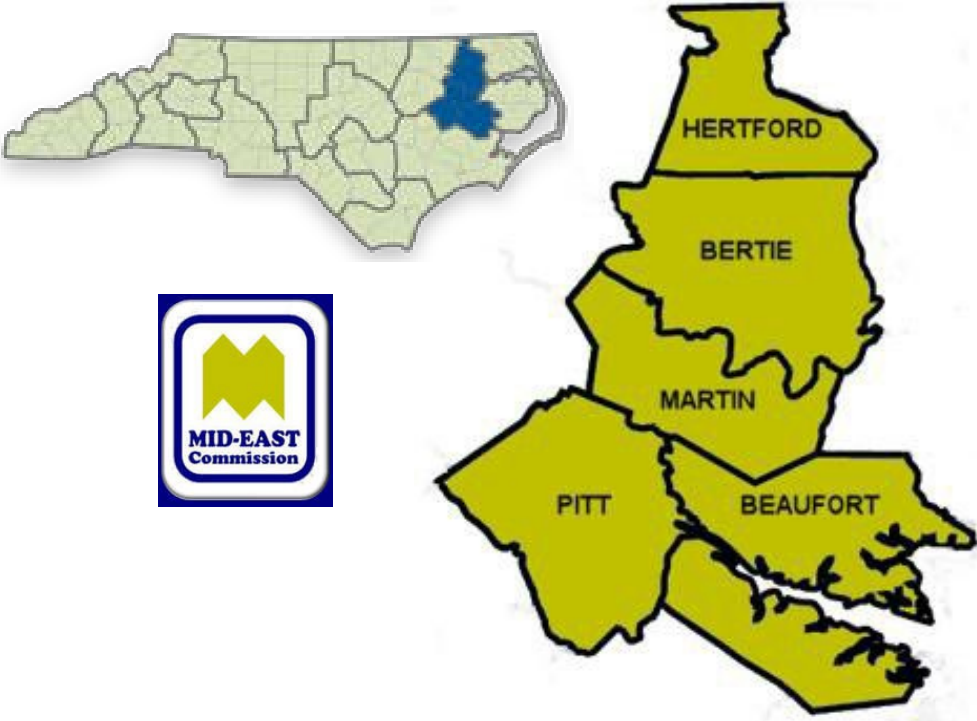


# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Mid-East Commission 2022

Serving Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt Counties



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## Member Governments

### Beaufort County

Aurora  
Bath  
Belhaven  
Chocowinity  
Pantego  
Washington  
Washington Park

### Hertford County

Ahoskie  
Como  
Cofield  
Harrellsville  
Murfreesboro  
Winton

### Bertie County

Askewville  
Aulander  
Colerain  
Kelford  
Lewiston/Woodville  
Powellsville  
Roxobel  
Windsor

### Martin County

Bear Grass  
Everetts  
Hamilton  
Hassell  
Jamesville  
Oak City  
Parmele  
Robersonville  
Williamston

### Pitt County

Ayden  
Bethel  
Falkland  
Farmville  
Fountain  
Greenville  
Grifton  
Grimesland  
Simpson  
Winterville

## **CEDS Vision Statement**

**The 2022 Mid-East Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will help build a regional competitive advantage and leverage the marketplace by establishing and maintaining a robust regional infrastructure, thereby creating revitalized and vibrant communities which will develop healthy and innovative people.**

## **Introduction**

The Mid-East Commission was created by the State of North Carolina in May of 1967 as a Regional Council of Governments serving the local governments and residents of Region “Q”, which is comprised of Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt Counties, as well as their municipalities. The Commission’s mission is to assist people in the Region and its environs by providing professional technical assistance services from its Planning, Economic Development and Community Services Department, Workforce Development, and Area Agency on Aging. The multifaceted and vast experience of its highly trained, educated, and professional staff enables it to meet the needs of its clients, enhancing and sustaining their quality of life.

### ***CEDS and NC Tomorrow Overview***

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed and required to bring together the public and private sectors in creating a comprehensive and performance-based plan to strengthen the regional economy. A CEDS is required for a region to be eligible for assistance through Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs. The Mid-East Region CEDS 2022-2027 document provides an analysis of the regional economy and all of its elements and serves as a guide to establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, identifying investment priorities and funding sources, and assigning lead organizations the responsibility for executing the action plan. CEDS 2022-2027 is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with broad base and diverse public and private sector participation.

North Carolina Tomorrow is a collaborative partnership, led by the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils (NCARC), with the US Economic Development Administration, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Community Investment and Assistance and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, to create a uniform statewide North Carolina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (NCCEDS).

The first initiative in 2012 was to create “Uniform” Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) across North Carolina. These regionally-significant CEDS serve as the foundation to create the statewide NC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – a statewide blueprint for creating an economically sustainable economy for North Carolina. The statewide CEDS promotes growth and community development based on common sense, data collection and analysis, and sustainable best practices.

Funding for the 2012 NC Tomorrow initiative was provided by the US Economic Development Administration and the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Community Investment and Assistance through the NC Catalyst Program. The NC Department of Commerce provided planning grants to 16 non-entitlement local governments, one in each of the 16 Council of Governments (COG) regions. Regional CEDS documents are required to undergo a major update every five years in order for the region to qualify for EDA programs, with funding for the major updates provided by EDA. The NC Tomorrow Plan (Statewide CEDS) has most recently been updated in 2017, with funding for the update also provided by EDA.

## **Guiding Principles and Standards**

The statewide NCCEDS centers on the Six Livability Principles established by the EPA, HUD & HUD Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the Six Investment Principles set forth by the US Department of Economic Development and the NADO CEDS Standards of Excellence. The planning process included all sectors of the economic development community including local, regional and state economic developers, planners, private industry, educational institutions, elected officials and multiple ground-level community organizations to help North Carolina regions develop strong economies and become more sustainable and resilient in the coming years.

### Statewide NC CEDS Guiding Principles and Standards

HUD-EPA-DOT LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES	EDA INVESTMENT PRIORITIES	NADO STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
Provide more transportation choices	Collaborative regional innovation	Build more resilient economies and communities
Promote equitable, affordable housing	Public-private partnerships	Foster a regional collaborative framework to align resources
Enhance economic competitiveness	National strategic priorities	Use modern scenario, data and analysis tools and planning techniques
Support existing communities	Global competitiveness	Create a more strategy-driven planning process
Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investments	Environmentally sustainable development	Increase collaboration across boundaries and position regional CEDS into building blocks for statewide strategies
Value communities and neighborhoods	Economically distressed and underserved communities	Communicate in compelling and modern communication techniques: online and social media
		Engage the public, private, non-profit and education sectors, along with the general public in the development of the CEDS

## **2022 Update**

The 2022 CEDS is a five-year major update. For the 2020 minor update, Mid-East Commission staff added information on opportunity zones. For the 2022 major update, staff worked with a CEDS Advisory Committee consisting of 46 people from diverse backgrounds representing both the private and public sectors.

The CEDS Advisory Committee participated in 16 virtual meetings and also disseminated information for comment via email to develop the plan. Major tasks included updating the demographic and economic data, SWOT analysis, cluster analysis for each county and the region, updating area economic performance factors, updating the economic resilience section including vulnerabilities, steady state, and responsive state initiatives, updating goals, objectives and implementation strategies, and updating the vital projects list.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Mid-East Region is consistent with and dependent upon the citizen participation process. The 2022 major update included a virtual public open house and two in-person public open houses held in October 2022. The in person open houses were held at the Bertie County Community Space (Windsor, Bertie County) and at the Washington Civic Center (Washington, Beaufort County).

## **CEDS Advisory Committee**

The CEDS Advisory Committee represents the economic interest of our region. The committee acts as an advisory committee to review and update the CEDS and to recommend its approval to the five counties in the region and the Mid-East Commission Board of Directors. Mid-East Commission staff worked closely with the committee and other key public and private sector members during the development of CEDS 2022-2027. The Mid-East Commission, the planning organization for the Economic Development District, in conjunction with each county's Economic Developer, appointed the persons to serve on the CEDS Advisory Committee.

The CEDS Advisory Committee members are made up of private sector representatives, public officials, community leaders, and representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private citizens. The CEDS Advisory Committee membership roster is included as **Appendix B**.

Included in the Advisory Committee are five county Economic Developers who work solely in economic development. This list consists of the following persons:

Martyn Johnson – Economic Developer for Beaufort County, Retired

Brad Hufford – Economic Developer for Beaufort County

Steve Biggs – Economic Developer for Bertie County

Kelly Bowers – Economic Developer for Hertford County

Jason Semple – Executive Director of the Martin County Economic Development Commission

Wayne Rollins – Business Retention and Expansion Specialist for Pitt County Economic Development



These individuals were included because of their in depth knowledge of the needs, social characteristics, and goals of their respective counties. Their input is an essential element of public/private participation.

The following employees of the Mid-East Commission assisted in the development of the CEDS:

Jamie Heath, Planner (Lead person to Advisory Committee)

Bryant Buck, Executive Director

Pat Harris, Director of Community and Economic Development

Jennie Bowen, Workforce Development Director

Lisa Williams, Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Sam Singleton, Transportation Planner

## Background

Region “Q” is located in Northeastern North Carolina but not in the extreme Northeastern corner of the state. The region is comprised of Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt Counties. It is a wide, essentially flat, coastal plain lying within the inner coast along the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. The region is dominated by rural undeveloped agricultural and woodland that is sparsely populated. Small municipalities make up most of the population centers in Region “Q”. Pitt County is the only semi-developed county in the region and varies demonstratively from the other four counties.

The region is punctuated by flat, meandering rivers – the Tar-Pamlico, Pungo, Chowan, and Cashie, and the more turbulent waters of the Roanoke. The vast acreage on both sides of these rivers and their many tributary creeks are devoted to undevelopable floodplains. The entire system of sounds, rivers, tributaries and wetlands constitutes the second largest estuary ecosystem on the East Coast and in the lower 48 United States.

The land is dominated by wetland peat, and primarily sand and loam based prime agricultural soils. A large percentage of the land in the region has severe constraints for development, due primarily to a seasonal high water table and year-round wetness tendencies. These soils are also located in areas susceptible to flooding as specified by FEMA. The vegetation consists of that found in wet and floodplain areas with Carolina pines tending to dominate the landscape. Farm crops which are an important part of the natural resource based economy are cotton, grain corn, peanuts, tobacco, soybeans, and sweet potatoes. The region has a mild four-season climate with frequent humid conditions typical of the Southeastern United States.

## Love Living Here Exercise

Members of the CEDS Advisory Committee and people attending public input meetings were asked, “Why do you love living here?” Their answers were used to form the following word cloud. Larger text represents a greater number of responses.



## **Area Economic Performance Factors**

### **Land Use and Environment**

The region suffers from restricted or constrained land use because of the floodplain or near-floodplain nature of the terrain - a terrain that in many locations cannot be economically developed or is environmentally sensitive. For example, in Bertie County nearly 80% of the soils in the County have limitations for septic tanks due to its poor drainage, seasonably high water tables, or permeability problems" (CAMA Land Use Plan). Further, in Beaufort County, "Over 70% of the County is underdeveloped land, including sensitive environmental areas..." (CAMA Land Use Plan).

The region's portion of the fragile Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary must be protected from degradation. Land use and environmental controls protect the life support system for the fishing industry and enhance several tourist activities. However, many developers of potential job creating projects find it uneconomical and time consuming to deal with these controls. Industrial and other business uses can find sites, but site selection is often compromised by the location of environmentally sensitive areas. The pull is strong in both directions.

The Mid-East Commission and the CEDS Advisory Committee are very aware of these divergent opinions and believe development should only occur if the integrity of the land and the quality of the region's air and water are not permanently compromised.

### **Local Land Use Plans and Zoning**

Zoning refers to municipal or local laws or regulations that govern how real property can and cannot be used in certain geographic areas. The majority of municipalities in the region enforce local Zoning Ordinances. Hertford County and Pitt County have county-wide Zoning Ordinances, while Beaufort, Bertie, and Martin Counties do not have county-wide zoning.

Previously, there was no requirement for local governments to have Land Use Plans in order to have Zoning Ordinances. The General Assembly passed NC General Statute 160D in 2019. The legislation made a number of revisions to state planning statutes, most of which were minor, technical changes. One of the most substantive changes was the requirement to have a plan in order to have zoning. By July 1, 2022, local governments must have a reasonably maintained Comprehensive Plan or Land Use Plan in order to retain the authority to adopt and enforce zoning regulations. While "reasonably maintained" is not defined by statute, the School of Government is recommending updates on a 5-10 year basis. It is acceptable for a town to be on a county plan, as long as all requirements for the town are met, such as an individual future land use map that lays out future land uses within the town jurisdiction.

The following is a summary of local Land Use Plans in the region as of this writing:

#### **Beaufort County -**

- Beaufort County Joint CAMA Land Use Plan, 2010
  - Includes Beaufort County municipalities except Bath and Washington
  - Chocowinity portion undergoing update in 2022
- Town of Bath CAMA Land Use Plan, 2007
  - Undergoing update in 2022

- City of Washington CAMA Land Use Plan, 2007
- City of Washington Pride in the Past, Faith in the Future: 2023 Comprehensive Plan, 2013
  - Undergoing update in 2022

Bertie County –

- Bertie County Joint CAMA Land Use Plan, 2016
  - Includes municipalities except Windsor
- Town of Windsor CAMA Land Use Plan, 2018

Hertford County –

- Hertford County Joint CAMA Land Use Plan, 2011
  - Includes municipalities

Martin County –

- Martin County Comprehensive Plan with a Health and Wellness Component, 2013
  - Includes municipalities
- Town of Williamston Comprehensive Plan, 2012

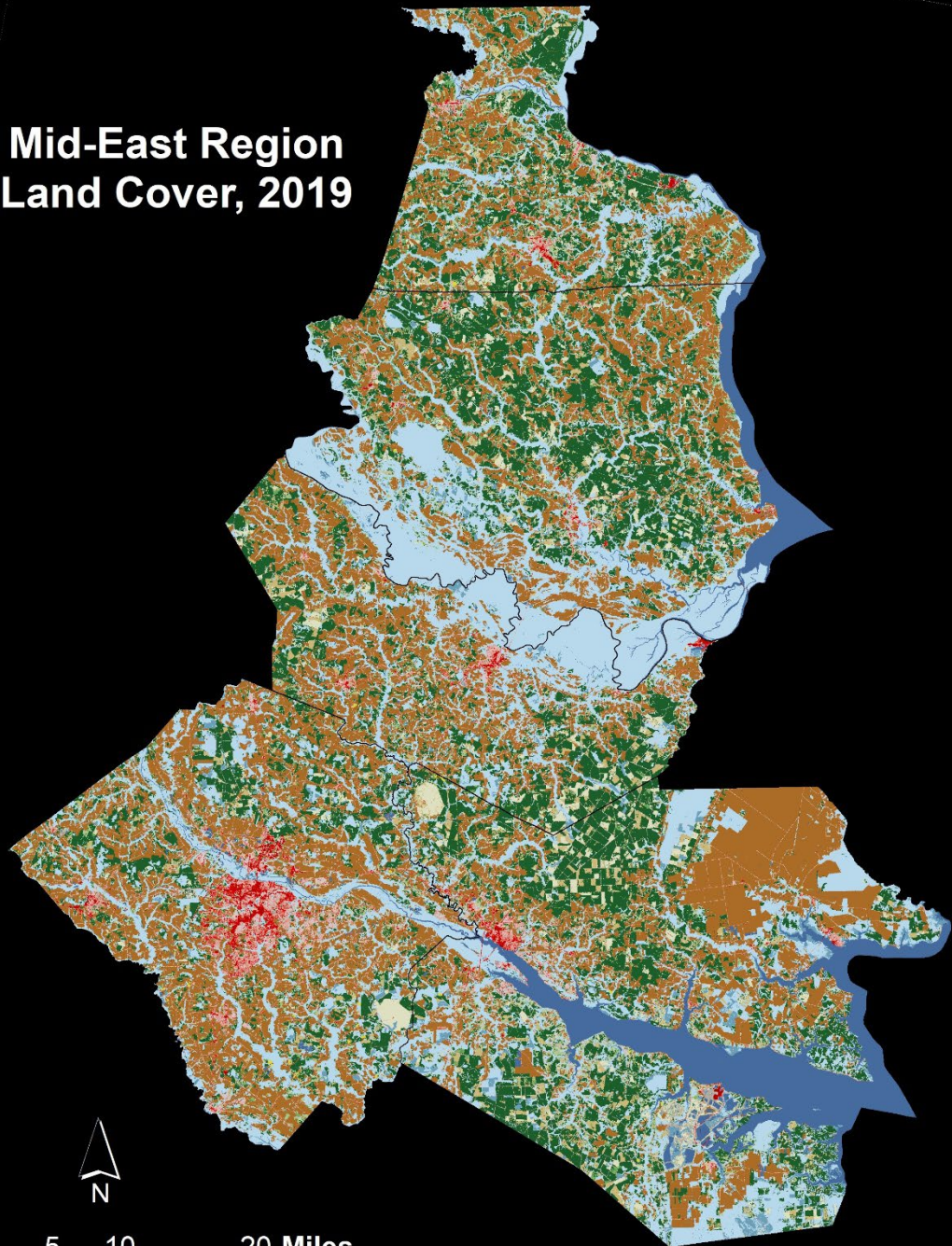
Pitt County –

- Pitt County 2030 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2011
- Town of Farmville Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2022
- Horizons 2026: Greenville’s Community Plan, 2016
- Town of Winterville Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2019
- Town of Ayden Community Vision 2030, 2019

## **Regional Land Cover**

The National Land Cover Database is developed by the US Geological Survey. The Mid-East Region was most recently surveyed in 2019. The following map displays land cover in the region.

# Mid-East Region Land Cover, 2019



## NLCD Land Cover Classification Legend

- 11 Open Water
- 12 Perennial Ice/ Snow
- 21 Developed, Open Space
- 22 Developed, Low Intensity
- 23 Developed, Medium Intensity
- 24 Developed, High Intensity
- 31 Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)
- 41 Deciduous Forest
- 42 Evergreen Forest
- 43 Mixed Forest
- 51 Dwarf Scrub\*
- 52 Shrub/Scrub
- 71 Grassland/Herbaceous
- 72 Sedge/Herbaceous\*
- 73 Lichens\*
- 74 Moss\*
- 81 Pasture/Hay
- 82 Cultivated Crops
- 90 Woody Wetlands
- 95 Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands

\* Alaska only

0 5 10 20 Miles

Source: National Land Cover Database



## **Financial Resources**

Commercial capital within the region is largely controlled by lending institutions that are headquartered in other regions of the state or the country. Fortunately, the region generally finds that its servicing lending institutions do make adequate capital available on reasonable terms and conditions.

Due to the low per capita and median household incomes in the region, many residents do not have the discretionary income needed to support flourishing retail and service businesses. Traditional lenders are often unable to take some or any risk to finance these businesses. In such instances, the potential borrowers have acceptable alternative financing sources such as the Mid-East Certified Development Corporation's EDA Revolving Loan Fund, the USDA Intermediary Relending Program, or the NC Rural Center's Microenterprise Loan Program. Recently, there have been private angel and venture capitalist lenders locating in the region, providing another source of alternative financing.

Local government budgetary shortfalls make community improvements and other economic development investments impossible without help from grant funds in most areas of the region. There has been a recent influx of grant monies to local governments through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). As of the time of this writing, rural and small town governments are having issues with staff capacity to administer funds. Regional COGs are expecting EDA funding to provide local governments with ARPA grant administration assistance in the near future.

State and federal broadband grants have continued, and additional grants have become available since the previous CEDS update. There have recently been many grant programs available for local and regional resilience planning and flood reduction projects. State and federal grants continue to be available for new businesses/expansions based on the number of jobs created.

## **Business, Personal and Property Taxes**

The personal income tax and the corporate tax of the State of North Carolina are applied on a uniform basis throughout the state. Neither is there a differing effect of the state sales tax from one region of the state to another.

Property taxes on business and personal real estate and equipment do vary widely from one county to another in proportion to the level of services needed or wanted and in inverse proportion to the per capita size of the list of ratable property.

Generally, most of the Mid-East counties are fairly frugal in the level of services supported. Of the five counties, three have high property tax rates. This, of course, is discouraging to businesses that are interested in expanding or relocation in these counties. However, the raw tax rates do not tell the whole story, as some counties have all-inclusive rates, with no separate tax streams.

The current county property tax rates are as follows:

- Bertie: 0.865 cents per \$100

- Beaufort: 0.625 cents per \$100
- Hertford: 0.840 cents per \$100
- Martin: 0.810 cents per \$100
- Pitt: 0.6841 cents per \$100

## **Existing Infrastructure**

Existing infrastructure is a considerable, if not major, impediment to the attraction of prospective companies. The following sections summarize the current status of broadband, electric, housing, natural gas, transportation, water, and wastewater infrastructure in the region.

### **Broadband**

High-speed broadband internet has become a necessary utility. Broadband connection is no longer optional but vital for the region to compete economically and for citizens to not be left behind. Students can no longer fully participate in the education system without broadband access. The region needs high-speed internet to the last mile in rural areas.

The Mid-East Region is still lacking in high-speed broadband availability. Many rural areas in the region have no suitable options available. However, there have been some improvements made in every county since the last CEDS update, with some of those improvements being major.

State grants such as the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant through the NC Broadband Office have been a helpful source of funding for local governments to implement broadband infrastructure projects in partnership with the private broadband industry. These grants provide funding for companies to go into rural areas that would otherwise be unprofitable because of the upfront infrastructure costs and the low population densities. This has helped bring broadband projects to rural areas in the region. However, local governments have experienced issues with funding agencies not taking local input and needs into consideration when choosing a broadband provider to provide the service.

The GREAT grant is currently funded, and the next state broadband grant anticipated is the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) grant. The state has the intention to fill all the gaps and eventually cover all households in North Carolina with high-speed broadband internet. It is incumbent for leaders in the Mid-East Region to take advantage of these broadband grant programs while they are available.

### **Electric**

Electric capacity in the region is found to currently be sufficient. Service in the region is provided by major nationwide providers, Electric Membership Cooperatives (EMCs), and local government systems supported by Electricities, depending on the area. Electric rates in the region are generally reasonable.

There has been a continued increase in solar energy facilities (or “solar farms”) across the region since the last CEDS update. Many local governments have started regulating these



solar energy facilities through local land use and zoning regulations and some local governments have enacted temporary moratoriums.

## **Housing**

The Mid-East Region is comparably an affordable area to purchase a home, although costs have risen recently, as they have across the country. In most areas of the region, there is a lack of variety in housing options to choose from. Multi-family residential developments are very limited outside of the City of Greenville and are not adequate to meet demand. In the four more rural counties, there is also a severe lack of middle-income rental options.

One major impediment to more affordable housing construction in rural areas is the rules for the low-to-moderate-income (LMI) qualified tax credit. To qualify, the property must be within 2.5 miles of a grocery store, which only includes major chain stores, not local grocery stores or Dollar Stores. There is no flexibility in the rule (referred to as the “QAP” formula). For example, Bertie County had a proposed property within 2.6 miles of a grocery store, and it would not qualify. There is currently legislation for Tier 1 counties to have some flexibility. If passed, the definition of grocery stores would be changed to include local grocery stores and Dollar Stores. The legislation passing would be positive for the region as it would open up many more properties to receive the LMI tax credit, which is an attraction to potential developers.

In many areas of the region, there is a need to demolish blighted and dilapidated housing that is beyond the ability to repair. Larger “entitlement” communities receive Community Development and Block Grant (CDBG) funds to cover these residential demolitions, but smaller “non-entitlement” communities do not have this funding available. “Non-entitlement” communities can apply for the CDBG Demolition Program, but only if the local government has control of the site and it is intended for future industrial use. The only “entitlement” community in the Mid-East Region is the City of Greenville in Pitt County. There is a major need for residential demolition funding in the region to prevent the continued creation of blighted areas and slums.

## **Natural Gas**

Natural gas, a prerequisite for the location of certain industrial and commercial uses, is now found to be more frequently scattered in areas of the Mid-East Region. However, natural gas service is still unavailable in the majority of the region. Natural gas pipelines have been extended to many industrial parks, but some industrial parks still lack access, such as the NC Rail and Commerce Park in Martin County.

It is important to extend natural gas service to all current and anticipated future industrial and heavy commercial areas. Possible sources of funding include NC Dept. of Commerce’s (DOC) State Rural Grants Economic Infrastructure Program or DOC’s Industrial Development Fund. However, the eligibility for both programs is strict and generally requires an employer or multiple employers who will be creating a significant number of jobs. There is a need for more flexible funding sources to expand natural gas infrastructure in the region.

## Water

The availability of water service in the region is generally found to be adequate and the capacity of existing systems is sufficient. There are still some areas of the region where public water service is not available, and development must be served by private wells. It would be ideal to extend public water service to these areas.

There are common problems with the condition of public water systems throughout the five counties. Many town systems are 30-40 years old and have never been properly maintained. The result is failing systems – especially the lines.

For small towns and rural counties, upgrading water systems often seems impossible without outside financial assistance. Where water system condition problems directly affect the location or retention of an employer, a possible EDA public works project exists. Another potential opportunity for upgrading systems is FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) grant. However, the BRIC grant is very competitive, the application is time consuming, and requires a skilled grant writer. This prevents many small town and rural local governments from pursuing an application due to staff capacity limitations and limited funding to secure outside consultants. There have recently been some water system improvements planned with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, but the projects haven't happened yet. Small town and rural local governments require assistance administering the funds due to staff capacity issues and the complication of reporting requirements.

There are often affordability issues with small town and rural water systems due to having a low volume of users. High rates may discourage potential businesses from locating in these areas. System regionalization has been successful in lowering rates in some areas of the region. Regionalization should be explored further in areas where service affordability is an issue due to a lower user base. NC DEQ has merger/regionalization feasibility grants available. These grants fund studies to evaluate the potential consolidation of two or more systems into one system and the potential physical interconnection with another system for regional wastewater treatment or regional water supply.

There are some cases where major upgrades to water systems have been forced by the state due to requirements for groundwater and aquifer encroachment. Many local governments have had to switch from groundwater to surface water for public water systems due to restrictions, an expensive switch to make. Some communities have had to foot the bill for multi-million dollar system upgrades with little to no assistance from the state. These costs have been passed on to system users in communities which are already economically distressed. In some cases, the rates for service have risen to the point of sparking public outrage, with citizens organizing protests outside Town Halls. Local governments in the region recognize the value of our natural resources and want to be good stewards of those resources. It is important that future state mandates around public water systems come with available funding for local governments to comply and make the system upgrades, at least in Tier 1 counties.

There is also a need to upgrade public water systems to digital mapping platforms across the region. Many small town and rural local governments are operating from old paper maps dated

back to when their water systems were originally constructed. These maps need to be updated and brought into a modern digital mapping system. NC DEQ's Asset and Inventory Assessment Grant provides funding to upgrade systems to digital mapping, as well as funding for conducting asset inventories and condition assessments.

## **Wastewater**

The capacity of existing wastewater systems is generally sufficient to accommodate future growth within the systems' service areas. However, there are major issues with the lack of wastewater service availability across the region. Sewer is only available within and just outside some municipalities, while some municipalities and most county areas have no wastewater service available and must rely on on-site septic systems. In the four more rural counties, often even within urban areas of these counties, public wastewater service is not adequate to serve the next potential round of industrial development. The lack of wastewater service is a major impediment to the attraction of new businesses to the region.

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## Transportation

### *Aviation*

The Pitt-Greenville Airport (PGV) provides air freight and commuter service to Greenville, which is in the southwestern portion of the region. Commuter flights into or from the airport are commercial flights connected to the International Airport in Charlotte (Charlotte-Douglas). The Martin County Airport, Tri-County Airport (located in Hertford County and also serving Bertie County), and the Washington-Warren Airport (Beaufort County) serve general and corporate private flights.

Air freight into the region is generally infrequent and must be supplemented by common carrier freight hauls from the Norfolk-Virginia Beach and Raleigh-Durham Airports. This level of service is marginal for the Mid-East Region's current needs and inadequate for a future which could see high technology commerce and growth.

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian*

The City of Greenville in Pitt County has a comprehensive greenway system. Greenways are severely lacking in the rest of the Mid-East Region. There are a few smaller greenways scattered throughout the region, but not nearly enough to serve public demand. There is currently a prime opportunity to take advantage of funding programs related to 2023 being branded as NC's Year of the Trail. There is also an opportunity to tie into the East Coast Greenway's planned NC Alternate Coastal Route.

In addition to the public recreation benefits, it is desirable from an economic development standpoint for the region to be part of a trail that runs the entire east coast of the country from Maine to Florida. A Feasibility Study was recently funded for a greenway to connect the City of Greenville in Pitt County to the City of Washington in Beaufort County and should begin in the next few months. If constructed, the greenway will be part of the East Coast Greenway system.

Safe on-road bicycle facilities are lacking in the entire region. Some people bicycle for their daily transportation needs, and they face dire safety issues. The availability of sidewalks and crosswalks in urban areas varies. Improvements and expansions of the sidewalk system is a need for most municipalities in the Mid-East Region.

All local governments and especially those in small town and rural areas require outside funding to construct bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. A primary source of funding is the submittal of bicycle and pedestrian projects for competitive NC DOT funding through the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (Greenville MPO) or the local Rural Planning Organization (Mid-East RPO or Peanut Belt RPO). A primary issue with this funding source is that the match required by NC DOT is difficult or impossible for some local governments to pay, especially in small towns and Tier 1 counties. There is currently an effort to reduce the required local match for bicycle and pedestrian projects in Tier 1 counties.

In order to submit bicycle and pedestrian projects for NC DOT funding through the local MPO or RPO, the projects must be in an adopted local plan. NC DOT's Integrated Mobility Division

offers Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grants which many communities in the region have used to develop local plans. There is also the opportunity to include bicycle and pedestrian projects into County Comprehensive Transportation Plans, but these plans are only updated by NC DOT approximately once every ten years.

Once a project is in a locally adopted plan, the community can then submit projects from the plan to their MPO or RPO for funding consideration, provided the required local match is available. Projects submitted to MPOs and RPOs are not guaranteed to be funded but are subject to NCDOT's prioritization process. This is a competitive funding process in which projects are scored based on metrics defined by NCDOT. Projects can compete for three pots of NCDOT money; statewide, regional, and division. The statewide pot is the most competitive but has the largest amount of funding available, while the division pot is the least competitive but has the smallest amount of funding available, with the regional pot being in between.

There are also grant programs available through US DOT (RAISE grant) which are very competitive but offer a large pot of money for projects demonstrating a regional impact. There are several community-based grants from private organizations and non-profits that provide funding for smaller projects.

There is currently a need to develop a Mid-East Region Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and a Mid-East Region Comprehensive Greenway Plan, which could possibly be funded through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant program. Existing Bicycle Plans, Greenway Plans, and Pedestrian Plans across the region are as follows:

Beaufort County -

- Beaufort County Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- City of Washington Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- City of Washington Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

Bertie County -

- Town of Windsor Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Hertford County -

- Town of Ahoskie Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- Town of Murfreesboro Greenway Plan
- Town of Murfreesboro Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

Martin County -

- Walk Williamston: A Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

Pitt County -

- Pitt County Greenway Plan
- Town of Farmville Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan
- Town of Farmville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- Town of Winterville Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan
- Town of Winterville Greenway Master Plan
- Greenville MPO Active Transportation Plan
- Greenville MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

## *Electric Vehicles*

There has been a recent rise in ownership of electric vehicles (EVs), and it is clear that the use of EVs is only going to increase in the future. There has already been a measurable impact on the gas tax which is used by DOT to fund highway projects. There will need to be a way to tax usage of electric vehicles to make up for funding shortfalls due to reduced gas tax. There has been recent discussion on using a plug in device to tax people based on the number of miles driven in the EV. This will not be the most beneficial for rural areas where people drive further distances to attend to daily needs.

There are extremely limited options for EV charging in the Mid-East Region. There is a need for public and private EV charging stations in convenient locations across the region. There have been recent grant programs to fund community owned charging stations but few communities in the region have taken advantage of these programs to date. A major barrier to the increase in privately operated EV charging stations is a regulation that businesses are not able to have an EV charging station available to the public unless they also provide gasoline. There is currently an effort to get this regulation changed.

## *Ferries and Water Transport*

The Aurora-Bayview Ferry in Beaufort County crosses the Pamlico River, serving both tourists and commuters to and from the Nutrien facility in Aurora. The ferry provides the only option to cross the river east of Washington in Beaufort County.

The San Souci Cable Ferry in Bertie County crosses the Cashie River and primarily serves tourists. The Parker's Cable Ferry in Hertford County crosses the Meherrin River and also primarily serves tourists. Unlike the larger boats of the state's coastal ferry system, cable ferries carry a maximum of two vehicles and are guided across a river by cables connected to both shores. These are two of only three remaining inland cable ferries in the state.

There have been recent planning level discussions on connecting Outer Banks Ferries with smaller inland high speed ferries for tourists to enjoy a one day or multiple day Inner Banks Adventure. If funded, this could be a major tourism boom for the region.

There is also a potential opportunity to increase local water-based transportation for residents and visitors through publicly or privately operated "water taxis", which could, for example, provide river-based transport between two municipalities on a river or between various historic downtown districts in a county.

There are currently multiple "blueway" water recreation trails in the region frequented by paddlers. There are camping platforms for paddlers available along the Roanoke River and the Tar-Pamlico River. There is the opportunity to construct camping platforms on the Meherrin River as well.

## *Highway*

Generally, the only less accessible regions of North Carolina than Region "Q" are portions of Western North Carolina in the Great Smoky Mountains and some beaches of the Outer Banks

along the extreme East Coast. The Smoky Mountains and the Outer Banks compensate for their inaccessibility by being the top two tourist attractions in the state by which tourists will overcome the areas inaccessibility to gain the enjoyment they want. Such is not the case for Region "Q".

The highway system in the region possesses features which contribute to substandardness and inaccessibility:

1. At grade (highway level) perpendicular crossings of highways with rural roads and state routes.
2. Tight curves.
3. Occasional access to highway directly from private property.
4. Complete breakdown of highway standards in urban centers.

Truck and commuter dependent manufacturers and wholesalers are likely to choose many other locations in the state prior to choosing the Mid-East Region, given these serious highway deficiencies mentioned above. Even the four-laning of highways is not adequate if they are not designed and built to Interstate standards.

There have been improvements made to the highway system in the region since the last major update. US-64 has been designated as Future I-87. DOT is working on bringing the corridor to Interstate standards in sections. Currently, they are adding shoulders and raising bridges. Part of the I-87 corridor has been redone and resurfaced to be stronger, almost up to Martin Community College. Additional funding is needed to bring the entire corridor up to Interstate standards.

US-264 has been four laned in the region with the exception of the eastern most portion in Beaufort County. A section of US-264 in Pitt County has been brought up to Interstate standards and designated as I-587. I-587 follows the US 264 (East-West) Wilson By-Pass which opened in 2004, improving the accessibility to I-95 (North-South). I-587 also provides access to the Piedmont area of the state, including the greater Raleigh area. The remaining portions of US-264 are still below Interstate standards, and some portions have serious access management issues.

A portion of US-17 in Bertie and Martin Counties has been designated as Future I-87. I-87 provides access to Tidewater Virginia and the Norfolk Port. There is a lot of work needed to bring US-17 up to Interstate standards in this area. Funding needs to be allocated to do so. Construction of the US-17 Washington By-Pass (North-South) has been completed. The Washington to Williamston portion of US-17 is funded to be four laned. Currently utility relocation is occurring, and the project is under contract for construction. After completion, the only portion of US-17 in the region remaining as a two lane highway is the Beaufort County to Craven County portion.

US-13 has been four laned in Hertford County but is still two laned in Bertie County. US-158 is primarily a two laned highway but has been four laned in some areas of Hertford County. US-258 is only two laned in the region. These US highways and some state highways in the region are commuting routes that have heavy truck traffic. Yet the majority of these routes are two laned and in major need of upgrades. Sections of NC-11 have been four laned, but the highway still has two laned portions. With the volume of truck traffic considered, the entire

corridor needs to be four laned. NC-33, another state highway with heavy truck traffic, is almost completely two laned, with the exception of a section in the Greenville MPO area. The NC-125 bypass in Martin County has been completed and is four laned. Prison Camp Rd. will be part of NC-125 once it is widened and improved, but it will still be two laned.

While there have been significant improvements to inter-regional highway infrastructure since the last major CEDS update, we still have a long way to go, and community leaders must keep working to ensure that improvements to highway infrastructure occurs. Perhaps one of the largest barriers to securing more project funding is the weight that NC DOT puts on congestion in its funding formulas, which causes the majority of project funding to go to major urban centers outside the region. There is currently an effort to reduce the weight of congestion in the funding formula to provide greater benefit for rural areas such as the Mid-East Region.

### *Port*

The ports nearest the Mid-East Region are the container ports in Norfolk and Wilmington and the breakbulk and bulk port in Morehead City. The flow of goods between the region and these ports is considered adequate, with access to the ports by common carrier or rail. From Williamston in Martin County (a central location in the region), it is 130 miles to Norfolk, 120 miles to Wilmington, and 80 miles to Morehead City. The expansion of Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) 20 by the port of Virginia and the expansion of FTZ 214 at the Global Transpark in Kinston provide cost advantages to companies involved in import/export activity and made becoming a satellite location easier.

### *Public Transit*

The City of Greenville operates the GREAT bus system, the only fixed route system in the region. All other areas of the Mid-East Region are served by rural on demand transportation systems. Service is generally only offered during daytime hours, a challenge for those with non-traditional work schedules and for people taking night classes. Expanding the hours that rural public transit systems operate should be a priority, however, there is concern that evening ridership rates will be too low to sustain operations. Rural park and ride lots are another option to implement with rural transit systems, but there is a similar concern on whether there would be enough demand. If implemented, park and ride lots could connect with greenways and/or on road bicycle facilities, enabling residents in rural areas to commute without using a personal vehicle.

NC DOT will be developing a Regional Public Transit Plan in the near future. This is a pilot plan which will include multiple other counties in addition to the Peanut Belt RPO counties (which includes Bertie and Hertford Counties in the Mid-East Region). A similar plan is needed for the Mid-East RPO (includes Beaufort, Martin, and Pitt Counties). This is a potential for the second phase of NC DOT's Regional Public Transit Plans.

### *Rail*

Freight rail service is found to be generally adequate to many of the industrialized locations within the region at present. There are funding opportunities to assist businesses with getting rail spurs to their locations.



There was an intermodal CSX hub constructed in Rocky Mount known as the “Carolina Connector Terminal” which opened in November 2021. The intermodal facility combines the superior economics of rail transportation with the short-haul flexibility of trucks and offers a competitive cost advantage over mid to long-haul trucking. Although the facility was reduced from its original scope, it still has significant capacity, featuring three wide-span, zero emission electric cranes with a lift capacity of 110,000 containers per year. The majority of container handling is completely automatic with operators remotely controlling the initial lift and final placement from inside the terminal building.

Direct rail passenger service does not exist for the region; travelers must travel to Wilson (40 miles from Greenville) or Rocky Mount (40 miles from Ahoskie) for the nearest Amtrak stations. Peanut Belt RPO is working to get passenger rail back in Weldon, which will be closer than current options.

There is currently a Light Rail Feasibility Study funded to study the area between Greenville and Raleigh, which should begin in the next few months.

### ***Impacts of Natural Disasters***

The location of the Mid-East Region makes it susceptible to the effects of natural disasters, especially hurricanes. Long lasting effects are most felt by the low income segment of the population, who are more likely to occupy the most hazard prone areas and less able to recover after a disaster occurs.

Hurricane Floyd passed through the region on September 15, 1999 and caused the most damage of any storm since Hurricane Hazel in the 1950s. All five counties in the Mid-East Region were severely constrained by the damage done during this storm. The worst damage was not caused by the high winds, as with many hurricanes. The rains that accompanied the storm caused the most severe and lasting damage to the region and all of eastern North Carolina. Flooding associated with this storm was an economic burden to all of the Region “Q” counties.

Although all areas of the region were severely affected by the storm and the flood, some were more visible than others were. Pitt County was the center of national news coverage for several weeks as the floodwater receded. One of the most widespread effects of this storm and flood was on the farmers of the region. The cash crops, these farmer’s livelihoods, were destroyed or damaged. Many homes in the region were deemed uninhabitable and many others needed flood remediation. The region was unprepared for a natural disaster of this magnitude. Federal agencies such as FEMA were visible for years after the flood. Many areas of the region will not be inhabited again because of flood risks.

Hurricane Isabel made landfall and moved through the region on September 18, 2003. This Category 2 Storm caused an estimated \$170 million dollars in damage to insured property in North Carolina alone. There was a recorded 6 to 10 foot above normal tide level storm surge leaving many waterfront areas of the region inundated with storm water. Although the flood damage from this storm was not as extensive as Hurricane Floyd, it still caused major hardship for many areas of the region. The wind damage from this storm was very extensive. Bertie and

Hertford Counties, the two most northern counties in the region, sustained some of the worst damage during Hurricane Isabel. The winds downed both trees and power lines causing many secondary roads to become impassable. These two counties were without power in some areas for extended periods after the storm.

On August 27, 2011, Hurricane Irene hit the North Carolina coast as a strong Category 1 Storm with winds over 85 miles per hour. All five Mid-East counties were designated as federal disaster areas. There were over \$125 million in damages in North Carolina alone.

Hurricane Matthew brushed past the North Carolina coast on October 8, 2016 bringing devastating flooding across central and eastern North Carolina. More than a foot of rain fell 100 miles inland, swelling streams and rivers to levels above what was seen in Hurricane Floyd in 1999. All five Mid-East counties were designated as federal disaster areas. Bertie and Pitt Counties in particular suffered major damage due to the flooding. Federal disaster aid was far from sufficient to cover the damaged infrastructure.

Hurricane Florence hit the North Carolina coast as a strong Category 1 Storm on September 14, 2018. Hurricane Florence was slow moving and long lasting, causing devastating flooding in its path. Significant flooding and widespread power outages remained after the storm. Florence caused an estimated \$30 billion in damages and is on record as the most expensive storm to ever hit the Carolinas. In the Mid-East Region, Beaufort and Pitt Counties sustained the most damage from the storm and were declared federal disaster areas. Eastern Beaufort County was severely impacted and had widespread flood damage.

Hurricane Dorian hit the North Carolina coast as a Category 1 Storm on September 6, 2019. Beaufort and Pitt Counties were declared federal disaster areas. The storm caused over \$74 million in damages in North Carolina.

Hurricane Isaias hit the North Carolina coast as a Category 1 Storm on August 4, 2020. Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford and Pitt Counties were declared federal disaster areas. The storm caused over \$30 million in damages in North Carolina.

Hurricane Ian tracked through North Carolina after making landfall for a second time as a Category 1 Storm in South Carolina on September 30, 2022. The storm brought minor flooding to coastal communities in North Carolina and brought down trees and power lines across the eastern and central parts of the state. All five Mid-East counties were declared federal disaster areas, but fortunately there was minimal damage as a result of this storm.

In some county's most recent FEMA floodplain map updates, properties which flooded during past hurricanes have been removed from FEMA's official floodplain. Beaufort County is a prime example where this has occurred with a significant number of properties. The properties being removed from FEMA's official floodplain is a concern because of the flooding history of the properties which new residents may not be aware of, and the fact that if the property is outside the FEMA floodplain, flood insurance is not required.

## Regional Profile Data

### Population Information

Table 1 shows population growth for counties in the Mid-East region. It shows the total population for each county from 2000, 2010, and 2019 as well as the population and percentage growth during that timeframe. <sup>1</sup>

The data shows that Pitt County is much more populated than the other four counties. Pitt County was the only county to grow in population (6.1%) from 2010 to 2019. The other four counties saw a population decline from 2010 to 2019. The Mid-East Region as a whole grew in population by 1.9% from 2010 to 2019.

