



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF STATE BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT



Employment First State for Individuals with Disabilities

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

CHARLES PERUSSE
STATE BUDGET DIRECTOR

February 28, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Phil Berger, President Pro-Tempore of the Senate
Representative Tim Moore, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Mark Trogon, Director of Fiscal Research Division

FROM: Stephanie McGarrah, Director of the NC Pandemic Recovery Office *sm*

SUBJECT: North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office

Per Session Law 2020-4, Section 4.3.(b), as amended, the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office is required to submit a monthly report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations regarding the staffing, expenditures, and activities of the Office.

The report is attached for your review. If you have questions, please email them to stephanie.mcgarrah@osbm.nc.gov.

Attachments

Report on NC Pandemic Recovery Office Operations and Activities

Overview of the Office

In May 2020, Governor Cooper established the NC Pandemic Recovery Office (NCPRO) to oversee and coordinate the fiscal response to the COVID-19 pandemic. NCPRO is responsible for overseeing the distribution of the \$3.6 billion in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) from the U.S. Treasury to provide support to state agencies, local governments, nonprofits, hospitals, educational institutions, and research organizations. NCPRO established a system for distributing, tracking, auditing, and providing guidance to more than 2,000 recipients of the funds provided by CRF.

In addition to CRF, NCPRO is responsible for the oversight, administration, and federal reporting for seven additional COVID-19 recovery programs: (1) the Governors Emergency Education Relief (GEER) program, (2) Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA), (3) Homeowners Assistance Fund (HAF), (4) Economic Development Administration Tourism Grant Funds, (5) Economic Development Administration Strategy Funds, (6) Capital Projects Fund, and (7) American Rescue Plan Act State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF). NCPRO is responsible for providing technical guidance and support to all county and municipal governments that received funds from the American Rescue Plan Act Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (LFRF), and funds for the 525 municipalities that are flowing through the State.

North Carolina received \$222.7 million in GEER funds from the CARES Act and CRSSA Act, which come to the State from the U.S. Department of Education. The Governor is responsible for awarding funds to education entities under GEER I and GEER II programs (totaling \$137.8 million); federal law allocates the remaining \$84.8 million to the Emergency Assistance for Non-public Schools program, which is administered by NCDPI, with NCPRO providing oversight and federal reporting. GEER funds must be expended by December 31, 2023 (GEER 1 by December 2022 and GEER 2 by December 2023). Reporting and oversight activities are required through first quarter of 2024, and federal audits of GEER funds will continue through the end of 2025.

The Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program assists households that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic with \$979 million in federal funds awarded to the State of North Carolina through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The U.S. Treasury allocated an additional \$280 million directly to 18 local governments, and \$24.4 million was provided to five tribal governments in North Carolina for the ERA Program. NCPRO is responsible for the oversight, administration, and federal reporting for the state's allocation of the ERA funds. Additionally, NCPRO is working with the local and tribal governments to coordinate programs and is providing technical assistance where needed.

North Carolina received \$273.3 million for the Housing Assistance Fund (HAF) through ARPA to provide financial assistance to homeowners experiencing hardship due to the COVID-19

pandemic. Funds from this program may be used to prevent homeowner delinquencies, defaults, foreclosures, and other homeowner-related expenses. NCPRO is responsible for the oversight, administration, and federal reporting for the state's allocation of HAF funds.

The State of North Carolina received \$5.4 billion in American Rescue Act State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF), and local governments in North Carolina directly received \$2.7 billion in Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (LFRF). North Carolina received \$352,692,103.50 of the \$705 million to distribute to 525 municipalities in accordance with U.S. Treasury rules and guidance. To date, NCPRO has distributed \$342,638,945.92 of the LFRF to 521 of the 525 municipalities. The office is currently working to assist the remaining local governments in completing their paperwork to receive these funds. In addition, NCPRO hosted webinars on June 30th and July 1st with more than 1000 attendees — in collaboration with the Local Pandemic Recovery Stakeholder Group — to provide guidance to local governments regarding the use of ARPA funds. NCPRO also participated on several panel discussions with the UNC School of Government (SOG) “Basics of ARPA” course for local governments during the month of October. NCPRO is partnering with the SOG to host learning communities to discuss the federal and state requirements in March 2022 and a “Basics of ARPA” course for state agencies in May 2022.

