Guilford County
Emergency Management Program Strategic Plan
FY 2016-2018

Guilford County Emergency Services
Emergency Management Division
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About Guilford County

A Brief History

Guilford County has a robust history that dates back to before the Revolutionary War. Prior to its formal founding, the land that now comprises Guilford County was inhabited by American Indians and eventually European immigrants who had relocated from the northern British colonies. Following the Regulator Movement, British officials governing the colony approved the formation of a new county that included parts of then Rowan and Orange Counties. The process to form the new county began on December 5, 1770, and on January 26, 1771, Guilford County was officially formed. The county was named for Francis North, 1st Earl of Guilford, whose father was the British Prime Minister during this time.

Population and Characteristics

Guilford County is located in the central part of North Carolina in a region known as the Piedmont Triad. It is bordered by Rockingham, Alamance, Randolph, Davidson, and Forsyth Counties.

The county has a population of over 500,000 and is the third most populated county in the state. Guilford County has a land area of around 649 square miles and also includes approximately 8 square miles of water. The county includes two major cities, Greensboro and High Point, and eight towns, Gibsonville, Jamestown, Oak Ridge, Pleasant Garden, Sedalia, Stokesdale, Summerfield, and Whitsett.

There are several universities within the county, in addition to a variety of recreational and entertainment venues. During the Revolutionary War, on March 15, 1781, a pivotal battle was fought in Guilford County. Called the Battle of Guilford Court House, the Americans lost the battle but inflicted such heavy losses on the Loyalist troops that it helped lead to the surrender of those troops in Yorktown, which signified the end of the war. This area is now designated as a National Park in Guilford County. In addition to the National Park, the county owns seven regional parks and eleven nature preserves.

There are several major roads and highways that go through Guilford County, the largest of these being Interstates 40 and 85, which join up in Greensboro. The county also includes an

international airport, the Piedmont Triad International Airport and two rail services, North Carolina Railroad Company and Norfolk Southern, which run through Guilford County. These rail services, Norfolk Southern in particular, are responsible for the transport of numerous hazardous materials through the county.

Climate

Guilford County has a subtropical climate with four distinct seasons and moderate temperatures in the fall, winter, and spring. The county's average annual rainfall is 43.6 inches and the average annual snowfall is 7.6 inches. The average number of days with any measurable precipitation is 104.

Form of Government

In 1926, Guilford adopted the Board-Manager form of government, at that time electing their Chairman, J. Al Rankin, to the County Manager position. Today, the Board consists of nine commissioners, eight elected by districts and one elected by the county at-large. They serve as the primary administrative and legislative body within the county, establish policies and laws, and appoint officials. The County Manager is appointed by the Board and serves as its administrative arm; ensuring that the daily operations of the county run smoothly, recommending alternatives to existing policies in order to accomplish county objectives, and routinely reporting on county activities and resources.

Guilford County Mission, Vision and Values

The Guilford County Board of Commissioners adopted the following mission, vision, and core values in the spring of 2015.

Guilford County Mission

To provide efficient, effective responsive government that meets the public's needs while maintaining a high performance workforce that provides exceptional services that supports a high quality of life and sustainable economic growth.

Guilford County Vision

Guilford County Government will be a high performing local government organization that maintains a culture which embraces diversity, strives for equality, inspires individuals and organizational excellence in an effective, fiscally sound and sustainable manner; promotes quality development while protecting the character of communities and citizens engagement in supporting community health, citizen welfare and prosperity, public safety and educational opportunities in a business friendly environment.

- Goal and Results Orientation
- Unity and Teamwork
- Integrity and Honesty
- Loyalty and Trustworthiness
- Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability
- Open Communication and Transparency
- Responsive and Citizen Focused
- Diversity

Organizational Overview

Program Overview and Structure

The current Emergency Management Program was formed on July 1, 2003 through a Guilford County Board of Commissioners budget ordinance ending the previous City / County consolidated Emergency Management Organization. Beginning in July of 2003, Guilford County began building an all hazards, Emergency Management Program by reengaging its partner agencies and utilizing the framework of NFPA 1600 and identified best practices of program management.

Initially the Program was coordinated by two full time staff members of the Emergency Management Division of Guilford County Emergency Services and a new Emergency Operations Plan and supporting documents were created. Since 2003, the Emergency Management division has grown to five full time emergency managers and two part time emergency management technicians. These individuals, working for Guilford County, coordinate roughly 120 partner agencies in a comprehensive, all hazards, Emergency Management Program built on best practices and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards.

The Emergency Management Program utilizes a framework of advisory committees, working groups, and partnerships to accomplish the mission of a well-rounded Emergency Management Program.