<b>Table 1. Mid-East Commission Region Population Growth, 2000-2019</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>Census 2000</b>	<b>Census 2010</b>	<b>Census 2019</b>	<b>Growth 2010-2019</b>	<b>% Growth 2010-2019</b>
Beaufort	44,958	47,759	47,168	(-591)	(-1.2%)
Bertie	19,773	21,282	19,380	(-1,902)	(-8.9%)
Hertford	22,601	24,669	24,012	(-657)	(-2.7%)
Martin	25,593	24,505	22,849	(-1,656)	(-6.7%)
Pitt	133,798	168,148	178,433	10,285	6.1%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>246,723</b>	<b>286,363</b>	<b>291,842</b>	<b>5,479</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau (2000 Decennial Census, 2010 Decennial Census, 2019 American Community Survey)

<sup>1</sup> The CEDS Advisory Committee determined that the 2020 US Census data is inaccurate for a majority of the region. There were particular issues with undercounting, especially in rural areas of the region. Additionally, there seems to be inaccuracies in other data sources from the same time period. This is likely due to issues related to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic effecting data collection efforts. The Advisory Committee decided to use data from 2019, which is more dated, but seems to be more accurate based on local knowledge. Future population projection data was omitted, as it was determined that these projections were skewed by the inaccurate 2020 Decennial Census data counts.

**Table 2.**  
**Mid-East Commission Region Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 2019**

County	Population By Race						Population by Ethnicity			
	White	% White	African American	% African American	Other	% Other	Hispanic or Latino	% Hispanic or Latino	Non Hispanic or Latino	% Non Hispanic or Latino
Beaufort	33,969	72.0%	11,782	25.0%	1,417	3.0%	3,658	7.8%	43,510	92.2%
Bertie	6,830	35.2%	11,933	61.6%	617	3.2%	413	2.1%	18,967	97.9%
Hertford	8,422	35.1%	14,263	59.4%	1,327	5.5%	921	3.8%	23,091	96.2%
Martin	12,460	54.5%	9,625	42.1%	764	3.3%	911	4.0%	21,938	96.0%
Pitt	102,087	57.2%	61,924	34.7%	14,422	8.1%	11,168	6.3%	167,265	93.7%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>163,768</b>	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>109,527</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>18,547</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>17,071</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>274,771</b>	<b>94.2%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau (2019 American Community Survey)

Table 2 shows the Mid-East Region population by race and ethnicity. Race is broken down by Caucasian or White, African American or Black, and Other (includes American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, some other race, and two or more races), while ethnicity is split into Hispanic or Latino and Non- Hispanic or Latino.

Beaufort (72.0%), Martin (54.5%) and Pitt (57.2%) Counties have a larger White population while Bertie (61.6%) and Hertford (59.4%) Counties have a higher percentage of African Americans. Overall, the Mid-East Region has a 56.1% White population and a 37.5% African American population. Pitt County has the largest Other race population at 8.1% followed by Hertford (5.5%), Martin (3.3%), Bertie (3.2%), and Beaufort (3.0%) Counties. The Mid-East Region's Other race population is 6.4%.

The ethnicity part of the table shows Hispanic or Latino populations of each county. Beaufort County had the largest percentage with 7.8%, followed by Pitt at 6.3%, Martin at 4.0%, Hertford at 3.8%, while Bertie County had the smallest Hispanic or Latino population at 2.1%. The Mid-East Region had a population of 5.8% Hispanic or Latino and 94.2% Non-Hispanic or Latino.

**Table 3.  
Mid-East Commission Region Population by Age Group, 2019**

<b>County</b>	<b>% Under 18 years</b>	<b>% 18-24 years</b>	<b>% 25-44 years</b>	<b>% 45-64 years</b>	<b>% Over 65 years</b>	<b>Median Age</b>
Beaufort	20.4%	7.2%	20.8%	28.2%	23.3%	46.2
Bertie	17.5%	8.2%	23.7%	28.7%	21.9%	45.4
Hertford	19.0%	11.6%	22.3%	27.6%	19.4%	42.2
Martin	20.5%	7.3%	20.7%	29.0%	22.3%	46.3
Pitt	21.5%	17.7%	25.6%	22.4%	12.8%	32.5
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	42.5

Source: US Census Bureau (2019 American Community Survey)

Table 3 shows the region’s population breakdown by age group and the median age for each county. Each county’s percentage of people 18 or younger ranges from 17.5% (Bertie) to 21.5% (Pitt). Pitt County (17.7%) has the highest and Hertford County (11.6%) has the second highest percentage of people in the 18-24 year age group, with the other three counties ranging from 7.2% to 8.2% in this age group. This is at least partially due to East Carolina University’s location in Pitt County and Chowan University’s location in Hertford County. Each county’s percentage of people in the 25-44 year age group ranges from 20.7% (Martin) to 25.6% (Pitt). Each county’s percentage of people in the 45-64 year age group ranges from 22.4% (Pitt) to 29.0% (Martin).

Pitt County has the lowest percentage of people in the 65 years and over age group at 12.8%. The other four counties ranged from 19.4% (Hertford) to 23.3% (Beaufort) in the 65 years and over age group.

The Mid-East Region average is 20.8% under 18 years, 14.1% 18-24 years, 24.0% 25-44 years, 24.8% 45-64 years, and 16.4% 65 years and over.

Pitt County has the youngest median age at 32.5 years, followed by Hertford County at 42.2 years. The other three counties range from 45.4 – 46.3 years median age. The Mid-East Region average is 42.5 years median age.

## Income, Wages and Poverty

Table 4. Mid-East Commission Region Average Annual Wage, 2010-2021							
County	2010	2015	2021	Change 2010-2015	% Change 2010-2015	Change 2015-2021	% Change 2015-2021
Beaufort	\$32,396	\$35,932	\$41,912	\$3,536	10.9%	\$5,980	16.6%
Bertie	\$31,824	\$30,004	\$38,480	(-\$1,820)	(-5.7%)	\$8,476	28.2%
Hertford	\$31,720	\$35,516	\$44,980	\$3,796	12.0%	\$9,464	26.6%
Martin	\$26,728	\$28,912	\$35,360	\$2,184	8.2%	\$6,448	22.3%
Pitt	\$36,972	\$41,912	\$51,688	\$4,940	13.4%	\$9,776	23.3%
<b>Region Average</b>	<b>\$34,840</b>	<b>\$39,104</b>	<b>\$48,256</b>	<b>\$4,264</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>\$9,152</b>	<b>23.4%</b>

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (annual periods 2010, 2015 and 2021)

Table 4 shows the average annual wage for each county and the region for the years 2010, 2015 and 2021. Also shown is the change and percentage change from the periods 2010-2015 and 2015-2021.

Bertie County saw a decrease in the average annual wage of -5.7% from 2010 – 2015. The other four counties showed an increase in the average annual wage from 2010 – 2015, including Beaufort County at 10.9%, Hertford County at 12.0%, Martin County at 8.2%, and Pitt County at 13.4%. The Mid-East Region as a whole had an average annual wage gain of 12.2% from 2010 – 2015.

From 2015-2021, there was a major gain in the average annual wage for all five counties, including Beaufort County at 16.6%, Bertie County at 28.2%, Hertford County at 26.6%, Martin County at 22.3%, and Pitt County at 23.3%. The Mid-East Region as a whole had an average annual wage gain of 23.4% from 2015 – 2021. While there is awareness of a wage gain during this period, the numbers reported seem to be higher than the increases that actually occurred in many areas, based on local knowledge. There is the possibility of a few high paying employers skewing the numbers as well.

<b>Table 5. Mid-East Commission Region Poverty Rates 2019 &amp; Food Insecurity Rates 2019</b>			
<b>County</b>	<b>All Persons Poverty Rate (%)</b>	<b>Under 18 Poverty Rate (%)</b>	<b>Food Insecurity Rate</b>
Beaufort	18.6%	29.3%	15.6%
Bertie	23.2%	39.5%	15.7%
Hertford	21.9%	32.0%	15.7%
Martin	19.7%	30.1%	15.6%
Pitt	22.9%	27.7%	15.4%
<b>Region Average</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau (2019 American Community Survey), Feeding America 501(c) (3) non-profit (2019 Map the Meal Gap study)

Table 5 shows poverty rates and food insecurity rates. It shows the percentage of all people in poverty as well as just those persons under the age of 18. The table also shows the food insecurity rate for each county as well as the region's average.

The poverty rate for the Mid-East Region ranged from 18.6% in Beaufort County to 23.2% in Bertie County. The region's average poverty rate was 21.3%. The percentage of persons under the age of 18 living in poverty was higher, ranging from 27.7% in Pitt County to 39.5% in Bertie County. The average poverty rate of persons under the age of 18 was 31.7% for the Mid-East Region. (It is worth noting that Pitt County's poverty rate is impacted by a large student population from East Carolina University that work part-time for relatively low wages.)

The food insecurity rate for the region was very similar in all counties, ranging from 15.4% - 15.7%. The average food insecurity rate for the Mid-East Region was 15.6%. All five counties were greater than the State of North Carolina's average food insecurity rate of 13.5%.

<b>Table 6. Mid-East Commission Region Median Household Income 2019 Per Capita Income 2019 &amp; Per Capita Living Wage 2019</b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>
Beaufort	\$45,212	\$27,504
Bertie	\$35,527	\$22,947
Hertford	\$41,028	\$20,119
Martin	\$40,090	\$23,575
Pitt	\$47,437	\$27,155
<b>Region Average</b>	<b>\$41,859</b>	<b>\$24,260</b>

Source: US Census Bureau (2019 American Community Survey)

Table 6 shows the region's median household income and per capita income. The region's average median household income was \$41,859. Pitt County had the highest median household income at \$47,437, followed by Beaufort County at \$45,212, Hertford County at \$41,028, Martin County at \$40,090, and Bertie County at \$35,527. The Region's average per capita income was \$24,260. Beaufort County had the highest per capita income at \$27,504, followed by Pitt County at \$27,155, Martin County at \$23,575, Bertie County at \$22,947, and Hertford County at \$20,119.



## Housing

<b>Table 7.</b>				
<b>Mid-East Commission Region Housing Units, 2010-2019</b>				
<b>County</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change 2010-2019</b>	<b>% Change 2010-2019</b>
Beaufort	24,688	26,081	1,393	5.6%
Bertie	9,822	9,812	(-10)	(-0.1%)
Hertford	10,635	10,660	25	0.2%
Martin	11,704	11,584	(-120)	(-1.0%)
Pitt	74,990	79,384	4,394	5.9%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>131,839</b>	<b>137,521</b>	<b>5,682</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau (2010 Decennial Census, 2019 American Community Survey)

Table 7 shows the number of housing units in 2010 and 2019, including the change and percent change from 2010 – 2019.

Pitt County had the most housing units with 79,384 and saw an increase in housing units of 5.9% from 2010 – 2019. Beaufort County had 26,081 housing units and saw an increase in housing units of 5.6% from 2010 – 2019. Martin County had 11,584 housing units and saw a decrease in housing units of -1.0% from 2010 – 2019. Hertford County had 10,660 housing units and saw a slight increase in housing units of 0.2% from 2010 – 2019. Bertie County had 9,812 housing units and saw a slight decrease in housing units of -0.1% from 2010 – 2019. Overall, the Mid-East Region saw a 4.3% increase in housing units from 2010 – 2019, due to the increases in Beaufort and Pitt Counties.

Based on local knowledge, the housing units data seems incorrect for some counties. There was more growth in housing units than reported in Pitt County. A lot of homes were built in Martin County during this period, yet there is a loss shown. There is the possibility that only demolitions and losses were counted in Martin County but nothing new that was built was counted.

**Table 8.**  
**Mid-East Commission Region Median Home Value 2019,**  
**Homeowner Vacancy Rate 2019, Rental Vacancy Rate 2019,**  
**% of Units with No Vehicle Available 2019**

<b>County</b>	<b>Median Home Value</b>	<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>Rental Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>% of Units with No Vehicle Available</b>
Beaufort	\$132,800	3.3%	7.8%	7.0%
Bertie	\$82,200	1.2%	4.8%	10.0%
Hertford	\$88,600	1.5%	10.2%	9.2%
Martin	\$92,500	1.6%	11.7%	8.0%
Pitt	\$148,600	2.1%	5.7%	8.7%
<b>Region Average</b>	\$108,940	1.9%	8.0%	8.6%

Source: US Census Bureau (2019 American Community Survey)

Table 8 shows the median home value, homeowner vacancy rate, rental vacancy rate, and percentage of units with no vehicle available for each county and also gives the region's average.

Pitt County had the highest median home value at \$148,600, followed by Beaufort County at \$132,800, Martin County at \$92,500, Hertford County at \$88,600, and Bertie County at \$82,200. The region's average median home value was \$108,940.

The homeowner vacancy rate ranged from 1.2% (Bertie) to 3.3% (Beaufort), while the rental vacancy rate ranged from 4.8% (Bertie) to 11.7% (Martin). Beaufort County had the lowest percentage of units without a vehicle available at 7.0%, followed by Martin County at 8.0%, Pitt County at 8.7%, Hertford County at 9.2%, and Bertie County at 10.0%.

## Education

<b>Table 9. Mid-East Commission Region Educational Attainment of Population 25 years and over, 2019</b>			
<b>County</b>	<b>High School Graduate or higher</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree or higher</b>	<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>
Beaufort	87.7%	20.6%	8.1%
Bertie	78.4%	13.6%	5.5%
Hertford	80.8%	14.9%	5.8%
Martin	83.4%	16.4%	5.7%
Pitt	89.3%	32.7%	12.2%
<b>Region Average</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau (2019 American Community Survey)

Table 9 shows the percentage of high school graduates aged 25 and older, the percentage of people with a Bachelor's Degree aged 25 and older, and the percentage of people with a Graduate or Professional Degree aged 25 and older. The North Carolina High School graduation rate was 87.8% while the Mid-East Region's High School graduation rate was 83.9%. Pitt County was the only county higher than the state at 89.3%, while Beaufort County was about equal to the state at 87.7%. The other counties had High School graduation rates below the state average with Martin County at 83.4%, Hertford County at 80.8%, and Bertie County at 78.4%.

The North Carolina percentage of persons 25 years and older with a Bachelor's Degree or higher was 31.3%, while the Mid-East Region Bachelor Degree rate was 19.6%. Pitt County was the only county higher than the state at 32.7%. Beaufort County (20.6%), Bertie County (13.6%), Hertford County (14.9%) and Martin County (16.4%) were lower than the state for the population 25 years and older with Bachelor's Degrees or higher.

The North Carolina percentage of persons 25 years and older with a Graduate or Professional Degree was 11.3%, while the Mid-East Region's rate was 7.5%. Pitt County (12.2%) was higher than the state, while Beaufort County (8.1%), Bertie County (5.5%), Hertford County (5.8%) and Martin County (5.7%) were lower than the state for the population with Graduate or Professional Degrees.

## Crime Rate

<b>Table 10. Mid-East Commission Region Crime Rate, 2019</b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Total Crime Rate</b>	<b>Violent Crime Rate</b>
Beaufort	2,274 per 100,000 population	221 per 100,000 population
Bertie	1,224 per 100,000 population	267 per 100,000 population
Hertford	2,715 per 100,000 population	407 per 100,000 population
Martin	2,679 per 100,000 population	473 per 100,000 population
Pitt	2,770 per 100,000 population	366 per 100,000 population
<b>Region Average</b>	<b>2,775 per 100,000 population</b>	<b>347 per 100,000 population</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>2,909 per 100,000 population</b>	<b>408 per 100,000 population</b>

Source: NC Dept. of Public Safety (Uniform Crime Report, 2019)

Table 10 shows the total crime rate and violent crime rate for each county, the region and the state for 2019. The total crime rate for North Carolina was 2,909 per 100,000 population. All counties in the region were below the state crime rate. Bertie County was significantly below it with a total crime rate less than half that of the state. The average crime rate for the Mid-East Region was 2,775 per 100,000 population, below the state crime rate of 2,909 per 100,000 population.

The violent crime rate for North Carolina was 408 per 100,000 population. Beaufort and Bertie Counties were significantly below the state's violent crime rate, Pitt County was below the state's violent crime rate, Hertford County was nearly equal to the state's violent crime rate, and Martin County was slightly higher than the state's violent crime rate. The average violent crime rate for the Mid-East Region was 347 per 100,000 population, below the state violent crime rate of 408 per 100,000 population.

## Employment Information

Table 11. Mid-East Commission Region Employment, 2010, 2015, 2021							
County	2010	2015	2021	Change 2010- 2015	% Change 2010- 2015	Change 2015- 2021	% Change 2015- 2021
Beaufort	16,085	15,654	15,980	(-431)	(-2.7%)	326	2.1%
Bertie	6,637	6,423	5,263	(-214)	(-3.2%)	(-1,160)	(-18.1%)
Hertford	9,226	8,906	8,514	(-320)	(-3.5%)	(-392)	(-4.4%)
Martin	7,407	6,935	6,166	(-472)	(-6.4%)	(-769)	(-11.1%)
Pitt	69,745	74,374	76,318	4,629	6.6%	1,944	2.6%
<b>Region Total</b>	109,100	112,292	112,241	3,192	2.9%	(-51)	0.4%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (annual periods 2010, 2015 and 2021)

Table 11 shows employment numbers by county for the years 2010, 2015, and 2021. The region's total is also displayed. The change and percentage change for the periods from 2010-2015 and 2015-2021 are also given.

From 2010 – 2015, Pitt County was the only county to show an increase (6.6%) in employment. The other four counties showed decreases in employment including Beaufort County at -2.7%, Bertie County at -3.2%, Hertford County at -3.5%, and Martin County at -6.4%. Overall, the Mid-East Region employment numbers increased by 2.9% from 2010 – 2015, due to the growth in Pitt County.

From 2015 – 2021, Beaufort County (2.1%) and Pitt County (2.6%) showed an increase in employment. Bertie County had the largest percent decrease in employment from 2015 – 2021 at -18.1%, followed by Martin County at -11.1% and Hertford County at -4.4%. Overall, the Mid-East Region employment numbers very slightly increased by 0.4% from 2015 – 2021.

Based on local knowledge, it seems that the employment loss for Bertie and Martin Counties is overcounted. It is acknowledged that there was some loss for the period. There was an industry lost in Martin County during that timeframe, but neither county lost that many employees.

<b>Table 12. Mid-East Commission Local Businesses 2021 and Self-Employed 2019</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>Total Private Industry</b>	<b>Manufacturing Establishments</b>	<b>Available Industrial Buildings</b>	<b>Total Retail Businesses</b>	<b>Estimated Self- Employment</b>
Beaufort	1,174	50	1	384	1,512
Bertie	270	No data	1	63	526
Hertford	437	14	5	151	457
Martin	437	12	3	143	354
Pitt	3,946	111	17	1,185	4,180
<b>Region Total</b>	6,264	187	27	1,926	7,029

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (March 2022 County Profiles)

Table 12 shows total private industry, manufacturing establishments, available industrial buildings, total retail businesses and estimated self-employment for each county and the region. As expected, Pitt County had the highest total private industry with 3,946. Total private industry in Beaufort County was 1,174, Martin County 437, Hertford County 437, and Bertie County 270. Total private industry in the region was 6,264.

Pitt County and Beaufort County had the greatest number of manufacturing establishments, with Pitt having 111 and Beaufort having 50. Hertford County had 12 manufacturing establishments, Martin County had 12, and there was no data on Bertie County manufacturing establishments. The Mid-East Region's total number of manufacturing establishments was 187.

Pitt County had 17 available industrial buildings. Available industrial buildings in the other counties included 5 in Hertford County, 3 in Martin County, one in Beaufort County, and one in Bertie County. The total available industrial buildings in the Mid-East Region was 27.

Pitt County had the greatest number of retail businesses with 1,185. Beaufort County had 384 retail businesses, Hertford County had 151, Martin County had 143, and Bertie County had 63 retail businesses. Total retail businesses in the Mid-East Region was 1,926.

Estimated self-employment in Pitt County was 4,180, Beaufort County was 1,512, Bertie County was 526, Hertford County was 457, and Martin County was 354 estimated self-employed. The total estimated self-employment in the region was 7,029. It should be noted that these self-employed numbers include those classified as sole proprietors only.

## **Beaufort County Employers & Occupations**

Largest Employers (250+ employees):

1. Beaufort County Schools
2. Nutrien (formerly PCS Phosphate)
3. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
4. Beaufort County
5. Beaufort County Community College
6. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
7. City of Washington
8. Precoraire

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

**Table 14.  
Beaufort County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-  
2020**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change in Jobs 2015-2020</b>	<b>2020 Earnings per Worker</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	1,369	1,265	(-7.6%)	\$15,028
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,111	1,256	13.1%	\$30,420
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	444	669	50.7%	\$41,028
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	152	140	(-7.9%)	\$18,824
Construction	505	2,004	296.8%	\$30,203
Educational Services	1,566	1,346	(-14.0%)	\$38,532
Finance and Insurance	376	343	(-8.8%)	\$55,744
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,982	1,958	(-1.2%)	\$36,296
Information	167	157	(-6.0%)	\$54,375
Management of Companies and Enterprises	62	108	74.2%	\$66,352
Manufacturing	2,655	2,054	(-22.6%)	\$71,552
Mining	351	283	(-19.4%)	\$76,467
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	418	321	(-23.2%)	\$34,320
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	432	304	(-29.6%)	\$57,408
Public Administration	1,138	1,163	2.2%	\$44,460
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	113	107	(-5.3%)	\$29,328
Retail Trade	2,175	2,227	2.4%	\$25,896
Transportation and Warehousing	432	415	-3.9%	\$49,140
Utilities	193	116	-39.9%	\$48,750
Wholesale Trade	558	965	72.9%	\$47,424

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.



## **Bertie County Employers & Occupations**

Largest Employers (100+ employees):

1. Perdue Farms, Inc.
2. NC Dept. of Public Safety
3. Bertie County Board of Education
4. Bertie County
5. QSI, LLC
6. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

**Table 15.  
Bertie County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-  
2020**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change in Jobs 2015-2020</b>	<b>2020 Earnings per Worker</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	155	206	32.9%	\$12,324
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	407	252	(-38.1%)	\$34,580
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	404	325	(-19.6%)	\$38,376
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	35	47	34.3%	\$27,768
Construction	282	37	(-86.9%)	\$29,380
Educational Services	605	562	(-7.1%)	\$28,667
Finance and Insurance	72	57	(-20.8%)	\$46,384
Health Care and Social Assistance	924	686	(-25.8%)	\$34,736
Information	53	11	(-79.2%)	\$38,012
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	0%	N/A
Manufacturing	1,629	1,315	(-19.3%)	\$30,925
Mining	0	0	0%	N/A
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	96	61	(-36.5%)	\$26,884
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	35	35	0%	\$22,568
Public Administration	827	823	(-0.5%)	\$46,176
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5	5	0%	\$19,032
Retail Trade	318	274	(-13.8%)	\$22,152
Transportation and Warehousing	145	142	(-2.1%)	\$52,000
Utilities	21	81	285.7%	\$78,450
Wholesale Trade	64	57	(-10.9%)	\$53,872

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

## **Hertford County Employers & Occupations**

Largest Employers (100+ employees):

1. Duck Thru
2. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
3. Nucor Corporation
4. Hertford County Board of Education
5. Hertford County
6. Med Ex Medical Transport Service
7. Chowan University
8. Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center
9. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
10. Integrated Family Services, LLC
11. Kerr Group, LLC
12. Roanoke-Chowan Community College
13. Home Life Care, Inc.
14. Carolinas Home Care, Inc.
15. Enviva Management Company, LLC

Source NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

**Table 16.  
Hertford County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-  
2020**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change in Jobs 2015-2020</b>	<b>2020 Earnings per Worker</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	668	595	(-10.9%)	\$14,144
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	443	101	(-77.2%)	\$22,679
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	255	180	(-29.4%)	\$45,292
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5	2	(-60.0%)	\$11,250
Construction	297	347	16.8%	\$56,524
Educational Services	709	869	22.6%	\$40,404
Finance and Insurance	149	160	7.38%	\$53,352
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,975	2,247	13.8%	\$36,712
Information	59	30	(-49.2%)	\$41,912
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	23	N/A	No data
Manufacturing	981	957	(-2.4%)	\$82,368
Mining	0	0	N/A	N/A
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	212	218	2.8%	\$34,008
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	81	64	(-21.0%)	\$51,324
Public Administration	661	560	(-15.3%)	\$36,920
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	92	85	(-7.6%)	\$42,328
Retail Trade	1,075	1,498	39.3%	\$25,480
Transportation and Warehousing	143	196	37.1%	\$52,312
Utilities	79	97	22.8%	\$81,900
Wholesale Trade	685	255	(-62.8%)	\$47,372

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

## **Martin County Employers & Occupations**

Largest Employers (100+ employees):

1. Martin County Board of Education
2. Snacks Holdings
3. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
4. Martin County
5. Martin General Hospital
6. Martin Community College
7. Industrial Manufacturing Co., LLC
8. Town of Williamston
9. Home Life Care, Inc.

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

**Table 17.  
Martin County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-  
2020**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change in Jobs 2015-2020</b>	<b>2020 Earnings per Worker</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	786	689	(-12.3%)	\$12,012
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	134	98	(-26.9%)	\$27,456
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	294	281	(-4.4%)	\$40,820
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	31	18	(-41.9%)	\$17,614
Construction	226	219	(-3.1%)	\$45,812
Educational Services	619	640	3.4%	\$39,164
Finance and Insurance	258	146	(-43.4%)	\$54,288
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,087	1,035	(-4.8%)	\$32,292
Information	47	65	38.3%	\$72,800
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	N/A	N/A
Manufacturing	925	713	(-22.9%)	\$44,408
Mining	0	0	N/A	N/A
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	67	108	61.2%	\$27,300
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	114	126	10.5%	\$39,520
Public Administration	653	657	0.6%	\$36,036
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	31	30	(-3.2%)	\$30,628
Retail Trade	1,122	1,026	(-8.6%)	\$26,000
Transportation and Warehousing	97	117	20.6%	\$41,496
Utilities	25	24	(-4.0%)	\$19,605
Wholesale Trade	165	145	(-12.1%)	\$41,964

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

## **Pitt County Employers & Occupations**

Largest Employers (500+ employees):

1. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
2. East Carolina University
3. Pitt County Board of Education
4. Patheon Manufacturing Services, LLC (Thermo Fisher)
5. Hyster-Yale Group, Inc.
6. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
7. Pitt County
8. City of Greenville
9. Pitt Community College
10. Physicians East Pa
11. Executive Personnel Group, LLC
12. Food Lion
13. UHS Physicians
14. Denso Manufacturing North Carolina
15. Mayne Pharma, Inc.

Source NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

**Table 18.  
Pitt County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-2020**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change in Jobs 2015-2020</b>	<b>2020 Earnings per Worker</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	8,692	7,592	(-12.7%)	\$15,808
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,748	4,948	4.2%	\$58,500
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	593	667	12.5%	\$39,398
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	556	445	(-20.0%)	\$18,772
Construction	3,053	3,309	8.4%	\$49,036
Educational Services	11,002	10,843	(-1.4%)	\$57,668
Finance and Insurance	1,893	1,433	(-24.3%)	\$69,472
Health Care and Social Assistance	16,527	17,715	7.2%	\$55,432
Information	951	578	(-39.2%)	\$49,920
Management of Companies and Enterprises	976	774	(-20.7%)	\$95,784
Manufacturing	6,115	6,509	6.4%	\$67,080
Mining	18	199	1,005.6%	\$54,550
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	1,426	1,420	(-0.4%)	\$33,644
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1,675	1,791	6.9%	\$74,204
Public Administration	3,159	3,283	3.9%	\$50,128
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	772	934	21.0%	\$40,508
Retail Trade	9,048	9,081	0.4%	\$30,888
Transportation and Warehousing	909	1,226	34.9%	\$42,224
Utilities	519	559	7.7%	\$67,964
Wholesale Trade	1,739	1,306	(-24.9%)	\$53,456

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.



## **Mid-East Region Employers & Occupations**

Largest Employers (1000+ employees):

1. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
2. East Carolina University
3. Pitt County Board of Education
4. Perdue Farms, Inc.
5. Patheon Manufacturing Services, LLC
6. Hyster-Yale Group, LLC
7. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
8. Pitt County

Source NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

**Table 19.  
Mid-East Region Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-  
2020**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change in Jobs 2015-2020</b>	<b>2020 Earnings per Worker</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	11,670	10,347	(-11.3%)	\$13,863
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,843	6,655	(-2.7%)	\$34,727
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,990	2,122	6.6%	\$40,983
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	779	652	(-16.3%)	\$18,846
Construction	4,363	5,916	35.6%	\$42,191
Educational Services	14,501	14,260	(-1.7%)	\$40,887
Finance and Insurance	2,748	2,139	(-22.2%)	\$55,848
Health Care and Social Assistance	22,495	23,641	5.1%	\$39,094
Information	1,277	841	(-34.1%)	\$54,380
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,038	905	(-12.8%)	\$81,068
Manufacturing	12,305	11,548	(-6.2%)	\$59,267
Mining	369	482	30.6%	\$65,509
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	2,219	2,128	(-4.1%)	\$31,231
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,337	2,320	(-0.7%)	\$49,005
Public Administration	6,438	6,486	0.7%	\$44,465
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,013	1,161	14.6%	\$32,365
Retail Trade	13,738	14,106	2.7%	\$26,083
Transportation and Warehousing	1,726	2,096	21.4%	\$47,434
Utilities	837	877	4.8%	\$59,334
Wholesale Trade	3,211	2,728	(-15.0%)	\$48,818

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

## Assessment of the Area

The economic development assessment of the Mid-East Region can be directly stated through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis as follows:

### ***Strengths***

- The work ethic and ongoing training of the workforce
- Educational opportunities
- Partnerships
- Business & industry collaboration with education institutions
- Trauma center in the region
- ECU Health medical facilities across region
- Strong community college system across region
- Transportation systems improving
- I-187 and Future I-87
- Increased capacity for leisure and recreation activities
- Job and career opportunities
- Lower cost of living
- Thriving entrepreneurial base
- Mining, fishing, agriculture of continued importance
- Low traffic volumes in most counties
- Strong rail system in most areas
- The People
- Natural resources
- Potential for growth
- Increasing willingness across the region to collaborate for the good of everyone
- Increasing airport capacity
- Community College Small Business Centers and ECU's Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC) programs
- Historic downtowns with growing, vibrant arts communities
- Proximity to the Hampton Roads region of Va.
- Inner Banks tourism
- History and natural beauty
- Clean water and air
- Industry clusters in boat building, life sciences, air filtration and defense
- Proximity to the Port of Norfolk
- NC East Alliance as a policy advocate for the region
- Low cost of living

## ***Weaknesses***

- Workforce quantity
- Lack of available sites and buildings
- Lack of housing including moderate income rental housing
- Low traffic volumes makes competition for transportation projects difficult
- Vulnerability to natural disasters
- Lack of extracurricular/entertainment activities for adults
- Lack of citizen awareness on what is available to them
- Lack of healthcare facilities in some areas
- Lack of suitable public transit in most areas
- Lack of infrastructure funding
- High poverty rates
- Insufficient K-12 system and poor test scores
- Low graduation rates from high school
- Lack of broadband
- Perceived high property tax rate
- Lack of good paying jobs
- Lack of workforce housing
- Price of raw materials (lumber, steel)
- Lack of available buildings (product)

## ***Opportunities***

- CSX Intermodal facility in Rocky Mount
- Regional Workforce Innovation Center to train large numbers of employees
- Expand on biotechnology for all areas including agriculture
- Support services for the creative community
- River tourism
- Increased access to venture capital
- Expansion of local airports
- Expansion of existing business sectors
- Expansion of tourism opportunities
- Make young professionals/graduates aware of local opportunities
- Development of entertainment venues
- Take advantage of local history as a tourism draw
- Broadband expansion
- Remote working of millennials and Gen Z
- Large number of entrepreneurs
- Affluent retirees who could serve as SCORE (business mentor) volunteers
- Mild climate
- Proximity to the Port of Norfolk
- Development of shell buildings and industrial sites
- Airbnb growth in rural areas
- Future 1-87
- Capitalize on timber/forestry industry

## ***Threats***

- The strong manufacturing base is insufficiently diversified. Downturn in one or more key industries would have severe consequences.
- Continued devastation from frequent natural disasters such as hurricanes and associated flooding
- The idea that young professionals must leave the area to go live/work in larger cities like Raleigh or Charlotte to do well
- Lack of extracurricular activities and entertainment opportunities for adults
- Climate change
- Continued company locations to urban areas
- Aging workforce
- Brain drain
- Flood plain encroachment
- High poverty level
- Poorly funded education system
- Rural hospital closures (access to healthcare)
- Budgetary issues/funding shortfalls
- Lack of broadband service
- Declining infrastructure conditions

## **Economic Resilience**

The Mid-East Region is steeped in history and community values and offers a relaxed atmosphere that contributes to the quality of life of its citizens. From quaint, friendly small towns dotted throughout the region, to quiet rural areas, to big city amenities and entertainment, there is something to offer for every lifestyle. Picturesque woodlands, agricultural fields and rivers serve as the backdrop for the diverse communities in the region. A strong, resilient regional economy is critical to the long-term growth and stability of these communities.

In general, resiliency can be thought of as the ability to bounce back after a hardship or disruption. In the context of economic development, resiliency is inclusive of three primary attributes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock all together (EDA 2017). It is critical to incorporate both steady- state and responsive initiatives into any economic resilience strategy. Steady-state initiatives are long-term efforts that seek to bolster a community or region's ability to withstand or avoid a shock, while responsive initiatives include establishing capabilities to be responsive to the region's recovery needs following an incident (EDA 2017). A multi-phased approach was used to plan for economic resiliency in the Mid-East Region, beginning with identification of vulnerabilities and moving onto identifying both steady-state and responsive initiatives to counteract the identified vulnerabilities.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and drought.
- Man-made disasters such as terrorism, nuclear disaster, and infrastructure failure.
- Medical disasters such as the coronavirus pandemic.
- Climate change, including increasing temperatures, sea level rise, and encroachment on aquifers.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Incorporate resiliency into all infrastructure planning.
  - No new wastewater systems in floodplain and flood proof existing systems in floodplain.
  - Buyout or elevate properties frequently destroyed by flood.
  - Address flooding issues on roads and bridges which would be used as evacuation routes.
- Make improvements to land drainage throughout the region.
- Continue and expand on local resiliency planning efforts. Follow up plans with implementation grant applications.
- Educate farmers on the use of non-water intensive methods such as drip irrigation for appropriate crops.
- Keep information on infrastructure such as water lines and natural gas lines classified, as necessary.
- Maintain in good condition infrastructure such as bridges and dams, which cause loss of life and property when failure occurs.
- Assist businesses and the workforce with training in adaptive capabilities and new

technologies to help address technology issues with any potential future medical pandemics.

- Develop plans for regional supply chains.
- Extend high speed broadband infrastructure to all areas of the region including the “last mile” in rural areas.
- Participate in regional resiliency efforts such as the RISE (Regional Resilience Portfolio) program and the Rural Partners Network.
- Incorporate sea level rise projections into local and regional land use, infrastructure, and resilience planning.
- Research strategies to protect coastal groundwater resources from saltwater intrusion.
- Develop programs to educate farmers on climate-smart agriculture practices in partnership with local Cooperative Extensions.

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Continue Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning efforts.
- Continue local emergency management planning and expand on evacuation planning and mapping.
- Continue providing education on how to get recovery assistance to homeowners, small business owners and others who have property damage and/or are displaced following disaster.
- Participate in the “NC Inclusive Disaster Recovery Network” sponsored by Rural Forward NC. The group includes all levels of government, non-profits and private industry. Identify roles and actions of each agency and any gaps in needed disaster response and recovery services. Use this network to analyze emergency response methods post-disaster in order to make needed improvements.
- Maintain evacuation shelters throughout the region.
- Maintain emergency warning systems throughout the region.
- Provide adequate resources for emergency response units in each community.
- Ensure that emergency responders are trained to respond to a wide variety of disaster scenarios.
- Conduct an assessment of county Emergency Operations Plans and Community Health Needs Assessments to determine where pandemic response updates are needed.
- Identify underserved populations most impacted by the pandemic and connect with resources to facilitate health and economic development.
- Assist local governments with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Provide technical assistance to the extent needed by the particular local government.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Loss of a major employer.
- Large segment of the workforce does not have education/capabilities to switch between jobs or industries.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Develop target industry clusters to diversify the economic base of the region.
- Incorporate resiliency training (i.e., importance of learning new skills and ability to

switch between jobs and industries) into workforce training programs.

- Support existing businesses to help make sure they prosper.

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Support existing Rapid Response Teams to get employees of closed industries back to work. This could include assistance in finding new employment or retraining for employment in another sector.
- Establish Rapid Response Teams in counties where they do not currently exist.
- Market vacant industrial/commercial properties and the benefits of locating in the region to potential new employers.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Downturn in national and/or international economy.
- Economic downturn in key industries.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Help develop a strong, diversified regional economy with prospering businesses that can withstand and recover from a temporary downturn.
- Develop value chains for major industries that close gaps in supply chains and allow complementary industries and service based businesses to open in the region, helping to insulate the regional economy against national/international downturns.

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Provide support services to businesses affected by a downturn and help identify financial resources to keep them from closing if needed.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Declining population in rural counties.
- Brightest students leaving upon graduation.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Provide the amenities desired by the millennial generation, such as active communities with walkable downtowns, entertainment options, greenways, parks, etc.
- Ensure that a variety of housing types are available, including apartments at affordable rental rates.
- Help develop a strong, diversified regional economy, where there are employment opportunities for young adults upon graduation from college.
- Develop business incubator facilities throughout the region and support an entrepreneurial spirit that encourages young entrepreneurs to open businesses in their hometowns.
- Develop and support local young professionals groups.
- Market local events and updates of interest to young people through social media.
- Involve college students in community projects prior to their graduation, as class projects or via hiring interns.



- Support Community College programs that train the workforce to business and local government needs in the region. Courses should meet the needs of local employers.
- Workforce development should be place-based, meeting the needs of local employers.
- Spread the word and encourage new businesses to contact ApprenticeshipNC to take advantage of new grant funding for apprenticeship programs. The Community College, the business, and the apprentice can all receive funding through the program.
- Continue and support efforts to reenergize RAMP East (Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline).

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Continue offering free tuition at Community Colleges as long as feasible.
- Continue workforce development staff presence at Community Colleges and market local careers to students.
- Host Career Fairs collaboratively with Rivers East Workforce Development Board, multiple local governments, and the private sector.
- Support and advocate for programs that encourage students to return to rural areas after graduating from college, such as student loan forgiveness programs.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Expanding social unrest and political polarization.
- Widening gulf between rich and poor.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Strive to include all stakeholders and work together to solve regional issues.
- Connect with low income stakeholders in their own communities through partnerships with local community leaders.
- Leadership that brings political parties together and encourages people to understand each other is vital.

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Support programs that assist low to moderate income workers, such as daycare assistance and affordable housing.
- Each individual must make an effort to respect and understand others who have opinions differing from their own.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Lack of economic opportunity for disadvantaged populations.
- Lack of education on financial literacy.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Start students not going to college on Career Paths in High School.
  - Increase marketing and local High School collaboration on existing Career Paths.
  - Continue educating teachers on Career Paths.

- Add additional Career Paths as feasible, as identified by community needs.
- Advocate for additional funding to add NENC Career Pathways staff capacity.
- Continue outreach programs for dropout prevention.
- Ensure availability of affordable housing in safe neighborhoods.
- Educate students on building resumes and interview skills starting in High School.
- Educate students on financial literacy starting in High School.
- Continue workforce development partnerships with Community Colleges to reach students prior to graduation.
- Start financial literacy education in Middle School and continue into High School. Develop better formats to present financial literacy curriculums to students.
- Support educational field trips to get students out into the real world.

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Support daycare assistance for low to moderate income workers.
- Support minority and low income scholarship programs.
- Continue offering free tuition at Community Colleges as long as feasible.
- Support expanding qualification for the Federal Pell Grant program.
- Continue to provide free employment services through NC Works.
- Continue programs to bring NC Works services out into the community.
- Continue the NextGen program through NC Works and expand enrollment numbers through local partnerships.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Retirement in skilled trades and lack of skilled workers to replace retirees.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Start students not going to college on Career Paths in High School.
  - Increase marketing and local High School collaboration on existing Career Paths.
  - Continue educating teachers on Career Paths.
  - Add additional Career Paths as feasible.
  - Advocate for additional funding to add NENC Career Pathways staff capacity.
- Educate High School students on the level of income that can be achieved through a career in skilled trades.
- Continue workforce development partnerships with Community Colleges to reach students prior to graduation.
- Work with Community Colleges to advertise training programs for in demand fields.
- Develop local “Trades Formers” or similar organizations in each county as feasible. Connect local groups with NENC Career Pathways staff. Educate local groups on existing Career Pathways.
- Track results of the “Rivers East Advanced Manufacturing Academy” program (funded for 6 months March – August 2022) and seek funding to continue program if successful.
- Increase Career Path outreach to adult learners.
- Increase Career Path outreach to the justice involved community.

## **Responsive Initiatives**

- Companies can start apprenticeship programs in anticipation of key personnel retiring. The most promising apprentices could receive paid Community College tuition to be certified in the trade and eventually replace the retiree.
  - Help connect companies with apprentices.
- Spread the word and encourage new businesses to contact ApprenticeshipNC to take advantage of new grant funding for apprenticeship programs. The Community College, the business, and the apprentice can all receive funding through the program.
- Continue to provide free employment services through NC Works.
- Continue programs to bring NC Works services out into the community.
- Educate students on well-paying careers in the region that don't require a lot of post-secondary education.
- Develop new local small business succession programs and support existing small business succession programs.

## **Vulnerability**

- Criminal justice system reform is needed.
- There is a lack of mental health support services and addiction recovery support services.

## **Steady State Initiatives**

- Treat addiction and mental health disorders as diseases and ensure that proper treatment is given, not just a cycle of arrest and release.
- Criminal justice reform is needed to focus on rehabilitation rather than just punishment. This would involve changes to policy at all levels of government and changes to the criminal justice education system.

## **Responsive Initiatives**

- Advocate for state and federal support for mental health physicians and addiction treatment centers to get people the help they need without long waiting lists.
- Work with Universities to provide incentives for mental health professionals to locate in rural areas.
- Research the potential of developing a regional addiction recovery center by combining county awarded Opioid lawsuit funds.

## **Vulnerability**

- Lack of education on workforce needs and retraining needs of certain sectors.

## **Steady State Initiatives**

- Continue inventories of existing higher education, workforce and vocational training related to each industry and continue updating gap analyses to determine unmet needs.
- Educate employers on the workforce development services available to them and who to contact to enroll.
- Continue workforce development staff's reaching out to employers on an individual basis.

## **Responsive Initiatives**

- Establish a regional network for the communication of business workforce development needs. Include representatives from each industry, workforce development professionals, Community Colleges and Universities, economic development entities, etc. to determine short-term and long-term workforce development needs for each industry.
- Support development of industry specific Advisory Boards and connect Community Colleges with private sector participants.
- Continue offering Customized Training programs at the place of business through each Community College.
- Continue offering small business staff training (such as SERV Safe Certification) at the place of business through each Community College's Small Business Center.
- Continue offering On the Job training and Incumbent Worker Training programs through the Rivers East Workforce Development Board.

## ***Vulnerability***

- Lack of comprehensive, coherent immigration policy.

## **Steady State Initiatives**

- Education on the importance of migrant workers to the agriculture and construction industries.
- Provide vocational training for migrant workers and market these services in partnership with community non-profit organizations.

