

A photograph of the Guilford County Court House, a large, classical-style building with a prominent portico supported by columns. The building is light-colored with many windows. The text "GUILFORD COURT HOUSE" is visible on the pediment above the columns. The number "301" is above the central entrance. A wide set of stairs leads to the entrance.

Developing the Legislative Agenda for Long Session

Objectives



Develop legislative priorities for the upcoming long session to align with NCACC.



Evaluate a lobbying framework.

Overview of General Assembly Schedule

The North Carolina General Assembly operates on a two-year cycle, convening in January of odd-numbered years for the Long Session and in late spring of even-numbered years for the shorter Short Session.

Long Session

Timing: Convenes in January of odd years.

Duration: Typically runs from January through July, although it has no constitutionally mandated end date.

Focus: This is the primary session for general legislating and passing a comprehensive two-year state budget. Virtually any subject matter can be introduced and debated during this time.

Short Session

Timing: Convenes in the spring of even years (e.g., late April).

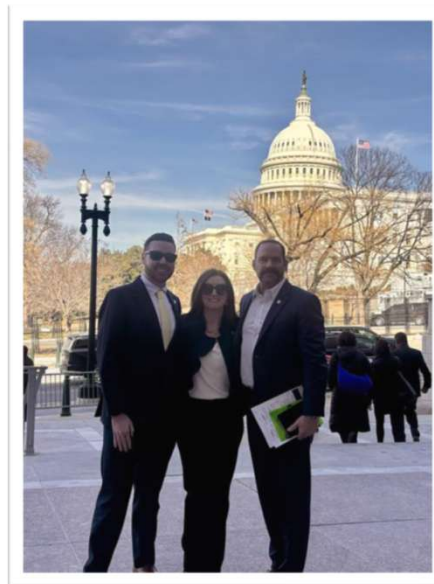
Duration: Typically lasts several weeks to a few months, often targeting a summer adjournment.

Focus: Generally restricted to budget adjustments, bills that successfully passed at least one chamber during the previous year's Long Session, and emergency issues.

Activities this Fiscal Year



Document shared with local delegation in the North Carolina General Assembly



Meetings held in DC with the federal delegation



Meetings held at the General Assembly with local delegation

Update on Short Session

Positive Progress:

Topic	Progress
Guilford County One-Fourth Cent Sales Tax Initiative	Revised ballot language was accepted and codified
Teacher Supplement Assistance Allotment	Guilford is in the allotment for at least 1 year based on revised minimum assessed value threshold.
Medicaid Funding	Medicaid funding was included in the state's budget
GTCC Aviation Center - Building Two	Budget included \$7.5 million of State funding.

Establishing Legislative Priorities for 2027

Upcoming Long Session: NCACC Goals



Every two years, in the months preceding the long session of the North Carolina General Assembly, **NCACC** begins a grassroots process to develop the Association's legislative goals, which guide advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels of government.

- Counties submit priorities to NCACC by August 27th
- Review and voting on goal proposals and guiding principles by NCACC steering committees
- Legislative Goals Committee reviews steering committee recommendations, approves core values and goals package for Board of Directors finalizes package to be presented to full membership
- Membership adopts goals at Legislative Goals Conference November 19-20.

Legislative Priorities



Infrastructure

- Regional Water/Sewer Steering Group
- Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act



Health and Human Services

- Property Tax Relief
- Expanding Childcare Access
- SNAP/FNS Penalty Cost Saving



Public Safety

- Balanced Billing for EMS
- First Net Reauthorization Act
- Amend Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy
- First Responders Retirement Parity Act



Education and Workforce Development

- Educator Pay
- Lottery Funding for Schools
- GTCC Aviation Center – Building Two

Infrastructure

Regional Water and Sewer



Why it matters to Guilford County

Regional water and wastewater infrastructure is essential to Guilford County because it supports economic growth, housing development, and reliable public services across a large, interconnected county. Strong regional systems help communities share costs, expand capacity efficiently, and ensure long-term readiness for jobs, residents, and future investment.



Impact

Coordinated regional systems can reduce costs, strengthen readiness for future growth and emergencies, and protect public health and environmental quality.

