



# Guilford County Needs Assessment

February 2023



# Guilford County Needs Assessment

Report Submitted to the Welfare Liaison Reform Project &

Guilford County Department of Social Services

February 2023



Prepared By the National Institute of Minority Economic Development  
Stephen J. Sills, PhD, Senior Vice President, Research, Policy & Impact Center  
Carolyn Bucknall, MPA Intern, UNCG  
Rasheda Kelley, MPA Intern, NCCU  
Rio White, Sociology Intern, UNCG

## Contents

Introduction .....	7
Background: Economic Mobility .....	8
Wage, Salary, & Wealth Disparities .....	8
Socio-Economic Mobility .....	10
Absolute vs. Relative Mobility.....	10
Opportunity and Structural Mobility .....	11
Post-Secondary Education .....	11
Immigration and Social Mobility .....	12
Stalled Growth .....	12
Impact of Education on Income Inequality.....	12
Workers Poll: Wage & Salary Disparities in NC.....	14
Disproportionate Impact of Inflation .....	15
Benefits Program: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) .....	16
Benefits Program: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	18
Primary Data Sources.....	21
Interviews.....	21
Focus Groups.....	22
Community Survey.....	23
Interview Findings.....	24
Vulnerable Classes of Workers .....	24
Ethnic and Racial Minorities .....	24
Women.....	25
Justice Involvement .....	26
LGBTQ+.....	29
Foreign Born.....	30
Senior Citizens.....	31
Veterans .....	32
Employer Issues .....	33
Worker Shortage.....	33
Mismatch of Skills .....	34
Drug Testing & Background Checks .....	35

Key Worker Issues.....	37
Low Pay and Limited Benefits.....	37
Flexibility (Work/Life Balance) .....	39
Lack of Advancement .....	40
Structural Barriers.....	41
Access to Transportation .....	43
Affordable Housing.....	44
Childcare .....	45
Workforce Engagement .....	47
SNAP & WIC Benefits .....	48
Focus Group Findings.....	53
Impact of Covid on Jobs, Workforce Development, & Social Services .....	53
Lack of General Awareness of Workforce Development & Social Services Resources .....	55
Need for Educational Attainment, Credentials, & Apprenticeships .....	57
Limited Options for Justice Involvement .....	60
Difficulty of Job Seeking in Current Market.....	64
Making Livable Wages .....	65
Structural Impediments to Good Jobs .....	65
Housing Affordability .....	66
Transportation Issues.....	66
Food Security & SNAP .....	67
Community Survey Findings.....	69
Characteristics of Respondents .....	70
Age & Educational Attainment .....	70
Employment & Disability Status.....	71
Race, Ethnicity, and National Origin .....	71
Sex, Sexuality, & Marital Status .....	72
Income .....	73
Bills & Expenses .....	73
Location of Respondents .....	74
Rating of City and Neighborhoods.....	76
Occupants, Dependents, & Children.....	78
Internet Access.....	79

Food Access..... 80

SNAP & WIC Utilization ..... 81

SNAP/WIC Recommendations ..... 83

    Expanding Eligibility ..... 83

    Expanding Selections of Eligible Foods & Goods ..... 86

    Improving Processing & Distribution of Benefits..... 86

    Improving Customer Service ..... 87

    Increasing Amount of Benefits..... 88

    Increase Awareness of SNAP/WIC ..... 88

    Guilford County DSS *I am very happy from Guilford County benefits* ..... 89

Transportation ..... 89

Housing ..... 90

Employment Assistance ..... 92

Reasons for Losing a Job ..... 93

Health Insurance & Healthcare Needs..... 94

Mental & Behavioral Health Needs ..... 95

Veterans Benefits..... 96

Everyday Treatment..... 97

Conclusions ..... 99

    Summary ..... 99

    Key Issues Facing the Community..... 100

Recommendation..... 101

**#1: Improve tracking of referrals & communications between community partners, social service agencies, health systems, and workforce development organizations. .... 101**

**#2: Increase funding and resources for workforce reentry programs, especially those working with justice involved individuals. .... 101**

**#3: Support access to post-secondary educational opportunities and connection to employment for low-and-middle-income individuals ..... 101**

**#4: Reduce impact of structural conditions of inequality including housing affordability, transportation availability, and food assistance..... 102**

**#5: Support universal high-quality childcare and pre-K programs ..... 102**

**#6: Improve application, processing, and delivery of SNAP/WIC Benefits to vulnerable populations ..... 102**

References ..... 104

Appendix A – Open Ended Survey Responses ..... 108

    What is most important resource to you or your community?..... 108

    What have we not asked that you feel is important and related to needed services and resources in Guilford County? ..... 120

## Table of Figures

Figure 1 – Inflation Rate, U.S. Labor Department July 2022 ..... 15

Figure 2 - Aspen Institute Working Definition of Good Jobs ..... 36

Figure 3 – Structural Barriers to Social and Economic Mobility ..... 41

Figure 4 – US Labor Market Participation December 2022 - Bloomberg ..... 47

Figure 5 - Earnings and Unemployment by Educational Attainment US BLS (2021) ..... 56

Figure 6 - Survey Responses ..... 69

Figure 7 - Race or Ethnicity of Respondents ..... 72

Figure 8 - Sexuality of Respondents..... 72

Figure 9 - Length of Residency ..... 75

Figure 10 – Adults in the Home ..... 78

Figure 11 – Children in the Home ..... 78

Figure 12 - SNAP Utilization ..... 81

Figure 13 - WIC Utilization ..... 82

Figure 14 - SNAP & WIC Difficulty ..... 82

Figure 15 - SNAP & WIC Timeliness ..... 83

Figure 16 - Transportation Difficulty..... 90

Figure 17 - Housing Status ..... 91

Figure 18 – Health Insurance ..... 94

Figure 19 – Everyday Treatment All Respondents (Weekly or More Often) ..... 97

Figure 20 – Everyday Treatment White/Non-White (Weekly or More Often) ..... 98

Figure 21 – Everyday Treatment Male/Female (Weekly or More Often) ..... 98

Figure 22 – Recommendations for improving and expanding SNAP/WIC Benefits..... 103

## Table of Tables

Table 1 - Unemployment rates formerly incarcerated population, by race and gender (2018) .....	28
Table 2 – Age of Respondents.....	70
Table 3 - Educational Attainment .....	70
Table 4 - Employment Status .....	71
Table 5 – Income Distribution of Respondents.....	73
Table 6 – Monthly Bills and Expenses .....	74
Table 7 - Respondent Location .....	75
Table 8 – Rating of Community.....	76
Table 9 - Factors that Influenced Decision to Move to Community .....	77
Table 10 – Issues within Community .....	77
Table 11 – Family Structure .....	79
Table 12 - Internet Access.....	79
Table 13 – Types of Transportation .....	89
Table 14 – Housing Issues .....	91
Table 15- Employment Assistance Needed .....	92
Table 16 Reasons for Losing a Job.....	93
Table 17 – Healthcare Needs .....	95
Table 18 – Mental & Behavioral Health Needs.....	96
Table 19 – Veteran Status & Benefits .....	97

## Introduction

This report was developed by the Research, Policy, and Impact Center (RPIC) of the National Institute of Minority Economic Development in response to a request from the Welfare Reform Liaison Project (WRLP) and Social Services for Guilford County (GC-DHHS-DSS). The RPIC is charged with assisting the WRLP and GC-DHHS-DSS in conducting an in-depth needs assessment and an analysis of secondary-demographic data for the Welfare Reform Liaison Project for programing metrics and grant writing purposes and for the Guilford County Government Department of Health and Human Services to explore opportunities to improve SNAP service delivery and access to vulnerable populations that may be disproportionately impacted by remote operations, language barriers, fear of government services, and a lack of access to technology. The study focuses primarily on what has changed in Low-and-Moderate Income (LMI) communities since the last report in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our research is mixed method and incorporates extensive quantitative and qualitative data, and community and stakeholder input.

The previous report in this project provided an analysis of secondary socio-demographic data. This report includes data from in-depth interviews with stakeholders, focus groups with LMI community members, and a county-wide survey of residents. The research findings presented in this report will be used to develop a better understanding of community needs and issues that present challenges for the most vulnerable in the community. Through these interviews we have explored the social, structural, and environmental conditions in the neighborhoods where people live and work; whether those conditions hinder economic mobility and make it harder for people to achieve their goals; and whether the obstacles affect some racial, age, or gender groups more than others.

We have sought perspectives, best practices, and recommendations from residents, community leaders, business executives, public administrators, educators, and workforce development experts throughout Guilford County. We hope that the detailed information presented here about a very wide range of topics will help to equip the WRLP and DSS with the understanding they will need in order to address the root causes of social inequality.



## Background: Economic Mobility

The following background materials regarding economic mobility and benefits programs should be used to orient the reader to the material that follows. It also serves to provide a historical context for inequalities we see in the socio-economic mobility of various classes within the community.

### *Wage, Salary, & Wealth Disparities*

According to the Federal Reserve, in 2020 white families in the US had a median wealth of \$188,200, compared to \$24,100 for Black families.<sup>1</sup> Family wealth is an important tool for providing an economic safety net and for assisting the next generation in getting started.<sup>2</sup> Wealth accumulation was systematically denied, and, in many cases, capital was even taken from Black communities and commuted to white institutions, resulting in the huge disparity seen today<sup>3</sup>. The legacy of exclusionary practices in the twentieth century is the 800% difference in the median wealth of white versus Black families. Shapiro (2006) exclaims that “closing the racial wealth gap must be at the forefront of the civil rights agenda in the twenty-first century.”<sup>4</sup>

The wage gap between White and Black workers is an important contributor to disparities in access to homeownership as well as just good quality housing, medical care, food access, and educational opportunities.<sup>5</sup> This wage differential narrowed between 1880, when “Blacks in the United States earned only about 34

---

<sup>1</sup> Bhutta, Neil, Andrew C. Chang, Lisa J. Dettling, and Joanne W. Hsu (2020). "Disparities in Wealth by Race and Ethnicity in the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances," FEDS Notes. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, DOI: 10.17016/2380-7172.2797 .

<sup>2</sup> McIntosh et al., 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Baradaran, Mehrsa. (2017). *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap*. Cambridge, Mass. Belknap Press, Harvard University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Shapiro, Thomas. (2006). "Race, Homeownership and Wealth." *Journal of Law and Policy* 20:53-74. [https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law\\_journal\\_law\\_policy/vol20/iss1/4](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_journal_law_policy/vol20/iss1/4).

<sup>5</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Committee on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity in the United States; Baciu A, Negussie Y, Geller A, et al. , editors. (2017). *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 11. 3, "The Root Causes of Health Inequity." National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK425845/>

percent of the income of Whites,”<sup>6</sup> to 51% by the 1950s.<sup>7</sup> The gap narrowed further with improving labor rights for workers in the 1960s: “The black-white wage gap shrank substantially from 1950 to 1980, and especially during the 1960s. Civil-rights laws and a decline in legally sanctioned racism most likely played some role. But the main reasons, Mr. Charles said, appear to have been trends that benefited all blue-collar workers, like strong unions and a rising minimum wage. Because black workers were disproportionately in blue-collar jobs, the general rise of incomes for the poor and middle class shrank the racial wage gap.”<sup>8</sup>

Little has changed in the last 40 years. There remains a 38.8% gap in earnings today. According to the U.S. Census, the median income in 2020 was \$45,870 for black households and \$74,912 U.S. dollars for white, non-Hispanic families.<sup>9,10</sup> Across the South, these wage differentials are even more pronounced. In some Southern cities the differential is even greater. For instance, in Atlanta, Georgia the Black median household income is \$31,900 compared to the non-Hispanic white income of \$96,065.<sup>11</sup> As noted in national and state-level analysis by PayScale, Inc, “equal pay for equal work is not a reality for many people of color. When controlling for education, years of experience, occupation and other compensable factors, most men and women of color still earn less than white men.... these differences in annual earnings can amount to hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars less for people of color over the course of their careers.”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ng, K., & Virts, N. (1993). “The Black-White Income Gap in 1880.” *Agricultural History*, 67(1), 1–15.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3744636>

<sup>7</sup> Leonhardt, David. (2020). “The Black-White Wage Gap Is as Big as It Was in 1950: Recent research indicates little progress since the Truman administration.” *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/opinion/sunday/race-wage-gap.html>

<sup>8</sup> Leonhardt, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Statista Research Department. (2021). “Median income of white, non-Hispanic private households in the United States from 1990 to 2020.” Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/203277/median-income-of-white-households-in-the-us/>

<sup>10</sup> Statista Research Department. (2021). “Median income of black private households in the United States from 1990 to 2020.” Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/203295/median-income-of-black-households-in-the-us/>

<sup>11</sup> SimplyAnalytics (2021). “U.S. Census American Community Survey 2020 Current Estimates Data from SimplyAnalytics database.”

<sup>12</sup> PayScale. (2021). “The Racial Wage Gap Persists in 2020.” <https://www.payscale.com/data/racial-wage-gap>

### *Socio-Economic Mobility*

In a stratified society, social mobility refers to the increase or decrease of the class or status of individuals or groups. This movement requires an open class system or social structure that provides opportunities for changing one's relative position in the society. In America, the system of advancement is perceived to be that of a meritocracy, in which abilities or achievements determine mobility.

Social mobility may be measured in changes in income or occupational prestige. Movement between classes may be measured within one person's life course (intragenerational mobility) or may be measured across generations (intergenerational mobility). Thus, a parent working hard in a "blue-collar" factory job may save enough money to send their son or daughter to law school; or an individual may begin as the child of working-class parents and through their own excellence in academics may be accepted to the same school. In both cases, the meritocratic system would allow for upward intergenerational and intragenerational mobility. However, the reality is that there are a number of factors that are associated with one's chances of social mobility. Birth status (ascribed status) plays a significant role. Limitations such as parental socioeconomics, opportunities for educational attainment within the society, race/ethnicity, sex, and urban/rural residence have great influence on the individual's prospects for mobility. Moreover, most social mobility in America has been attributed to structural economic and social changes rather than to personal effort.

#### Absolute vs. Relative Mobility

Social mobility is often measured by tracking the income or occupation of individual families over time. The degree of mobility may be evaluated in absolute or relative terms. Absolute mobility refers to the inflation adjusted change in a family's income over time, often measured as it crosses over a fixed standard such as the poverty line. Relative income mobility is typically measured in movement between quintiles (a distribution that has been divided into fifths). Most families experience some relative mobility, moving up or down one or more quintiles in mean income. Yet, the proportion of families to remain in the same quintile has increased from about 35% in the 1970s, to about 40% in 1990s. This indicates an increasingly less mobile

class structure. In fact, a recent Brookings study of intergenerational wealth noted, “Mobility out of the top and bottom quintiles is low. Half (49 percent) of those with bottom-quintile wealth will remain in the bottom quintile in their late fifties. Similarly, half (53 percent) of individuals who start in the top wealth quintile will remain there in their late fifties.”<sup>13</sup>

#### Opportunity and Structural Mobility

The degree of mobility is related to the rate of growth in an economy and the amount of opportunity that economy holds for individuals to move from one type of employment to another. Changing economic structures in the twentieth century account for most of the documented social mobility in America. With increasing productivity, resulting from technological improvements, living standards may improve from one generation to the next though the class structure itself changes little. However, the growth of the economy resulted from the structural transition from agrarian to industrial, then to technology-based economies. This allowed for a great deal of upward intergenerational mobility, especially during the post-war period (1950s-1970s), as the occupational structure of the country changed. Yet, the changes in the relative class status from one generation to the next were modest. Very few moved more than a few positions (up or down) within the class structure.

#### Post-Secondary Education

Access to college education has also been a significant factor in promoting social mobility in the twentieth century. Median incomes of those with a four-year degree are more than twice that of individuals with only a high school diploma. Attempts have been made to increase access to post-secondary education to lower income families and thereby encourage intergenerational mobility. However, opportunities for college education are still greater for those from families with higher socio-economic status, especially in the elite colleges and universities.

---

<sup>13</sup>Shiro, Ariel Gelrud, Pulliam, Christopher, Sabelhaus, John, Smith, Ember. 2022. “Stuck On The Ladder Intragenerational Wealth Mobility In The United States” Brookings Institute. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2022\\_FMCI\\_IntragenerationalWealthMobility\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2022_FMCI_IntragenerationalWealthMobility_FINAL.pdf)

## Immigration and Social Mobility

In the last forty years, the proportion of immigrants in America has increased to about 14% of the total population. The majority of migrants enter the US today with lower levels of “human capital” than US citizens, placing them at a disadvantage in competing for fewer and fewer higher prestige, higher income jobs. For intergenerational mobility to occur, the children of migrants must overcome barriers to assimilation, their low ascribed status, as well as fewer opportunities in the economy. In particular, mass migration has created ethnic enclaves with their own independent economies that act to limit opportunities for upward mobility.

## Stalled Growth

The rate of upward social mobility in the United States was steady until the late 1970s. It has been declining in the past few decades as economic growth has slowed or even stalled (principally in the late 1990s). This stalled growth has led to a decline in the proportion of middle-income and high skill workers in favor of a growth in the service sector resulting in a decrease in the opportunities for upward mobility. In inflation-adjusted terms, men born after 1960 are earning less than their fathers' generation did at the same age. An increase in economic inequality during this period can be linked to a widening gap between wages of skilled and unskilled labor.

## *Impact of Education on Income Inequality*

While educational attainment has risen significantly in the last two decades, we continue to see a huge disparity in post-secondary education by race and ethnicity. White 25- to 29-year-olds are 55% more likely than Black counterparts to have completed a bachelor’s degrees or higher.<sup>14</sup> And Black high school students are 13 percent less likely to graduate than their white peers.<sup>15</sup> One of the most robust predictors of a child’s academic success and earning power is whether they can

---

<sup>14</sup> Hanson, Melanie. (2021). “Education Attainment Statistics” EducationData.org.  
<https://educationdata.org/education-attainment-statistics>

<sup>15</sup> Stemm-Calderon, Zoë. (2019) Why Education Reform Must Prioritize Resource Equity Raikes Foundation.  
<https://raikesfoundation.org/blog/posts/why-education-reform-must-prioritize-resource-equity>

read by third grade.<sup>16</sup> In North Carolina two out of five children do not read at grade level at the end of third grade. There are clear racial disparities with 41% of Black third graders reading at grade level compared to 70% of white children.<sup>17</sup>

According to education researchers, Barbara Bowman, James Comer, and David Johns (2018), “The interface between racism/classism and attendant economic and social disadvantages is the key to understanding the underachievement of African American children. African Americans have been exposed to generations of legal and illegal measures to deny them basic rights.”<sup>18</sup> Resource equity is an underlying issue: “school districts attended predominantly by students of color receive \$23 billion less in funding than primarily white districts, despite serving the same number of students. And school districts that are poor and white receive about \$150 less per student than the national average. In contrast, school districts that are poor and attended primarily by students of color receive \$1,600 less.”<sup>19</sup> In a recent study, *Is School Funding Fair*, researchers at the Education Law Center compared state funding of schools across all 50 states finding that most states provide disproportionately *more* economic resources to affluent schools than to those in high poverty areas.<sup>20</sup>

Several other factors are related to the lack of progress in achieving parity in educational attainment and standardized scores. For poor urban youth, there is evidence that disengagement in school is a major cause of absenteeism and low graduation rates.<sup>21</sup> Also, there is data to support the claim that “a growing disparity in teacher quality across the social divide may have offset the impacts of policies

---

<sup>16</sup> Fiester, Leila. (2010). Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters. Annie E. Casey Foundation. <https://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-why-reading-by-the-end-of-third-grade-matters>

<sup>17</sup> NC Child 2021 County Data Cards. <https://ncchild.org/what-we-do/insights/data/2021county-data-cards/>

<sup>18</sup> Bowman, B. T., Comer, J. P., & Johns, D. J. (2018). “Addressing the African American Achievement Gap: Three Leading Educators Issue a Call to Action.” *Young Children*. 73(2), 14–23. <https://www.istor.org/stable/26558913>

<sup>19</sup> Stemm-Calderon, Zoë. (2019)

<sup>20</sup> Baker, B., Farrie, D., Sciarra, D. (2018). *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card* Education Law Center [https://edlawcenter.org/assets/files/pdfs/publications/Is\\_School\\_Funding\\_Fair\\_7th\\_Editi.pdf](https://edlawcenter.org/assets/files/pdfs/publications/Is_School_Funding_Fair_7th_Editi.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Mac Iver, D. (2019). Five Successful Reforms to Combat Students’ Absenteeism and Disengagement. John Hopkins School of Education. <https://education.jhu.edu/2019/06/five-successful-reforms-to-combat-students-absenteeism-and-disengagement/>

designed to work in the opposite direction.”<sup>22</sup> Finally, confounding the issue is the fact that parental education strongest predictor of student achievement.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Workers Poll: Wage & Salary Disparities in NC*

In July of 2022, the Research, Policy, & Impact Center polled constituents to better understand wage and salary disparities in North Carolina and explore the barriers experienced by minority workers. Minority respondents were nearly three times as likely (31.4% minority respondents vs 13.3% white respondents) to be earning less this year than last year. White respondents meanwhile were twice as likely as minority respondents to be earning more this year (46.7% of white respondents as compared to 22.9% of minority respondents).

Notably, while 33% of white respondents took a medical or FMLA leave, none of the minority respondents did, underscoring the differences in benefits and employment categories that minority workers fill. Minority workers were also more likely to experience barriers limiting their ability to work such as caring for aging relatives, lacking healthcare, having a disability, not having transportation, not having credentials needed for the job, and experiencing employer bias or racism.

We asked respondents to rank ways that the local, state, or federal government could help to improve workforce conditions. Most respondents recommended that government should: offer free community college options, raise the minimum wage, provide universal preschool, and close racial and gender pay gaps. One participant explained: *“[It is a] myth that people are lazy and do not want to work not true. People want to work when/where they are taken care of. People do not want to work when the take home (after taxes) offers no benefits to their lives and they cannot afford to live (pay for housing, transportation, food, etc.)”*

---

<sup>22</sup> Hanushek, E.A., Peterson, P.E., Talpey, L.M., and Woessmann, L. (2019). “The Achievement Gap Fails to Close: Half century of testing shows persistent divide between haves and have-nots.” *Education Next*. 19(3), 8-17.

<sup>23</sup> Hanushek, E.A., Peterson, P.E., Talpey, L.M., and Woessmann, L. (2019).



**FIGURE 1 – INFLATION RATE, U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT JULY 2022**

### *Disproportionate Impact of Inflation*

While unemployment has remained low as the US recovers from the global COVID19 Pandemic, inflation has been very high causing serious harm to many workers’ abilities to afford basic goods and services. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The annual inflation rate in the US accelerated to 9.1% in June of 2022, the highest since November of 1981.” The Research, Policy, & Impact Center polled constituents to better understand how inflation is impacting them. Disparities are clear as 72% of minority respondents indicated that their families are experiencing moderate to severe economic hardship as compared with only 52% of white respondents.

Coping strategies have included taking on additional work, overtime, or even second jobs (29% of respondents); starting or expanding a side business (28%); selling family assets or real properties to cover costs (16%) and seeking public assistance (15%). Workers are also cutting back on things like driving (56%) and food purchases at the grocery store (51%) in order to off-set higher costs. Poll respondents are looking to the federal government to forgive student loan debt, raise minimum wage, institute price controls on fuel and other goods, and expand economic assistance programs.



### *Benefits Program: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)*

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) program is a federal program carried out by the states meant to help low-income individuals buy nutritious foods. As part of the program, eligible households are given benefits each month based on their income and household size that they can spend with their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card at grocery stores and other retailers.<sup>24</sup>

Previously known as Foods Stamps, the program began in 1939 in response to plummeting crop prices and large surpluses from America's farmers.<sup>25</sup> The program was meant to help farmers by increasing the purchasing power of the American people.<sup>26</sup> The program's goals did not shift to feeding the poor until the 1961 pilot program and later the 1964 Food Stamp Act expanded the scope of food aid across the country.<sup>27</sup> The Food Stamp Act has been amended many times over the last 60 years - most notably establishing eligibility and work requirements and lifting the purchase requirement.<sup>28</sup> Today, SNAP is the nation's largest nutrition assistance program helping to feed more than 42 million Americans each month has been proven to reduce food insecurity, improve the health and educational outcomes of children, and act of a key stabilizer for family well-being.<sup>29</sup>

With a few exceptions, SNAP is meant to be for anyone who can meet the program's income and work requirements. In order to qualify, a household's gross monthly income must be 130% of the federal poverty level and their net monthly income (after tax and deductions) must be 100% of the federal poverty level.<sup>30</sup> In addition, able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) between the ages of 18 and 49 must work or participate in a work program as well as meet other work requirements in order to receive benefits beyond three months.<sup>31</sup> Both the income and work requirements make exemptions for the elderly and individuals with

---

<sup>24</sup> USDA, 2021c

<sup>25</sup> USDA, 2018

<sup>26</sup> MacDonald, 2016

<sup>27</sup> MacDonald, 2016; USDA, 2018

<sup>28</sup> MacDonald, 2016; USDA, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Food Research & Action Center, 2017; USDA, 2021f on size of the modern SNAP program; Gundersen, Kreider, & Pepper, 2017; McKernan, Ratcliffe, & Braga, 2021 on SNAP participation reducing food insecurity; Hoynes, Schanzenbach, & Almond, 2016 on SNAP participation improving health and educational outcomes of children.

<sup>30</sup> USDA, 2021c

<sup>31</sup> USDA, 2021c; USSSA, 2022

disabilities.<sup>32</sup> College students are generally not eligible for SNAP, but have been able to receive benefits during the COVID-19 public health emergency.<sup>33</sup> Lawfully present non-citizens can be eligible, but must be under 18 years old, receiving disability assistance, or have lived in the U.S. for at least five years.<sup>34</sup>

Recent evidence consistently shows that benefit levels are too low to provide for a realistic, healthy diet, even with households contributing their own funds towards groceries.<sup>35</sup> Based on this evidence, and the 2018 Farm Bill that ended the requirement that the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) used to calculate benefits be cost neutral, in 2021 the USDA determined that the cost of a nutritious, practical, cost-effective diet is 21% higher than the current benefit levels.<sup>36</sup> For the first time in 45 years, the USDA increased the purchasing power of the TFP by an average of \$36.24 per person per month.<sup>37</sup> Although many households face less food insecurity due to improved benefits, many will also face cuts in 2023 with the end of emergency pandemic allotments and *households in one in five counties will continue to experience a gap between their allotted benefits and a modestly priced meal.*<sup>38</sup>

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) division of Food and Nutritional Services (FNS) serves more than 1.6 million FNS participants.<sup>39</sup> Among the households served by SNAP, 86% contain children, elderly members, or individuals with a disability.<sup>40</sup> North Carolina has one of the lowest SNAP participation rates in the country at 69% meaning *more than 30% of the state's eligible households are not a part of the program.*<sup>41</sup> This gap is more pronounced among working poor, immigrant, and mixed-immigration-status families that face barriers to accessing services including transportation, limited time, internet access, language, trust, stigma, and awareness that they may be eligible for food assistance.<sup>42</sup> North Carolina also bans people with some drug-

---

<sup>32</sup> USSSA, 2022

<sup>33</sup> USDA, 2021c; USDA, 2021d

<sup>34</sup> USDA, 2021c

<sup>35</sup> USDA, 2021b

<sup>36</sup> USDA, 2021f

<sup>37</sup> USDA, 2021e; USDA, 2021f

<sup>38</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022a; Fiol & Gundersen, 2021; NCDHHS, 2023

<sup>39</sup> NCDHHS, n.d.

<sup>40</sup> USDA, 2021a

<sup>41</sup> Holden, n.d.; USDA, n.d.-b

<sup>42</sup> Aluoch et al., 2022; Holden, n.d.

related felony convictions from SNAP which has a disproportionate impact on communities of color.<sup>43</sup> Even if they aren't banned from the program, justice-involved individuals have a harder time meeting the work requirements for SNAP because of their record. Advocates call for the program to be more accessible, include a greater number of region-specific traditional foods that can be purchased with EBT, and for states to get rid of their bans against justice-involved individuals.<sup>44</sup>

*Benefits Program: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)*

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal program that supplements the SNAP benefits of women, infants, and children, although households do not have to receive SNAP benefits in order to be eligible for WIC. *Adequate nutrition is critical for infants and young children's cognitive and physical development.*<sup>45</sup> WIC aims to ensure pregnant women have the nutrients they need to deliver healthy babies and those babies have the nutrients to develop into healthy children. As part of the program, WIC participants are given additional benefits they can spend with their EBT cards to purchase specific items including milk, baby food, and formula as well as separate "cash value benefits" to purchase fruits and vegetables. Participants also have access to nutrition counseling, healthcare referrals, and breast-feeding support at their local WIC clinic.

