



JANUARY 2024 GRANT RESOURCES OPPORTUNITIES



GRANTS



NC DEPARTMENT OF DIGITAL INFORMATION, DIVISION of BROADBAND and DIGITAL EQUITY has launched its 2nd round of the **DIGITAL CHAMPION GRANT Program**; funding requests may be \$400,000 per county served to a maximum

of \$1.5M. Eligible applicants include: Community service (local governments, town, city, and county), County libraries, K-12 Schools 501(c)(3), higher education, and Councils of

Government. Projects must address at least 1 of the following digital inclusions: 1) Affordable, reliable high-speed internet; 2) Provision of internet enabled devices (computers, laptops, etc.) that meet users' needs; 3) Provide access to digital literacy and skills training; 4) Provide quality technical support; and 5) Creation of applications and online content designed to enable and encourage sufficiency, participation, and collaboration. Expanding broadband infrastructure will not be considered.

The funding invitation window is open. **Deadline: Jan. 22, 2024 at 11:59 PM.** Click on Funding Programs and Digital Equity Grant Scroll and view the Dec. 5th webinar. For more information, visit <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/news/press-releases/2023/11/09/state-office-digital-equity-and-literacy-launches-digital-champion-grant-program>.



NCDIT Launches Expanded FirstNet Network Funding Opportunity to Enhance Public Safety Applications are open for a \$2 million funding opportunity

through the North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) **FirstNet Network**. The FirstNet Network is supported by the NCDIT FirstTech team. This broadband network is designed to maintain communication during disasters and other large-scale events that may disrupt communication channels. Applications will be awarded

to projects that demonstrate the largest impact on public safety, with additional focus on unserved and

underserved areas.

Funding will be based on a project plan developed by FirstNet in consultation with the applicant. Matching funds will be required from the applicant, and NCDIT's FirstTech team will use the match rate as part of the grading scale for determining which projects to award. In-kind match will also be accepted.

Applicants must be an entity of North Carolina state government, which includes: All state government organizations; UNC System or individual schools, universities, or centers within the system; and N.C. Community College System or individual schools, colleges, or centers within the system. Only 1 application per campus will be accepted. However, the project plan can involve the deployment of several solutions or infrastructure to achieve coverage enhancement on that campus. Examples of projects include: construction of a new macro cellular tower site; small cell deployments; and temporary deployable assets to achieve needed coverage, among others.

Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis with projects that meet the selection criteria awarded as funding is available. Evaluations of the initial submissions will be conducted in March 2024 with awarded projects announced in April 2024. For more information visit, <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/news/press-releases/2023/11/15/ncdits-firsttech-team-launches-2m-funding-opportunity-expand-public-safety-broadband-network-state>.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE: STRATEGIC ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - Application Deadline: Open. Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) supports projects that promote and implement strategic community investment plans. These plans use the unique strengths of rural communities to advance prosperity. USDA Rural Development helps finance these projects to build community prosperity by using community assets, identifying resources, convening partners, and leveraging federal, state, local or private funding.

To be eligible for SECD, a project must:

- Be eligible for the covered program and be carried out in a rural area; and
- Support a multi-jurisdictional and multi-sectoral strategic community investment plan.

Visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/strategic-economic-and-community-development>.



USDA, RURAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMUNITY FACILITIES DIRECT LOAN & GRANT IN NORTH CAROLINA – This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas, such as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area. Eligible borrowers include: Public bodies, community-based non-profits, and federally recognized Tribes. Private and commercial businesses are not included.

Eligible rural areas including villages, towns, and cities with no more than 20,000 residents, including Federally Recognized Tribal Lands - according to the latest US Census Data. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment, and pay related project expenses. Examples of essential community facilities include: 1) Health care facilities such as hospitals, medical clinics, dental clinics, nursing homes or assisted living facilities; 2) Public facilities such as town halls, courthouses, airport hangars or street improvements; 3) Community support services such as childcare centers, community centers, fairgrounds, or transitional housing; 4) Public safety services such as fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, public works vehicles or equipment; 5) Educational services such as museums, libraries, or private schools; and 6) Utility services such as telemedicine or distance learning equipment. **Applications are accepted year-round through the local USDA, Rural Development office** via <https://www.rd.usda.gov/find-your-local-area-office>. For more information visit, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/nc>



USDA, RURAL DEVELOPMENT: WATER & WASTE DISPOSAL LOAN & GRANT PROGRAM in NORTH CAROLINA - It provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. This program assists qualified applicants who are not otherwise able to obtain commercial credit on reasonable

terms – through long-term, low-interest loans, and if funds are available, a grant may be combined with a loan if necessary to maintain reasonable keep user costs.

