

Governor Cooper's Budget Proposal / Bills Filed This Week / Tax Filing Extension / Extra Credit Grant Program



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Representative Nasif Majeed District 99 - Mecklenburg County



Governor Cooper Proposes Two Year State Budget

PEACE. Traditionally, North Carolina passes a two year State Budget in odd-numbered years. Halfway through the two year budget, in an even-numbered year, we amend it.

The two year process started this week with the Governor's Recommended Budget. Next, the State Senate will consider the budget and then it will come to the State House. Once both chambers agree on a budget it goes to Governor Cooper for his approval.

Governor Cooper's budget is an excellent start to the process. Here is what is in it:

Investing in our Schools and Teachers

The Governor's budget would provide K-12 teacher raises of 10% on average over the biennium and ensure that all non-certified school personnel receive a minimum of \$15 an hour, on par with other state employees. In addition to pay raises, teachers, principals and all public school employees would receive a \$2,000 bonus before June 30 and a \$1,000 bonus in the next two fiscal years (total of \$4,000). These employees were left out of previous bonuses for state employees.

The budget also invests more than \$78 million in early education and child development so that more children can attend Pre-K, receive high-quality care, and access early intervention services. Additionally, the plan provides \$80 million to help school districts hire more nurses, counselors, psychologists, and social workers to support student physical and mental health.

Read more about the Governor's plan for stronger schools [HERE](#).

Supporting State Employees

Governor Cooper's budget proposal supports hardworking state employees and retirees by:

- Pay raises for most state employees of 2.5% in each year of the two-year budget for a total 5% raise.
- Pay raises for university and state-funded local community college employees of 5% in the first year and 2.5% in the second year for a total of 7.5%. These employees were left out of previous year pay raises.
- \$2,000 bonus for university and state-funded community college local community college employees before June 30th and \$1,000 bonus in

each of the next two fiscal years. These employees were left out of previous year bonuses.

- State retirees would receive a 2% recurring COLA increase in 2021/22 and 2% bonus payments in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This is the largest increase for retirees in over a decade.

Read more [HERE](#).

Rebuilding Critical Infrastructure

The Governor's budget recommends cash capital investments totaling over \$1.1 billion, including \$675 million for UNC System projects, \$360 for state agency projects, and \$100 million toward energy efficiency improvements.

North Carolina's strong balance sheet presents a generational opportunity to address critical long-term infrastructure needs. The Governor's budget takes advantage of the state's low debt and historically low interest rates and recommends placing a \$4.7 billion General Obligation Bond on the November 2021 ballot to ask voters to address key infrastructure needs across North Carolina, including:

- \$2.5 billion for public schools to address the over \$8 billion in documented needs
- \$783 million for the UNC System, including \$295 million for health and safety projects
- \$500 million for the Community College System
- \$430 million for Health and Safety projects across State Government
- \$460 million for Parks, Zoos, Museums, and Historic Sites

Ensuring North Carolina's Economic Recovery

The Governor recommends \$45.4 million in economic investments, including support for One NC Small Business Fund and Carolina Small Business Fund. The Governor's proposed budget invests to help small businesses thrive and provides funding to prepare rural and economically distressed communities for an innovation-based economy. It also proposes funding to address the disproportionate economic impact of COVID-19 on communities of color through increased support for minority-owned businesses.

Read more about the Governor's plan for a more prosperous economy [HERE](#).

Increasing Access to Quality Healthcare

Governor Cooper's budget provides access to health care for more than 600,000 working North Carolinians, keeps rural hospitals open and strong, reduces the number of uninsured veterans, helps fight the opioid epidemic, and injects over \$5 billion in direct investment into the state by expanding Medicaid. No taxes would be increased to achieve this major expansion of health care access, and the American Rescue Plan provides an additional \$1.7 billion in federal funds to support Medicaid expansion without the state covering any cost share for up to six years.

Investments for a Clean, Healthy North Carolina

The budget invests over \$100 million in expanding access to clean energy technologies, investing in clean energy economic development and building the clean energy workforce pipeline to catalyze North Carolina's economy. The budget invests \$10 million for clean energy economic development and \$4.5 million in clean energy grants for homegrown start-ups and small businesses.

Clean, safe water and air are essential for the health and well-being of North Carolinians. Governor Cooper recommends over \$300 million in spending on environmental stewardship, increasing access to parks, and enhancing the

state's resiliency to future floods. The budget also recommends nearly \$8 million for emerging compounds mitigation.

Read more about the Governor's plan to fight climate change and increase economic development in clean energy [HERE](#).

A Safer, More Equitable North Carolina

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to shine a light on long-standing inequities. The Governor's budget proposal advances equity in our healthcare, economic, criminal justice and education systems through strategic investments, including funds to:

- Recruit and retain a diverse educator workforce;
- Ensure access to a sound, basic education for all students;
- Emphasize equity in government decision making;
- Support minority-owned businesses; and
- Prioritize fairness in the criminal justice system.

For details on this and to read the Governor's full plan, visit [HERE](#).

Important Bills Filed This Week

The North Carolina House of Representatives has a bill filing deadline of May 4 for most bills and May 11 for revenue and spending bills. Here are some important bills filed this week:

Health Students – Nurses in Every School ([HB 347](#)) or Add School Nurses for Healthier Students ([HB 348](#))

- Requires at least one school nurse in every school starting in 2021/22.
- NC student-to-nurse ratios are far below nationally recommended standards.

