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Introduction

Welcome to the 2017 County Map Book!

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners is pleased to share this year’s county data maps. These data and map visualizations highlight demographic, economic, health, and educational information from North Carolina’s 100 counties.

These categories and data indicators were selected based on research at the county level, recommendations from county officials and staff, and timely policy issues. We hope this information will help provide context and promote analysis for decisions at the local level.

Read the Overview below for more insights into the data, and then use the Data Visualization Tools and Techniques resource to learn how to read the following maps. To view interactive versions of the maps online, go to www.ncacc.org/mapbook. Note that some maps include an average figure, which reflects the average of the values included in that specific dataset.

Dr. Linda S. Millsaps  Paige C. Worsham  Samuel I. Mills
Research Director    Research Attorney    Research Intern
Acknowledgments

The 2017 County Map Book is a publication of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners’ Center for County Research. The majority of the data come from federal, state, and local sources and each map includes a citation with the applicable reference.

The Center for County Research thanks the organizations and resources that helped with the data collection process including the N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services, the N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction, the N.C. Dept of Revenue, the N.C. Dept. of Commerce, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, the N.C. Dept. of Agriculture, the N.C. Dept. of State Treasurer, the N.C. State Board of Elections, the N.C. Dept. of Public Safety, the U.S. Census Bureau, and county staff across the state.

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Overview

In our analysis, we address data related to three hot topics: economic development, children, and opioids. Be sure to watch the County Research Pulse blog on the NCACC website for more detailed assessment on these and other specific topics.

**Economic development:**
Economic development continues to be at the top of the list of interests for county leaders. Statewide, unemployment is at 4.2%. However, challenges remain as 28 counties have unemployment rates in excess of 5%. Addressing these numbers is particularly difficult in 21 counties, as they do not have a single ready economic development site, which are described as commercial buildings or locations available and on the market.

Another economic development factor is commuting distance. Areas with the greatest proportion of residents with an extended commute are primarily near the border of the state. Some of the longest commutes are found in the far northeastern counties, as well as in Union, Caswell, and Person counties. Only Lincoln and Franklin have well above average commutes that are clearly into another North Carolina county. Examining ways for the “halo counties” to benefit more from their proximity to an urban county (defined by the NC Rural Center as counties with a population density of 750 or more people per square mile) may be a possible economic development strategy, particularly in those areas without an array of available sites.
Overview

Children:
Let’s start with some good news. North Carolina’s high school graduation rate increased to 85.9% statewide in 2016. This was a new high for the state. Moreover, 23 counties saw graduation rates of more than 90%, and two counties – Dare and Avery – had graduation rates above 95%.

This continues an upward trend of at least 10 years, significant movement given the importance of educational attainment for individual and county competition in the global marketplace.

Now to some of the challenges. The portion of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, and the number of children in the state in poverty, continue to be of concern. Recent data suggest that 65% of North Carolina children qualify for subsidized school nutrition. While several counties have rates that are significantly below that number -- for example, Camden at 30% -- a large proportion of counties have much higher percentages. Currently, eight North Carolina counties have at least 98% of their students who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. A number of local and federal policy choices may make this statistic a predictive indicator of low to moderate income, as opposed to poverty rates. However, according to the University of Wisconsin, at least one-third of children in 21 counties live in poverty. A myriad of studies suggest that children growing up poor are less likely to perform well in school, more likely to have poor health behaviors, and more likely to grow up to be poor adults.

A new indicator we included this year is a measure of “disconnected youth.” These are defined as teenagers and young adults, between the ages of 16 and 24, who are neither working nor in school.
Overview

While data is not available for all 100 counties, of those reporting, 14 counties have at least one-quarter of their youth population in this category. Sixty-six counties have a larger proportion of their young people in this category than the nation as a whole. This is particularly important as this disconnection makes it far less likely they will be able to transition successfully to adult responsibilities.

Opioids:
Another new map relates to opiate deaths. Unfortunately, in 2014-15, the most recent year with available data, six counties each lost at least 40 people to opioid poisoning. Even more troubling are the 52 counties that saw an increase in opiate deaths, three of which experienced increases of more than 300% over the previous year. Conversely, thirty counties actually saw a decline in opioid poisoning deaths, while seven saw no change year over year.