The 1969 Commodity Supplemental Food Program was the first federal program to fight malnutrition among low-income mothers and children by targeting food assistance to those groups.<sup>46</sup> The program was piloted in 1972 and made permanent in 1975 with later amendments adding nutrition education, healthcare referrals, and breast-feeding promotion as important pillars of the modern program.<sup>47</sup> Today, WIC serves approximately six million women, infants, and

---

<sup>43</sup> North Carolina Justice Center, n.d.

<sup>44</sup> Aluoch et al., 2022

<sup>45</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b

<sup>46</sup> USDA, n.d.-a

<sup>47</sup> USDA, n.d.-a

children and has contributed to healthier births, improved health outcomes, and greater academic achievement.<sup>48</sup>

Pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding individuals, infants, and children up to age 5 are eligible if they meet income guidelines and are at “nutritional risk” as determined by a healthcare professional.<sup>49</sup> To be eligible for WIC benefits, applicants must have a gross household income at or below 185% of the federal poverty line but can also qualify if they receive other means-tested benefits such as SNAP or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).<sup>50</sup>

Like other means-tested food assistance programs, WIC benefits were increased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>51</sup> Under the American Rescue Plan, the amount of the monthly cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables was temporarily increased from \$11 per month to \$35 per month with benefit increases set to expire in September 2023.<sup>52</sup> The American Rescue Plan also included \$53 million in grant funds to help WIC improve outreach, modernize their technology and service delivery, expand access to farmers markets, improve shopping experience and convenience, and diversify their workforce.<sup>53</sup>

Participation in WIC increased by 21% in North Carolina during the pandemic (2020-2022) – *the greatest increase in participation in the country*.<sup>54</sup> Among states’ mixed response to the pandemic in which overall national WIC participation rates dropped, North Carolina’s shift from requiring in-person meetings to determine WIC eligibility to remote telephone interviews, increased food benefits, and additional program flexibilities contributed to an increase in enrollment by reducing transportation, work schedule, and childcare barriers.<sup>55</sup> The state still has a long way to go – *over 30% of North Carolinians who are eligible for WIC aren’t enrolled and* enrollment from children 1 to 5 years old lags behind infant enrollment.<sup>56</sup> In the rural eastern and western parts of the state, people living in

---

<sup>48</sup> Carlson & Neuberger, 2021; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b; USDA, 2022

<sup>49</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b

<sup>50</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b

<sup>51</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b

<sup>52</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b; GCCHS, n.d.

<sup>53</sup> USDA, 2022

<sup>54</sup> Food Research & Action Center, 2019

<sup>55</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b; Davis, 2022; Food Research & Action Center, 2019

<sup>56</sup> Food Research & Action Center, 2019; USDA, 2022

underserved locations have limited access to WIC offices and report lack of variety in WIC-approved foods and the social stigma of participating in the program as major barriers.<sup>57</sup> The decline in WIC participation among Tribal Organization WIC agencies is another reflection of the barriers Native American communities in these parts of the state face to accessing benefits, including low access to food, longer travel distances to clinics and stores, and limited phone and internet services.<sup>58</sup> Mothers who reported unplanned pregnancies, had few social supports, and faced more structural barriers were also less likely to participate.<sup>59</sup>

States should continue to build on what they have learned from the pandemic to advance nutrition security and equity among underserved groups with a new focus on targeted outreach and partnerships, clinic experience and modernizing technology, and retention of children ages 1 through 5.<sup>60</sup>



<sup>57</sup> Isaacs, Shriver, & Haldeman, 2020; Miles et al., 2022

<sup>58</sup> Food Research & Action Center, 2019

<sup>59</sup> Food Research & Action Center, 2019; Liu & Liu, 2016

<sup>60</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022b; Food Research & Action Center, 2019; USDA, 2022

## Primary Data Sources

A needs assessment is a process used by organizations to determine priorities, make improvements, or allocate resources. It will be used to determine the concerns and needs of low-income communities. It is an opportunity for building stakeholder support, engaging clients and referral agencies, eliciting staff and social service system feedback, and promoting community support. It is also an opportunity to identify barriers that low-income people face in accessing services. The results may be useful in determining how to allocate scarce resources and staffing.

### *Interviews*

For the first phase of our data gathering, we conducted semi-structured, in-depth one-on-one interviews with community stakeholders. Interviews were conducted remotely via zoom and recorded. The interview subjects were assured that their comments would not be reported in a manner that would identify the person speaking by name or by affiliation. The comments directly quoted in this report are lightly edited for clarity or to ensure confidentiality. Interviews were between half an hour and an hour in length. Transcripts were made of each interview, reviewed by a project intern for accuracy, then reviewed for themes and quotes using a grounded approach. We interviewed people representing the following organizations and professions:

- Community Colleges
- Department of Social Services
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Major Construction Corporations
- NCWorks Career Center
- School District Personnel

In these interviews, we discussed a range of topics, from the state of the job market today, to the shortage of workers across all industry sectors, to the attitudes of the workers and their employers, and the opportunities presented to workers by the

changes happening now. We talked about inequities in the job market and in the workplace, and the social conditions that limit economic mobility for vulnerable groups. We talked in depth about the many socio-economic and structural barriers that keep people from finding employment or progressing in their economic mobility including transportation, food security, housing, educational opportunities, and childcare. We also explored issues regarding access to benefits like SNAP/WIC.

### *Focus Groups*

The focus group, or group interview, is a common methodology that has been used as a means of data collection in the social sciences for at least a century. Focus groups gained popularity in the 1930s and 40s with Robert K. Merton who used them as a tool for gauging reactions to wartime propaganda materials (Morgan, 1988; Hollander 2004). Since then, the methodology has been employed in a wide variety of research setting that call for a deep understanding of a groups' perspective on a particular issue. It is through the synergistic, collaborative, and interactive atmosphere of the focus group that participants are influenced to express many ideas that may have been more difficult to express individually (Morgan, 1988). There are many advantages to using focus groups in evaluation and needs assessments as they provide an effective method for identifying need and barriers, framing appropriate messaging, and designing relevant strategies for outreach (Garfield, Malozowski, Chin, Narayan, Glasgow, Green, Hiss, and Krumholz 2003). Vincent, Clark, Zimmer, and Sanchez (2006) note that focus groups are an "efficient method of obtaining information about an underserved population's experience" (96). Focus groups produce more in-depth information than quantitative research methods, yet the value of focus group research is largely dependent on how well the focus groups are designed and executed and how carefully the data are collected and analyzed.

We conducted a series of focus groups across Guilford County including at the GuilfordWorks offices in Greensboro and High Point and the DSS Office in Greensboro. We also conducted several supplemental interviews with justice involved individuals who could not join any of the in-person groups, to expand on the issues we encountered.

Depending on the makeup of the group, we asked questions about the social services, workforce needs, structural impediments to economic mobility, and food security issues. We asked people to tell us about their experiences dealing with economic problems and struggling to find help.

Focus groups were conducted under a rule of confidentiality. Participants were assured that their comments would not be reported in a manner that would identify the person speaking. Focus groups lasted an hour to an hour and a half; supplemental interviews lasted about a half hour. All focus groups were conducted in person.

### *Community Survey*

To supplement these qualitative data sources, we also designed an online survey of residents and stakeholders in Guilford County. An ideal survey manages to control for error by ensuring that each member of a population has an equal chance of being included in the sample, that sample members are randomly selected in large enough numbers to assure that they are representative and that everyone who is included in the sample responds. Surveys, whether distributed by postal mail, telephone, or Internet, seldom achieve these ideal conditions. Similar to postal mail surveys prior to the 1970s, most email and internet-based surveys have not had response rates consistently high enough to be generalizable to any population. None-the-less, internet surveys have the potential to be a practical and valuable resource for social science and planning studies. The design flexibility, geographic reach, anonymity, and minimized error of internet-based surveys are superior to telephone and mail delivery methods. The survey was widely publicized by DSS and WRLP as well as through stakeholder groups, direct emails, community listservs, and through online social media (Facebook and Twitter).



## Interview Findings

### *Vulnerable Classes of Workers*

Most individuals interviewed recognized that some social statuses faced stigma, prejudice, or discrimination in recruitment, hiring, and retention and were disproportionately impacted by structural issues such as housing, food access, and healthcare. Minorities, women, justice involved individuals, individuals with a disability, LGBTQ+, limited English proficient, older workers, and veterans were all discussed in some ways as being disadvantaged.

### *Ethnic and Racial Minorities*

When asked to identify vulnerable populations, many interviews spoke about ethnic or racial minorities. One interviewee said, “so I feel like some of the minority populations, they don't have the same opportunities.” Another respondent affirmed, “There are huge equity gaps, just between black and whites in our community.” The lack of ethnic/racial diversity between salaried and hourly employees, between entry level and management level of organizations was also pointed out, “I would have senior leadership look like the world that we live in and the communities we serve.” This racial and ethnic divide is something that has gained attention with a few of the employers and workforce development directors we spoke to who said they were promoting programs to address equity by targeting historically low-income communities to recruit, train, and place more workers of color in higher skilled and higher paying positions:

*“...equity has been a huge conversation over the past two, three years, right. I would say that we have intentionally leveraged data to support targeting our community-based programming to what just so happens to be high minority communities. So, our eastern part of the county ...and our southern part of the county...has received a lot of targeted services from the workforce system. And I would, you know, back into say that 85 plus percent of those communities are black and brown. And so, we find that important, because the data shows that median household or median household earnings are significantly, are extremely low. Unemployment rates are very high, crime rates are very high. And all of that is intertwined.... So, I would say, our,*

*our targeted, you know, outreach and community-based programs in those minority communities has been very successful for us. I don't know if it's the best model. But you know, we do see increased participation rates in those communities.”*

A community college executive elaborated on the job market segmentation that occurs along lines of color and a program she is instituting to address racial disparities in educational attainment encouraging students to continue past their associates degrees to complete bachelors: “...what was concerning us is we looked at the wages that they would earn, even with an associate's degree, and they were below the average income in our community, .... I also don't want to sentence our students to a lifetime of poverty.”

Women

Our stakeholders clearly recognized the unequal impact on employed or job-seeking women, especially as a result of the pandemic. One explained, “I think that COVID forced a lot of people to stay home, and to find other avenues of revenue that would take care of their families. A lot of women have decided to go back and become homemakers because it's cheaper than trying to pay daycare. I think that a lot of individuals were at that point of retirement, and just went ahead and took that early retirement. I think that there are still those out there that were not on the radar. When the unemployment benefits end, they are dropped from that radar, because there's no way to track them.”

During the pandemic eight times as many women dropped out of the workforce compared to men,<sup>61</sup> they have now begun to return. “As of August, more than 49 million women aged 25 to 54 were working or looking for work. That's slightly more women than were in the workforce in February 2020. The return has been especially pronounced among Black and Latina women.”<sup>62</sup> Yet, in many fields, women are still absent. One corporate executive said, “we were at about, we were at about 20% women. However, I think that has changed because I was recently told Friday that we have 91 women out of almost 600 employees. And that is in the

---

<sup>61</sup> See <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/22/coronavirus-pandemic-women-workforce-500329>

<sup>62</sup> See <https://www.npr.org/2022/09/28/1125149612/women-are-returning-to-paid-work-after-the-pandemic-forced-many-to-leave-their-j>

field working on job sites as well as in the offices like marketing and accounting and HR kinds of positions.”

Gender tracking was recognized as an issue by multiple interviewees. As one interviewee said, “I think is a due to lack of exposures, a lot of times in certain industries, women, of course, are left out, for instance, in construction or welding, you don't see a lot of women in those areas.” Another industry leader said they needed to be more intentional about addressing gender disparities, “So, we are being intentional about trying new things to recruit more women and underrepresented populations. But right now, it's still a largely white male dominated company and industry.” This employer has instituted new measures to try and attract more women into the male dominated field. The participant explained, “one example where we have started this work intentionally is with women in the company. So, we started a series of roundtable meetings with women in each of our offices in March. And from that, identified what needs to change in our benefits, in our culture, and safety on a job site. All those things. And we'll be revisiting that again in February with the whole group of women again.”

#### Justice Involvement

Among the most vulnerable of populations are those who have had justice involvement. Many interviewees recognized that, “Individuals that are justice involved have significant barriers.” While highly correlated with race, we see that justice involvement itself creates vulnerability. As we can see from the pre-pandemic, Bureau of Justice Statistics’ National Former Prisoner Survey (NFPS) data above, there are disproportionately higher unemployment rates for Black men and women, yet incarceration experiences result in much higher rates of unemployment overall. Couloute and Kopf (2018) explain, “High unemployment among formerly incarcerated people is not simply explained by the overrepresentation of people of color in the criminal justice system; it’s the status of being formerly incarcerated that sets them apart.”<sup>63</sup> For this reason, we treat race/ethnicity and justice involvement as separate vulnerable classes.

---

<sup>63</sup> Couloute and Kopf (2018)

Stakeholders echoed the difficulties faced by justice involved individuals, “I think of individuals, justice involved individuals, a lot of times we, we don't get to that second chance. So, we'll be working more closely with our justice involved individuals to provide opportunities to have employer think differently about those second chances for those individuals.” Stigma wasn't the only problem, however. One workforce development official explained, for job placement employer liability insurance can be an issue, “the justice served are always gonna be a difficult population.... Obviously, with their record, that's going to be a little bit more difficult depending upon the employer, if the employer can't hire him for insurance reasons, or whatever reasons that they have. So, we tried to, I know the staff that worked with those populations, tried to know employers in the area who were more accepting, accepting of persons with criminal records.” These programs linking justice involved individuals directly with employers were vital. They not only provided connections and introductions, but also provided security to the employers: “...we work with employers to make sure that they have their, that anybody who's been incarcerated that we do have them federally bonded, and that we help them fill out the WIAO paperwork for their business.”<sup>64</sup>

Changes were noted, some resulting from the current economic conditions. There was some evidence of more employers providing opportunities as a result of the low unemployment rate. A participant explained, “you know, some, some employers, you know, you know, a lot of them have rules against hiring felons, and that kind of thing. They're waiving that, especially, you know, if it's been so, so long are they their record is clean now and that kind of thing.” Another noted greater employer leniency, “And then we're also seeing a trend for our employers to, as long as it was not a violent offense, then a lot of folks are working through that. And just, they just want to be aware. And I know people are scared to check that box, to say if they've got a felony, but the business is just want to be aware and make sure it's not a violent offense.”

---

<sup>64</sup> See <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/workforce-investment/adult>

**TABLE 1 - UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FORMERLY INCARCERATED POPULATION, BY RACE AND GENDER (2018)<sup>65</sup>**

	<b>Unemployment rate general population</b>	<b>Unemployment rate formerly incarcerated</b>
<b>Black women</b>	6.4%	43.6%
<b>Black men</b>	7.7%	35.2%
<b>White women</b>	4.3%	23.2%
<b>White men</b>	4.3%	18.4%

Things are also changing on the policy level, especially as a result of the “Ban the Box” Law (Executive Order 158: Furthering Fair Chance Policies In State Government Employment) which was signed in 2020.<sup>66</sup> One community college representative noted, “I’ve been to some of the, the lobbying and everything that they did the legislation to, you know, take, you know, some of the things off applications and all that so you know, my, my, my feelings on that personally is you know, you know, I believe we serve a God of a second chance. And if someone has done their time and, and have been rehabilitated, we owe it to them to give them a chance at a job or manufacturer....” Another area of correlation was between justice involvement and substance misuse. “In North Carolina, drug possession is the number one crime that lands a person in prison. In 2017, about 19 percent of folks that entered prison were locked up due to drug possession or intent to sell.”<sup>67</sup>

#### Individuals with Disabilities

Another category or class of vulnerability in the workforce was those with a disability. According to the American Community Survey, in Guilford County the civilian noninstitutionalized population with one or more disabilities was 59,755 individuals or about 11.2% of the total population. This sizeable segment of the population faces many challenges to employment and is sometimes overlooked. One interviewee affirmed, “Definitely individuals with disabilities and limited abilities, I feel they’re left out. Certainly, bypassing individuals and a lot of the quote unquote, higher skilled industries that require more training.”

<sup>65</sup> Couloute, Lucius and Kopf, Daniel. (2018) “Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment among formerly incarcerated people.” Prison Policy Initiative. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html>

<sup>66</sup> See <https://www.backgroundsonline.com/blog/north-carolina-passed-a-ban-the-box-law>

<sup>67</sup> See <https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2018/03/06/incarcerating-mental-illness-and-addiction/>

Another stakeholder echoed, “In terms of individuals, we're kind of leaving out, I think a lot of times individuals who have disabilities, either physical or mental. I think we need to work better with those individuals, particularly OCS, students, occupational core studies students in high school. They can provide, we can help work with them to build out our workforce and support some of these pipeline of workforce issues in terms of talent.” Several programs were mentioned that are working to connect individuals with disabilities to work, “we've also connected employers with vocational rehab, as they have a pool of applicants that we don't always get access to through the Career Center. So sometimes we'll make referrals to employers to try and make that connection between job seeker and employer as well.”

Disability visibility was also raised as an important issue that employers should be aware of, “They may think, the, the person with a disability has to be a person with a seen disability. And sometimes they're very disabled people with unseen disabilities.” In other cases individuals may not receive a fair chance based on the perception of their disability: “I feel like disability, disabled individuals or people with limited abilities are oftentimes excluded from opportunities. Just because visually, someone thinks that they can't do something when, in actuality they could if they were given the opportunity or the training to do it.”

Most employers noted that they will make accommodations for any employees with disabilities. One employer explained, “If we are known, presenting the fact that they have a disability, we'll do our best to accommodate it.” Similarly, another employer described their approach, “...when it comes to disabilities, you know, we do have individuals on staff that had some form of disabilities. And so, we make sure they have the tools and technology to effectively complete the essential duties of their job. And so, if we don't have that, we make sure we get it so they can be successful in their job when it comes to a form of disability.”

LGBTQ+

Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are not prohibited statewide in private employment though some municipalities and county governments have adopted expanded anti-bias ordinances including

Greensboro, and High Point.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, a “June 2020 Supreme Court ruling affirmed that LGBTQ people across the country are protected by federal law against discrimination in the workplace.”<sup>69</sup> Yet, in N.C. the lack of affirmative employment protections, and growing legislation against LGBTQ+ identified communities,<sup>70,71</sup> presents an issue for worker rights and the experiences of LGBTQ+ discrimination in the workplace.

Industry specific resistance has been seen as well. One construction employer explained, “...this year, it was in a national endeavor for people in the construction industry to rally around this issue. And we did not participate in it last year. And this year, we did participate, but it was, was a baby step. Because again, not everyone's ready to go full on into this journey. And I'm happy we participated. We did share something on social media for Pride month. But, depends on whom you ask. People came to me saying, I feel seen and appreciated in my workplace. Thank you for posting this. And other people apparently went to a leadership saying, why did they mean to post this? Why was this allowed? I'm like, Why? Why would this not be allowed?”

Foreign Born

Another, sometimes overlooked, vulnerable population was immigrants and refugees who make up 11% of the labor force.<sup>72</sup> Foreign born individuals comprise about 10.8% or about 58,035 residents in Guilford County. Immigrants and refugees are employed at high rates in Manufacturing, Construction, Accommodation and Food Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail Trade. None-the-less, one workforce development director noted, “I can't think of anything that's been specifically targeted towards refugees and immigrants.”

---

<sup>68</sup> See [https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality\\_maps/profile\\_state/NC](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality_maps/profile_state/NC)

<sup>69</sup> See [https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/employment\\_non\\_discrimination\\_laws/state](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/employment_non_discrimination_laws/state)

<sup>70</sup> See <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/north-carolina-senate-revives-attacks-on-lgbtq-north-carolinians-this-time-by-passing-dont-say-gay-or-trans-bill-even-more-egregious-than-floridas>

<sup>71</sup> See <https://ncpolicywatch.com/2022/03/16/will-nc-get-swept-up-in-the-national-rising-tide-of-anti-lgbtq-legislation/>

<sup>72</sup> See <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-north-carolina>

Another administrator explained, that while they work with refugee resettlement agencies on job placement, they do not have many services specifically tailored to the needs of foreign-born residents:

*“Yeah, I think that that is, you know, full transparency, a space that we really can enhance our, you know, collaborations, and certainly service and impact. Those agencies do come to our partners network meetings, as we are resettling individuals, think back to the most recent Afghan resettlement initiative that came to [this] County, they did reach out, and we were at the table with them to say, we can provide support by, you know, connecting you with employers that could potentially look at, you know, employing those individuals with skills. But generally speaking, they're leading those efforts, and we're really just being supportive, you know, as an extension of the work that they're already doing. But, I think that most public systems could do, or public workforce systems for that matter, could do a better job at creating better services to serve, you know, immigrant and refugee communities.”*

Documentation status was another obstacle to workforce development services with immigrants.

*“Um, so I'll tell you who's left out Well, right now, what we're going to, again, Hispanic individuals who are they don't have to be citizens, but they're going to have to have that work authorization part. So, and that costs money. And I don't know how they don't exactly know all of this. We have, I've worked with Hispanic students earlier. And I don't know if how much of this has changed. But you have to fill out a form, there's an application fee. And I think it needs to be filled out by an attorney, if so then there's a fee for that. So that's going to be a challenge.”*

Senior Citizens

According to the American Community Survey (2017-2021), there are 81,613 individuals in Guilford County who are 65 years or older. It was recognized that senior citizens presented a viable pool of workers. One interviewee explained, “I



think that more so there's a lot of untapped market that employers could look at. If they were willing to look at them. You have the, the older employee.”

There are several limitations though that were noted: lower educational attainment, retraining needs, and physical energy needed. As one person explained, employers may, “For some reason, they may not think the older ones have enough energy.” Another point made by some participants was the fact that while there were limited resources available for older jobseekers, more funding is geared towards educating and training younger people, “now we find older adults having to learn new skill sets. And then once they learn those skill sets, they don't have the experience to step into positions. So, you know, an apprenticeship opportunity would work great for them. But money is being, they are funding, it's provided for the 18-to-24-year-old. But there's no money provided for the older adult.”

Veterans

A group that received attention for needed additional support were veterans of armed services who represent about 6.6% of the Guilford County population. Employers, economic development officials, and workforce development professionals all noted the need for helping veterans who were having trouble with finding employment. One explained, “Yeah, so we have a Veteran Services Unit. So, they're working with individuals that have served, you know, in the military and have come back, and they have some sort of barrier to, you know, successfully reentering the workforce. And so, the state provides us three full time personnel to work out at the Career Centers to work with them.”

Some of the barriers that veteran's face were brought up as well. For example, one participant said, “So I worry that a lot of these veterans who come out, you know, they end up with PTSD or some type of mental illness. And no, employers don't want to have to deal with that.”

Adjacent to the issue of workforce equity for veterans was the issue of homelessness which is high in this population. An interviewee explained, “our veterans' program specifically works with homeless veterans and a homeless

veteran population. And then they'll try to get them into certain shelters and veteran programs to get them back to where they have suitable housing.”

### *Employer Issues*

#### Worker Shortage

According to the U.S. Chamber of commerce there is a national deficit of workers. As Stephanie Ferguson, Director, Global Employment Policy & Special Initiatives, explains “Right now, the latest data shows that we have over 10 million job openings in the U.S.—but only around 6 million unemployed workers. We have a lot of jobs, but not enough workers to fill them. If every unemployed person in the country found a job, we would still have 4 million open jobs.” The shortage, she explains, is due to both the growth in the job market which add 3.8 million jobs in 2021 as well as the 2.9 million who dropped out of the workforce due to early retirement, enhanced benefits during the pandemic, issues with childcare, and the opening of a record number of new small businesses.<sup>73</sup>

This issue was top of mind for our interviewees. One interviewee explained, “what's not going well, is trying to find job seekers to fill all those opportunities.” Participants all declared that there just aren't enough applicants for the number of jobs available, “there's just a labor shortage across the board in every sector.” As one workforce development director explained, “One of the biggest trends we're finding, and I think this is kind of statewide, is that we've got a lot of openings. And we don't have enough people.”

The issue was being felt across all sectors as one economic development officer explained, “manufacturing is struggling to get people to actually come to work.” Another added, “Yeah, we get a lot of telephone calls, especially any jobs that requires manual labor. Those employers have a harder time. I know right now of two employers that I've been dealing with in the last week or two, a landscaper and pest control. The pest control services, they're looking at trying to have some type of training.... And I've got the landscape labor company that she says, If I hire

---

<sup>73</sup> Ayala, Megan. 2022 “The Pandemic Unemployed Survey: Why Americans are Staying Out of the Workforce” U.S. Chamber of Commerce <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/the-pandemic-unemployed-survey-why-americans-are-staying-out-of-the-workforce>

somebody, she doesn't usually quit before I get the paperwork done to get them into payroll system. “

Industries were having an especially hard time finding and keeping anyone over entry level positions and these positions were a revolving door with many leaving within months of employment. This churn puts additional strain on those who remain with an employer as they have to absorb the additional workload for the same pay, “it is hard for those that work in these places and they, they don't have enough help. So, it's putting a burden on those that are still working.”

#### Mismatch of Skills

Another issue with recruitment is the mismatch between worker's skills and employers' needs. One workforce development director explained, “there's plenty of jobs, and there's plenty of job seekers, the problem is the mismatch of skills, so that people that are looking for a job don't have the skills that the employers have vacancies or so that is, is, you know, a little bit of a mismatch we would have if we put all these bodies into jobs. Yeah, we could fill a lot of them, or maybe all of them, but, but if you're not skilled for that particular type of work, that's a problem.”

Technological changes in the workplace were brought up as well as skilled trades and training and even just the physicality of some jobs, “a lot of our barriers too are ability to do the work, physically.” On the job training, apprenticeships, community college programs, and other efforts have had results. One administrator explained, “We've had some better success lately, but we do still, you know, continue to struggle with finding good talent.”

Technological deficits were especially acute with older jobseekers. It was said that, “they are left out because they didn't grow up in the era of computers.” This deficit was exacerbated by a fear of technology: “I never really hear people talk about the broadband being an issue, but we just hear people who are just afraid they've not ever had to do it, and they just are scared to learn. Or that, you know, maybe they just have kids that help them when they have to, but that's not I have not heard anyone talk about access and being an issue.”

## Drug Testing & Background Checks

A final area of exploration with employers was around drug testing and background checks. Drug testing has been found to disproportionately impact workers of color. One recent survey found “African-American respondents experienced the highest rate of firing or being reprimanded”<sup>74</sup> Another study of nearly 70,000 respondents found, “younger age, male sex, black race, income greater than \$20,000, completion of high school and non-urban residence were associated with report of drug testing at one’s workplace among the full sample as were non-white collar occupation, work in medium or large workplace, and absence of other substance abuse/dependence. In stratified analyses, black race was associated with report of workplace level drug testing among executive/administrative/managerial/financial workers and technicians/related support occupations; Hispanic ethnicity was associated with the outcome among technicians/related support occupations.”<sup>75</sup>

Many employers had universal testing of employees. One company executive explained, “everyone takes the drug test. Yep. And I have heard from people, you know, this is, this is not equitable. This is a bad practice. Companies shouldn't be doing this anymore. I mean, even I have, I have a desk job, I had to take a drug test to get hired. And you know, some people push back around, well, alcoholism doesn't get tested and screened, on the drug tests and what if somebody comes to work drunk or hungover? So, there are all these layers that are not, not to be discounted there, right? But the bottom line is, is we do drug test.” This universal testing was usually at point-of-hiring: “We only test when we bring people in. We do the drug testing when we bring people in. We do drug and background check. But after that, not a yearly or quarterly or whatever we don't do that.”

Other employers had foregone the drug testing altogether, “a lot of our manufacturers and business and industry partners have forgone the drug test.” However, most still required a background screening. One employer explained, “we do not require drug testing. But we do a criminal background. And each scenario is weighed as far as you know, severity of the crime time since, since that occurred,

---

<sup>74</sup> See <https://detox.net/uncover/drugs-at-work/>

<sup>75</sup> Becker, W.C., Meghani, S., Tetrault, J.M. and Fiellin, D.A. (2014), Racial/ethnic differences in report of drug testing practices at the workplace level in the U.S.. *Am J Addict*, 23: 357-362. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1521-0391.2013.12109.x>

and just how it pertains to their specific position.” This represents a shift for some employers who said they used to test for drugs, but they had too many issues then with filling positions: “I think we have good workers. But I think honestly, just passing the drug test is a big, big deal.” Another added, “so, a lot of employers have taken marijuana off the drug test, so that they can get more people hired. Because that's more, more recreational everywhere.” This change has been recent and attributed in part to the exodus of so many from the labor market: “especially in the last two years where employers can't hire .... they're more willing to hire people that have some type of criminal background record. Depending on what it is, though, everybody looks at it a different way.”