## **Responsive Initiatives**

- Advocate for immigration policy reform at the federal level. Develop a clear path for obtaining work visas and for citizenship

## ***Vulnerability***

- Youngest children are not reaching education milestones in many cases.
- The region's High School graduation rate is below the state average, even as the state average has recently surpassed the national average. The region's College graduation rate is significantly below the state and national average.

## **Steady State Initiatives**

- Continue dropout prevention programs and other initiatives to improve the High School graduation rate, which is getting close to the state average.
- Continue the Career and College Promise program, where students can get college credits during High School free of charge.
- Get Phonics back into Elementary School education.

## **Responsive Initiatives**

- Support existing tutoring programs and start tutoring programs in schools where they

don't exist.

- Support and expand Head Start programs so that quality Pre-K education is available to all children.
- Support scholarship programs and grant programs that allow promising students to attend College.
- Continue offering free tuition at Community Colleges as long as feasible.
- Advocate for additional funding to catch-up students who fell behind on their reading level, math skills, etc. during the pandemic.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Automation, globalization and consolidation of industry.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Include the most recent technological innovations in workforce training.
- Provide competitive incentives for businesses to headquarter in the region.
- Encourage employers to develop flexibility in the work environment and flexibility in work schedules to attract qualified employees (many employers switch to robotics because they can't hire).

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Retrain workers displaced by automation and/or consolidation of industry.
- Develop strategies and partnerships to identify and connect with displaced workers.
- Each industry must take the initiative to adapt to and profit from globalization.
- Advocate for state grants to be investment based rather than job based.
- Identify retraining and retooling needs of the workforce to provide robotic equipment maintenance.

### ***Vulnerability***

- Lack of shared vision for the region.

### **Steady State Initiatives**

- Continue regional planning efforts such as the CEDS and Regional Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- Encourage every municipality and county to develop a Comprehensive Plan and combine these documents into a Regional Comprehensive Plan (includes integration of land use, hazard mitigation, transportation, housing, recreation, economic development and other planning efforts).

### **Responsive Initiatives**

- Create a coalition of counties East of I-95 and brand the region for marketing purposes.
- Create a Regional Marketing Plan.
- Create a visual marketing piece that highlights the benefits of each community.
- Develop a regional newsletter. Share success stories and ideas for improving the region.

## ***Vulnerability***

- Lack of representation in State Legislature.
- The formula for state investment favors urban areas.

## **Steady State Initiatives**

- Start an advocacy group for the region that will advocate for rural needs in Raleigh.

## **Responsive Initiatives**

- Examine state investment formulas and advocate for appropriate changes to benefit rural areas.
- Advocate for Legislative representation based on area instead of population, or for an equal number of Representatives from each county/district.

## ***Vulnerability***

- Lack of broadband infrastructure in many rural areas of the region.
- Lack of sewer service in many rural and small town areas of the region.
- Lack of natural gas service in a majority of the region.

## **Steady State Initiatives**

- Plan for the prioritized expansion of broadband infrastructure to the last mile in rural areas.
- Plan for the prioritized expansion of sewer service and natural gas service. Plan for development into the future in addition to serving existing Industrial Parks.
- Develop a study of renewable energy across the region.
- Take advantage of existing grant programs through the NC State Broadband Office.

## **Responsive Initiatives**

- Establish mobile broadband solutions to serve low income communities in the interim until broadband infrastructure is developed.
- Provide support to local government infrastructure grant applications.
- Create local government partnerships for regional grant applications as feasible.
- Advocate for local input to be a true driving factor in the selection of firms to deliver on grant funded infrastructure projects.
- Develop a Regional Broadband Taskforce to plan for and apply for grants to fund broadband infrastructure in the region.

Diversification of the regional economy is a key goal in planning for economic resiliency. Determining what existing clusters form the economic base of the Region is the first step in planning for additional target sectors, as well as planning for value chains for existing clusters and the targeting of complementary businesses. The following section outlines a cluster analysis conducted for each county and the region.

## **Cluster Analysis**

This cluster analysis was developed in partnership with each county's Economic Developer and the Rivers East Workforce Development Board.

### ***Beaufort County***

Beaufort County is well represented in all three areas classified as primary economic drivers. Mining, agriculture and manufacturing all employ a large number of people and generate a tremendous amount of income. Additional sectors include aquaculture and commercial fishing.

Opportunities exist in all sectors of advanced manufacturing and general manufacturing. Beaufort County Economic Development has identified existing manufacturing clusters of boat building, air filtration, and metalworking.

The healthcare sector will continue to grow in Beaufort County as it will across the region. The county will support initiatives by the NC Dept. of Commerce, the Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC) and other partnerships that will drive business to Beaufort County and will improve opportunities for its citizens.

### ***Bertie County***

In Bertie County, the Perdue Farms Facility – a poultry processor located in Lewiston-Woodville is the largest employer within the county and is the largest driving economic force. The Bertie County Correctional Facility is also a major employer. The County's Economic Development Commission is interested in continuing to recruit support services for this major complex.

The next highest employment sectors are healthcare and education, as is the case for much of the state. Agriculture continues to employ many people in Bertie County. There are also many small businesses in the county and entrepreneurship has been increasing in recent years.

The Economic Development Commission is focusing on tourism and on all types of manufacturing. Existing manufacturing clusters include food, value added agriculture and agricultural biotechnology. The county is already home to AVOCA, which is a bio-mass extraction company. The county is also home to Darling (formerly Valley Protein), a rendering company which takes excess product from the Perdue Facility and turns it into a protein to be put in animal feed.

Possible cluster opportunities for Bertie County include alternative energy (bio-mass and solar), marine trades, food production and distribution, automotive, and tourism, including but not limited to, adventure tourism and the Lost Colony.

The Economic Development Commission has been heavily involved in marketing the county for travel and tourism in recent years. Bertie County has purchased 147 acres of land on the Albemarle Sound, referred to as the "Tall Glass of Water" project. The site will be an amenity for both residents and visitors to the county including a public beach/swimming area, a science education center, hiking trails, and camping opportunities. The Economic Development

Commission is partnering with municipalities in the county to create a tourism trail which makes visitors to Tall Glass of Water aware of opportunities across the county, such as local foods, restaurants, and retail experiences.

Bertie County also recognizes the potential for waterfront and retirement residential development. A company has recently purchased the old Scotch Hall site and is doing a complete revitalization of the golf course and building spec homes, along with a new restaurant and community center.

## ***Hertford County***

Hertford County's location along the North Carolina and Virginia border offers direct business and employment ties to the Richmond and Hampton Roads area, which includes military and shipyards located there. The Hertford County Economic Development Department indicates that steel and other metal fabrication, metal recycling, agriculture and forestry are also major business clusters for them. Nucor Steel is a major economic force in the county and many subsidiary businesses exist due to their presence.

Alternative energy, specifically solar and biomass, have been growing clusters. It is worth noting that large scale solar developments are now subject to new county ordinances, which may limit the growth of this cluster in the future.

Hertford County is identified as a multi-county mini hub for healthcare and retail shopping. Hertford County is dominated by the healthcare sector. Another top sector is small business, which represent 84% of the businesses in the county. Hertford County also recognizes the potential for waterfront and retirement residential development.

## ***Martin County***

The current cluster areas for Martin County are wood and pulp processing, food processing, value added agriculture, green energy, chemicals and plastics, and advanced manufacturing. Martin County is also positioned as a regional hub for retail business and tourism, because of its location at the intersection of future Interstate-87 and US-13/US-17.

Domtar has the largest manufacturing footprint in Martin County, followed by Flagstone Foods, which is the largest private employer in the county. The county owns a rail-served industrial park in Everetts, which was rebranded in 2019 as the NC Rail and Commerce Park.

The Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center is the largest equine facility in Eastern North Carolina, containing 456 permanent stalls. It hosts equine events from the Mid-Atlantic and Southern states, adding to Martin County's tourism economy. Martin Community College has the only equine program in the eastern part of the state, further contributing to the equine niche in the county. The community college is planning on adding other unique programs in the future, such as forestry.



## ***Pitt County***

The Pitt County Economic Development Department has identified its high growth industry sectors as life sciences, specifically biopharmaceuticals and medical devices, along with the downstream supportive industries. The county leadership has worked for many years with multiple partners to position Pitt County as a leader in biopharma and related industries in North Carolina.

Assets include East Carolina University, ECU Brody School of Medicine, ECU School of Dental Medicine, ECU Department of Engineering, ECU Health (formerly Vidant Health), Pitt Community College and its BioWork program, the NC Community College System's BioNetwork Center, the Technology Enterprise Center of Eastern Carolina, home of the NC Pharmaceutical Services Network, and Pitt County Schools' Health Sciences Academy. Also notable is the opening of the ECU Life Sciences Building in November 2021, which will be the home of the Golden Leaf funded Eastern Region Pharma Center.

Key support partners include the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, ECU's Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), ECU's Division of Research, Economic Development and Engagement (REDE), Thermo Fisher Scientific, Mayne Pharma, CMP Pharma, RTI Surgical, and DR Burton. Thermo Fisher Scientific expanded in December, 2020 (\$500 million, 500 jobs) and September 2021 (\$154 million and 290 jobs).

The largest sector in Pitt County is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 15,646 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Educational Services (13,622 workers) and Retail Trade (9,912).

The industry cluster in Pitt County, North Carolina with the highest relative concentration is Pharmaceuticals with a location quotient of 12.13. This cluster employs 2,116 workers in the region with an average wage of \$67,561. Employment in the Pharmaceutical cluster is projected to expand in the region about 0.5% per year over the next ten years. Pitt County continues to be a regional leader in the healthcare, education, and retail sectors.

As of 2020, total GDP in Pitt County was \$8,669,380,000. Of all the sectors in Pitt County, Manufacturing contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2020, (\$2,111,384,000) The next-largest contributions came from Educational Services (\$1,367,141,000); and Health Care and Social Assistance (\$1,336,364,000).

## ***Mid-East Region***

Healthcare/social assistance, education, and manufacturing dominate the regional economy. The Rivers East Workforce Development Board has identified healthcare and biotechnology as two growth sectors for the region. This combines two of the region's top current employment sectors.

Many of the regional assets for biotechnology are centered in Pitt County. However, there are five hospitals and many primary physicians throughout the region that can participate in clinical trials. Avoca, Inc. is a bio-mass facility located in Bertie County. Nutrien-Aurora, Weyerhaeuser, and Perdue are also national leaders in agricultural biotechnology. Each of these has major processing facilities that are located in the region, yet they are located outside

of Pitt County.

Educational opportunities related to biotechnology are spreading throughout the region. East Carolina University and the Community College system throughout the region are leading the way with educational programs designed to prepare individuals for work in biotechnology and related fields. All of the region's Community Colleges are in a biotechnology consortium. Additionally, training for this area is filtering down to the High School level.

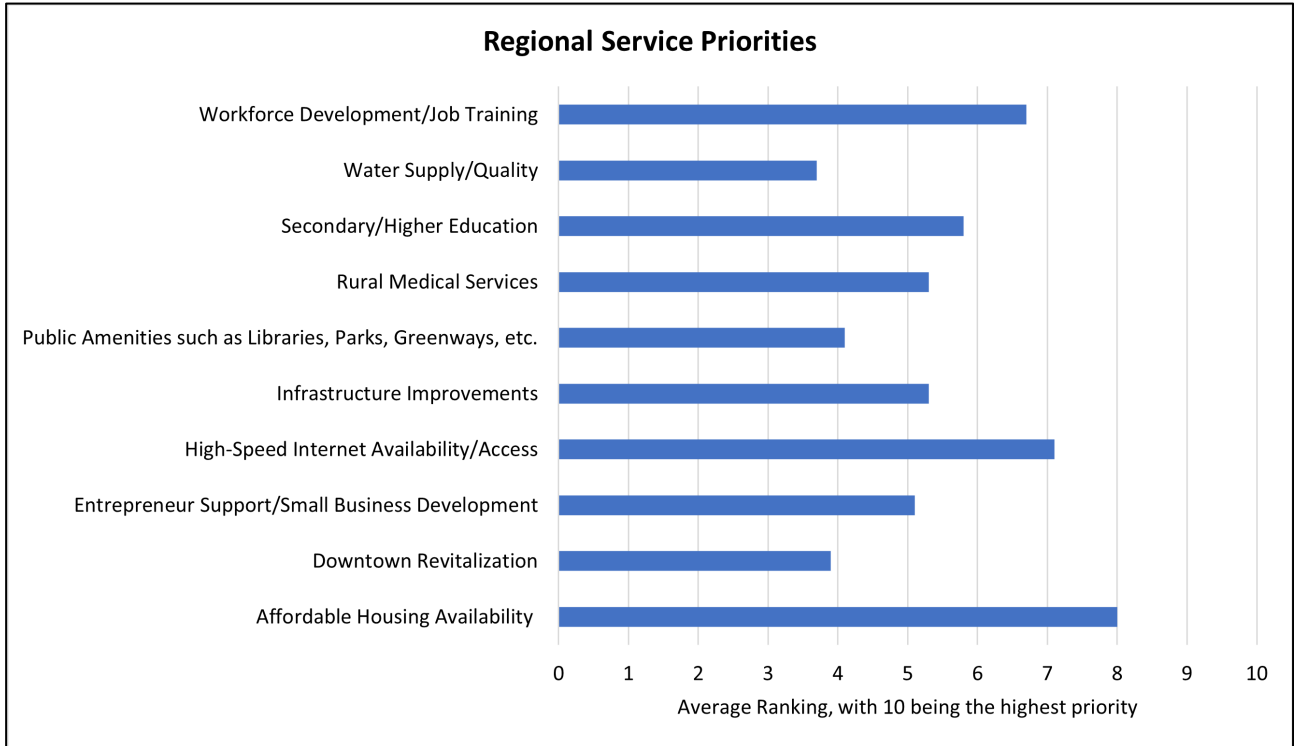
The region has a broad base of industries in the manufacturing sector that includes heavy process to light manufacturing.

Large public sector employers throughout the region include East Carolina University, ECU Health, each of the Community Colleges and each County Board of Education.

Existing clusters for the region include advanced manufacturing, biopharmaceuticals, boat building/marine trades, chemical processing, life sciences, local education and training providers, local government services, logistics, plastics, production technology and heavy machinery, small business, tourism, and value-added agriculture.

## Regional Service Priorities

Members of the CEDS Advisory Committee and attendees at public input meetings were asked to rank the following regional service priorities on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest priority. They were asked to use each number only once. The following graph represents the mean average of their responses. In addition to availability of funding, the responses provide guidance for staff on which CEDS goals and objectives to focus on first.



## Goals and Objectives

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE</b>
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.</b>
<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Continue making regular updates to regional and local cluster analyses and identify clusters that offer competitive advantages.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin with existing plans that have been developed already in other counties and by regional or</li> <li>• Begin with existing plans that have been developed at the local level and by regional organizations.</li> <li>• Collect and compare any existing cluster analysis reports.</li> <li>• Develop a cluster analysis for each county and a regional cluster analysis.</li> <li>• Update the cluster analyses regularly.</li> <li>• Identify competitive advantages the region has to offer. Interview key economic development professionals, private companies and developers about what they consider makes them competitive.</li> <li>• Repeat the process every 2-3 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2,500 per update</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA CEDS Planning Funds</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of updated cluster analysis every 2-3 years.</li> <li>• Identification of additional clusters that offer competitive advantages updated every 2-3 years.</li> </ul>

**NC Tomorrow**

**BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE**

**Goal 1**

**Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.**

**Objective 2**

**Use the cluster analysis to target existing businesses and start-ups and market the benefits of locating in the region.**

**Implementation Actions**

- Market the region as entrepreneurial friendly to attract start-up businesses.
- Advertise in industry and entrepreneurial magazines and journals.
- Advertise online on related websites and via social media.
- Continue assisting new and expanding businesses in applying for and administering state grants.
- Look into the Certified Entrepreneurial Community program.
- Keep a database showing all local tax incentives and other local incentives for new businesses and existing businesses looking to expand updated on a regular basis and share with partner organizations. Keep this information on an easy to access and update website.
- Offer competitive incentives for new employers to locate in the region.
- Research incentives in surrounding areas. Identify any additional incentives that can be implemented to make the region more competitive.
- Keep a database of grant programs, tax credits, etc. for business owners updated on a regular basis and share with partner organizations. Keep this information on an easy to access and update website.
- Create a regional database that shows available industrial and commercial buildings.
- In addition to marketing on local databases, utilize NC East Alliance's existing regional available property database.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a targeted mailing package that shows a visual marketing image, other information that highlights quality of life, the cluster analysis, the incentives available, grant programs and appropriate available buildings.</li> <li>• Research businesses in target clusters that may be interested in expanding and mail them the package.</li> <li>• Follow up on targeted mailings with phone calls. Offer to give a tour of the region or a specific building/location.</li> <li>• Synthesize individual business marketing efforts into a coherent regional marketing campaign.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$200,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of marketing materials</li> <li>• Development of online databases</li> <li>• Number of advertisements</li> <li>• Number of targeted mailings</li> <li>• Number of tours given as a result of targeted mailings/advertisements</li> <li>• Number of new businesses opened as a result of targeted mailings/advertisements</li> <li>• Number of jobs created as a result of targeted mailings/advertisements</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE</b>
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.</b>
<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Engage partner organizations to regularly update the Mid-East Region CEDS Implementation Plan (the most recent edition being the 2020 Regional Collaborative Strategic Plan).</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include action steps, organization responsible, and timeline within the CEDS Implementation Plan.</li> <li>• Compare existing plans from the NC East Alliance, other Regional Economic Development Plans, and any local Economic Development Plans.</li> <li>• Meet with industry leaders.</li> <li>• Utilize CEDS to use identified strengths and opportunities.</li> <li>• Survey/input from successful manufacturers with our target clusters.</li> <li>• Have regular meetings to discuss progress on implementation.</li> <li>• Update the plan every five years.</li> <li>• Review performance measures annually.</li> <li>• Conduct local and regional asset mapping.</li> <li>• Update the catalog of partner organization activities and make recommendations for how efforts can be combined to be more impactful.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadband Providers</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Committees of 100</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• County Health Departments</li> <li>• Downtown Organizations/Main Street Programs</li> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• Electric Providers</li> <li>• Environmental Organizations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Banks/Pantries</li> <li>• Homeless Shelters/Soup Kitchens</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Housing Organizations</li> <li>• Institutes of Higher Education</li> <li>• K-12 education providers</li> <li>• Law Enforcement Organizations</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• MPOs and RPOs</li> <li>• Natural Gas Providers</li> <li>• NCDOT</li> <li>• Partnerships for Children</li> <li>• Private Industry</li> <li>• Recreation Departments/Organizations</li> <li>• Social Service Departments</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> <li>• Vocational Training Providers</li> <li>• Wastewater Providers</li> <li>• Water Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$20,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• NC Works Local Innovation Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEDS Implementation Plan is updated every five years.</li> </ul>



<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE</b>
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.</b>
<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Conduct an analysis that identifies the existing and potential improved place brand for the region.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the possibility of partnering with other regions east of I-95.</li> <li>• Create a brand for the Mid-East Region and/or Eastern NC Region.</li> <li>• Research potential funding opportunities including grant options such as Golden Leaf.</li> <li>• Use information gathered from Tourism Authorities and community leaders during the Regional Collaborative Strategic Plan process to help identify the current perceived place brand.</li> <li>• Work with partner organizations to scope an RFQ that can go out to potential "branding" companies.</li> <li>• Develop a selection committee and a list of interview questions for companies responding to the RFQ.</li> <li>• Set specific action items with deliverable dates.</li> <li>• Develop a logo based on the branding campaign for marketing purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Institutes of Higher Education</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• Private Industry</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$50,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> </ul>

**Performance Measures**

- Identification of a place brand for the Mid-East Region and/or Eastern NC
- Development of a logo based on the place brand

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE</b>
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.</b>
<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>Develop and implement a Regional Marketing Plan.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding mechanisms.</li> <li>• Hire a qualified private advertising/marketing agency to develop the Regional Marketing Plan.</li> <li>• All partners work with the consultant to develop the Regional Marketing Plan.</li> <li>• Determine target markets.</li> <li>• Ensure that the Regional Marketing Plan includes detailed action steps, responsible organizations and timelines.</li> <li>• Have regular meetings to discuss progress on implementation.</li> <li>• Update the plan every five years.</li> <li>• Review performance measures annually.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Institutes of Higher Education</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• Private Industry (representing key clusters)</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a Regional Marketing Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE</b>
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.</b>
<b>Objective 6</b>	<b>Create a marketing image that reflects the quality of life and unique assets of each area, such as water resources, peanuts, glassworks, historical and cultural sites, sports arenas, campgrounds, etc.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding mechanisms.</li> <li>• Hire a professional design firm to create the marketing image.</li> <li>• Have the firm use research that was done for the branding campaign and Regional Marketing Plan when creating the marketing image.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Institutes of Higher Education</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• Private Industry</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$50,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a regional marketing image.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE</b>
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.</b>
<b>Objective 7</b>	<b>Assist businesses with the development of new adaptive capabilities.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually identify attainable, new, adaptive capabilities for the region.</li> <li>• Provide workforce training programs that emphasize the most recent technologies. Incorporate the newest technologies into workforce training programs in partnership with Universities and Community Colleges.</li> <li>• Educate companies on the importance of adaptive capabilities. Instead of being good at one thing, each company must be good at learning how to do new things.</li> <li>• Identify successes that we can promote and share.</li> <li>• Assist businesses with developing strategies to read signals and pivot or quickly adapt when change within their sector or in the overall economy occurs.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• Private Industry</li> <li>• Small Business Centers</li> <li>• SBTDC</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on cost of incorporated technology.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> </ul>

- NC Works Local Innovation Grant
- Rivers East Workforce Development Board
- SBTDC

**Performance Measures**

- Number of new technologies incorporated into workforce training programs.
- Development of training materials for businesses.
- Number of employees learning about new technology through workforce training.
- Number of companies receiving training on adaptive capabilities.
- Number of companies working adaptive capabilities into their business strategy.

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.</b>
<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Develop multi-modal transportation plans that address existing and future year capacity deficiencies and implement multi-modal transportation projects across the region. (Multi-modal transportation includes all modes of transportation and their connections to each other.)</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the most up-to-date transportation data available from development commissions, county and municipal governments, and NCDOT when making land use decisions and conducting long-range planning processes.</li> <li>• Facilitate timely updates of Comprehensive Transportation Plans.</li> <li>• Ensure that Comprehensive Transportation Plans are truly multi-modal, including airport, bicycle and pedestrian, ferry/water transport, highway, public transit, and rail; and their connections to each other.</li> <li>• Advocate for removal or reduction of NCDOT's local match requirements for Tier 1 Counties (currently 10% for public transit projects, 20% for bicycle and pedestrian projects).</li> <li>• Advocate for a reduction of the weight on congestion in NC DOT's highway funding formula.</li> <li>• Encourage local government participation in their MPO or RPO.</li> <li>• Continue developing local bicycle and pedestrian plans.</li> <li>• Advocate for the completion of designated Future Interstates.</li> <li>• Create a Regional Greenway Plan and associated Greenway Feasibility Studies to facilitate development of an interconnected greenway system across the region which ties into the East Coast Greenway system and the NC Great State Trails Plan. NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant and State Planning and Research Grant could potentially provide funding for the plan and feasibility studies.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop regional partnerships to secure funding for larger transportation projects with regional impact, such as discretionary grants available through USDOT (currently RAISE Grant, formerly BUILD Grant and TIGER Grant).</li> <li>• Assist businesses with securing available grant funding for rail spurs to their locations.</li> <li>• Research the potential of Micro-Transit/Mobility-on-Demand (MOD) as a solution to improve rural on-demand public transit services in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenville MPO</li> <li>• Mid-East RPO</li> <li>• Peanut Belt RPO</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCDOT</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Airports</li> <li>• Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocates/Organizations</li> <li>• Ferry System</li> <li>• Public Transit Providers</li> <li>• Rail System</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOs/RPOs</li> <li>• NC DOT</li> <li>• US DOT</li> <li>• Local governments funds for smaller projects/local matches</li> <li>• Various community grants for smaller projects</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All County Comprehensive Transportation Plans undergo a major update every 5-10 years, including meaningful input from all stakeholders.</li> <li>• Comprehensive Transportation Plans include all modes of transportation and their interconnections.</li> <li>• Number of new transportation projects in each mode.</li> <li>• Research on Micro-Transit/Mobility-on-Demand (MOD) and analysis of how it could be utilized to improve rural-on-demand public transit in the region completed.</li> </ul>



<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.</b>
<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Plan for and expand broadband infrastructure to all areas of the region, including the “last mile” in rural areas until all households, businesses and organizations are served.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a plan for the expansion of broadband infrastructure in the region.</li> <li>• Develop a Regional Broadband Taskforce to guide development and implementation of the plan.</li> <li>• Facilitate relationship building between local communities, broadband providers and funding agencies.</li> <li>• Apply for available grants through the FCC and NC Broadband Office to get projects implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadband companies</li> <li>• NC Broadband Office</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$250,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• Federation Communication Commission (FCC)</li> <li>• NC Broadband Office</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of regional Broadband Plan</li> <li>• Development of regional Broadband Taskforce</li> <li>• Number of broadband grant applications</li> <li>• Number of broadband projects</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.</b>
<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Research the current housing stock, identify additional needs and develop and implement a plan for the availability of a variety of housing options.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage local governments to make affordable housing and a variety of housing options, including apartments, a priority in their Comprehensive Plans, Land Use Plans, Subdivision Ordinances, Zoning Ordinances and other development ordinances.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a Mid-East Region Housing Plan which focuses on providing a variety of housing options for people of all income levels and lifestyle preferences.</li> <li>• Create a regional group to address and promote affordable housing.</li> <li>• Create and maintain a database of funding sources for affordable housing projects.</li> <li>• Partner with private developers on low to moderate income housing projects by assisting with grant applications and administration.</li> <li>• Advocate for the revision and modification of LMI tax credits to better serve Tier 1 and rural areas.</li> <li>• Advocate for LMI development jobs to go to local contractors first.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Housing Authorities</li> <li>• Local governments</li> <li>• NC Housing Finance Agency</li> <li>• USDA-Rural Development</li> <li>• Local affordable housing organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$150,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDBG</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• HUD</li> <li>• NC Housing Finance Agency</li> <li>• USDA-Rural Development</li> </ul>

**Performance  
Measures**

- Creation of regional affordable housing group
- Number of new apartments buildings in areas with a need
- Number of new grant applications
- Number of new affordable housing projects
- Number of plans and ordinances updated to allow more housing choices

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.</b>
<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Upgrade local utility systems to digital mapping databases.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a list of local government utility systems that need database upgrades.</li> <li>• Assist local governments with grant applications to have databases upgraded, such as the Asset and Inventory Assessment (AIA) Grant available through NCDEQ for water and wastewater systems and the 205(j) Grant available through NCDEQ for stormwater systems.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPA</li> <li>• NC DEQ</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	• \$20,000 - \$150,000 depending on what type of system and the size of the system
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NC DEQ Asset and Inventory Assessment Grant (AIA)</li> <li>• NC DEQ 205(j) Grant (for stormwater systems only)</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new grant applications</li> <li>• Number of local utility systems upgraded to digital mapping databases.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.</b>
<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>Expand sewer and natural gas infrastructure to existing and anticipated future industrial areas.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a list of existing industrial areas which lack sewer and/or natural gas access.</li> <li>• Work with economic development professionals and local governments to anticipate future industrial areas. Include major transportation corridors and other areas of local significance.</li> <li>• Identify potential grant programs and other funding mechanisms to expand sewer and natural gas infrastructure to identified areas.</li> <li>• Consider regional partnerships where appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Gas Providers</li> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• EDPNC Utility Account</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• NC Dept. of Commerce</li> <li>• USDA- Rural Utility Service</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of existing industrial areas status and identification of future industrial areas.</li> <li>• Number of new grant applications</li> <li>• Number of new sewer and natural gas projects.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.</b>
<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Promote environmentally sustainable development patterns.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify existing models of success.</li> <li>• Engage and educate architects, engineers, developers, and the general public within the region.</li> <li>• Conduct a survey following a public education campaign to determine demand for sustainable developments such as conservation subdivisions.</li> <li>• Educate developers on local demand and data showing that conservation subdivisions and similar developments bring higher profits.</li> <li>• Clean-up contaminated properties in the region. Apply for Brownfield Grants to clean-up contaminated properties.</li> <li>• Provide and share information regarding appropriate methods to promote environmentally sustainable development patterns.</li> <li>• Encourage local governments to allow for environmentally sustainable developments such as conservation subdivisions, tiny home communities, planned unit developments, etc. within their development ordinances, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances.</li> <li>• Encourage local governments to provide incentives for environmentally sustainable development where feasible.</li> <li>• Educate the public on what they can do to make their properties more environmentally sustainable, i.e., stormwater education, septic maintenance education, use of fertilizers and other chemicals, creating rain gardens and wildlife gardens, etc.</li> <li>• Promote use of the NC Green Growth Toolbox to local governments.</li> <li>• Develop partnerships with organizations such as US Fish and Wildlife, NC Wildlife Resource Commission, NC DEQ, and County Soil and Water Conservation districts to gather educational materials and host educational events.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program</li> <li>• Architecture and engineering design firms</li> <li>• College of Design (NCSU)</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• East Carolina University</li> <li>• Environmental Engineers (NCSU)</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• NC Coastal Federation</li> <li>• NC DEQ</li> <li>• NC Wildlife Resources Commission</li> <li>• Private developers</li> <li>• Sound Rivers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• NC Brownfield Program</li> <li>• NC DEQ</li> <li>• NC Sea Grant</li> <li>• Various community grants could be used to fund public education campaign</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and/or gathering of existing materials for an architect, engineer, developer, general public education campaign on environmentally sustainable development patterns and their benefits.</li> <li>• Number of in-person and virtual workshops held as part of the general public education campaign and number of people in attendance.</li> <li>• Online materials available as part of the general public education campaign.</li> <li>• Number of public places that physical public education materials such as brochures are available for the general public education campaign.</li> <li>• Number of ordinance changes and new incentives to encourage environmentally sustainable development.</li> <li>• Development of economic education materials for developers.</li> <li>• Number of in-person and virtual workshops held as part of developer economic education campaign and number of people in attendance.</li> <li>• Online materials available as part of developer economic education campaign.</li> <li>• Creation and/or gathering of existing materials for homeowner/property owner education.</li> </ul>

- Number of in-person and virtual workshops held as part of homeowner/property owner education campaign and number of people in attendance.
- Online materials available as part of homeowner/property owner education campaign.
- Number of public places that physical education materials such as brochures are available for the homeowner/property owner education campaign.



<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.</b>
<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Plan for and accelerate investments in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods and ensure that underserved and distressed communities are engaged in the planning process.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current plans and identifying additional planning needs.</li> <li>• Utilize the Guidebook on Local Planning for Healthy Communities developed by NCDOC's Division of Community Assistance to help identify additional planning needs and potential impactful projects.</li> <li>• Identify funding sources and apply for grants to implement projects.</li> <li>• Educate communities on the planning process and the importance of being involved. Conduct outreach to underserved and distressed communities through partnerships with local community, neighborhood, and faith-based leaders.</li> <li>• When developing any new plans, meet people in their own communities to engage them in the planning process.</li> <li>• Advocate for funding assistance to local governments for removal of blighted residential structures.</li> <li>• Hold regular meetings to assess progress made towards implementation.</li> <li>• Use the designation of "Persistent Poverty County" to secure additional community grant funding in eligible areas of the region. Research the availability of grant funding for counties with this designation and assist with applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>• NOC Division of Community Assistance</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• East Carolina University</li> <li>• Community and Neighborhood Organizations</li> <li>• Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>• K-12 School System</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$25,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• NCDOT</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Various community grants</li></ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of additional planning needs and potential projects.</li><li>• Number of grant applications.</li><li>• Number of implementation meetings.</li><li>• Number of public education/outreach events conducted within communities.</li></ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.</b>
<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Plan for and implement the restoration and preservation of urban and town centers.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate the public on tax credits available for restoration of historic properties.</li> <li>• Partner with the NC State Historic Preservation Office and local historic non-profit organizations to provide educational materials to the public on proper restoration and preservation of historic properties.</li> <li>• Review existing local downtown plans and interview community leaders to identify strengths and weaknesses. Conduct a needs assessment of all urban and town centers in the region.</li> <li>• Identify and share local success stories.</li> <li>• Create a database of available commercial properties in urban and town centers and participate in NC East Alliance’s regional commercial property database.</li> <li>• Advocate for funding for removal of blight in downtown areas.</li> <li>• Encourage local incentives and public-private partnerships for historic building rehabilitation.</li> <li>• Continue to assist local governments in administering grants for historic property rehabilitation.</li> <li>• Promote downtown areas through historic and cultural walking tours, festivals, small business events, etc.</li> <li>• Market downtown areas as great places to live, work and play.</li> <li>• Encourage mixed-use zoning in downtown areas.</li> <li>• Incorporate public art and pocket parks in downtown areas.</li> <li>• Slow traffic and maintain pedestrian infrastructure in downtown areas.</li> <li>• Widen sidewalks to allow sidewalk cafes where possible.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance to local governments on development of local Historic Districts and associated ordinances.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance to local governments for participation in the NC Dept. of Commerce’s Main Street and Small Town Main Street programs.</li> <li>• Contact property owners of downtown buildings that are</li> </ul>

	<p>vacant but not for sale. Encourage them to rent the building or sell it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather example ordinances and ordinance templates that address downtown blight.</li> <li>• Local governments adopt ordinances and administer through code enforcement.</li> <li>• Encourage renovation of upper story apartments in downtown areas for residential development.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County and Municipal Arts Councils</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Downtown Development Associations/Organizations</li> <li>• East Carolina University</li> <li>• Local Historic Associations/Organizations</li> <li>• NC DOC's Division of Community Assistance</li> <li>• NC Historic Preservation Office</li> <li>• NC Main Street Program</li> <li>• NCSU School of Design</li> <li>• Private Developers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• NC Dept. of Commerce</li> <li>• NC Main Street Program</li> <li>• Various Community Grants</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development/gathering and distribution of public educational materials on historic tax credits, and proper historic property rehabilitation and preservation.</li> <li>• Needs assessment of all urban and town centers in the region is completed.</li> <li>• Regional database of available properties in downtown areas developed.</li> <li>• Number of new grant applications and number of local governments provided grant administration assistance for rehabilitation of historic properties.</li> <li>• Number of rehabilitated historic properties.</li> <li>• Number of new communities joining the Main Street and Small Town Main Street Programs.</li> <li>• Number of new public art installations and pocket parks in downtown areas.</li> <li>• Number of new pedestrian projects in downtown areas.</li> <li>• Number of new historic and cultural walking tours, festivals, and other downtown events held.</li> </ul>

- Number of ordinances changed to allow more mixed-uses downtown.
- Number of new local historic districts and associated ordinances developed.
- Number of property owners of vacant buildings contacted.
- Number of new ordinances to address downtown blight.
- Number of new upper story apartments in downtown areas.

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.</b>
<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Collaborate with law enforcement on community policing initiatives.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to update the list of which police departments already have community policing initiatives in place and what specific programs they are implementing.</li> <li>• Gather local success stories on community policing initiatives and share success stories publicly.</li> <li>• Gather a comprehensive list of example community policing initiatives.</li> <li>• Gather a list of resources for training officers.</li> <li>• Gather a list of potential funding sources for departments to implement initiatives.</li> <li>• Reach out to and encourage all local Police Departments and Sheriff's Offices to implement community policing initiatives</li> <li>• Celebrate and share success stories from local police departments regionally and locally.</li> <li>• Encourage development of Community and Neighborhood Watch organizations.</li> <li>• Increase collaboration between municipal Police Departments and County Sherriff's Offices.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Local Police Departments and Sherriff's Offices</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community leaders</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• Community and Neighborhood Watch organizations</li> <li>• Faith-Based Organizations</li> <li>• K-12 School System</li> <li>• Local business owners</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$10,000 to develop materials and reach out to all departments in the region.</li> <li>• Varies based on initiative but should be relatively low-cost to implement initiatives. Community policing initiatives can be worked into officer's existing shifts.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• Local governments</li> <li>• Various Community Grants</li> <li>• US DOJ Community Policing Microgrants</li> </ul>

**Performance Measures**

- Development of education materials for local law enforcement.
- Number of local Police Departments and Sheriff's Offices contacted and provided with information.
- Creation and distribution of success stories regionally and locally.
- New community policing initiatives enacted.
- New Community Watch organizations created.
- New partnerships between municipal Police Departments and county Sherriff's Offices.

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.</b>
<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>Ensure that all residents have access to healthcare, education, and affordable services. Identify areas that lack access or where access is not affordable.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an analysis of availability, adequacy and affordability of broadband service, healthcare, K-12 education, higher education, electric service, natural gas, water service and wastewater service. .</li> <li>• Determine which areas lack access to services, and where services are inadequate or unaffordable.</li> <li>• Identify funding sources for needed improvements. Advocate for needed funding if not available.</li> <li>• Where access is not available, plan for access and implement appropriate programs and projects.</li> <li>• Where access is inadequate, determine why and work with partners on improvements.</li> <li>• Where access is unaffordable, determine why and identify potential strategies, programs, and projects to improve affordability and/or assist low to moderate income citizens.</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of partnerships with neighboring local governments and/or regionalization of systems where high water and wastewater rates exist.</li> <li>• Advocate for improved access to mental healthcare in the region.</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of a county partnership to develop a regional substance abuse treatment facility.</li> <li>• Advocate for improved access to early childhood education.</li> <li>• Advocate for expansion of daycare assistance programs for the low-income working population.</li> <li>• Support development of a financial management curriculum.</li> <li>• Provide financial management courses starting in Middle School and continuing into High School.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is transportation available to healthcare for those who do not own a vehicle or are unable to drive.</li> <li>• Educate residents on the availability of Telehealth services and how it can benefit them.</li> <li>• Advocate for more input on local needs for the “community-based mental health services” funding. The specific needs of the local community need to be the</li> </ul>



	driving force behind project selection.
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadband Companies</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Health Departments</li> <li>• County Social Services Departments</li> <li>• ECU Health</li> <li>• K-12 Schools</li> <li>• NC Rural Center</li> <li>• Public Transit Operations</li> <li>• Private Medical Providers</li> <li>• Private Passenger Transportation Companies</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Utility Companies</li> <li>• Water/Sewer Authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$10,000 for study/analysis</li> <li>• Project cost varies depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• NC Rural Center</li> <li>• Various Community Grants</li> <li>• Funding sources vary depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study/analysis of availability, adequacy, and affordability of services completed.</li> <li>• Number of partner organizations worked with.</li> <li>• Number of grant applications for improvements/projects.</li> <li>• Number of improvements to access, adequacy, and affordability of services in all communities.</li> <li>• Construction of a regional substance abuse facility.</li> <li>• Development of a financial management curriculum.</li> <li>• Implementation of financial management curriculum in Middle Schools and High Schools.</li> <li>• Number of people transported to healthcare appointments.</li> <li>• Number of people educated on Telehealth or number of Telehealth related targeted advertisements.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.</b>
<b>Objective 6</b>	<b>Capitalize on natural resources and recreation opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for citizens and promote ecotourism.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market the region for ecotourism.</li> <li>• Work with Tourism Authorities to advertise the area for ecotourism through niche marketing, i.e., hikers, bird watchers, kayakers, etc.</li> <li>• Encourage local governments to have Ecotourism Zoning Districts where appropriate.</li> <li>• Assist local governments in applying for and administering grants for greenways and park development.</li> <li>• Identify ecotourism related businesses that may be interested in expanding and reach out to them.</li> <li>• Market existing camping platforms/blue trails on the Roanoke and Tar- Pamlico Rivers.</li> <li>• Market the unique ecosystems and ecotourism activities of the Albemarle Sound and Pamlico Sound.</li> <li>• Implement regional greenway projects which tie in with the East Coast Greenway Coastal Route and the NC Great State Trails Plan.</li> <li>• Improve public waterfront access across the region.</li> <li>• Improve access to public parks across the region.</li> <li>• Support development of joint use agreements between local governments and school districts and market availability of facilities to the public where joint use agreements already exist.</li> <li>• Support efforts to link the inner and outer banks through ecotourism and high-speed ferries.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Ecotourism related businesses</li> <li>• K-12 school districts</li> <li>• Roanoke River Partners</li> <li>• Sound Rivers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project</li> </ul>

**Potential Funding Sources**

- Land and Water Management Trust Fund Grants
- NC DCM Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grants
- NC DOT
- PARTF Grants
- Tourism Development Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus

**Performance Measures**

- Number of ecotourism related advertisements.
- Number of new ecotourism businesses opened.
- Number of new ecotourism zoning districts created.
- Number of new grant applications.
- Number of new greenways developed.
- Number of new parks developed.
- Number of new public waterfront access sites.
- Number of new joint use agreements.

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.</b>
<b>Objective 7</b>	<b>Address food deserts where there is a lack of options for healthy, fresh foods. Develop healthy eating resources to address dietary challenges in low income rural areas.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for access to healthy foods in food desert areas.</li> <li>• Expand Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) programs to each county.</li> <li>• Continue gathering updated data from USDA, NC Cooperative Extension, Feeding America, etc. Determine any additional local data needs. Gather data down to the block group level if not already available.</li> <li>• Work with developers/business owners on grocery store development in food desert areas where feasible.</li> <li>• Explore the option of co-op grocery stores and co-op kitchens.</li> <li>• Work with convenience store owners on offering healthy food choices and accepting WIC &amp; SNAP benefits.</li> <li>• Start weekly Farmer’s Markets in food desert areas and accept SNAP benefits.</li> <li>• Provide weekly transportation to Farmer’s Markets from disadvantaged neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Start community gardens in food desert areas.</li> <li>• Partner with local educational and community organizations to provide healthy shopping &amp; cooking classes to with transportation available from disadvantaged neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Support development of food trucks offering healthy foods traveling between food desert areas, like mobile grocery stores.</li> <li>• Support free breakfast and lunch programs and summer meal programs at low to moderate income schools.</li> <li>• Continue and expand Meals on Wheels programs for low income seniors.</li> <li>• Educate children on nutrition beginning in Elementary School.</li> <li>• Continue improvements to healthy school meals.</li> <li>• Partner with local Cooperative Extensions to offer home gardening classes on site in food desert communities.</li> </ul>

	<p>Offer free home gardening resources as an incentive to participate. If not feasible to offer programming on site, provide transportation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local food pantries with funding assistance for refrigeration equipment, mini grocery carts, facility expansion, staff/volunteer training, etc.</li> <li>• Provide transportation to local food pantries from disadvantaged neighborhoods in food desert areas.</li> <li>• Advocate for the revision and modification of LMI tax credits to better serve Tier 1 and rural areas.</li> <li>• Promote purchases from local farmers by major chain stores. Develop or gather outreach materials to convince owners/managers that buying from local farmers is more affordable than buying in bulk from other areas. It also supports local economies, is better for the environment, and provides better food because it is fresher. It is a marketing strategy for them as well.</li> <li>• Visit local chain grocery stores to provide the outreach materials and speak with owners/managers in person regarding purchasing from local farmers.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Cooperative Extensions</li> <li>• County Health Departments</li> <li>• East Carolina University</li> <li>• Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>• Food Banks</li> <li>• Food Pantries</li> <li>• K-12 School System</li> <li>• Private Developers</li> <li>• Public Transit Systems</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies Depending on Project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed America Non-Profit Organization</li> <li>• Golden Leaf Food Distribution Assistance Program</li> <li>• Kate B. Reynolds Foundation</li> <li>• NC Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• NC Dept. of Agriculture</li> <li>• USDA</li> <li>• USDA – Healthy Food Financing Initiative</li> <li>• Various Community Grants</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food desert data down to block group level kept updated.</li> <li>• Number of new grocery stores, co-op stores, or co-op kitchens in food desert areas.</li> <li>• Number of new Farmer’s Markets in food desert areas.</li> </ul>

- Weekly transportation to Farmer's Markets from disadvantaged neighborhoods in food deserts provided.
- Number of new food trucks serving food deserts areas.
- Number of convenience stores that add healthy food options.
- Number of community gardens started.
- Number of new HEAL organizations started.
- Number of food pantries assisted to receive additional resources.
- Expanded number of Wheels on Meals programs.
- Development of a nutrition curriculum.
- Provide students with nutrition curriculum starting in Elementary School.
- Number of gardening classes provided.
- Number of healthy shopping and cooking classes provided.
- Number of people transported to classes from disadvantaged neighborhoods in food desert areas.
- Outreach materials created/gathered to promote purchasing from local farmers by chain grocery stores.
- Number of grocery stores provided outreach materials and visited in person.