Make sure to watch the County Research Pulse blog for more analysis in the coming months! Linda
Every map will have a legend that appears in the upper left hand corner. Note the color ramp used for each interval. Maps portraying data without outlying figures will use the standard five gradient color ramp starting at “Normal lowest figures” and ending at “Normal highest figures.” The Average interval will contain all values that closely approach the average up to values that reach the [unweighted] average. Any data sets with outliers will rely on one or both of the extra intervals to convey their significance.

Sometimes, a legend will have this icon beside it if there is a county (or more) in a map’s data set without data, or did not report any data.

This table contains the list of abbreviations that will be used to reference North Carolina counties and their individual figures. These 2-3 letter abbreviations will appear on the North Carolina state layer in the following maps. They will also be used in the data visualization tables.

This is a small scale version of the tables that will appear in the bottom left hand corner. These tables will display every county’s individual figure for the following indicators. The table will be color coordinated to match the color gradient being used in the map. The counties will be arranged from the smallest value to the largest value.

A small scale layer of North Carolina will appear in the bottom right hand corner. It represents the percentage of NC’s population that each county holds (NOTE: not population density). It is important to reflect on each county’s population percentage because, often, this figure correlates with data sets (such as raw counts) and provides context for the broader map.
INTRODUCTION: COUNTY POPULATION PERCENTAGES (2016)

Note: Percentages were estimated based on a county’s number of citizens compared to the number of citizens in the state of North Carolina. Figures do not represent population density. This particular map will appear at the bottom right corner of the following pages on a smaller scale. It should serve as a frame of reference for the population of North Carolina’s 100 counties whilst analyzing the following data sets. Some figures in the following maps, specifically raw counts, are reflected in the population percentage that a particular county represents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Four Year Graduation Rate (%)
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PER COUNTY; BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Note: The figures on this map represent educational attainment by county. Specifically, this indicator represents the percentage of a county whose highest form of education is a bachelor's degree. The unweighted average for this indicator is 13%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015 (5 year estimate)
Source: As self-reported in the 2015-2016 Department of Public Instruction Statewide Facility Needs Survey
**NC EDUCATION LOTTERY FUND DISTRIBUTION (2016-17)**

**Lottery Fund Distribution ($)**

| Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, 2016-17 | Note: Estimated NC Education Lottery Fund Distribution is the amount of money estimated to be allocated to each school district from lottery proceeds. Total monies that can be allocated to all 115 school districts in NC are capped at $100 million out of the total amount raised by the lottery. Lottery funds are distributed based on ADM. |
**LOCAL CURRENT EXPENSE PER STUDENT (2016-17)**

- **Expense Per Student ($)**
  - $435- $892 (8)
  - $957- $1,372 (27)
  - $1,453- $1,705 (AVG) (26)
  - $1,706- $2,909 (32)
  - $3,279- $3,945 (4)
  - $4,436 (1)

- **Legend**
  - **County Name**
  - **Figure**

---

**Note:** Local County-Contributed Current Expense Per Student is the amount of money reportedly allocated to be spent on each individual student by the county over the course of the school year. This map does not include charter school funding.

Source: As self-reported by the county for the NCACC Budget and Tax Survey, 2016-17

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**Population Percentage**
- 0.04- 0.9%
- 1- 3.7%
- 5.1- 10.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Note: Average teacher Salary Supplement is the amount of additional, locally funded salary that a teacher receives for working in a particular school district. The unweighted average for this indicator is $2,516.
Low Wealth Allotment ($)

$35,180- $86,327 (3)
$149,099- $817,791 (21)
$1,016,818- $2,769,455 (AVG) (23)
$2,789,001- $5,402,762 (23)
$6,086,784- $8,829,321 (4)
$11,711,947- $17,753,219 (3)

Note: Low Wealth Supplemental Funding is the state allocation to provide supplemental funds in counties that do not have the ability to generate revenue to support public schools at the average state level. Counties or LEAs without an abbreviation on the map received no funding for this allocation. Those LEAs that did not receive funding are listed in the white box above the LEA abbreviations.