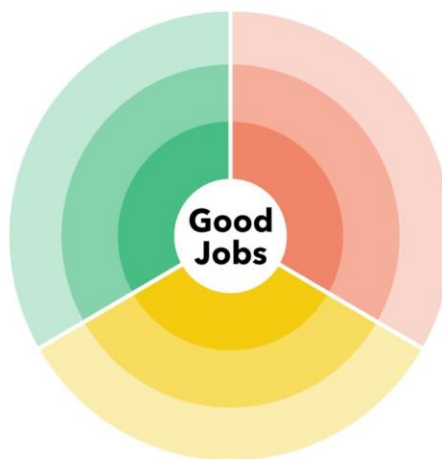
## Good Jobs: A Working Definition

### Economic Stability

- Stable, family-sustaining pay
- Sufficient, accessible, and broadly available benefits
- Fair, reliable scheduling practices
- Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions

### Economic Mobility

- Clear and equitable hiring and advancement pathways
- Accessible, paid training and development opportunities
- Wealth-building opportunities



### Equity, Respect & Voice

- Organizational and management culture, policies, and practices that:
  - are transparent and enable accountability
  - support a sense of belonging and purpose
  - advance DEIA\*
  - and address discrimination.
- Ability to improve the workplace, such as through collective action or participatory management practices

\*DEIA: diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

FIGURE 2 - ASPEN INSTITUTE WORKING DEFINITION OF GOOD JOBS

## Key Worker Issues

We explored perspectives on the issues workers have with the various stakeholders interviewed. Those on the frontlines of human resources and workforce development had relevant perspectives on what they felt were problems facing jobseekers in Guilford County. The issues fell into the categories of low pay, lack of flexibility or work-life balance, and few advancement opportunities. It is noted that these issues align well with the working definition of a good job proposed by the Aspen Institute which includes the domains of economic stability, economic mobility or advancement, and principals of equity, respect, and voice for workers.<sup>76</sup>

### Low Pay and Limited Benefits

One theory explaining the worker shortage is that it is being caused by low wages, poor working conditions, and the unwillingness of workers displaced during the pandemic to return to underpaid positions. According to an August 2022 study by the North Carolina Department of Commerce,

*“The number of job openings in North Carolina skyrocketed in 2021, while the supply of jobseekers fell below pre-recession levels, leading to a record-low number of jobseekers per job opening. These trends were particularly pronounced for low-wage jobs, such as Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations. By the end of 2021, the number of job openings in Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations had more than doubled, while the number of jobseekers in this category was 18% lower than its pre-recession level.”<sup>77</sup>*

A recent article in the UNC School of Government N.C. Impact Initiative also notes that workers in education and healthcare have also dropped out of the market in part due to wages:

*“The medical field has been greatly impacted by these shortages. North Carolina was already projected to face a shortage of around 12,500 nurses by 2033 before the pandemic and is now set to face projected shortages of up to 21,000 nurses in the coming decade due to burnout.....*

---

<sup>76</sup> See <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/good-jobs-champions-group/>

<sup>77</sup> See <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/blog/2022/08/30/low-wage-workers-and-k-shaped-recovery-north-carolina>

*Another heavily affected sector is education, with a November 2021 survey indicating that half of all teachers were considering switching positions. In addition to low levels of pay and benefits, teachers say they feel stretched thin, with new expectations and little support. For many since the pandemic began, teaching has been exhausting, and some say it's not sustainable.”<sup>78</sup>*

Our interviewees clearly recognized the “K-shaped recovery” that is being discussed in the media. The economic rebound from the pandemic benefited higher wage workers who are now earning more and seeing more job openings, but simultaneously this is furthering disparities with low wage workers. One economic development official noted that wages were rising across the job market, “what’s going on is employers in [this] County, have really over the past couple of years, raised salaries for not just entry wages for you know, entry level positions, but really all positions. So that's helping bridge a gap.”

None-the-less it was pointed out that inflation has made these wage gains less meaningful, “we know the price everything go everything's going up price wise, but salaries ain't going up [as fast].” Starting wages were not sufficient for living costs as one interviewee noted, “...one thing is the companies are not paying enough at all like to live on, and I see some of these, you know, but I see sometimes, like, an ad say, you know, it'll pay \$12 an hour and ... I'm like, what? Like, if they offered that to me, I'd be like, what no, like, nobody can live on that.”

Another interviewee pointed out the bifurcation in the market between high- and low-skilled workers, “It's a challenge right now, because of the dollar the hourly wage that's being offered for relatively low skilled work. It's kind of an undercut. And so I think that's, I think that's part of the challenge.” Finally, and further underscoring the divide between higher wage workers and others, an employer explained the recent loss of some employees, “I think he’s, he was looking for more salary [from us]. But he said, you know what, let me go ahead and leave. Since then, the other two that left, one was salary, he saw an opportunity where I think he's gonna get maybe like \$20,000, a year more. And I'm like, I don't blame you. Not at

---

<sup>78</sup> See <https://ncimpact.sog.unc.edu/2022/09/the-ongoing-workforce-shortage/>

all.” It wasn’t just direct pay, but the lack of benefits which also made higher skilled workers think about leaving, “Since we are a small nonprofit, our benefits and what we can offer are limited, especially when it comes to health care. My current issue right now and the person I’m trying to hire is they are the head of their family... And because we are so small as an organization, we cannot pay for their health insurance.... So that really decreases our ability to hire people because of that.”

Other participants explained that new manufacturing industries had come to the area and attracted the higher-skilled workers away, “you know, several new industries are coming in, and they have gotten the higher pay. So, you know...they probably are most likely pulling from other industries where the pay has not been so good. We’ve seen a lot of that. But it’s again, I think it comes back to those wages where, you know, we’ve had the lower wages.”

Flexibility (Work/Life Balance)

A December 2022 article in Financial Management Magazine had the title, “Benefits and flexibility remain important to attract talent, report finds” The article, which used data from Indeed and Glassdoor found that, “employers trying to fill in-person jobs may find themselves at a disadvantage as workers gravitate to work that lets them stay home.... Organizations that adopt flexible work can cater more to employees with disabilities and parents with childcare responsibilities. They also open their doors to expanded talent pools....”<sup>79</sup>

Flexible schedules, work from home opportunities, and work/life balance were a common topic in our interviews. One participant noted, “I want to work for a company that has paid parental leave and excellent family benefits because it speaks to the culture of the company. And I think we don’t talk about that enough.” Another employer also spoke about the need for work-place flexibility:

*“So I think employers who would be more flexible, when it comes to that, I think, in the past, and what we’re dealing with, right now, we have employers who they don’t care, they don’t care that you can’t, you don’t have, you know, your child sick, or maybe, you know, Mom has to go get a job and you don’t have childcare. They don’t, they don’t, they don’t look at the individual*

---

<sup>79</sup> See <https://www.fm-magazine.com/news/2022/dec/benefits-flexibility-attract-talent-report-finds.html>



*situations, and they're not flexible when it comes to that if you don't show up, you don't show up. And you get, you know, you get fired. So, yeah, we've, we've struggled with that over the years. I think that PTO, health benefits, and being flexibility when it comes to childcare.*

*And to an individual situation, you know, I mean, that's, that's something I've been, I've been blessed in both my organizations, they've been very flexible when it comes to the deaths in the family or, and I know it's not, you know, it's not always like that all these industries can't always be as flexible, but I think that needs to be considered. And then, you know, we're, we're talking with our HR folks in the industries and trying to get them to think more, more like that, and to encourage policies that will allow for flexibility and to manage on different situations because everybody's got a different background, everybody's dealing with different stuff. And I just feel like they're not they've not been as forgiving. Over the years.”*

In a similar vein, an interviewee discussed the flexibility needed for working parents in particular industries like construction. She explained, “related to that are childcare issues, because you gotta get back to pick up your kids at a certain time, whether it's afterschool care, or daycare, or whatever it might be. So, these are all are interrelated. We are seeing some companies offer more flexible work arrangements, so people can mitigate that at least a couple days a week. We are not that company. We are asking people to be in the office. And part of that is construction was deemed essential and never shut down. And that means for everyone in the office to so those are some of the issues.”

Lack of Advancement

Another job quality issue for workers is the opportunity for mobility or advancement. One employer said, “I think there could be more opportunities where I would like to see there being more opportunities for advancement for other individuals here.” Most entry level and production-based jobs lacked clear pathways as one interviewee suggested, “the people that are engaged in employment there are often in you know, what we tend to call the dead-end jobs....”

Smaller employers also had limited opportunities. While they might have good pay and benefits and even economic mobility, one had to wait for attrition among senior levels before positions would open for promotions, “Oh, yeah, economic mobility, stability, for sure. Um, opportunities for advancement, not so much just because this is a place that people like to work at for a long time. So, people, once they get a higher-level role, they typically stay in that role for a significant amount of time. So those opportunities to advance don't necessarily come up.” Similarly, “I think we offer good jobs. Now as far as advancement, you know, obviously, we're, we're, a small organization and unless I'm gonna leave and the person has been here for a while, and they're qualified, you know, there's just our size, there's we're kind of limited on advancement in a clear advancement opportunity.”



**FIGURE 3 – STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY**

### *Structural Barriers*

The distribution of occupations by race or gender tends to perpetuate workplace inequities and relegates women and people of color to lower-paying jobs. While social mobility usually involves climbing up the economic ladder and achieving a higher standard of living, making more money, and getting a better-paying job with

better benefits, there are many barriers to mobility that have been observed in the literature and in these interviews with stakeholders. More economic mobility happens when the social and material conditions exist which help and support that person, or people as a whole, in their efforts to gain access to employment opportunities.

In the *State of Working NC 2021: Protecting & Connecting Workers* report from the NC Justice Center,<sup>80</sup> the authors note, “Rebuilding from COVID-19 presents an opportunity to shore up our economic defenses and lift up communities that previously were left in harm’s way. Helping people overcome the barriers to rejoining the labor force is the quickest way to speed our collective economic recovery, and doing it right will put us on a path to a more resilient post-COVID economy.”

Some of the barriers that were underscored in our interviews (as well as in the literature) include: access to transportation, affordable and safe housing close to employment opportunities, and affordable quality childcare. One interviewee explained,

*“So from our perspective, and the work I’ve done, since about 2006, working at youth programming, and all the way up through adult dislocated worker and just the policy side of the house, a lot of the barriers kind of stemmed from issues around transportation, access to technology or broadband, childcare opportunities that are from different organizations, we’re, you know, we’re in this new space around diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. So, I think a lot of organizations who support work around workforce development have changed their thought processes, and in organizations who hire people have changed their thought processes. So, I think just a big barrier is our big reason why a lot of people don’t aren’t able to follow the economic mobility ladder, or just basic simple barriers around access to technology, transportation, and childcare.”*

---

<sup>80</sup> See <https://www.ncjustice.org/publications/state-of-working-nc-2021-protecting-connecting-workers/>

## Access to Transportation

Nearly every interviewee pointedly discussed the barriers presented by lack of access to public forms of transportation, especially in High Point. Transportation impacts all other areas of life: “in our community transportation is really the deal breaker...whether they can get to the job or not.” Another said the problem is especially critical for immigrant, “the accessibility of services, because of transportation, especially working with the immigrant population, that really limits the areas in which they can resettle to the area and live in the area, because they have to have access to both employment but also medical care, as well.”

Another transportation-related issue was that many High Point residents have to go to Greensboro for work or healthcare. One participant explained, “People are having to truck to Greensboro not for everything but enough that it becomes another barrier So how do we spread the wealth around the County in terms of resources, help, and access?” Similarly, access to County social services required trips to Greensboro, “yeah along those lines, we have folks who have difficult time getting to social services. Actually, if someone in High Point has to go to Greensboro the transportation, there's just, it's difficult to take PART and get into downtown Greensboro, and so we often find that some services are not available in High Point that are in Greensboro.”

Mass transit and walking are not feasible alternatives. One neighborhood leader noted, “our communities are not designed to walk everybody knows that if you just could get out and walk easily...” Another, who had lived in many other US cities, decried, “the transportation system here is horrible. You people would have a hard time. Busses are running but, you know if they didn't have a car, they'd have a heck of a time trying to get to a job.” Another elaborated on the bus schedules, “for people who don't have transportation, you know, the way that our bus system is running currently, they can get to a first shift job and get home. And they can go to a second shift job, but they can't get home because the bus transportation stops. And they definitely cannot get to a third shift. And, and I know that the hours for our transportation was supposed to be extended until at least 9:15 pm or so.... I don't think that that's moved forward, because they could not find what they, what they call qualified drivers.” Transportation has been a long-standing issue, “I've

lived here since 2006 and ever since I've lived here, every year the conversation is about the transportation. And nothing has ever really been improved.”

#### Affordable Housing

A report just released by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank in Washington DC, noted that “Since 2010, the price of a house has increased by 31.5 percent, while rents have risen by 14.6 percent. The average fair market rent, which represents the 40th percentile of gross rent, for a two-bedroom apartment in North Carolina now exceeds \$960 per month, or more than \$11,500 per year. State officials estimate that North Carolina needs 900,000 additional homes over the next decade to meet the demands of a growing population.”<sup>81</sup> In part, this report blamed the shortage of housing supply on zoning which restricts density and multi-family housing in preference for detached single-family homes. The National Low Income Housing Coalition points out that housing affordability is a workforce issue as “without affordable housing, families have constrained opportunities to increase earnings.”<sup>82</sup>

Many of those we interviewed listed lack of housing and housing affordability as issues impacting workers in their areas. This lack of housing was seen for single family homes, as well as multi-family housing types. An employer explained, “We don't have a lot of affordable single-family homes.” Recent increase in cost of housing was also discussed, “I have noticed that the housing market and rental market has increased.” One participant reflected on just how much the prices have increased:

*“I will tell you, in the six years that I've been here, I have noticed that the housing market and rental market has increased, because when I first moved here, you know, you could rent a nice house, three bedroom house for like, \$700. And now, it's more like \$1000. So that, you know, things have changed over the six years in that area. So, I would think that it would be getting a little bit harder with that \$30,000 to \$32,000 a year [salary]. If that's the only income Yeah.”*

---

<sup>81</sup> See <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/keeping-north-carolinas-housing-affordable>

<sup>82</sup> See <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/why-we-care>

## Childcare

Childcare in North Carolina is also prohibitively expensive. According to the Care Index<sup>83</sup> at-home care averages \$27,251/yr and in-center care averages \$8,643/yr. This represents about 34% of the median household income. As a result of COVID19 closures of childcare facilities and schools, availability of childcare has become more restrictive. Childcare supports parents' employment, but also affects their ability to work sufficient hours, seek promotions, and build skills.<sup>84</sup> A December 2022 headline underscores the issue, "The NC economy is said to be 'inextricably linked to childcare'."<sup>85</sup>

It has been argued that high quality universal pre-K could "significantly reduce the financial burden facing families with young children and help ensure that children are prepared for kindergarten."<sup>86</sup> It also helps with reducing poverty in households with children by reducing the cost-burden of families due to childcare expenses.

An October 2022 headline by WRAL noted, "workforce crisis: Shortage of childcare employees keeps parents from getting back to work." The childcare workforce itself is being impacted. As a workforce development director pointed out, "an issue now though, is with the workforce shortage is really impacting childcare and childcare centers, because there's not available staff or the spots are taken. Or you may not be able to acquire a voucher from whatever organization that provides those Department of Social Services, and things of that nature." In many rural areas, participants noted only having one or two options for care, "...as far as the childcare is concerned, that's a huge a huge deal in our area. In fact, where I live, there's only one child development center, that, that's public."

For many interviewees, childcare was both a barrier to employment and an equity issue for employed and job seeking women. One explained, "I would also say childcare [is a barrier] because they can't, if they don't have childcare, they can't go to work. If you know, and then they don't have a plan B when childcare is not a,

---

<sup>83</sup> See <https://www.care.com/care-index>

<sup>84</sup> See <https://buildthefoundation.org/2020/12/new-report-child-care-crisis-cost-north-carolina-2-4-billion-yearly-before-the-pandemic/>

<sup>85</sup> See <https://localtoday.news/sc/the-nc-economy-is-said-to-be-inextricably-linked-to-childcare-93251.html>

<sup>86</sup> Lieberman, A. (2022). "Policy Recommendations: Universal Pre-K." New America. <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/care-report/policy-recommendations-universal-pre-k/>

you know, my kids sick, I don't have a backup plan. I can't go to work today. And employers are getting tighter and tighter on you know, that's one of the things we found here is that, you know, you might get one chance, but you can't use that every time because employers are tightened are really tightening the absentee policies is what we've also found here.” A corporate executive suggested one possible way employers could help, “I did mention in a meeting last week that if we're really having trouble recruiting, the number one thing I think will help us is if we had a child childcare stipend. And that's where men and women are like, if we provide a childcare stipend, that's a huge benefit for people.” Another employment specialist linked childcare and the worker desire for more flexibility and talked about the need for onsite childcare at employment locations:

*“I think American workers want and need more flexible work hours, that may or may not be working remotely. But, but definitely some flexibility somewhere in there. And it probably does tie back into childcare. For most things, I think in our area, also, we have several industrial parks, that are already in existence or are being built. And I think that, that our community leaders, and even state leaders, when these companies are choosing to relocate, or build here, and they're looking at one of these industrial parks, I think there should be some kind of incentive either through accompanies and, you know, maybe state incentives to consider having a childcare facility within that park. And then it would not matter if you work with Toyota or Lidl or whatever other company is there, it would be primarily for those employees and their children. And I think that those childcare centers should also be opened. And it's hard, you know, and staffed to accommodate the work hours of those facilities. So just not an eight, hour seven to six, or whatever the normal childcare hours are, I think they need to, you know, expand beyond that. I think there are a few childcare facilities that do that, but not enough.”*

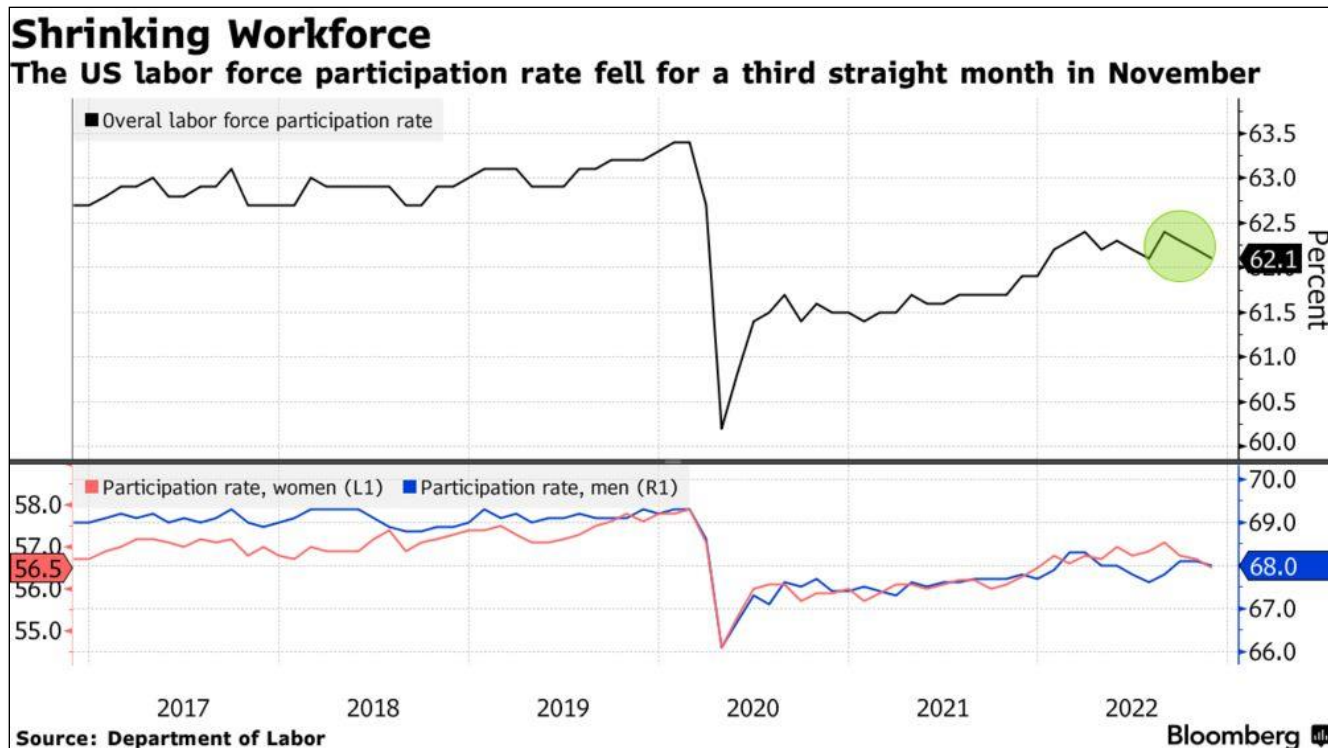


FIGURE 4 – US LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION DECEMBER 2022 - BLOOMBERG<sup>87</sup>

### Workforce Engagement

With labor force participation below pre-pandemic levels, many of our interviewees discussed engagement as an issue. One said, “it's just so critical right now, for our employers to get talent, and they need it now. And we have a lot of people who are not engaged in the workforce for various reasons.” Another elaborated:

*“So, yeah, so engagement. So COVID has really changed how we work with people. I mean, you know, there's a big push for virtual services and making sure we individually can meet them where they are, and engage with them without them coming to bricks and mortar centers. So, we're really focusing on our virtual services, some combination of hybrid services, but COVID really changed. Individuals walking in doors, seeking out help. So just trying to re-engage individuals. I don't think it's a thing of people are lazy, they don't want to work or they got too much money*

<sup>87</sup> See <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-12-02/us-jobs-report-shows-more-americans-are-leaving-the-workforce>



*from the government. I just think circumstances are where they're trying to figure out childcare needs, transportation needs, how to address some of the barriers, and just engage and get them back into the workforce. So, I think engagement is the biggest thing we've kind of seen lacking, or we have to, we have to work on getting individuals back when the doors are back into services."*

While "COVID has changed everything for community serving organizations," some agencies had restarted in-person workshops in an attempt to re-engage jobseekers, "we're looking at ways to start some of those workshops back now that we're starting to see more customers in person can have more in person classes." Another noted people coming in to seek services, "primarily, people who are seeking employment services will come in to us and we'll engage them into our resource room where we have staff that meet them." Another workforce development official noted that they had resources and funding to support more engagement, "we're able to provide training dollars and supportive services to job seekers that are looking to get training in specific career pathways."

### *SNAP & WIC Benefits*

Guilford County, North Carolina is home to a wide range of agricultural resources, including 854 farms, 76,352 acres of farmland, and \$521,860 in market value of agricultural products sold.<sup>88</sup> At the same time, Greensboro/High Point, the major metropolitan area within the county, has 18 census tracts designated as food deserts<sup>89</sup> and a food insecurity rate of 13.3%<sup>90</sup> or about 71,000 individuals who don't get enough to eat.

In a related project conducted by the RPIC, one pediatrician noted issues with food insecure families in Guilford County. She said: "I would say for me, probably somewhere not eight to 10% of families have some degree of food insecurity at some point in time. Because a lot of my moms who are single moms or dad is not

---

<sup>88</sup> US Department of Agriculture (2017). *2017 Census Full Report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1\\_Chapter\\_2\\_County\\_Level/North\\_Carolina/st37\\_2\\_0001\\_000\\_1.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/North_Carolina/st37_2_0001_000_1.pdf)

<sup>89</sup> US Department of Agriculture (2019). *Food Access Research Atlas*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>

<sup>90</sup> Feeding America (2020). *Food insecurity in Guilford, County*. Retrieved from: <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/north-carolina/county/guilford>

routinely in the picture, when they deliver, they're usually working hourly jobs, and they don't get they don't get a lot of they don't really make any money when they're home on maternity leave. And so, I would say at least eight to 10% have some degree of food insecurity and probably more than that, that without WIC without WIC, it probably be maybe 15 to 20%.” In addition to limited access to foods, the pediatrician noted a lack of access to healthy food: “I look at food insecurity, actually, in different ways. There's people who have access to no food or limited food, and there's people who have access to very poor nutritional choices. And I actually write that also as food insecurity. So, I think that when I do my dietary history, that I think that that would probably be the next thing, and then bringing them to understand how you can get some other resources for healthy foods and how to do that.”

For this project, DSS staff were interviewed to better understand SNAP and WIC benefits and how people access those resources. One interviewee explained who she sees as applicants to the program, “So it's generally what you would consider your vulnerable population, regardless of age, unlike some of the medical assistance programs, Food Nutrition Services is set aside for any household member that falls under a certain income category. Normally, it's 133% of the poverty level.... But it's generally you know, households that are economically disadvantaged...The different thing about food nutrition services is that we service the household instead of individuals. And so whatever income is available to the household, or who's considered a mandatory household member, we issue out the benefits that way. And again, there really is no age restriction other than case head has to be an adult 18 years of age or older, living on their own or if they're an adult living with their parents, young adult living with their parents, they can't apply for separate benefits until they are 22 and older.”

Feeding America estimates that as a result of the COVID19 pandemic and the subsequent unemployment, “45 million people (1 in 7), including 15 million children (1 in 5), may have experienced food insecurity in 2020.”<sup>91</sup> The NC Justice Center noted, “during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people depending

---

<sup>91</sup> Feeding America. 2022. *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020 & 2022*.  
[https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/National%20Projections%20Brief\\_3.9.2021\\_0.pdf](https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/National%20Projections%20Brief_3.9.2021_0.pdf)

on SNAP benefits has increased by 29 percent in the state.”<sup>92</sup> Locally, DSS officials also saw a dramatic increase:

*“Well, you know, just during COVID, the volume of customers that we see increased dramatically. And so right now, we generally hold between, say, 15- and 1,700 applications each week. And then our recertification staff have between maybe 250 to 300 recertifications per worker per month. Now, that's on a normal, normal case volume, normal case flow. But because of the public health emergency, the state of North Carolina has rolled some of those over and extended some certification periods, and lifted some of the recertification requirements because of the volume, because there will be no way that we could actually keep up, because some staff deficits and all those things. So thankfully, the state has put some of those things in place so that we can keep up.”*

As noted in other areas of concern, immigrant families are often the most food insecure. Carl Vierling, Executive Director of the Greater High Point Food Alliance, explained in a report by the N.C. Poverty Research Fund, “A lot of immigrants were essential workers, and they went to work even when they were sick, because they had no options.’ Many immigrants were barred from receiving a range of government benefits, including the federal stimulus checks and SNAP. In North Carolina, over 400,000 foreign-born individuals were ineligible to receive stimulus payments. Many immigrants also hesitated to seek assistance due to fear, language barriers or cultural differences.”<sup>93</sup>

Local DSS officials explained how they try to accommodate mixed-documentation status families:

*“So with the citizenship requirements, we are able to kind of encompass those household where the case head or the adult applicant may not meet the citizenship requirement, but the children in the household do. Now the case head, regardless of their citizenship, their income would count. But we will prorate*

---

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.ncjustice.org/publications/an-already-food-insecure-nc-sees-hunger-on-the-rise/>

<sup>93</sup> N.C. Poverty Research Fund. 2021. *The Persistent and Pervasive Challenge of Child Poverty and Hunger in North Carolina* [https://law.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NC-child-poverty\\_final-web.pdf](https://law.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NC-child-poverty_final-web.pdf)

*their income because we can't issue out benefits to meet their needs, but they're financially responsible for the citizens in their household. We prorate the income so it's not counted 100% But it is still counted towards their eligibility. So yeah, folks that don't meet all of the citizenship criteria, but there are other members in the household that do we issue out benefits for those that do."*

While attempting to accommodate these families, the DSS official did note that language barriers were the most significant issue for processing applications from immigrants:

*"Um, just in my experience, I would say probably those with language, the language barriers, because we then do have to wait for an interpreter. And then they're the ones that maybe have had an additional need. But then we didn't realize it until after we were able to speak with the interpreter. A lot of times customers will want to come in and want to use their children to interpret, and we- because it's not an adult, you know, they can't sign off on a documentation- can't allow that. So, then there's a wait time to connect with someone, but we do have, you know, a contract with, excuse me, the language line that provides, you know, we can always get a Spanish interpreter, just like that.*

*Sometimes there's a little bit of a delay, if you need someone that speaks Urdu is another common one that comes up. You know, so they do have a little, but by and large, I will say since the, the County has allowed the opportunity to apply over the phone, it's worked out a little bit better. And then also applying online is an option....as far as difficulty, I would say it's the those with limited English proficiency."*

As part of the interview, we asked what recommendations they had for making SNAP/WIC easier to access or easier to process. The DSS official explained,

*"So magic wand, I would need more staff so that, I don't have staff that are working with hundreds of recertifications a month. And if those hundreds aren't done there, that puts someone at the risk of there being a break in their benefits, because then what happens is they call and 'hey, I don't have my food stamps.' 'And it's like, okay, we're gonna get to you, thank you so much.'"*

*And then it's not immediate, because food is an immediate need, then they're going to escalate those calls up and up and up and up and up. So magic wand for me, would be because, you know, I feel like this system is set up to serve those that need it. I think that the income requirements could you know, because, because they are some that are the working poor like to say, you know, they're working everyday and they're just over the income limit, but they still have bills they have, you know, all the things that kind of pull from their monetary resources to buy food. We can't serve those. You know, I wish we could do a little something about that. But if we can't, you know, maybe that's bigger scale. But as far as immediate, I just need more staff so we can serve our customers better. If we can balance out this workload a little bit more, maybe we won't have people call in and say, hey, I didn't get my benefit. So, we won't have folks saying, you know, I called to report a change, and we weren't able to get it done because we have 300 other ones to do.”*



**Supplemental  
Nutrition  
Assistance  
Program**

**Putting Healthy Food  
Within Reach**

## Focus Group Findings

Focus groups or listening sessions were conducted between 11/4/2022 and 1/20/2023. Focus groups were conducted at Greensboro and High Point NCWorks Offices, at the Guilford County Department of Social Services, and via zoom. The groups included community stakeholders from partner organizations, SNAP beneficiaries, participants in workforce development programs, persons with justice involvement, and retirees. A variety of themes were explored during the hour to hour-and-a-half long group interviews.

