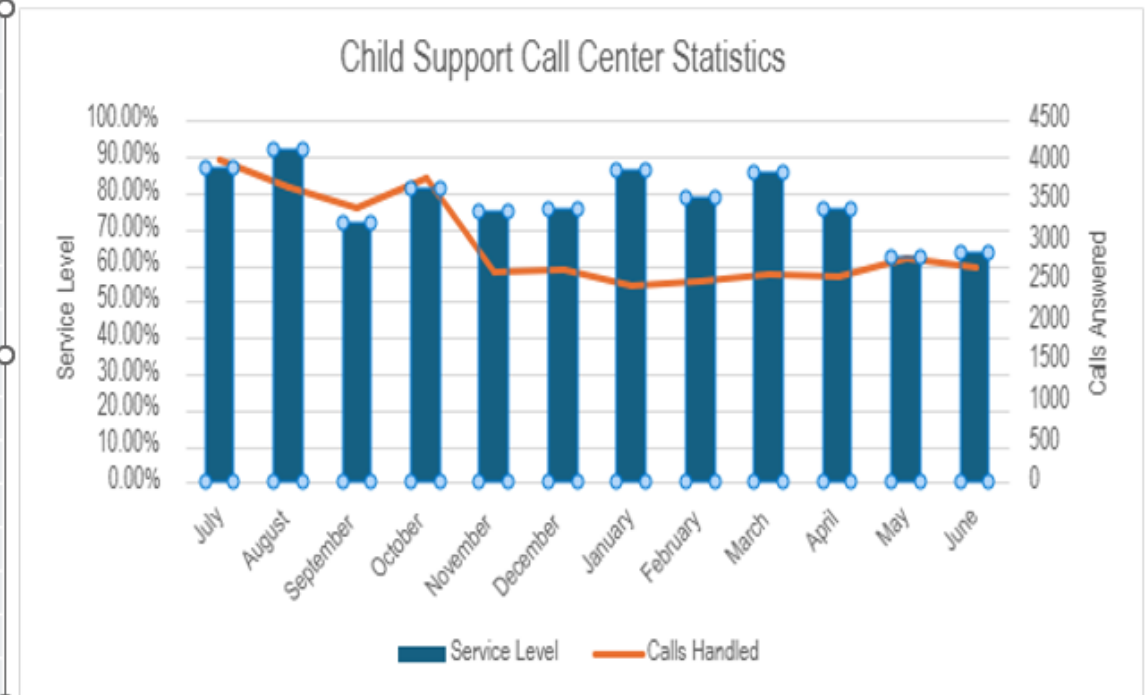
- The Child Support program is staffed with 99 employees and is a division of the 5<sup>th</sup> largest County Department.
- Flexible Workplace Breakdown:
  - **Onsite- Agency Stationed – 7 Positions**
  - **Onsite- Hybrid Eligible – 86 Positions**
    - Program Managers – Once per week
    - Supervisors – Bi-weekly rotation; 3 days onsite, 2 days offsite & 4 days onsite, 1 day offsite
    - Agents & Administrative Assistant I staff – Bi-weekly rotation; 3 days onsite, 2 days offsite & 2 days onsite, 3 days offsite
  - **Remote – 6 positions**
    - Administrative Assistant 1 staff dedicated to the Child Support Call Center

Guilford County Child Support ranked #4 in North Carolina achieving 3 out of the 5 Federal Collection & Incentive Measures

| FY 24-25            | % Paternity Established | % Cases Under Order | % Current Collections | % Payment to Arrears | Total Collections |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| County Goal:        | 98.83%                  | 82.72%              | 70.00%                | 70.00%               | \$33,374,234.74   |
| County Performance: | 94.05%                  | 87.32%              | 71.88%                | 71.65%               | \$32,685,498.92   |

## Child Support Call Center Data

|             | Service Level | Calls Handled | Avg Speed of Answer | Avg Handle Time |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| July (2024) | 87.05%        | 4021          | 0:00:20             | 4:00            |
| August      | 92.37%        | 3682          | 0:00:11             | 3:52            |
| September   | 71.92%        | 3425          | 0:00:47             | 4:17            |
| October     | 80.98%        | 3787          | 0:00:26             | 4:09            |
| November    | 74.92%        | 2631          | 0:00:40             | 4:18            |
| December    | 75.85%        | 2648          | 0:00:41             | 4:01            |
| January     | 86.28%        | 2451          | 0:00:19             | 3:55            |
| February    | 78.85%        | 2511          | 0:00:33             | 4:00            |
| March       | 85.81%        | 2592          | 0:00:24             | 3:58            |
| April       | 75.59%        | 2566          | 0:00:41             | 3:59            |
| May         | 62.02%        | 2789          | 0:01:08             | 4:12            |
| June (2025) | 63.45%        | 2689          | 0:01:12             | 4:08            |
|             | 77.92%        | 33,103        | 0:00:34             | 4:03            |



DSS has demonstrated success utilizing flexible work models as an effective operational strategy, supporting performance, accountability, and service continuity. This approach has been largely grounded in maintaining clear accountability standards and performance parity across all staff locations. Flexible work for our department has served as a strategic tool to strengthen organizational performance, attract top talent, and enhance employee retention.