Federal & State Legislative Ask

Advocate for the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority in efforts to develop a regional water and wastewater system serving Guilford and Randolph counties, including securing state funding to support implementation and advance the project.

1.6 M+ people in the Piedmont Triad rely on the region's rivers, lakes, and reservoirs to support clean drinking water.

150 contaminants routinely filtered out and monitored by PTRWA.



PTRWA plans to increase capacity from 14.7M gallons per day to 26.7M gallons per day to meet the region's growing demand.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act



Why it matters to Guilford County

The legislation would reauthorize federal surface transportation programs, including funding for roads, bridges, multimodal infrastructure and rail safety.



Impact

Reauthorizing the funding with more direct local funding can cut delays, get projects moving faster, and turn transportation investments into jobs and economic growth across the region.

Federal Legislative Ask

Support enactment of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act (BUILD America 250) to strengthen federal investment in roads, bridges, transit, and other transportation infrastructure that supports Guilford County's mobility and economic growth.

550,000 residents

138,000 daily inbound commuters

86,000 projected population growth over next 20 years



1,883 miles of state maintained roads in Guilford County and 104 miles of interstate

Our Residents

Property Tax Relief



Why it matters to Guilford County

Property tax relief programs must be authorized by the State. With legislative leadership, the County could provide additional property tax relief for Seniors, disabled veterans, and fixed-income households.



Impact

Updating targeted relief programs helps longtime residents remain in their homes, preserve neighborhood stability, and protect vulnerable families from being priced out by rising assessments.

State Legislative Ask

Advocate for property tax relief through an increase in the income cap for the Elderly or Disabled Homestead Exclusion property tax program and a 100% property tax exemption for qualifying disabled veterans.

29,000 veterans call Guilford County home.

16% of Guilford County residents are Seniors.

\$38,800 current Elderly/Disabled Homestead Exclusion income limit.



A typical Guilford County homeowner pays about **\$2,000** annually in property taxes.

Expanding Childcare Access



Why it matters to Guilford County

More than 44% of children in Guilford County live in households experiencing poverty or low income. Childcare costs can prevent parents and caregivers from participating fully in the workforce. At the same time, low wages and early childhood educator shortages have contributed to a 10% decline in licensed childcare facilities in Guilford County, placing additional strain on the system.



Impact

High-quality childcare improves school readiness for children and empowers caregivers to work. A robust workforce is foundational for current and future economic development.

State Legislative Ask

Support legislation similar to HB 1066 and HB 1086 to strengthen North Carolina's early childhood workforce, improve affordability, and expand childcare capacity.

\$66,027 median household income.

31% of children age 0-5 are enrolled in early childcare

\$13.50 average hourly wage for a Guilford County early childhood educator



The average annual cost of care for high-quality 2-year old care in Guilford County is **\$12,193.**

SNAP/FNS Payment Error Cost Share



Why it matters to Guilford County

H.R. 1 established a potential federal cost-sharing obligation for Food and Nutrition Services benefits when a state's payment error rate exceeds the federal threshold. SB 257 created a mechanism for allocating a portion of any resulting state obligation to counties. The county assessment consists of a flat amount equal to 0.75% of each county's base-year sales tax allocation, plus a proportional amount based on the county's share of the statewide payment-error dollars.



Impact

Based on current estimates, the statewide obligation could total approximately \$150 million, with Guilford County's share estimated at \$12.6 million.

State Legislative Ask

Modify the SNAP/FNS payment error rate penalty distribution, included in SB 257, to ensure counties that maintain payment error rates below the 6% federal threshold are not assessed penalties.

Federal Legislative Ask

Delay implementation of H.R. 1 and the penalties for payment error rates to provide more time for counties to implement technology enhancements and oppose unfunded mandates and changes in eligibility for federal programs that shift costs to counties.

7.01% FY2025 payment error rate for NC.

2.2% Guilford County's payment error rate.

\$174,923,648 distributed by FNS in benefits while serving 103,489 households in Guilford County.



The error rate must be below 6% to avoid a penalty.

Public Safety

Emergency Ambulance Reimbursement



Why it matters to Guilford County

Residents and visitors rely on EMS services 24/7 and 365 days a year. When emergencies happen and EMS provides transportation for care, patients can be left with a surprise bill if the EMS service is out of network. Balance Billing requires insurers to pay for medically necessary EMS transportation and limits out-of-pocket expenses for patients.



