



Economic Incentive Policy

Purpose:

The County of Ashe has shown a strong commitment throughout its history in the support of economic development throughout our community. From being a regional leader in the production of agricultural goods; to providing support for continued growth at GE Aerospace; to helping to grow the largest ambulance manufacture in the United States: American Emergency Vehicle; the County has long been committed to growth and development of our community. As part of this overall commitment, Ashe County Commissioners have recognized the need to provide programs and financial support to strengthen and diversify the County's economy. Maintaining and expanding a diverse, valuable ad valorem tax base is a key concern for the County's fiscal health. Council finds it is essential to not only attract new investment but also to encourage existing business to expand and reinvest in their County of Ashe operations.

Guiding Principles:

- A strong, vibrant community attracts economic investment.
- Quality of life and economic development are interdependent community priorities.
- Outcome-driven economic investment results in long-range financial returns, as well as community benefits that improve quality of life.
- Economic development investments must achieve measurable outcomes to improve the quality of life for all residents and businesses.
- Recipients of Economic Development incentives must be good community partners

Economic Incentive Goals

- Create and maintain high quality jobs and wages
- Provide new ad valorem tax revenue streams
- Strengthen the economy and build community

- Sustain a high quality of life
- Promote comprehensive opportunities for workforce development
- Diversify the County's largest employers

Examples of Desired Outcomes of Economic Incentives

- An increase in workforce development such as education and job skills.
- An increase in financial capital development, such as job growth, small business development and access to credit.
- An increase in overall revenue to the County through the levying of ad valorem taxes on new real and personal property invested.
- Investment and overall improvement of our community, such as blight reduction, poverty reduction, crime reduction and increased recreational opportunities.

Achieving these outcomes consistently requires a clear vision; specific tools for evaluation, decision making and monitoring individual projects, supported by strong partnerships; creative leadership; and political will.

Incentive Guidelines

Qualifying Businesses

Ashe County Commissioner's aim in establishing incentive guidelines is to encourage new job creation and new ad valorem tax revenue in the County by supporting private sector investments in our community. The primary focus of these guidelines is for the expansion of existing industrial operations in the County and the recruitment of new industries to the County. Under certain circumstances, retail, medical office or mixed-use facilities may be considered for incentives. If a project in a non-industrial category provides strong sales or tax base potential, provides unique employment opportunities or contributes to the community in a unique way it may be considered by County Commissioners for incentives on a case-by-case basis.

Qualifying for an Incentive

The Ashe County Board of Commissioners will consider incentives proposals that contribute significant public benefits to the County's residents in the form of: new job creation, job retention and ad valorem tax base growth.

Incentives provided to a company will be determined to have a positive long-term impact and return on County's investment. Generally, the Ashe County Board of Commissioners will consider incentive awards

that provide companies reimbursable, performance-based cash grants as a percentage of the total assessed value of new real and personal property invested by a private industry over time.

- Companies requesting incentives must prove that the project is competitive with other states or countries and that incentives are necessary for the company to consider the investment in Ashe County.
- In no case will any incentive be granted to a company where the incentive awarded exceeds the projected new ad valorem tax revenue to the County over a 10-year period.
- New jobs created by firms requesting incentives should be full time and pay wages at or above the average annual wage in Ashe County as determined annually by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and retained for the duration of the incentive agreement.
- Applications for Development Incentives may be considered in circumstances that do not meet minimum criteria if an exception is disclosed and a determination of reasonable benefit to the County can be provided.
- The County of Ashe reserves the right to modify or amend this policy as necessitated by changing economic conditions.
- All local incentives are awarded at the discretion of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners.

Incentive Request Approval Process

The process for considering requests may vary depending on a project's specific needs. These steps are for general information.

1. Site visit or conference call with the County's Community Development Director.
2. A project site plan, written description of the project, project scope, number and type of employment positions, phasing and timing of the development and any other information that would be viewed as important in describing the project.
3. Completion of an Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) Project Summary Form application and supporting documentation submittal by the applicant company if eligible for State incentives. The County reserves the right to request additional relevant supporting documentation to ensure minimum eligibility criteria are met as detailed in this policy.
4. The Community Development Director will then meet with applicable County staff to determine the level of eligibility, potential incentive amounts, and report to the County Manager.
5. If a request for incentives is recommended by staff, the Community Development Director and

County Manager will inform Ashe County Board of Commissioners and the applying company. Staff will coordinate an approval timeline of the incentive request with the company, the County, and any other funding agencies engaged in the project.

7. Once an incentive agreement is approved by legal it will be the responsibility of the Clerk to publish the appropriate public hearing notice and the Community Development Director to introduce the incentive agreement at a public hearing.
6. All requests to be considered by Ashe County will require approval by Council in a properly noticed public hearing.
7. All incentive packages, notices, agreements and activities must be permitted by statute,
8. Incentive determinations and processes are further guided by the North Carolina Supreme Court's opinion *Maready vs. Winston-Salem*.