Eligible applicants include: Most state and local governmental entities, private nonprofits, and Federally-recognized tribes. Areas that may be served include: Rural areas and towns with populations of 10,000 or less -- and Tribal lands in rural areas. (To determine if a property is in an eligible rural area, click on one of the USDA Loan program links - <https://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do> - and then select the Property Eligibility Program link. When you select a Rural Development program, you will be directed to the appropriate property eligibility screen for the Rural Development loan program you selected.)

Applications are accepted year-round through the local USDA, Rural Development office via <https://www.rd.usda.gov/find-your-local-area-office>.

Funds may be used to finance the acquisition, construction, or improvement of:

- Drinking water sourcing, treatment, storage and distribution;
- Sewer collection, transmission, treatment and disposal;
- Solid waste collection, disposal and closure; and
- Storm water collection, transmission and disposal.

In some cases, funding may also be available for related activities such as:

- Legal and engineering fees;
- Land acquisition, water and land rights, permits and equipment;
- Start-up operations and maintenance;
- Interest incurred during construction;
- Purchase of facilities to improve service or prevent loss of service; and
- Other costs determined to be necessary for completion of the project.

For more information, visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/nc>.



USDA, RURAL DEVELOPMENT: SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING REPAIR LOANS & GRANTS in NORTH CAROLINA: It is also known as the Section 504 Home Repair Program to provide loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards.

To qualify, you must:

- Be the homeowner and occupy the house;
- Be unable to obtain affordable credit elsewhere;
- Have a household income that does not exceed the **very low limit** by county; and
- Be age 62 or older - for grants.

Loans may be used to repair, improve or modernize homes or remove health and safety hazards. A maximum loan is \$7,500 and a maximum grant is \$10,000. The loan interest rate is fixed at 1% for 20 years. Full title service is required if the total outstanding balance on Section 504 loans is greater than \$25,000.

Grants must be used to remove health and safety hazards. Grants have a lifetime limit of \$10,000 and must be repaid if the property is sold in less than 3 years. **Applications are available year-round, as funding lasts.** For more information view, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants/nc>.



USDA, RURAL DEVELOPMENT: RURAL HOMES LOANS (DIRECT PROGRAM)

- It is also referred to as the Section 502 Direct Loan Program to assist low- and very-low-income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability. Payment assistance is a type of subsidy that reduces the mortgage payment for a short time.

Borrowers are required to repay all or a portion of the payment subsidy received over the life of the loan when the title to the property transfers or when the borrower is no longer living in the dwelling.

A number of factors are considered when determining an applicant's eligibility for Single Family Direct Home Loans. At a minimum, an applicant's interest in obtaining a direct loan must have an adjusted family income that is at or below the applicable low-income limit for the area where he/she wishes to buy a house and he/she must

demonstrate a willingness and ability to repay debt.

Applicants must:

- Be without decent, safe and sanitary housing;
- Be unable to obtain a loan from other resources on terms and conditions that he/she can reasonably be expected to meet;
- Agree to occupy the property as his/her primary residence;
- Have the legal capacity to incur a loan obligation;
- Meet citizenship or eligible noncitizen requirements; and
- Not be suspended or debarred from participation in federal programs.

Properties financed with direct loan funds must not have market value in excess of the applicable area loan limit and must not be designed for income producing activities. **Applications are accepted year-round through the local USDA, Rural Development office** via <https://www.rd.usda.gov/find-your-local-area-office>.

Search <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs/single-family-housing-direct-home-loans/nc>.



USDA, RURAL DEVELOPMENT: TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE LOANS AND LOAN GUARANTEES - Application Deadline: Open.