Impact

More predictable reimbursement would strengthen the financial sustainability of EMS services while limiting patient out-of-pocket costs and reducing uncertainty about network status.

State Legislative Ask

Support HB 489, or similar legislation, to strengthen the financial sustainability of county emergency medical services by authorizing additional reimbursement mechanisms, including balance billing, while maintaining appropriate patient protections.

85k+ annual EMS calls

62k+ annual EMS billable transports

\$1,052 average cost of an ALS EMS transport



7:12
*average EMS
response time
in Guilford
County*

First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act



Why it matters to Guilford County

Guilford County's public safety agencies rely on FirstNet's dedicated broadband network to maintain reliable, interoperable communications during emergencies and disasters.



Impact

Reauthorizing FirstNet will ensure continued access to a secure, resilient communications network that strengthens emergency response, enhances responder safety, and supports coordination among public safety agencies.

Federal Legislative Ask

Support the long-term reauthorization of FirstNet to ensure Guilford County's public safety agencies maintain access to a reliable, resilient, and interoperable broadband communications network.

93,759 calls to EMS

55,510 calls to the Sheriff's Office

17,908 calls to County Fire Departments

First Responders Retirement Parity Act



Why it matters to Guilford County

Guilford County relies on nonprofit fire and emergency service organizations to provide critical frontline response, particularly in rural fire districts. The County supports 17 rural fire departments, 11 of which do not participate in the state retirement system.



Impact

Allowing eligible nonprofit first responders to participate in governmental retirement systems would improve retirement security and benefit parity, help local departments attract and retain qualified personnel, reduce turnover, and strengthen the long-term reliability of fire and emergency response services throughout Guilford County.

Federal Legislative Ask

Support enactment of the First Responders Retirement Parity Act (H.R. 2382) to remove federal barriers that prevent eligible nonprofit fire and emergency service organizations from participating in governmental retirement systems, promoting retirement parity and strengthening recruitment and retention of first responders.

17 rural fire districts

11 not in the state retirement system



Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy



Why it matters to Guilford County

County jails are not designed to provide long-term mental health treatment, yet people in crisis may enter the justice system when community-based services are unavailable. Detention can also restrict Medicaid coverage, interrupt treatment, and make successful reentry more difficult, even for individuals who have not been convicted or sentenced.



Impact

The federal Medicaid exclusion shifts the cost of providing necessary physical and behavioral health care for people held in the Guilford County Detention Centers to the County and local taxpayers.

Federal Legislative Ask

Support federal legislation to amend the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) by allowing eligible pretrial detainees to maintain access to Medicaid benefits and supporting continuity of care before release, reducing the financial burden on counties while improving health and public safety outcomes.

1,306 adults in county jail requiring access to medical services.

\$12 M+ spent in the prior year on medical services.

Education

Educator Pay



Why it matters to Guilford County

The 2026 Appropriations Act provides state funding for FY 2026–27 to help eligible counties offer competitive teacher salary supplements. Counties with an adjusted market value of taxable real property below \$80 billion are eligible, bringing Guilford County into the program for the current fiscal year. Because future eligibility will be reconsidered by the General Assembly, continued access to this funding is not guaranteed.

The Appropriations Act also includes a 3% increase for classified pay.



Impact

The program is estimated to provide an additional \$750 to \$1,300 annually per eligible teacher for salary supplements; however, this funding may be temporary.

State Legislative Ask

Support making Guilford County's eligibility for the Teacher Supplement Allotment secure by increasing the adjusted market value threshold to \$125 billion and continue annual pay adjustments for classified personnel.

\$5,000 maximum supplement per state-funded teacher.

\$7,282 Current average teacher supplement, ranked 23rd in the State.

62% of LEAs receiving the supplement report it supports teacher recruitment and retention.



How it's calculated:

- Taxable real property factor (65%)
- Median household income factor (25%)
- Effective tax rate factor (10%)

Lottery Funding for Schools



Why it matters to Guilford County

Guilford County Schools is the third-largest school system in the state and has significant, much-needed capital projects planned and underway. Stronger Education Lottery support can help meet growing demands, improve long-term planning, and reduce pressure on local property taxpayers while supporting student success.