### *Impact of Covid on Jobs, Workforce Development, & Social Services*

Dr. Harry Holzer, Professor of Public Policy at Georgetown University, and a Senior Fellow at The Brookings Institution notes, “As we slowly recover from the COVID-19 pandemic that is leaving many closed or reorganized businesses in its wake, each month we will continue to see workers permanently displaced from their jobs. And automation and globalization will generate many additional displacements in the coming years and decades.”<sup>94</sup> There was a consensus among social service providers, jobseekers, and low-income residents that the COVID-19 pandemic had fundamentally changed the way that work and social service agencies functioned. One student participating in a focus group explained that COVID had slowed down the availability of certain jobs:

*“I think with the fact that COVID kind of slow down jobs are less and less available as they were a few months or a year ago. It doesn't affect me too much because I'm still, I want to be a physical education teacher and I still have to finish my degree. So even though there are no jobs for that right now, you know, it doesn't really affect me too much right now.”*

Another participant said that while he sees more jobs available, employer expectations had changed:

*“I think that I've come across a lot of opportunities. But I also think that there's been a shift- maybe I am blaming it on COVID. But since the pandemic and the wages going up, and people*

---

<sup>94</sup> Holzer, H.J. 2021. “After COVID-19: Building a More Coherent and Effective Workforce Development System in the United States.” Brookings. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Holzer\\_LO\\_v5-1.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Holzer_LO_v5-1.pdf)

*having to compete at those wages for people to fill in certain spots, employers have pushed back also. They are pushing back on having to pay more expecting more. But there's a disconnect. I think that there's like tiers. Between people that either have degrees and then degrees with experience, or no degrees and experience or very diverse experience are all being treated a little differently."*

Participants also indicated that there were now more options for remote or hybrid work as well as more flexibility in social services as a result of the pandemic.

*"I think that when the pandemic hit and, and businesses found a new way of operating, and now is trying to connect folks that have the skill set to not only do the job but navigate through the, the new way that we act as a function. Because a lot of company found out that you don't have to come into a brick-and-mortar office in order to do the job."*

Similarly, the numbers of individuals being served by 'brick-and-mortar' workforce development agencies had declined:

*"So, historically, we were serving upwards of 35 to 40,000 individuals pre COVID. That means that they were these are unique individuals coming into our two career centers. So we have two NCWorks career centers here in Guilford County, one in High Point, and one in Greensboro, so about 35 to 40,000 individuals pre COVID, were coming into our Career Centers. Throughout COVID. Obviously, we had to modify our operations. And so, we deployed a lot of different virtual service options for them to be able to do that, as we're coming through and or peripherally out of COVID, we've seen a complete flip of our customer accounts coming into the brick-and-mortar locations of the career centers and a steep incline of individuals that are accessing services virtually. So we're working on our annual report. Now, it seems as if we touched about 23,000 individuals in the last program year, so we're down close to 60-70%."*

### *Lack of General Awareness of Workforce Development & Social Services Resources*

Well before the pandemic, Dr. Lindsey McDougle, Associate Professor at the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University–Newark has noted that, “A lack of nonprofit awareness may result in limited utilization of critical services among those that may need the most nonprofit assistance.”<sup>95</sup> Participants in our community stakeholder focus groups also noted that while there may be plenty of social services and resources available in Guilford County, many clients didn’t know about them:

*“I think awareness to of what's available. I know we talked about how the programs are working together. But sometimes parents that are coming into the city may not know what those programs are. So, I think more awareness of what is available and the accessibility to those programs will be, will be a lot helpful to parents who are coming into the area and parents that are here, and trying to navigate what's what and what's not and having a central place for that information will be really good.”*

A social worker at DSS echoed the problem of lack of awareness:

*“As you know, sometimes in conversation where, you know, just customers maybe not being aware of all that we can do. Sometimes they don't really ask for what's needed. But we try to as much as we can simplify that process and have them only see one worker.”*

Another stakeholder noted that while they had made efforts to partner with other organizations and connect with jobseekers, attendance at outreach events was not always very robust:

*“So, I mean, we try to we try hard to make strong partnerships with community partners, such as nonprofits, of course, Goodwill is our service provider, contractor, service provider for our adult and youth and dislocated worker programs. So we try to go out*

---

<sup>95</sup> McDougle, Lindsey. 2014. “Understanding Public Awareness of Nonprofit Organizations: Exploring the Awareness-Confidence Relationship.” *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*. 19:187-199. <https://csis.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/LINDSEY-MCDOUGLE.pdf>



*into the community, sometimes we have the mobile Career Center, where we try to connect with job seekers, I just still feel like there's a lack of awareness of the support that we can provide to both job seekers and employers. So I know we try hard to connect with people. But it's not always as easy as we'd like it to be. We will hold events, sometimes job fairs or orientations about our program. And sometimes the attendance isn't what we had hoped. So, I don't know."*

One community member recommended that more peer-to-peer sharing and word-of-mouth marketing was needed to encourage people to utilize services:

*"Each one teach one....Just like we were sharing like you know, teaching one another sharing information, important information. Because a lot of times people don't know if they all know they wont, you know, jump into it or you know, test it out or or do it because they don't know. You know, they don't know it they're not going to try it."*

### Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2021

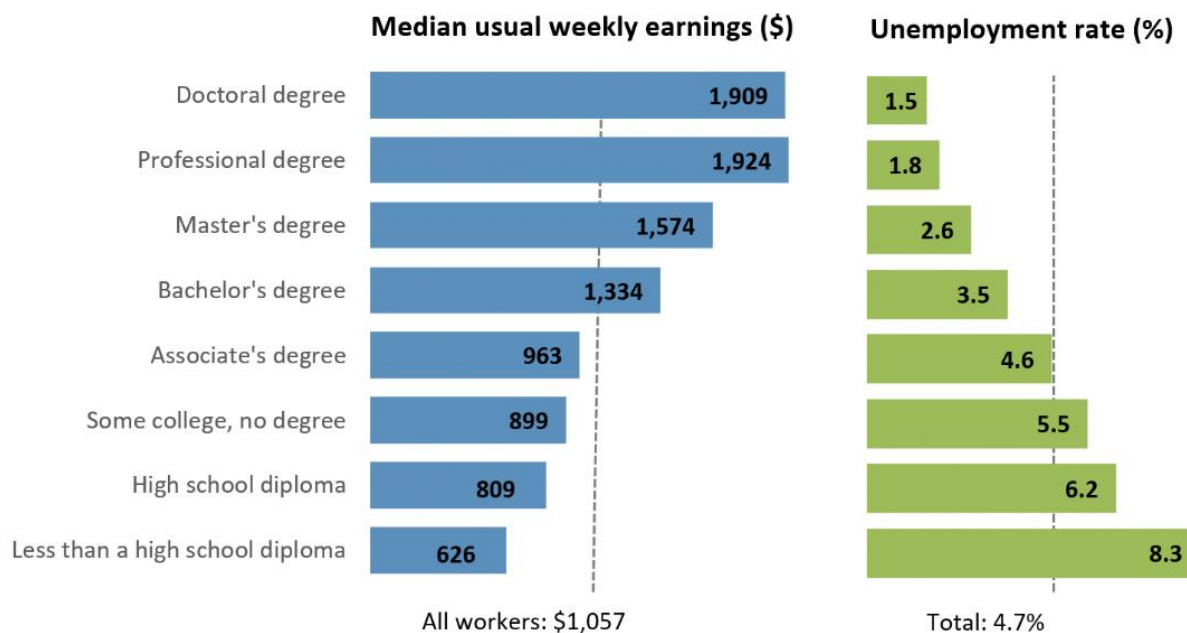


FIGURE 5 - EARNINGS AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT US BLS (2021)

### *Need for Educational Attainment, Credentials, & Apprenticeships*

As can be seen in the graphic on the previous page, there is a clear and compelling positive link between educational attainment and earnings as well as clear protection from unemployment that comes with higher education. Moreover, during the pandemic, educational attainment continued to protect individuals from labor force displacement. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The unemployment rate for people with a high school diploma or less rose more than 12.0 percentage points between February and May 2020. The rate rose 5.5 percentage points during the same period for those with a bachelor’s degree or more.”<sup>96</sup>

This relationship between education and employment security was well understood by community stakeholders. For example, one workforce development professional in High Point, explained the generational impact of low educational attainment and how it most impacted older workers as the labor market changed:

*“Yeah, several years ago, we did a study here in High Point, it was right around 2005, 2007 it was a Workforce Development Study. And what one of the, it wasn't shocking, but it's something that you don't think about, because as a career counselor, there was some questions that I just didn't ask, you know, do you have a high school diploma, or GED, I really didn't ask that, because of my points of reference. But once we did the study, what we found out was in High Point, and these are mostly older adults now, you know, in their, their 50s. And over, and it has changed some, but with High Point being a manufacturing city, you know, people were not encouraged to get a high school diploma, because families work for companies. And you knew that dad worked for the company, and mom worked with the company, I'm gonna work with the company, my uncle works for the company, and we're gonna stay there 30 years. So all of a sudden, you know, as it was pre pandemic, the economy went to the point where companies started leaving High Point. And they started laying*

---

<sup>96</sup> Parkinson, Cody. 2020. “COVID-19, educational attainment, and the impact on American workers” US Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/beyond-bls/covid-19-educational-attainment-and-the-impact-on-american-workers.htm>

*folks off. And they, they found it difficult to find another job, because I only a high school diploma. And I'm too old to go back to school. So, you know, a lot of a lot of people face that. And as far as moving up in companies, those that did, did it from experience, more so than education, but now, descriptions are written so you just weed people out."*

Educational attainment in Guilford County is considered fairly high with 87.3% of adults completing high school/GED or more, and 35.9% of adults have a higher education degree (bachelor's, master's, or doctorate; ACS 2021). Guilford County Schools has 126 schools and 70,047 students.<sup>97</sup> The average high school graduation rate is 82.0%. Yet, acquiring a higher education degree or workforce credentials is a problem for those working already in low-wage jobs. As a focus group participant explained, there is a 'catch 22' for workers:

*"Well, there's the catch 22. So, you know, you either don't have a job, and you can get a grant to go to school for free. Which then you aren't living because you have no job. But you can go to school for free, which is great. Or you have a job and you go to school, but you can't afford to pay for college. So, you know, it's, it's pretty much impossible to do both almost, you know. I wouldn't be opposed to like, I wouldn't be opposed to doing school. But I can't afford it. And then, yeah, I'm 49. So I do look at that, like, well, I'm kinda you know, I know, they always say it's never too late, you know."*

In a survey of Guilford County workers administered by this researcher between March 2021 and September 2021 and with a total of 712 responses, three-quarters (74.6%) of respondents indicated a desire to continue their post-secondary education. Workers were asked about potential barriers to furthering their post-secondary credentials. Half of respondents (48.5%) indicated that they have debt from tuition or fees associated with post-secondary education that prohibit them from continuing their education. Tuition for continuing education was the greatest barrier for 38% of respondents. Foregoing income while pursuing education was also a major barrier (37%). Transportation (17%) and childcare issues (15%) were

---

<sup>97</sup> See <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/north-carolina/districts/guilford-county-schools-105844>

also significant barriers. Some differences were noted on barriers by race and sex. Tuition, childcare, student loans, healthcare, and Limited English Proficiency were more common barriers for minority respondents. Similarly, female respondents were more impacted by tuition, childcare, student loans.

On the job training, apprenticeships, community college programs, and other efforts have had good results in increasing educational attainment and connecting LMI communities with jobs. Yet, as this participant points out, these programs are really only supported for young people:

“So, I work with the apprenticeship programs, and what I've found ... that apprenticeships are geared towards middle school, high school, all right, the youth. But now we find older adults having to learn new skill sets. And then once they learn those skill sets, they don't have the experience to step into positions. So, you know, an apprenticeship opportunity would work great for them. But money is being, is their funding is, is, is provided for the 18- to 24-year-old. But there's no money provided for the older adult. Case in point, there is a huge need for drivers. So, we are inundated with people coming in to get their CDLs and that's okay. You know, because the jobs are out there. The problem is that most of the companies as with the exception of the huge companies can't hire because they can't, their insurance won't allow them to hire, hire somebody with less than two years of driving experience. You know, so how do you get two years of driving experience? .... If companies can't hire, and the ones that the larger companies will hire, and the reason they can is because they're self-insured. So is a six on one-hand and a dozen on the other hand, you can run into issues either way. And apprenticeship program would help that. But we need the funding...see right now, if somebody is 18 to 24, I'm sorry. If somebody is 18 to 24, there's a \$5,000 funding stream there that I can actually go out and pay for their insurance for two years to get them the experience. But I can't do that for older adults.”

Older workers not only faced exclusion from apprenticeship programs and educational opportunities, but also said they had problems finding employment.

One focus group participant who was in his mid-sixties said, “The interview don't take about me five minutes. Once I tell them that I've retired and my age they just asked me a couple questions and its over.” Another employment specialist explained, “And even though they might, I might have someone who has a lot of experience but if they're older, they have less likelihood of getting placement because they're looking for someone who has maybe less experience, but they can't utilize various ways that might have more energy, or are perceived to have more energy.”

#### *Limited Options for Justice Involvement*

Justice served or justice involved individuals face additional scrutiny in finding employment as well as other social benefits. One formerly incarcerated female explained,

*“With the record that I now have, as far as retail, I know there are a couple of girls here at the home who have jobs outside the home and they have been able to gain employment in a warehouse setting or in a home health setting with felonies on their records and the pay that they're making. Is is okay I guess by today's standards, you know, \$15 an hour, five years ago to start somewhere was fairly good. And now with the economy the way it is, it's not that impressive. It takes a lot more live now than it did any any other industry of professional industry, especially, I don't know what the odds of my of me being able to gain gainful employment are going to be, I'm fairly apprehensive about that.”*

There were some reentry programs mentioned, but even those participants in such programs continued to face barriers to employment from their backgrounds:

*“I think that you need to be more on more programs like more industries like Goodwill. Goodwill does provide a second chances to a lot of people with backgrounds, but you don't see like other companies and stuff like that nature. And you could have something that was dated back 7,8,9, 10 years ago and they still want to hear you out. Well, we all know that it only takes one year to make major differences in your life. So if you're looking at a person that got in trouble 7 to 10 years ago, you're not at least willing to hear them out about the situation or at least evaluate*

*who they are at the current moment, then it is definitely is very hard to find a job. And statistics proven that most of the general population has some type of background, whether it is petty theft, traffic tickets, cannabis in position, whether its some serious, they do have some type of background, it's very hard to find somebody that is completely unscathed in 2022. So I mean, it's it does bring a lot of challenges to the middle class.”*

Another formerly incarcerated person explained that while they are working at a transitional program for justice served individuals, they are also going to community college to earn an associate degree:

*“Sure, um, the only legitimate legal job I've had has been since I got out of prison in November. And I work here at.... a transitional housing program that I am involved in. I like the job, okay. It's a little slow pace for my taste is just part time. We're only three days a week, we make candles and body care products. But this opportunity has allowed me to enroll in [community college]. I am pursuing my associate degree in Applied Science in healthcare administration. I'm prior to 2002. I have experience in medical billing and coding, as well as Office Management....I'm hoping that having my associate's degree combined with 12 years' experience, I will be able to get with a company and do medical coding from home, or in a hospital setting. Having a felony on my record is going to be very prohibitive to that in that particular field”*

Workforce development and social service personnel pointed out that employers, now desperate for workers, may be missing out on opportunities to hire talented workers just because of past justice involvement.

*“I think employers are losing out on some highly qualified individuals simply by and we had this drive forever, but you know, it's slow cities have bought into, banning the box. You know, just simply banning the box and, and allowing the person the opportunity to least come for an interview. There are and I can attest to this, there are some brilliant people that just happen to have something happen, you know, being in the wrong place at the wrong time. You know, make make, make a bad decision.*

*And to my sister's point right here. You know, as a career counselor, I've witnessed a person not getting a job for something that happened 25 years. Yeah, so its real."*

Some participants reflected on people they knew who had been successful at reentry, but they also pointed out that there was clear tracking in what kinds of jobs were available to former felons.

*"I do have a couple of longtime friends who also have felonies on their record. They received training both the gentleman I'm referring to received their welding certifications in prison, and when they came out there came out in 2016. He was then and has been able to since find a job as a professional electrician in the commercial industry, with no problem and with really good pay. However, people with felonies that are trying to work in the White Collar industry seem to encounter more problems than the blue collar industry, construction jobs and house housing, hospitality jobs are not as hard to get into working for hotels and restaurants, that kind of thing. But higher level entry jobs with higher income bases are a are a challenge for people with felonies, no matter what experience they have, or what kind of kind of background they have entrepreneurial positions, you know, starting your own business are a way for felons to make it financially. But those are also they're not as easy. That's not as easy to do as they make it sound the caseworkers in case managers in prisons make it sound. The grants aren't as easy to find, to start your own business. It's just it's not as accessible as you are led to believe it will be."*

Support for those who were previously incarcerated was severely lacking. Programs that should have helped provide a smooth reentry with social and vocational supports were missing:

*"I was at NCCIW in Raleigh, for my entire incarceration, you have to beg to get an application to a transitional home. And the only way that I found this place was through a free book place that an inmate told me about that I wrote it got free books from and they sent me in a resource list who you know, when you get out where to get clothes, where to get food, where do you get help with*

*finding a job. The prison gave out nothing like that, nothing. And it's, it's a problem for all the inmates all the inmates have a problem with that. It was a problem from the time I got there to the time I left and something definitely needs to change. They say they want you to succeed when you leave they want you to make life changes while you're there. And the tools the government and private industry provides tools to do that with to help you do that with, but we don't get access to them.”*

Prison reentry programs should be aimed at helping individuals who have been incarcerated successfully transition back into society and avoid reoffending. Implementing effective prison reentry programs is critical for reducing recidivism and improving public safety, as well as for promoting social and economic stability. According to the 2022 Sentencing Commission Recidivism Report, “Of the 47,000 people covered by the report, 41 percent were arrested within two years...The recidivist incarceration rate for inmates released from prison was 36 percent. Overall rates were down from previous years, with some of that reduction perhaps attributable to the slow-down in court operations as a result of COVID-19.”<sup>98</sup>We see high rates of recidivism as a result of the missing social support for justice involved individuals. A focus group participant explained.

*“...for one, a lot of people come out of prison, they cannot go back to their social connections, because they're not good ones. They will. They are very prohibited into living a different life. It's if you have nowhere to go, you have no comments, no license, no job, no clothes and you go stay with an old friend. They're going to hand you drugs to sell to get back on your feet or they're going to take you to steal something to get back on your feet or to eat.... The first time I left prison, which was three months before I went back, I had nowhere to go. It was right when COVID started in 20. I couldn't even get help from the Salvation Army or Goodwill because everything was closed. So, I went to a friend's couch and three days later, I was doing the same things that got me locked up and three months later, I was right back in. And I it's just it's a vicious cycle.”*

---

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.sog.unc.edu/blogs/nc-criminal-law/look-2022-sentencing-commission-recidivism-report>



### *Difficulty of Job Seeking in Current Market*

Many of the residents who participated in focus groups emphasized the difficulties they were having with finding good jobs. The challenges faced by job seekers, particularly those from marginalized communities such as women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities, can limit their access to job opportunities and make it difficult for them to advance in their careers. Some job seekers had put out hundreds of applications without success.

*“I can say, I have put out 139 resumes. I have in 49 years of my life, I've never put out 139 resumes. So my issues that I have seen so far. So one thing is the companies are not paying enough at all like to live on and I see some of these, I don't have a degree, you know, but I see sometimes, like, adults say, you know, I'll pay \$12 An hour and they want a bachelor's degree. I'm like, what? Like, if I had a bachelor's degree, and they offered that me, I'd be like, what no, like, nobody can live on that.”*

Another noted employers often have high expectations for job applicants, including a requirement for specific experience, education, and skills. This may lead to a mismatch between requirements and actual skills and experience. One focus group participant explained:

*“I have two years in the military, and I work specifically with physical conditioning in that area. However, there's like, barely middle management positions, like there's like, as a lifeguard, you have a supervisor who's like, you know, where I would probably more fit to be, but they're just not available.”*

Another elaborated on the requirements:

*“You know, some jobs you can get in. But if you look at the requirement and kind of push your away and read that they require this or they say preferred, or something like that, and they kind of throw you off and you want to apply but you don't, so you go back on social media, and be like, maybe I can do something myself, maybe I can be an influencer you know.”*

### *Making Livable Wages*

In North Carolina, the current minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour, which is the same as the federal minimum wage. However, many advocates argue that this amount is not enough to provide a livable wage for many workers, particularly those living in urban areas like the Greensboro-High Point Metropolitan Statistical Area with higher costs of living. According to various estimates, the hourly rate for a livable wage in North Carolina can range from \$11 to \$20 or more, depending on the specific region and household size. In general, the cost of living in North Carolina is lower than in many other states, but there are still significant expenses that must be taken into account, such as housing, food, transportation, and health care. So many of the participants in the focus groups brought up the lack of salaries and wages and the high cost of living:

*“I mean I think that the payment has a lot to do with everything else going up. And then you've, pay range is not. I mean, it's just ridiculous, the way prices going up on products and stuff. And then some jobs don't not going to pay a proper wage. You know 12, 13, 15 dollars an hour and I think it is hard and rent mortgages and rent, I mean, has skyrocketed, people becoming homeless.” myself.*

Another participant talked about the efforts to raise the minimum wage in North Carolina, “You know, one of the things that we were fighting for was livable wage. But the livable wage now is more than what we were fighting for...we were fighting for \$15. And now \$15 is not enough.”

### *Structural Impediments to Good Jobs*

Conditions of the social environment are shaped by how the political and economic systems distribute resources, and these conditions contribute to social and economic inequality. We asked our focus group participants to tell us about housing, transportation, food security, and the benefits cliff. They discussed: the need for affordable and healthy housing in safe neighborhoods, about issues with a lack of transportation to services or better location of services within communities of need, improving early childhood development resources including childcare, and accessing food and nutrition programs like SNAP.

## Housing Affordability

Housing is an issue of universal concern. Said one participant, “there's a real lack of affordable housing.” Housing impacts many areas of one’s life. Where you live may mean access to schools and educational opportunities, jobs, healthy places to walk or exercise, healthy food options, etc. Linked to affordable housing is the quality of housing. A resident explained, “based on people's income and what they can afford, housing is terrible. I mean just rental property is bad. You know, whenever you have families living in rental property, based on their income, and the windows are not insulated, and the, the roof, it leaks, you get water coming down, the furnace is not working, but that's all they can afford.”

In the last two years, as a result of COVID19 and housing market conditions, prices have gone up. Some participants felt the hikes were unreasonable, “we are getting ready to move, but can’t because I just can't afford it by myself.” Another participant explained that as people move out of his complex, the landlord is raising prices: “Yeah, I know, I live in a one bedroom. But people moving out charging \$800. The new people. But I only pay, I pay less than six.”

A social service professional noted the need for collaboration across agencies in order to address housing as system issues.

*“I think that we have housing instability here, that is also prohibiting individuals from participating, you know, successfully participating in employment and training activities and or going back to work. I think that those are probably the top three that we're seeing now. And whereas I can't do too much about the housing piece there, we're making sure that we're keeping our housing organizations abreast on what we're seeing from individuals that are requesting or accessing services.”*

## Transportation Issues

Transportation came up in every one of our meetings (as well as in the previous interviews). As one jobseeker noted, “If you ride the bus it is gonna take you an hour or two to get to where you want to go.” Mass transit is just not a choice for so many individuals. Another participant explained, “They don't run - if you work

third shift. Somewhere between there you're gonna have to find other transportation than the bus.” One of the workforce development trainers elaborated:

*“So, I had a client that used to live here in High Point who actually was in training at the GTCC campus in Greensboro you know on Wendover Avenue. So, he had to leave here, go to GTCC Jamestown, transfer, from there go downtown Greensboro, transfer from to get out to the job, so on the course, so he would leave almost seven in the morning. And he will get to class late every day because he didn't get to class until nine. And then had to reverse that coming back. The issue coming back is that the bus system here stopped running at six o'clock. You know, so now, what can he do?”*

Food Security & SNAP

Food insecurity and costs of healthy foods came up in many of our conversations. One resident explained,

*“It's expensive, it's expensive to eat healthy. You know, you can go to the store and get junk food for cheaper, or oodles of noodles or you get ramen noodles cheaper than you can get, you know, salad and stuff like that. And then, you know, with the fresh fruit, it goes bad quicker. So, you gotta keep going back to the store and stuff. And- it cost more to eat healthier.*

Another participant explained that many have shifted to prepared foods, “It used to be used to be cheaper to shop at the grocery store and cook it yourself. But now its just like the food went up so high. It's like, while fast food might be cheaper at least it would be cooked for you.” Echoing this sentiment, another person in the same group said, “I can't go pick up a salad at supermarket that's \$10, but I can go to McDonald's and get a McDouble for a dollar, shit hey I could get 10 of those, I'm hungry, I can go and spend 10 bucks. Then I will have McDoubles for at least three days, I can eat three a day. Hey good. Now, all of a sudden, after a year of doing that, now I got high blood pressure, high cholesterol, you know what I am saying, or worse.”

One recent headline on National Public Radio read, “Demand at food banks is way up again. But inflation makes it harder to meet the need.”<sup>99</sup> This national trend was witnessed locally as well: “I see a lot of people using food banks and food lines and stuff, you know, but eventually, that's going to run out. I'm going to just briefly touch on it. ...we are losing a lot of farms. So that is affecting food products that come into our neighborhoods and stuff. We need more farmers, we need more farmland to give back and not bought up and put into project homes or buildings.”

Some participants wanted the government to relax restrictions and expand SNAP benefits: “So there was a point where certain foods, or certain items you couldn't buy, I know there's still some now, that you couldn't buy with your EBT benefits. So, what if, and what if that was extended to junk food? But the price, the amount of funds that they receive is enough to be able to buy, you know, good healthy foods.” But many LMI individuals don't qualify for SNAP due to earnings or savings, “To get those benefits. Yeah, you get your income got to be under a certain level and it's not it's not a lot at all. I mean, it is got to be very, very low income. Like they would not help me, because I just got laid off. They would not help me, you know, because I have money in the bank. You can't have money in the bank.”

Another reasons provided for not utilizing SNAP benefits included technological challenges. “And sometimes people don't sign up for SNAP or whatever is available. Some people are not computer savvy, and some people just don't know.”

Participants indicated that word of mouth was the best means of getting information out about service provision and things like access to SNAP: “Word of mouth is pretty much the best way. Because it's a chain reaction, you tell someone, and then that person is gonna tell someone, it just keeps going.” Others were afraid of losing benefits if they took a new job or received a raise. “They're like, oh, well, I don't want to lose my housing voucher, or I don't want to lose my food stamps, or, I mean, it doesn't make sense to me.”

---

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/02/1101473558/demand-food-banks-inflation-supply-chain>

## Community Survey Findings

A community-wide survey was also conducted with residents in Guilford County. Survey solicitations were published on social media, in email listservs, and through social service agencies in the community. The survey opened on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and closed on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. A total of 739 surveys were fully completed (38.8% or partially completed (61.2%). The mean time to complete the survey was just over 10 minutes.