**NC Tomorrow**  
**Goal 4**

**DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE**

**Develop a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.**

**Objective 1**

**Foster the development, recruitment and retention of a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.**

**Implementation Actions**

- Work with representatives from all educational entities, as well as private industry and other major employers.
- Continue to utilize workforce development partnerships.
- Education on 21st Century skills starts in Elementary School and continues through High School and College or workforce/vocational training.
- Strategically market employment opportunities to young people.
- Work with leaders from each industry and local employers to determine 21st Century skills that the workforce is lacking.
- Workforce development, education and vocational training providers continue striving to be up to date in educating themselves and incorporating new technologies into training programs.
- Incorporate globalization, creativity & innovation, critical thinking & problem solving, and life & career skills needed in the 21st Century into training programs.
- Continue offering workforce training for employees at their workplace, incorporating 21st Century skills into the training.
- Employers can offer to pay for computer classes and other related classes at Community Colleges for those employees who are behind in 21st Century skills but have a desire to learn.
- Maintain Work Ready Community Certification in Beaufort, Martin, Hertford and Pitt Counties. Obtain this certification in Bertie County.
- Continue the 21st Century Skills Initiative in NC Public Schools.
- Continue Early College programs for High School students.
- Start students not going to college on Career Paths in High School, focusing on 21st Century skills needed

	<p>for their chosen field, as well as training for adaptability in a fast-paced globalizing world. Emphasize the need for continuing education throughout their career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue free tuition programs at Community Colleges as long as feasible.</li> <li>• Encourage employers to offer flexible work options when possible.</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of creating a regional purchasing group to obtain software licensing discounts.</li> <li>• Develop a program to train counselors and career advisors at NC Works Career Centers to use and incorporate technology, such as Tratify software, into career readiness and career counseling programs.</li> <li>• Expand business participation in apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Expand student participation in apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Continue Career Readiness certification at local High Schools and add additional certifications for High School students, such as SERV Safe certification.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• ECU Rise 29 Program</li> <li>• IES and private businesses involved in STEM (i.e., pharmaceutical, manufacturing, engineering design firms, etc.)</li> <li>• K-12 School Systems</li> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• NC Works Centers</li> <li>• NENC Career Pathways</li> <li>• Other industries and employers (including industrial, commercial and service based businesses)</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Vocational Training Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden Leaf Workforce Assistance Grant</li> <li>• NC Works Innovation Grant</li> <li>• NC DOC Workforce Development Grants</li> <li>• NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants</li> </ul>



**Performance Measures**

- All counties certified as Work Ready Communities.
- Addition of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills to current workforce/vocational training programs and Career Path program.
- Number of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills related trainings, such as training on new technology, attended by Workforce Development staff.
- Training program developed for NC Works staff.
- Number of NC Works employees trained on new technology such as Tratify software.
- Percentage of employers satisfied with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills of the workforce.
- Number of new businesses participating in apprenticeship programs.
- Increase in number of students participating in apprenticeship programs.
- Career Readiness Certification available at all local High Schools.
- Number of new certification programs available at local High Schools.

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE</b>
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Develop a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.</b>
<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Identify and analyze all educational, workforce, and vocational training resources and conduct a gap analysis based on employer needs.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop surveys pertinent to targets.</li> <li>• Conduct a survey of High Schools, Community Colleges, Universities, and employers.</li> <li>• Form a group that includes representatives from each industry and other major employers, workforce development professionals, Community Colleges, and others involved in workforce/vocational training.</li> <li>• Work with the group to determine workforce development needs that are lacking.</li> <li>• Perform an inventory of training programs including workforce training, vocational training and higher education.</li> <li>• Identify any Advisory Committees already formed for each industry.</li> <li>• Conduct a gap analysis to see where training needs are not being met.</li> <li>• Connect employers to any resources they are not aware of.</li> <li>• Incorporate identified needs into workforce training, vocational training and higher education.</li> <li>• Continue offering workforce training for employees at their place of work. Customize the training to fit employer needs.</li> <li>• Market available programs, educating the public and business owners on the robust offering of education and training programs available in the region.</li> <li>• Hold regular meetings to assess progress and update the gap analysis every 3-5 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• IES and private businesses involved in STEM (i.e., pharmaceutical, manufacturing, engineering design firms, etc.)</li> <li>• K-12 School Systems</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• NC Works Centers</li> <li>• NENC Career Pathways</li> <li>• Other industries and employers (including industrial, commercial and service based businesses)</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Vocational Training Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• NC Works Innovation Grant (if completed as part of CEDS Implementation Plan update)</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gap analysis updated in partnership with employers and education/training providers every 3-5 years.</li> <li>• Needs identified in gap analysis incorporated into training programs.</li> <li>• Number of marketing efforts to educate business owners and the public on available education and training programs.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE</b>
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Develop a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.</b>
<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Develop ways to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem across the region which supports existing small businesses and fosters the development and growth of new small businesses.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a database of available local, state, and federal support and training resources for entrepreneurs and share with partner organizations in easy to distribute formats.</li> <li>• Promote educational options through workshops and educational materials.</li> <li>• Celebrate entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Engage small business owners who have experienced the start-up process to mentor local entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Support local events such as Entrepreneur Expos and explore the possibility of hosting a regional Entrepreneur Expo.</li> <li>• Create a regional guide for entrepreneurs showing resources for training and support, zoning/permit assistance, potential grants, low interest loans, available properties, market analyses, etc.</li> <li>• Look into the Certified Entrepreneurial Community program.</li> <li>• Market the region as being entrepreneur friendly.</li> <li>• Identify and address any gaps in entrepreneur training and support services.</li> <li>• Market training and support services available to entrepreneurs. There are many free options that entrepreneurs may not be aware of.</li> <li>• Identify funding sources for incubator facilities.</li> </ul>

- Develop business incubator facilities across the region. Each can specialize in certain types of businesses so that equipment can be shared.
- Create a regional forum for entrepreneurs and small business support organizations.
- Develop residential neighborhoods focusing on segments of entrepreneurs. An example is artist districts where artists live, share incubator space, and have a venue to sell their products.
- Offer entrepreneurial education courses at the Middle School and High School level.
- Continue partnerships with Small Business Centers at each Community College.
- Seek funding to increase staff capacity to get small business and workforce development professionals out into the community. Meet small business owners at their businesses to see what training and technical support services they need.
- Keep a database of grant programs, tax credits, etc. for small business owners updated on a regular basis and share with partner organizations. Keep this information on an easy to access and update website.

**Lead Agency(s)**

- Mid-East Commission
- Rivers East Workforce Development Board
- Local Governments
- Community College Small Business Centers
- SBTDC at ECU

**Strategic Public/Private Partnerships**

- Angel, private equity, and venture capital companies with an interest in helping the region grow
- Chambers of Commerce
- Committees of 100
- Community Colleges
- Community Organizations
- County Economic Development Departments/Corporations
- Downtown Development Associations/Organizations
- ECU Rise 29 Program
- EDPNC
- Electricities
- K-12 School Systems
- Small Business Owners
- Universities

<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants</li> <li>• NC DOC Workforce Development Grant</li> <li>• NC Rural Center</li> <li>• NC Works Innovation Grant</li> <li>• US Small Business Association (SBA)</li> <li>• Various Community Grants</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database of support and training resources created and shared.</li> <li>• Number of small business/entrepreneur events held.</li> <li>• Regional entrepreneur guide created and shared.</li> <li>• Information on Certified Entrepreneurial Community Program gathered and shared.</li> <li>• Number of regional marketing efforts that include small business/entrepreneur targeted marketing.</li> <li>• Gap analysis of entrepreneur training and support services conducted in partnership with support organizations and small business owners.</li> <li>• Number of marketing efforts geared toward informing entrepreneurs of resources and services available to them.</li> <li>• Number of new business incubator facilities or business incubator facility expansions.</li> <li>• Regional forum for entrepreneurs and small business support organizations created.</li> <li>• Number of residential neighborhoods focused on segments of entrepreneurs developed.</li> <li>• Development of entrepreneurial education courses for Middle School and High School levels.</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial education courses offered at Middle School and High School levels.</li> <li>• Number of small businesses provided outreach at their place of business.</li> <li>• Number of small businesses receiving training or support services at their place of business.</li> <li>• Increases in enrollment in Small Business Center and SBTDC courses and business counseling programs.</li> <li>• Database of available grants and tax credits created and shared.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE</b>
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Develop a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.</b>
<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Improve marketing of current Career Paths, develop additional Career Paths that recognize the needs of employers, and start students in developing on these pathways in High School.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Career Path training programs continue to meet the needs of local employers.</li> <li>• Expand business participation in apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Expand High School student participation in apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Begin exposing students to Career Path opportunities in Middle School.</li> <li>• Begin vocational training for students on Career Paths in High School.</li> <li>• Continue educating principals, teachers, and career counselors in local High Schools on Career Paths and expand outreach.</li> <li>• Seek increased buy-in on Career Paths from Career Coaches at local High Schools.</li> <li>• Continue reaching adult learners through Community College partnerships and expand outreach to adult learners on Career Path opportunities.</li> <li>• Expand outreach to high school students, parents, and the wider community to increase awareness of Career Paths.</li> <li>• Increase partnerships between Community Colleges, ECU, and local High Schools to better serve students and promote Career Paths. Start a monthly or quarterly meeting involving all parties to increase collaboration.</li> <li>• Develop additional Career Paths which meet the needs of local employers.</li> </ul>

- Seek funding to increase staff capacity and have workforce development presence in local High Schools to help guide students into Career Paths.
- Support the formation of local volunteer organizations to host events and market Career Paths. Possibly pull volunteers from local community groups and civic organizations. Partner with these organizations and educate volunteers.
- Hold a training “boot camp” for all locally developed volunteer groups.
- Continue educating NC Works staff on Career Paths and work Career Path outreach into work readiness programs. Seek increased buy in on Career Paths from NC Works staff.
- Expand employer participation in Strategic Planning Committees for each Career Path.
- Develop a Career Path Training Guide.
- Develop strategic Career Path marketing materials.
- Conduct a marketing campaign including online via websites, social media, local newspapers, and local television. Write press releases for newspapers and ask journalists to write articles. Ask for free spots on local news shows and other local public broadcasting. Explore the feasibility of advertising via billboards.
- Partner with local businesses to market Career Paths. Send developed marketing materials to businesses, especially those with Marketing Departments, and request assistance.
- Partner with Community Colleges and ECU to market Career Paths. Send developed marketing materials to their Chancellors/Presidents, and request assistance.
- Work with school system to allow senior projects to focus on career readiness/job opportunities.
- Continue partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce to promote Career Paths and apprenticeship programs.

**Lead Agency(s)**

- NENC Career Pathways
- Rivers East Workforce Development Board
- High Schools

**Strategic Public/Private Partnerships**

- Community Colleges
- Community Organizations
- County School Boards
- Local employers
- NC Dept. of Education



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NC Works Centers</li> <li>• Vocational Training Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant</li> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf Workforce Assistance Grant</li> <li>• NC Works Innovation Grant</li> <li>• NC DOC Workforce Development Grants</li> <li>• NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants</li> <li>• Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new businesses participating in apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Increase in number of students participating in apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Increase in number of Career Path students attending vocational training in High School.</li> <li>• Number of presentations and events at Middle Schools.</li> <li>• Number of educational events and visits to High Schools to educate principals, teachers and career counselors.</li> <li>• Number of educational events and visits to Community Colleges and ECU to educate Chancellors/Presidents, teachers, and career counselors, and to conduct outreach to adult learners.</li> <li>• Increased buy-in of Career Paths by Career Coaches at local High Schools.</li> <li>• Number of outreach events for students, parents and the community.</li> <li>• Increase in High School students enrolled in Career Paths.</li> <li>• Monthly or quarterly meetings for NENC Career Pathways, Rivers East Workforce Development Board, Community College, ECU, and local High School staff to increase collaboration on serving students and promoting Career Paths.</li> <li>• Increase in adult learners enrolled in Career Paths.</li> <li>• Number of new Career Paths developed and certified by the NC Dept. of Public Instruction.</li> <li>• Workforce Development staff presence at local High Schools to help guide students into Career</li> </ul>

Paths.

- Number of new volunteer organizations promoting Career Paths.
- Training “boot camp” held for volunteer organizations.
- Number of outreach events held by local volunteer organizations.
- Number of educational events and visits to NC Works Centers to educated NC Works staff on Career Paths.
- Increased buy-in of Career Paths by NC Works staff.
- Number of local employers participating in Strategic Planning Committees for each Career Path.
- Career Path Training Guide developed.
- Strategic Career Path marketing materials developed.
- Number of relevant advertisements by type of media.
- Number of local businesses sent marketing materials.
- Number of advertisements by local businesses by type of media.
- Marketing materials sent to all Community Colleges and ECU.
- Number of advertisements by Community Colleges and ECU.
- High School senior projects are able to focus on career readiness/job opportunities.

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE</b>
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<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>Provide the atmosphere and amenities desired by the millennial and Gen-Z generations.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support vibrant, walkable, mixed-use downtown districts.</li> <li>• Develop more greenways and parks.</li> <li>• Develop more sidewalks and bicycle lanes.</li> <li>• Attract businesses millennials and Gen-Zs are drawn to, such as microbreweries and farm-to-table restaurants.</li> <li>• Encourage local governments to have zoning that allows mixed-uses downtown.</li> <li>• Host community activities of interest to young people.</li> <li>• Develop a robust regional economy, with jobs available for those wanting to return to their hometowns after graduating from College.</li> <li>• Support entrepreneur friendly communities and business incubator facilities across the region.</li> <li>• Market the region to millennials and Gen-Zs through social media.</li> <li>• Incorporate public art into communities.</li> <li>• Offer scholarships for students to attend Community College prior to transferring to a University and continue free tuition programs at Community Colleges as long as feasible.</li> <li>• Encourage local employers to offer flexible work options when possible.</li> <li>• Support the development of local young professionals' groups.</li> <li>• Connect entrepreneurs with resources for financial assistance and loan institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community College Small Business Centers</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County and Municipal Arts Councils</li> <li>• County and Municipal Recreation Departments</li> <li>• Downtown Development Associations/Organizations</li> <li>• ECU's SBTDC</li> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• NC DOT</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> <li>• Private businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on project</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDBG Grants</li> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• Main Town and Small Town Main Street Grant community grant funds</li> <li>• National Endowment for Arts</li> <li>• NC DCM Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant</li> <li>• NC DOC Division of Community Assistance</li> <li>• NC DOT</li> <li>• PARTF Grants</li> <li>• US Small Business Association</li> <li>• Various Community Grants</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of improvement projects in downtown areas.</li> <li>• Number of new greenways and parks.</li> <li>• Number of new sidewalks and bicycle lanes.</li> <li>• Number of new businesses opened that are attractive to millennial and Gen-Z generations.</li> <li>• Number of zoning ordinances changes to allow mixed-use development.</li> <li>• Number of events held geared toward young people.</li> <li>• Number of social media marketing efforts geared toward millennial and Gen-Z generations.</li> <li>• Number of new business incubator facilities.</li> <li>• Number of new public art installations.</li> <li>• Number of new young professionals' groups.</li> <li>• Number of entrepreneurs connected to resources.</li> <li>• Increase in millennial and Gen-Z age groups in county and regional demographics.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE</b>
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Develop a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.</b>
<b>Objective 6</b>	<b>Bring career counseling, career readiness, small business development, and workforce development programs out into the community.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Workforce Development staff presence in Community Colleges. Expand to have an office located in each Community College in the region.</li> <li>• Seek funding to increase staff capacity and increase workforce development office hours at Community Colleges.</li> <li>• Continue programs to get NC Works staff out into communities to assist citizens with career readiness, career counseling, and job searches.</li> <li>• Continue programs to get Small Business Center staff out into communities to assist small businesses at their place of business.</li> <li>• Seek funding to increase Small Business Center staff capacity to increase the number of businesses served at their place of business.</li> <li>• Seek funding to increase staff capacity and have Workforce Development staff presence in local High Schools.</li> <li>• Foster partnerships with local businesses, community organizations and faith-based organizations in order to meet citizens within their own communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• NC Works Centers</li> <li>• Community College Small Business Centers</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• ECU's SBTDC</li> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• Faith-Based Organizations</li> <li>• Local Businesses</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Mid-East Commission</li> <li>• NC East Alliance</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost to get existing staff out into communities is minimal but capacity is not adequate to serve the five-county region.</li> <li>• Cost to increase staff capacity \$40,000 - \$75,000 annually per position.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf</li> <li>• NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants</li> <li>• NC DOC Workforce Development Grant</li> <li>• NC Rural Center</li> <li>• NC Works Innovation Grant</li> <li>• US Small Business Association (SBA)</li> <li>• Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce development presence staff at Martin Community College continues.</li> <li>• Workforce development staff office set-up at all Community Colleges in the region.</li> <li>• Increase in workforce development staff hours at Community Colleges.</li> <li>• Number of people assisted with career readiness, career counseling, and job searches by NC Works staff within their communities.</li> <li>• Workforce development presence staff at local High Schools.</li> <li>• Number of events held within communities.</li> <li>• Funding received for increased Workforce Development staff capacity.</li> <li>• Number of small businesses provided services at their place of business.</li> <li>• Funding received for increased Small Business Center staff capacity.</li> </ul>

<b>NC Tomorrow</b>	<b>DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE</b>
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Develop a workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.</b>
<b>Objective 7</b>	<b>Increase marketing of workforce development programs and apprenticeship programs available to employers.</b>
<b>Implementation Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather existing outreach materials for available workforce development and apprenticeship programs and related grants.</li> <li>• Call and visit businesses in person to let them know about the programs available to them, such as On the Job Training, Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training, apprenticeships, etc.</li> <li>• Make businesses aware of available grant funds which make these programs free or low cost to them when grants are utilized.</li> <li>• Partner with local community organizations to market available workforce development programs and apprenticeship programs to the community.</li> <li>• Conduct a marketing campaign to advertise available services to employers and the fact that they are free or low cost with available grants. Include advertising online via website and social media, local newspapers, and local television. Write press releases for newspapers and ask journalists to write articles. Ask for free spots on local news shows and other local public broadcasting. Explore the feasibility of advertising via billboards.</li> <li>• Continue partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce to promote available Workforce Development and apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Support the formation of local volunteer organizations to help promote available Workforce Development and apprenticeship programs in their communities. Partner with these organizations and train volunteers.</li> </ul>

<b>Lead Agency(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rivers East Workforce Development Board</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Public/Private Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• Community Organizations</li> <li>• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations</li> <li>• County School Boards</li> <li>• EDPNC</li> <li>• High Schools</li> <li>• Local Employers</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Local Media</li> <li>• NC Works Centers</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Vocational Training Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Level Cost Estimate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100,000</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDA</li> <li>• Golden Leaf Workforce Assistance Grant</li> <li>• NC Works Innovation Grant</li> <li>• NC DOC Workforce Development Grants</li> <li>• NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants</li> <li>• Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of businesses contact by phone.</li> <li>• Number of businesses visited in person.</li> <li>• Number of partnerships and events at local community organizations.</li> <li>• Number of relevant advertisements by type of media.</li> <li>• Number of events held in partnership with Chambers of Commerce.</li> <li>• Number of local volunteer organizations formed.</li> <li>• Number of events hosted by local volunteer organizations.</li> </ul>



## Vital Projects

This section identifies regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the goals and objectives of the CEDS. The vital project list is general rather than location specific. The vital project is alphabetically listed and not in any prioritized order.

- Attract retirees by marketing the benefits of retiring in the region and through certification programs such as “Retirement Friendly Communities”.
- Communicate to leaders that funding must accompany any new state and federal mandates, especially in low-income municipalities and Tier 1 counties, to assist local governments with the cost of compliance.
- Completion of infrastructure throughout industrial and/or technology parks.
- Conduct place-making exercises throughout the region.
- Construction or expansion of workforce training centers.
- Continued improvements to air passenger service to the region.
- Continued improvements to highways throughout the region.
- Create a regional partnership to ensure that high-speed broadband internet access is available in all areas of the region, including the last mile in rural areas. Take advantage of available grant programs and advocate for local input to be a driving factor when selecting firms to deliver on contracts.
- Creation of disaster resistant jobs through workforce training, vocational training and education with a focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.
- Develop a regional greenway system that ties in with the East Coast Greenway and the NC Great Trails State Plan.
- Develop a regional substance abuse treatment facility.
- Develop additional affordable housing stock, including apartments, and promote affordable housing to encourage growth in communities.
- Enhance the regional meeting capabilities throughout the region.
- Ensure access to a variety of housing options and quality K-12 education in all areas of the region.
- Establishment of business incubator facilities throughout the region.
- Expand hotels/accommodations for visitors to the region.
- Expansion of sewer and natural gas infrastructure to additional areas, especially anticipated future industrial areas.
- Explore additional cross-county and regional cost sharing opportunities for infrastructure and services.
- Extension of infrastructure including water, wastewater, roads, electric, rail, gas and broadband to new industries.
- Foster continued development of target clusters identified in the local and regional cluster analyses.
- Foster the development of new, desirable industrial buildings (shell buildings) which can be customized to meet the needs of a variety of industries.
- Further develop tourism opportunities throughout the region through a unified branding campaign that shows benefits and highlights of our counties and counties in surrounding regions, including a visual map for marketing purposes.
- Identify best practices throughout the region and create an easy to access platform to

share ideas and successes.

- Incorporate the arts, cultural activities and festivals in the economic development strategy for the region.
- Increase access to community-based mental healthcare across the region.
- Increase capacity to develop and promote Career Paths.
- Mitigate damage from natural disasters by protecting public utilities from flooding where feasible and improving land drainage across the region.
- Promote affordable housing in rural areas by advocating for the revision and modification of LMI tax credits to better serve Tier 1 and rural areas. This includes changes to the QAP formula to change the definition of grocery store, making qualification for the tax credit easier, and providing more money for the tax credit.
- Regionalization of water and wastewater systems where appropriate.
- Revitalization of downtown areas throughout the region.
- Start a group for advocacy to the state and federal government to communicate the region's needs and advocate for investment in the region.

Funding for past projects and these prospective projects has/will come from a combination of the following sources:

1. Local Government Funds
2. Economic Development Administration
3. NC Broadband Office
4. NC Community Development Block Grant- Economic Development
5. NC Community Development Block Grant- Infrastructure
6. NC Dept. of Commerce- Economic Infrastructure and Building Reuse
7. NC Dept. of Commerce- Workforce Development Funds
8. NC DEQ State Wastewater and Drinking Water Reserves Program
9. NC DOT- Rail Industrial Access Program
10. NC Golden LEAF Foundation
11. NC Industrial Development Fund
12. NC Land and Water Management Trust Fund
13. NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
14. NC Recreational Trails Program

## Opportunity Zones

An Opportunity Zone is an economically distressed community where private investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for capital gain tax incentives. Opportunity Zones were created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to stimulate economic development and job creation, by incentivizing long-term investments in low-income neighborhoods (EDA).

Investments made by qualified entities known as Opportunity Funds into certified Opportunity Zones will receive three key federal incentives to encourage investment in low-income communities including (NC Dept. of Commerce):

- Temporary tax deferral for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Step-up in basis for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Permanent exclusion from taxable income of long-term capital gains

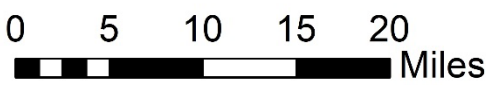
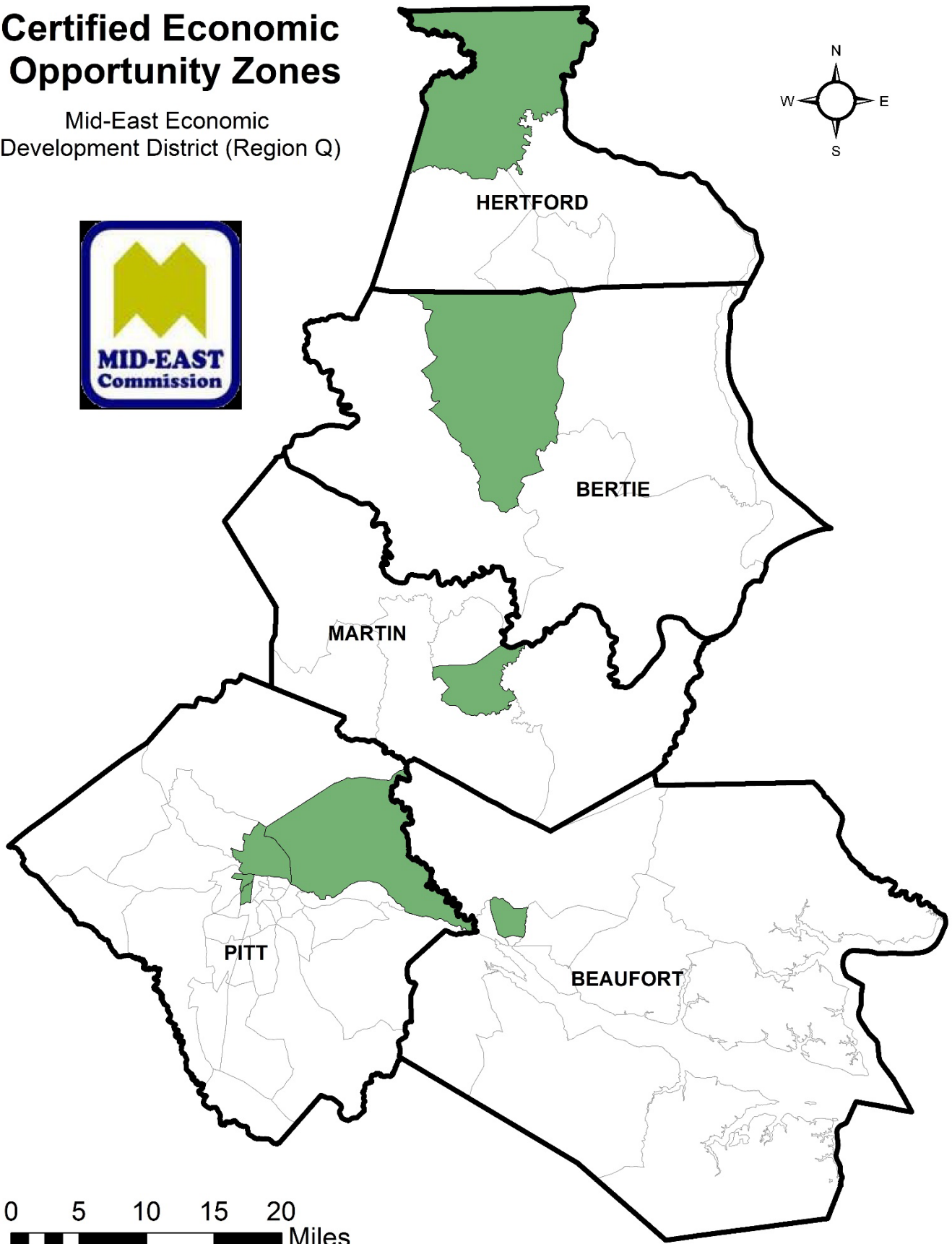
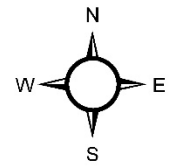
Opportunity Zones promise to drive billions—even trillions—of dollars in long-term investment into low-income urban and rural census tracts across the country. But to make that happen, community stakeholders, state and local government leaders, investors and developers must work together to engage responsibly with this powerful but untested tool, and to help create the kinds of communities that benefit residents and the U.S. economy as a whole. For community stakeholders, that engagement demands careful, collaborative and inclusive planning, establishing incentives and guardrails for investment, collecting metrics on community impact, and reporting on outcomes in a transparent and accessible manner (Rural LISC).

There are more than 8,760 designated Qualified Opportunity Zones located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five United States territories (EDA). The federal law allows each state to designate up to 25 percent of its total low-income census tracts as zone candidates. North Carolina has just over 1,000 of these tracts, so only 252 census tracts could be selected as Opportunity Zones (NC Dept. of Commerce).

Region Q contains eight Opportunity Zones. Opportunity Zone boundaries coincide with census tract boundaries. Opportunity Zones exist in all five counties, with one Opportunity Zone in Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, and Martin Counties, and four Opportunity Zones in Pitt County. The following map shows certified Opportunity Zones in the region.

# Certified Economic Opportunity Zones

Mid-East Economic Development District (Region Q)



Demographic data for each Opportunity Zone in the Mid-East Region is summarized in Table 20, including total population, median household income and percent of the population in poverty.

<b>Table 20. Mid-East Commission Region, Certified Economic Opportunity Zones' Demographics</b>				
<b>Jurisdiction(s)</b>	<b>Census Tract</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>Population Below Poverty Level</b>
Beaufort County City of Washington (northern section)	37013930400	4,724	\$30,547	32.5%
Bertie County Town of Aulander	37015960200	3,953	\$38,448	30.3%
Hertford County Town of Como Town of Murfreesboro	37091950100	7,384	\$38,891	24.5%
Martin County Town of Williamston (eastern section)	37117970200	3,905	\$38,607	21.0%
Pitt County City of Greenville (northeastern section)	37147000900	8,102	\$50,422	29.1%
Pitt County City of Greenville (northern section)	37147000800	3,270	\$38,139	38.2%
Pitt County City of Greenville (north- central section)	37147000701	3,248	\$25,601	40.4%
City of Greenville (central section)	37147000702	2,910	\$22,633	56.1%

(2019 US Census American Community Survey)

The question at hand is how the Mid-East Region can take advantage of Opportunity Zones and use these designations as catalysts to help achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the CEDS. Rural LISC has developed an Opportunity Zone Playbook for community stakeholders which recommends the following action steps:

1. Hold a stakeholder meeting.
2. Embark on a plan for work in the Opportunity Zones.
3. Incentives and guardrails in the Opportunity Zones.
4. Collaborate to build pipeline and leverage local expertise.
5. Ramp up your investor marketing.
6. Develop impact metrics and encourage transparency.

The CEDS Advisory Committee is uniquely qualified to lead the way on action steps one and two above, holding a stakeholder meeting and embarking on a plan for work in the Opportunity Zones. There are already a number of public, private, and non-profit organizations represented on the committee from across the region.

The planning phase is a critical opportunity to bring a range of community stakeholders to the table, to safeguard an equitable and inclusive process, and to elevate the community's voice. For Opportunity Zones to fulfill their intended purpose, this aspect of the process is crucial (Rural LISC).

Action step three refers to identification and creation of incentives and guardrails in the Opportunity Zones. Outside of the federal incentives discussed previously, there are currently no state or local incentives for Opportunity Zones investments in Region Q. The Rural LISC playbook recommends principal financing tools that can be harnessed for launching Opportunity Zone projects, including:

- Tax Increment Finance (TIF)
  - Tax Increment Finance (TIF) is a mechanism for capturing the future tax benefits of real estate improvements to cover the present costs of those improvements. This tool is used to pay for infrastructure, land acquisitions, demolition and planning on sites where development would not otherwise occur. TIF districts, which extend from 10 to 40 years, depending on jurisdiction, could be created in or around Opportunity Zones to support key infrastructure.
- Private activity bonds
  - Private Activity Bonds are issued by a state or local authority on behalf of a nongovernmental project, such as the expansion of a small manufacturer or hospital. When these bonds are “qualified,” by being issued for one of several defined purposes, they are exempt from federal income taxes. The tax exemption enables the project to access capital at a lower interest rate than could otherwise be achieved, thereby facilitating a larger or more secure project.
- Access to capital tools
  - Entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses often have a difficult time accessing capital, as they may not have the credit or sufficient business history to qualify for conventional financing. This presents an opportunity for state and local entities to create new financing tools or target existing ones to these types of businesses in Opportunity Zones, including revolving loan funds and micro-loan funds, both of which currently exist in Region Q.
- Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)
  - Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is an innovative tool that allows property owners to access affordable financing for energy efficiency improvements on their homes or businesses—and could encourage investments in older, less efficient buildings that may otherwise sit vacant. Over 30 states including North Carolina have PACE legislation.
- Tax incentives and abatements
  - State and local incentives, primarily in the form of tax abatements, are one of the most popular and efficient forms of direct development assistance. They can offer relief from sales, income or other tax liabilities, typically with strict

performance based award requirements and due diligence measures to ensure the abatement creates the desired effect. Tax abatement programs could attract investors and developers to Opportunity Zones.

- Federal financing tools
  - There are more than 100 different federal programs that support economic development. Many provide funding to state or local governments, while others directly finance a business, industry or intermediary. Knowing the landscape of federal programs will help state and local practitioners take advantage of opportunities that may apply to Opportunity Zone projects. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is one applicable example of a program that could be utilized in conjunction with Opportunity Zones.

The Rural LISC playbook also recommends the following guardrails for Opportunity Zone projects:

- Adhere to existing Comprehensive Plans.
  - Existing Comprehensive Plans for Region Q are already categorized in a database.
- Create impact standards required to receive additional state and local incentives.
- Find private partners dedicated to creating impact.
- Review and revise existing zoning ordinances.
  - Many local governments are currently in the process of doing this due to new North Carolina General Statutes 160d legislation.
- Clearly articulate types of projects desired in an Opportunity Zone Investment Prospectus.

Action step four refers to collaborating to build a pipeline and leverage local expertise. One recommendation is to form a state or regional consortium, which can also be thought of as an implementation committee. With the addition of key representation including private developers and investment firms, the existing CEDS Advisory Committee is uniquely qualified to lead the way on this action step in Region Q.

Another recommended approach to advance the process is financial feasibility modeling, where models are created for the financial feasibility of particular asset class priorities that emerge in the planning process. By doing a preliminary analysis of development costs and sources of capital (including Opportunity Zone proceeds) and reconciling these sources and uses with operating projections, stakeholders can sharpen what strategies and resources they will need to create critical neighborhood assets such as affordable housing, day care centers, health centers, commercial and other community facilities.

Action step five refers to ramping up investment marketing. Marketing is also a common theme throughout the Mid-East CEDS and the Regional Collaborative Strategic Plan, with committee members stressing the importance of increased marketing for the region as a priority goal. Once there's a plan in place for Opportunity Zones, local officials must cultivate strategies to attract Opportunity Zone investors. A prospectus is a key way to highlight the potential for investment, describe the types of financing needed, emphasize work that has already been done to develop neighborhoods, and define a vision for the future. This prospectus could then be marketed to developers inside and outside of the region.

Moreover, community partners can leverage the interest in Opportunity Zones to attract attention to their tracts. Presenting at Opportunity Zone forums beyond the region can generate interest. State, regional and local officials, meanwhile, could create interactive websites to help investors identify the various Opportunity Zones within a particular jurisdiction and assess the resources, incentives and development possibilities that exist. A consortium or Implementation Committee website could also send a strong signal to investors and developers that stakeholders are working together to develop their Opportunity Zones.

The final action step refers to developing impact metrics and encouraging transparency. Rigorous evaluation and accessible reporting are keys to inclusive and equitable success in the Opportunity Zones. One of the chief concerns about Opportunity Zones, especially for community leaders and government officials, is that some investments will prioritize profit over the needs and desires of communities. Currently, Opportunity Funds are not required to demonstrate that they are providing tangible benefits to communities.

There are different approaches to measuring the impact of these investments, ranging from voluntary and self-defined monitoring to required equity-related benchmarks. Some experts advocate for fund-level monitoring of investments; others seek to track community changes over time. Rural LISC recommends that state, regional and local government leaders collaborate with communities to establish specific, reasonable Opportunity Fund reporting requirements. With input from community residents and organizations, they can help encourage transparency and accountability, and point funds toward community-benefiting activities. Rural LISC also recommends that reporting focus on the direct connection between investments and outcomes, not just on broader indicators.

Economic Opportunity Zones in Region Q provide an opportunity to help implement many of the goals and objectives of the CEDs. Goals and objectives for which implementation projects could take direct advantage of Opportunity Zone legislation include the following:

- Goal 1: Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, foster continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, diversify the regional economy and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.
  - Objective 2: Use the cluster analysis to target existing businesses and start-ups and market the benefits of locating in the region.
- Goal 2: Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.
  - Objective 2: Plan for and expand broadband infrastructure to all areas of the region, including the “last mile” in rural areas until all households, businesses and organizations are served.
  - Objective 3: Research the current housing stock, identify additional needs and develop and implement a plan for the availability of a variety of housing options.
  - Objective 5: Expand sewer and natural gas infrastructure to existing and anticipated future industrial areas.
- Goal 3: Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and



town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.

- Objective 2: Plan for and accelerate investments in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods and ensure that underserved and distressed communities are engaged in the planning process.
- Objective 3: Plan for and implement the restoration and preservation of urban and town centers.
- Objective 6: Capitalize on natural resources and recreation opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for citizens and promote ecotourism.
- Objective 7: Address food deserts where there is a lack of options for healthy, fresh foods. Develop healthy eating resources to address dietary challenges in low income rural areas.
- Goal 4: Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.
  - Objective 3: Develop ways to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem across the region which supports existing small businesses and fosters the development and growth of new small businesses.
  - Objective 5: Provide the atmosphere and amenities desired by the millennial and Gen-Z generations.

Identified vital projects which could take direct advantage of Opportunity Zone legislation include the following:

- Establishment of business incubator facilities throughout the region.
- Construction or expansion of workforce training centers.
- Completion of infrastructure throughout industrial and/or technology parks.
- Extension of infrastructure including water, wastewater, roads, electric, rail, gas and broadband to new industries.
- Foster continued development of target clusters identified in the local and regional cluster analyses.
- Regionalization of water and wastewater systems where appropriate.
- Revitalization of downtown areas throughout the region.
- Enhance the regional meeting capabilities throughout the region.
- Expand hotels/accommodations for visitors to the region.
- Create a regional partnership to ensure that high-speed broadband internet access is available in all areas of the region, including the last mile in rural areas. Take advantage of available grant programs and advocate for local input to be a driving factor when selecting firms to deliver on contracts.
- Ensure access to a variety of housing options and quality K-12 education in all areas of the region.
- Develop additional affordable housing stock, including apartments, and promote affordable housing to encourage growth in communities.
- Foster the development of new, desirable industrial buildings (shell buildings) which can be customized to meet the needs of a variety of industries.
- Expansion of sewer and natural gas infrastructure to additional areas, especially anticipated future industrial areas.

As emphasized previously, communicating the benefits of investing in Opportunity Zones to developers and investors will be key to using the Opportunity Zone legislation as a catalyst to get projects on the ground.

## **General Evaluation Criteria**

While specific performance measures are located under each objective, the following general performance measures will be used to evaluate the Mid-East Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS.

1. Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS.
2. Number and types of investments undertaken in the region.
3. Number of jobs retained in the region.
4. Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS.
5. Changes in the economic environment of the region.

Thank you very much to those of you who helped make this plan possible – and to everyone who is dedicated to working on its implementation.

