COVID-19 STRATEGIC RECOVERY PLAN
Executive Summary

In March 2020, Mecklenburg County, like many other communities across the nation and world, began experiencing the impacts of the global pandemic in the community. As such, County leaders decisively took a bold response at the outset of the crisis to respond swiftly and timely to the pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic, the federal government has provided multiple rounds of COVID-19 relief funding to communities. Earlier in spring 2021, Mecklenburg County was awarded $215 million in COVID-19 relief funding via the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act for state, local and Tribal governments. The key objectives are to: support the urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease the spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control, strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs, support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses, and to address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the inequal impact of the pandemic on certain populations.

In response to the federal government, the County embarked on the development of a five-year plan to determine how to spend the relief funds. Prior to plan development, from August 2021 to November 2021, an “environmental scan” was performed to identify information and inputs needed to develop the Mecklenburg County Strategic Recovery Plan as a guide for County leaders to decide how to disperse the American Rescue Plan Act funding as well as other COVID-19 relief funds awarded. Environmental scans are typically used in strategic planning efforts.

As a result of nationwide research, public engagements, engagements with County staff and a review of performance information, five priority areas, nine goals and multiple strategies were determined to comprise the proposed Strategic Recovery Plan.

The five priority areas are:
- Behavioral Health & Health Equity
- Affordable Housing & Homelessness
- Workforce & Economic Development
- Parks, Environment & Infrastructure
- Childcare & Early Childhood Development

The Plan helps the County move from vision to equitable outcomes in the community.
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Planning Team

The following individuals served on the Strategic Recovery Plan team:

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Dena Diorio
County Manager

Michael Bryant
Deputy County Manager

Leslie Johnson
Deputy County Manager

Derrick Ramos
Deputy County Manager/Chief of Staff

Anthony Trotman
Deputy County Manager

COUNTY TEAM

Monica R. Allen
Strategic Planning & Evaluation Director

Tanisha Anderson
Public Information Officer

Laura Antanaitis
Strategy & Planning Analyst

David Boyd
Finance Director

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Management & Budget Director

Danny Diehl
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Eliza Durfee
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Brandon Juhaish
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4 | COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan
Process

1. Reviewed Treasury Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF): Expenditure Categories for Eligible Uses

2. Engaged Starla Tanner, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager

3. Collected data and other information as part of the environmental scan efforts

4. Held first strategic planning retreat in September 2021

5. Drafted first version of the Strategic Recovery Plan

6. Held second strategic planning retreat in November 2021

7. Met with the Executive Team to finalize version one of the Strategic Recovery Plan
Environmental Scan

Introduction
An essential first step in any strategic planning process is performing an environmental scan. Conducting an environmental scan helps an organization to identify trends, potential opportunities, programmatic alignments, and likely challenges that could impact the organization as it carries out its mission.

As an innovative leader in local governance, Mecklenburg County, under the direction of County Manager Dena Diorio, prioritized identifying relevant elements both internal and external to the organization that could impact the County’s implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). To create Mecklenburg County’s Strategic Recovery Plan, County staff gathered information from a variety of sources in order to construct a plan that targets pertinent County issues.

The following information was used to understand the national landscape, stakeholder and expert perspectives, benchmark-county best practices, as well as community and organizational data.

NATIONWIDE RESEARCH
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ARPA Planning Research ...............................................................................................................................................................7

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Recommendations ............................................. 8
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Mecklenburg County Advisory Board Feedback .....................................................................................................................10

INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT/REVIEW
Mecklenburg County Department Director Interviews ...........................................................................................................11
Mecklenburg County Executive Cabinet Survey .....................................................................................................................11
Community Research .....................................................................................................................................................................12
Organizational Performance Information ...................................................................................................................................12

In order to provide equity-focused, community-empowering, and evidence-driven public services, Mecklenburg County utilized these inputs to inform the construction of the Strategic Recovery Plan. Whether the information helped to guide the formation of priority areas, strategies, or overall structure, each played an essential role, culminating in the final Strategic Recovery Plan presented on page 13 of this report.
Nationwide Research

**COVID-19 RESPONSE RESEARCH**

In response to the changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the leadership of Mecklenburg County researched best practices from benchmark counties across the nation. Interviews were held with Wake, Guilford, and Buncombe Counties in North Carolina; Pinellas County, Florida; Hennepin County, Minnesota; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; and Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. During these interviews, each county offered insight into operational and service changes made in response to, and any future mitigation strategies being considered for, COVID-19. Including this research as part of the environmental scan helped identify possible innovative opportunities utilized by peer counties that Mecklenburg County could leverage. Themes highlighted during this process included service delivery to vulnerable populations, public health, and emergency response management.

