

RESOLUTION REQUIRING TRANSPARENCY ON FEDERAL AND STATE BUDGET IMPACTS

Resolution Number: [TO BE ASSIGNED]

Date: [DATE TBD]

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, Johnston County serves 26,175 residents who depend on local government services for education, healthcare, nutrition assistance, infrastructure, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, our county government and school system rely significantly on federal and state funding streams to deliver essential services to our community; and

WHEREAS, the federal government is currently in a shutdown that has created uncertainty about the continuation of critical programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, Medicaid, and educational funding; and

WHEREAS, the cumulative impact of these budgetary cuts disproportionately risks the closure of essential community infrastructure including grocery stores, public schools, clinics, and hospitals in rural counties, where such facilities often operate on narrow margins and serve as irreplaceable anchors of local economies and public health, thereby threatening to create service

deserts that would force residents to travel prohibitive distances for basic necessities, education, and medical care; and

WHEREAS, our public schools serve as the educational foundation for [number] students and rely on federal funding for special education services, Title I programs, school nutrition, and Medicaid reimbursements; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's Universal Opportunity Scholarship Program diverts significant state taxpayer dollars to private schools—with planned appropriations totaling approximately \$7 billion through 2032–33—while public schools that serve 84% of students and are constitutionally required to provide education to all children remain among the lowest-funded in the nation, creating additional fiscal pressure on county budgets to support underfunded public schools that serve the vast majority of [County Name] County students; and

WHEREAS, counties in western North Carolina devastated by Hurricane Helene in September 2024 are still waiting for promised federal and state disaster assistance more than one year after the storm, with families displaced from their homes, businesses unable to rebuild, critical infrastructure still damaged, and local governments struggling to maintain basic services while bearing extraordinary recovery costs without adequate reimbursement, demonstrating the failure of federal and state governments to deliver timely support to communities in crisis; and

WHEREAS, federal and state government funding streams for the services we administer are becoming increasingly unpredictable, with the Congressional

Budget Bill (BBB) creating cascading impacts on state and local budgets for years to come; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly has not yet passed a comprehensive state budget, forcing state agencies and local governments to operate on continuation budgets that do not account for population growth, inflation, or increased service demands; and

WHEREAS, these combined federal and state budget uncertainties create cascading impacts on [County Name] County's ability to plan, budget, and deliver services that our residents depend on; and

WHEREAS, in [County Name] County, approximately [number] residents receive SNAP benefits, [number] families participate in WIC, [number] students rely on free and reduced-price school meals, and [number] residents receive Medicaid services; and

WHEREAS, our public schools serve as the educational foundation for [number] students and rely on federal funding for special education services, Title I programs, school nutrition, and Medicaid reimbursements; and

WHEREAS, the cascading effects of federal budget cuts, shutdowns and state budget delays disproportionately harm working families, children, seniors, people with disabilities, and rural communities in our county; and

WHEREAS, residents have a right to understand how decisions made by federal and state governments affect their access to local services; and

WHEREAS, transparency and accountability are essential principles of democratic governance, especially during times of budgetary uncertainty;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

That the [County Name] County Board of Commissioners hereby commits to providing clear, accessible, and timely information to county residents about budget impacts resulting from federal and state government decisions.

Section 1: Public Transparency Requirements

The County Manager shall establish and maintain a dedicated webpage on the county website that provides:

1. **Clear explanations** of how federal government shutdowns and state budget delays impact county services
2. **Regular updates** on the status of federal and state funding for programs administered by the county
3. **Itemized information** showing which services may face cuts or disruptions and the government entity (federal, state, or local) responsible for funding decisions
4. **Plain-language summaries** accessible to residents of all educational backgrounds and language proficiencies
5. **Historical context** showing funding trends and the cumulative impact of budget cuts over time
6. **Contact information** for federal and state elected officials who have decision-making authority over affected programs

Section 2: Coordination with Schools

The County Commission directs the County Manager to coordinate with the [County Name] Board of Education to:

1. Share information about federal and state budget impacts on public education

2. Identify overlapping impacts on services provided by both county government and schools
3. Present joint updates to the public when appropriate
4. Advocate together for predictable and adequate federal and state funding

Section 3: Public Hearing

Within 60 days of the adoption of this resolution, the County Commission shall hold a public hearing on the impacts of federal government shutdowns and state budget delays on [County Name] County services.

The County Manager is directed to:

1. **Invite** the [County Name] Board of Education to participate in a joint public hearing
2. **Publicize** the hearing through multiple channels including the county website, local media, social media, email lists, and community organizations
3. **Provide** simultaneous interpretation services as needed to ensure accessibility
4. **Collect** written and oral testimony from residents, service providers, educators, healthcare workers, and other community stakeholders
5. **Document** the real-life impacts that families and individuals are experiencing due to budget uncertainty

Section 4: Public Report

Within 30 days following the public hearing, the County Manager shall prepare and publish a comprehensive report that includes:

1. **Summary of testimony** received at the public hearing

2. **Quantification of impacts** on county residents, including:
 - Number of residents at risk of losing SNAP or WIC benefits
 - Impact on school nutrition programs
 - Medicaid service disruptions
 - Effects on public school funding and services
 - Impacts on county infrastructure and service delivery
3. **Recommendations** for interventions by city, county, state, and federal agencies to mitigate harm
4. **Advocacy priorities** for [County Name] County's delegation to the General Assembly and U.S. Congress
5. **Action plan** for how the county will respond to various budget scenarios

Section 5: Intergovernmental Advocacy

The Board of Commissioners directs the County Manager to:

1. **Transmit** this resolution to North Carolina's Governor, members of the state legislature representing [County Name] County, and members of North Carolina's congressional delegation
2. **Advocate** for passage of a comprehensive state budget that fully funds county services and public education
3. **Call upon** federal officials to end the government shutdown and restore funding certainty for programs serving working families
4. **Urge** state and federal officials to increase transparency about how their budget decisions affect local communities
5. **Coordinate** with other North Carolina counties facing similar challenges to amplify advocacy efforts

Section 6: Regular Updates

Until such time as both federal and state budgets are finalized and funding streams are stabilized, the County Manager shall provide monthly updates to the Board of Commissioners at public meetings regarding:

1. Changes in federal or state funding affecting county services
 2. Updates to the public transparency webpage
 3. Communication with state and federal officials
 4. Evolving impacts on county residents and services
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

This resolution requires staff time to:

- Create and maintain a public transparency webpage
- Coordinate with school officials
- Organize and conduct a public hearing
- Prepare a comprehensive public report
- Engage in advocacy with state and federal officials

These activities will be accomplished using existing county resources. The greater fiscal impact comes from the federal and state budget uncertainties this resolution addresses, which threaten [estimated dollar amount] in federal and state funding that supports county services.

ADOPTED

This resolution was adopted by the [County Name] County Board of Commissioners on [date] by a vote of [] **in favor** and [] opposed.

BOARD CHAIR: _____

COUNTY MANAGER: _____

CLERK TO THE BOARD: _____