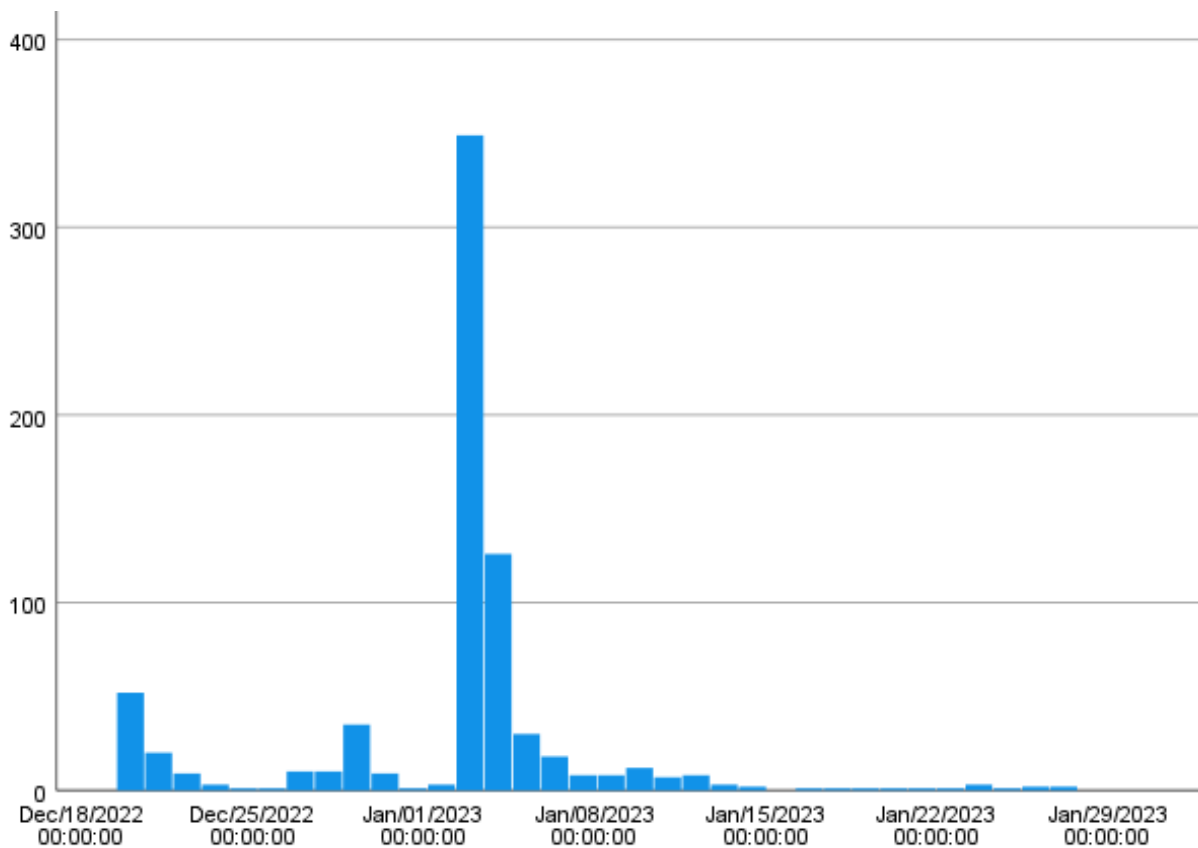


FIGURE 6 - SURVEY RESPONSES

## Characteristics of Respondents

### Age & Educational Attainment

On average, respondents were between 25 and 34 years old with a range from under 18 to between 75 and 84 years old. Most respondents (79.8%) fell between 25 and 54 years old. A little over a third (34.5%) of the survey respondents held a bachelor's degree or higher, while a third (33.9%) had some college or an associate degree, and 31.6% held a High School Diploma or lower educational attainment.

TABLE 2 – AGE OF RESPONDENTS

		Frequency	Percent %	Valid %
Valid	Under 18	2	.3	.7
	18 - 24	26	3.5	9.4
	25 - 34	119	16.1	42.8
	35 - 44	69	9.3	24.8
	45 - 54	34	4.6	12.2
	55 - 64	15	2.0	5.4
	65 - 74	11	1.5	4.0
	75 - 84	2	.3	.7
	Total	278	37.6	100.0
	Missing	461	62.4	
<b>Total</b>		<b>739</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

TABLE 3 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %
Valid	Less than high school	21	2.8	7.6
	High school graduate	66	8.9	24.0
	Some college	70	9.5	25.5
	2-year degree	23	3.1	8.4
	4-year degree	50	6.8	18.2
	Professional degree	38	5.1	13.8
	Doctorate	7	.9	2.5
	Total	275	37.2	100.0
Missing	464	62.8		
<b>Total</b>		<b>739</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**TABLE 4 - EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Employed full time	112	35.90%
Employed part time	40	12.80%
Unemployed looking for work	62	19.90%
Unemployed not looking for work	21	6.70%
Retired	14	4.50%
Student	22	7.10%
Disabled	16	5.10%
Other (explain)	25	8.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

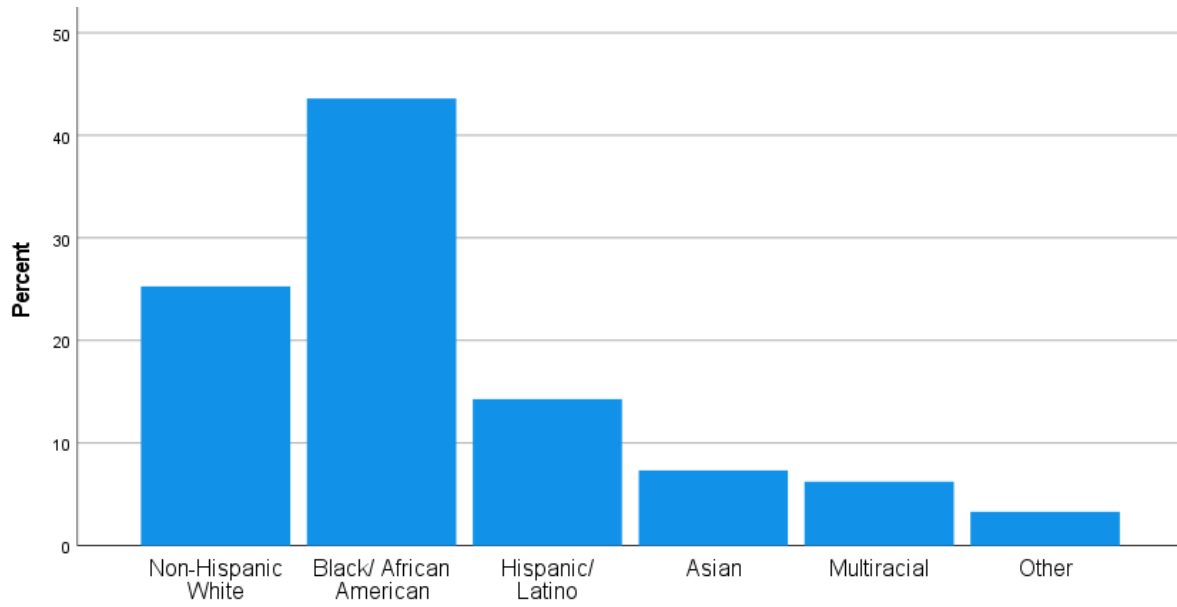
#### Employment & Disability Status

More than a third (35.9%) were employed full time and 12.8% were employed part time, while 19.9% were unemployed and looking for work. The remaining 31.4% were unemployed and not looking for work, retired, students, disabled, or not working for other reasons. About 17.1% of survey respondents indicated they had a physical or mental disability.

#### Race, Ethnicity, and National Origin

A quarter (25.3%) of respondents identified as non-Hispanic white, while 43.6% were black/African American, 14.3% Hispanic/Latino, and 7.3% Asian. The remaining percentages were Multiracial (6.2%) and 'other' (3.3%). Most respondents (80.5%) were born in the United States. Of the 19.5% foreign born, more than a third (36.5%) were US Citizens. Most respondents (82.2%) spoke English at home while 8.7% spoke Spanish and 9.1% spoke some other language including: Arabic, Farsi, Jrai, Karen, Swahili, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

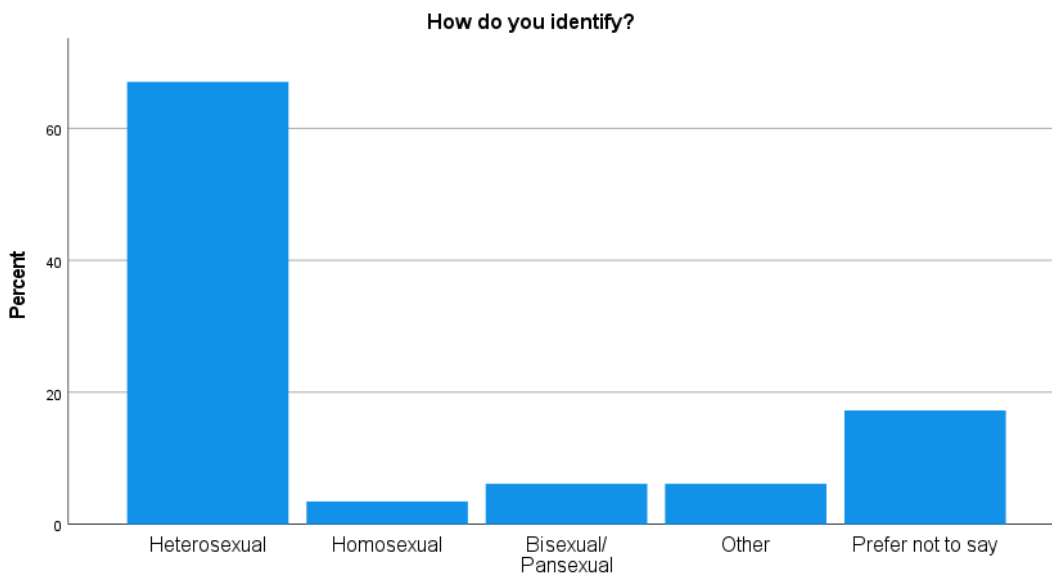




**FIGURE 7 - RACE OR ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS**

### Sex, Sexuality, & Marital Status

A majority (89.4%) of respondents were female, 9.5% identified as male, and 1.1% identified as non-binary. Two-fifths (39.9%) were married, 9.2% partnered, 13.2% divorced or separated, and 1.8% widowed. More than a third (35.9%) were single and never married. While two-thirds of survey respondents identified as heterosexual, 6.1% identified as bi- or pan-sexual, 3.4% homosexual, 6.1% other sexuality, and 17.2% preferred not to disclose.



**FIGURE 8 - SEXUALITY OF RESPONDENTS**

### Income

Of respondents who reported their incomes, nearly a quarter (23.3%) were under \$10,000 while about 79.5% were under the Guilford County median income of \$53,756.38. Thus respondents to this survey disproportionately represent Low and Middle Income communities.

TABLE 5 – INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than \$10,000	66	8.9	23.3	23.3
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	41	5.5	14.5	37.8
	\$20,000 - \$29,999	44	6.0	15.5	53.4
	\$30,000 - \$39,999	41	5.5	14.5	67.8
	\$40,000 - \$49,999	33	4.5	11.7	79.5
	\$50,000 - \$59,999	20	2.7	7.1	86.6
	\$60,000 - \$69,999	5	.7	1.8	88.3
	\$70,000 - \$79,999	8	1.1	2.8	91.2
	\$90,000 - \$99,999	3	.4	1.1	92.2
	\$100,000 - \$149,999	14	1.9	4.9	97.2
	More than \$150,000	8	1.1	2.8	100.0
	Total		283	38.3	100.0
Missing	System	456	61.7		
Total		739	100.0		

### Bills & Expenses

Respondents were asked about monthly reoccurring bills and expenses. Nearly all respondents (90.5%) had cell phone bills, utility bills (94.9%), internet (77.6%), gas/fuel (75.7%), food (74.7%), and rent (62.8%). “Other bills” included bankruptcy expenses, car taxes, clothing, and IRS payments. In a recent poll of North Carolinians,<sup>100</sup> we found that families are adapting to inflationary costs by:

- *Cutting back on groceries (51%)*
- *Not driving as much (56%)*
- *Taking additional work, overtime, or a second job 29%*
- *Starting or expanding a side business (28%)*

<sup>100</sup> <https://theinstitutenc.org/2022/06/impact-of-inflation-on-families-mwbes/>

**TABLE 6 – MONTHLY BILLS AND EXPENSES**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Cases</b>
Phone- cell	275	10.50%	90.50%
Utilities	258	9.80%	84.90%
Internet	236	9.00%	77.60%
Gas	230	8.70%	75.70%
Food	227	8.60%	74.70%
Rent	191	7.30%	62.80%
Car/truck/ or other personal transportation	167	6.30%	54.90%
Credit cards	165	6.30%	54.30%
Cable/ Satellite TV	130	4.90%	42.80%
Health insurance	118	4.50%	38.80%
Other Insurance	105	4.00%	34.50%
Childcare	88	3.30%	28.90%
Mortgage	88	3.30%	28.90%
Medical payments	87	3.30%	28.60%
Loans	86	3.30%	28.30%
Loans- School	64	2.40%	21.10%
Phone- home	36	1.40%	11.80%
Bus/taxi/Uber/shared rides or other public transportation	30	1.10%	9.90%
Loans- Payday	20	0.80%	6.60%
Child support	13	0.50%	4.30%
None	3	0.10%	1.00%
Other (explain)	13	0.50%	4.30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2630</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>865.10%</b>

### *Location of Respondents*

Nearly two-thirds (64.4%) of respondents who indicated their location of residence were in Greensboro followed by 21.3% who live in High Point. The remaining 14.3% live in the smaller townships of unincorporated areas of Guilford County. On average respondents have lived in the community for 12 years with a range from less than a year to over 40 years.

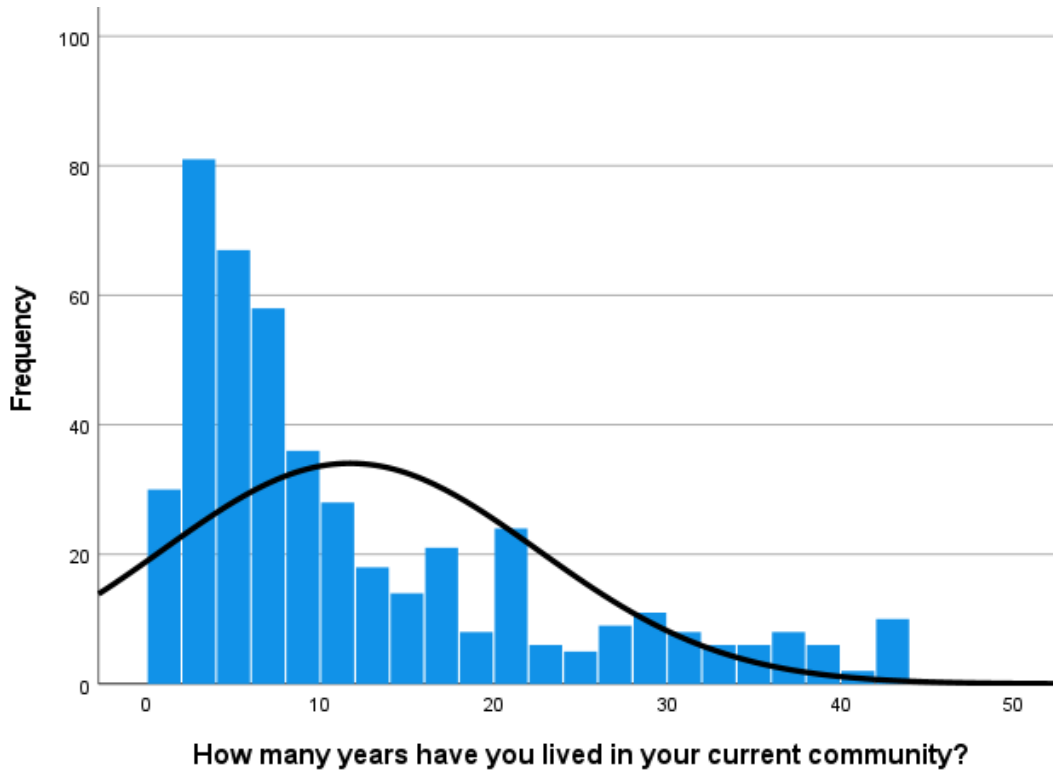


FIGURE 9 - LENGTH OF RESIDENCY

TABLE 7 - RESPONDENT LOCATION

		Frequency	Percent %	Valid %
Valid	Not in Guilford County	10	1.4	2.0
	Browns Summit	11	1.5	2.2
	Climax	1	.1	.2
	Colfax	4	.5	.8
	Gibsonville	6	.8	1.2
	Greensboro	320	43.3	64.4
	High Point	106	14.3	21.3
	Jamestown	7	.9	1.4
	Julian	1	.1	.2
	McLeansville	5	.7	1.0
	Oak Ridge	8	1.1	1.6
	Pleasant Garden	5	.7	1.0
	Stokesdale	1	.1	.2
	Summerfield	2	.3	.4
	Whitsett	6	.8	1.2
	Other	4	.5	.8
	Total	497	67.3	100.0
	Missing	242	32.7	
<b>Total</b>		<b>739</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

### *Rating of City and Neighborhoods*

Respondents were asked to rate their community on a scale of one to five with five being the highest score. The mean score was 3.68, with 67.4% giving a rating of four or five. However, some differences were seen by location: Greensboro had a mean score of 3.63, High Point a score of 3.57, and Other areas in the Guilford County the highest at 4.23.

Respondents were also asked about the factors they considered when they moved into their communities. The most frequent response was the convenience of the location, followed by affordability, and then safety. The least common response was ‘people who are the same race as me.’ Similarly, high cost of housing, lack of safety, and poor or lacking public transit were all issues that respondents did not like about their neighborhoods.

**TABLE 8 – RATING OF COMMUNITY**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent %</b>	<b>Valid %</b>
Valid	1	16	2.2	3.9
	2	48	6.5	11.8
	3	69	9.3	16.9
	4	191	25.8	46.8
	5	84	11.4	20.6
	Total	408	55.2	100.0
	Missing	331	44.8	
<b>Total</b>		<b>739</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**TABLE 9 - FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED DECISION TO MOVE TO COMMUNITY**

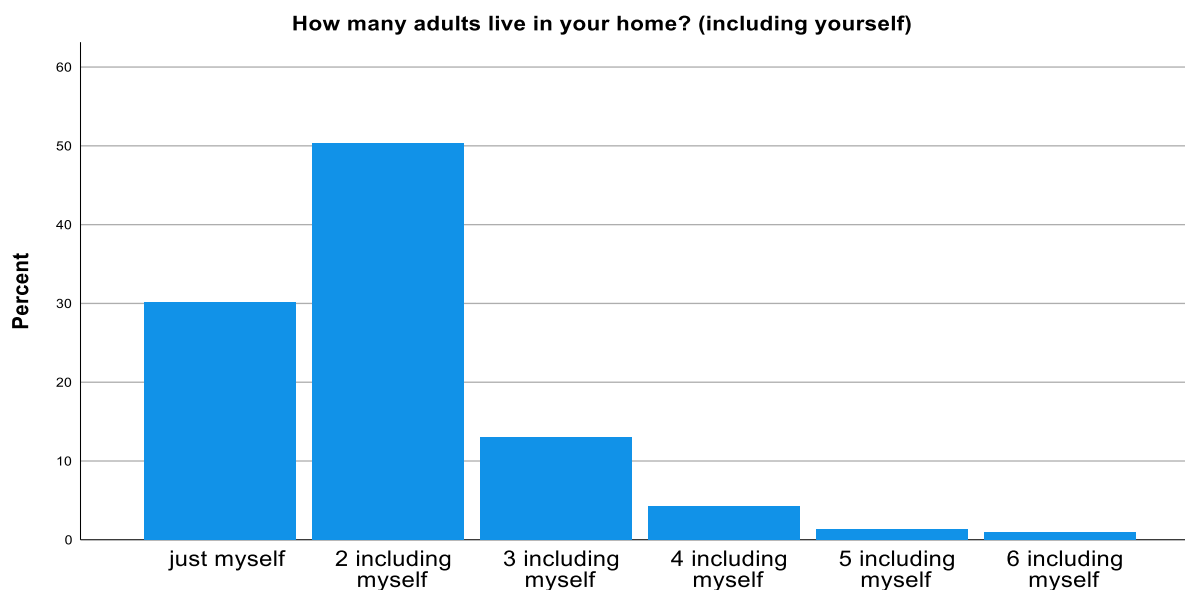
<b>Responses</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Convenient location	134	12.80%
Affordability/Cost	127	12.20%
Safe	124	11.90%
Near my school/work	97	9.30%
Housing condition	74	7.10%
Good schools	74	7.10%
Overall feeling	72	6.90%
Child friendly	68	6.50%
Diversity (a mix of different races)	52	5.00%
Neighbors	51	4.90%
Family in the same neighborhood	47	4.50%
I have always lived here	30	2.90%
Good public transportation	28	2.70%
People who are the same race as me	25	2.40%
Other (explain)	41	3.90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**TABLE 10 – ISSUES WITHIN COMMUNITY**

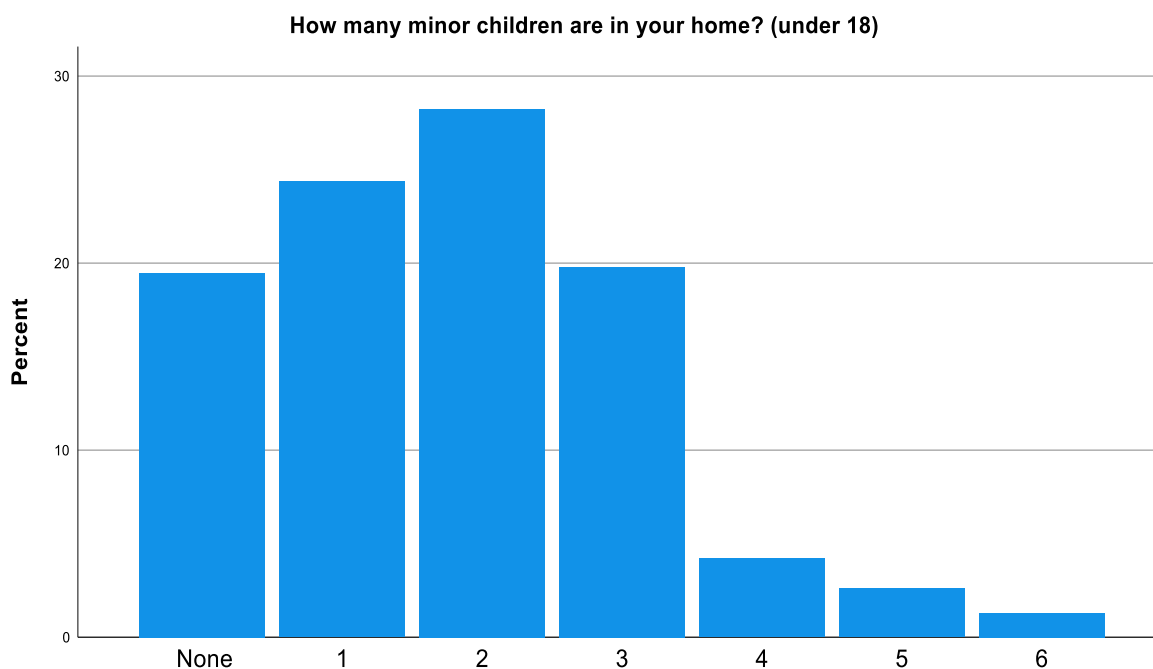
<b>Responses</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Too expensive	68	13.20%
Unsafe	66	12.80%
Poor/ no public transit	60	11.60%
Bad house conditions	49	9.50%
Bad schools	41	7.90%
Not diverse enough	41	7.90%
Not child friendly	30	5.80%
Neighbors	29	5.60%
Not conveniently located	24	4.60%
Overall feeling	15	2.90%
Not near my school/work	15	2.90%
Too ethnically diverse	6	1.20%
Other (explain)	73	14.10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Occupants, Dependents, & Children

About 30.2% of respondents lived alone while 50.3% lived with one other person and 13.0% with two other individuals. Most (80.5%) had one or more children in the home and 19.5% cared for an individual with a mental or physical disability. Of households with children, 43.9% were two-parent and 43.1% were single mothers.



**FIGURE 10 – ADULTS IN THE HOME**



**FIGURE 11 – CHILDREN IN THE HOME**

**TABLE 11 – FAMILY STRUCTURE**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Cases</b>
Two parents	105	38.60%	43.90%
Single mom	103	37.90%	43.10%
Raising own children and children of others	19	7.00%	7.90%
Raising children of other family members	7	2.60%	2.90%
Foster children	7	2.60%	2.90%
Shared custody	6	2.20%	2.50%
Intergenerational Household	6	2.20%	2.50%
Raising someone else's children (not family)	3	1.10%	1.30%
Single dad	2	0.70%	0.80%
No children, other dependents	1	0.40%	0.40%
Other (explain)	13	4.80%	5.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>113.80%</b>

### *Internet Access*

Less than 1% of respondents said they did not have access to the internet. This number is most likely skewed as a result of the survey being online. According to ACS 2021 estimates, 12.54% of Guilford County residents do not have access to the internet. It is noted that nearly half of the respondents said they access internet from their homes, about 31.1% from their cell phones, and 11.9% from their workplace.

**TABLE 12 - INTERNET ACCESS**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
At home	295	47.50%
On my cell phone	193	31.10%
At work	74	11.90%
At the library	20	3.20%
At a family members house	15	2.40%
At a friends' house	11	1.80%
I do not have access to the internet	6	1.00%
Another place (explain)	7	1.10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>621</i>	<i>100.00%</i>



### Food Access

Food Lion and Walmart were the primary sources of food for most respondents followed by Harris Teeter and Aldi's. Smaller convenience grocery stores included Dollar General (13.0% of respondents), Family Dollar (13.0% of respondents), and the Dollar Store (12.3% of respondents). Food banks/pantries (8.3%) and soup kitchens (1.2%) account for only a small portion of the total.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Cases</b>
Food Lion	236	21.90%	72.80%
Walmart	223	20.70%	68.80%
Harris Teeter	94	8.70%	29.00%
Aldi's	78	7.20%	24.10%
Super G Mart	45	4.20%	13.90%
Dollar General	42	3.90%	13.00%
Family Dollar	42	3.90%	13.00%
Restaurants	42	3.90%	13.00%
Dollar Store	40	3.70%	12.30%
Publix	36	3.30%	11.10%
Food Banks or Food Pantry	27	2.50%	8.30%
Lowe's Foods	24	2.20%	7.40%
Fresh Market	23	2.10%	7.10%
Farmers' Market	20	1.90%	6.20%
Li Ming's Global Mart	16	1.50%	4.90%
Trader Joe's	16	1.50%	4.90%
Whole Foods	12	1.10%	3.70%
Deep Roots	11	1.00%	3.40%
Other independent grocery store	10	0.90%	3.10%
Soup Kitchens	4	0.40%	1.20%
Bestway	3	0.30%	0.90%
Food for Less	3	0.30%	0.90%
Other (specify)	16	1.50%	4.90%
I do not have a regular place where I get food	13	1.20%	4.00%
	<b>1076</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>332.10%</b>

### SNAP & WIC Utilization

About half of the respondents (52.4%) use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits while 61.3% indicated having used Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits. Most respondents (59.6%) said that it was somewhat to extremely easy to register for SNAP and WIC and 50.4% of respondents said it took one week or less for approval. Crosstabulations were computed for social categories and ease of SNAP/WIC registration. No significant differences were noted by age, educational attainment, disability status, race/ethnicity, or immigrant status regarding the ease of registration.

