

Watauga County

Watauga County has a population of 58,731, an increase of 15.2% over the past decade.

We all thrive when we ...



Expand Access to Health Services

- 8.8% of people do not have health insurance.
- The average life expectancy for newborns is 82.1 years.
- There is one mental health provider for every 246 residents.



Provide Affordable Housing for All

- Rent is unaffordable for 64.4% of renters.
- 37.9% of people spend more than half of their income on rent.
- The median hourly wage is only 68.6% of what's needed for 1 adult and 2 children to make ends meet (LIS*).



Address Structural Barriers to Equality

- 44% of residents are considered low-income (less than \$50,200 for a family of four).**
- The richest 5% of households make an average of 43 times more than the poorest 20% of households.

... make the investments needed to promote shared prosperity for everyone in every county in N.C.

Poverty and Economic Hardship			
	County	State	Year
Percentage of people living in poverty	21.2%	14.1%	2014-2018
Black	41.4%	23.5%	
White	25.8%	10.6%	
Latinx	53.2%	28.5%	
Asian	49.9%	11.9%	
American Indian	50.3%	25.1%	
Child poverty rate	15.3%	20.2%	

Jobs and Ability to Afford the Basics			
	County	State	Year
Jobless worker : Job openings	940 : 1,370	182,598 : 283,392	Feb. 2020
Unemployment rate	2.7%	3.3%	2019
Change in number of people employed since December 2007	5,418 more	611,291 more	2007, 2019
Living Income Standard* wage (1 adult, 2 kids)	\$21.04	\$22.94	2019
Hourly median wage	\$14.44	\$17.19	2019
Change in median wage since 2009 recovery began	fell 10 cents	grew 38 cents	2009, 2019
Median Household Income	\$48,489	\$53,922	2018

Access to Affordable Housing			
	County	State	Year
Percentage of people paying more than 30% of income toward rent	64.4%	52.9%	2014-2018
Percentage of people paying more than 50% of income toward rent	37.9%	23.9%	2014-2018
Fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit	\$914	\$881	2019
Number of hours needed to work to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair market rate	97 hours a week	94 hours a week	2019

Healthy Lives and Communities			
	County	State	Year
Percentage of residents without health insurance	8.8%	11.1%	2014-2018
Life expectancy	82.1 years	77.6 years	2016-2018
Black	***	75.2 years	
White	82.1 years	78.4 years	
Mental health provider : residents	1 : 246	1 : 409	2019
Percentage of residents receiving SNAP	4.1%	12.1%	2019

Educational Attainment			
	County	State	Year
Graduation rate	90.4%	86.5%	2018-2019
Black	***	83.7%	
White	89.6%	89.6%	
Latinx	>95%	81.1%	
Asian	***	94.5%	
American Indian	***	81.2%	
Percentage of adults with Bachelor's degrees	32.4%	29.5%	2014-2018
Bachelor's degree, men	29.6%	26.4%	
Bachelor's degree, women	35.2%	32.7%	
Median salary, men with at least a Bachelor's	\$44,414	\$61,426	
Median salary, women with at least a Bachelor's	\$33,947	\$41,197	

* The Living Income Standard is a measure of what a family needs in order to cover the basic expenses. See more at NCJustice.org/LIS.
 ** A family of four is considered low-income if they make below 200% of the federal poverty line, or \$50,200 in 2018.
 *** Insufficient data

Note: This County Snapshot provides a pre-COVID-19 economic picture of counties throughout North Carolina.

For data sources or other counties, visit NCJustice.org/snapshots