**ARPA PLANNING RESEARCH**

The leadership of Mecklenburg County sought to understand how other local government entities across the nation were strategizing the use of their American Rescue Plan funding. Cook County, Illinois, Harris County, Texas, Fairfax County, Virginia, and King County Washington were the benchmark counties reviewed. Findings from these benchmark counties supported the priority areas being considered for Mecklenburg. For example, Cook County, Harris County, Fairfax County, and King County all featured priorities in the areas of public health and workforce development. Further, both Harris and Fairfax highlighted affordable housing as a leading concern. Additionally, recommendations from the NC League of Municipalities, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the National League of Cities, and Governor Cooper’s American Rescue Plan Recommendations were considered. These local and state government organizations were vital in understanding the emerging best practices of ARPA implementation. The information gathered from these institutions largely reflected the priorities seen in the peer county benchmark research. Common themes such as health equity, investment in vulnerable populations, and ensuring healthy environments emerged. Mecklenburg County incorporated external ARPA planning research into the environmental scan in order to create an innovative, informed Strategic Recovery Plan. The framework and the priorities of Mecklenburg County’s Strategic Recover Plan were informed, in part, by benchmark counties’ planning structures and by the best practice recommendations of local and state government institutions.
Public Engagement

MECKLENBURG COUNTY COVID-19 RECOVERY AND RENEWAL TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners authorized the creation of the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force (“Task Force”) for the purpose of reviewing the areas of health, economy, and community within Mecklenburg County and making timely recommendations for County action. The Task Force consisted of 16 concerned community members, with areas of expertise ranging from consumer engagement at Novant Health, to community economic development at the Centralina Regional Council, to community engagement at the United Way of the Carolinas. The group was facilitated by Mecklenburg County staff, and their work culminated in the Task Force Recommendations, a set of three goal areas containing 13 strategies and 60 actions. These recommendations reflect the priorities of the Mecklenburg County community for recovering from the pandemic. Mecklenburg County aligned all of these recommendations to goal areas within the COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan.

LIVABLE MECK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Livable Meck community engagement initiative was commissioned by Mecklenburg County leadership in order to hear from County residents about how incoming ARPA funding should be spent. This engagement included a community survey and multiple in-person community interaction events. With an emphasis on equity, this initiative partnered with non-profits, churches, senior living facilities, colleges/universities, and recreation centers to connect with residents of all ages, incomes, and races. In all, 1,274 people responded to the Community Survey, and many others were engaged in-person. From these inputs, homelessness and mental health, were identified as key issues. As the Livable Meck Community Survey was created with ARPA in mind, the results were essential to informing the strategic planning process and prioritization.
BUSINESS LEADERS ROUNDTABLE
Mecklenburg County is equipped with a talented supply of community-oriented business leaders. These business leaders are vital collaborative partners with Mecklenburg County, increasing the reach and breadth of County funded initiatives. Capitalizing on this base of support, Mecklenburg County presented preliminary priority areas to the Business Leaders Roundtable to extract comments and recommendations. This engagement provided insights into the challenges being faced by the private sector, particularly in the area of workforce development.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING
On October 5th, 2021, the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing for residents to share their feedback on how the American Rescue Plan Act funds should be utilized. The public hearing produced a diverse gathering of individuals and organizations, which represented the rich variety of the County’s community. Everything from non-profit organizations, to community organizations, to small businesses were present to give their perspectives regarding how Mecklenburg County should utilize the ARPA dollars. There were community members represented at the hearing. County Manager Dena Diorio found it essential to include the public hearing comments in the considerations of the ARPA strategic plan. Topics shared at the hearing included food insecurity relief, small business and non-profit support, second chance and re-entry services, affordable housing, mental health and health equity, and early childhood services. These issues were used to guide the creation of Mecklenburg County’s ARPA strategic plan priority areas and strategies.
MECKLENBURG EXECUTIVE COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL SURVEY
The Mecklenburg Executive Collaborative Council survey was designed to gauge the priorities of County non-profit entities. This survey asked questions regarding which priority areas would contribute the most to disproportionately impacted communities, which would have the greatest effect on historic inequities, and which are the most urgent needs within the non-profits’ service populations. In total, there were 64 responses to the Collaborative Council survey. Homelessness and affordable housing were reported as the most crucial factors affecting Mecklenburg County residents by these organizations. Understanding the important role non-profits play in carrying out public services, Mecklenburg County incorporated the findings from the Collaborative Council survey results into the Strategic Recovery Plan's goal prioritization and strategy creation.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD FEEDBACK
Mecklenburg County’s advisory boards are a way for members of the community to share in the governance of the County. Therefore, looking to the advisory boards for input was an indispensable part of the planning process. Participating advisory boards included the Air Quality Commission, the Park and Recreation Commission, the Storm Water Advisory Committee, the Groundwater Advisory Committee, the Domestic Violence Advisory Board, the Women's Advisory Board, and the Citizen's Capital Budget Advisory Board. Input received included recommendations for equitable investments into communities, park and facility rehabilitation in underserved neighborhoods, prioritization of mental health issues, protection of groundwater sources and storm water restoration projects, and increasing workforce development opportunities. These considerations from the advisory boards helped to inform the Strategic Recovery Plan goals and strategies.
Internal Engagement

