

ROI's policy program aims to be a **bridge between the communities in Edgecombe and Nash counties and local policymakers**. We listen to our community to identify priority issues then fuse community knowledge, international best practices, and local connections to solve them.

Long Term Vision

We are creating a **new model of community-driven policy change** at the systems level. We pilot and refining **systems-level solutions to wicked problems**. The solutions we create will tackle all the aspects of problems, not just immediate needs, focusing tightly on the unique resources and challenges of our rural communities.

Priority Issue Areas, Identified by the Community

1. Workforce Development

a. Current activities:

- i. Working with Tarboro Parks & Rec to design and deliver the Tarboro Young Civic Leaders Internship, a paid internship for high school students. This program is designed to provide economic opportunity and professional development while building the Town's capacity to deliver services.

b. Future plans:

- i. Trauma-informed work with employers to improve employee experience and retention
- ii. Developing skills curriculums with community colleges and employers to improve employment outcomes
- iii. Piloting employee ownership structures with local businesses

c. THE VISION

- i. Make our communities leaders in workforce development, creating cutting-edge jobs and innovative, equitable ownership structures

2. Disrupting the School-to-Prison pipeline

a. Current activities:

- i. Working with the Edgecombe County Sheriff's Office to design and conduct trauma-informed trainings for School Resource Officers (SROs)
- ii. Conducting focus groups at South Edgecombe Middle School and SouthWest Edgecombe High School to better understand the relationships between students and SROs and identify next steps

Priority Issue Areas, Identified by the Community *(con't)*

2. Disrupting the School-to-Prison pipeline

b. Future plans

- i. Working with the Sheriff and Schools to facilitate more interactions between community (including students, teachers, and parents) and law enforcement
- ii. Designing and implementing a yearly process to deliver feedback from students, teachers, and administrators to SROs
- iii. Refining and publicizing the MOU that governs SRO conduct
- iv. Implementing trauma-informed training with other nearby law enforcement entities
- v. Working with the juvenile justice system to implement trauma-informed practices and restorative justice

c. THE VISION

- i. Create a future where law enforcement in schools is an excellent resource for student development and thriving, and end the criminalization of youth.

3. Increasing Access to Mental Health Care in Schools

b. Current activities

- i. Conducted a successful pilot for billing Medicaid for mental health services at HOPE alternative school.

c. Future plans

- i. Work with public schools to develop a system for billing Medicaid for mental health that they can use without spending too much administrative time
- ii. Pilot different ways to bill Medicaid and refine what works

d. THE VISION

- i. Increase the mental well-being of students by enabling schools to massively expand the mental health support they offer

Issue Sensing

We hold monthly virtual listening sessions open to all to identify and discuss issues. We are now working to expand to in-person listening sessions in places where the community already gathers like places of worship, sporting events, and school sessions.

Stakeholders We Engage (More to Come!)