Staffing, Funding and Responsibilities of NC Pandemic Recovery Office

The North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office is organizationally located in the Office of State Budget and Management. The office hired its first staff in May 2020 and added most staff within the first three months of operation to complete its primary duties:

- Develop the systems, processes, and procedures to efficiently disburse the federal recovery dollars as appropriated,
- Disburse federal funds in a timely manner to assist recipients in responding to the pandemic,
- Monitor changing US Treasury guidance,
- Provide technical assistance to recipients and assist in program development design,
- Meet federal and state reporting requirements,
- Identify the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on North Carolina's people, communities, and businesses,
- Address gaps in recovery funding for underserved people, places, and businesses, and
- Audit the recipients of federal dollars to ensure compliance with federal and state laws.

All the positions within the office are time-limited, temporary, or contract-based (i.e., employees who have been temporarily reassigned from state agencies). Because the office was established in May 2020, it has operated remotely from its inception, and it continues to operate in a hybrid remote and in-person environment in accordance with guidance from DHHS and OSHR.

Additional positions have been added as noted in table 1 as NCPRO has been tasked with administering additional federal funds, and auditing and federal reporting requirements have increased in frequency and volume.

Table 1: Summary of NCPRO Staffing and Expenditures, March 2020 – January 2022

Month	Total Number of Staff	Total Personnel Cost	Total Non-Personnel Cost	Total Cost by Month
March 2020	0	0	0	0
April 2020	0	0	0	0
May 2020	3	8,591.07	0	0
June 2020	12	67,352.03	749.52	68,101.55
July 2020	15	119,815.90	4,588.03	124,403.93
August 2020	15	130,740.75	38,592.20	169,332.95
September 2020	15	136,148.22	8,145.64	144,293.86
October 2020	15	136,485.55	1,407.52	137,893.07
November 2020	16	126,366.83	2,409.89	128,776.72
December 2020	16	178,025.30	12,848.23	190,873.53
January 2021	18	149,403.42	7,537.26	156,940.68
February 2021	17	155,859.82	8,804.60	164,664.42
March 2021	18	141,641.95	21,407.67	163,049.62
April 2021	23	168,626.56	883,422.23 ¹	1,052,048.79
May 2021	25	175,851.73	6,155.37	182,007.10
June 2021	29	278,819.41	3,225.22	282,044.63
July 2021	29	200,350.51	27,965.34	228,315.85
August 2021	32	218,647.84	37,655.50	256,303.34
September 2021	32	268,239.75	84,126.80	352,366.55
October 2021	31	269,178.59	13,003.93	282,182.52
November 2021	32	284,207.97	59,379.55	343,587.52
December 2021	34	248,388.44	45,578.92	293,967.36
January 2022	34	205,263.74	19,189.36	224,453.10

Table 2: Detailed NCPRO Staffing Report

Month	Number of Staff Hired	Position Number	Permanent, Temporary, Time-limited, or Contract (Start and End Dates Noted for Temporary Positions)	Funding Source for Each Position	Total Funds Spent on Salary and Benefits for Personnel
March 2020	0				
April 2020	0				
May 2020	3	65031177 65031225 65031201	Time-limited Time-limited Time-limited	CRF	\$8,591.07
June 2020	9	65031279 65031327 65031328 65031332 65031375 65031400 65031500 1383460 1667049	Time-limited Time-limited Time-limited Time-limited Time-limited Time-limited Time-limited Contract Contract	CRF	67,352.03
July 2020	3	65031553 65031576 2275732	Time-limited Time-limited Temporary (7/1/2020 – 6/1/2021)	CRF	119,815.90
August 2020	0				130,740.75
September 2020	0				136,148.22
October 2020	0				136,485.55
November 2020	1	1155703	Temporary (11/4/2020 through 4/30/2021)	CRF	126,366.83
December 2020	0				178,025.30
January 2021	2	65032485 00627194	Time-limited Temporary (1/26/2021 – 12/10/2021)	CRF	149,403.42