MECKLENBURG COUNTY DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS

In preparation for this strategic planning work, County leadership, following the principles of effective and inclusive organizational management, sought input from department directors through interviews. These interviews were held with directors whose departments most closely aligned with the ARPA guidance from the U.S. Department of Treasury. Those departments included Community Resources, Community Support Services, Social Services, Public Health, and Economic Development. Priority areas reported by department directors included access to medical and mental health care for vulnerable populations, job training and workforce development, premium pay for essential workers, equitable investments into underserved communities, affordable housing, small business assistance, rent and mortgage assistance, food security initiatives, and expanding access to broadband in underserved neighborhoods. These departmental inputs were considered in the construction of the Strategic Recovery Plan goals and strategies.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY EXECUTIVE CABINET SURVEY

County Manager Dena Diorio is assisted in her stewardship of Mecklenburg County by a select group of individuals made up of deputy county managers, department directors, and others. Each contributes to an area of expertise crucial for proper County administration. This executive cabinet, was surveyed to determine how they thought the County should use the incoming ARPA funds. The resulting feedback provided direction for the prioritization of key areas within the ARPA strategic plan. The executive cabinet feedback directed attention to crucial issues facing the County, and led the Strategic Recovery Plan team to identify priority areas. Of these priority areas common denominators included affordable housing, child welfare and advocacy, small business resiliency, public safety and criminal justice, mental and emotional health, and early child care and education.
COMMUNITY RESEARCH

In order to build a data-driven Strategic Recovery Plan, the strategic planning team performed a data-gathering exercise on the most pertinent issues facing Mecklenburg County. As a foundation for this community research, they referred to the 2020 Pulse Report, an annual report presented to the Board of County Commissioners by the County Manager’s Office, detailing what County experts believe to be the most important issues facing the community. The Pulse Report utilizes key data points, gathered from both local and national databases, to synthesize a complete story of the state of Mecklenburg County. Data adapted from the 2020 Pulse Report, and updated for most recent 2021 data where available, included the extent of COVID-19 impacts, digital access, unemployment, environmental concerns, education and childcare, and food insecurity. Further research was performed over increasing poverty rates, the impacts on small businesses, housing affordability, and overall cost of living changes. The strategic planning team synthesized these key data and presented the findings to the County Executive team, who then used the information to inform the priority areas, goals, and strategies within the Strategic Recovery Plan.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

In order to provide effective and efficient services, each County department is required to operate under the direction of a strategic plan. The progress of these strategic plans is measured through performance indicators within the County’s performance management system. Given the major disruptions across all fields of work in Mecklenburg County due to COVID-19, it was necessary to review which performance indicators suffered the most as a result of the pandemic. The county performance measures that were identified as being adversely impacted by COVID-19 were considered when building the Strategic Recovery Plan. For example, the Department of Community Resources reported a disruption in the United Workforce Development job retention rate due to pandemic related layoffs. Thus, the priority of strengthening workforce development initiatives within Mecklenburg County was reinforced. Other impacted performance areas were also included in the Strategic Recovery Plan strategy creation.
Priority Areas

STRATEGIC PLANNING STRUCTURE
After reviewing the U.S. Treasury guidance, engaging with the Intergovernmental Affairs Director, and conducting the environmental scan, the Strategic Recovery Plan team created five priority areas. Each priority areas includes one to three goals. From there, strategies were designed so that community organizations and internal departments can align their work in ways that will drive progress toward the identified goals.