Hate Crimes Prevention Act ([HB 354](#))

- Increases the scope and punishment of hate crimes and requires enhanced training for law enforcement and prosecutors.
- We need to strengthen laws that protect vulnerable communities and prevent future tragedies.

Funds for the Expansion of NC Pre-K ([HB 364](#))

- Invests \$12.5 million to expand pre-k slots for eligible children.
- Early investment helps our children get off to a good start and is one of the best investments we can make with taxpayer funds.

NC Teacher Support Program Funds ([HB 371](#))

- NC Teacher Support Program helps to increase teacher effectiveness, enhance skills, and reduce attrition among beginning teachers.
- NC needs to do all we can to attract and retain good teachers.

Restore Educational Sales Tax Holiday ([HB 377](#))

- Restores the Sales Tax Holiday for Back-to-School.
- NC families deserve a one day sales tax break when buying back-to-school supplies.

Make Legislators' Documents Public Records ([HB 374](#))

- Legislators are public officials and their records should be public like all other state public officials.
- We need to act to increase transparency and boost public confidence in government.

K-3 Reading and Literacy Improvement Act ([HB 420](#))

- Funds local school districts so every K-2 classroom has a teacher assistant and every three 3rd Grade classrooms has a teacher assistant.
- We need to invest to help our students with literacy and reading at early grades so they will be better positioned to excel in later grades.

Charlotte Citizens Review Board Subpoena Power ([HB 421](#))

- Grants subpoena power to the Charlotte Citizens Review Board.
- Subpoena power is important to help determine facts in gather information when there are citizen complaints involving law enforcement action.

Extra Credit Grant Program

Most North Carolina families with children received a \$335 coronavirus relief payment last fall to help with virtual schooling and childcare costs. **Eligible families who did not receive the \$335 check have another chance to apply through May 31, 2021.**

The \$335 payments are for individuals with a dependent child who was 16 or younger at the end of 2019.

If you did not file a 2019 state return because your gross income for 2019 did not exceed the state's filing requirements for your filing status (generally \$10,000 per year if you are single and \$20,000 per year if you are married), you may still be eligible for the \$335 payment if you apply by May 31. **If you have already received the \$335 grant, you are not eligible under the new law.**

While the program provided over 1 million checks to North Carolinians some taxpayers with qualifying children who filed a 2019 state tax return on or before October 15, 2020, were not eligible for the automatic grant payment due to a tax preparation software error. Many taxpayers who were otherwise eligible for the automatic payment had a "0" or blank field incorrectly reported on Line 10a due to the software error. The only resolution before the law change was to file an amended 2019 return by October 15, 2020.

Under the new legislation, taxpayers impacted by the 10a issue may [apply](#) for the grant. Additionally, NCDOR provides professional tax preparers with a [Bulk Upload Option](#) to submit two or more applications on behalf of individuals who encountered the Line 10a issue.

Go the North Carolina Department of Revenue website at [NCDOR.gov](https://www.ncdor.gov) for details and to apply.

Applicants can [visit our website](#) to apply and learn more about the program, as well as call our helpline at (877) 252-3052 for assistance.

Tax Filing Extension

The North Carolina Department of Revenue extended the individual income tax filing date to match the new guidance from the IRS, making the filing and payment deadline May 17, 2021 instead of April 15, 2021. North Carolina taxpayers now have an extra month to submit their payments to the state. As long as taxpayers file and pay their taxes on or before May 17, they will not incur any penalties but they will be charged interest – unless the law is changed. I strongly support changing the law so that interest is not charged as well.

Governor Cooper Announces North Carolina Will Relax Some COVID-19 Restrictions

As North Carolina's trends continue to show improvement and vaccine distribution increases, Governor Roy Cooper announced this week that the state will continue to ease some COVID-19 restrictions.

Indoors and Outdoors up to 100% Capacity, Subject to Masks and 6 ft. Social Distancing

- Museums and Aquariums

- Retail Businesses
- Salons, personal care and grooming businesses, tattoo parlors

Indoors up to 75% and Outdoors up to 100% Capacity, Subject to Masks and 6 ft. Social Distancing

- Restaurants
- Breweries, Wineries, and Distilleries
- Recreation (e.g., bowling, skating, rock climbing)
- Fitness and Physical Activity Facilities (e.g., gyms, yoga studios, fitness centers)
- Pools
- Amusement Parks

Indoors and Outdoors up to 50% Capacity, Subject to Masks and 6 ft. Social Distancing

- Bars
- Movie Theaters*
- Gaming Facilities*
- Meeting, Reception, and Conference Spaces
- Lounges (including tobacco) and Night Clubs
- Auditoriums, Arenas, and other venues for live performances
- Sports Arenas and Fields (includes professional, collegiate, and amateur)

*Movie theaters and gaming facilities may operate at up to 75% capacity outdoors.

Read [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Vaccine Information

People with higher risk medical conditions in Group 4 are now eligible for vaccination. Higher-risk medical conditions for Group 4 include intellectual and developmental disabilities including Down Syndrome, and neurologic conditions, such as dementia. Some local counties have opened vaccines up for all groups.

Detailed information about each vaccine group is online at YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov (English) or vacunate.nc.gov (Spanish).

[1 in 5 NC adults now fully vaccinated against COVID, state says](#)
The News & Observer

Stay safe...PEACE!



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Text MAJEEDN to 22828 to get started.

Visit our Website

#IWillNotYield



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