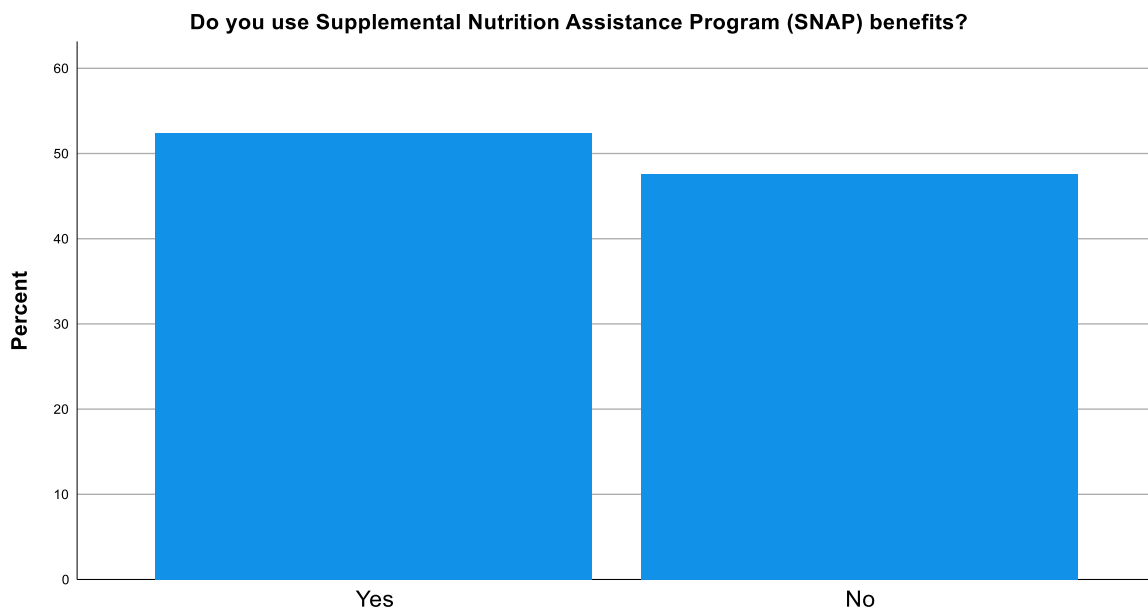
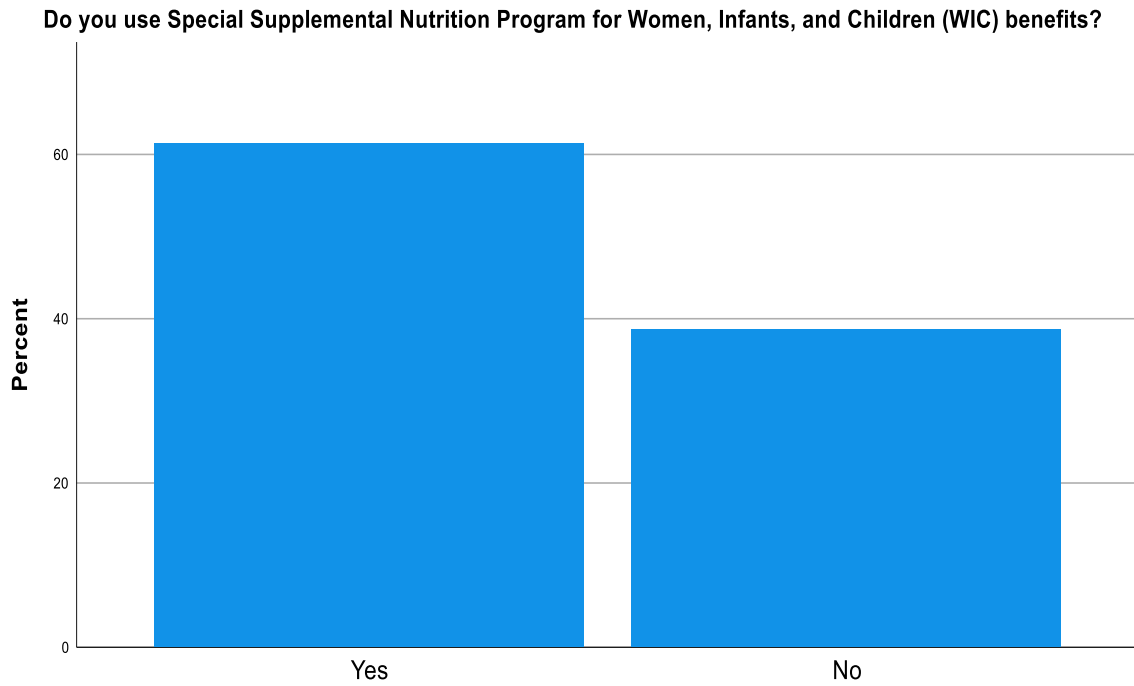
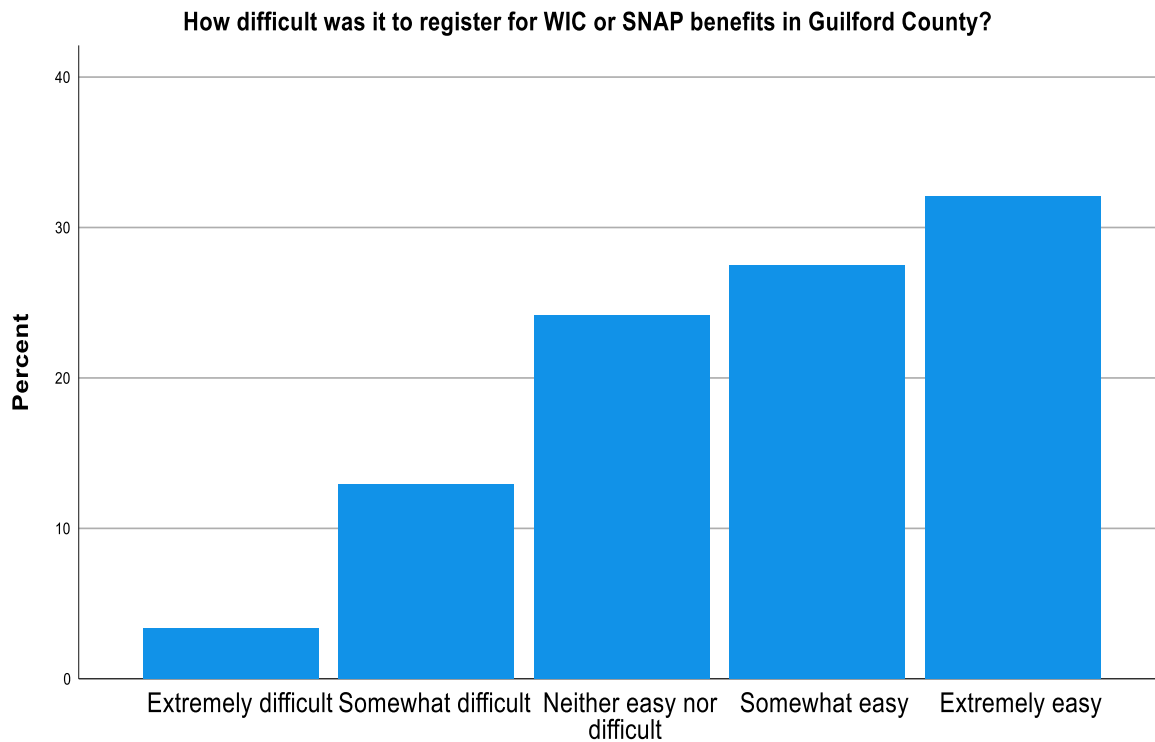


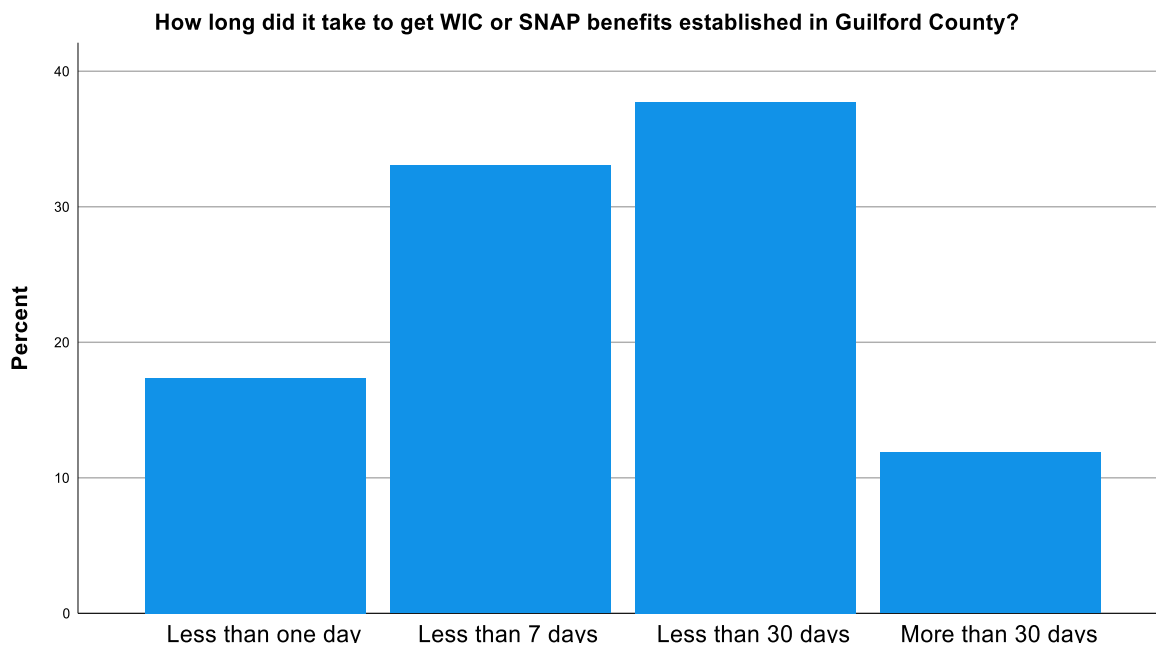
FIGURE 12 - SNAP UTILIZATION



**FIGURE 13 - WIC UTILIZATION**



**FIGURE 14 - SNAP & WIC DIFFICULTY**



**FIGURE 15 - SNAP & WIC TIMELINESS**

### *SNAP/WIC Recommendations*

Respondents were asked what recommendations they had for improving SNAP/WIC programs. Suggestions fell into several general categories or themes including expanding eligibility, expanding selection of eligible foods and goods, improving process and distribution of benefits, improving customer service, increasing amounts of benefits, increasing awareness of benefits, and feedback on Guilford County DSS.

#### Expanding Eligibility

- *Actually help families stop saying they make 1\$ over the limit for services, it took me having another child 17yrs later stop working because I was pregnant not work for 4months, now back at work part time just to get a little bit of help, and I'm about to lose my medicaid because my oldest will be 18 and I'll be back down to only two in the house hold even though she's still in school.*
- *Allow college students to apply for SNAP.*
- *Anyone that's an adult should be qualified for snap benefits*
- *Approve more people. Cost is going up but people still aren't eligible to receive benefits it's not fair*
- *Assist more families with a little higher income who also really need assistance*
- *Assistance getting food to the elderly, disabled, and those who can't drive or have no access to transportation.*
- *By approving the younger people who really need it*

- *Change the income requirements for working class people to get SNAP or WIC.*
- *Don't make it so hard for people to be approved*
- *Everyone should get it regardless of income*
- *Food and other assistance like it need to be adjusted better than they are now to meet high/continuing rising costs.*
- *Food and utility assistance should be more accessible. Although I have a good job, poor decisions and inflation make affording food and utilities more difficult to manage. A temporary resources without so many questions would be nice*
- *For this the barrier of eligibility is more of a problem. It needs to be expanded due to inflation and other societal issues.*
- *Give the people who work some kind of assistance cause it hard when u working and paying all your bills then never have money to feed your kids it's a struggle*
- *Give to all who need help not just those not working or make less. Look at net income and not gross. Allow certain situations like bankruptcy or starting a new job to be acceptable so families can get on their feet and maintain. Working people need help to but in most cases get denied because they are over income when everything is going up.*
- *Guilford County can improve services like SNAP and other benefits by considering net income as a qualification instead of gross income. This inclusion of net income as a qualification can be beneficial for the working poor.*
- *have more access to programs for refugees and immigrants*
- *Help families with very low incomes as well as families in emergency situations. I have been receiving benefits and then been told we make too much and our benefits were not continued, which caused us to struggle a great deal and have to really stretch our dollars thin in order to pay bills and eat. That included not being able to afford insurance and no extras like snacks and "fun foods" that kids like. All because on paper we made "too much money"*
- *Help people with disabilities regardless of income because income may not be enough but over the income limit*
- *Helping people from 20-35 with regular Medicaid so everyone could get the help they need.*
- *I feel like the program is okay. Sometimes renewal is difficult but during covid the process is much easier*
- *I have had the issue of being denied because my hours are too few and that I don't make enough. And my partner had the issue of making too much but everything goes to bills.*
- *I think that everyone should get there benefits on the same day also allow for some hot foods to be eligible to buy on ebt*
- *I think that if you work full time you should be able to get SNAP benefits. It's alot of hard working families that really need help but they can't because before taxes they make too much money but once insurance and taxes are paid they barely have enough to feed their families. I have been in a place where it's been either I pay my car payment or I buy I food. And then I'm in more in debt because my car Payment is now behind. The pandemic gave alot of families that would normally not be able to get any resources some and if we can do it because of a pandemic then we should be able to do it all the time.*
- *I was denied for not working enough hours while my hours were cut. My partner makes not a lot of money but only gets \$5 in Snap monthly.*

- *I wished those caseworkers give chance to other nationalities other than black Americans or white Americans. Example Asians, give more benefits base on the household income not base on what they look like or they look like Mexicans but Asians. I heard a lot of stories Black and White got more benefits while jobless while other nations got part time job and got less benefits and they also pay taxes every year. Be fair on judging and screening applicants.*
- *Increase the income eligibility*
- *Increase the minimum wage income to eligibility for benefits. There are so many people out there unable to get help and thrive with everyday life just because they make just a \$100 above the minimum wage! Food inflation is 3times higher than it was last year! We are i need.*
- *Increasing the percentage over the poverty line to help more folks qualify for these benefits would be helpful. The working poor and folks who have employment but make more than the amount, but need assistance is a large group.*
- *It would be nice to get food stamps for single moms something would really help especially having so many other bills to pay*
- *Make is easier for senior's and low-income individuals to apply for services. An example is you can only apply to Greensboro Housing Authority online. Many seniors or those without access to the internet have difficulty applying.*
- *Make it easier for people without children to qualify if they need help.*
- *Make it more widely available. I receive WIC but don't qualify for snap but as a single mom who pays for all households bills and childcare snap would be helpful*
- *Make the requirements less stricter*
- *Make them available to even people who have jobs but still can't afford to buy groceries or pay bills due to inflation.*
- *More accessible to people who work. Just because you have a job doesn't mean you make enough to survive and you aren't struggling.*
- *Offer to all families with children.*
- *provide the benefits to those that are really in need, and deserving individuals, some people are getting benefits but not really grateful about it, to the point it's been waisted.*
- *Raising the guidelines to assist those who are the working poor.*
- *Snap should be easier for families with borderline high income too*
- *So I think everything they do is good but it's just i was told I needed to be 21 to be able to get on snap but I've been told by my doctors that I'm allowed to apply so that's where I'm confused*
- *Stop using the gross pay as income when taxes are being took out.*
- *Take transportation costs in consideration. Car insurance, car payments, bus fair, etc..as expenses! We couldn't have income if we didn't have transportation!*
- *They can make it accessible to single parents that are doing everything they can to support their children. On papal it may look like they make enough to cover everything but that's not always the case and then they have to worry about how to feed their children and how to afford childcare.*

## Expanding Selections of Eligible Foods & Goods

- *Change the milk because too much person to had that problem when going to get the milk*
- *Clarify fruits and vegetables that are allowed on the wic benefits. I just moved here and have tried to buy numerous fresh fruits and veggies on the wic and most if not all are not allowed. When I lived in Michigan and received wic benefits I was able to get any fruits and veggies at our local Walmart.*
- *Debería de permitir para que con la tarjeta se pueda comprar productos básicos para bebé como pañales y wipe (It should allow you to buy basic baby products such as diapers and wipes with the card)*
- *Delivery fee free*
- *Don't charge for delivery over certain amount*
- *Extend their services to those who don't have means of transportation.*
- *Give free Uber vouchers, have kiosks to apply certain benefits at locations more easily accessible to those without transportation and live on the outskirts of Greensboro but still in the county.*

## Improving Processing & Distribution of Benefits

- *Allow people to apply and make changes online*
- *Anything to make it easier to apply, get, and use benefits!*
- *Approve it faster*
- *Approve people on first time of applying and issued card the same day*
- *checking in with the boss/company that people work for to see what they're meant to be making per paycheck*
- *Complete the process with individual show examples of what's needed*
- *Ease of access and assistance with applying*
- *Easier access. More communication and outreach. Wider range of help.*
- *Easier to get in touch with case managers.*
- *Faster processing times*
- *Have a way of seeing updates (where it is in processing, when recertifications are needed) in real time on the same website where you can apply. Give email address of your SNAP caseworker so you can have direct contact (they NEVER answer phone calls).*
- *Have bilingual personnel. Have their services available through the internet.*
- *I feel as if it shouldn't take as long to receive benefits or to be given an answer if you are approved or not. Also I feel as if when it is time to renew your SNAP, we shouldn't have to about losing benefits if we don't have all of the paper work to renew.*
- *Increase the time frame for processing paperwork*
- *Just refill on time, because people have already planned with the food, & if it doesn't refill when it's supposed to that's money out of our pocket us lower class people have to pay form, when that could be going towards savings for an apartment/house*
- *Make it easier and faster to apply. It's difficult and time-consuming to gather all the materials. A streamlined application process would benefit a lot of people.*
- *Make it easier to apply*
- *Make the process easier/more accessible.*
- *Offering more offices*

- *Online apps*
- *Partner with nonprofits in the areas*
- *Pay out two time a month.*
- *Quantify need and prioritize based on that making it faster and easier to get*
- *The application process more efficiently and less stressful*
- *The delivery system to receive the card you get the SNAP benefits on is extremely slow. If you lose your card it can take up to 2 months to obtain a new one and that means you don't have a way to buy food in that time.*
- *This is my second time receiving SNAP services once 2011. It took a while for me to approve and the process was long. When I applied in 2022 online after losing my job back in the beginning of October by the end of October, I was able to hear something back and I was able to contact my worker via email which was great. The online option in being able for the case manager to receive documents via email and communicate with you through email, has really improve the process for individuals who may not have transportation to and from social service office or who may not be able to do the application in person.*
- *Understand that a car payment is still a bill. Gas is still a bill. Food stamps are not enough and we have to come out of pocket for a lot of things.*

#### Improving Customer Service

- *Answering the phone. I may not have the money for gas to travel to the building.*
- *As a single mom i was trying to apply food benefits and school benefits. I didn't hear from both.*
- *Assisting applicants on ways they can get help, call back time shouldn't take 48hrs or more being able to speak to someone about your case sooner*
- *Be kinder.*
- *Better communication from staff, shorter wait time, continue virtual appointments*
- *Bilingual*
- *By giving a call to update the case or an email or letter that arrives soon as actions are taken by worker*
- *friendlier staff.*
- *Have a mobile office for ppl that can't find transportation*
- *Helping acquire the necessary documents for the application process*
- *It is a big help if they can be reach easy especially phone calls. It's take long time to reach*
- *Make knowledge of ALL assistance programs more noticeable, IE publish on social media, maybe do a short profile of services available on local news media outlets as well as on social media. I needed and still need some home repairs done that I can't afford. It took me a year to find a service available to help. Person who worked there even told me not too many people realize they exist.*
- *More personalized information like packets through the mail. Some wording can be misunderstood when there is a lot of text on a page and only one line on the entire page pertains to you and your situation in a sea of words. I've had to reread a few papers just to pick out what is actually mentioning my situation.*
- *More training for service personnel*



- *Really listen to what individuals are saying about their situation. There are people who really need help with food & housing. I'm one of them.*
- *The employees/caseworkers are either avoidant or overworked. They rarely answer the phone or get in contact with their cases.*
- *The WIC sets phone call appointments but never call on time, I have missed 3 appointments, I was waiting more than 10 minutes of the exact appointment time but did not receive call and later on I receive mails that I have missed my appointment. This is annoying to me.*
- *They first have to have respect of our situation and understand that we are still human*
- *They should have more workers that complete the process for the new applicants. They may need to offer employees more money or unionize to get the pay up to the standards across the country for other DSS workers. Then maybe the workers they do have will be happier and treat the clients better.*

#### Increasing Amount of Benefits

- *Give more and distribute them weekly or bi-weekly*
- *Give more money because with the inflation what we get is not enough. People who actually use it to provide for their families like me, we suffer by the middle to end of the month. We don't get enough with how much food has gone up. Especially healthy food.*
- *Help with more stamps due to inflation*
- *If possible give additional funds for food during holidays.*
- *Increase the amounts*
- *Increase the benefits*
- *provide even more resources for people that need help*
- *Reevaluate the cost of inflation to income requirements*
- *Regardless to what I make in a Jr at my job I should still be able to receive the same amount to feed me and my family because once I pay my bills I'm left with nothing sometimes and the SNAP helps me out a lot to provide for my family*
- *Things are higher than ever food cost so much that even food stamps doesn't help but so much*
- *With the price of living and inflation up so drastically, more benefits could be offered to median income families.*

#### Increase Awareness of SNAP/WIC

- *Have more visibility*
- *Let people know what's out here and help people that needs help.*
- *Make the public more aware of such programs.*
- *Maybe more advertising of how to apply and make the process more approachable bc it's already embarrassing for most people.*
- *More dissemination of information how to avail it*
- *Phone alert or message*
- *Reach out to more people*
- *Shorter TAT and keeping clients informed, reaching out to them making sure that all the right information is sent in.*
- *The county can improve by explaining monthly SNAP benefit limits and the rollover of funds.*

- *try to do follow-up calls to insure that families have enough for the household*

Guilford County DSS *I am very happy from Guilford County benefits*

- *I really haven't had any problems with Guilford County Health and Human Services.*
- *I think Guilford County is doing a fantastic job!*
- *I think Guilford county is doing a great job with service delivery however I've heard that some workers don't do thorough assessments and approved based on previous income levels*
- *I think the delivery is awesome, it's usually the same time every month and on debit cards; nothing better.*
- *I think they did good*
- *In my opinion Guilford County is doing the best they cam with the funding they have!*
- *It's pretty good i have no complaint there*
- *They do fine to me*
- *You do a great job. When first applying it takes time to be approved but that's the only issue.*

### *Transportation*

Most respondents (80.1%) used a personal car or truck to get around. However, 12.9% used friends' vehicles, 12.0% walked, and 10.1% used a taxi or Uber. Overall, 17.9% have difficulty getting to or from work, medical appointments, or taking care of daily needs as a result of transportation issues.

**TABLE 13 – TYPES OF TRANSPORTATION**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Cases</b>
Personal car/truck	254	60.50%	80.10%
Friends' car/truck	41	9.80%	12.90%
Walk	38	9.00%	12.00%
Taxi/ Uber	32	7.60%	10.10%
Pay other people	20	4.80%	6.30%
Bus	17	4.00%	5.40%
Bike	5	1.20%	1.60%
Scooter	2	0.50%	0.60%
Motorcycle	2	0.50%	0.60%
Other (explain)	9	2.10%	2.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>132.50%</b>

Do you have difficulty getting to or from work, medical appointments, or taking care of daily needs as a result of transportation issues?

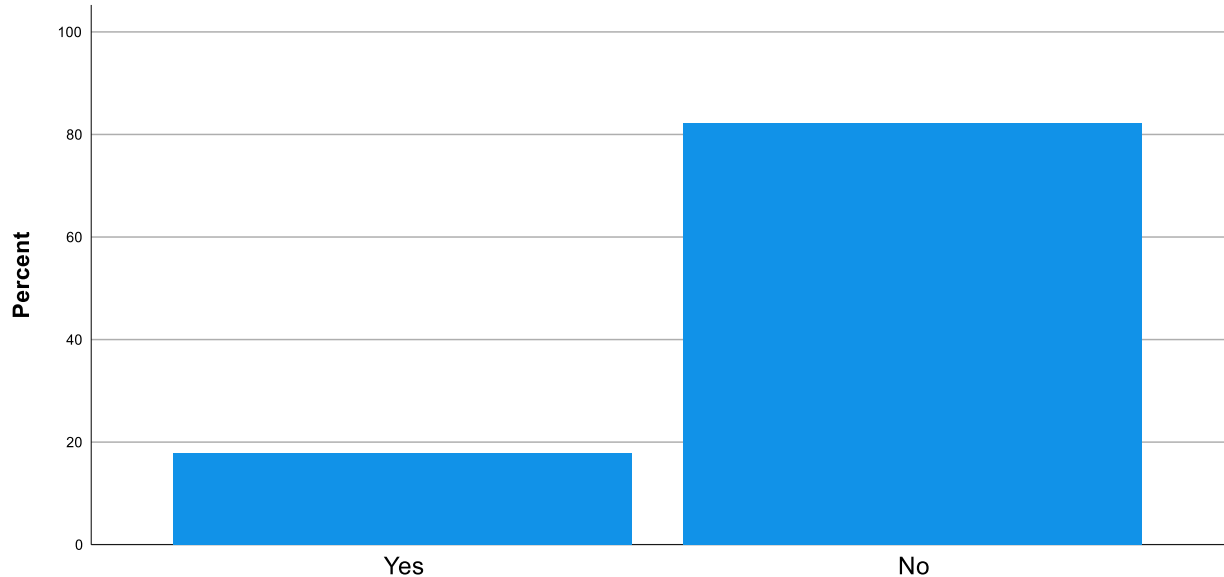


FIGURE 16 - TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTY

### *Housing*

Most individuals either rent house or apartment (55.0%) or own their own house or condo (30.8%). Nonetheless, 7.2% indicated they stay with friends or family. Among “other” living arrangements included: *Boarding house, Currently going through eviction process, Own a mobile home in a community but have to pay lot rent, and Staying with family and in hotels.* While a third (32.5%) of respondents said they have no housing issues, more than a quarter (28.4%) needed mortgage or rent assistance, 27.0% needed help with repairs, 25.3% needed assistance paying for utilities, and 20.4% were burdened by unaffordable housing. Additional housing-related issues were:

- *Hard paying lot rent when it continues to go up*
- *I lost my house due to rent going up and they put me out without notice after ten years due to I did get the paperwork of eviction after we were put out.*
- *I'm not able to receive housing for myself because of one eviction on my record*
- *My apartment flooded too many times since I been here and I can't afford to move and I'm about to be homeless. My kids stay sick cause of the mold*
- *Not enough room for me and my medical equipment*
- *Subsidizing my niece and her kids based on her working to pay Day Care*

- *Theft issues*

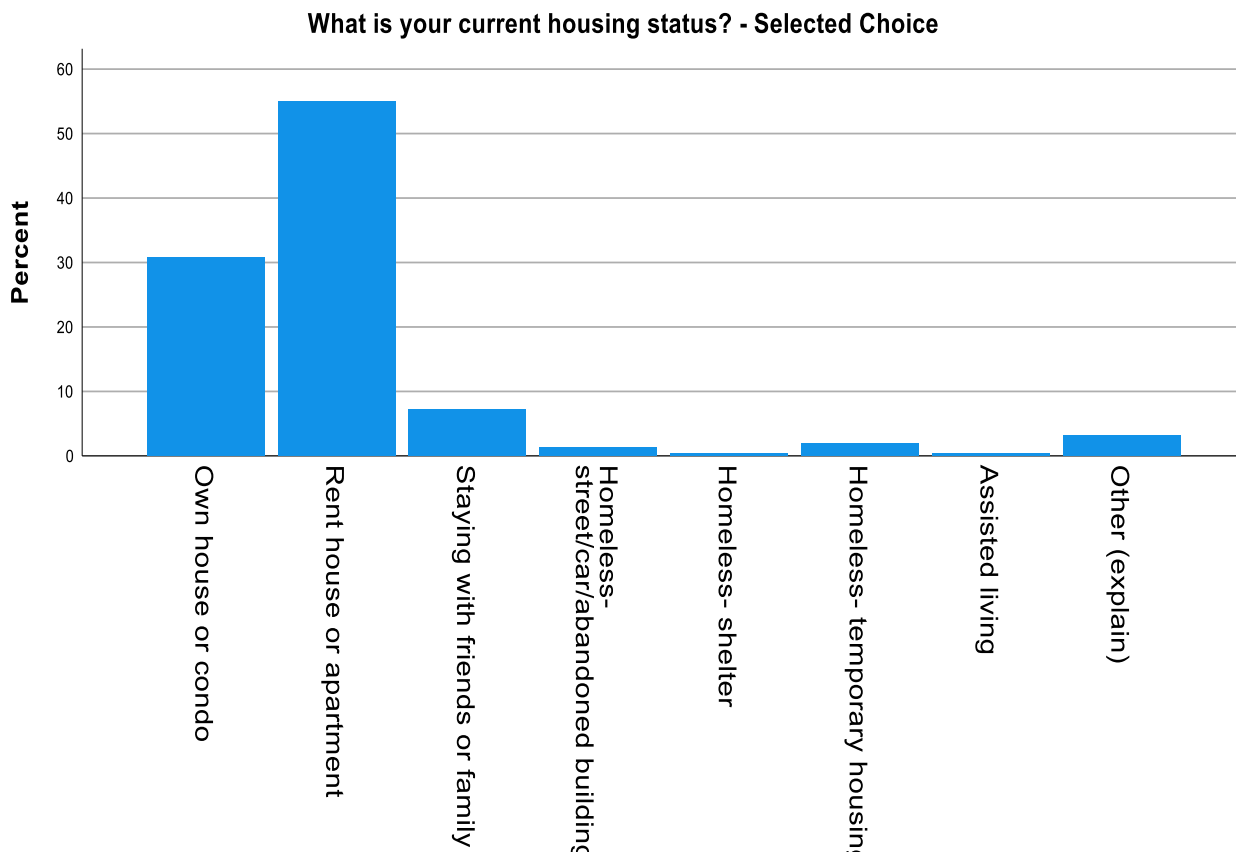


FIGURE 17 - HOUSING STATUS

TABLE 14 – HOUSING ISSUES

<i>Responses</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent of Responses</i>	<i>Percent of Cases</i>
None	94	16.80%	32.50%
Mortgage or rent assistance	82	14.60%	28.40%
Repairs	78	13.90%	27.00%
Utility assistance	73	13.00%	25.30%
Housing not affordable	59	10.50%	20.40%
Furniture or household goods	44	7.80%	15.20%
Unhealthy conditions - mold, lead, pests, other health issues	37	6.60%	12.80%
Neighborhood not safe	26	4.60%	9.00%
Pet friendly environment	23	4.10%	8.00%
Other medical accommodations	13	2.30%	4.50%
Unsafe home structure	11	2.00%	3.80%
Handicap access or modification	7	1.20%	2.40%
Other (explain)	14	2.50%	4.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>194.10%</b>

### Employment Assistance

While just over half (54.8%) of respondents indicated that they did not need assistance with employment seeking activities, 21.0% said they needed help with career or job training, 15.8% need help with resumes, 14.7% need higher educational attainment or certifications. Write-in responses for “other” included issues with justice involvement impacting employment opportunities, the need for ‘work from home’ opportunities due to disability and childcare, and information on making a career switch.

