

READER'S GUIDE TO THE GUILFORD COUNTY BUDGET

The Annual Budget Document for Guilford County is grouped into primary sections, each with a specific theme and purpose. Taken together, they comprise a document designed to meet the information needs of a broad base of users. The following are the sections in the order in which they appear in the budget document.

INTRODUCTION

This section provides general introductory information on the budget, the budget development process, and overall revenues and expenditures. It includes the following sections.

- ***Manager's Message***

The Manager's message describes the objectives for the budget based on priorities previously discussed by the Board of Commissioners. It covers important issues such as the tax rate, budget issues and objectives, changes in services, fund balance, personnel, schools, and other changes that are incorporated into the annual budget.

- ***Budget Ordinance***

The annual budget is formally adopted at the time the Board adopts a budget ordinance. The ordinance includes specific expenditure and revenue appropriations for the County's departments, as well as the ad valorem tax rates and levies. The ordinance also delineates the authority of the County Manager to amend the budget during the year and to enter into certain contractual agreements. Other provisions cover restrictions on contingency funds and compensation/allowances of the County Commissioners.

- ***Budget Development and Amendment Information***

This section includes a description of the budget development process used to prepare the annual budget. It includes a copy of the budget development calendar, as well as an outline of the requirements that must be followed to amend the budget during the year.

This section also includes a summary of the budget financial guidelines that are used when developing the annual budget.

Finally, this section discusses the fund structure used to account for the financial affairs of the County, as well as the specific ways expenses and revenues are reported in the budget (Basis of Budgeting) and in the annual financial report (Basis of Accounting).

- ***Organizational Chart*** of County functional areas and related departments.

- ***Vision, Mission, Priorities & Focus Areas*** of the Board of Commissioners for the County.

- ***Summary of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances***

This section includes several tables of summary information that provide the reader with a snapshot of the overall resources budgeted by the County. The data is presented in summary form for all budgeted funds and by individual major fund.

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY INFORMATION

This section provides additional information regarding the General Fund, the primary operating fund of Guilford County.

- It includes a discussion of the major **expenditure** and **revenue** categories, information on historical trends, and details regarding the development of the estimates included in the adopted budget. Also included is a table showing how much **county funding is provided for each department**. Some departments have access to non-county sources of revenue, which reduces the amount of locally-raised funds (e.g., property tax, sales tax) that is needed to support department services. This chart shows how the county allocates the funding over which it has the most control.
- A comparison of prior and current year **staffing levels** and changes is also presented.

COUNTY MISSION, VISION & FOCUS AREAS

This section provides information about the County's vision, mission, and broad community focus areas. County focus areas identified in the strategic plan guide many of the decisions made in the development of the budget.



**Organizational
Excellence**



**Healthy
People**



Public Safety



**Economic
Development**



Education



**Recreation
& Culture**



Infrastructure

Priorities icons and color bars appear at the top of each department page offering an easy way to tie specific departmental services to the broader goals of the community. Also identified are specific priorities that each department works to achieve.

FUNCTIONAL AREAS and DEPARTMENTS

County services are grouped into six general functions: **Education, Human Services, Public Safety, Community Services, General Government, and Support Services.**

Each function has its own section in this document. The first two pages of each section include **summary information regarding the overall expenditures and revenues for each function.**

The remaining pages of each functional section are comprised of individual **department pages.** These pages provide additional details about the County's specific departments.

The department service pages link each department to one or more county goals and priorities, as indicated by color bars and icons at the top of each page. The pages also show the expenditures and revenues associated with each department in a Budget Summary. Actual expenditures and revenues for FY 2017, the adopted budget for FY 2018, the amended budget for FY 2018 (includes changes to the adopted budget during the year), the department's requested budget for FY 2019, and the Manager's Recommended Budget for FY 2019 are included. Also displayed are each department's purpose and goals, budget highlights, major accomplishments, performance measures, and future issues.

DEBT REPAYMENT & INFORMATION

The County issues debt, primarily through the issuance of general obligation bonds, to help fund large capital projects including new schools, detention facilities, emergency services bases, and other government needs.

- This section includes information about the annual **debt service payments** that must be made to pay for County debt.
- A graph and chart are included to provide the reader with an understanding of the **total general obligation debt requirements** for existing and planned debt over the next 20 plus years.
- It also includes information regarding the **legal debt limits** and **local guidelines** that govern the amount of debt the County can issue.

FIRE DISTRICTS

This section includes information about the county's Rural Fire Districts that operate in areas of the county without a municipal fire department. Information about fire tax rates and the services provided by each fire district is included in this section.

OTHER FUNDS

This section contains summary information regarding the two other funds of the County that include appropriations in the adopted budget. These funds are the Room Occupancy and Tourism Development Fund, and Internal Services Fund.

MULTI-YEAR PLANS

The county engages in a number of multi-year planning processes for major expenditures.

These plans help the county prepare for major purchases in future years. This section includes plans for major facility maintenance/repair needs, major equipment purchases, technology initiatives, and vehicle replacement over the next several fiscal years.

GLOSSARY

A list of terms related to governmental budgeting and accounting.

APPENDICES

The following information is contained in the Appendices section:

- Guilford County Profile & Demographics
- Guilford County Map
- Budget Ordinance

CAPITAL

This section includes two categories: “**operating**” **capital expenditures** included in the budget (generally, items or projects that cost between \$5,000 and \$100,000) and a summary of the **major capital projects** (generally, those that cost \$100,000 or more) that are included in the County’s 10-year Capital Investment Plan (CIP).

- A **list of all operating capital expenditures** for General Fund departments is included in this section.
- In addition, the proposed CIP for the next ten years is also presented.

If you have any questions or would like more information about any part of the Guilford County budget, please call the Budget, Management & Evaluation Department at (336) 641-3275.