Month	Number of Staff Hired	Position Number	Permanent, Temporary, Time-limited, or Contract (Start and End Dates Noted for Temporary Positions)	Funding Source for Each Position	Total Funds Spent on Salary and Benefits for Personnel
February 2021	0				155,859.82
March 2021	1	825243	Temporary (3/22/2021 – 12/10/2021)	CRF	141,641.95
April 2021	5	2197186 1165961 639639 2310512 216573	Time-limited Time-limited Time-limited Temporary (4/19/2021 – 12/10/2021) Temporary (4/19/2021 – 12/10/2021)	CRF	168,626.56
May 2021	2	65032594 65009917	Time-limited Temporary (5/17/2021 – 12/10/2021)	CRF	175,851.73
June 2021	4	963300 2122768 20686861 2314325	Time-limited Time-limited Temporary Temporary	CRF	278,819.41 ²
July 2021	2	60080066 60080107	Temporary Temporary	CRF	200,350.51
August 2021	3	1320441 863585 1521242	Temporary Time-limited Time-limited	CRF	218,647.84
September 2021	0				268,239.75
October 2021	0				269,178.59
November 2021	2	65034018 65034040	Time-limited Time-limited	CRF	284,207.97
December 2021	3	65034040 2343928 65004275	Time-limited Temporary Temporary	CRF	248,388.44
January 2022	1	65031328	Time-limited	CRF	205,263.74

Activities of NC Pandemic Recovery Office During the 2020 Calendar Year

During the 2020 calendar year, NCPRO was focused on administration, oversight, disbursement, and reporting for the state's \$3.6 billion in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), as well as identifying the impacts of the pandemic on North Carolina's people, communities, and businesses. The first round of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) was included in the CARES Act, and NCPRO was involved in determining how to best allocate those funds and in developing oversight, administration, and reporting functions for the GEER program. Because the CRF dollars were set to expire on December 30, 2020, NCPRO also worked with CRF recipients to reallocate funds to make sure they were used before the deadline. When President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act into law on December 27, 2020, which extended the CRF expenditure deadline, NCPRO shifted its focus to making sure CRF recipients understood the new deadline and guidance from the U.S. Treasury. In addition, the Consolidated Appropriations Act included funds for the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program.

Activities of NC Pandemic Recovery Office During the 2021 Calendar Year

In 2021, NCPRO completed the following activities by federal fund type and activity.

American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA/CSLFRF):

The staff of the NC Pandemic Recovery Office completed the following activities, functions and assignments related to American Rescue Plan Act CSLFRF funding during the Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2021 time period:

- Led OSBM efforts to summarize the provisions of the American Rescue Plan and its State impact and worked with OSBM to begin implementing the provisions of HB 196/SL 2021-3.
- Developed guidance, database structures, and contracting processes for the 525 Non-Entitlement Units (NEUs) allotted to receive Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (LFRF), as well as launching a robust improvement of 28 website pages (in addition to our current Coronavirus Relief Fund-related information) by providing timely ARP-specific materials.
- Worked with 14 partner organizations to host a training and question and answer session about ARPA and LFRF with over 1,000 registered attendees.
- As of October 20, 2021, \$342,638,945.92 has been disbursed to 521 of 525 NEUs for their first tranche of Local Federal Relief Funds (LFRF), which equates to 99% of all NC recipients eligible for LFRF that have been processed and paid since US Treasury first released the Interim Final Rule on May 17, 2021.
- In conjunction with the Office of the Governor, helped establish a State Agency Pandemic Recovery Stakeholder group and held two ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) Interagency meetings in December 2021 with State Agencies regarding SFRF information, guidance, and processes.
- Hosted or facilitated more than 46 virtual or in-person meetings or trainings facilitated state-wide to assist stakeholders and partners with ARPA.

Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF):

The staff of the NC Pandemic Recovery Office has completed the following activities, functions and assignments related to Coronavirus Relief funding during the Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2021 time period:

- Processed CRF reimbursement requests, provided extensive technical assistance and guidance for CRF, as well as completed ongoing federal and state monthly reporting requirements to the U.S. Treasury and NC General Assembly.
- From January-December 2021, \$280,765,703.77 has been disbursed to CRF recipients.
- Created the proactive monitoring strategy of developing a grant manual which helped NC recipients better understand how to interpret federal guidance/reporting as well as North Carolina's reporting requirements.
- In compliance with federal and state reporting requirements, compiled and confirmed a list of all CRF recipients who have completely expended their funds and contacted those recipients to notify them that their reporting responsibilities for CRF are concluded.
- Developed a close-out tracking system for CRF recipients to ensure remaining funds are spent or returned by the allotted deadlines.