## Appendix A: Past and Present EDA Investments

FY (yyyy)	EDA Approval Date	Appl Short Name	Project Short Descrip	Proj County Name	EDA \$	Local/Applicant \$
1965	3/31/1965	Employment Security Off	Housekeeper	Pitt	\$0.00	\$0.00
1966	3/25/1966	Aurora Township	Extend Sewage Facility	Beaufort	\$1,761.00	\$0.00
1966	6/2/1966	Belhaven Town of	Water & Sewer System	Beaufort	\$528,000.00	\$528,000.00
1966	3/28/1966	E Carolina College	Dev Center East Carolina	Pitt	\$129,000.00	\$0.00
1966	3/25/1966	Greenville Util Comm.	Sewage Outfall Line	Pitt	\$875.00	\$0.00
1966	3/3/1966	Greenville Util Comm.	Sewage Outfall Line	Pitt	\$330,000.00	\$330,000.00
1966	3/2/1966	Washington City of	Water & Sewer	Beaufort	\$107,000.00	\$117,000.00
1966	3/2/1966	Washington Twnshp	Water And Sewer	Beaufort	\$1,377.00	\$0.00
1966	4/25/1966	Windsor North Carolina	Ind Waste Treat Fac	Bertie	\$42,000.00	\$42,000.00
1967	5/5/1967	Ayden Town of	Treatment Lagoon/sewer	Pitt	\$54,000.00	\$54,000.00
1967	5/22/1967	E Carolina College	Cont Expansion NC Inst	Pitt	\$130,000.00	\$23,000.00
1968	4/8/1968	E Carolina College	Tech Asst Com Econ Dev	Pitt	\$111,000.00	\$55,000.00
1968	6/28/1968	Mid-East Commission	Plan Asst Grant	Beaufort	\$40,000.00	\$13,000.00
1968	4/30/1968	Utility Assn Inc	Sewer And Water System	Bertie	\$143,000.00	\$143,000.00
1969	6/3/1969	Beaufort Cnty Tech Inst	1-Story Voc Tech Bldg	Beaufort	\$0.00	\$120,000.00
1969	4/18/1969	E Carolina College	Cont Expansion NC Ins	Pitt	\$135,938.00	\$145,051.00
1969	5/31/1969	Utility Assn Inc	Sewer And Water System	Bertie	\$24,500.00	\$24,500.00
1970	12/24/1969	Martin Technical Inst	Expand Technical Inst	Martin	\$0.00	\$305,000.00
1970	6/22/1970	Mid-East Commission	Public Service Career	Beaufort	\$105,000.00	\$0.00
1970	10/15/1969	Mid-East Commission	Continuation Plan Grant	Beaufort	\$48,000.00	\$16,225.00
1970	11/3/1969	Winterville Town of	Wtr Line/swg Coll Line	Pitt	\$0.00	\$75,000.00
1971	12/15/1970	Greenville Util Comm.	Expand Gas Lines	Pitt	\$181,200.00	\$120,800.00

1971	12/15/1970	Greenville Util Comm.	Swg. Trt. Facilities	Pitt	\$627,350.00	\$501,890.00
1971	12/15/1970	Greenville Util Comm.	Water Plt Exp	Pitt	\$649,200.00	\$432,800.00
1971	9/8/1970	Mid-East Commission	Feas/Indus Complex	Beaufort	\$75,000.00	\$0.00
1971	11/17/1970	Mid-East Commission	Second Continuation	Beaufort	\$45,600.00	\$22,880.00
1972	6/20/1972	East Carolina Univ	Auditorium Building	Pitt	\$294,600.00	\$98,200.00
1972	10/6/1971	Mid-East Commission	Third Continuation	Beaufort	\$45,600.00	\$17,898.00
1972	6/15/1972	Roanoke-Chowan Tech Coll	Technical School	Hertford	\$900,000.00	\$300,000.00
1972	6/22/1972	Williamston Town of	Wtr/swr Ext TO Ind PK	Martin	\$124,000.00	\$64,900.00
1973	6/13/1973	East Carolina Univ	Auditorium Building	Pitt	\$39,000.00	\$26,000.00
1973	6/20/1973	Farmville Town of	Water Supply/storage	Pitt	\$243,000.00	\$162,000.00
1973	11/6/1972	Mid-East Commission	Fourth Continuation	Beaufort	\$79,800.00	\$45,441.00
1973	5/1/1973	Mid-East Commission	Print Indust Park Study	Hyde	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
1973	6/21/1973	Williamston Town of	Wtr/swr Ext TO Ind PK	Martin	\$57,500.00	\$57,500.00
1974	5/17/1974	Mid-East Commission	Supp Plan Grant	Beaufort	\$45,600.00	\$15,200.00
1975	6/25/1975	Mid-East Commission	A-95 Review	Beaufort	\$4,000.00	\$1,334.00
1976	10/28/1975	Econ Improvement Corp	Eic, Inc Community Food	Pitt	\$0.00	\$0.00
1976	5/21/1976	Farmville Town of	Ind PK Feas Study	Pitt	\$30,000.00	\$10,000.00
1976	4/22/1976	Greenville Util Comm.	Sewer System Additions	Pitt	\$223,500.00	\$223,500.00
1976	9/2/1976	Hertford County	Ind PK Feas Stdy	Hertford	\$30,000.00	\$10,000.00
1976	7/13/1976	Mid-East Commission	Supp Plan Grant	Beaufort	\$12,600.00	\$4,200.00
1976	7/20/1976	Mid-East Commission	Supp A-95 Review	Beaufort	\$5,000.00	\$1,666.00
1976	8/18/1975	Mid-East Commission	Fifth Continuation	Beaufort	\$50,200.00	\$16,732.00
1976	8/1/1975	Williamston Town of	Pa+nt & Clean Houses	Martin	\$0.00	\$0.00
1977	3/16/1977	Beaufort Cnty Tech Inst	Vocational Educa Bldg	Beaufort	\$480,000.00	\$320,000.00
1977	1/7/1977	Jamesville Town of	Swr-Wtr Tmt Plant	Martin	\$0.00	\$0.00
1977	9/19/1977	Mid-East Commission	Supp A-95 Review	Beaufort	\$3,000.00	\$1,000.00
1977	9/30/1977	Mid-East Commission	Prof Svcs Grant	Beaufort	\$20,000.00	\$6,667.00
1977	11/5/1976	Mid-East Commission	Sixth Continuation	Beaufort	\$50,200.00	\$16,734.00
1977	8/24/1977	Tri County Airport Auth	Air Terminal	Hertford	\$167,000.00	\$150,000.00

1978	10/21/1977	Beaufort Cnty Tech Inst	Vocational Educa Bldg	Beaufort	\$62,459.00	\$41,640.00
1978	4/12/1978	Martin County	Ind Site Study	Martin	\$30,000.00	\$10,000.00
1978	10/27/1977	Mid-East Commission	Seventh Continuation	Beaufort	\$50,200.00	\$16,734.00
1979	3/23/1979	Mid-East Commission	Planning Suppl	Beaufort	\$5,025.00	\$1,675.00
1979	12/11/1978	Mid-East Commission	Planning Cont	Beaufort	\$50,200.00	\$16,734.00
1980	6/13/1980	American Contract Pkgrs	Gw/c Drug Packaging	Martin	\$0.00	\$0.00
1980	6/13/1980	American Contract Pkgrs	Gfa Drug Packaging	Martin	\$0.00	\$0.00
1980	11/7/1979	Mid-East Commission	Planning Cont	Beaufort	\$55,225.00	\$18,409.00
1981	10/31/1980	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Cont Plng Grant	Beaufort	\$55,225.00	\$18,408.00
1981	8/31/1981	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$13,807.00	\$4,602.00
1981	1/14/1981	Robersonville Town of	Sewer Line Ext TO Ind	Martin	\$780,000.00	\$150,000.00
1982	5/6/1982	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$27,613.00	\$9,205.00
1982	8/4/1982	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$27,613.00	\$9,205.00
1983	2/2/1983	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$12,978.00	\$4,326.00
1983	8/11/1983	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$42,248.00	\$14,083.00
1983	9/5/1983	Williamston Town of	Expand Wtr Distr Sys	Martin	\$336,000.00	\$336,500.00
1984	8/27/1984	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$55,225.00	\$18,409.00
1984	8/27/1984	Washington City of	Wtr/swr & Elec Ser	Beaufort	\$324,000.00	\$216,000.00
1985	9/9/1985	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$55,225.00	\$18,409.00
1986	9/9/1986	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$45,200.00	\$15,067.00
1987	8/24/1987	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$53,000.00	\$17,667.00
1988	8/25/1988	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$53,000.00	\$17,667.00
1988	10/19/1987	Robersonville Town of	Exp Wtr Sup,Elev Tank	Martin	\$478,800.00	\$319,200.00
1989	6/21/1989	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	\$53,000.00	\$17,667.00
1990	3/10/1990	Mid-East Commission	RLF	Beaufort	\$300,000.00	\$100,000.00
1990	7/2/1990	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	\$53,000.00	\$17,667.00
1990	4/2/1990	Washington City of	Exp Wtr&wstwr Collec LN	Beaufort	\$537,500.00	\$537,500.00
1991	6/14/1991	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	\$53,000.00	\$17,667.00
1992	6/29/1992	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	\$56,000.00	\$18,667.00
1993	6/17/1993	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	\$55,000.00	\$18,334.00

1994	6/24/1994	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	\$57,000.00	\$19,000.00
1995	5/12/1995	Beaufort Cnty Cmty Coll	2-Way Voice,Video & Data	Beaufort	\$900,000.00	\$600,000.00
1995	6/19/1995	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	\$87,000.00	\$29,000.00
1996	7/15/1996	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	\$52,000.00	\$47,334.00
1997	8/6/1997	Martin County	Ind PK Dev Plan	Martin	\$15,000.00	\$5,000.00
1997	6/16/1997	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Beaufort	\$142,000.00	\$47,334.00
1997	8/15/1997	Robersonville Town of	Wstwtr Trtmnt Improv	Martin	\$1,155,000.00	\$1,025,000.00
1998	11/10/1997	Ayden Town of	Wtr Sys Dist Improv	Pitt	\$39,491.00	\$200,000.00
1998	2/25/1998	Beaufort Cnty- Washington	Wtr,Swr Ext	Beaufort	\$1,009,338.00	\$229,788.00
1998	7/14/1998	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Beaufort	\$52,000.00	\$17,334.00
1998	10/21/1997	Pitt County	Eastern Carolina Tech CT	Pitt	\$400,000.00	\$445,000.00
1999	7/1/1999	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Beaufort	\$59,500.00	\$19,834.00
1999	7/7/1999	Robersonville Town of	O/R on Constn.Contract	Martin	\$270,000.00	\$270,000.00
2000	9/27/2000	Mid-East Commission	EDA Mitigation Grant	Beaufort	\$100,000.00	\$25,000.00
2000	7/3/2000	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Multi	\$52,000.00	\$17,334.00
2000	11/4/1999	Mid-East Commission	Economic Impact Study	Multi	\$46,000.00	\$0.00
2000	8/17/2000	Winton	Upgrade WWTP & Sewer Sys	Hertford	\$911,038.00	\$200,000.00
2001	5/9/2001	Greenville	Floodproofing	Pitt	\$1,543,000.00	\$1,543,000.00
2001	6/8/2001	Hertford Co. So. Wtr.Dis	Water System Improvement	Hertford	\$500,000.00	\$0.00
2001	7/12/2001	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Multi	\$52,000.00	\$17,334.00
2001	4/2/2001	Mid-East Commission	Hurricane Floyd Recovery	Multi	\$40,000.00	\$10,000.00
2001	4/2/2001	Robersonville Town of	Wastewater Improvements	Martin	\$661,000.00	\$661,000.00
2001	6/28/2001	Washington City of	Wastewater Floodproofing	Beaufort	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
2002	7/23/2002	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$52,000.00	\$17,334.00
2002	9/24/2002	Regional Science Center	Science Ctr design study	Multi	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
2002	8/15/2002	Washington, City of	WastewaterTreatmt Plant	Beaufort	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,716,500.00
2003	4/25/2003	Beaufort Co Committee	Skills Ctr Construction	Beaufort	\$356,000.00	\$356,100.00
2003	8/4/2003	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$52,000.00	\$17,334.00

2003	12/31/2003	Windsor, Town of	Infrastructure Imprvemnt	Bertie	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,285,400.00
2004	9/13/2004	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$52,000.00	\$17,334.00
2005	6/21/2005	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$52,000.00	\$17,334.00
2006	6/23/2006	Farmville	Water System Improvement	Pitt	\$1,000,000.00	\$6,261,570.00
2006	6/17/2006	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment		\$53,500.00	\$35,667.00
2007	7/1/2007	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Invest- 6 mo. Ext	Multi	\$26,500.00	\$26,500.00
2007	11/28/2007	Greenville/GUC	Aquifer Storage Recovery	Pitt	\$703,000.00	\$704,375.00
2007	12/14/2007	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Investment	Multi	\$53,000.00	\$35,333.00
2009	12/23/2009	Beaufort County/ BCCC	Allied Health Building	Beaufort	\$2,500,000.00	\$4,123,593.00
2010	8/25/2010	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Investment(Supp)	Multi	\$20,000.00	\$13,333.00
2011	9/20/2011	Mid-East Commission	Hurricane Irene Mitigation	Multi	\$50,000.00	\$21,429.00
2012	1/30/2012	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$189,000.00	\$126,000.00
2013	9/11/2013	City of Washington	Hurricane Irene	Beaufort	\$1,442,049.00	\$1,410,107.00
2014	12/24/2014	Pitt County/PCC	Science & Tech. Bldg.	Pitt	\$2,000,000.00	\$16,310,805.00
2014	12/30/2014	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$189,000.00	\$189,000.00
2015	FY 2015	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$189,000.00	\$189,000.00
2017	FY 2017	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Investment (Supp)	Multi	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00
2017	FY 2017	East Carolina University	eNC Innovates! Project	Pitt	\$498,443.00	\$503,176.00
2018	FY 2018	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	\$210,000.00	\$90,000.00
2019	FY 2019	Mid-East Commission	Disaster Recov. Coordinator	Multi	\$200,000.00	\$50,000.00
2020	FY 2020	Mid-East Commission	CARES ACT	Multi	\$400,000.00	0.00
2020	FY 2020	Mid-East Commission	Revolving Loan Fund	Multi	\$671,000.00	0.00
					\$33,798,879.00	\$46,622,076.00



## Appendix B: 2022 CEDS Advisory Committee Members

### Beaufort County

#### **Economic Developer**

Beaufort County Economic Development  
Martyn Johnson, Director, Retired

Beaufort County Economic Development  
Brad Hufford, Director

Beaufort County Economic Development  
Susan Squires, Economic Development Specialist

#### **Education**

Beaufort County Community College  
Dr. Stacey Gerard, Vice President of Continuing Education

Beaufort County Community College  
Lentz Stowe, Small Business Center Director

#### **Private Sector**

Carver Machine Works  
Lindsey Crisp, President & CEO

The Mulberry House Brewery  
Mohamed Ali Darar, Owner

#### **Community**

Washington-Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce  
Catherine Glover, Director

#### **Public Official**

Beaufort County Board of Commissioners  
Ed Booth, County Commissioner

### Bertie County

#### **Economic Developer**

Bertie County Economic Development  
Steve Biggs, Director

Bertie County Economic Development  
Robin Payne, Grant Writer

#### **Education**

Served by Martin Community College

**Private Sector**

Southern Bank  
Crystal Godwin, City Executive

**Agricultural**

Carl Bond, Bertie County Economic Development Board Member  
Retired from US Dept. of Agriculture

**Community**

Windsor-Bertie Chamber of Commerce  
Lewis Hoggard, Director

**Public Official**

Bertie County Board of Commissioners  
Ron Wesson, County Commissioner

**Hertford County****Economic Developer**

Hertford County Economic Development  
Kelly Bowers, Director

**Education**

Roanoke Chowan Community College  
Dr. Murray Williams, Director

Roanoke Chowan Community College  
Dr. Stephanie Benson

**Private Sector**

Alfiniti Inc.  
Steve James, President

**Community**

Ahoskie Chamber of Commerce  
Amy Braswell, Director

Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce  
Daryl Williams, Director

**Public Official**

Hertford County Board of Commissioners  
John Hornton, Vice Chairman

**Martin County****Economic Developer**

Martin County Economic Development Commission  
Jason Semple, Director

**Education**

Martin County Community College  
Maureen Green, Director of Institutional Research/Effectiveness/Liaison

Martin County Community College  
Charles Banks, Small Business Center Director

**Private Sector**

Flagstone Foods  
Tony Hinton, Employee and Community Relations Manager

**Community**

Martin County Chamber of Commerce  
Rebecca Harned, Director

**Public Official**

Town of Bear Grass  
Charlotte Griffin, Mayor

**Pitt County****Economic Developer**

Pitt County Economic Development  
Wayne Rollins, Business Retention and Expansion Specialist

**Education**

Pitt Community College  
Dr. Johnny Smith, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement

Pitt Community College  
Jim Ensor, Small Business Center Director

**Private Sector**

Winnie Jenkins  
Farrior Steel Works, HR Manager

**Community**

Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce  
Kimber Stone, Director of Member Relations & Programs

**Public Official**

Pitt County  
Melvin McLawhorn, Pitt County Commissioner

Town of Winterville  
Veronica Roberson, Councilwoman

## Regional

### **Workforce Development**

Rivers East Workforce Development Board Staff  
Jennie Bowen, Director

Rivers East Workforce Development Board Member  
Robert Williams, Rivers East WDB Chairman & Small Business Owner (WMS Marketing)

### **Economic Development**

Economic Development Partnership of NC  
Sarah Bernart, Manager of Northeast Region

Greenville-ENC Alliance  
Uconda Dunn, Vice President of Business Development

NC East Alliance  
Van Rogerson, President

NC East Alliance  
Trey Goodson, Regional Economic Developer

### **Transportation**

Greenville MPO  
Eliud De Jesus, Transportation Planner

Mid-East RPO  
Sam Singleton, Transportation Planner

Peanut Belt RPO  
Stephanie Harmon, Transportation Planner

### **Disaster Recovery**

Mid-East Commission  
Lisa Williams, Disaster Recovery Coordinator

### **Education**

East Carolina University  
Office of Community Engagement and Research  
Dr. Sharon Paynter, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Economic and Community Engagement

### **Minority**

Association of Mexicans in NC  
Juvencio Rocha-Peralta, Director

# Appendix C: Pandemic Recovery Addendum

## Introduction

With the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing a defining and pivotal moment in our nation's history that will shape the future of our communities. The decisions and resulting actions of our leaders will set the course for either resilience and recovery or economic decline. The 2022 Mid-East CEDS Advisory Committee, a group of public and private sector representatives from across the five-county region, assisted in the development of this Pandemic Recovery Addendum. A full list of 2022 CEDS Advisory Committee members is included as Appendix B.

To ensure that the Mid-East Region is equipped to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Advisory Committee convened seven times between January – April 2022 to discuss each goal area of the CEDS. Goal areas include Business Recruitment, Retention and Marketing; Physical Infrastructure; Healthy and Safe Communities; and Small Business and Workforce Development. The purpose of each meeting was to determine how the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have shifted or otherwise altered the landscape across the region within each goal area and how the Mid-East Commission, its member governments, and partners, can adjust course under the CEDS.

The purpose of this addendum is to present additional or modified strategies to aid in the region's COVID-19 pandemic response, recovery, and resiliency. This addendum will provide a strategy for regional stakeholders to respond to the economic injuries resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, recover from those existing and ongoing injuries, prevent further economic injuries, and prepare for future economic injuries.

## Economic Impact of COVID-19

The economic injuries and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Mid-East Commission's five county region are still emerging and the full extent is not yet realized. However, the following data helps to measure the severity of this pandemic on the region's economy and document the need for a cohesive response, recovery, and resiliency strategy. These baselines, along with project specific data, can be used to measure the response/recovery efforts and contributions of projects and their impacts on the region.

## Percent Home on Workdays

The University of Chicago's US COVID Atlas provides data on the percent of workers home on workdays. In January 2020 (pre-pandemic), Beaufort, Bertie, Martin and Pitt Counties had a 23-27% work from home rate, while Hertford County had a 27-30% work from home rate. In January 2021, Beaufort, Martin and Pitt Counties had a 27-30% work from home rate, Bertie County had a 30-36% work from home rate, and Hertford County had a 27-30% work from home rate. In the five county region, Hertford County was the only county with no significant increase in the percentage of at home

workers. While there was an increase in all the other counties, Bertie County had the largest increase in the percentage of at home workers. Figure C-1 shows the January 2020 and January 2021 percent home on workdays.

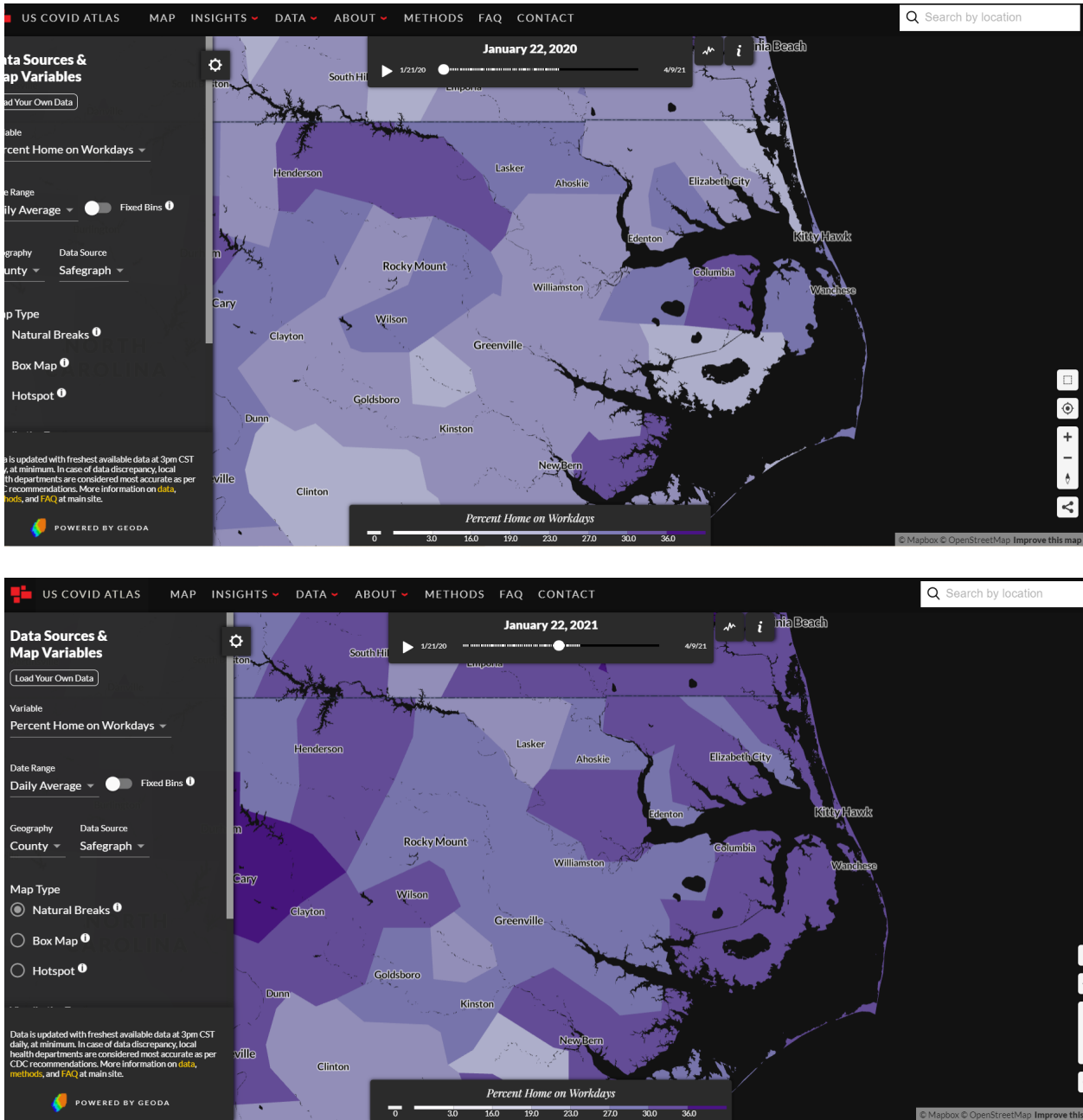


Figure C-1: Percent Home on Workdays (Source: University of Chicago, US COVID Atlas)

## Regional Unemployment Rate

From January 2020 (pre-pandemic) to January 2021 (post-pandemic), the Mid-East region saw a 2.0% increase in the unemployment rate, compared to a 3.4% increase for the state as a whole. From January 2021 to December 2021, the region experienced a 2.6% decrease in the unemployment rate, compared to a 2.8% decrease for the state as a whole. The regional unemployment rate has recovered, with the January 2020 pre-pandemic unemployment rate being 4.0%, and the December 2021 unemployment rate being 3.4%. Results were similar for all five counties. While there was an increase in the unemployment rate from January 2020 – January 2021, all counties are now back to pre-pandemic unemployment rates. Figure C-2 shows the COVID-19 impact on the regional unemployment rate.

Regional Unemployment Rate - COVID-19 Impact					
Area	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2021	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - Jan. 2021	Dec. 2021	Percent Change Jan. 2021 - Dec. 2021
Beaufort County	4.2%	6.0%	+1.8%	3.2%	-2.8%
Bertie County	4.9%	6.3%	+1.4%	4.0%	-2.3%
Hertford County	4.7%	6.9%	+2.2%	4.5%	-2.4%
Martin County	4.5%	6.7%	+2.2%	3.6%	-3.1%
Pitt County	3.8%	5.9%	+2.1%	3.2%	-2.7%
Mid-East Region	4.0%	6.0%	+2.0%	3.4%	-2.6%
North Carolina	3.6%	6.0%	+3.4%	3.2%	-2.8%

Figure C-2: Regional Unemployment Rate – COVID-19 Impact (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

## Labor Force

There were 136,263 people in the labor force in the Mid-East Region as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 123,606 people in April 2020. Numbers steadily improved and as of December 2021, there were 138,301 people in the labor force in the Mid-East Region. While the region as a whole shows recovery of the number of people in the labor force, there is geographic variability within the region. Figure C-3 shows the number of people in the labor force in the Mid-East Region.

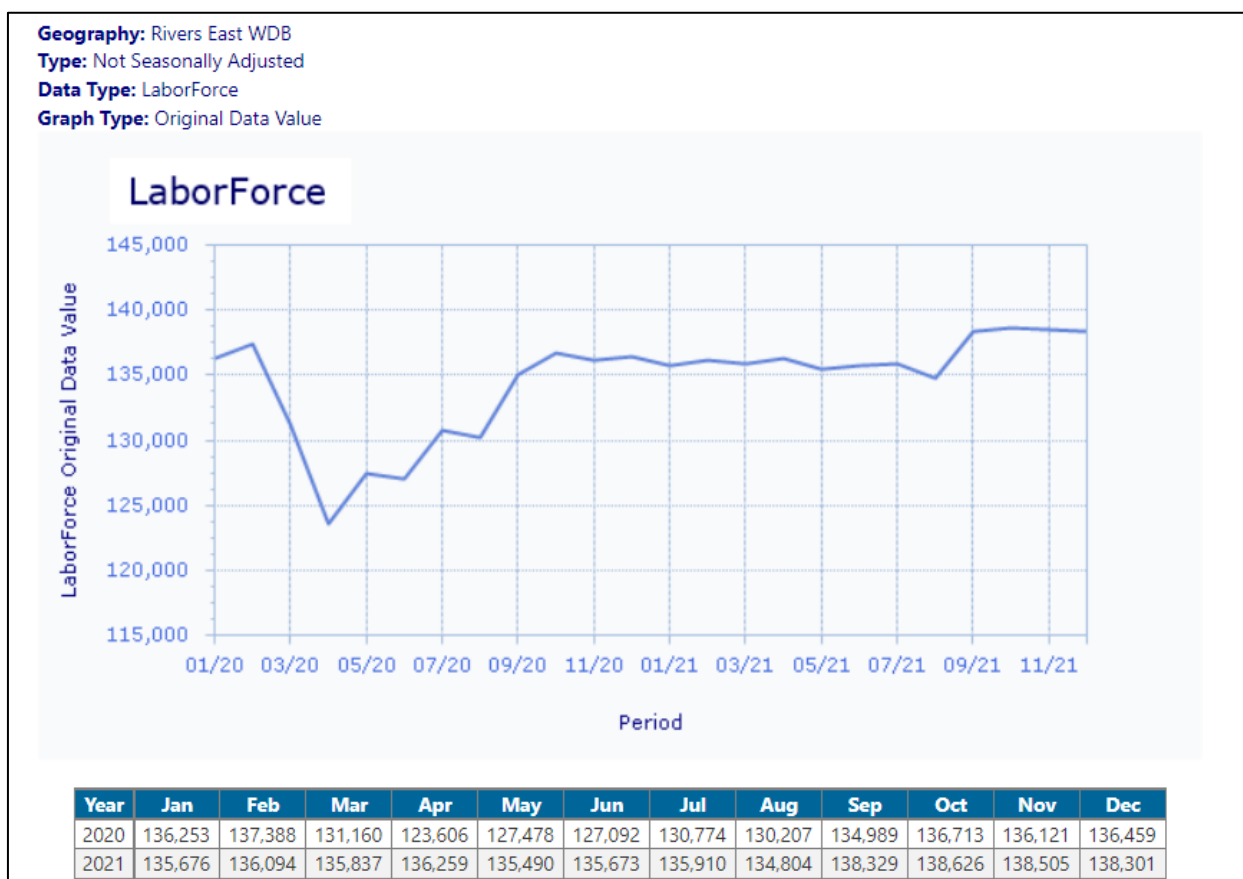


Figure C-3: Mid-East Region Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)



There were 19,768 people in the labor force in Beaufort County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 18,049 people in April 2020. Numbers steadily improved and as of December 2021, there were 19,938 people in the labor force in Beaufort County, showing recovery back to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-4 shows the number of people in the labor force in Beaufort County.

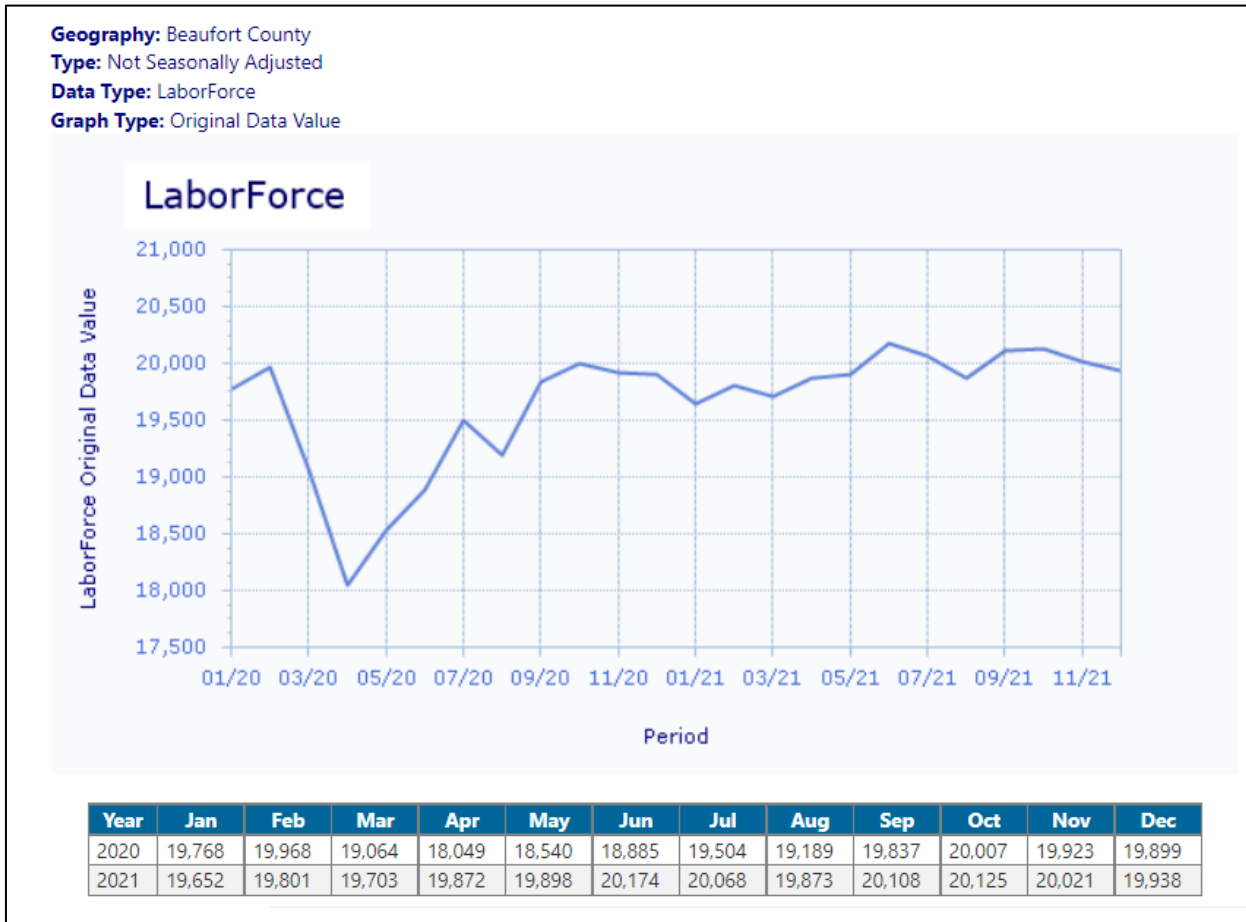


Figure C-4: Beaufort County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 7,969 people in the labor force in Bertie County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 7,192 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Bertie County has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 7,450. Figure C-5 shows the number of people in the labor force in Bertie County.



Figure C-5: Bertie County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 9,357 people in the labor force in Hertford County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 8,547 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Hertford County has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 8,954. Figure C-6 shows the number of people in the labor force in Hertford County.

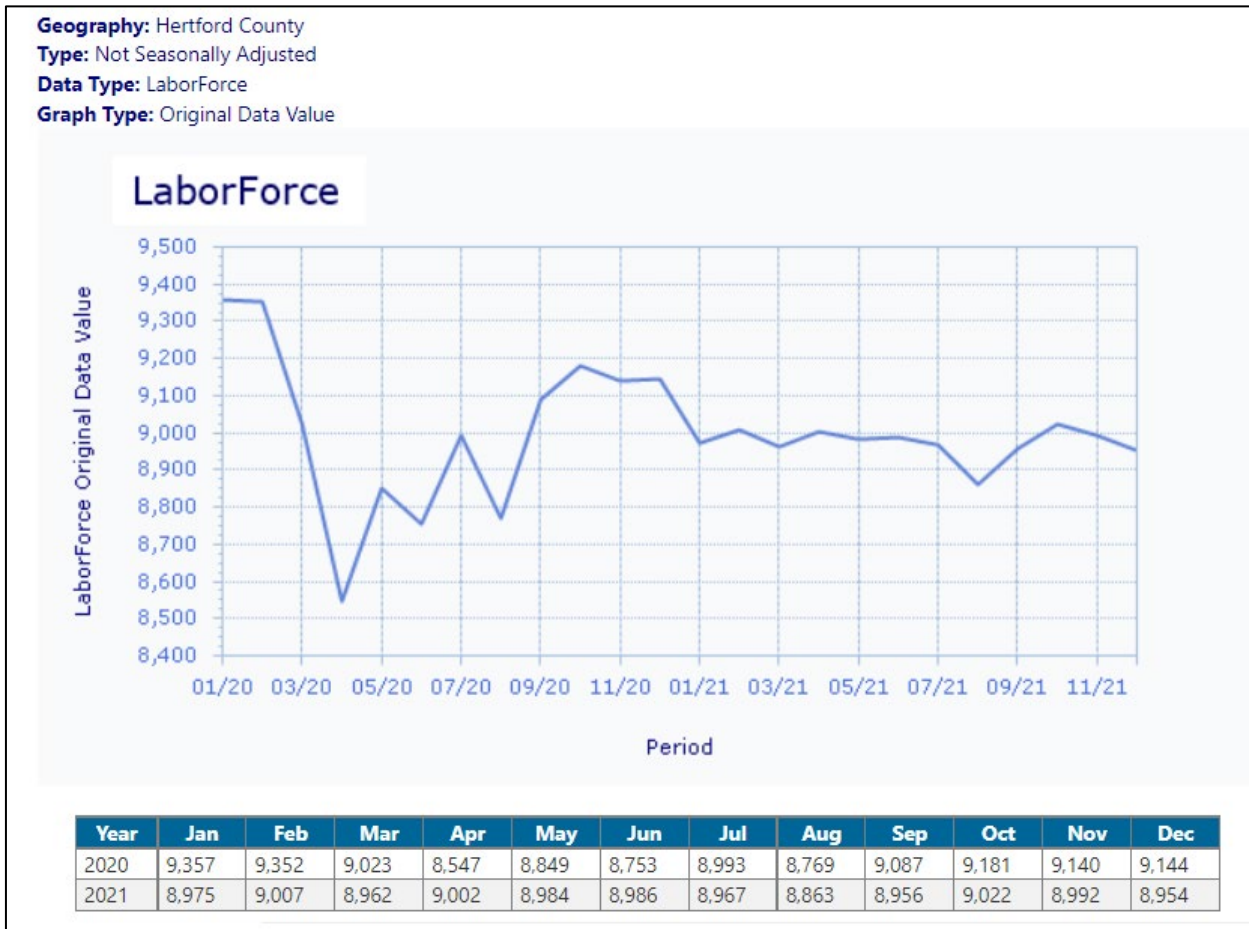


Figure C-6: Hertford County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 9,184 people in the labor force in Martin County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 8,265 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Martin County has almost recovered to pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 8,961. Figure C-7 shows the number of people in the labor force in Martin County.

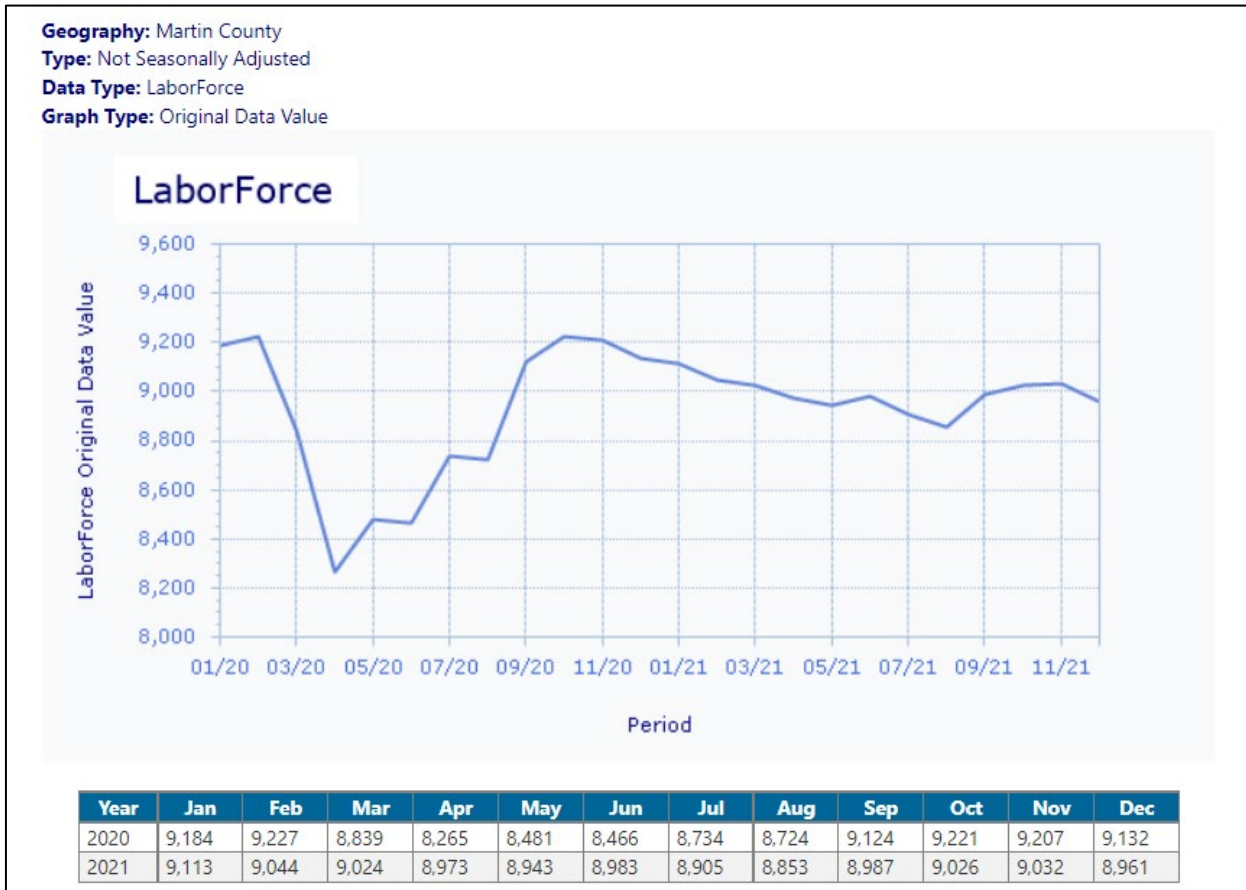


Figure C-7: Martin County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 89,875 people in the labor force in Pitt County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 81,553 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Pitt County has recovered and increased from pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 92,998. Figure C-8 shows the number of people in the labor force in Pitt County.

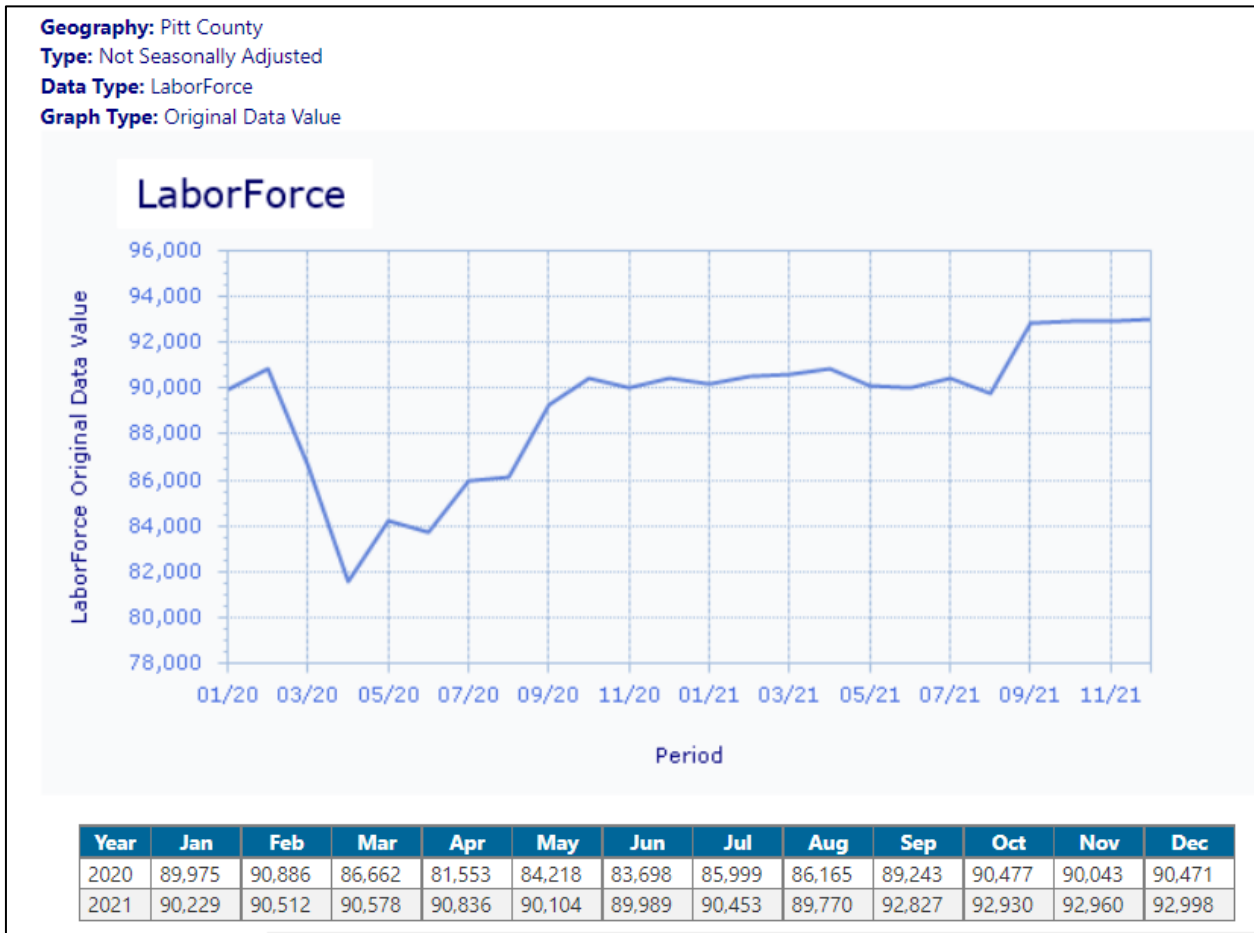


Figure C-8: Pitt County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

## Unemployment Claimants

The number of initial unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region spiked from March 2020 – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the increase in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in May-June of 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants and continued unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. However, there is geographic variability within the region. Figure C-9 shows initial unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region and Figure C-10 shows continued unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region.