The five priority areas are:

- Behavioral Health & Health Equity
- Affordable Housing & Homelessness
- Workforce & Economic Development
- Parks, Environment & Infrastructure
- Childcare & Early Childhood Development

The following pages outline the specific goals and strategies under each priority areas, as well as any COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force recommendations that align.
Behavioral Health & Health Equity

**GOAL 1**

**Improve behavioral health outcomes by increasing access to resources, services and programming**

**Strategies:**

I. Provide services that directly address substance abuse, use, and misuse
II. Provide crisis intervention and trauma treatment services for adults and youth experiencing community violence or domestic violence
III. Employ peer support specialists to reduce waitlists and the need for police intervention
IV. Expand culturally sensitive behavioral health programming using community-based methods (e.g., cultural activities, events, parks and activity spaces)
V. Improve affordability of behavioral health counseling for adults and youth who are uninsured or underinsured
VI. Expand access to mental health services in targeted neighborhoods and qualified census tracts
VII. Provide services or outreach to promote awareness of and access to mental health services
VIII. Provide hotlines or warmlines for individuals
IX. Promote mental health services to individuals and families
### Behavioral Health & Health Equity

**Improve behavioral health outcomes by increasing access to resources, services and programming**

**COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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</table>
| Expand and promote mental health care and substance abuse treatment options | - Expand the County’s mental health and related support services. (28H)  
- Initiate a mental health communications campaign to promote awareness on how and where to get help and to help remove stigmas around seeking support (29H)  
- Increase mental and emotional health supports in our schools for our students, educators, and staff (30H)  
- Adopt the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Model (CCBHC) as a standard within our public health services, health clinics and providers (31H)  
- Increase funding and resources for substance abuse treatment, therapy, recovery and care (32H) |
| Support the mental health needs of educators, school staff, childcare workers and other front-line staff dedicated to serving families with children and older adults | - Inventory access to mental health care for employees among educational, childcare, and adult care providers and devote targeted resources to fill in gaps where needed for front line workers in these sectors (33H) |
Behavioral Health & Health Equity

Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy

Strategies:
I. Deploy innovative health equity programming for disproportionately impacted communities
II. Provide services to the uninsured/underinsured
III. Provide services to women to help reduce infant mortality
IV. Expand federal qualified health centers (FQHCs)
V. Implement place-based health services throughout Mecklenburg County to decrease neighborhood level health disparities and invest in integrated health care clinics and/or urgent care centers in which health care providers are trained in culturally relevant care
VI. Address parental preparedness to provide quality care to children from birth to 3, older children, and/or teens through parental education and/or home visits
VII. Employ community health workers, public benefits navigators, and/or implement community violence intervention programming
VIII. Provide services that directly address the Social Determinants of Health
IX. Provide support for vulnerable populations to access medical or public health services
X. Provide services or outreach to promote awareness of and access to health services
Behavioral Health & Health Equity

Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy

COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empower people, providers, and partners with health care information</td>
<td>• Create and implement a comprehensive health communications and community outreach/engagement program (1H)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conduct an on-going, annual COVID-19 data collection and community survey (2H)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Partner with healthcare providers and specialists to host public health forums (3H)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Connect with visual art professional and students, schools, universities, organizations, and street artists to create educational content via neighborhood art (4H)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Partner with local faith communities, higher education institutions, libraries, athletic facilities, grassroots networks, and community organizations for outreach (5H)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Evaluate and extend the County COVID-19 Ambassadors Program as an Epidemic Prevention Ambassadors Program (6H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce time and distance barriers separating people from their health care options</td>
<td>• Create or identify an existing map/directory of area clinics and health care facilities and make these locations easily available to the public (11H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outfit and deploy mobile health care clinics (12H)</td>
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<td>• Develop and deploy a Health Transportation Service (13H)</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Offer Health Tailgate events (14H)</td>
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<td>• Create Medical Homes (15H)</td>
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</table>
Behavioral Health & Health Equity

GOAL 2

Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy

COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

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<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce health care affordability barriers</td>
<td>• Increase public funding for safety net providers and promote the use of community clinics, free clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) (16H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expand support for sliding scale fees based on income at Mecklenburg County health care facilities (17H)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advocate vigorously to expand Medicaid in North Carolina (18H)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop a comprehensive community health care affordability study (19H)</td>
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<td>Enhance coordination of our community’s health care efforts</td>
<td>• Establish a digital health hub and data repository (20H)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Review community/patient service access and use of health care resources within MedLink (21H)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop a strategy and increase public investments in resources for heightened acute and chronic care needs and management (22H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create and empower an on-going COVID Recovery and Renewal public body (23H)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Behavioral Health & Health Equity

Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy

COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

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<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Build trust through grassroots and community connections | • Identify and make more available (existing or new) a directory of grassroots and community-based organizations (CBO's) that are health care and health education advocates (7H)  
• Encourage healthcare providers to partner with at least two trusted community organizations operating in marginalized communities (8H)  
• Expand the County's community health workers program to help build relationships, understanding of needs, and awareness of resources between healthcare providers and residents in local areas and communities (9H)  
• Place health information boards/stations in popular community places and spaces (10H) |
| Prioritize cultural awareness in healthcare | • Expand the availability of and support recruiting efforts for diverse health care workers (24H)  
• Require and provide resources for cultural competency training (25H)  
• Include a patient service and cultural sensitivity survey in after care (26H)  
• Develop culturally based health education modules (27H) |
Increase food security with individuals and families

Strategies:
I. Increase access to healthy food (i.e., fresh fruits and veggies) from all five food groups and accommodating to specialized diets to include expanding the selection of healthy food (e.g., food distribution centers, convenience stores, mobile food trucks, delivery services, and community markets)
II. Address food deserts with creative and innovative strategies
III. Reduce barriers for individuals to gain access to food support

COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

<table>
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<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Expand access at the neighborhood level with more small pop-up markets, gardens and mobile fresh food buses (5C)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Expand awareness of available food and nutrition resources and locations (6C)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide transportation resources and options to get people to food resources (7C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide resources for volunteer recruitment and deployment among food providers (8C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partner with trusted organizations serving undocumented residents (9C)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bolster community food security efforts and reduce the footprint of food deserts
Reduce and prevent homelessness & housing instability*

Strategies:
I. Cultivate partnerships to increase inventory of affordable housing and/or affordable housing subsidies
II. Expand access to sustainable, affordable housing opportunities and funding streams
III. Expand educational programming and communication campaigns to public on how to access affordable housing resources
IV. Support disproportionately impacted populations through rental subsidies and/or critical home repairs
V. Decrease housing income discrimination
VI. Offer workforce housing
VII. Offer shelters and transitional housing to individuals experiencing homelessness
VIII. Provide homelessness prevention services
IX. Offer housing navigation assistance to facilitate moves to neighborhoods with high economic opportunity
X. Offer an Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (EMAP)
XI. Implement incentives for property owners and developers to invest in affordable housing initiatives
XII. Build a day services center

*Note: Additional strategies will be included after the approval of the Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan
Affordable Housing & Homelessness

Reduce and prevent homelessness & housing instability*

COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

<table>
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<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide aid and assistance for affordable housing, support for renters,</td>
<td>• Provide direct financial assistance as eviction moratoriums end (1E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homeowners, landlords, and people experiencing homelessness in our community</td>
<td>• Provide increased supports to organizations providing temporary or crisis assistance to those experiencing homelessness or in imminent threat of homelessness (2E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expand resources for deposit, application fee and service fee waivers</td>
<td>• Increase resources to agencies involved in supporting tenants’ awareness of rights, responsibilities, and resources in times of need (4E)</td>
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<tr>
<td>that are often barriers to those experiencing homelessness (3E)</td>
<td>• Advocate for changes in use of background checks and criminal history as criteria for rental approvals (5E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase resources to agencies involved in supporting tenants’ awareness of rights, responsibilities, and resources in times of need (4E)</td>
<td>• Explore prioritizing HOPE program awareness efforts and requests by zip code (6E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advocate for changes in use of background checks and criminal history as criteria for rental approvals (5E)</td>
<td>• Lead a strategy focused specifically on enabling access to affordable housing for full-time artists in our community (18E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase support for artists and the organizations that support them in the community

* Note: Additional strategies will be included after the approval of the Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan
Workforce & Economic Development

Increase access to training and employment opportunities to meet workforce demands of now and the future

Strategies:
I. Increase development opportunities for adults and youth through diverse job preparedness training, resume review, job placement services, job retention strategies, and/or career mentoring
II. Educate students on college and career readiness opportunities, including the trades
III. Target workforce development initiatives on skilled trades, STEM careers, or other industries with difficulties connecting workers with employment opportunities
## Workforce & Economic Development