USDA Rural Development offers financial assistance to eligible service providers that will construct, improve, or expand telecommunication and broadband networks in rural areas. Applications will be accepted from entities that provide telecommunications in qualified rural areas, which include: State and local governmental entities; federally recognized Tribes; non-profits,

including cooperatives, and limited dividend or mutual associations; and for-profit businesses (must be a corporation or limited liability company).

Eligible areas are towns with a population of 5,000 or less, those that are without telecommunications facilities, or areas where the applicant is the recognized telecommunications provider. Contact the local RD office to determine whether the proposed service area qualifies via <https://www.rd.usda.gov/find-your-local-area-office>. For more information on other programs administered by RUS Telecommunications please visit, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/telecom-programs>.

Types of available funding include:

- Cost-of-Money Loans are direct loans from USDA Rural Utilities Service.
- Loan Guarantees of up to 80% allow private lenders, including the Federal Financing Bank (FFB), to extend credit to qualified borrowers in rural areas.
- Hardship Loans may be used, at the sole discretion of USDA Rural Utilities Service, to assist applicants in meeting financial feasibility requirements for applications to serve underserved areas.



ALBEMARLE-PAMLICO NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP (APNEP) ENGAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP GRANT:

APNEP offers funding for Engagement & Stewardship projects on a regular basis - for environmental projects that increase community stewardship, volunteerism, and environmental literacy within the Albemarle-Pamlico region. APNEP grants may be of interest to coastal non-profits,

educators, local governments, community organizations, regional planners, agricultural communities, and other watershed partners. Most recently, APNEP has funded several outdoor classroom projects that serve the dual purposes of environmental education and water quality restoration, and implementation projects that benefit stormwater runoff, coastal and watershed planning efforts, and best management practice implementation.

The availability of annual funding to be awarded for multiple projects generally is \$40,000-\$80,000. APNEP is currently **accepting applications until February 15, 2024.** See <https://apnep.nc.gov/resources/grant-opportunities>.



GOLDEN LEAF FOUNDATION: FLOOD MITIGATION PROGRAM - Golden LEAF's program awards will not exceed \$1,000,000. Projects requesting more than \$500,000 must complete the application addendum found on the Flood Mitigation Program webpage and submit the addendum with the application.

Eligible projects include:

- Construction of new or improvement of existing publicly owned stormwater infrastructure, including natural drainage infrastructure and flood control equipment.
- Repair of existing stormwater infrastructure damaged or destroyed by flooding, which must include improvements to mitigate against flooding.
- Engineering expenses related to planning and development of flood mitigation solutions. (See guidelines for additional detail on eligible use of funds in this category.)

Characteristics of competitive proposals include:

- Efforts to mitigate against hazards with a frequency beyond a hurricane or other named storm.
- Clear benefit for residents, businesses, and other entities within a community with priority on those where flooding poses a risk for life, health, and safety.
- A demonstrated likelihood of success and feasibility demonstrated by engineering reports and analysis by professional engineers.
- A current (*within the last 6 months*) estimate of probable cost or another similar document.
- Linked to a comprehensive stormwater assessment or planning effort with community support.
- Sustainable outcomes that can be maintained following use of funds.
- Leveraging of non-Golden LEAF funds or demonstrating that local funds are unavailable and/or insufficient to complete the project.

Funds may only be awarded to units of local government. Local governments from all 100 counties are eligible. For purposes of this program, units of local governments include counties and cities and their boards, agencies, commissions, authorities, and institutions. The **next deadline** for the program is **Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 12:00 PM** with applications **to be considered by the Golden LEAF Board on June 6, 2024**. For more information, visit <https://goldenleaf.org/mitigation/>.



NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (NCEM) is now accepting applications for grants funded through the 2023 Appropriations Act, S.L. 2023-134, § 5.6(f), the **Emergency Management Disaster Relief and Mitigation Fund**. Eligible applicants are state agencies, units of local government, public authorities, and nonprofit organizations. Funding can be used for flood mitigation, transportation infrastructure resilience against natural disasters, and assistance with local matching to draw down

federal mitigation funds. Initial funding for this notice is anticipated to be \$25 million. Projects can be 100% funded with no cost share and are paid on a reimbursement basis. Grant administration costs are not eligible. **Applications must be received by NCEM no later than Close of Business (5pm) on January 31, 2024**. Applications must be submitted to the following email address: NCEMLTR.grants@ncdps.gov.