GEER/EANS, ERA & HAF Funding:

The staff of the NC Pandemic Recovery Office has completed the following activities, functions and assignments related to the Governor's Emergency Education Relief funding, Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools funding, and Homeowners Assistance funding during the Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2021 time period:

- Conducted analysis, prepared recommendations, and helped Governor Cooper's office finalize the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) allocations from GEER I and GEER II funds as well as developed subaward documentation and performance measures for GEER funding.
- Coordinated the set-up of interagency projects funded by GEER, including Longleaf Commitment, Longleaf Complete, and the Education Recovery Dashboard.
- Worked with the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to start-up and provide oversight for the Emergency Assistance for Non-public Schools (EANS) I program and EANS II program.
- Worked with the NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR) on the start-up and implementation of the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program.
- Began working with the NC Housing Finance Agency to prepare for implementation of the Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) Program in early 2022.

Auditing to Ensure Compliance of Federal Relief Funds:

The staff of the NC Pandemic Recovery Office has completed the following activities, functions and assignments to ensure compliance of federal relief funds during the Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2021 time period:

- Monitored CRF, Emergency Rental Assistance Funds (ERA), and Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds (GEER) to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state regulations related to funding programs, including Uniform Guidance and the Cash Management Improvement Act.
- Completed twelve audit reports during the months of May, June, and August.
- (The Preliminary Financial Audit report and the Single Audit Compliance report conducted by the State Auditor had no findings.)
- Completed the FY21 Annual Audit Report.

Transparent Strategy and Data Analytics:

The staff of the NC Pandemic Recovery Office has completed the following activities, functions and assignments to ensure that a transparent outreach strategy and data analytics plan was in place during the Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2021 time period:

- Worked in partnership with the NC Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC) and SAS Institute to create an internal online dashboard to track the NC Economy and its recovery efforts.
- Began development of NC Community Pulse Survey to collect, analyze, and publish county- and regional level data on the impacts of the pandemic and progress toward recovery. Expected to launch early 2022.
- Continually tracked all federal relief funds (to date over \$83 billion) provided to NC and analyzed the impacts, as well as identified remaining gaps in recovery.
- Created an interactive map for [NCPRO.nc.gov](https://ncpro.nc.gov) that represents \$24.1 billion out of over \$50 billion in federal COVID relief funds allocated to North Carolina in 2020.
- Led several presentations and workshops with state and local education leaders on the various sources of \$10B in federal funds to support recovery efforts in early learning, K-12, and postsecondary education.
- Developed a template for county and regional profiles of education-related COVID-19 funds received for early learning, K-12, and postsecondary educational entities.
- Worked with OSBM to develop Governor’s ARPA budget with recommendations to assist families most impacted by the pandemic, upgrade our infrastructure, prepare our workforce, promote business development and innovation, and position our government to serve.
- Worked with other agencies to understand the impacts of the pandemic on businesses, arts and cultural organizations, childcare providers, education systems, communities, families, and individuals.
- Developed and continued to publish the [Monthly Economic Update](#) to track the economic recovery of North Carolina.
- Developed a [monthly newsletter](#) to provide updates related to NCPRO staff’s work with pandemic relief funding, recipients across the state, and more as well as updates on the economic recovery of NC, Emergency Rental Assistance and other housing program updates, pandemic relief fund success stories across the state, current opportunities, and more.
- Developed new approaches to technical assistance and written guidance for CRF and CSLFRF recipients, including infographics synthesizing and explaining key issues, as well as PROtalks – YouTube videos walking recipients through close-out and reporting processes.
- Worked in partnership with the NC Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) to build out a standalone website for NCPRO at [NCPRO.nc.gov](https://ncpro.nc.gov).