## Social Services Staff Work Location Distribution

|                          |            |             |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|
| On-site Hybrid Eligible  | 448        | 55%         |
| On-site Agency Stationed | 233        | 29%         |
| Remote                   | 106        | 13%         |
| Field Based              | 18         | 2%          |
| Satellite                | 9          | 1%          |
| <b>Total:</b>            | <b>814</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| Metric                      | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                | Eligibility/Enforcement                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Performance Parity          | Expectations for workload, quality, and results are identical for all staff, regardless of work location.                                                                  | All staff must adhere to documented performance goals.                                                                                     |
| Timeliness & Compliance     | Staff must consistently meet all operational timeliness and compliance mandates (e.g., processing, recertification deadlines, regulatory requirements).                    | Failure to meet these mandatory operational metrics will result in coaching and could potentially lead to progressive disciplinary action. |
| Eligibility Gate            | Only staff who have successfully completed their probationary period and all necessary job-specific and technical training are eligible for flexible work.                 | This ensures foundational competency and trust are established before allowing autonomous work locations.                                  |
| Accountability & Suspension | If performance metrics or compliance standards fall below acceptable thresholds, remote or hybrid privileges will be immediately reviewed and may be suspended or revoked. | This ensures accountability remains primary and the flexible option is tied directly to success.                                           |

## Strategies to Mitigate Risks and Challenges

- Implement targeted training for supervisors and managers focused on managing decentralized teams, setting measurable objectives, giving effective remote feedback, and fostering inclusion.
- Implement a structured strategy for remote staff engagement, utilizing technology for regular virtual team-building events, frequent 1:1 check-ins and consistent organizational communication.
- Institute a formal, annual technology evaluation process to ensure all remote staff have secure, effective, and up to-date hardware and software. This includes a recurring review of our cybersecurity protocols for decentralized access.

## Observed Benefits of FWP in DSS:

- Reduced turnover and absenteeism- improves retention by supporting employee needs and reducing unscheduled absences.
- Access to a larger talent pool- broadens recruitment reach and attracts high-quality candidates across regions.
- Increased productivity- enables focused work environments and greater task efficiency.
- Higher job satisfaction- fosters trust, autonomy, and engagement among employees.
- Reduced operational footprint- decreases facility and resource costs through optimizing existing workspace use.

# Key Considerations to Adopt a Flexible Workplace Program

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1. **Organization-Wide Policy Integration:** Implement the approved policy guidelines consistently across all departments, ensuring clarity of expectations, compliance with professional standards, and alignment with operational needs.
2. **Administrative Systems (SimpliGov):** Utilize SimpliGov to document employee acknowledgment of Professional Standards and to record approved flexible work schedules and locations.
3. **Budget and Resource Planning:** Evaluate and plan for technology, space, and facility redesign needs associated with flexible work implementation.
  - **Equipment and Infrastructure** – Identify necessary equipment such as docking stations, dual monitors, and lock boxes to meet departmental operational requirements (ex: Economic Services requires two-monitor setups).
4. **Space Utilization and Redesign:** Rethink how existing workspaces might support shared use to accommodate both on-site and flexible employees.
5. **Long-Term Space Planning:** Assess the scale of future space needs to align facility investments with workforce distribution and flexible workplace adoption.



## 1. Regulation and Policy Considerations

- Regulation: FLSA Addendum 11.2, Inclement Weather, Emergency Preparedness
- Policy, Rules, Guidelines

2. Implement the proposed workplace location categories and definitions.

3. Implement the eligibility and revocation criteria based on the guidelines.

4. Establish acceptable distance away from County work location. Ex. Must be able to physically report to a county-assigned location within two (2) hours or less.

5. Incorporate a Manager Discretion Exception.

# Questions and Conversation

- Receive a report on flexible workplace, and to direct staff to amend existing regulations for Board approval and authorize the Manager to develop and implement relevant flexible workplace operational policies, rules and guidelines.