TABLE 15- EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Responses	N	Percent of Responses	Percent of Cases
None, I don't need employment assistance	149	28.70%	54.80%
Career/job training	57	11.00%	21.00%
Resume writing	43	8.30%	15.80%
Need for more education (GED, certifications, other educational attainment)	40	7.70%	14.70%
Career information options	33	6.40%	12.10%
Career assessment	31	6.00%	11.40%
Job interviewing skills	31	6.00%	11.40%
Work clothes	29	5.60%	10.70%
Job search strategies	27	5.20%	9.90%
Computer help	24	4.60%	8.80%
Access to hygienic products	22	4.20%	8.10%
Assistance with completing applications	15	2.90%	5.50%
Other (explain)	18	3.50%	6.60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>190.80%</b>

### *Reasons for Losing a Job*

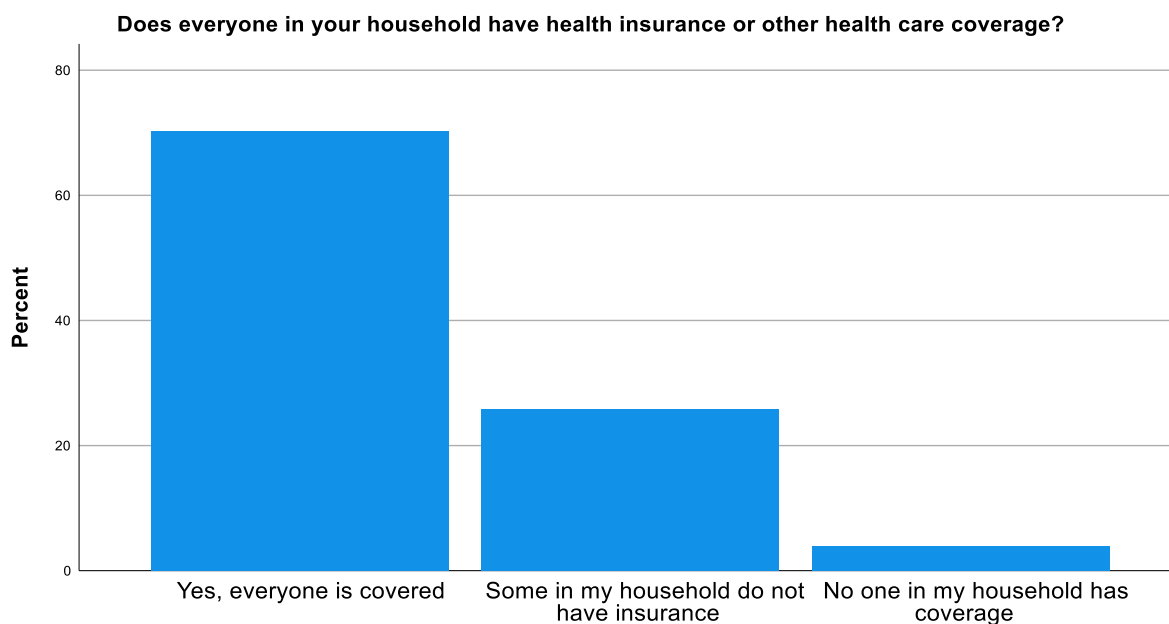
Respondents were asked if they had ever lost a job and if so, what the reason was. A little more than a quarter (28.7%) of respondents answered the questions. The leading reason for loss of work was lack of childcare, cost of childcare, or other childcare issues (34.0%). The second leading issue impacting a quarter of respondents (25.5%) was personal health issues or injuries. Pregnancy (21.2%) and transportation issues (20.3%) impacted one-in-five respondents. “Other” reasons included: *Being Black and transgender, the Covid-19 pandemic, disputes with supervisors, and the impact of inflation.*

**TABLE 16 REASONS FOR LOSING A JOB**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent of Responses</i>	<i>Percent of Cases</i>
Lack of childcare, cost of childcare, or other childcare issue	72	17.50%	34.00%
Personal health/injury	54	13.10%	25.50%
Pregnancy	45	10.90%	21.20%
Transportation issues	43	10.40%	20.30%
Cut hours	41	10.00%	19.30%
Lack of advancement opportunity	33	8.00%	15.60%
Job searching	20	4.90%	9.40%
Family health/injury	19	4.60%	9.00%
Position abolished	17	4.10%	8.00%
Plant or company closed or moved	17	4.10%	8.00%
Work related injury	8	1.90%	3.80%
Lack of appropriate clothing	6	1.50%	2.80%
Other (explain)	37	9.00%	17.50%
<i>Total</i>	<i>412</i>	<i>100.00%</i>	<i>194.30%</i>

### Health Insurance & Healthcare Needs

Healthcare access is an important issue impacting many residents of Guilford County. About a quarter of respondents (25.9%) said that some individuals in their household do not have health insurance and an additional 3.8% said no one in their household has coverage. Lack of health insurance leads to many severe health issues as those without insurance delay preventative care and regular checkups and wait until issues are more severe. Respondents were also asked about unmet healthcare needs. The most frequent responses were needs for dental care (33.10%), eye/vision care (23.60%), general medical care (15.70%), mental health care (15.70%) and prescription medication (11.60%).



**FIGURE 18 – HEALTH INSURANCE**

**TABLE 17 – HEALTHCARE NEEDS**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent of Responses</i>	<i>Percent of Cases</i>
Dental care	80	16.80%	33.10%
Eye/vision care	57	12.00%	23.60%
General medical care	38	8.00%	15.70%
Mental health care	38	8.00%	15.70%
Prescription medication/ money for prescription	28	5.90%	11.60%
Child diagnosed with a disability	23	4.80%	9.50%
Sleep problems	22	4.60%	9.10%
OBGYN services	20	4.20%	8.30%
Diabetes	15	3.20%	6.20%
Hypertension	15	3.20%	6.20%
Hearing care	7	1.50%	2.90%
Pulmonary Disease (COPD, Emphysema, Asthma)	6	1.30%	2.50%
Heart Disease	5	1.10%	2.10%
Substance abuse treatment	5	1.10%	2.10%
AIDS/HIV risk or treatment	4	0.80%	1.70%
Medical equipment	4	0.80%	1.70%
STIs (sexually transmitted infections)	3	0.60%	1.20%
Teen pregnancy	1	0.20%	0.40%
None	98	20.60%	40.50%
Other (explain)	6	1.30%	2.50%
<i>Total</i>	<i>475</i>	<i>100.00%</i>	<i>196.30%</i>

### *Mental & Behavioral Health Needs*

Additional health needs were explored for mental or behavioral healthcare. Half (49.8%) of the respondents said they did not need services. Yet, 22.1% of survey respondents needed assistance with depression, 19.5% with planning for the future, 14.3% had self esteem issues as well as personal problems they would like help with.



**TABLE 18 – MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent of Responses</i>	<i>Percent of Cases</i>
None	115	23.30%	49.80%
Depression	51	10.30%	22.10%
Planning for the future/ goal setting	45	9.10%	19.50%
Self-esteem	33	6.70%	14.30%
Personal problems	33	6.70%	14.30%
Family conflicts	27	5.50%	11.70%
Couples' communication	26	5.30%	11.30%
PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)	25	5.10%	10.80%
Making decisions/ problem solving	24	4.90%	10.40%
Trauma	21	4.30%	9.10%
Parenting classes	17	3.40%	7.40%
Caregiver support	17	3.40%	7.40%
Anger control	17	3.40%	7.40%
Alcohol use	9	1.80%	3.90%
Disability counseling	8	1.60%	3.50%
Victimization	5	1.00%	2.20%
Thoughts of suicide (last 6 months)	5	1.00%	2.20%
Drug use	5	1.00%	2.20%
Addiction	4	0.80%	1.70%
Spousal abuse	2	0.40%	0.90%
Other (explain)	5	1.00%	2.20%
<i>Total</i>	<i>494</i>	<i>100.00%</i>	<i>213.90%</i>

### *Veterans Benefits*

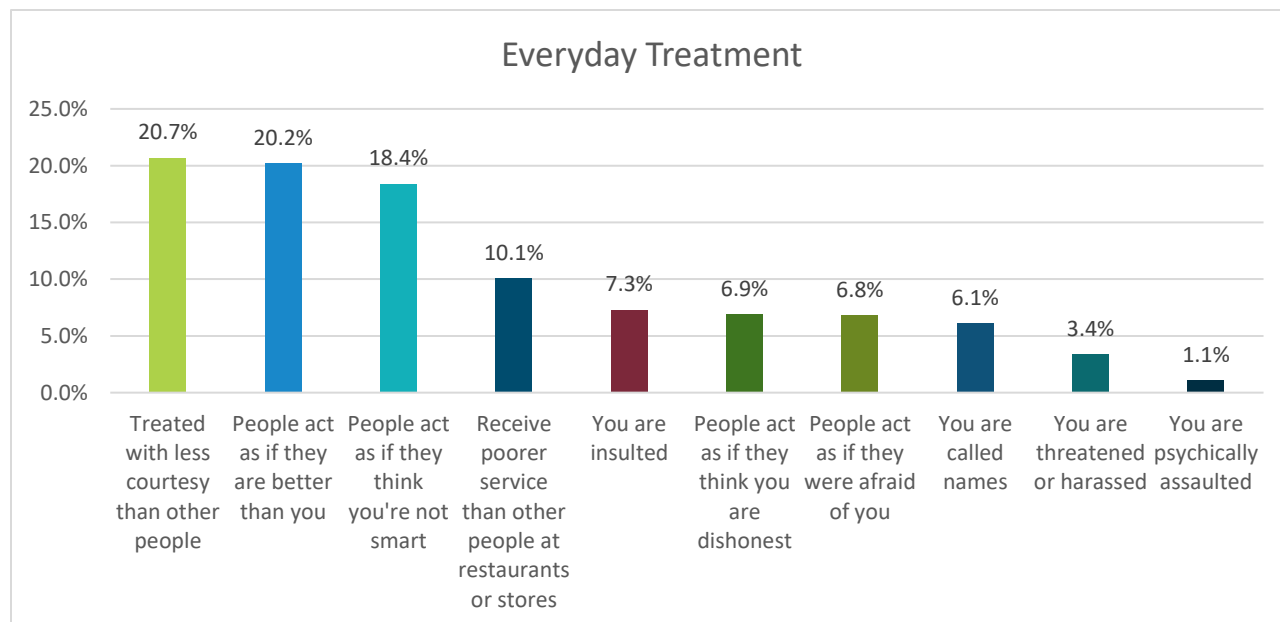
Only 2.8% of respondents (8 in all) were identified as veterans. Half of the veterans indicated that they were not receiving benefits. The primary reasons for not receiving benefits were not knowing how to get them and not having a need for benefits.

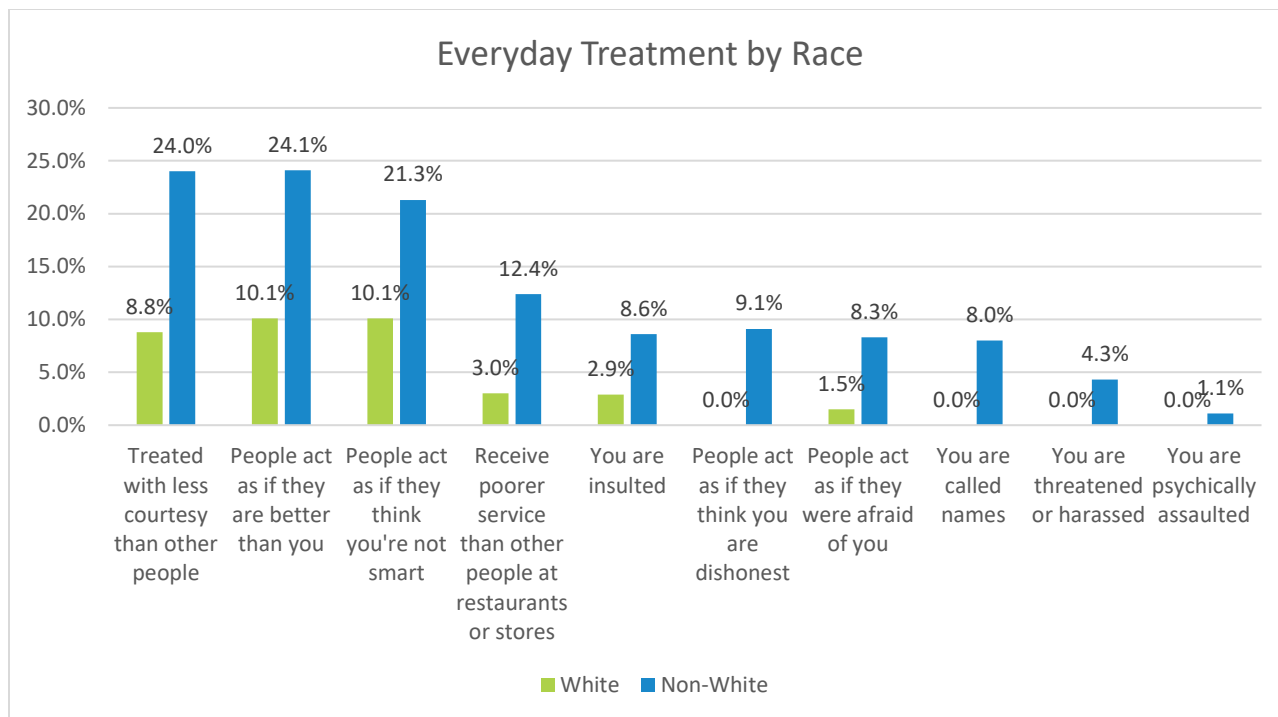
**TABLE 19 – VETERAN STATUS & BENEFITS**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	I am not a veteran	275	37.2	97.2	97.2
	I am a veteran, and I am receiving benefits	4	.5	1.4	98.6
	I am a veteran, but I am not receiving benefits	4	.5	1.4	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing	System	456	61.7		
<b>Total</b>		<b>739</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

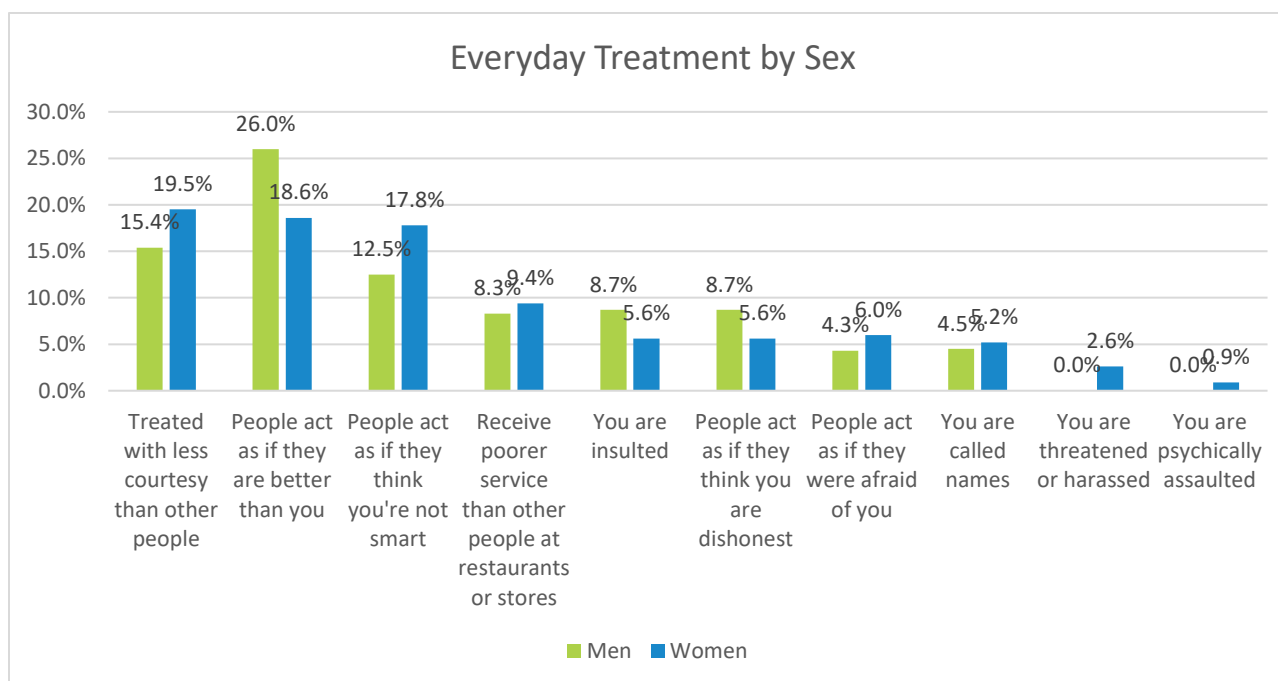
### Everyday Treatment

Respondents were asked about their perception of treatment by others in their community. Most people never or rarely perceived being discriminated against. However, on a weekly basis or more often, 20.7% felt they were treated with less courtesy than others, 20.2% felt that others acted as if they were better than them, and 10.4% felt people acted as if they thought the respondent was not smart. Non-White respondents were more likely to feel like they were discriminated against than White respondents. Women also experiences more types of discrimination.


**FIGURE 19 – EVERYDAY TREATMENT ALL RESPONDENTS (WEEKLY OR MORE OFTEN)**



**FIGURE 20 – EVERYDAY TREATMENT WHITE/NON-WHITE (WEEKLY OR MORE OFTEN)**



**FIGURE 21 – EVERYDAY TREATMENT MALE/FEMALE (WEEKLY OR MORE OFTEN)**

## Conclusions

### *Summary*

This report has found that in Guilford County, vulnerable populations including minorities, women, justice involved individuals, individuals with a disability, LGBTQ+, limited English proficient, older workers, and veterans are in some ways being disadvantaged by systemic issues and structural causes.

Our stakeholders and survey participants clearly recognized the unequal impact on employed or job-seeking women, especially as a result of the pandemic. It was understood that while there are high levels of refugee resettlement in the area, there are not many services specifically tailored to the needs of foreign-born residents. Survey results showed that Non-white respondents faced greater barriers to access to social services. Yet, among the most vulnerable of populations cut out of labor markets and some social benefits are those who have had justice involvement.

While employers and workforce development people talked about a worker shortage, jobseekers were having a difficult time. There are several problems that jobseekers are experiencing in today's labor market. Some of these include:

**Skill Mismatch:** Many jobseekers are finding that their skills are not aligned with the demands of the current labor market, making it difficult for them to find employment. This can be due to the rapid pace of technological change, shifts in industry demands, or other factors.

**Competition for Jobs:** The current labor market is highly competitive, with many jobseekers competing for a limited number of good and well-paying positions available. This can be particularly challenging for individuals with limited experience, education, or skills. Or for retirees, women, and justice involved who are returning to the job market.

**Stagnant Wages:** Despite low unemployment rates, many workers are facing stagnant or declining wages, making it difficult for them to make ends meet and achieve economic security.

**Inadequate Benefits:** Many workers, particularly those in low-wage or part-time positions, lack access to benefits such as health insurance, paid time off, and retirement savings plans. This can make it difficult for them to manage their health and financial well-being.

**Bias and Discrimination:** Jobseekers from marginalized communities, including people of color, women, and individuals with disabilities, often face discrimination and bias in the hiring process, making it difficult for them to find employment that matches their skills and experience.

### *Key Issues Facing the Community*

Adequate and affordable housing is a fundamental determinant of health and well-being. Poor housing conditions, such as overcrowding, lack of basic amenities, and exposure to environmental hazards, can lead to poor health outcomes, including respiratory diseases, injuries, and stress-related conditions. Access to affordable and safe housing is also linked to better health outcomes, improved educational outcomes, and increased economic stability.

Access to reliable and affordable transportation is essential for accessing health care, education, and employment opportunities, and can have a significant impact on health and well-being. Lack of access to transportation can limit access to health care, reduce economic opportunities, and increase social isolation.

Living in certain geographic areas can limit access to opportunities and resources, such as good schools, healthy food, and safe environments. Likewise, inequities in the education system, including inadequate funding, inadequate facilities and resources, and disparities in academic achievement, can limit access to educational opportunities and limit the future prospects of marginalized groups.

Many workers, particularly those in low-wage or part-time positions, lack access to benefits such as health insurance, paid time off, and retirement savings plans. This can make it difficult for them to manage their health and financial well-being.

## Recommendation

The following recommendations are some of the possible ways to ameliorate the structural barriers and inequalities that limit low- and middle- income individuals and families and ways to improve delivery of resources in Guilford County.

***#1: Improve tracking of referrals & communications between community partners, social service agencies, health systems, and workforce development organizations.***

- NCCARE360 is a comprehensive, centralized system of care designed to support individuals and families as they navigate the health and human services system in North Carolina.
- Increase utilization of NCCARE360 within social services and community based organizations to better document referrals and outcomes.
- NCCARE360 will help to improve access to health and human services, increase efficiencies, drive better outcomes, and reduce disparities, and provide for data-driven decision making.

***#2: Increase funding and resources for workforce reentry programs, especially those working with justice involved individuals.***

- Implementing effective prison reentry programs is critical for reducing recidivism and improving public safety, as well as for promoting social and economic stability. Best practices for prison reentry programs include providing comprehensive services, collaborating with community-based organizations, using evidence-based approaches, focusing on employment, maintaining continuity of care, involving family members, and conducting regular evaluations and data collection.

***#3: Support access to post-secondary educational opportunities and connection to employment for low-and-middle-income individuals***

- Connect jobseekers with training programs, community colleges, and higher education opportunities that will lead to living wage employment;
- Expand support for paid externships and ‘on-the-job’ training programs linked to industry and include adults over 24 years of age;
- Provide debt-free higher education and community college degree options;
- Support student loan debt forgiveness for LMI populations;

- Work with employer-based programs that provide support for parents (childcare, PTO, FMLA, flexible schedules, etc).

***#4: Reduce impact of structural conditions of inequality including housing affordability, transportation availability, and food assistance.***

- Provide free bus passes to social service visits while also expanding options for transportation including van pool, intra-city buses, and county-wide transit systems.
- Partner with housing providers to create a pipeline of housing choice vouchers directly to participating landlords;
- Coordinate with the High Point Food Alliance, Out of the Garden Project, Second Harvest and other organization on distribution of food especially at social service agencies, schools, and in communities designated as having low food access.
- Look to the success of some of the Healthy Opportunities Pilots across the state in leveraging Medicaid to pay for healthy foods.

***#5: Support universal high-quality childcare and pre-K programs***

- Parents need affordable, quality childcare in order to improve socio-economic conditions.
- Work to expand Head Start and similar preschool programs to accommodate growing need. These programs may also be another good point-of-contact for addressing needs of families.

***#6: Improve application, processing, and delivery of SNAP/WIC Benefits to vulnerable populations***

- Based on recommendations from those interviewed and surveyed, expand eligibility of SNAP to all parents, college students, refugees and immigrants, seniors, working poor, and other food insecure individuals.
- Expand the amount of benefits as well as the types of goods and foods that can be purchased.

- Improve processing time and customer services for those seeking benefits.
- Increase community awareness of resources by engaging residents through marketing, outreach, social media, and other forms of advertising.

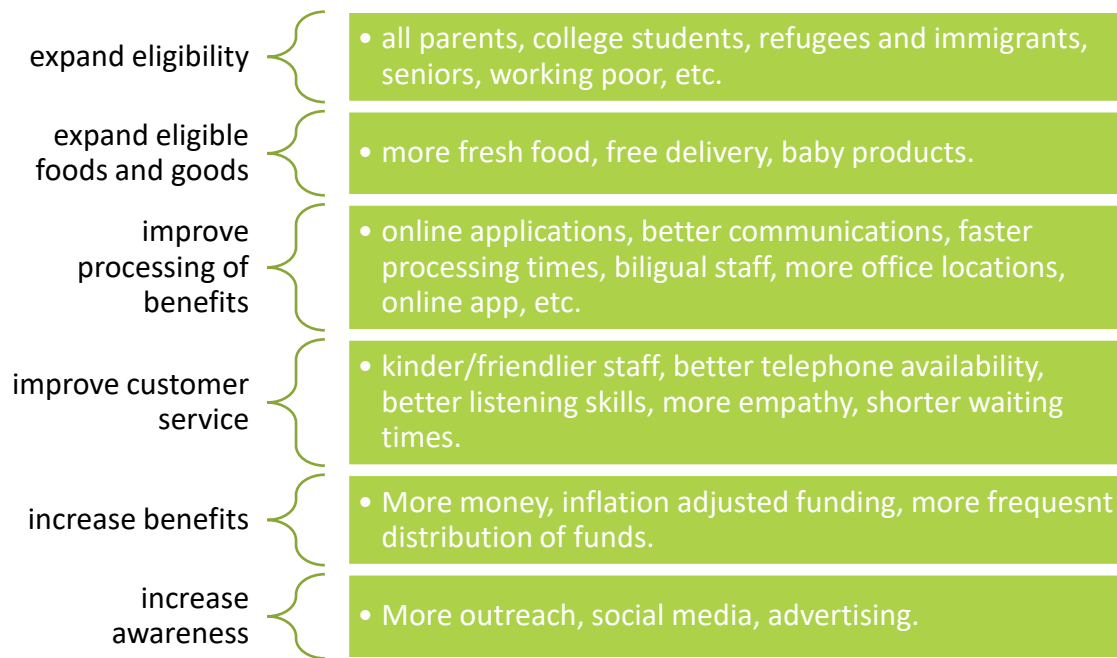


FIGURE 22 – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING AND EXPANDING SNAP/WIC BENEFITS



## References

- Aluoch, A., Broxton, M., Gordon, Y., Izquierdo, B., Moore, T., Gilkesson, P., Dolby, T., & Lower-Basch, E. (2022). *A community-driven anti-racist vision for SNAP*. clasp.org. [https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022.9.28\\_A-Community-Driven-Anti-Racist-Vision-for-SNAP.pdf](https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022.9.28_A-Community-Driven-Anti-Racist-Vision-for-SNAP.pdf).
- Carlson, S. & Neuberger, Z. (2021). *WIC works: Addressing the nutrition and health needs of low-income families for more than four decades*. cbpp.org. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/wic-works-addressing-the-nutrition-and-health-needs-of-low-income-families>.
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2022a). *A quick guide to SNAP eligibility and benefits*. cbpp.org. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/a-quick-guide-to-snap-eligibility-and-benefits>.
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2022b). *Policy basics: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children*. cbpp.org. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/special-supplemental-nutrition-program-for-women-infants-and-children>.
- Davis, J. (2022). *North Carolina saw the country's greatest increase in WIC participation during the pandemic*. Wfae.org. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.wfae.org/health/2022-10-19/north-carolina-saw-the-countrys-greatest-increase-in-wic-participation-during-the-pandemic>.
- Fiol, O., Waxman, E., & Gundersen, C. (2021). *Persistent gaps in SNAP benefit adequacy across the rural-urban continuum*. urban.org. [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/105010/persistent-gaps-in-snap-benefit-adequacy-across-the-rural-urban-continuum\\_0.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/105010/persistent-gaps-in-snap-benefit-adequacy-across-the-rural-urban-continuum_0.pdf).
- Food Research & Action Center. (2017). *The role of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in improving health and well-being*. frac.org.

<https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-role-snap-improving-health-well-being.pdf>.

Food Research & Action Center. (2019). *Making WIC work better*. frac.org. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/Making-WIC-Work-Better-Full-Report.pdf>.

Food Research & Action Center. (2022). *WIC during COVID-19*. frac.org. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/wic-during-covid-19-2022.pdf>.

Guilford County Child Health Services. (n.d.) *How WIC works*. guilfordcountync.gov. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.guilfordcountync.gov/our-county/human-services/health-department/child-health-services/how-wic-works>.