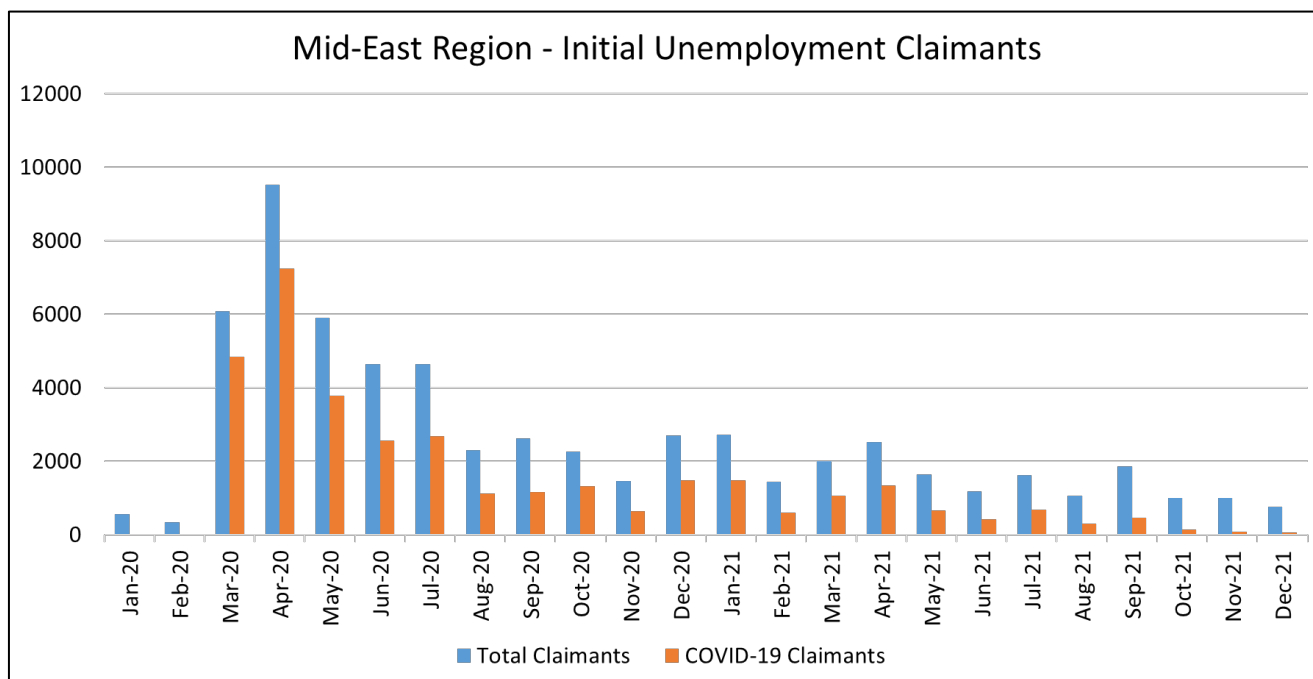


Figure C-9: Mid-East Region Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

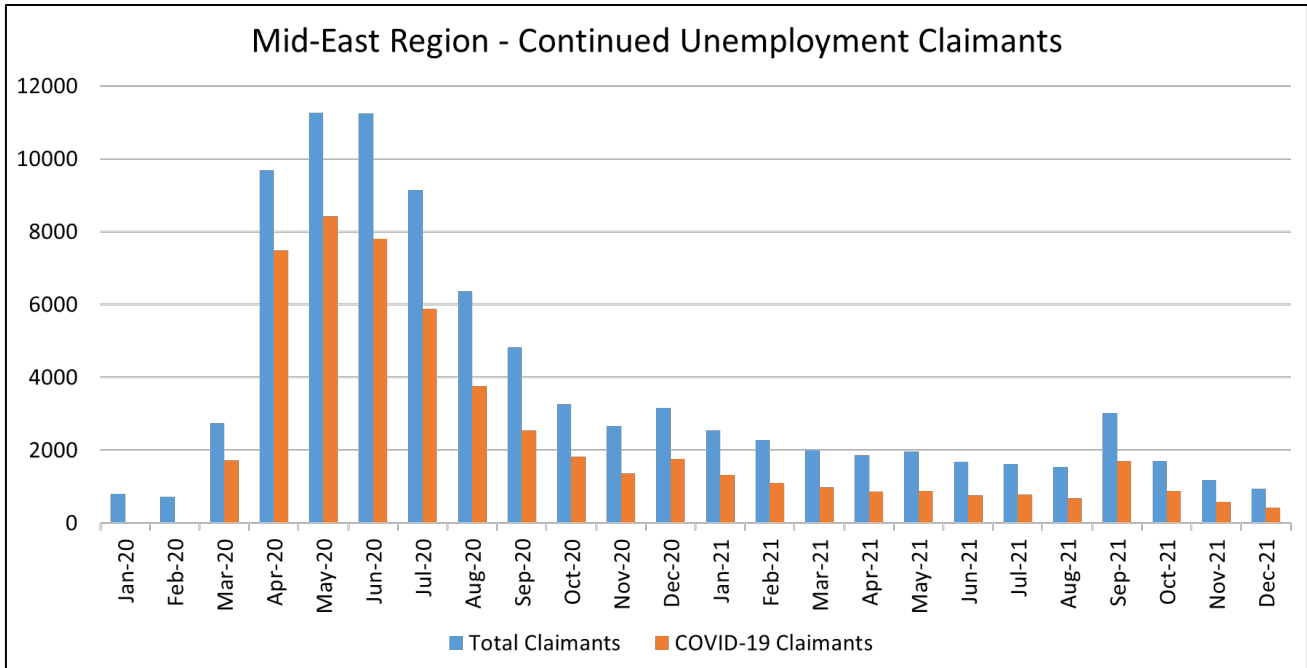


Figure C-10: Mid-East Region Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Beaufort County spiked from March 2020 – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the increase in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in May 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants and continued unemployment claimants in Beaufort County has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-11 shows initial unemployment claimants in Beaufort County and Figure C-12 shows continued unemployment claimants in Beaufort County.

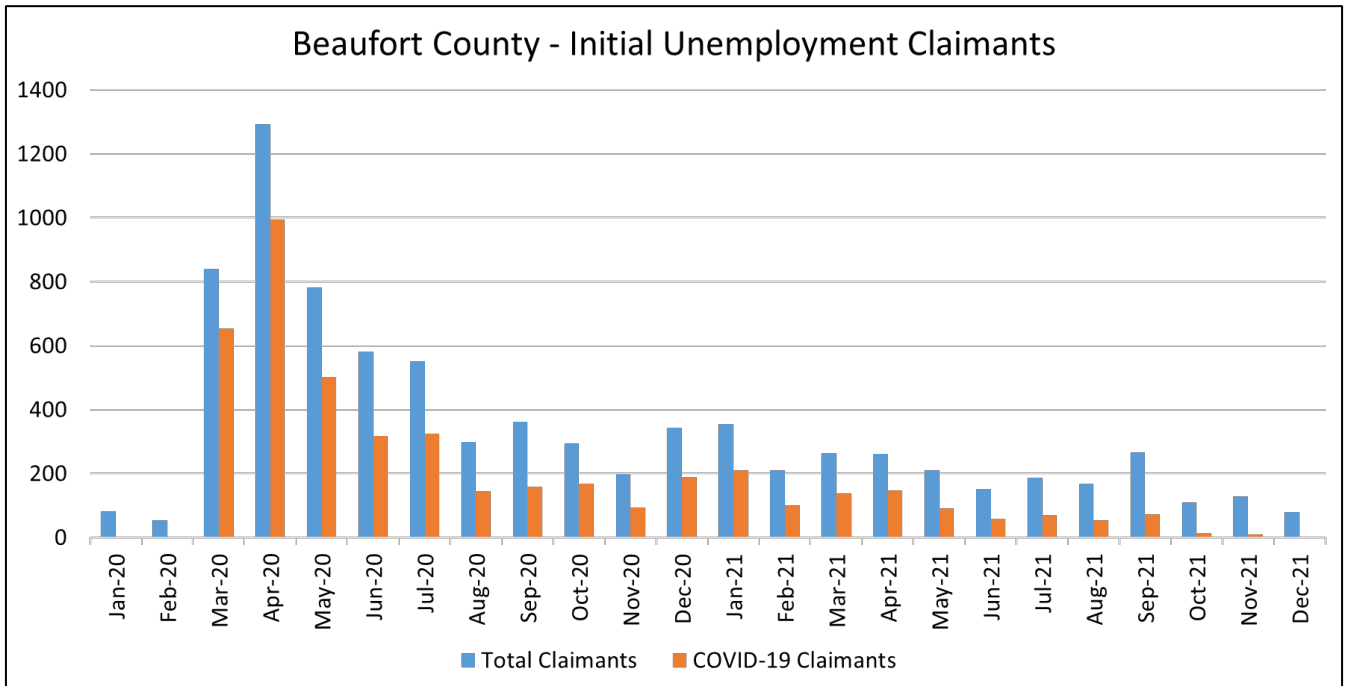


Figure C-11: Beaufort County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)



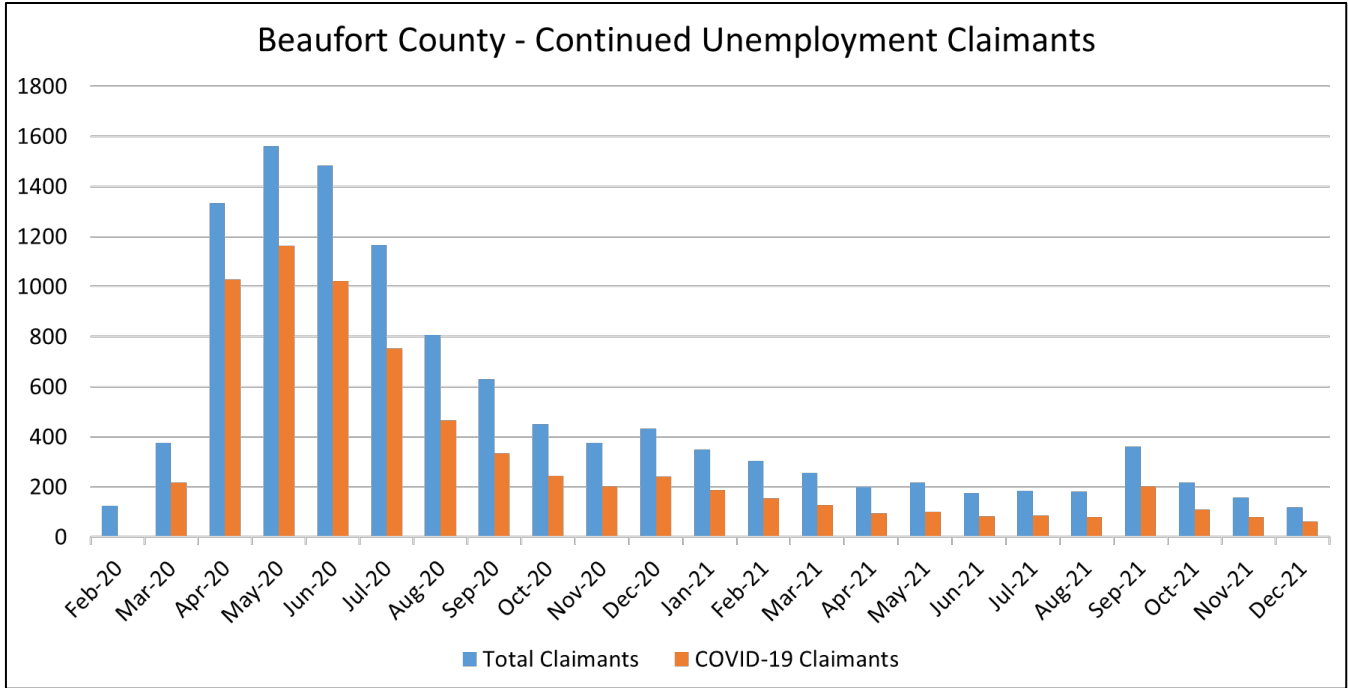


Figure C-12: Beaufort County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Bertie County spiked from March – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the increase in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in June 2020. There has been a trend toward recovery, but it has been uneven and there have been several smaller spikes in initial and continued unemployment claimants in Bertie County. The situation is looking up, as initial unemployment claimants in Bertie County have nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and continued unemployment claimants in Bertie County have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-13 shows initial unemployment claimants in Bertie County and Figure C-14 shows continued unemployment claimants in Bertie County.

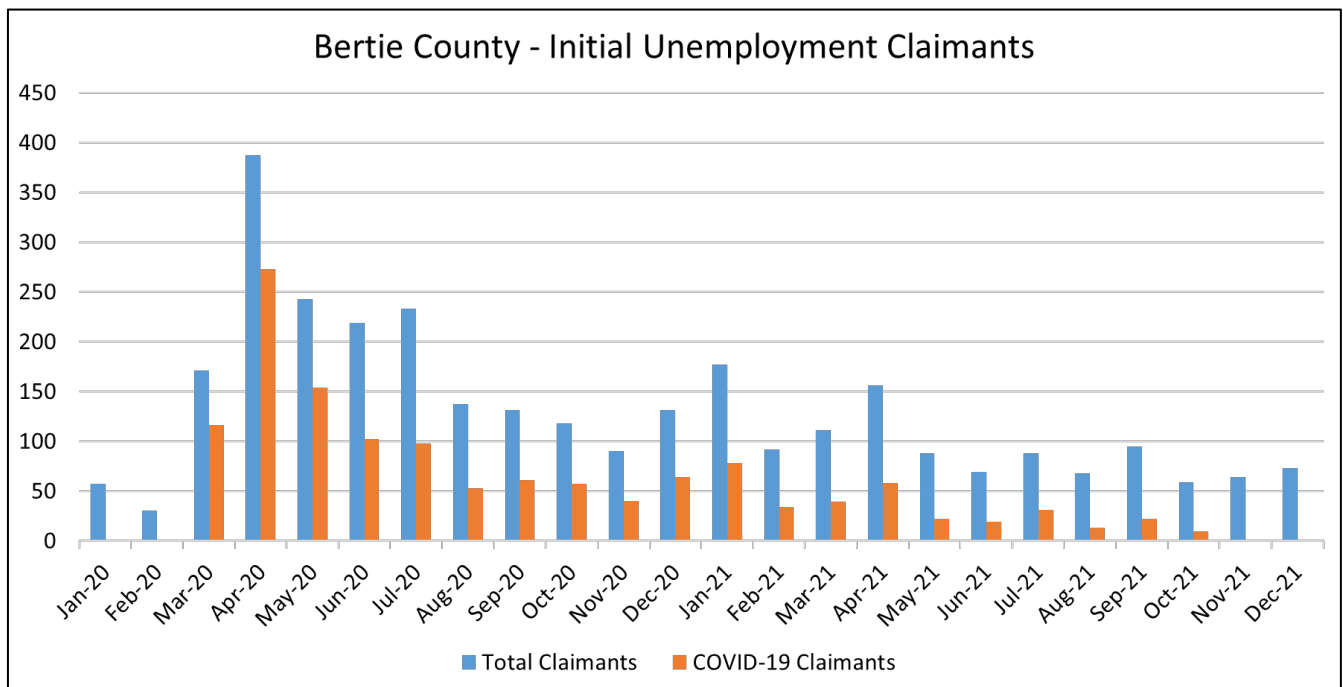


Figure C-13: Bertie County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

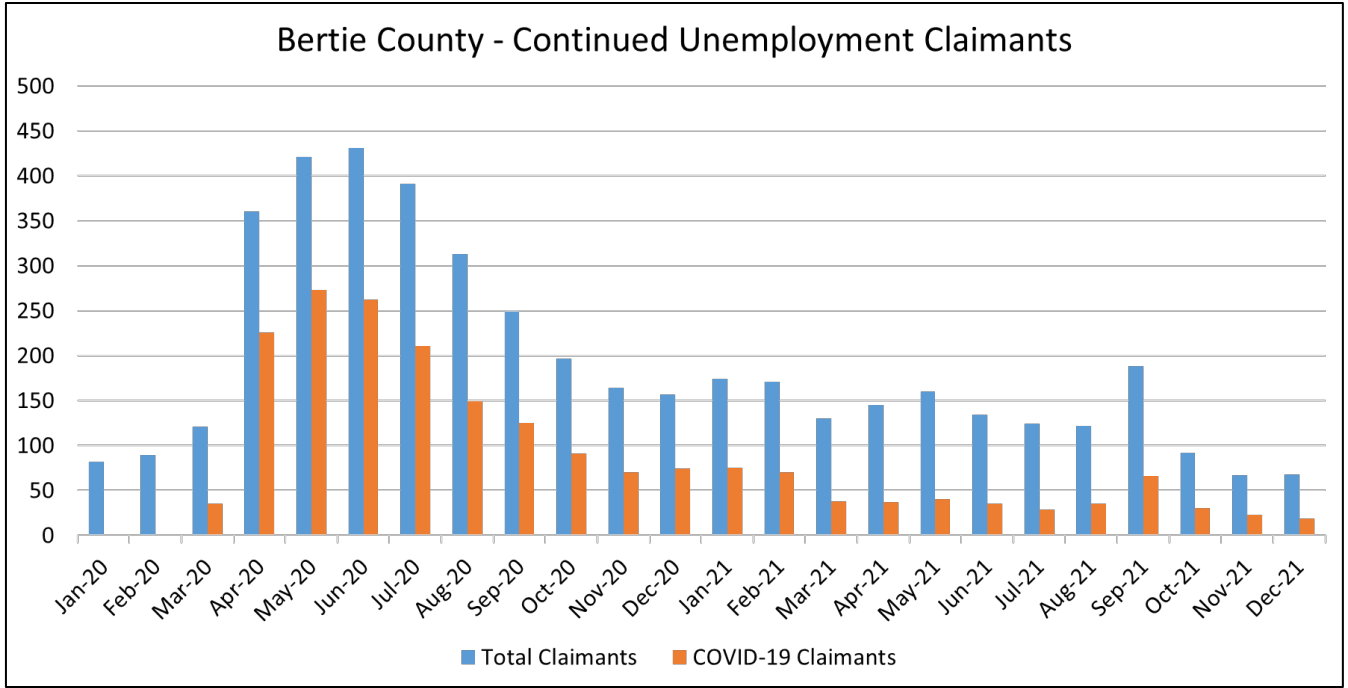


Figure C-14: Bertie County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Hertford County spiked from March – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the increase in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in June 2020. There has been a trend towards recovery, but it has been uneven and there have been several smaller spikes in initial and continued unemployment claimants in Hertford County. The situation is looking up, as initial unemployment claimants in Hertford County have nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and continued unemployment claimants in Hertford County have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-15 shows initial unemployment claimants in Hertford County and Figure C-16 shows continued unemployment claimants in Hertford County.

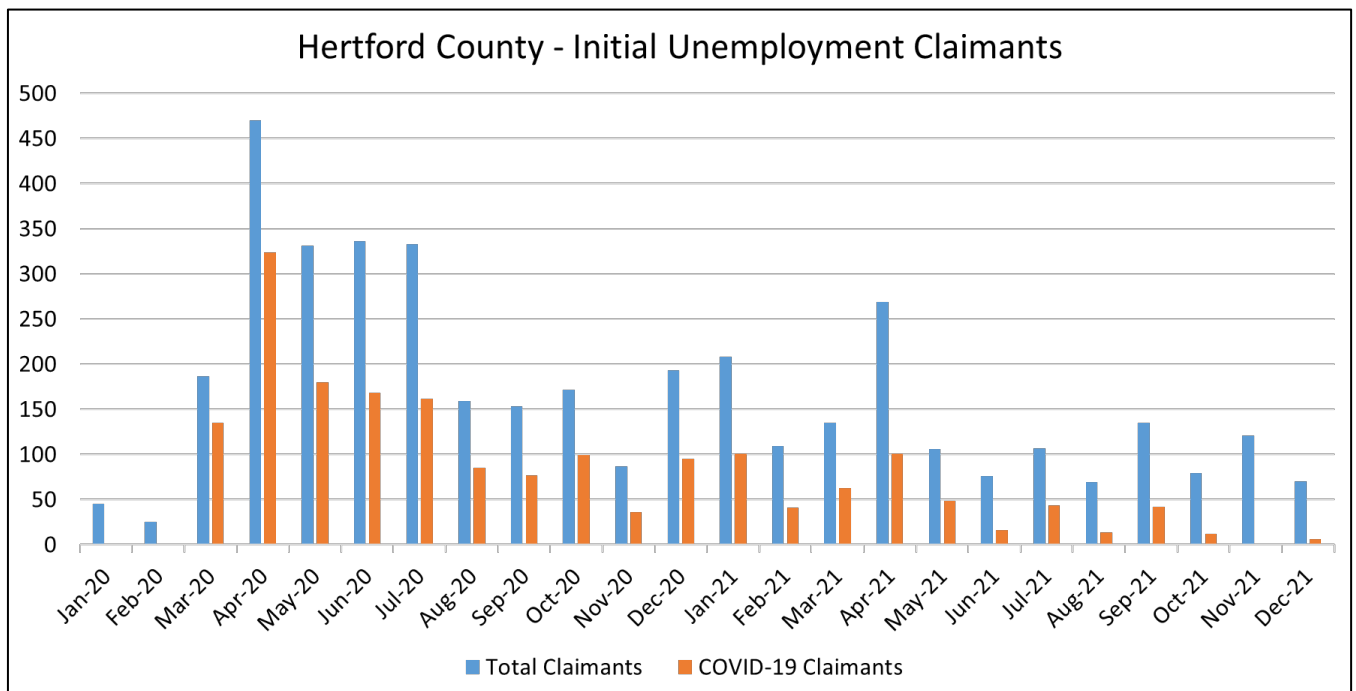


Figure C-15: Hertford County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

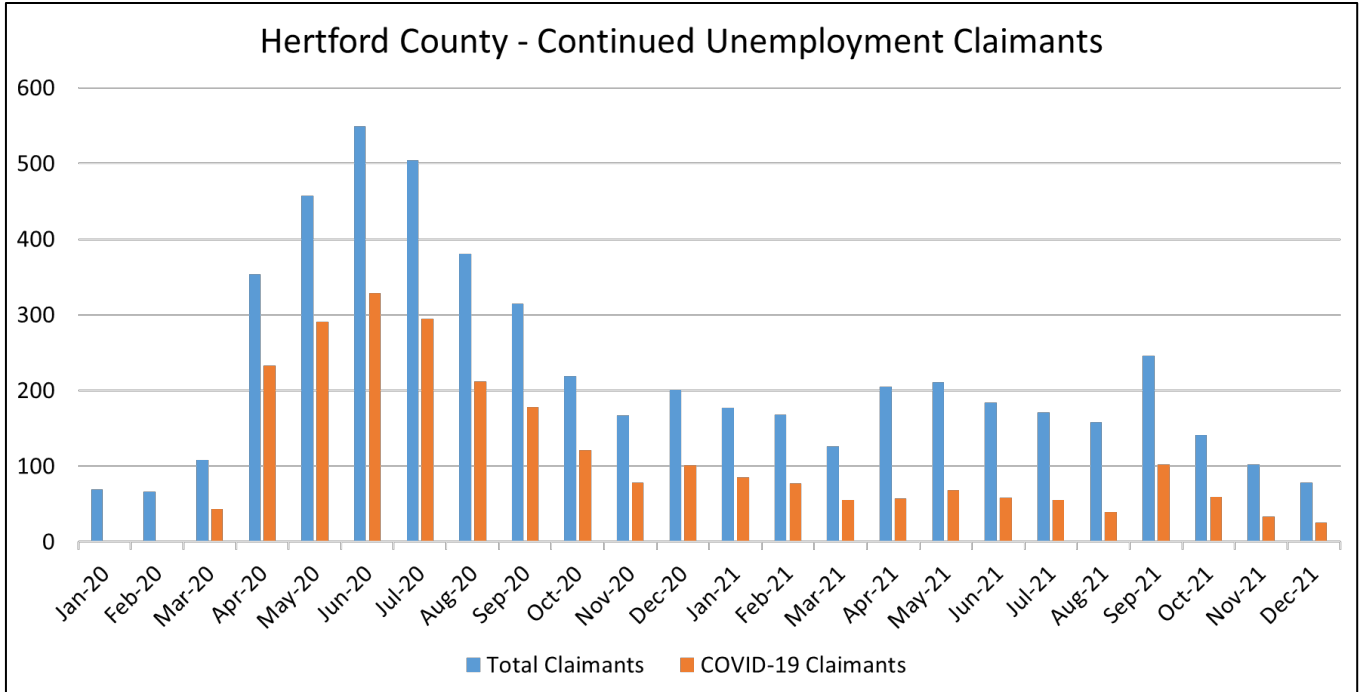


Figure C-16: Hertford County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Martin County spiked from March 2020 – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the increase in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in June 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants in Martin County has nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and the number of continued unemployment claimants has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-17 shows initial unemployment claimants in Martin County and Figure C-18 shows continued unemployment claimants in Martin County.

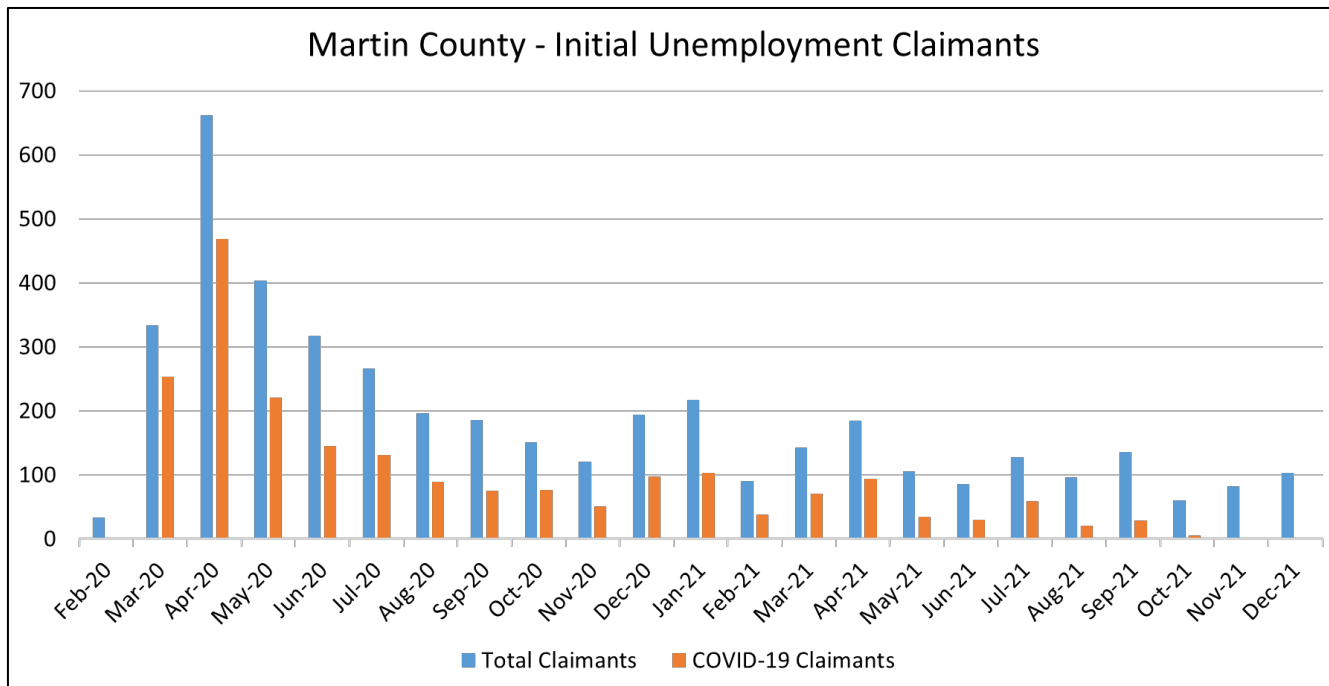


Figure C-17: Martin County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

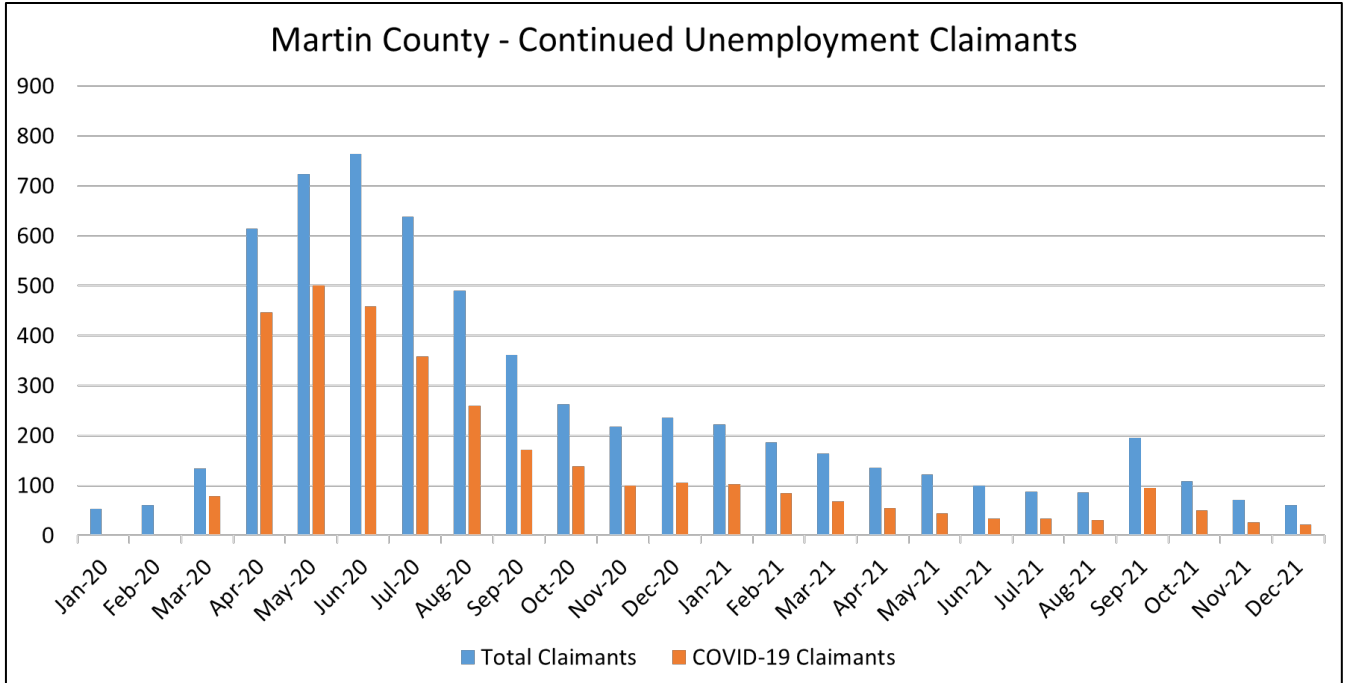


Figure C-18: Martin County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Pitt County spiked from March – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the increase in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in May – June 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants and continued unemployment claimants in Pitt County has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-19 shows initial unemployment claimants in Pitt County and Figure C-20 shows continued unemployment claimants in Pitt County.

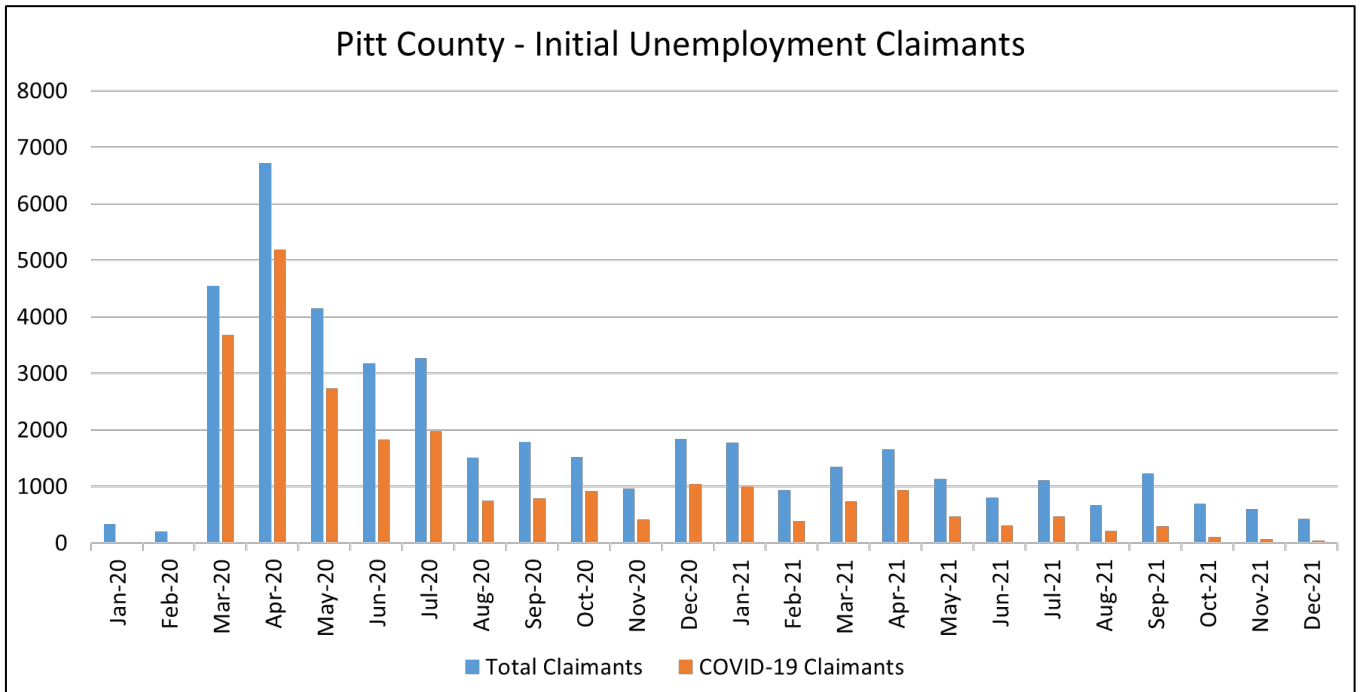


Figure C-19: Pitt County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)



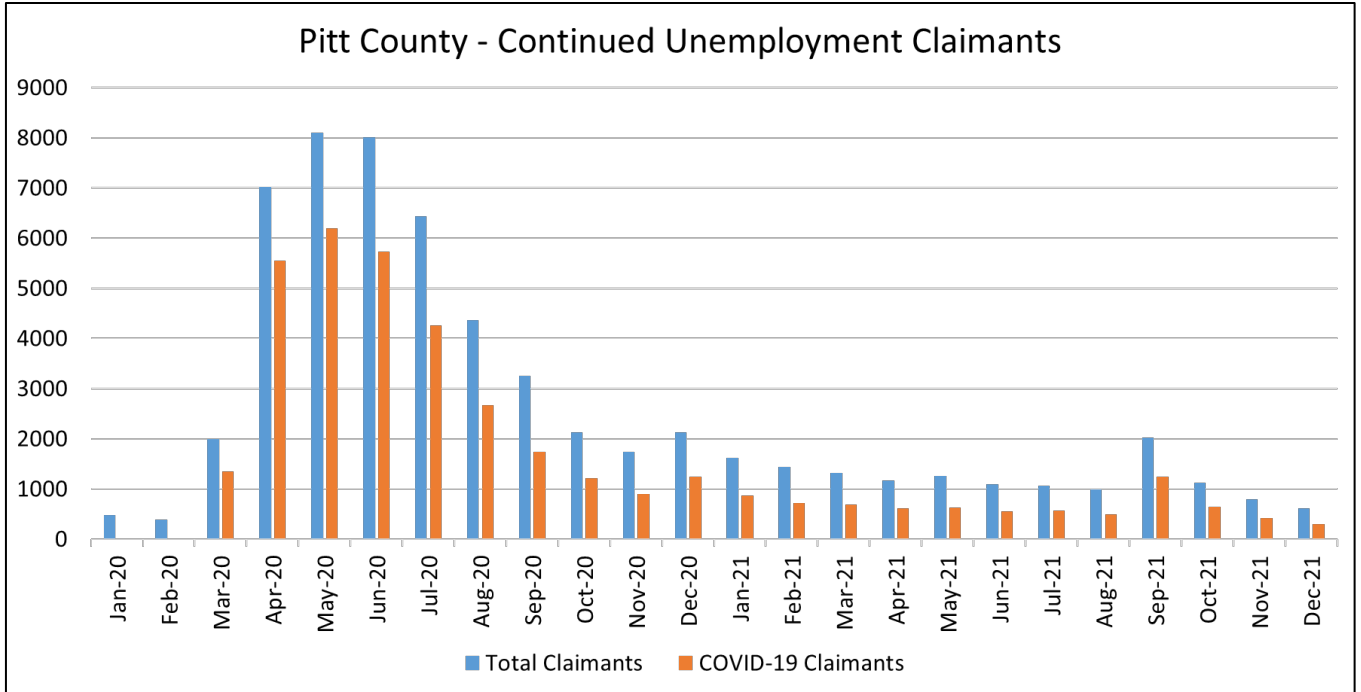


Figure C-20: Pitt County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

## Employment by Industry

Employment by industry in the Mid-East Region was affected by the pandemic. From January 2020 – June 2020, seven industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; arts, entertainment and recreation; educational services; management of companies and enterprises; other services (except public administration); professional, scientific and technical services; and wholesale trade.

From June 2020 – June 2021, accommodations and food services recovered about half the number of jobs lost. There was no data on arts, entertainment and recreation for the period. Educational services recovered less than half of the jobs lost. Management of companies and enterprises continued to lose jobs. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs that were lost. Professional, scientific and technical services showed growth, recovering more jobs than were lost. Wholesale trade also showed growth, recovering more jobs than were lost.

The only industry that grew by more than 5% in both the January 2020 – June 2020 and June 2020 – June 2021 period was transportation and warehousing. Data was not available for the construction, information, manufacturing, and utilities industries.

Figure C-21 shows employment by industry for the Mid-East Region for both periods. Figure C-22 shows the percent change in employment by industry for the Mid-East Region from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-23 shows the percent change in employment by industry for the Mid-East Region from June 2020 – June 2021.

Mid-East Region: Employment by Industry						
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,917	1,997	4.17%	1,794	-10.17%
21	Mining	39	41	5.13%	32	-21.95%
22	Utilities	data missing	data missing	data missing	689	data missing
23	Construction	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
31	Manufacturing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
42	Wholesale Trade	2,826	2,543	-10.01%	3,224	26.78%
44	Retail Trade	14,316	13,847	-3.28%	14,398	3.98%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1,957	2,082	6.39%	2,235	7.35%
51	Information	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
52	Finance and Insurance	2,130	2,093	-1.74%	2,165	3.44%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,128	1,161	2.93%	1,253	7.92%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,372	2,244	-5.40%	2,572	14.62%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,012	877	-13.34%	802	-8.55%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,677	6,587	-1.35%	7,305	10.90%
61	Educational Services	15,167	12,998	-14.30%	13,770	5.94%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	24,105	23,386	-2.98%	23,259	-0.54%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	770	718	-6.75%	data missing	data missing
72	Accommodation and Food Services	12,052	9,695	-19.56%	10,595	9.28%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,243	2,067	-7.85%	2,241	8.42%
92	Public Administration	6,490	6,380	-1.69%	6,309	-1.11%

Figure C-21: Mid-East Region Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

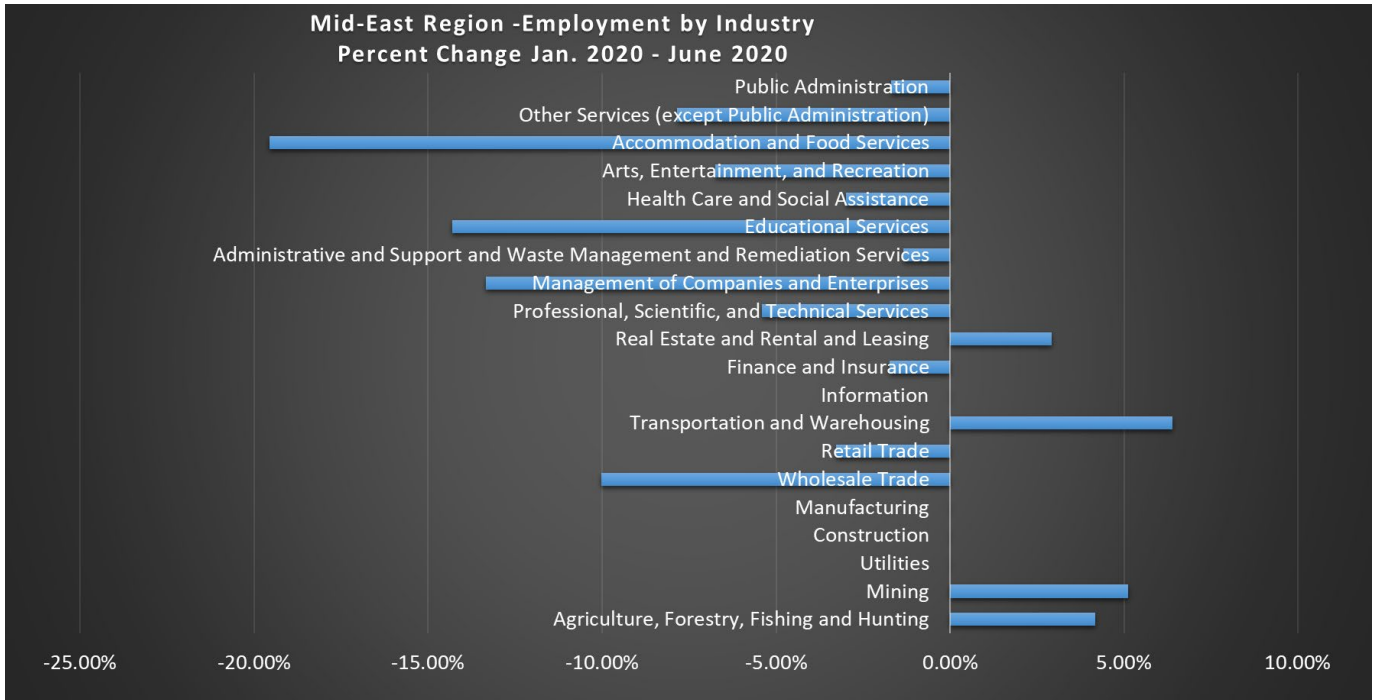


Figure C-22: Mid-East Region Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

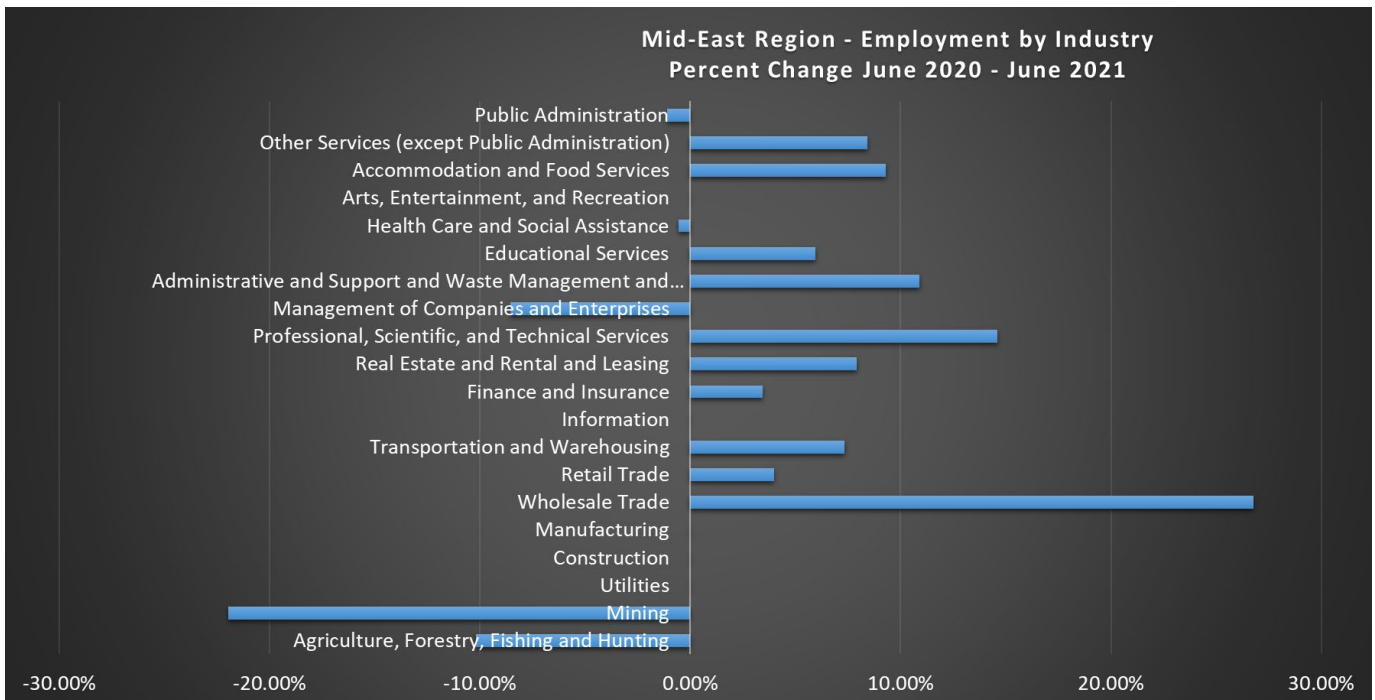


Figure C-23: Mid-East Region Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Beaufort County, five industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; educational services; healthcare and social assistance; management of companies and enterprises; and other services (except public administration).

From June 2020 – June 2021, accommodations and food services recovered the jobs lost. Educational services recovered about half of the jobs lost. Healthcare and social assistance recovered less than half of the jobs lost. Management of companies and enterprises continued to lose jobs. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs lost.

The only industry in Beaufort County that grew by more than 5% in both periods was arts, entertainment, and recreation. While this industry lost jobs in most areas, jobs grew in Beaufort County. The highest job growth occurred in wholesale trade, which grew by over 30%. The highest loss was in management of companies and enterprises, in which over half of jobs were lost.

Data was not available for the construction, information, mining, and utilities industries. Figure C-24 shows employment by industry for Beaufort County for both periods. Figure C-25 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Beaufort County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-26 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Beaufort County from June 2020 – June 2021.