Current Activities of NC Pandemic Recovery Office During the 2022 Calendar Year

Function		Activities
Grants Management	Grants Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided guidance to agencies and subrecipients on the appropriations and uses of SFRF • Met with state agencies and local stakeholder groups

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked on processes and procedures for distributing and monitoring SFRF • Worked with our data team to develop and begin to implement our grants management system
	Data Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitted CRF US Treasury 2021 Q4 Report • GEER agreements transfer to NCPRO PANGRAM, NCDPI payment request was handled and paid via NCAS in PANGRAM • All grant mangers started creating SFRF agreement in PANGRAM • Privacy Threshold Analysis and DIT Exception forms for TATLASSIAN JIRA cloud-based software subscription service and outlook plug-in for projects management/issues tracking were submitted and approved by DIT. Ready to make the purchase. • Transferring the ArcGIS Online project finished by NCSU student intern into OSBM ArcGIS Online account • Providing technical supports and solutions for CRF closeout process, daily script process to copy files from ShareFile to SharePoint • Provided technical support to other NCPRO Teams
	Performance Measures & Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Monthly CRF report to the General Assembly • Compiled information on funding provided to non-entitlement units funded with LFRF • Develop performance measures reporting strategy for SFRF • Held meetings with direct recipients of SFRF to discuss project plans and funding guidelines • Collected and reviewed project plans from over 150 SFRF recipients • Began developing project inventory for SFRF projects • Compiled and submitted Quarterly SFRF report to US Treasury
Policy & Strategic Planning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published monthly economic update • Managed implementation of EDA ARPA Statewide Planning Grant, including development of research programs to enhance use of data in recovery planning • Supported interagency SFRF implementation working group • Supported Governor's office and OSBM with GEER-program planning • Developing economic recovery data dashboard • Responded to internal and external requests for data related to North Carolina's economic recovery and overall COVID-19 relief aid funds • Initiated and/or continued research efforts on the impact of the pandemic on particular topics, such as business loans, food insecurity, health workforce, aging North Carolinians, etc.

<p style="text-align: center;">General Counsel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with external consultant on organizational and situational assessment; preliminary benchmarking with other states; funds flow model • Reviewed Treasury Final Rule on SLFRF • State agency stakeholder meeting on SFRF • Local government stakeholder meeting on SFRF/LFRF • Completion of draft MOU for state administering agencies • Analysis of Davis-Bacon and work conditions questions • Discussed CRF closeout procurement issue • Discussed DOA ReToolNC funding and program design • Discussed DOR Business Recovery Grants • Discussed procurement questions with DEQ • Status checks on rental assistance programs • Training on state grant reporting requirements • Internal audit meetings and issue resolution
<p style="text-align: center;">Business Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processed a payment for \$100,000,000.00 to NCORR for Emergency Rental Assistance Funds-II (ERA-II) • Processed payments for 6 recipients for \$27,856,098.46 under ERA 1 • Processed payments for GEER I (Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Funds) funds for 6 awards in the amount of \$3,944,582.85 • Reviewed and processed payments for GEER II funds for 5 awards in the amount of \$285,416.20 • Created monthly bank reconciliations for November for CRF, ARP, ERA and GEER Funds. • Helped to review and aggregate C-2 forms for CRF close-out purposes. • Continued joining meetings for PANGRAM system implementation. • Monitored ShareFile for manual downloads for supporting documents. • Communicated with OSBM finance team and CRF recipients to record CRF refunds properly. • Joined new employee trainings held by OSBM.
<p style="text-align: center;">Auditing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started consulting review for subrecipient monitoring of ARPA funding. • Continued with audits of CRF program. • Replied to request for documents from Office of State Auditor. • Continue to develop tools and templates to audit GEER funding.
<p style="text-align: center;">Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redacted 40 documents for a public records request • Created a survey form to gather contact information for the Community Pulse Survey • Initiated an internal working group for creating a dashboard for the NCPRO website

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put together a document of NCPRO accomplishments for 2021 for use by the Governor’s Office
<p style="text-align: center;">CRF Closeout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted hospitals, nonprofits, and counties in the CRF close-out process. • Met with several non-profit recipients regarding their CRF outstanding balance. • Provided guidance and technical assistance via phone, email and Teams meetings. Monitored CRF expenditures and validated supporting documents. • Assisted with State Auditors request for CRF supporting documents for selected hospitals, counties, and state agencies. • Finalized the recalculation of Attachment C-2s for the NC Assisted Living Association (NCALA) and North Carolina Senior Living Association (NCSLA) to support the closure of their five (5) agreements. • Met with North Carolina Healthcare Foundation (NCHCF) to address issue with their PPE vendor. • As of 1/31/22 there were only 4 hospitals with unspent balances and 10 nonprofits with unspent balances.