NCDOT, STATE PLANNING and RESEARCH (SPR) Funds: The SPR Grant is a reimbursement-based program, and ECC's 2 RPOs are unable to encumber funds that might be necessary to process invoices during the reimbursement process. In our region, grant recipients will provide 5% local match, the state reimburses 15%, and the federal government reimburses 80%. Unfortunately, the ECC's fund balance is insufficient to sustain and supplement the transactions that could be expected while it is administering this program, which directly impacts the RPO budget.

The plan or study is contracted out by the RPO to a qualified planning or engineering firm to work Full Time on the project; a steering committee may collaborate with the firm, the RPO, and local officials - to guide the project. To apply, reach out to your RPO: **Senior Transportation Planner, Becca Eversole, Down East RPO at beversole@eccog.org**, for these 4 counties -Carteret, Craven (outside New Bern MPO), Jones, and Pamlico. **Transportation Planner, Mickey Anderson, Eastern Carolina RPO at manderson@eccog.org**, for the other 4 counties - Duplin, Greene, Lenoir, and Wayne County (outside Goldsboro MPO). The application **deadline is February 29th, 2024**.



NC DOT, CARBON REDUCTION PLAN (CRP) GRANTS: The CRP grant program (resulted from the American Rescue Plan) provides funding for local projects with a goal of reducing carbon emissions. Guidelines for these grants are left intentionally open-ended, leaving municipalities and counties with a wide range of options for seek funds. Projects may range from purchasing new EV transit vehicles (subject to Buy America), new traffic signalization, roundabouts, bike lanes, greenways, sidewalks, and others. The CRP grant program, as per most federal programs, requires a 20% local match for all grants awarded.

CRP projects are locally administered, but DOT can be used for assistance. If any entity is interested in applying

for CRP funding, apply through *DERPO* or *ECRPO*. **NCDOT is accepting applications on a rolling, quarterly basis.** For a CRP summary, visit the spring 2023 overview, [Carbon-Reduction-Program-RPO-Summary-Sheet.pdf \(eccog.org\)](#).



COMMUNITY WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING GRANT PROGRAM

(CWRAR): Proposals are now being accepted for the 2024 Grant Program. Download the 2024 CWRAR Grant request for proposals by PDF

<https://www.deq.nc.gov/environmental-assistance-and-customer-service/local-govt/2024-cwrar-rfp/download?attachment>. This grant program is a recurring annual funding opportunity for local governments to build lasting capacity to divert materials from the waste stream and / or increase public awareness of recycling. **Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on Thurs., Feb. 15, 2024.** For more information or assistance, please contact

Sandy Skolochenko, sandy.skolochenko@deq.nc.gov at (919) 707-8147.



MULTIFAMILY RECYCLING GRANT PROGRAM:

The NCDEQ grant offers funding to initiate or expand multifamily recycling programs within the state and is open to local governments, recycling businesses or non-profits, multifamily property owners or management companies, public housing authorities, and colleges and universities for off-campus housing. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.** Search,

<https://www.deq.nc.gov/environmental-assistance-and-customer-service/multifamily-recycling-grant-rfp/open>. For more information or assistance

please contact Elise Traywick, elise.traywick@deq.nc.gov at (919) 707-8135.



T-Mobile partnered with Main Streets America to provide **T-MOBILE HOMETOWN**

GRANTS: Applications are due quarterly and are intended only for “shovel-ready projects” to foster local relationships through technology upgrades or the arts, and in outdoor spaces or community centers. The **spring deadline for applications is open from January to March 29.** Elected officials, town managers/employees, tribal leaders, or non-profit community leaders from small towns with population less than 50,000 qualify for a maximum grant of

\$50,000. For more information see, <https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/honmetown-grants>.