Impact

Maximizing support from lottery proceeds, and increasing flexibility to use funds for items like classroom safety or technology, strengthens long-term budget planning, reduces pressure on local property taxes, and creates better learning environments that support student success.

State Legislative Ask

Increase funding allocations to the Lottery Fund - Public School Building Repair and Renovation Fund from \$50 million to \$100 million, as well as expand allowable uses of Education Lottery proceeds to address capital, school safety, and technology needs.

\$31.7M

approximate lottery-funded education allocations went to Guilford County in FY2024.

67,000

GCS student population.

Grade 3-12

are required to take electronic testing, with limited state funding for technology.



Guilford County
Schools operates
over 120 school
facilities for
instructional
education



GTCC Aviation Building 2



Why it matters to Guilford County

Completing Building 2 would expand aviation training capacity to more than 1,200 students, helping meet growing workforce demand from major regional employers such as Honda Aircraft, Boom Supersonic, JetZero, and other aerospace companies. By growing the local talent pipeline, this expansion supports high-wage job creation, economic competitiveness, and Guilford County's role as a leading aerospace hub.



Impact

Building Two would significantly expand workforce training capacity, strengthen the pipeline for high-demand aerospace careers, help local employers fill skilled positions with homegrown talent, and connect residents to high-wage careers.

State Legislative Ask

Provide an additional \$22.5 million in state funding for GTCC Aviation Building Two, bringing the total state commitment to \$30 million and matching the \$30 million allocated by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners.



31,734 total student headcount 2025-2026.

70,000 square feet of instructional space for future aviation workforce training in advanced composites technologies

1,200 expanded student enrollment capacity.

17,000 new aviation jobs are expected in the region by 2035.

Other Identified Topics for Additional Exploration

Topics Being Researched for Long Session

Topic	Request
Agricultural Support and State Incentives	Evaluate opportunities to strengthen state programs, incentives, and financial resources that support local farmers, preserve agricultural operations, and promote the long-term viability of farming in Guilford County.
Public Service Company Equalization Funding	Evaluate the State's Public Service Company property tax equalization funding and distribution methodology to ensure counties and affected local fire districts are not adversely impacted.
Local Flexibility for School Calendars	Evaluate legislation providing local boards of education opportunities to align the school calendar with local community college schedules.
State Support for School Nursing Services	Evaluate opportunities for increased and sustainable state funding for school nursing programs to improve student access to health services and reduce reliance on local funding.
Raise the Age and Juvenile Detention Impacts	Evaluate the operational and fiscal impacts of North Carolina's Raise the Age requirements on county juvenile detention facilities and identify opportunities for additional state funding, capacity, or programmatic support.

Topics Being Researched for Long Session

Topic	Request
High-Needs Individuals in Emergency Departments	Evaluate state funding, placement options, and behavioral health and long-term care resources for high-needs individuals who remain in hospital emergency departments or other inappropriate settings because appropriate community-based or residential placements are unavailable.
Foster Care Capacity and Placement Solutions	Evaluate opportunities for increased state investment in foster care placements, assessment and treatment resources, residential programs, and other solutions for children with complex behavioral, medical, or placement needs.
Rural Fire District Funding Model	Evaluate revisions to the state and local funding framework for rural fire districts to provide greater sustainability, equity, and predictability in funding essential fire and emergency response services.

Board Feedback

Any topics the Board would like to add or remove from the list?

Requested Action:

Direct staff to submit identified legislative priorities to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and schedule a meeting with the local delegation prior to the start of long session by the North Carolina General Assembly.