Beaufort County - Employment by Industry						
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	654	650	-0.61%	*	data missing
21	Mining	*	*	data missing	*	data missing
22	Utilities	*	*	data missing	*	data missing
23	Construction	*	*	data missing	712	data missing
31	Manufacturing	1,994	2,030	1.81%	2,136	5.22%
42	Wholesale Trade	965	996	3.21%	1,329	33.43%
44	Retail Trade	2,118	2,260	6.70%	2,175	-3.76%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	399	419	5.01%	433	3.34%
51	Information	*	*	data missing	*	data missing
52	Finance and Insurance	354	340	-3.95%	329	-3.24%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	109	110	0.92%	113	2.73%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	302	303	0.33%	361	19.14%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	161	79	-50.93%	74	-6.33%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,136	1,359	19.63%	1,306	-3.90%
61	Educational Services	1,469	1,288	-12.32%	1,359	5.51%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,038	1,890	-7.26%	1,941	2.70%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	132	155	17.42%	175	12.90%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,415	1,258	-11.10%	1,407	11.84%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	326	307	-5.83%	325	5.86%
92	Public Administration	1,166	1,176	0.86%	1,146	-2.55%

Figure C-24: Beaufort County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

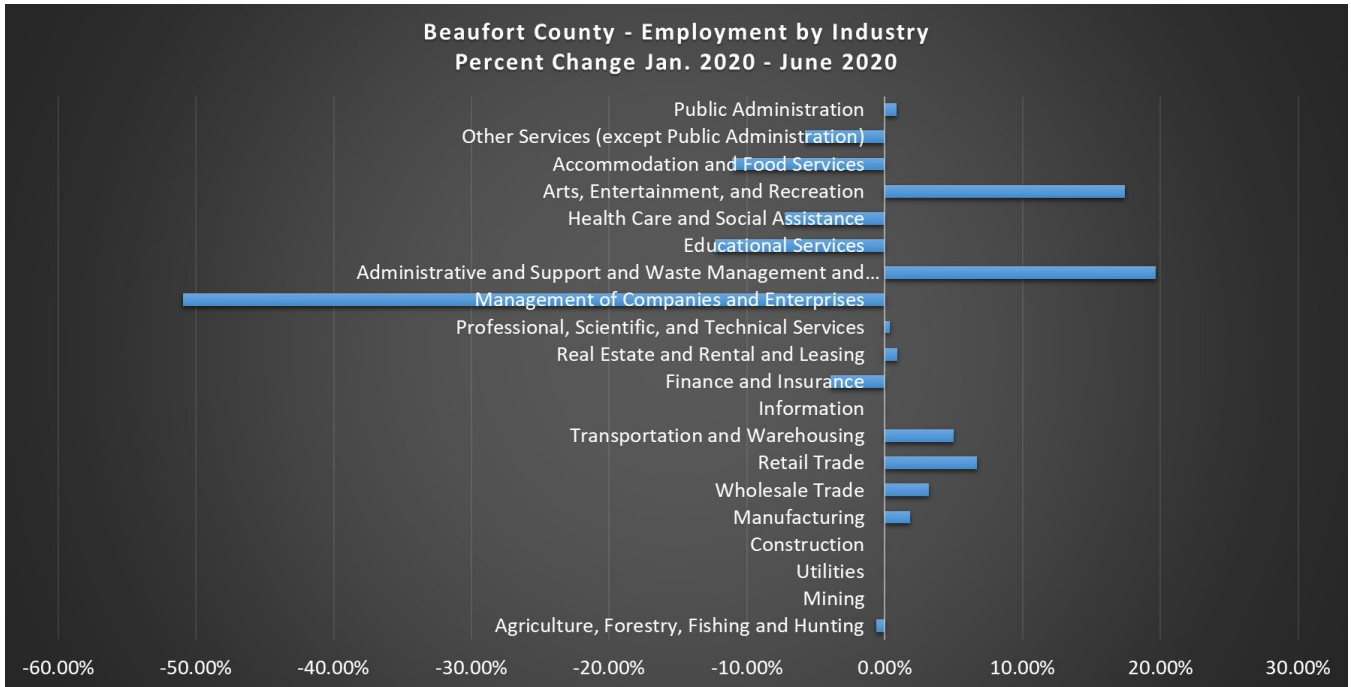


Figure C-25: Beaufort County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

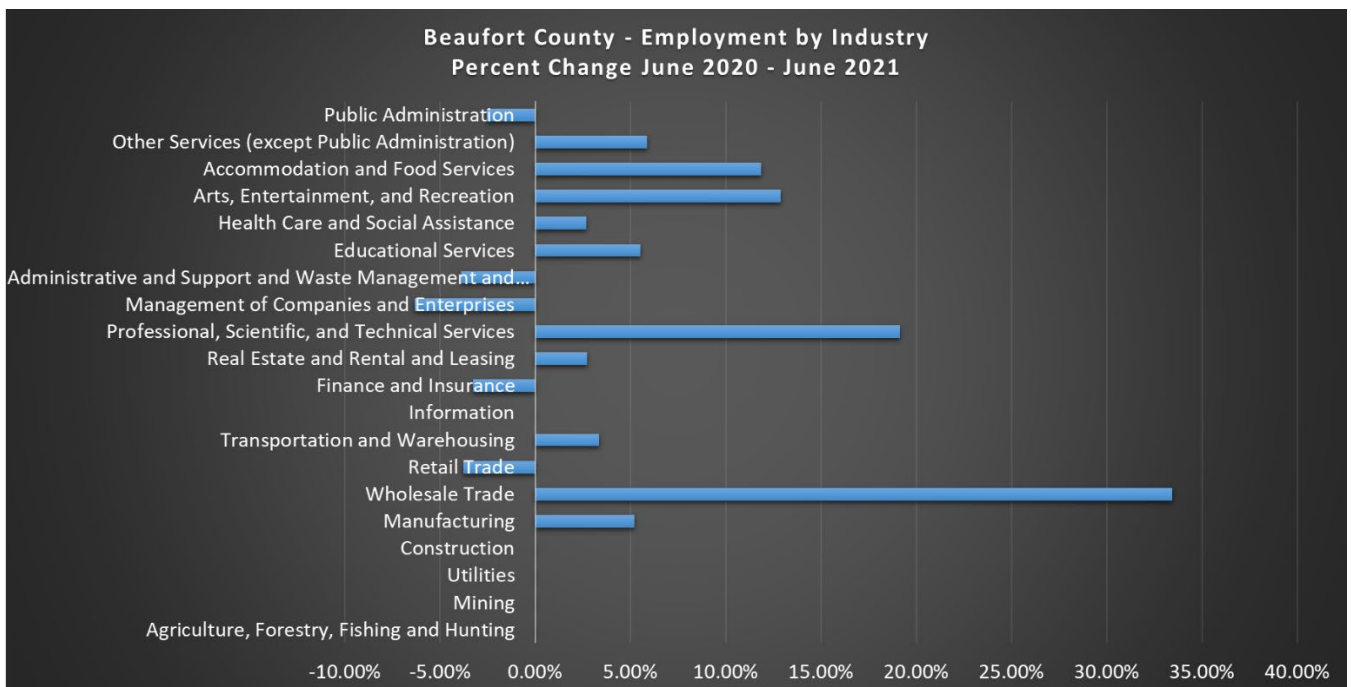


Figure C-26: Beaufort County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Bertie County, four industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: arts, entertainment and recreation; healthcare and social assistance; information; and other services (except public administration).

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Bertie County, arts, entertainment and recreation continued losing jobs. Healthcare and social assistance did not recover the jobs lost. Information continued losing jobs. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs lost.

The greatest job growth in Bertie County occurred in the construction industry, which grew by over 30%, followed by real estate and rental and leasing, which grew by 25%. The highest loss was in arts, entertainment and recreation, in which over half of jobs were lost.

Data was not available for the educational services, manufacturing, management of companies and enterprises, and mining industries.

Figure C-27 shows employment by industry for Bertie County for both periods. Figure C-28 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Bertie County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-29 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Bertie County from June 2020 – June 2021.

Bertie County - Employment by Industry						
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	289	327	13.15%	309	-5.50%
21	Mining	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
23	Construction	27	37	37.04%	missing	data missing
31	Manufacturing	data missing	data missing		data missing	data missing
42	Wholesale Trade	59	58	-1.69%	59	1.72%
44	Retail Trade	268	263	-1.87%	279	6.08%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	138	144	4.35%	141	-2.08%
51	Information	12	11	-8.33%	10	-9.09%
52	Finance and Insurance	59	58	-1.69%	50	-13.79%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4	5	25.00%	5	0.00%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	30	33	10.00%	30	-9.09%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	241	245	1.66%	290	18.37%
61	Educational Services	data missing	data missing	data missing	missing	data missing
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	715	638	-10.77%	648	1.57%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	54	50	-7.41%	24	-52.00%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	226	215	-4.87%	182	-15.35%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	67	60	-10.45%	68	13.33%
92	Public Administration	832	803	-3.49%	801	-0.25%

Figure C-27: Bertie County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)



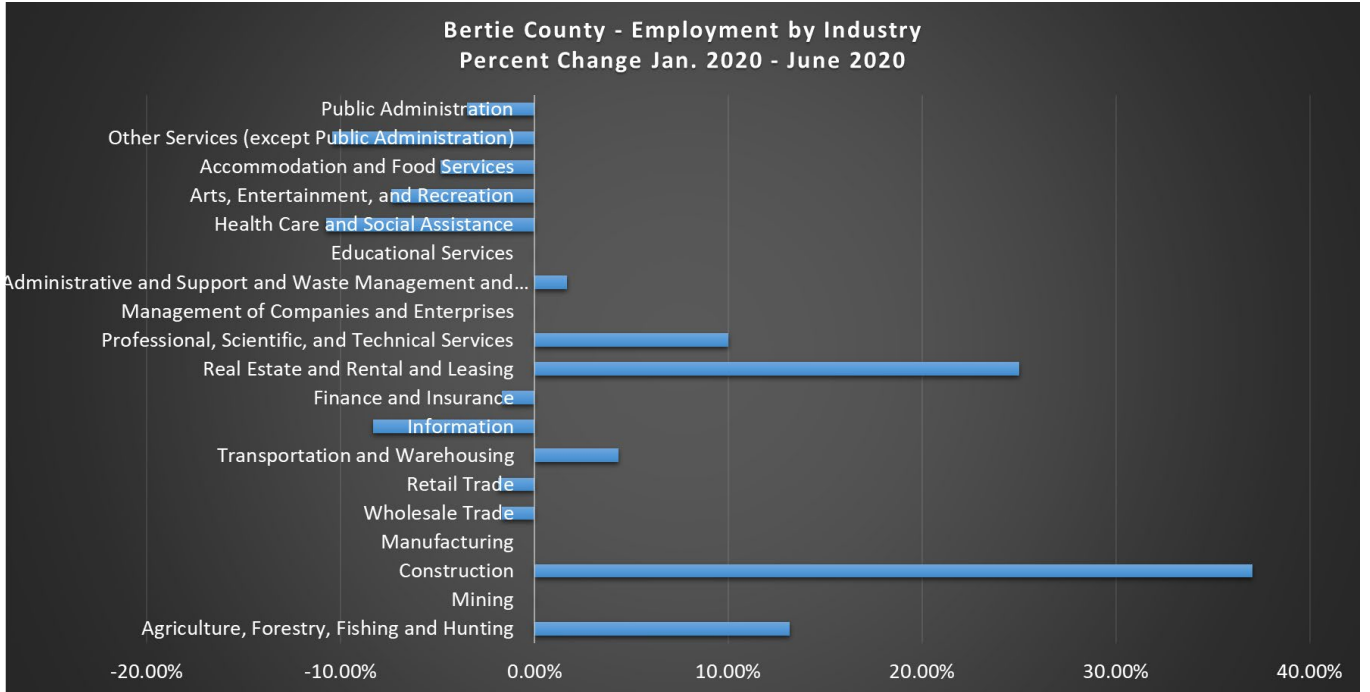


Figure C-28: Bertie County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

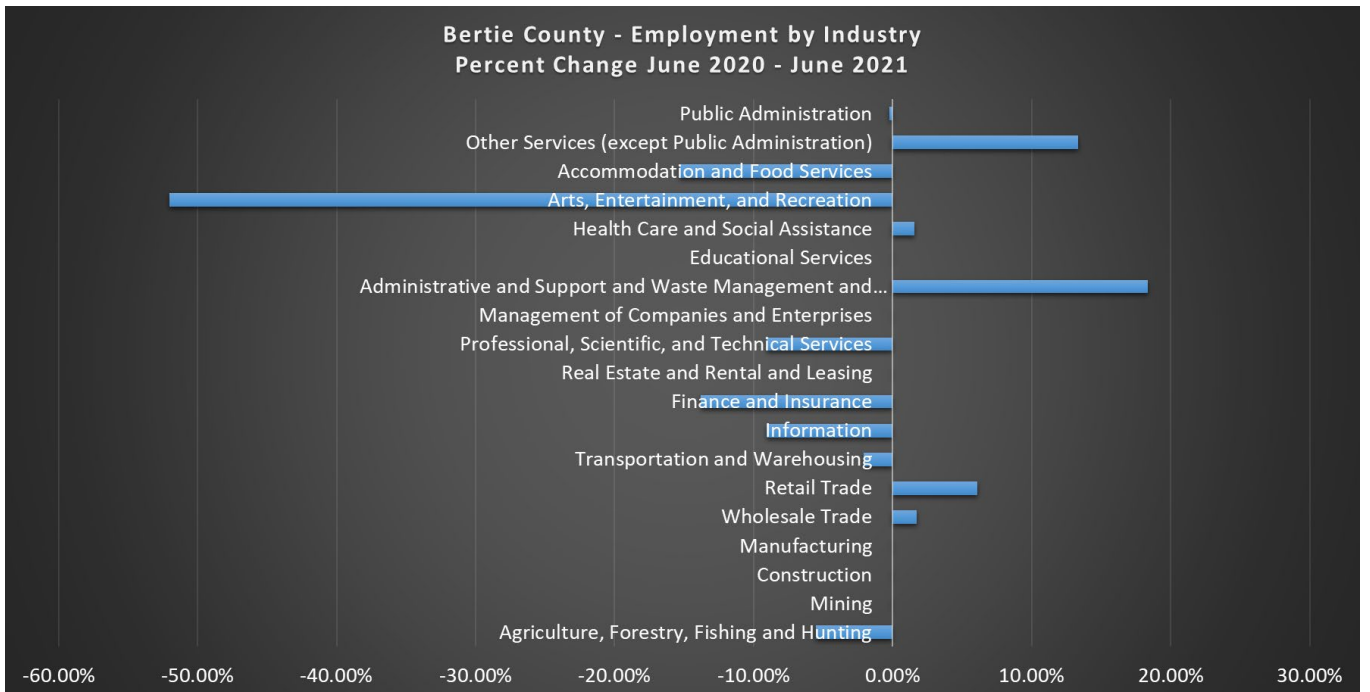


Figure C-29: Bertie County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)



From January 2020 – June 2020 in Hertford County, seven industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; construction; educational services; healthcare and social assistance; information; public administration; and wholesale trade.

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Hertford County, accommodations and food services did not recover the jobs lost. Construction continued to lose jobs. Educational services recovered less than half of the jobs lost. Healthcare and social assistance recovered about half of the jobs lost. Information recovered about half of the jobs lost. Public administration did not recover the jobs lost. Wholesale trade did not recover the jobs lost.

The greatest job growth in Hertford County occurred in the transportation and warehousing industry, which grew by over 20%. The highest loss was in administrative and support and waste management, in which over 70% of jobs were lost from June 2020 – June 2021.

Data was not available for the arts, entertainment and recreation industry and the management of companies and enterprises industry.

Figure C-30 shows employment by industry for Hertford County for both periods. Figure C-31 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Hertford County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-32 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Hertford County from June 2020 – June 2021.

Hertford County - Employment by Industry						
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	176	186	5.68%	169	-9.14%
22	Utilities	96	99	3.13%	99	0.00%
23	Construction	373	339	-9.12%	316	-6.78%
31	Manufacturing	946	974	2.96%	941	-3.39%
42	Wholesale Trade	263	249	-5.32%	247	-0.80%
44	Retail Trade	1,513	1,488	-1.65%	1,503	1.01%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	196	189	-3.57%	236	24.87%
51	Information	34	29	-14.71%	31	6.90%
52	Finance and Insurance	160	162	1.25%	161	-0.62%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	83	81	-2.41%	85	4.94%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	64	65	1.56%	71	9.23%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	426	432	1.41%	104	-75.93%
61	Educational Services	959	764	-20.33%	818	7.07%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,342	2,182	-6.83%	2,259	3.53%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
72	Accommodation and Food Services	677	541	-20.09%	562	3.88%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	230	233	1.30%	182	-21.89%
92	Public Administration	597	524	-12.23%	538	2.67%

Figure C-30: Hertford County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

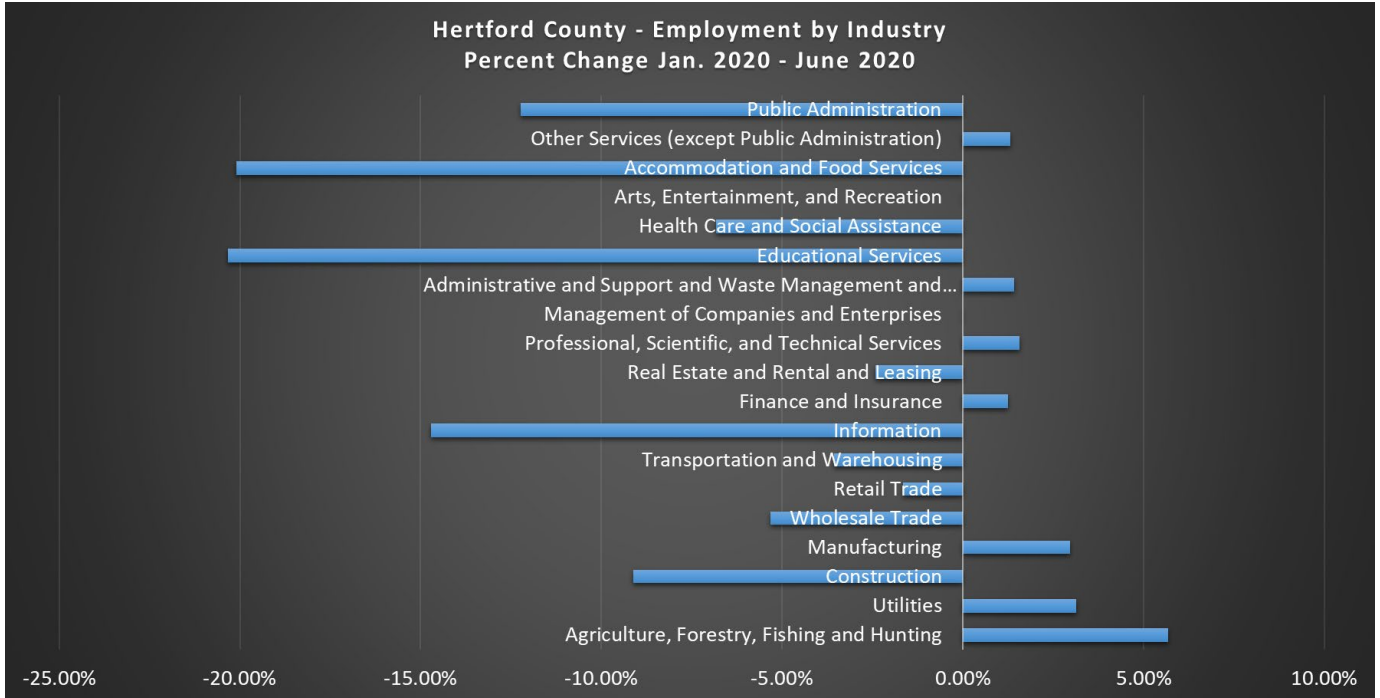


Figure C-31: Hertford County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

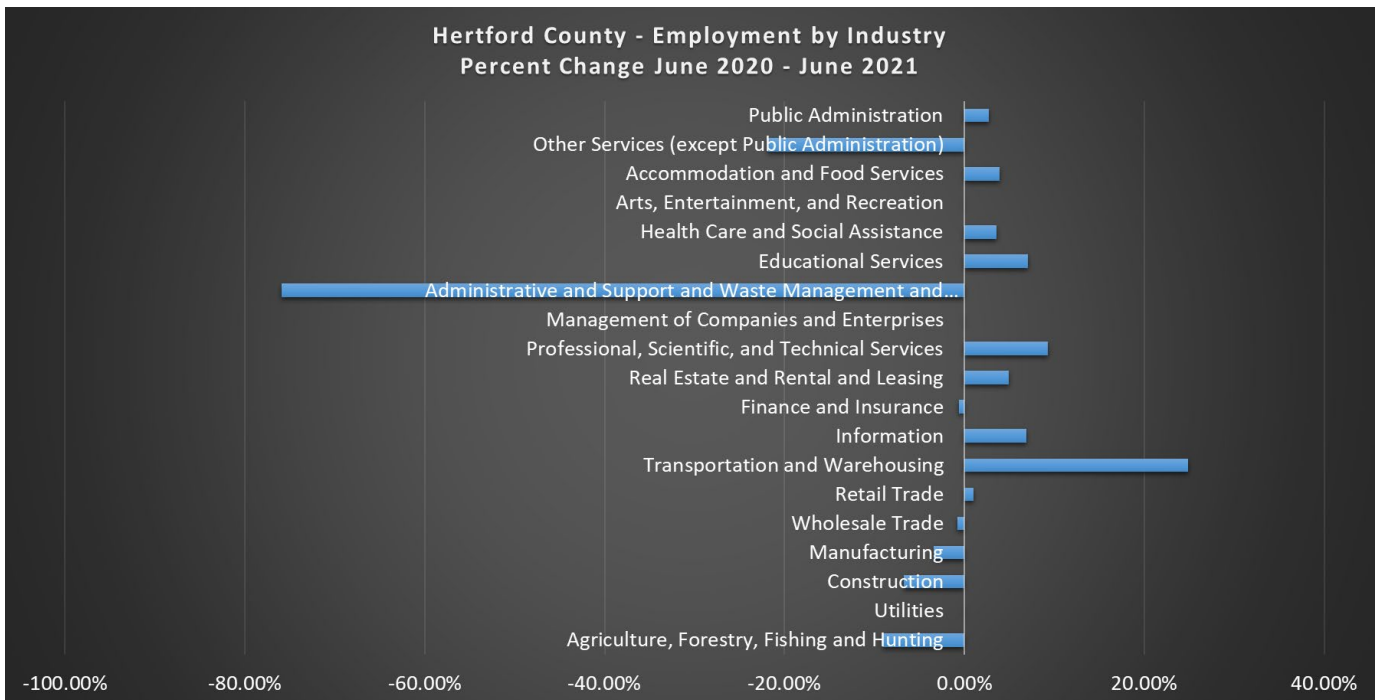


Figure C-32: Hertford County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Martin County, seven industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; administrative and support and waste management; information; other services (except public administration); professional, scientific and technical services; real estate and rental and leasing; and wholesale trade.

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Martin County, accommodations and food services recovered the jobs lost. Administrative and support and waste management lost additional jobs. Information recovered over half of the jobs lost. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs lost. Professional, scientific and technical services gained all jobs back plus added additional jobs, showing growth. Real estate and rental and leasing lost additional jobs. Wholesale trade lost additional jobs.

The greatest job growth in Martin County occurred in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, which grew by about 25%. The highest loss was in wholesale trade, in which over 40% of jobs were lost.

Data was not available for the arts entertainment and recreation; educational services; management of companies and enterprises; and utilities industries.

Figure C-33 shows employment by industry for Martin County for both periods. Figure C-34 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Martin County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-35 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Martin County from June 2020 – June 2021.

Martin County Employment by Industry						
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	290	285	-1.72%	277	-2.81%
22	Utilities	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
23	Construction	219	216	-1.37%	206	-4.63%
31	Manufacturing	703	711	1.14%	683	-3.94%
42	Wholesale Trade	165	131	-20.61%	101	-22.90%
44	Retail Trade	1,020	1,046	2.55%	1,020	-2.49%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	111	115	3.60%	113	-1.74%
51	Information	72	57	-20.83%	65	14.04%
52	Finance and Insurance	148	148	0.00%	137	-7.43%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32	29	-9.38%	28	-3.45%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	141	105	-25.53%	158	50.48%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	103	86	-16.50%	84	-2.33%
61	Educational Services	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,047	1,003	-4.20%	988	-1.50%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	data missing	data missing	data missing	30	data missing
72	Accommodation and Food Services	740	641	-13.38%	716	11.70%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	123	109	-11.38%	126	15.60%
92	Public Administration	643	639	-0.62%	628	-1.72%

Figure C-33: Martin County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

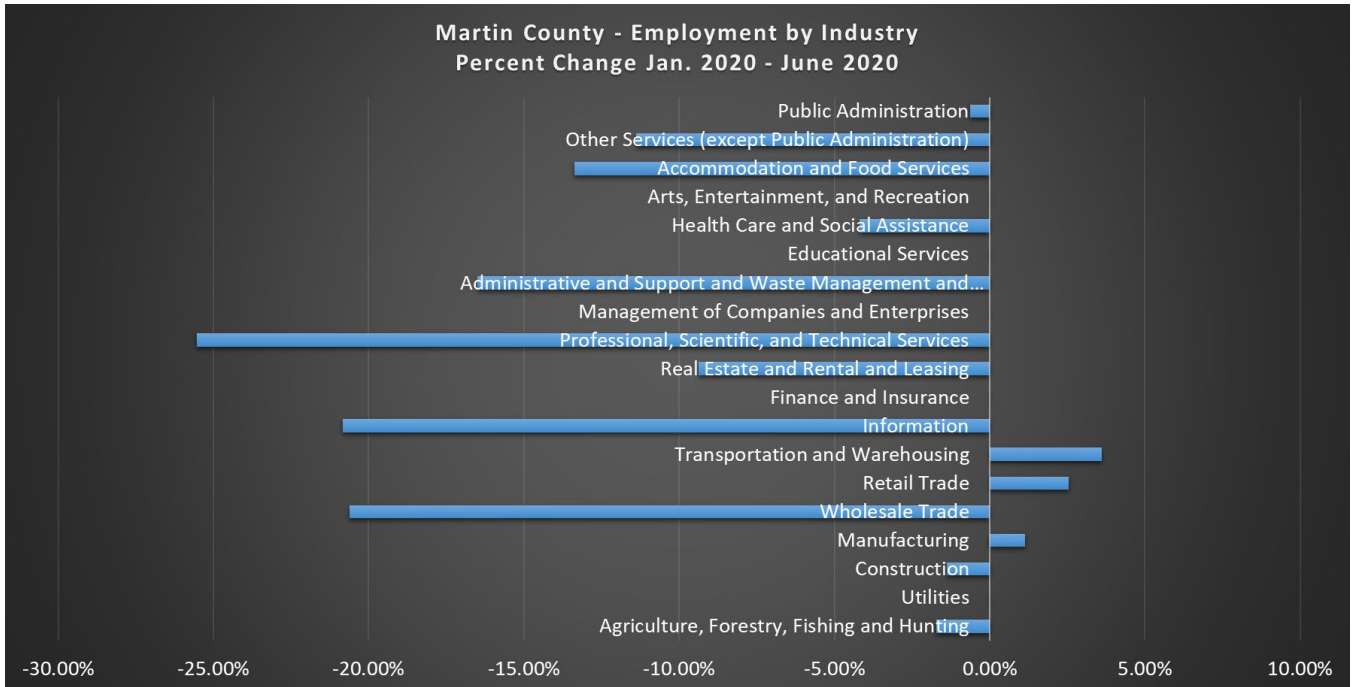


Figure C-34: Martin County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

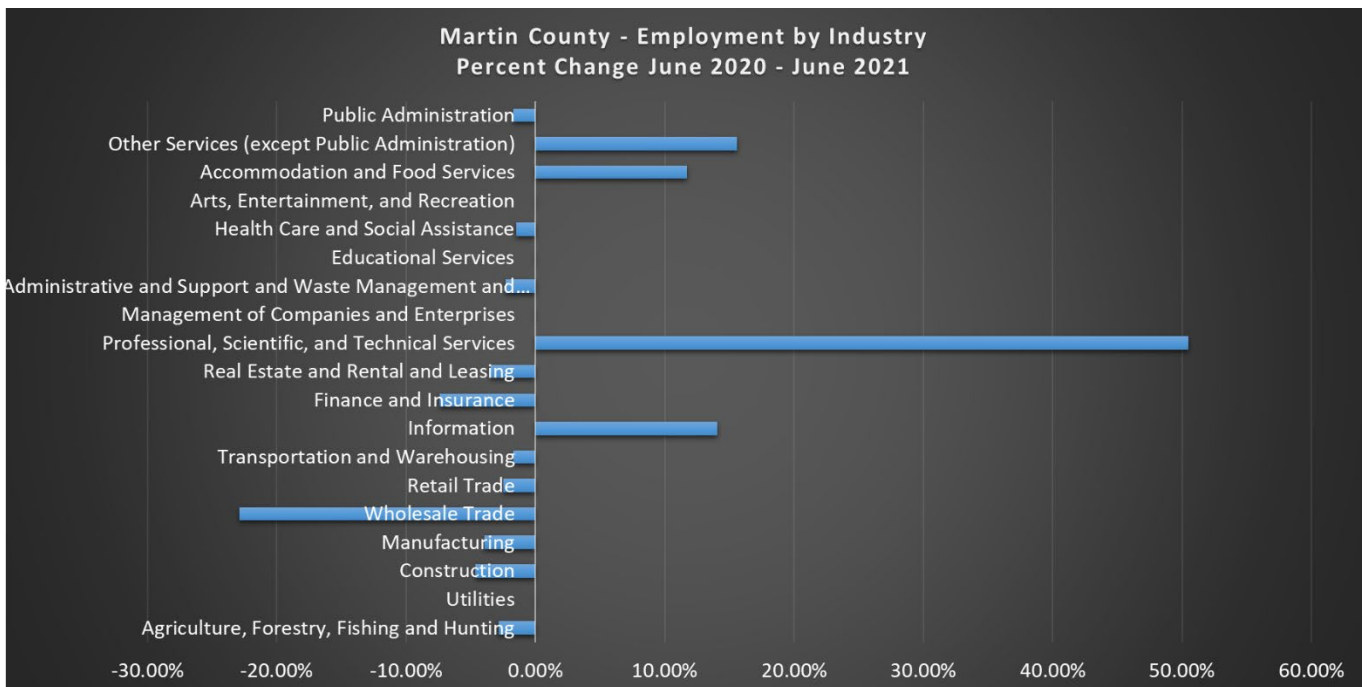


Figure C-35: Martin County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Pitt County, four industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; arts, entertainment and recreation; information; and management of companies and enterprises.

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Pitt County, accommodations and food services did not recover the jobs lost. Arts, entertainment and recreation gained all jobs back plus added additional jobs, showing growth. Information recovered the jobs lost.

Management of companies and enterprises recovered less than half of the jobs lost. The greatest job growth in Pitt County occurred in arts, entertainment and recreation, which grew by over 25%. While this industry lost jobs in most areas, jobs grew in Pitt County. The highest losses were in the accommodations and food services industry and the management of companies and enterprises industry, which each lost about 13% of jobs.

Data was not available for the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry and the mining industry.

Figure C-36 shows employment by industry for Pitt County for both periods. Figure C-37 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Pitt County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-38 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Pitt County from June 2020 – June 2021.

Pitt County Employment by Industry						
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	508	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
21	Mining	33	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
22	Utilities	565	557	-1.42%	554	-0.54%
23	Construction	3,375	3,273	-3.02%	3,663	11.92%
31	Manufacturing	6,633	6,453	-2.71%	6,668	3.33%
42	Wholesale Trade	1,374	1,367	-0.51%	1,488	8.85%
44	Retail Trade	9,397	9,162	-2.50%	9,421	2.83%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1,113	1,220	9.61%	1,312	7.54%
51	Information	652	540	-17.18%	658	21.85%
52	Finance and Insurance	1,409	1,471	4.40%	1,488	1.16%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	900	925	2.78%	1,022	10.49%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,835	1,757	-4.25%	1,952	11.10%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	833	744	-10.68%	718	-3.49%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,771	5,249	10.02%	5,521	5.18%
61	Educational Services	11,459	10,983	-4.15%	10,457	-4.79%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	17,963	17,547	-2.32%	17,423	-0.71%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	541	437	-19.22%	682	56.06%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	8,994	7,751	-13.82%	7,728	-0.30%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,497	1,491	-0.40%	1,540	3.29%
92	Public Administration	3,252	3,364	3.44%	3,196	-4.99%

Figure C-36: Pitt County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)



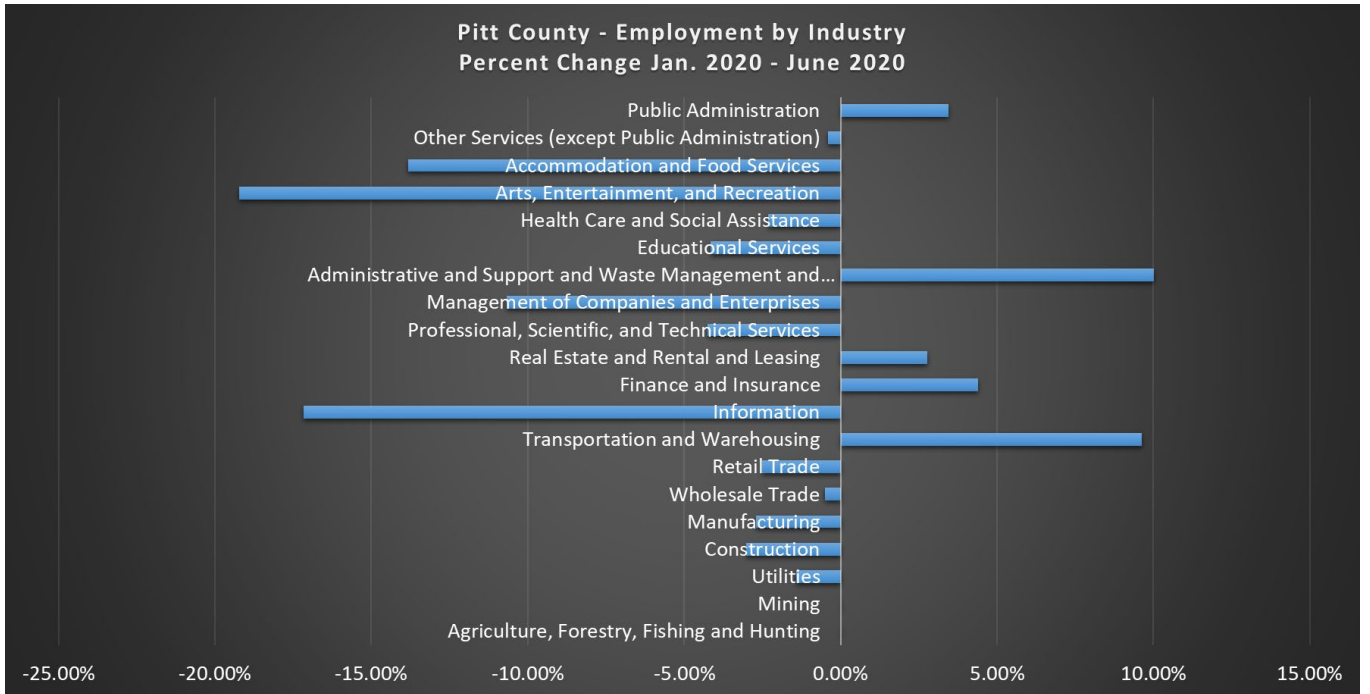


Figure C-37: Pitt County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020  
 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

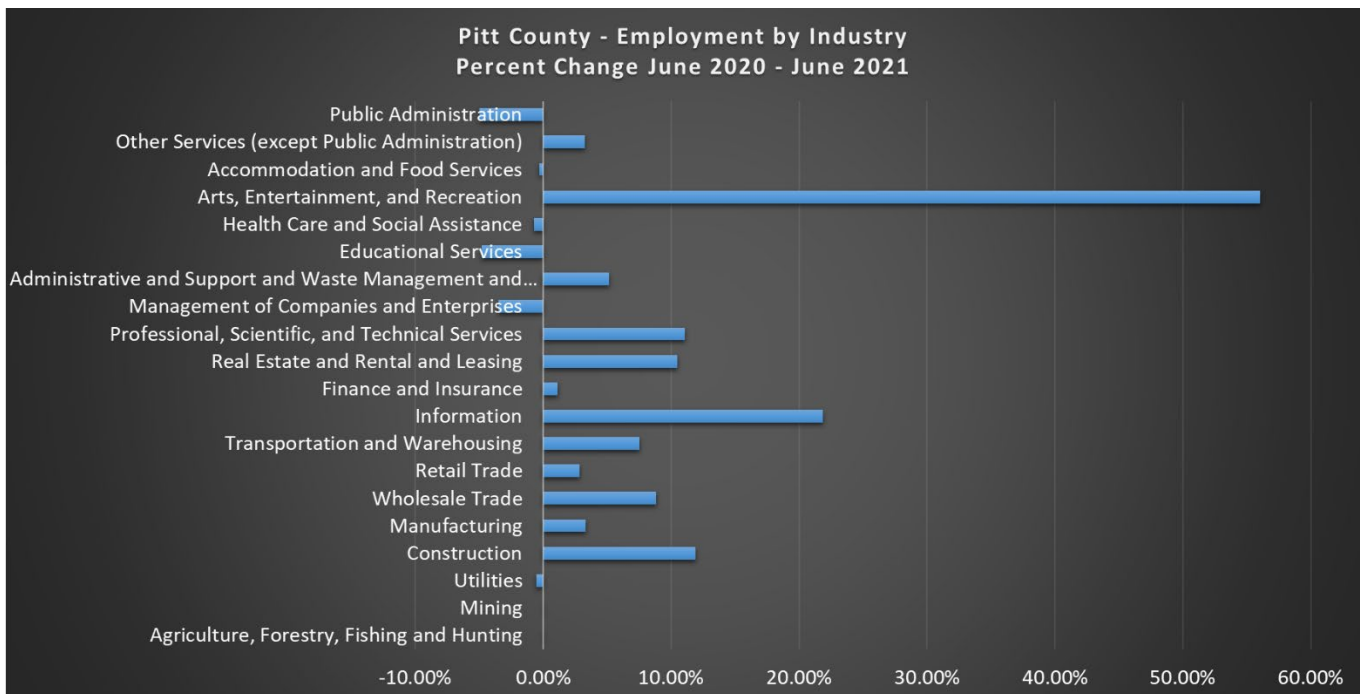


Figure C-38: Pitt County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021  
 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)



## Financial Impact of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as a direct allocation to states, counties, and metropolitan areas. Allocations to non-entitlement units of local governments (municipalities serving populations under 50,000) were distributed through the state and the local government had to apply to receive funds.

The Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund provided \$195.3 billion to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Of this amount, the Act required \$25.5 billion to be allocated equally to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The remaining \$169 billion was distributed based on the average estimated number of seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals, using the latest data available U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

The Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund provided \$65.1 billion to counties. The Act required that these funds be allocated based on each county's population share of the total population of all counties, using the latest available population data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Within the categories of eligible uses, recipients have broad flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet the needs of their communities. Recipients may use Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to:

- Support public health expenditures, by funding COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff;
- Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector;
- Replace lost public sector revenue, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic;
- Provide premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support to those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors; and,
- Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet.\*

\*Expenditures must comply with federal and state law, which may have additional restrictions on types of spending, such as municipal or county spending on broadband internet.

Unfortunately, many smaller and rural units of local government with limited staff capacity have struggled with the reporting requirements required to spend ARPA funds. Figure C-39 shows the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds distributed in the Mid-East Region.

<b>Cornavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>
Beaufort County allocation	\$9,128,034.00
Bertie County allocation	\$3,680,233.00
Hertford County allocation	\$4,598,980.00
Martin County allocation	\$4,358,707.00
Pitt County allocation	\$35,107,015.00
City of Greenville allocation	\$24,689,311.00
Mid-East Region total direct allocation	\$81,562,280.00
NC allocation for non-entitlement units of government	\$705,384,207.00
State of North Carolina allocation	\$5,439,309,692.20

Figure C-39: Mid-East Region Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Source: US Dept. of the Treasury)

## Disaster and Public Health Response Plans

Existing disaster and public health response plans for the Mid-East Region include a Community Health Needs Assessment and an Emergency Operations Plan for each county. Some municipalities have their own Emergency Operations plans, as well. Most Emergency Operations Plans have been updated post-pandemic in the region, while most Community Health Needs Assessments have not. There should be an assessment of these local plans to determine where pandemic response updates are needed.

- Beaufort County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019
- Beaufort County Emergency Operations Plan, 2016
- Bertie County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2018
- Bertie County Emergency Operations Plan, 2020
- Hertford County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2018
- Hertford County Emergency Operations Plan, 2021
- Martin County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2018
- Martin County Emergency Operations Plan, 2021
- Pitt County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019
- Pitt County Continuity of Operations Plan, 2021
- Pitt County Emergency Operations Plan, 2021

## Regional Strategic Response

Pandemic recovery strategies were developed in partnership with the CEDS Advisory Committee and are organized under the four overarching goals of the Mid-East Region CEDS: Business Recruitment, Retention and Marketing; Physical Infrastructure; Healthy and Safe Communities; and Small Business and Workforce Development.

### Goal 1: Business Recruitment, Retention & Marketing Pandemic Recovery Strategies

- It is vital for economic development organizations, small business centers, local governments, and others involved in business recruitment and retention to get back to meeting with businesses in person. Virtual meetings should also be available depending on the business' needs.
- Develop and maintain a toolkit to provide support to partner organizations in adaptive capabilities and implementation of new technologies. Provide workshops on use of the toolkit as needed.
- Start a regular regional economic recovery call to support county economic recovery calls, business and industry roundtables, and other local collaborations geared toward business retention and economic recovery. Use the call as a regional forum to learn and share success stories.
- Conduct a Regional Supply Chain Study to identify specific supply chain issues facing local businesses. Research and determine strategies that establish a more reliable and resilient supply chain, including an analysis of where manufacturers within the region can potentially fill gaps.
- Conduct business marketing campaigns around access to skilled workers and quality of life, including natural resources and ecotourism. Develop marketing niches based on education and workforce training programs available in the region with strong enrollment numbers.
- Develop a remote worker target analysis and an accompanying marketing strategy.
- Support local business retention through shop local marketing campaigns, made in marketing campaigns, etc., building on existing trends and encouraging citizens to continue shopping locally. See the "Made in BOCO" example in Beaufort County and the "Small Business Saturday" example in Williamston/Martin County.
- Reach out to businesses and have partner organizations reach out to businesses to make them aware of ARPA funding and how it applies to them.
- Increase collaboration with business owners through participation on advisory committees, focus groups, industry roundtables, local and regional events, etc.
- Start a quarterly event where we invite businesses and the larger community/public to participate in economic development planning. Trade off hosting county.

### Goal 2: Physical Infrastructure Pandemic Recovery Strategies

- Create a Regional Broadband Taskforce to develop a Regional Broadband Plan and apply for available grant funding for broadband expansion across the region.

- Seek funding to continue deployment of mobile broadband solutions to underserved areas that do not meet definitions under current grant programs in the interim.
- Partner with local governments to provide free public wi-fi at public locations.
- Develop local bicycle plans and pedestrian plans across the region. Develop a regional comprehensive bicycle and greenway plan.
- Assist local governments in applying for grant funds for design/engineering and construction of bicycle, pedestrian and greenway projects.
- Submit bicycle, pedestrian and greenway projects from plans to MPO/RPO for competitive NCDOT funding.
- Tie greenway projects in with the regional East Coast Greenway where possible.
- MPO/RPOs take the lead in creating partnerships to apply for federal grants to fund regional projects that were delayed or cancelled in the STIP.
- MPO/RPO continue working with hardest hit transportation sectors such as public transit and aviation to provide support services and connect with DOT resources.
- Provide at least one workshop for regional infrastructure stakeholders on water and wastewater financing that considers the impacts and financing challenges presented by the pandemic.
- Develop a regional Water Transportation Plan to capitalize on the increase in boaters and paddlers. Connect local water trails via a regional system. Plan for water based public transit, whether publicly or privately operated.
- Enhance the ability to highlight best demonstrated practices across the region.
- Identify key/high priority areas for natural gas service, such as industrial parks and airports. Develop a plan to overcome barriers to natural gas access.
- Advocate for the broader use and expansion of rail. Partner with the NC East Alliance. They have started a workshop on rail and rail development.
- Include renewables and green infrastructure in energy planning.

