

Prioritizing Employee Wellbeing & Engagement:

Guilford County

What do your employees think about their workplace?

The Local Government
Workplaces Initiative can
help you find out.

In early 2021, the Guilford County Board of Commissioners updated its core values and goals for Guilford County. Based on the Board's belief that employees are the county's greatest resource, it established ***Our People Matter*** as one of the county's values, reflecting its desire to provide a positive and compassionate work environment that supports the financial, physical, mental, and social wellbeing of its team members. To guide the implementation of this vision, County Manager Michael Halford commissioned a workplace climate study by the UNC Local Government Workplaces Initiative (LGWI) to understand employee perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes.

LGWI's Workplace Climate Study

- Conducted in Qualtrics in 2021 and 2023.
- Covered a wide range of employee experiences
- Pre-survey focus groups identified issues for survey design
- Post-survey focus groups helped leaders interpret the data

2021 Workplace Climate Survey Results

- 63% response rate
- Strengths: organizational identification, supervision, teamwork
- Opportunities for improvement: employee voice and silence, pay and benefits, and burnout

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**Local Government
Workplaces Initiative**

Guilford County's Response to the 2021 Survey Results

- **Created a communications department** to improve information sharing, increase access to resources, and unify messaging
- **Formed Employees for Positive Change (EPC)**, a committee that gives employees a direct voice in policy and workplace improvements
- **Held "Open Mike" small group sessions** with the county manager and all-team "Coffee and Conversation" sessions with the manager and other staff, where employees can learn about county operations and engage in direct, open discussions with leadership
- **Adopted new pay and benefit plans** that helped reduce the number of vacancies, including a market-based pay structure, reinstatement of longevity pay and a base 401(k) contribution, and expanded leave benefits
- **Assessed staffing ratios** and began to add positions and increase technology investments to improve workloads

2023 Workplace Climate Survey Results

- **74% response rate** (11% higher than 2021)
- **Sixteen improvements**, including greater employee voice, less burnout, and higher pay satisfaction than 2021

This report is based on course project research conducted by UNC MPA candidates Julia Warren, Micah McRea, Layne Cole, Keagan James, and Jackson Dille.

“ Guilford County has partnered with LGWI on two climate surveys, several employee focus group processes, and related follow-up initiatives. The LGWI team brings expertise, transparency, and objectivity to the process, which has fostered a sense of trust among our employees. The partnership has produced tangible benefits and has been well worth the investment. ”

Daphne Taylor, MSW
Assistant Director, Guilford County Human Resources



Want to learn more?

Visit: lgwi.web.unc.edu

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