



November 15, 2021 | Benefits Counselor: Durham Guaranteed Income Pilot

Job Location:	Durham, NC
Role Type:	Contract, Temporary, \$25 per hour
Estimated Time Period:	January 3 - February 25 (maximum contract period is 8 weeks)

Pilot Background

As part of [Mayors for a Guaranteed Income](#) (MGI), a coalition of 50 mayors across the country, the City of Durham will conduct a 12-month Guaranteed Income Pilot, now called [Excel](#), that provides monthly \$500 unconditional cash payments to 115 formerly justice-involved residents beginning in October 2021. This pilot seeks to determine the effectiveness of this approach at increasing economic security and wellbeing and lowering recidivism rates among justice-involved individuals. [StepUp Durham](#) has been selected as non-profit administrator of Durham’s pilot and pilot evaluation will be conducted by the [Center for Guaranteed Income Research at the University of Pennsylvania](#).

The City of Durham has chosen to focus our pilot to understand the specific benefits of providing a guaranteed income to residents with recent justice involvement. This choice reflects our ongoing commitment, as Mayor Schewel stated in his 2018 State of the City Address, “to make the City we love a City of second chances” and builds off recent reform efforts by the City to increase economic opportunity for justice involved residents.

Justice involvement comes with many collateral consequences. Individuals often struggle to find employment or may aspire to start their own business or invest in training for a better job, but may lack the funds to pursue these dreams. These financial hardships may be borne by family members and may place added strain on these important relationships. We believe a guaranteed income can help ensure a successful transition home by providing a much needed additional source of income.

Position Description

We are searching for a highly motivated individual to serve as Benefits Counselor for up to 115 selected pilot participants. During the application phase of the pilot, prospective pilot participants will self-report any public benefits they are currently receiving. Once the 115 participants are selected and notified, to comply with the informed consent standards of Institutional Review Board (IRB) and in alignment with the values of agency and trusting residents to make the best decisions for themselves, the Benefits Counselor will meet individually (can be completed in-person with COVID protocols in place, virtually, or by telephone) with participants during the

pilot's onboarding phase (est. 6 weeks), to ensure program participants are informed of the potential impact on any public benefits they are currently receiving.

Based on this benefits counseling, participants can decide to opt out of the guaranteed income pilot or stay in it. Public benefits may include but are not limited to, social security, disability, unemployment, WIC, Medicaid, TANF, FNS/SNAP, public housing, Section 8 vouchers, other subsidized housing (LIHTC, HOME, CDBG), Childcare Subsidies, Emergency & Crisis Services, and Work First. For IRB requirements, documentation of each counseling session will be required.

The City of Durham and our partners have begun a preliminary analysis of the impact of these benefits, however, the Benefits Counselor may need to perform additional research by reaching out to social services and other organizations to further assess potential impact on benefits.

The Benefits Counselor may also be invited to attend 2-3 stakeholder meetings to discuss benefits-related questions as well as draft responses to questions for participants around impacts to benefits for social media, StepUp Durham's website (FAQs), or other materials.

Current Project Timeline

- **Dec 20th:** Application for eligible participants goes live
- **Jan 10th:** Center for Guaranteed Income Research performs Selection of Participants
- **Jan 17th - 31st:** Notification of participants
- **Feb 1st - 25th:** Onboarding (*the onboarding phase is when benefits counseling for selected participants will occur*)
- **Mar 4th:** First Payment

Qualifications

- Bachelor's or Master's in Social Work or related field
- Bilingual highly preferred
- Prior case management experience or counseling experience working with individuals around benefits eligibility
- Knowledge of the local, state, and federal benefits landscape
- Ability to work evening or weekend hours to potentially accommodate participant schedules and stakeholder meetings
- Has access to own phone and computer
- Displays confident leadership, writing, communication, and organizational skills

Values

- Understands and acknowledges that systemic racism underpins mass incarceration and financial inequality
- Has strong passion for highlighting the lived experiences of those experiencing financial insecurity or passion for supporting individuals who are system-impacted
- Understands the strength of diversity, and the need for solutions to support all regardless of race, religion, gender, immigration status, or ethnicity
- Demonstrates compassion and care to individuals as they make informed benefits-related decisions

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter outlining your interest in this position, your resume outlining your relevant experience, and three professional references in one PDF packet to guaranteedincome@durhamnc.gov. ***Applications received by November 30, 2021 will be prioritized.***

Note: This position will require the candidate to complete a drug screen and a background check with the City of Durham.

If you have any questions about the position, you may contact Amber Wade, Assistant to the Mayor, City of Durham, at amber.wade@durhamnc.gov.