### Goal 3: Healthy and Safe Communities Pandemic Recovery Strategies

- Work with local governments on reviewing and updating existing plans and policies including Emergency Management, Hazard Mitigation, and other related plans and ordinances to address pandemic mitigation.
- Identify underserved populations most impacted by the pandemic and connect with resources to facilitate health and economic development.
- Assist with educational and informational outreach through partnerships with local, regional and statewide healthcare professionals. Facilitate public forums with experts and provide general guidance to public and member governments.
- Expand implementation of mobile medical units across the region. See the Brody School of Medicine mobile medical unit example and the Martin County mobile medical unit example.
- Develop regional solutions to the lack of mental healthcare and substance abuse rehabilitation facilities. Explore the feasibility of counties combining opioid settlement funds to build a regional treatment center.
- Develop strategies to attract nurses and other medical staff to the region. Explore the feasibility of offering various local incentives. Partner with

community colleges and ECU Brody School of Medicine to reach students prior to graduation.

- Develop Comprehensive Recreation Plans across the region to capitalize on the increase in outdoor recreation activities.
- Continue to assist local governments with PARTF and other grants to fund public parks. Identify all public recreation grant sources and provide assistance with both applications and administration.
- Provide input into regional resilience planning and project identification, such as with the current RISE program sponsored by NCORR.
- Advocate for local input to be considered by Trillium when making funding decisions.
- Provide local governments with assistance on ARPA fund applications and administration.
- Catalog available grant programs and provide local governments with assistance on grant applications and grant administration.
- Conduct an assessment of county Emergency Operations Plans and Community Health Needs Assessments to determine where pandemic response updates are needed.

#### Goal 4: Small Business and Workforce Development Pandemic Recovery Strategies

- Add a Transportation/Logistics career pathway to the NENC Career Pathways program.
- Develop Trades Formers programs in all counties to promote the advanced manufacturing career pathway. See the Pitt County program as an example.
- Develop other local programs to promote career pathways and job opportunities directly to students. See the “Grow Local” program example in Pitt County.
- Resume providing small business and workforce development training programs in person. Offer some programs virtually as needed by the individual business or industry.
- Continue developing mobile solutions to increase participation in workforce training programs and enrollment in educational programs. Meet students at their schools and employees at their workplaces.
- Continue free tuition programs at community colleges as long as financially feasible.
- Small businesses and home based businesses have increased across the region. Develop incubator/coworking spaces to serve small businesses. See Bertie County example at Martin Community College building, done utilizing an existing resource.
- Continue successful virtual hiring/career fair events implemented during the pandemic. Expand the number of in person career fairs across the region.
- Expand on existing community college partnerships with a focus on filtering students directly into jobs. Expand on apprenticeship and internship programs in partnership with local employers.
- Enhance partnerships between community colleges. See the Martin Community College, Roanoke Chowan Community College example, in which students start at MCC and transfer to RCCC for the nursing program.

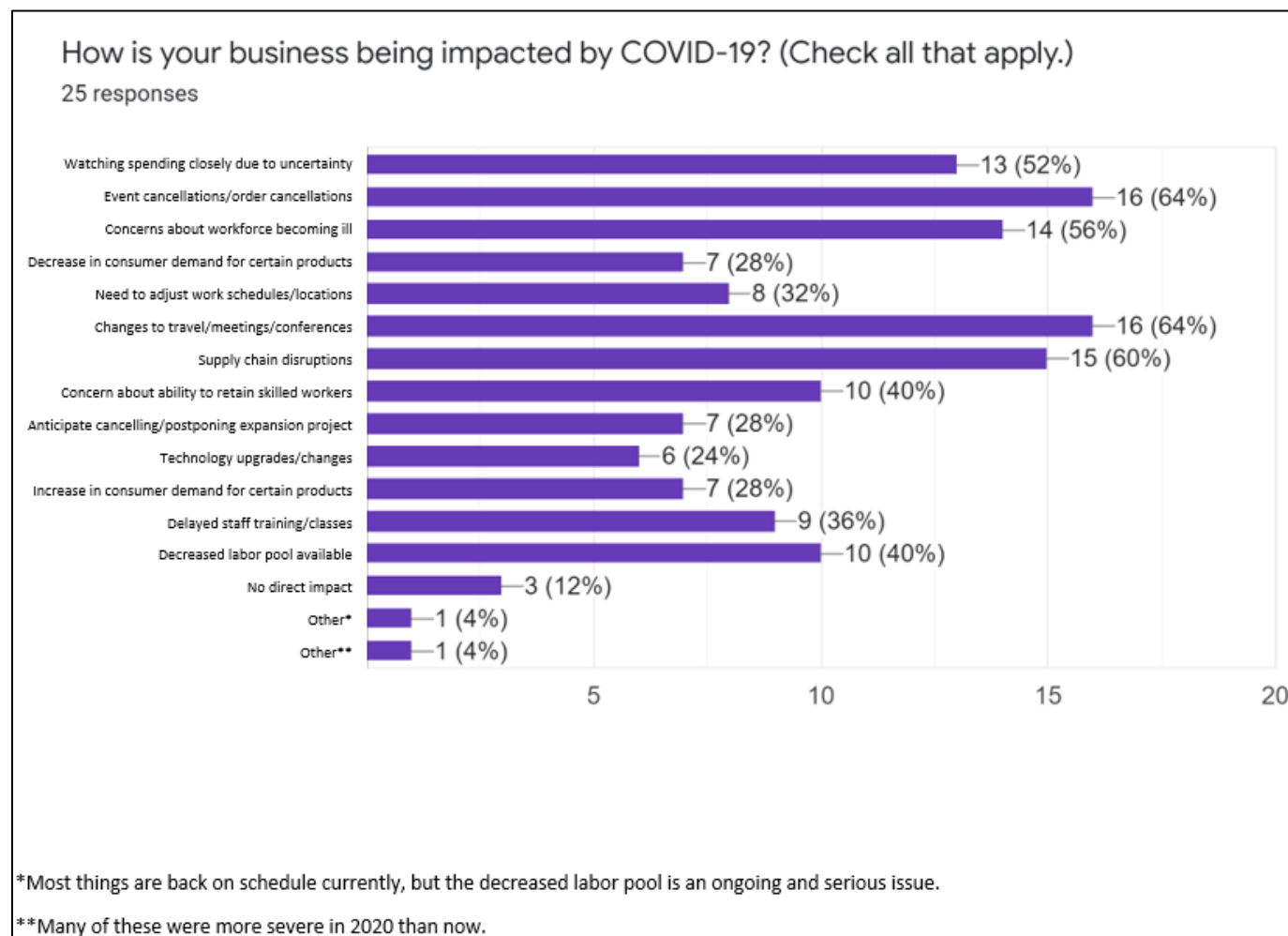
- Increase workforce development presence in high schools and community colleges in order to serve students directly. See the Rivers East Workforce Development Board satellite office example at Martin County Community College.
- Increase outreach to high school students on CTE programs such as SERV Safe.
- Offer employee training on CTE programs at the place of business, such as offering restaurant staff SERV Safe training on site.
- Market programs to students in simple yet memorable ways. See Martin Community College's "Career in a Year" example and Pitt Community College's "Halfway Home" student example.

### General Strategies for All Goals

- Secure implementation funds to ensure that this planning work is turned into action.
- Share Best Demonstrated Practices around highlighted priorities. We can all learn by sharing successes.
- Create a monthly newsletter that briefly highlights opportunities, concerns, and information sharing.

## Pandemic Recovery Addendum Business Input Survey Results

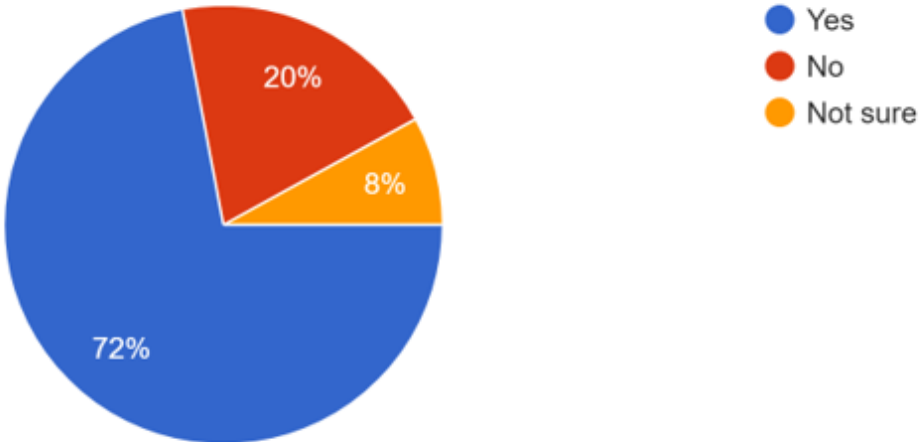
A business input survey was conducted in order to better understand how local businesses have been impacted by COVID-19 and what existing issues and needs businesses have. The survey was advertised both online and via hard copy flyers by local governments and partner organizations across the region. A total of 25 businesses responded to the survey. There was a range of businesses sizes and responses were geographically diverse. The results of the business input survey assisted the CEDS Advisory Committee in developing the pandemic recovery regional response strategies. Results of the business input survey are included below.





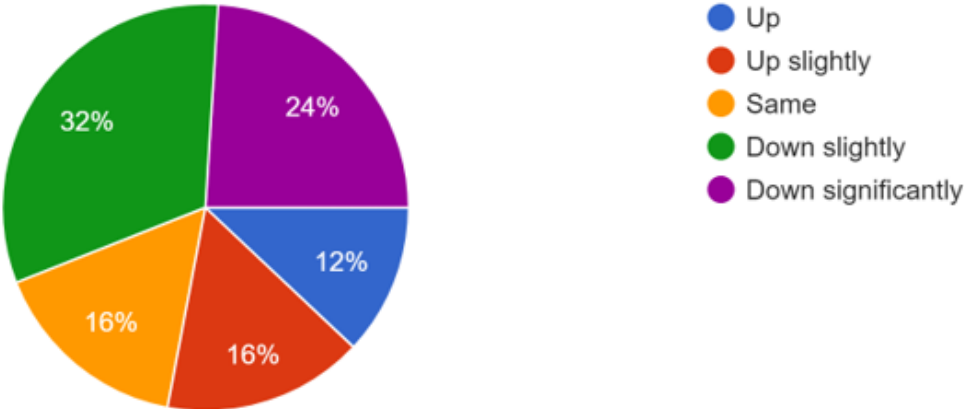
Are you satisfied with vaccination rates of your employees?

25 responses



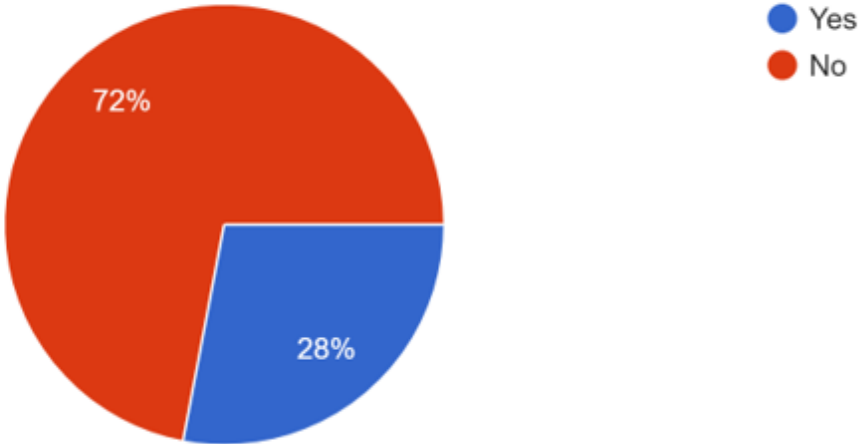
How has your revenue/sales been affected by COVID-19?

25 responses



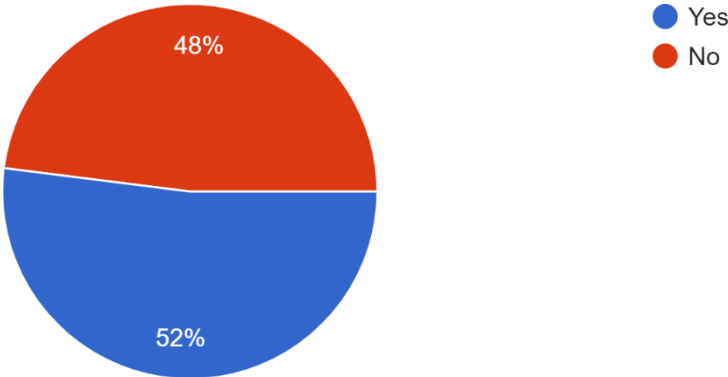
Has your business reduced operational hours, shifts, workdays, or wages?

25 responses



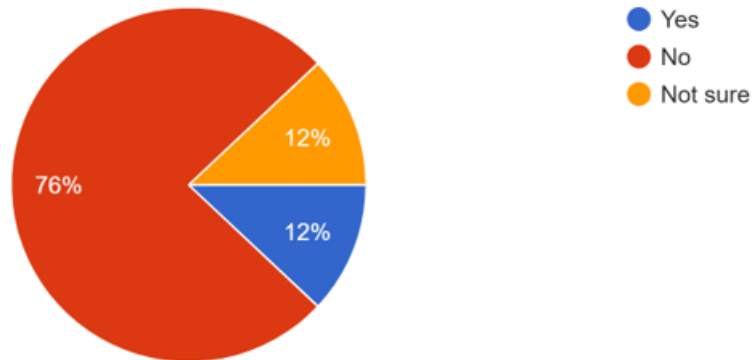
Has your business had to offer incentives or increased wages to attract/retain employees?

25 responses



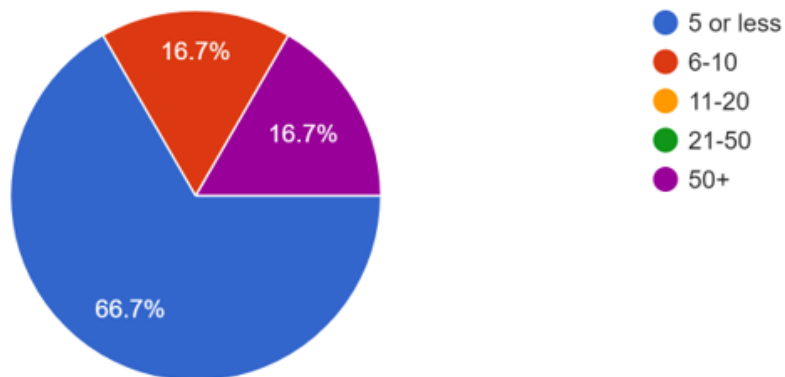
Have you already, or do you expect to, reduce staff or layoff employees as a result of impact from COVID-19?

25 responses



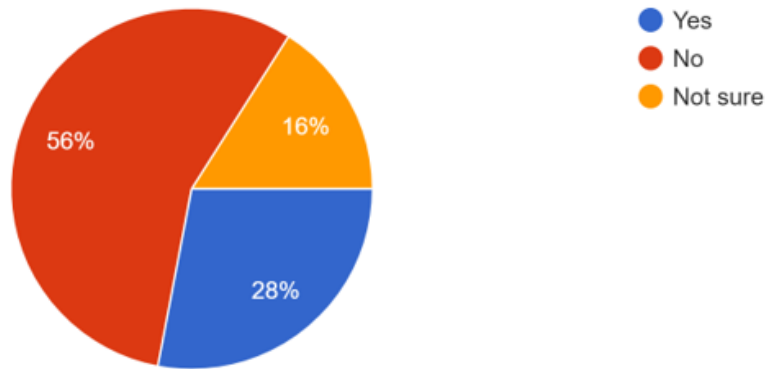
If yes, please estimate the number of employees who have or may be impacted by layoffs.

6 responses



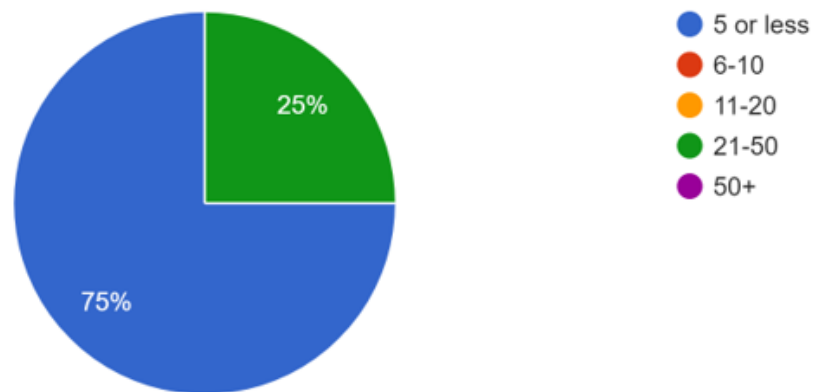
Have you already, or do you expect to, hire additional employees as a result of impact from COVID-19?

25 responses



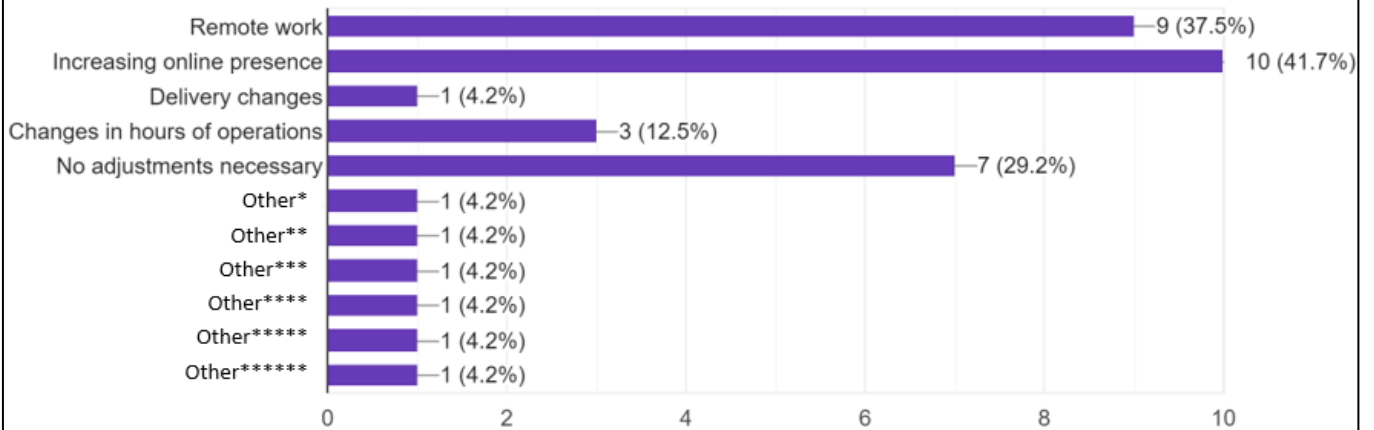
If yes, please estimate the number of additional employees who have or may be hired.

8 responses



### How is your business adjusting operations? (Check all that apply.)

24 responses



\*In construction, you can't not be boots on the ground on worksites.

\*\*Entering buildings by appointment only, cancelling services normally provided.

\*\*\*Changes in services offered, reduced hours and options for F&B

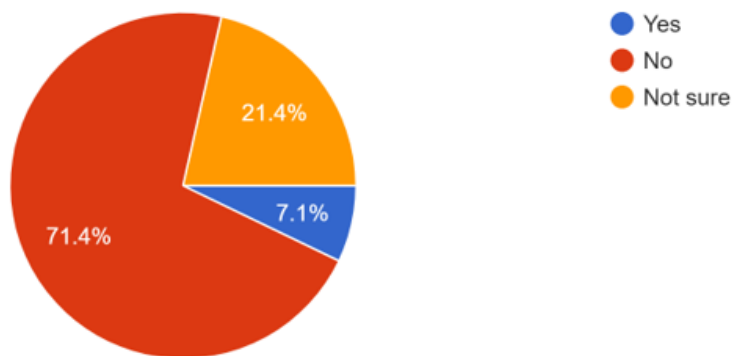
\*\*\*\*Locked doors

\*\*\*\*\*Remote-based, even before pandemic. No change.

\*\*\*\*\*We did those two things in 2020. Not doing them any longer.

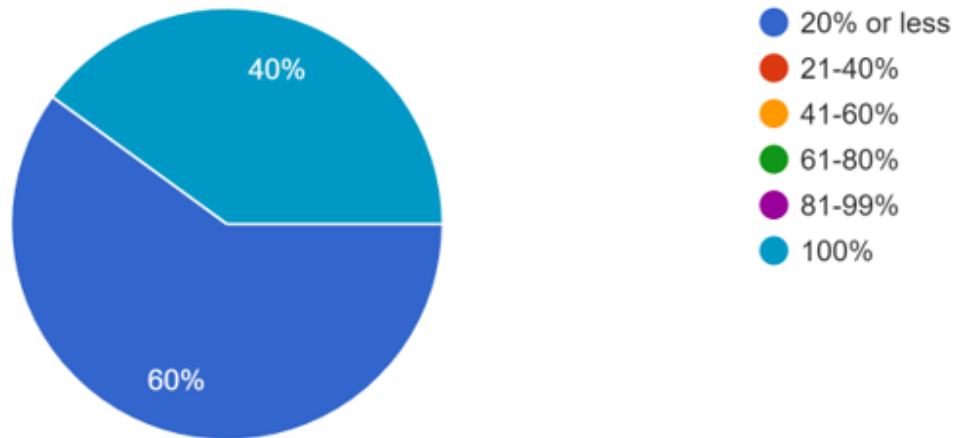
### If your business has switched to remote work due to the pandemic, will remote employees be staying remote?

14 responses



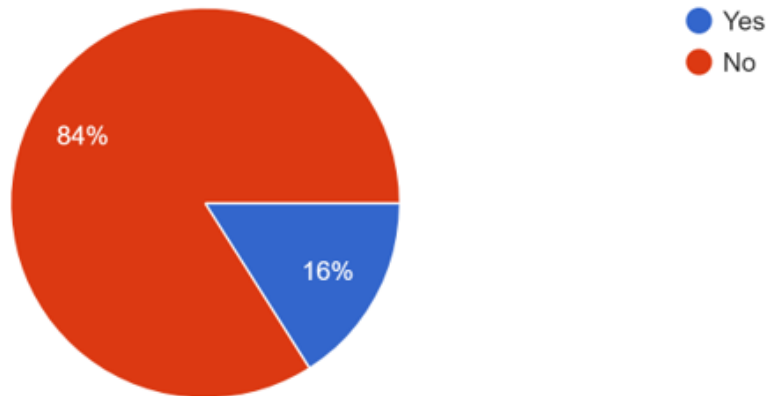
If yes, what percentage of employees will continue to work remotely?

5 responses



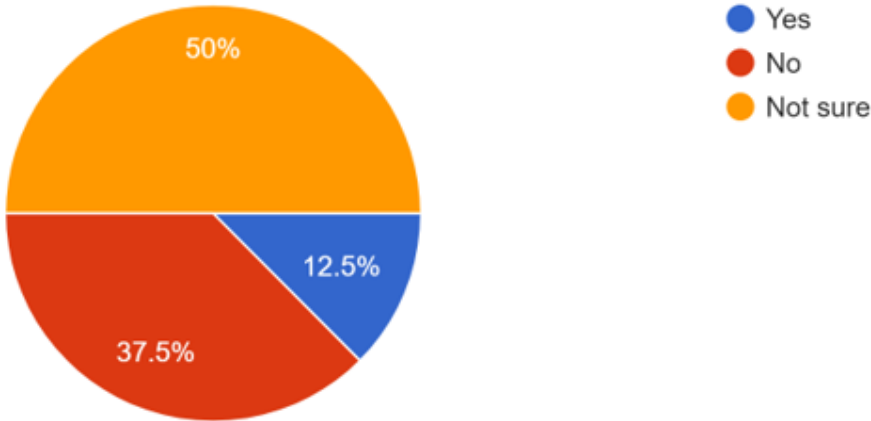
Has your business reduced or eliminated office space due to the pandemic?

25 responses



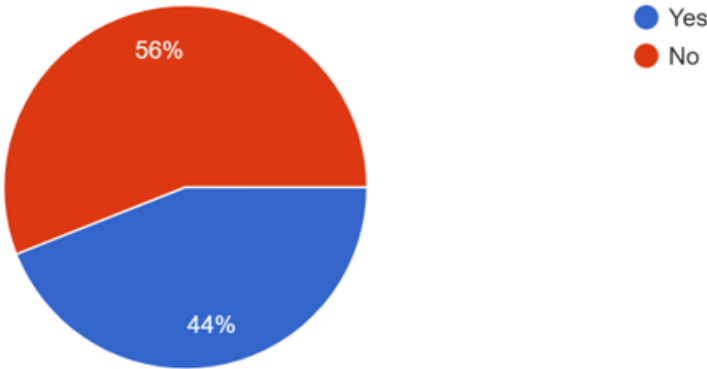
If yes, do you anticipate needing this office space again in the future?

8 responses



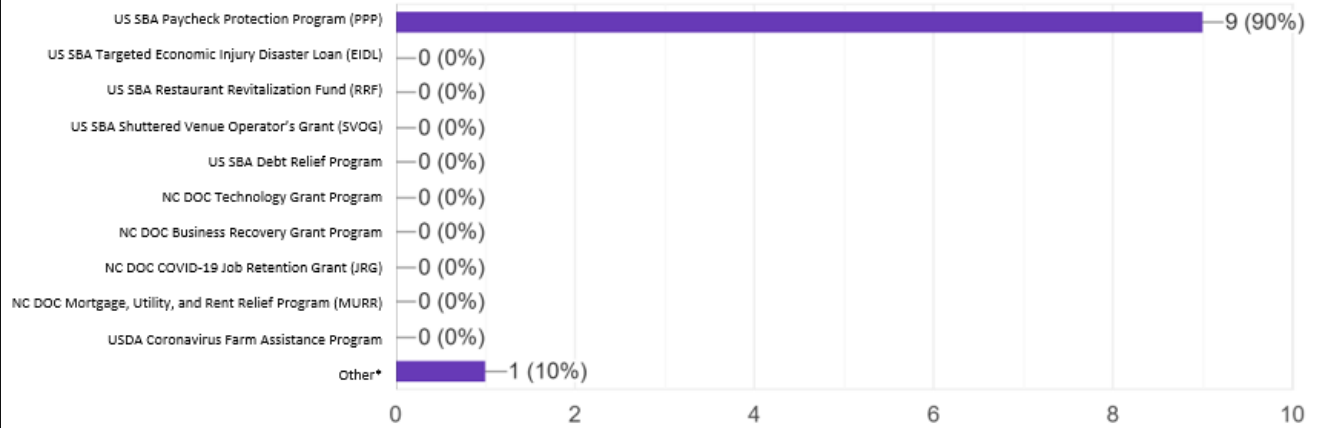
Has your business utilized any federal, state, or local grants to help with COVID-19 recovery?

25 responses



If yes, what grant(s) did your business utilize? (Check all that apply.)

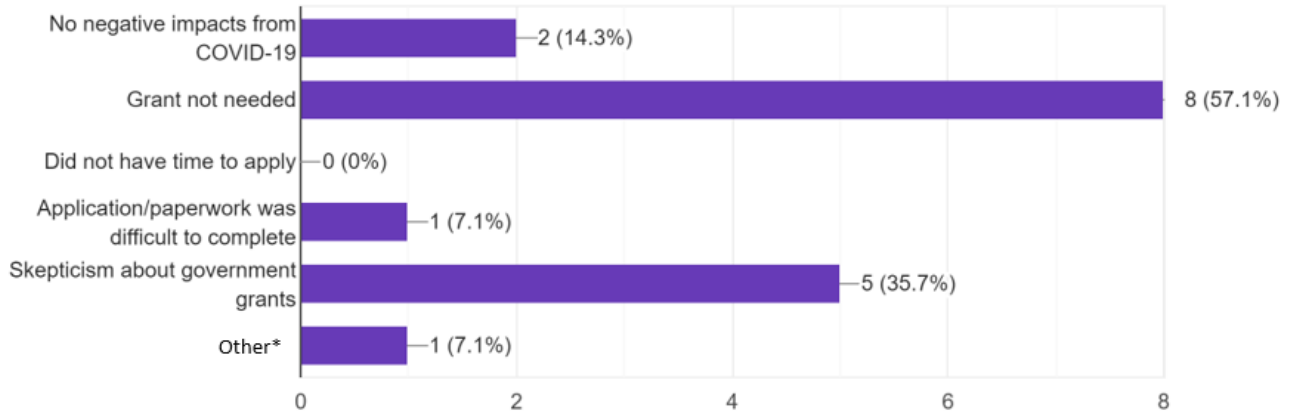
10 responses



\*ARPA

If no, why have you not utilized any federal, state or local grants to help with COVID-19 recovery? (Check all that apply.)

14 responses

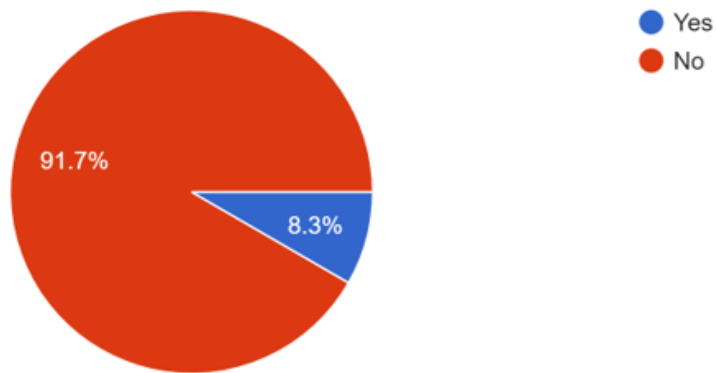


\*Corporate Business Plan was able to avoid this option.



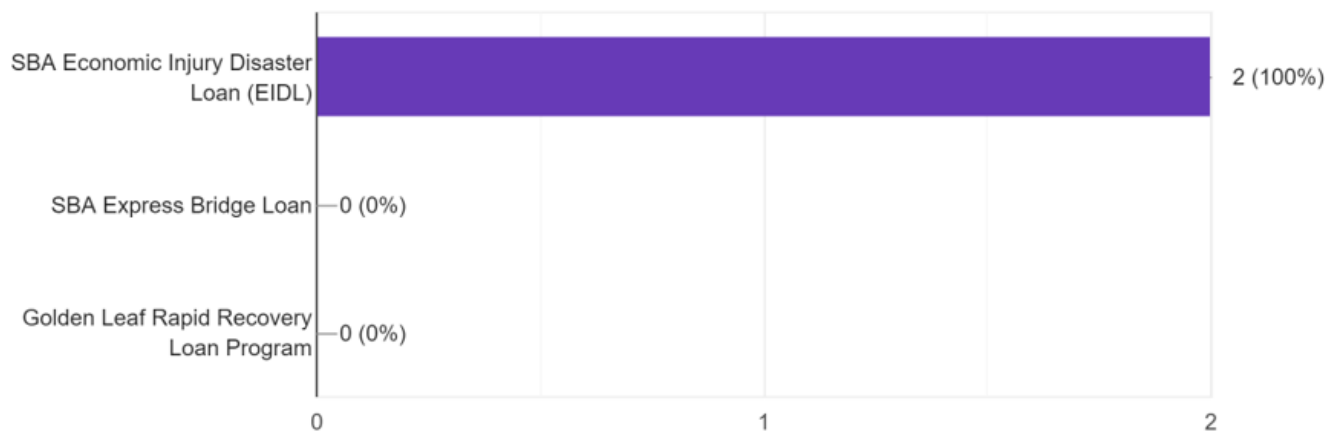
Has your business utilized any federal, state, or local loans to help with COVID-19 recovery?

24 responses



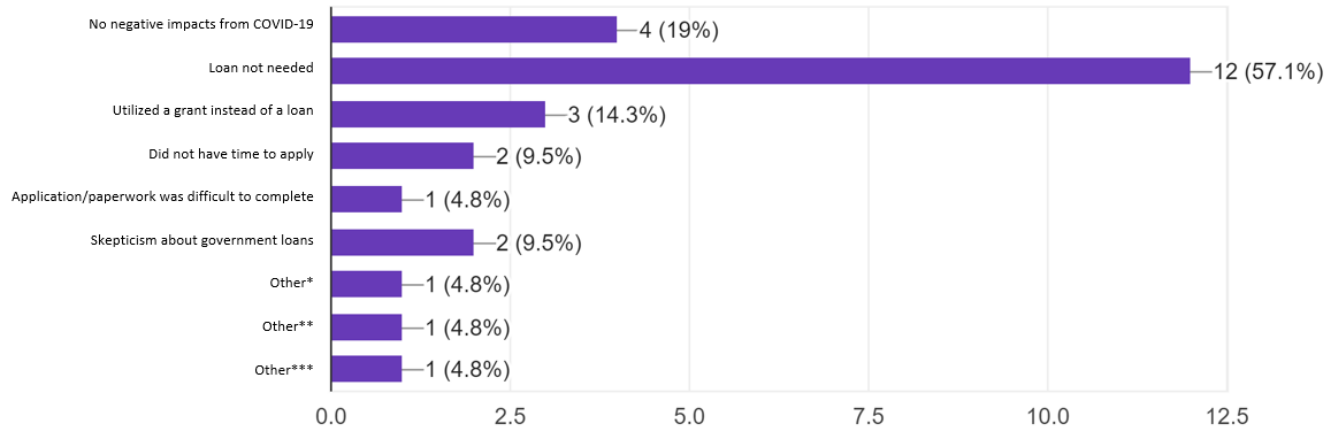
If yes, what federal, state, or local loan program(s) did your business utilize?

2 responses



If no, why have you not utilized any federal, state or local loan program(s) to help with COVID-19 recovery? (Check all that apply.)

21 responses



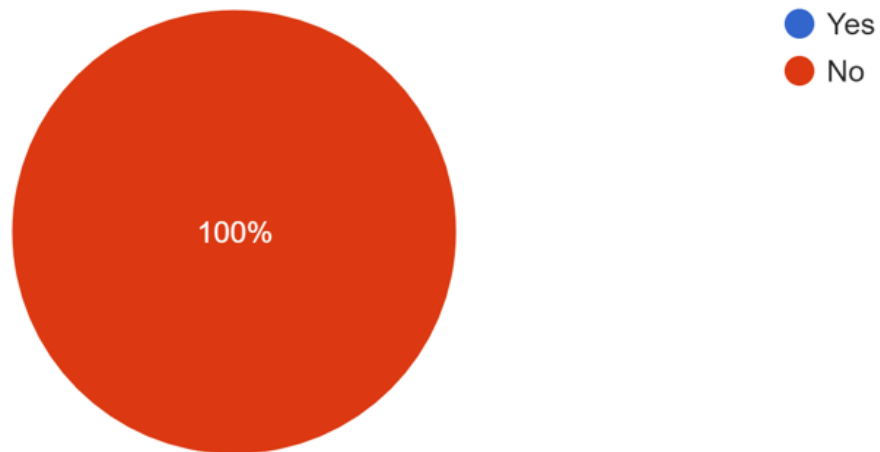
\*Not eligible to apply.

\*\*Wasn't aware of and when I found out deadline had passed

\*\*\*Same as prior response.

Did your business utilize private loans to help with COVID-19 recovery?

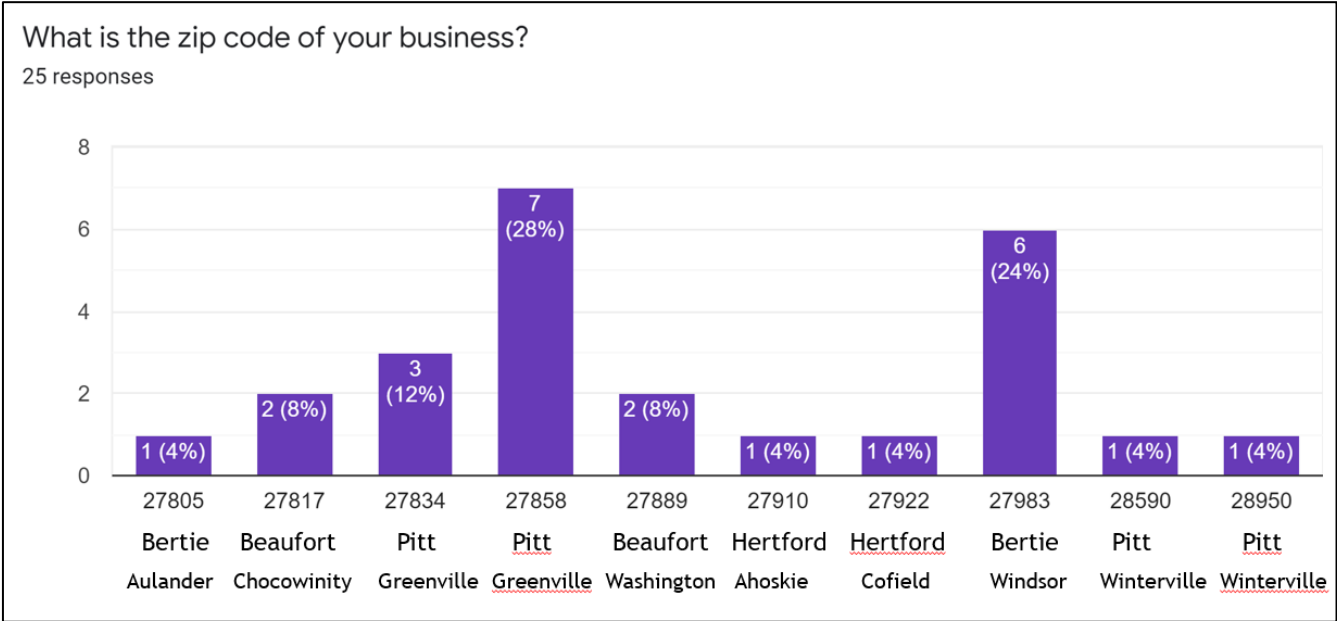
25 responses



# Do you have anything else to share with us regarding COVID-19 impacts to your business?

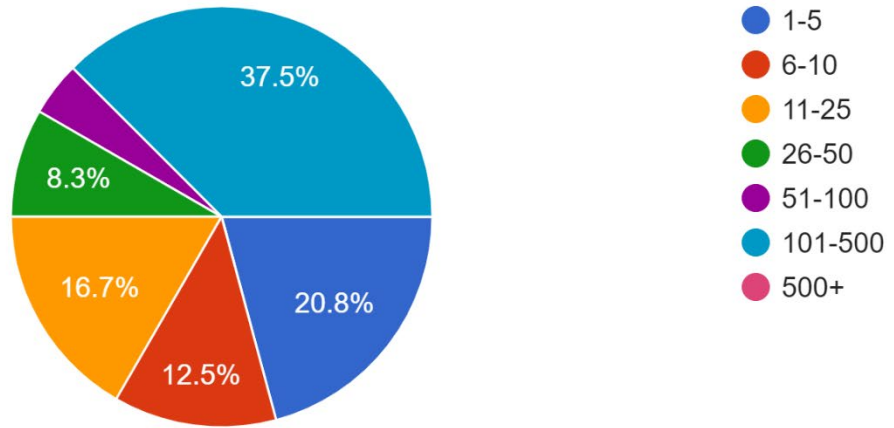
7 responses

- ▶ County government department. Answers to questions about grants/loans pertain only to one department. Answers may differ for County government as a whole
- ▶ We are largely back to normal. These answers mostly pertain to actions/impact from 2020
- ▶ Thanks to PPP, we have been able to make it
- ▶ More employees can work remote, which is good for Eastern NC's growth opportunities
- ▶ IT IS TIME TO MOVE ON
- ▶ We are a travel and tourism entity which was hit hardest by COVID
- ▶ I would like to know of more opportunities for grants to help my small business.



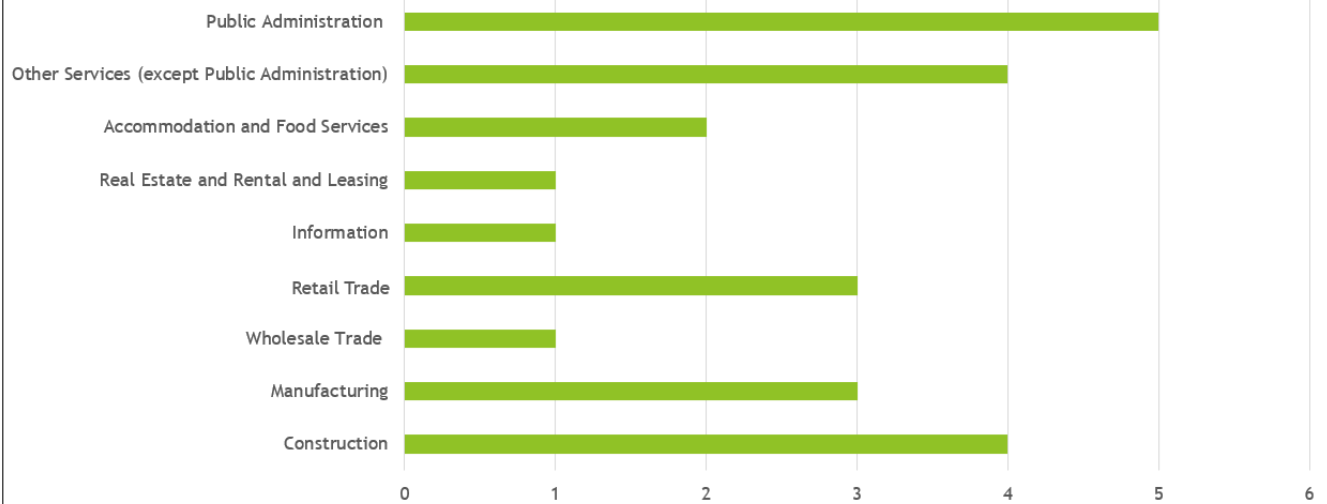
## How many employees does your business have?

24 responses



## What industry does your business represent?

24 responses



## Conclusion

To assist in carrying out the regional priorities set forth in this addendum, the Mid-East Commission may utilize EDA CARES Act Supplemental Funding to competitively procure consultants as needed in order to supplement staff capacity or provide a higher level of expertise. Mid-East Commission and Rivers East Workforce Development Board staff will work with member governments, regional stakeholders, and other partners to carry out the strategies set forth in this Pandemic Recovery Addendum.

Additionally, the CEDS Advisory Committee will continue to advise on these strategies and this addendum will be considered as the Mid-East Commission begins the CEDS five-year major update process.

Given the new federal investments that will be deployed over the next several years, the Mid-East Commission will focus on prioritizing capacity building for counties and municipalities to ensure that they can effectively and efficiently utilize new funding sources to promote a sustainable, equitable recovery. As a result, each of the planning efforts will focus on ways to inform resource decision-making and ways to develop and implement regional programming solutions and recommend local and state policy decisions that will facilitate recovery.

We must continue to be proactive and innovative in helping people get back to work, businesses to stay open, and work towards eliminating geographic, racial, gender, and income disparities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. To make the impact that is needed, we need support from stakeholders across the region in the private, public and philanthropic sectors.

Thank you very much to those of you who helped make this plan possible – and to everyone who is dedicated to working on its implementation.

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