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017-18
Note: Small County Supplemental Funding is the state allocation to provide additional funds to small school districts based on Average Daily Membership (ADM). To qualify, a school district must have fewer than 3,200 students. Based on ADM ranges, each school district will receive a pre-determined amount of funding. Counties or LEAs without an abbreviation on the map received no funding for this allocation. Those LEAs that did not receive funding are listed in the white box above the LEA abbreviations.
PERCENT OF K-12 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ACharter School (2016-17)

0% (4)
0.1%-0.9% (28)
1.1%-3.6% (27)
4%-5% [AVG] (10)
5.2%-11.7% (37)
12.9%-19.7% (7)
22.4%-25.2% (2)

Students Enrolled In Charter School (%)

Source: North Carolina Department of Instruction

Note: These values represent the percentage of all K-12 district students enrolled in public charter schools instead of traditional public or private schools. The unweighted average for this indicator is 5%.
PRE-KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT (2016-17)

Note: These figures show the number of children in contract to receive state-funded Pre-Kindergarten services in each county. The total number of children in 2016-17 is 27,019. The unweighted average for the indicator is 270 children.

Source: NC Division of Child Development and Early Education - Early Education Branch Programs and Educational Services
AVERAGE INCOME PER CAPITA (2015)

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce- Bureau of Economic Analysis, per capita personal income, 2015

Note: Per capita personal income is calculated as the total personal income of the residents of a given area divided by the population of the area. The North Carolina average income per capita is $33,761.
TOTAL TAXABLE PROPERTY PER CAPITA (2016-17)

Note: The taxable property per capita figures reflect the assessed property valuation in each county, divided by the number of people in the county. The unweighted average figure for this indicator is $102,136.

Source: As self-reported by each county for the NCACC Budget and Tax Survey, 2016-17.
**AVERAGE PROPERTY VALUE (2015)**

- **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015 (5 year estimates)

**Legend:**
- **$70,200- $98,800 (25)**
- **$104,400- $120,700 (15)**
- **$124,400- $137,833 (AVG) (15)**
- **$138,100- $171,900 (27)**
- **$182,300- $199,100 (10)**
- **$209,800- $283,400 (8)**

**Note:** Average Property Value is the average price an individual can expect a home in the county to cost. The unweighted average for this indicator is $137,833.
COUNTIES LEVYING SALES TAX ARTICLES 43, 46, OR BOTH

Note: This map shows counties that passed a referendum to levy the Article 43 Local Option Sales and Use Tax, the Article 46 Tax, or both, as of November 2016.

Source: NC Department of Revenue, Local Government Division
Note: These figures show the percentage of citizens within a county who lack access to fixed, advanced telecommunications capability. Congress defined advanced telecommunications capability (broadband internet access) as “high-quality” capability that allows users to “originate and receive high-quality voice, data, graphics, and video” services. Advanced capability, or broadband access, is defined as having a speed benchmark of 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload. These figures only represent fixed (not mobile) broadband services. The unweighted average for this indicator is 20%.

Source: Federal Communications Commission, 2016 Broadband Progress Report
**Average Weekly Wage ($)**

- **$546-560 (13)**
- **$561-565 (28)**
- **$565-569 [AVG] (26)**
- **$590-593 (27)**
- **$594-598 (6)**
- **$599-1,125 (6)**

**LEGEND**

- **COUNTY NAME**
- **FIGURE**

Source: NC Department of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division (2016 annual figures)

**Note:** Average Weekly Wage is defined as the average amount of money an individual in a county will earn per week. The North Carolina Average Weekly Wage is $695. Figures were rounded to the nearest whole number.
$9.70- $9.74 (4)
$10.06- $10.41 (23)
$10.47- $10.67 [AVG] (33)
$10.71- $10.93 (14)
$11.03- $11.69 (25)
$13.29 (1)

Source: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator, 2016

Note: Living Wage (Hourly) is defined as the minimum hourly pay an individual must earn in order to support themselves (1 adult) in the county, given that the individual is working full time (2,080 hours per year). The unweighted average for this indicator is $10.67.
PERCENT OF UNEMPLOYED POP. PER COUNTY (MAY 2017)

Source: NC Department of Commerce- Labor and Economic Analysis Division, May 2017

Note: Percentages were estimated based on a county's number of citizens unemployed compared to number of citizens employed. Percentages do not reflect the number of unemployed citizens compared to the entire state. The unweighted average for this indicator is 4.8%.
EXISTING BUILDING AND SITE LOCATIONS AVAILABLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (JUNE 2017)

Note: These figures represent any existing structure or site that is available for purchase and/or lease and has been put on the market by the owner. Existing structures include, but are not limited to, buildings that previously housed warehouses or distribution centers, commercial buildings, offices, manufacturing facilities and industrial facilities.