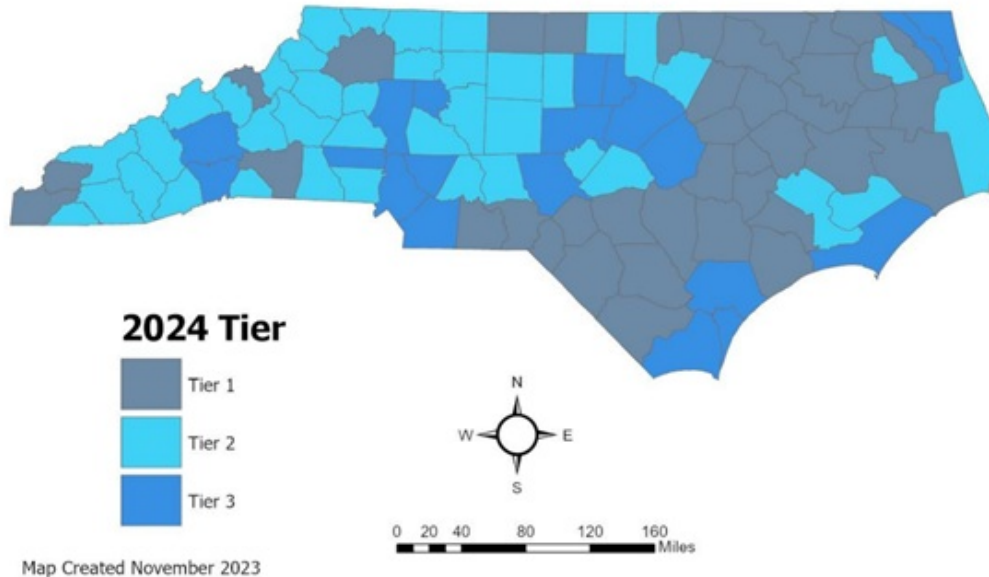
CREATIVE GIVE BACK CHALLENGE is open and accepting applications. Creative EDC's 11th Annual Give Back Challenge will offer an award of up to \$25,000 in consulting services to spur creative economic development projects. Creative EDC has expertise in strategic planning, product development, organizational development, downtown and small business development, entrepreneurship, and many other areas of economic development. Units of local government and nonprofit economic development

organizations in NC are eligible, which also includes SC and VA. Communities do not have to be economically distressed. The types of projects we will consider are as wide-ranging as the creativity of the applicant pool. The staff-selected finalist projects are reviewed and assessed by an independent Review Panel of strategic partners who select the winner. **Applications are due February 19, 2024 by 5:00 PM.** For more information, including examples of prior selections and details about the application process, please go to:

<https://creativeedc.com/paying-it-forward/the-creative-give-back/aboutapplication/>.

UPDATES

2024 County Tier Designations



(Source: NC Department of Commerce)



ECC will provide a Transportation Training session on Feb. 13, 2024, from 9:00-12:00 in ECC's Conference Room. This training is geared towards elected officials, with an emphasis on newly elected officials, and will give an overview of NCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), and the SPOT Prioritization process used to add new projects to the STIP. We will have an overview of the Strategic Transportation Improvements law, the process to create a new STIP and the role played by a Rural Planning Organization (RPO). We will also discuss the Prioritization process, which gets a new transportation project from concept to construction. North Carolina's prioritization method is known as SPOT, and we will go over it step by step. This is an in-person training, and we hope to see you there. If there is a need to have a virtual option for attendance, please contact Becca Eversole at beversole@eccog.org or Mickey Anderson at manderson@eccog.org.



ARPA ROUNDTABLE, "CONNECTING THE DOTS" BEST PRACTICES FOR SPENDING, APPROVING, & REPORTING FUNDS – Jan. 17, 10:00-11:30 AM. It is a virtual roundtable discussion with representatives from the UNC, SOG - and local municipal government. This webinar is free to all participants, but pre-registration is required. Please use this link, https://members.nclm.org/Courses-Events/Live-Events-Webinars/Meeting-Home-Page?meetingid={162B445A-0996-EE11-BE37-00224809C89A}&msdynmkt_trackingcontext=b2d6b424-242b-4113-858a-c70do8813cdb You will receive a separate Zoom confirmation link after completing registration.