Lobbying Framework

Our Lobbying Framework

Overview

- Seeking a firm to provide federal and/or state lobbying services
- Advances the County's current and anticipated legislative priorities
- Initial term of three years, with the option to renew for two additional one-year terms



RFP Timeline

- Launch in August
- Identify firm(s) in October

Framework

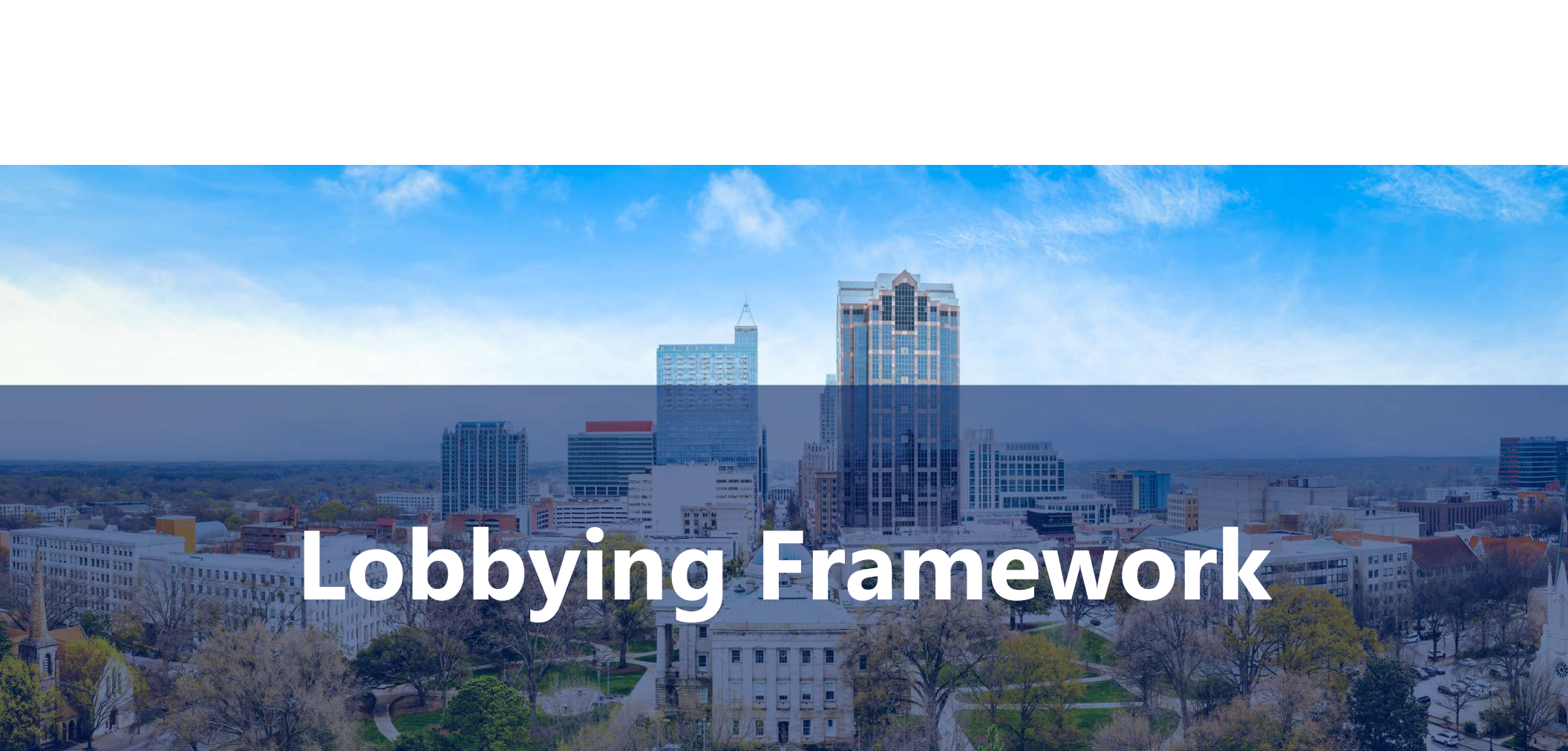
Overview

- Develop strategies and a plan to advocate for identified county priorities within 30-45 days after contract execution
- Provide written reports during regular, short, special, or reconvened sessions of the North Carolina General Assembly or U.S. Congress
- Provide a written post-session report within 30-days after adjournment of North Carolina General Assembly
- Monitor legislative action
- Provide briefings to Board of Commissioners
- Complete lobbying registrations and filings

Next Steps: Legislative Event



The Clerk's Office is planning a December 11 event to meet with the legislative delegation to share legislative priorities.



Lobbying Framework