Source: Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

0 (21)
1-6 (28)
7-20 (25)
21-27 [AVG] (10)
28-44 (8)
61-164 (5)
345-494 (3)
Number of Establishments

**NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS PER COUNTY (2016)**

Note: This map represents the number of businesses and other organizations (termed “establishments” by the U.S. Census Bureau) in each county during the year of 2016. An extra interval was added to show that there is a large gap between the last interval and the fifth interval. No counties have establishments ranging in numbers from 14,331 to 33,379, making Wake and Mecklenburg the outliers from these figures.

Source: NC Department of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division (2016)
Average value of farm and buildings ($)

**AVERAGE VALUE OF FARM AND FARM BUILDINGS (2016)**

Source: NC Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Statistics Book, 2016

Note: These values represent the average value of a county's farm and farm buildings. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture sourced the 2012 Census of Agriculture for these figures. The unweighted average for this indicator is $365 million.
Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

Ratio of County Population to Mental Health Providers

Note: Mental Health Providers is the ratio of the county population to the number of mental health providers currently practicing in that county. Figures include psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapists, mental health providers that treat alcohol and other drug abuse, and advanced practice nurses specializing in mental health care. A ratio was used to represent these figures because a ratio accurately represents a county's level of ability to provide care to those who are in need of mental health counseling. Any figure on the map, for example Pitt at "315:1", is translated as "One mental health provider for every 315 citizens in Pitt County."
Note: Uninsured population refers to the percentage of citizens within each county who are under the age of 65 and do not have health insurance. The North Carolina average is 16%.
NUMBER OF OPIATE DEATHS AND PERCENT CHANGE (2014-15)

Note: Opiate Deaths are any fatalities where the cause of death was listed as poisoning from opium, heroin, other opioids, methadone and/or other synthetic opioid. This map allows us to analyze two variables: (1) raw count of opiate deaths in the year 2015 per county, which are represented by the legend in the upper left hand corner and by the figures in the table on the left, and (2) percent change/increase from the number of opiate deaths in 2014, which is represented by the symbols next to the table. In regards to North Carolina’s opiate crisis, this allows us to see which counties are in need of more help and which counties are succeeding in their efforts to reduce the number of fatal opiate cases. All counties marked as “percent change NA” are counties that did not report any opiate fatalities in 2014.

Source: NC Department of Health and Human Services, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch
PERCENT OF COUNTY POPULATION AGES 65 AND OLDER LIVING IN POVERTY (2015)

Note: Poverty for this age group is defined as an annual income of $11,367 or less for an individual over 65, and $14,326 or less for two individuals over the age of 65 living together. Figures were rounded to the nearest whole number. The statewide average is 12%.

Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
Percent of Children Living in Poverty (2017)

Note: Children in Poverty is the percentage of children under age 18 living in poverty. The characteristics of the family used to determine the poverty threshold are: number of people, number of related children under 18, and whether or not the primary householder is over age 65. Family income is then compared to the poverty threshold; if that family's income is below that threshold, the family is in poverty. The unweighted average for this indicator is 27%.

Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
## DISCONNECTED YOUTH (2017)

Youth that is Disconnected (%)

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<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Number of Counties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.4% - 8.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1% - 13.5%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14% - 16.6%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.1% - 18.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19% - 24.3%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% - 29.6%</td>
<td>14</td>
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Note: Disconnected youth are teenagers and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school. These vulnerable young people are cut off from the people, institutions, and experiences that would otherwise help them develop the knowledge, skills and maturity necessary for a healthy lifestyle. The negative effects of youth disconnection ricochet across the economy, the social sector, the criminal justice system and the political landscape. The unweighted average for this indicator is 18.7%. 