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable to release details of new Rural Economic Development toolkit
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable is hosting a webinar to showcase the key components of the second edition of their Rural Economic Development Toolkit. It is designed to help provide practical ways rural communities can diversify their economies through outdoor recreation. The webinar will highlight new research and resources that are available within the toolkit, as well as highlight some of the strategies that communities have found successful. **The webinar will be Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 2pm ET.** To register, please go to: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VtZkqdo0TfiA2eLYoSx4sw#/registration.

ARP UPDATES



“This is a reminder that we will continue with weekly American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARP/CSLFRF) Office Hours this year. Once a month, we will have an expanded 2-hour session for those new to ARP/CSLFRF (or for those who want a refresher on the basics)—we’ll call it ARP Basics. (Note below there is a new Zoom log-in for all Office Hour sessions.)

Look for more resources in the coming months. In the meantime, feel free to continue sending questions my way outside of Office Hours, or work with your COG, the League of Municipalities, or the Association of County Commissioners to navigate the expenditure options and compliance requirements.” *Kara Millonzi, UNC, SOG*

UNC, SOG ARP Office Hours:

- Friday, January 19 — 8:30-9:30 AM (General local government finance, including ARP)
- Wednesday, January 24 — 8:30-9:30 AM (ARP specific)
- Monday, January 29 — 12:00-1:00 PM (General local government finance, including ARP)
- Tuesday, February 6 — 8:30-9:30 AM (ARP specific)
- Tuesday, February 13 — 8:30-9:30 AM (General local government finance, including ARP)
- Thursday, February 22 — 12:00-1:00 PM (ARP specific)
- Tuesday, February 27 — 8:30-9:30 AM (General local government finance, including ARP)

NEW ZOOM LOG IN

Here is the new Zoom Log in for all Office Hour Sessions:

<https://zoom.us/j/95481909044?pwd=U1E2VHNhN2luSoJEYTJqETZTMFRWdz09>

Meeting ID: 954 8190 9044

Passcode: 779726

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,95481909044# US

+19292056099,,95481909044# US (New York)



TREASURY RELEASES UPDATED P&E REPORT USER GUIDE AND COMPLIANCE GUIDANCE: U.S. Treasury updated 2 key guidance documents for the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Program (SLFRF) — the **Compliance and Reporting Guidance SLFRF-Compliance-and-Reporting-Guidance.pdf** (treasury.gov) and the **January 2024 Project and Expenditure User Guide Jan-2024-PE-Report-User-Guide.pdf** (treasury.gov). Both documents were updated to clarify that a UEI is not required

with respect to beneficiaries and contractors. However, counties must still maintain documentation to ensure that contractors are in good standing in accordance with paragraph (H) of Appendix II of Part 200 of the Uniform Guidance. Both updated documents also provide further assistance with programmatic data (performance indicators) required for Tier 1 Recipients. The January 2024 P&E User Guide includes new bulk upload templates for the Project and Expenditure Portal and project start and end dates for Expenditure Categories 8-10. Additionally, the January 2024 P&E User Guide includes new calculations in 2 locations: remaining obligated funds in the Project Overview section based on the Adopted Budget and the Certification section based on the Allocation Amount.

Counties that received over \$10 million in ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) and those with a population over 250,000 have a Project and Expenditure Report due on January 31.



THE MAIN STREET & RURAL PLANNING (MS&RP) works in regions, counties, cities, towns, downtown districts, and designated NC Main Street communities to inspire placemaking through building asset-based economic development strategies that achieve measurable results such as investment, business growth, and jobs. The MS&RP Center is part of the Rural Economic Development Division of the N.C. Department of Commerce, the state’s lead agency for workforce, community, and economic development. In this capacity, the MS&RP Center provides downtown revitalization and planning assistance to communities across the state primarily in economic development planning. The MS&RP Center’s Rural Planning program works with municipalities, county governments, and other organizations in rural areas to provide

strategic economic development planning and implementation services, technical support, and training. For more information visit, <https://www.ncmainstreetandplanning.com/>.

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