Strategic Planning Process

Beginning in the spring of 2015, the Emergency Management program engaged all of its stakeholders in a strategic planning process for the Guilford County Emergency Management Program. This process began with a survey to gather stakeholder thoughts on a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) process for the program. This data was reviewed during two strategic planning retreats to draft a new vision and mission for the Emergency Management Program as well as draft strategic goals and objectives for the Program.

These strategic planning elements were then compiled into a strategic planning document which was sent out for stakeholder review and feedback. The Guilford County Emergency Management Program Strategic Plan covers the timeframe of 2015 – 2018 and will be reviewed yearly by the Emergency Management Advisory Committee.

Vision and Mission

The vision of the Guilford County Emergency Management Program is:

A community resilient from all threats and hazards.

The mission of the Guilford County Emergency Management Program is:

To promote a whole community that is resilient and sustainable from all threats and hazards. This will be met through a proactive and professional Emergency Management Program that fosters partnerships within the community to create a model of excellence for preventing, protecting against, responding to, mitigating, and recovering from emergencies and disasters.

Program Goals and Objectives

Based on findings from the SWOT survey, the Emergency Management Program identified the following goals, objectives, and target milestones.

Goal 1: Enhance public outreach efforts to develop a "Culture of Preparedness" in Guilford County

Supporting Objective	Milestone
Adopt a whole community approach to emergency management that promotes equitable access and integration of historically underserved and at-risk populations and organizations in emergency planning processes	Ongoing
Increase user registrations and community awareness of the GEANI community notification system and larger community notification strategy	Q3 – 2016
Promote a "culture of preparedness" through marketing of the ReadyGuilford program, Emergency Management Program as a resource, and other community partners	Ongoing
Develop and host trainings for the community on the purpose and operations of the Guilford County Emergency Operations Center and Guilford County Emergency Management on-scene operations capabilities	Q1 – 2016
Further develop relationships with partner agencies, businesses, industry, non-profit, and faith-based organizations to improve communications and coordination in all emergency management mission areas	Ongoing
Implement annual Emergency Support Function (ESF) and Recovery Support Function (RSF) meetings to enhance collaboration and understanding of the key Emergency Management Program responsibilities	2016

Goal 2: Continuous improvement of the Guilford County multi-agency coordination systems by improving technology, establishing redundant infrastructure, and strengthening capabilities for interagency coordination during emergencies and disasters

Supporting Objective	Milestone
Continue to improve the Guilford County WebEOC System and research new technologies to support collaboration during disasters	Q4 – 2015
Implement a resource management process to align with state and federal resource management best practices	Q4 – 2015
Continually ensure that all primary and backup systems are in working order	Ongoing
Design, build, and operate a new Emergency Operations Center that meets the needs of the Emergency Management Program	2017
Document and track the Guilford County Corrective Action Program to validate continuous improvement in the Emergency Management Program	Ongoing

Goal 3: Assure that Guilford County maintains a comprehensive all hazards training and exercise program to evaluate and test all aspects of local emergency management systems

Supporting Objective	Milestone
Complete a comprehensive community based needs assessment regarding training and exercise requirements for the Emergency Management Program	Q3 – 2015
Develop and implement a multi-year training and exercise plan	Q4 - 2015

Goal 4: Strengthen internal emergency management planning and response operations within the Emergency Management Division

Supporting Objective	Milestone
Provided cross training to team members for critical functions and for professional development	Ongoing
Define a standard level of service for emergency management on-scene operations	Q1 – 2016
Educate emergency management partners on the roles and responsibilities of the emergency management division for on scene and EOC operations	Q2 – 2016
Ensure contact information for all key partner agencies is maintained for planning support and emergency operations	Ongoing

Goal 5: Support stakeholders in the development and maintenance of key responsibilities in the Emergency Management Program

Supporting Objective	Milestone
Evaluate enhancements to mass care capabilities to include special medical needs and functional needs support.	2017
Support the creation of a countywide multi-agency Incident Management Team program at the NIMS Type IV level	2017
Evaluate the potential for closer integration of public health preparedness planning, special event planning, and special operations planning within the Emergency Management Program	2018
Apply for the FEMA Integrated Emergency Management Course for the Emergency Management Program	2018
Increase planning resources to meet the needs of the healthcare community based on proposed changes to the Center for Medicaid / Medicare disaster planning requirements	2017

Method for Implementation

The Guilford County Emergency Management Division will work to include each of the strategic planning goals and objectives into yearly work plans and coordinate actions with the appropriate committee or agency. Where additional funding or executive buy-in is required, the Emergency Management Division will include proposals through the yearly budgeting process for elected official review. Progress on strategic planning initiatives will be included as a section in annual reports and documented in the internal Program and Project Management System within WebEOC.