Source: 2017 Measure of America, a project of the Social Science Research Council
Average Monthly Recipients

AVERAGE MONTHLY RECIPIENTS OF FOOD STAMPS (2016)

Source: NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services

Note: Average Monthly Recipients of Food Stamps is the average monthly number of persons during the state fiscal year who were recipients of the federally funded Food Stamp Program, which issues coupons to eligible recipients that are redeemable for food products at most retail food stores. Eligibility is based on income and resource guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
FOOD INSECURITY RATES PER COUNTY (2017)

Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

Note: Food insecurity refers to USDA's measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. The average rate for food insecurity in North Carolina is 17%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Note: Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch is the percentage of children enrolled in public schools eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Eligibility for free or reduced price lunch is a way of measuring the effect of poverty on children. The North Carolina Average for this indicator is 65%.
PERCENT OF ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES (2017)

Note: Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths is the percentage of motor vehicle crash deaths with alcohol involvement. Approximately 17,000 Americans are killed annually in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes. Binge/heavy drinkers account for most episodes of alcohol-impaired driving. The North Carolina average for alcohol-impaired driving fatalities is 30%.

Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
PREMATURE DEATH RATES (2017)

Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population

Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

LEGEND

Note: Premature Death is the years of potential life lost before age 75 (YPLL-75). Every death occurring before the age of 75 contributes to the total number of years of potential life lost. For example, a person dying at age 25 contributes 50 years of life lost, whereas a person who dies at age 65 contributes 10 years of life lost to a county’s YPLL. The YPLL measure is presented as a rate per 100,000 population and is age-adjusted to the 2000 US population.
TOBACCO SMOKING RATES PER COUNTY (2017)

Adult Smoking (%)

Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

Note: Adult Smoking is the percentage of the adult population (per county) that currently smokes every day or most days and has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime. Measuring the prevalence of tobacco use in the population can alert communities to potential adverse health outcomes and can be valuable for assessing the need for cessation programs or the effectiveness of existing programs.
Evidence suggests teen pregnancy significantly increases the risk of repeat pregnancy and of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI), both of which can result in adverse health outcomes for mothers, children, families, and communities. Additionally, there are strong ties between teen birth and poor socioeconomic outcomes. Teenage women who bear a child are much less likely to achieve an education level at or beyond high school.

Source: 2017 NC County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

Note: Teen Births are the number of births per 1,000 female population, ages 15-19. Evidence suggests teen pregnancy significantly increases the risk of repeat pregnancy and of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI), both of which can result in adverse health outcomes for mothers, children, families, and communities. Additionally, there are strong ties between teen birth and poor socioeconomic outcomes. Teenage women who bear a child are much less likely to achieve an education level at or beyond high school.
Source: As self-reported by each county for the NCACC Budget and Tax Survey, 2016-17

Note: The Average Daily Population is the average number of inmates held in the county jail per day. Inmate numbers vary over the course of a year. The unweighted average for this indicator is 204 inmates.
JUVENILE CRIME RATE (2016)

1.5 (1)
5.4-12.5 (22)
13.2-17.4 (17)
18.2-20.9 [AVG] (18)
21-27.8 (23)
29.8-50.3 (18)
73.8 (1)

Note: Juvenile Crime Rate is the rate of delinquent offenses per 1,000 youth, age 6-15, times 1,000. The unweighted average for this indicator is 21%. Source: NC Department of Public Safety, 2016 County Databook.
Note: Violent Crime Rate is the number of violent crimes reported per 100,000 population. Violent crimes are defined as offenses that involve face-to-face confrontation between the victim and the perpetrator, including homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.
Note: The median age divides the age distribution of each county into two equal parts. One-half of the county’s population is younger than the median age, and one-half is older. The median age for the state of North Carolina and for the United States is 38 years old. The unweighted average for median age in North Carolina is 42.
NUMBER OF COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Source: As self-reported by the county for the NCACC Budget and Tax Survey, 2015-16 & 2016-17

Note: This map displays the number of county government employees per district. Seven of these figures are from the NCACC’s Budget and Tax Survey in 2015-16 because figures were not reported for 2016-17. The unweighted average for this indicator is 685 county employees.
Note: Civilian Veterans include any individuals who have been discharged from the United States Military, are members of the reserves, or are active duty military members currently serving a civilian assignment.
Note: Percent Registered Voter Turnout is the percent of the total population 18 and over that is registered to vote, and that voted during the 2016 General Election (including early voters). The Statewide voter turnout was 69%.