### GOAL 1

Increase access to training and employment opportunities to meet workforce demands of now and the future

### COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase access to work and employment opportunities by reducing technological, transportation and workforce barriers</td>
<td>- Revisit and analyze the recommendations of the Opportunity Task Force (now Leading on Opportunity) to grow economic mobility. Identify specific areas, programs or initiatives that the County could leverage for expedited progress (7E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Invest more resources in closing the digital divide in our community faster through efforts in place now (8E)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Increase investments in programs for job training, workforce preparedness and connecting job seekers to employers with open positions (12E)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Support efforts to invest in local infrastructure as a tool for job creation and for expanding transportation access to employment opportunities (13E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase support for artists and the organizations that support them in the community</td>
<td>- Expand support for the Culture Blocks program to provide more direct employment opportunities for artists and creatives (15E)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Create or partner to resource and sustain existing community arts centers in challenged local areas and neighborhoods (16E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increase funding Arts &amp; Science Council (ASC) with specific focus on arts equity, inclusion, access, and connection to challenged communities (17E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strengthen organizations by equipping them with the tools to be resilient and provide work as aligned to County programs and services

Strategies:
I. Offer increased training opportunities to organizations on resiliency & operational capacity to better meet the needs of individuals disproportionately impacted by the pandemic
II. Develop a non-profit incubator program
## Workforce & Economic Development

**GOAL 2**

Strengthen organizations by equipping them with the tools to be resilient and provide work as aligned to County programs and services

### COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase access to work and employment opportunities by reducing technological, transportation and workforce barriers</td>
<td>• Invest with partners in additional rounds of Open for Business programs and Small Business Partner Support, Access to Capital, Workforce Partner and Innovate Business grants (10E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase support for artists and the organizations that support them in the community</td>
<td>• Incentivize training and hiring of second-chance workers for Mecklenburg County employment opportunities, companies doing business in Mecklenburg County today and for companies considering locating to Mecklenburg County (11E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explore programs to sustain small businesses in our local economy by matching these small businesses that offer goods and services to community customers with large corporations in our area (such as Amazon) that have marketing, logistics and distribution capacity (14E)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Expand support for the Culture Blocks program to provide more direct employment opportunities for artists and creatives (15E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create or partner to resource and sustain existing community arts centers in challenged local areas and neighborhoods (16E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase funding Arts &amp; Science Council (ASC) with specific focus on arts equity, inclusion, access, and connection to challenged communities (17E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workforce & Economic Development

**GOAL 2**

Strengthen organizations by equipping them with the tools to be resilient and provide work as aligned to County programs and services

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<td>• Make special effort for, and focus resources towards, non-profit organizations located in towns and rural areas of the county that serve residents outside the urban core and Charlotte city footprint (1C)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Expand awareness, use and resources of 211 (2C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create a digital hub or establish a partnership with an existing provider (such as Share Charlotte) that can link non-profits to each other for sharing of information and resources, as well as to donors and volunteers who can help (3C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish a non-profit/grassroots mentorship program or partner with existing mentorship programs (such as Unite Charlotte) (4C)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prioritize assistance for non-profit organizations and boost investments in agencies meeting critical needs for people most impacted by COVID-19 and in areas most historically challenged.
Enhance the land and water quality through strengthened infrastructure

Strategies:
I. Invest in projects within qualified census tracts
II. Invest in projects that align to the EPA Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds requirements
Parks, Environment & Infrastructure

Improve the physical infrastructure for parks, amenities, and greenways

Strategies:
I. Reinvest in existing Mecklenburg County parks, amenities, and greenways within qualified census tracts

COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Strategy & Actions Recommendation:

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<td>Increase access to work and employment opportunities by reducing technological, transportation and workforce barriers</td>
<td>• Require publicly available, broadband access to WiFi in all County public spaces (9E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Childcare & Early Childhood Development

**GOAL 1**

Increase access to affordable, quality childcare and education for children and families

**Strategies:**

I. Expand access to early childhood development (birth to 3) programs and services
II. Expand childcare and childhood education services (3-5) in disproportionately impacted communities
III. Expand and invest in family childcare providers to develop economic development and workforce development opportunities
IV. Expand home visiting programs for families with younger children
V. Enhance services for child-welfare involved and foster care youth
VI. Expand eligibility for childcare to working families who do not meet the income threshold