Gundersen, C., Kreider B., & Pepper, J.V. (2017). "Partial identification methods for evaluating food assistance programs: A case study of the causal impact of SNAP on food insecurity." *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 99(1), 875–93.

Holden, L. (n.d.). *The SNAP gap: A state-by-state glance*. frac.org. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://frac.org/blog/the-snap-gap-a-state-by-state-glance>.

Hoynes, H., Schanzenbach, D.W., & Almond D. (2016). Long-run impacts of childhood access to the safety net. *American Economic Review*, 106(4), 903–34.

Isaacs, S.E., Shriver, L., & Haldeman, L. (2020). Qualitative analysis of maternal barriers and perceptions to participating in federal supplemental nutrition program in rural Appalachian North Carolina. *Journal of Appalachian Health*, 2(4), 37-52.

Liu, C.H., & Liu, H. (2016). Concerns and structural barriers associated with WIC participation among WIC-eligible women. *Public Health Nursing*, 33(5), 395-402. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.12259>.

MacDonald, M. (1977). Food Stamps: An analytical history. *Social Service Review*, 51(4), 642-658. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30015546>.

- McKernan, S.M., Ratcliffe, C., & Braga, B. (2021). The effect of the US safety net on material hardship over two decades." *Journal of Public Economics*, 197.
- Miles, L., Spurlock, T., Livesay, N., Henry, M., Sugg, M., Farris, A., Roy, M., & Nunnery, D. (2022). P153 spatial analysis of perinatal food assistance resources in relation to food deserts in North Carolina. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 54(7): S90-S91.  
<https://dio.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2022.04.194>.
- N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *FNS caseload statistics reports*. *ncdhhs.gov*. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/program-statistics-and-reviews/fns-caseload-statistics-reports>.
- N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. (2023). *COVID-19 changes for Food and Nutrition Services*. *ncdhhs.gov*. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/information/human-services/changes-food-and-nutrition-services>.
- North Carolina Justice Center. (n.d.) *The felony SNAP ban*. *ncjustice.org*. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.ncjustice.org/felony-snap-ban/>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.-a). *History of the WIC program*. *fns.usda.gov*. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from [https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46648/15834\\_fanrr27c\\_1 .pdf?v=0](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46648/15834_fanrr27c_1.pdf?v=0).
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.-b). *SNAP participation rates by state, all eligible people*. *fns.usda.gov*. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usamap#>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2018). *A short history of SNAP*. *fns.usda.gov*. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/short-history-snap>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021a). *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program households: Fiscal year 2019*. *fns.usda.org*. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/Characteristics2019.pdf>.

- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021b). *Barriers that constrain the adequacy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments*. fns.usda.gov. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/barriers-constrain-adequacy-snap-allotments>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021c). *SNAP eligibility*. fns.usda.gov. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021d). *Students*. fns.usda.gov. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021e). *Thrifty Food Plan, 2021*. fns.usda.gov. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/TFP2021.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021f). *USDA modernizes the Thrifty Food Plan, updates SNAP benefits*. fns.usda.gov. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/news-item/usda-0179.21>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2022). *USDA makes major investments in WIC to improve maternal and child health*. fns.usda. Retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/news-item/usda-0224.22>.
- U.S. Social Security Administration. (2022). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) facts*. ssa.gov. <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10101.pdf>.

## Appendix A – Open Ended Survey Responses

*What is most important resource to you or your community?*

<i>A clean park for kids to play.</i>	<i>If kids do not have a place to play they usually create one. And it's usually someone else's property.</i>
<i>A community center that is accessible</i>	<i>It helps the community have a safe place to gather, learn and support each other.</i>
<i>Access to downtown &amp; Greenway, clean neighborhood. .</i>	<i>Close proximity to jobs, schools and entertainment. Feels clean.</i>
<i>Access to food and stores</i>	<i>Bc I like options</i>
<i>Access to food pantries. Assistance with resources that are available through the community</i>	<i>Some people don't know where to go. Somebody don't know how to navigate your website to understand there is additional help and resources available in the community</i>
<i>Access to quality healthcare and affordable food</i>	<i>It is difficult finding quality services when one is impoverished, however everyone deserves the opportunity to live a healthy and happy life.</i>
<i>Affordable Childcare</i>	<i>My niece is also new to Guilford County and must work, and is currently paying over \$300 a week for one child and only makes \$13.00 an hour. She is working to pay Day Care. I also know of others who can't work because they cannot afford Day Care</i>
<i>affordable housing</i>	<i>our homeless numbers are increasing especially among the elderly</i>
<i>Affordable housing/housing assistance</i>	<i>It's a fundamental basic need, needed for survival.</i>
<i>After school care</i>	<i>There aren't many Christian based after school programs for children in the community.</i>
<i>Assistance in Guilford county is very satisfactory</i>	<i>This resource isn't as helpful in other communities</i>
<i>Availability of resources such as housing</i>	<i>Growing population limited housing especially for growing families.</i>
<i>Backpack beginnings</i>	<i>I just visited it today and it helps with a lot of household needs-helps moms and struggling families</i>
<i>Backpack beginnings</i>	<i>Has helped me and my family in a desperate time of need.</i>
<i>Being able to use services@Goodwill</i>	<i>Because some places charge to use computers, fax papers but this service is totally free</i>
<i>Being close to the hospital</i>	<i>I have children with complex medical needs</i>
<i>Bicycle paths and safe streets for pedestrians.</i>	<i>Alternative means of transportation (cycling and walking) and outlets for outdoor exercise are the most important things to contribute to a healthier, more active community.</i>
<i>Book box</i>	<i>Area</i>

<i>childcare</i>	<i>Without a safe, healthy, nurturing, and affordable place for the children to be, I wouldn't be able to work, and with no money comes homelessness and all other ills.</i>
<i>Childcare transportation</i>	<i>Mental financial</i>
<i>Childcare, car repair, and food be cause</i>	<i>we need affordable child care to work. for those of us who have cars if they break down sometimes we have no way to pay for it it would be nice if they would be some type of way for single parents to get help with car maintenance so that we can continue to work. And food because there are so many families who don't have enough School counselors rather school social workers</i>
<i>Church</i>	<i>Where I am able to worship the Lord</i>
<i>Church and family</i>	<i>My mental health</i>
<i>Church, preschool</i>	<i>Necessity's for growth</i>
<i>City services (water, sewer, garbage)</i>	<i>Can't live without water and we can't make it nor clean it nor deliver it ourselves without our City.</i>
<i>City utilities and trash service</i>	<i>It's basic infrastructure we need.</i>
<i>Clean and safe streets</i>	<i>Makes the community look good</i>
<i>Clean environment</i>	<i>Health</i>
<i>close to work</i>	<i>I'd rather not have to drive long distances</i>
<i>Common knowledge of how the community works</i>	<i>We must increase common knowledge of how the community works so we know when, where, &amp; how to access community resources.</i>
<i>Community Center</i>	<i>Always something for the kids and community to do</i>
<i>Community networking/mutual aid</i>	<i>Every community is built upon the interconnectedness of its residents and I've found that calling upon the community (friends, neighbors, folks who know folks you know) has benefited me to no end. Asking the collective for resources and advice and having them be willing to take the time and energy to respond is a wonderful thing to behold.</i>
<i>Daycare</i>	<i>Na</i>
<i>Daycare, close stores</i>	<i>Single mom</i>
<i>Department of Social Services</i>	<i>It helps a lot of people</i>
<i>Department of social services</i>	<i>Provides valuable and needed resources and information</i>
<i>Doctors, Food stores</i>	<i>Help community with anything we need</i>
<i>DSS</i>	<i>is where all my hell comes from but you cannot get in touch with them.</i>
<i>DSS</i>	<i>Because they will help you if your white or non black.</i>

<i>DSS</i>	<i>You can rely on them to answer you in 24 hours on any help you need</i>
<i>EBT and WIC food programs</i>	<i>A basic resource for sustenance and nutrition.</i>
<i>EBT card</i>	<i>Helps feed my kids</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>Education is where everything begins</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>Good and educated people help the community</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>I want the best for my kids</i>
<i>Energy/power</i>	<i>Life basically stops if the power is off</i>
<i>everything</i>	<i>everything</i>
<i>Extracurricular things for the kids to participate in</i>	<i>We have none in our area and the drive is too far away</i>
<i>Family</i>	<i>Because family is everything</i>
<i>Family</i>	
<i>Family</i>	<i>Support one another in whatever necessary, especially in times of need</i>
<i>Family house we live in</i>	<i>Place of security and trust</i>
<i>Family, Costco, church, splash pad for children</i>	<i>Essential part of my daily life</i>
<i>Farmers Market</i>	<i>Easily accessible</i>
<i>fast response to outages</i>	<i>Personally because I have a newborn at home and especially with how cold it's been it's a big worry whenever there's an outage</i>
<i>Food</i>	<i>Children</i>
<i>Food banks</i>	<i>Youth services</i>
<i>Food banks with expired food and housing</i>	<i>I don't have stable employment or transpo To be able to eat and have a roof over my head is great</i>
<i>Food pantries</i>	<i>We wouldn't have food alot with the prices of food going through the roof and not enough money/ food stamps</i>
<i>Food stamps</i>	<i>Helps get food</i>
<i>Food, Utility and Housing services</i>	<i>Everyone needs and uses assistance</i>
<i>For me, the cultural art center.</i>	<i>There are so many organizations there (Greensboro Ballet, onstage and inclusive, Greensboro Youth choir to name a few) that have touched the lives of my family and made our lives more magical and artistic.</i>
<i>GCSS</i>	<i>It's an important resource for a variety of needs</i>
<i>Good Schools</i>	<i>I have young kids and chose to move to the NW Guilford area due to the schools in this area</i>
<i>government assistance programs</i>	<i>being a single mother with two kids, the assistance programs help a lot</i>
<i>Grant for 12 wk paid maternity leave for families unable to work and take care of a newborn while trying to keep bills paid.</i>	<i>Many families don't have maternity leave through there job or are only allotted 6 wk paid leave. By the 6 wk mark mom's are having there 6 wk check up after giving birth and are still getting adjusted to a lifestyle with there newborn. There are</i>

	<i>families who don't have a great support system and have to get childcare. Many families are not comfortable with a 6 wk old being put in childcare especially with covid still running rampant.</i>
<i>Great community watch out</i>	<i>Community pulls together</i>
<i>Great people</i>	<i>Convenient to all stores</i>
<i>Greensboro Urban Ministries/ Salvation Army</i>	<i>Most important resources because these places help Guilford County in numerous ways. Homelessness, Hunger, Bills for those who don't have enough....sometimes they help out financially.</i>
<i>Grocery's !</i>	<i>Feeds our family</i>
<i>guilford county social services</i>	<i>because it allows low income families get support</i>
<i>Guilford green foundation and other lgbt+poc safe &amp; inclusive locations</i>	<i>Making safe environments for ourselves and our children will allow future generations to prosper.</i>
<i>Halal Food. And place of worship.</i>	<i>If these are not provided by the community then I as a Muslim am forced to move somewhere where these necessities are available.</i>
<i>Having a job</i>	<i>So I can pay my bills and survive</i>
<i>Having space so your neighbors aren't on top of you.</i>	<i>I lived in Cary, NC before this and I hated having an HOA and seeing from your house into your neighbor's house.</i>
<i>Having the best support system around you.</i>	<i>Because sometimes when you're down and out. It's the people around who help encourage you to do better and be better.</i>
<i>Health and education</i>	<i>Health acces has such a great impact on the quality of life people have</i>
<i>Health care and safety</i>	
<i>Health care, Education, markets and Entertainment.</i>	<i>For my family.</i>
<i>Health service</i>	<i>Because it's so expensive.</i>
<i>healthcare, grocery stores, schools</i>	<i>nearby access and not secluded like other places having to travel too far for such</i>
<i>Help financially when I'm unable to work</i>	<i>It's survival</i>
<i>Help with resources family needs to get by day to day it's hard making a living &amp; keeping up with the bills</i>	<i>In order to live a decent life one needs the necessities</i>
<i>High Point Housing Authority</i>	<i>The Family Success Service has helped me get a handle on levels of financial stability in an uncertain economic climate.</i>
<i>Hospital and emergency services</i>	<i>They get to you as quickly as possible</i>
<i>Hospitals</i>	<i>To insure the community health issues and procure people treatment wether or not with health assurance</i>



<i>Hospitals and Places that help financially</i>	<i>Because we have more than enough hospitals to help and also places that have resources to help families</i>
<i>Housing</i>	<i>With out house no family</i>
<i>Housing and resources to help with assistance and making our community more safe. We need more medical and dental providers that will accept medicaid</i>	<i>To resolve homelessness and less violence in our communities</i>
<i>housing, food</i>	<i>cost of living and rent increase increase demand for affordable housing</i>
<i>I believe that UNCG is an important resource due to its community outreach and opportunities for leisure.</i>	<i>It serves social needs of people and provides entertainment for the community.</i>
<i>I honestly don't know. I am always at work or at home. I am not really sure what all my community has to offer.</i>	<i>Na</i>
<i>I like school</i>	<i>Schools are good</i>
<i>I live conveniently to doctors office and other places I can get there quickly</i>	<i>We need to know where there at when you have a family</i>
<i>i love a small city</i>	<i>because there isn't so much traffic</i>
<i>I love the nearby parks (Deep River Park and Johnson St Disc Park and High Point Mariana) that we have near our house.</i>	<i>I think it is extremely important to have natural areas in our community for places to play, relax, and grow.</i>
<i>Increase in f out foster care funding</i>	<i>It's is not enough for a kid to live a normal life</i>
<i>Job &amp; housing</i>	<i>Social services</i>
<i>Jobs</i>	<i>This is how we have to live. Need better pay on our jobs.</i>
<i>Jobs that pay well</i>	<i>Need money to live</i>
<i>Jobs, affordable housing and other requirements to live</i>	<i>They're required. Honestly, if things become more expensive, relocation may be a possibility</i>
<i>Keeping the environment clean and harmless .</i>	<i>Because ,people need to learn how to come together and not against each other .</i>
<i>La salud es lo más importante</i>	<i>Si nos cuidamos y nos vacunamos todos estaremos bien</i>
<i>Land</i>	<i>I have space in my yard</i>
<i>Las escuelas, los grupos de apoyo para los menores</i>	<i>Nos alienta y enseña a interactuar más con nuestros hijos informándonos de actividades para su desarrollo</i>
<i>Learning center</i>	<i>Daycare</i>
<i>Library</i>	<i>Accessibility, knowledge, programming</i>
<i>Library</i>	<i>We enjoy taking our granddaughter there</i>
<i>Library and park close by</i>	<i>Something for children to do</i>
<i>Living near other queer and trans friends and chosen family</i>	<i>Because mutual aid offers more than the government can</i>
<i>Local playground</i>	<i>Easy access for my child to have a safe place to play close to home. And it's fee.</i>

<i>Markets and "Parks n Rec" services</i>	<i>Food resources that can be affordable and keeping our youth productive/active</i>
<i>Mating</i>	<i>Nating</i>
<i>Medicaid</i>	<i>I had a toddler who had a burn injury last year and we did not had insurance or medicaid at that time. I could not take her to the emergency fearing the bill would be couple of thousands and it was the worst part of parenting. Then I got approved for Medicaid and now I can take my kids to the Dr without any fear. I don't say that it should be 100% free but one should at least know what they'd end up paying if they get a respective service and it should be reasonable too.</i>
<i>Medical and dental support</i>	<i>No one can afford it and everyone needs it.</i>
<i>Medical and food</i>	<i>Those are necessities</i>
<i>medicate / SSI</i>	<i>This service is important to me because I have a child with disability, and it helps offset the cost of some of his therapy services that I would not be able to afford based off my income alone and the insurance provider through my job.</i>
<i>Mental health, addiction services, homeless assistance, gun buying restrictions enforced.</i>	<i>All this is due to safety &amp; the ability to help these addicts &amp; the homeless have somewhere to go besides in front of stores, gas stations, &amp; off exits.</i>
<i>Mi familia</i>	<i>Su bienestar me interesa mucho</i>
<i>More transparent,more value for food stamps</i>	<i>People refugees need transportation</i>
<i>Multiple grocery stores and being close to highways. Childcare is also very close</i>	<i>It makes living in this area easy. With many business and places to eat and shop it is very convenient for me to support my household.</i>
<i>My children school</i>	<i>They help me a lot</i>
<i>My community</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>My daughter's pre-k education</i>	<i>Her school and community are very helpful and communal</i>
<i>My family</i>	<i>Support and love</i>
<i>My family is here.</i>	<i>Because they are my support system.</i>
<i>My family, they also live in Greensboro</i>	<i>Having family close by sometimes makes life easier</i>
<i>My food stamps</i>	<i>I can not afford groceries without it. groceries here in High Point are expensive. i came here from central VA.</i>
<i>My granddaughter helps me all the time with any needs I may have. Getting groceries, taking me to and from appointments and helping prepare meals.</i>	<i>She is a very important resource because family is the most important thing. I am very blessed to have her help.</i>
<i>My healthcare providers</i>	<i>They are very helpful</i>
<i>My Life Coach Shaun Adkins</i>	<i>She is helping me become a better person</i>
<i>My mom</i>	<i>She's my support person</i>

<i>My mom/family</i>	<i>Without her me &amp; my kids would be homeless</i>
<i>My next door neighbors are amazing and I love that there is a park behind us that my son and I can play at there safe.</i>	<i>Community and safety are important</i>
<i>My peace of mind</i>	<i>Happiness is key</i>
<i>My SNAP benefits</i>	<i>Because it is what me and my daughter depend on for our food each month.</i>
<i>N/a</i>	<i>I don't have one</i>
<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Natural areas like the walking trails, parks etc.</i>	<i>Everyone can enjoy it equally and it promotes health/wellbeing and makes the community a nice place to live.</i>
<i>NCAT university</i>	<i>I'm in school</i>
<i>Nonprofitable programs to help single mothers or help the community in struggles or any needs</i>	<i>there are people out here that have absolutely no one but try to make what they have work in good grace</i>
<i>Not so many resources that the community knows about.</i>	<i>We need more ways to become a homeowner.</i>
<i>Nothing</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
<i>Nothing. They don't help people on this side of town</i>	
<i>Nurse partnership program</i>	<i>Because there are very helpful people so u can learn more about ur child</i>
<i>Oak Ridge Town Park</i>	<i>Great place to exercise</i>
<i>Oak View Rec Center</i>	<i>Walking distance and a safe place for my son to play</i>
<i>Opportunities for children to thrive such as community centers</i>	<i>Children are the future</i>
<i>Opportunities for the residents at these low-income senior/disabled communities</i>	<i>Because idleness creates opportunities for negative things and negative influences to occur</i>
<i>Our compact size geographically and by population</i>	<i>It makes us neighborly</i>
<i>Our house.</i>	<i>We've never had a house before, and this one was bought with help from a family friend.</i>
<i>Our parks and schools</i>	<i>We love guilford county schools and the parks are lovely</i>
<i>Park and recreation , health service</i>	<i>Park is for playing with our children and health is very well</i>
<i>Park!!</i>	<i>Free play for my child</i>
<i>Park's</i>	<i>They are important because of the fresh air and stress relief that they wive</i>
<i>Parks &amp; recreation. Fun there was a beach area at a lake</i>	<i>Being close to nature and having places to go outside</i>
<i>Parks and green spaces</i>	<i>Contributes to health and well-being of people and environment. Public resource everyone can share.</i>

<i>Parks toilets are so old and rusty my kids got allergic reaction.</i>	<i>For better health and welfare of the community.</i>
<i>People</i>	<i>Because it's people who make up the resources for our community</i>
<i>People who help each other</i>	<i>Together we figure out how to make a difference</i>
<i>Person</i>	<i>People need more help</i>
<i>Person and place</i>	<i>Neighbor is like family</i>
<i>Person place and service</i>	<i>Because I want to feel safe in my community</i>
<i>Place</i>	<i>Cheaper rentals and reasonable groceries.</i>
<i>Place</i>	<i>Safety</i>
<i>Place</i>	
<i>Place</i>	<i>Peace down</i>
<i>Place and service</i>	<i>It's important for me</i>
<i>Place to live</i>	<i>Because need have a place to live with the child</i>
<i>Place, People and Transportation.</i>	<i>Place were everyone need to be safe and can be free to enjoy the nature around it, People is a way to interact one another and it's the vital part of the community, No people No community to serve and enjoy. Public Transportation is a way to go from one place to another and to use to go whenever we needed to go.</i>
<i>Places that help low income families Piedmont families services Health dept. Library</i>	<i>Family services Low income help</i>
<i>Play ground for the children to go to need to be brought in so that our community can have a space to play and have family fun not to far from our home</i>	<i>Lower rent that would stay at an affordable rate</i>
<i>Police presence... Funding resources ...</i>	<i>Safety and security</i>
<i>Poor service landlordheat</i>	<i>Heat. Lights. Cable</i>
<i>programs and assistance</i>	<i>They are the lifeline allowing me to barely sustain myself and my family</i>
<i>Public health services</i>	<i>Keeps our community healthy</i>
<i>Public Library</i>	<i>I'm retired and enjoy reading novels.</i>
<i>Public schools</i>	<i>They are building the future of our society and also make it possible for most adults to work because they are also child care.</i>
<i>Public Transportation and Rental Services</i>	<i>Rent</i>
<i>Queer and trans people like me in my neighborhood</i>	<i>Because my community helps me more than city resources ever does.</i>
<i>Quiet</i>	<i>Don't like loud people</i>
<i>Rental assistance</i>	<i>Because people are really struggling paying rent, buying food, and just taking care of their families</i>
<i>Resources being able to do things with my kids and family.</i>	<i>So I can have fun with my family and springing time.</i>
<i>Resources that help single parents</i>	<i>We don't have the help</i>

<i>Resources to help children get into private schools instead of public schools</i>	<i>My daughter will be 4 in November and I would like to get her into a private Catholic school</i>
<i>Respect and Safety, maintenance and repairs, and being heard as a long time resident.</i>	<i>Because I have been here five years, and I have seen and heard the guns being fired all around me.</i>
<i>Safe parks and Rec activities for children</i>	<i>School</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Being a single person it's good to have neighbors around that are trustworthy and a safe community</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Children upbringing</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Too much gun violence</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Because I have children</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Child care</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Trust and security for well being</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Safety</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Future leaders of America</i>
<i>Safety &amp; job opportunities</i>	<i>Job opportunities, community opportunities</i>
<i>Safety, community, resources</i>	<i>Emergency funds help. Educational tools.</i>
<i>School</i>	<i>Good education</i>
<i>Schools and metroparks.</i>	<i>Clean water.</i>
<i>secure environment</i>	<i>my neighborhood has changed a lot over the years. we now have rude inconsiderate neighbors in that they don't respect others property,are loud late hours at night,create hazardous conditions w/multiple on street parking situations,and drug and vandalism activity that used to NEVER exist now does. Safety is of my utmost concern.</i>
<i>Services for children 8-18 years of age to keep them busy gaining knowledge and not having idle time.</i>	<i>The children are the future of our community.</i>
<i>Shopping and gas</i>	<i>Convenience</i>
<i>Shopping center, gas station, restaurants</i>	<i>I use these resources daily</i>
<i>Side walks and access to nearby schools</i>	<i>Makes the area family friendly</i>
<i>small businesses</i>	<i>its nice to be able to spend money with people who live in the same area as you. Going into big stores is nice but knowing your neighbor has items you can purchase is real community.</i>
<i>Social services</i>	<i>Cause that's all the help I can get</i>
<i>Social services</i>	<i>The help they provide for food.</i>
<i>Social services</i>	<i>They help everyone in need</i>
<i>Social services</i>	
<i>social services</i>	<i>because it provides resources for low income communities</i>
<i>Social services.</i>	<i>To be able to provide for families in time of need</i>

<i>Stronger Oversight and Accountability for homes that are on Code Violations to include adding community organizations to the city or county budget to assist. Winter Emergency Shelter Additional Homeless Shelters and Affordable Housing. Funding for Housing First Initiatives Rent Cost Controls Funding for Current Shelters to Expand or New Shelters to be built Expanding or Creating Non Credit Based Home Buying/Building Options which should include community child care services, full sustainable community garden, access to public transportation.</i>	<i>Children are dying from having to live in UNSAFE Housing. Children are having to live in cars on streets and in parks and parking lots with their parents due to a lack of access to affordable housing. Children and Families are suffering from the lack of access and the general lack of resources to secure and obtain safe and affordable housing.</i>
<i>That's it's quiet we are located away from the city but close enough to get to stores.</i>	<i>Because I like it. Like living in the country.</i>
<i>the accessibility</i>	
<i>The arts, the festivals, the parks, the libraries, GTCC</i>	<i>Everyone can join and participate, gives free safe spaces and learn affordably</i>
<i>The bus</i>	<i>Because then I can't get to wy</i>
<i>The closeness of shopping centers</i>	<i>Don't have to drive far or long to get things necessary for living</i>
<i>The diversity in the community</i>	<i>It allows me to can experience, information and resources from A wider range of opportunities</i>
<i>The environment</i>	<i>The environment because is very peaceful and quiet.</i>
<i>The Food Lion and Family Dollar off of Coliseum Rd.</i>	<i>These are the main places I get sustenance from.</i>
<i>The home furnishings industry , our diverse population, and the current eagerness to serve and evolve our community.</i>	<i>These things contribute to the history, culture, and growth of our community. Without all of these things and collaboration among these areas HP would be stuck in the past.</i>
<i>The hospital.</i>	<i>There are so many illnesses</i>
<i>The house and the food</i>	<i>Because if we don't have a house or food we wouldn't survive</i>
<i>The Library</i>	<i>Its a definite source for anyone to shine.</i>
<i>The many resources for people who need assistance from government agencies, organizations, educational resources; the many private and public facilities for personal growth. The community when they need volunteers or donations.</i>	<i>Because it identifies the strength of the community through faith and personal commitment, rather than political guidance.</i>
<i>The most important resource is the WRLP program &amp; and the South side recreation center</i>	<i>Because they both help out to the best of my abilities and there abilities always on point and always on time</i>
<i>The most important resource to our community is each other.</i>	<i>Our community members rely on each other for information and to watch out for one another including help with the children.</i>

<i>The most important resources are the mosques that are around</i>	<i>Religion is quite important to us, and it brings majority of our community together as one</i>
<i>The neighbors. They help make the area feel more like home because we look out for each other.</i>	<i>I'm not sure.</i>
<i>The park</i>	<i>for the kids to remain kids an have something to look forward to</i>
<i>The parks.</i>	<i>They are very accessible and well-maintained.</i>
<i>The people (neighborly help and resources)</i>	<i>A helpful hand nearby is always a great resource</i>
<i>The people and low violence because we all have children.</i>	<i>Low crime tates</i>
<i>The playgrounds</i>	<i>The playgrounds are important so the children have somewhere to play safely!</i>
<i>The playgrounds</i>	<i>Playgrounds Water</i>
<i>The police station</i>	<i>Will keep crime down</i>
<i>The public transportation, public help they offer, local hospitals and walk in clinics.</i>	<i>The availability of public transportation.</i>
<i>The schools</i>	<i>Our kids are the future of everything. They are where we are headed. We need to educate them properly so they can right the ship</i>
<i>The schools and the parks</i>	<i>Beca use it helps with being with familia and taking walks</i>
<i>The town park</i>	<i>Wonderful place to walk and visit</i>
<i>The traditional public schools in our community.</i>	<i>Our public schools attract families to this area and therefore build up our community and we support each other.</i>
<i>The urgent care, hospital, school and health services</i>	<i>It's very helpful to us especially in time of need</i>
<i>The Women's Resource Center</i>	<i>it is an important resource because they help educate, inform and connect people to various resources throughout Guilford County. They also are caring, knowledgeable and are in touch with the needs of the community.</i>
<i>To be kind for everyone</i>	<i>Because I like it to be human</i>
<i>Town council that tries to offer meaningful services, information and connections to the community.</i>	<i>Creates safety, security and a sense of belonging</i>
<i>Trash service</i>	<i>Because we need clean space</i>
<i>Triad Health Project</i>	<i>Bridging the gap</i>
<i>Triad Health Project, GSO WOAHA, GSO Mutual Aid, Greensboro Urban Ministry, DSS</i>	<i>Social and economic justice</i>
<i>Triad Muslim Community</i>	<i>Its a place for me to pray and get socialize with the community.</i>
<i>Walmart</i>	<i>It's conveniently located and has everything I need for my household at the lowest cost.</i>
<i>Walmart being so close and Guilford County DSS being able to provide a lot more services then</i>	<i>Because being a first-time mom as of October 10, 2021 it makes my life 100% easier knowing that I</i>

<i>smaller counties as wilkes county which was the one I moved from. I am closer to family. I am close by the hospital in case of any emergencies.</i>	<i>have because being a first time mom as of October 10, 2021 it makes my life 100% easier knowing that I have any and all resources available to me locally than happy to drive 30 minutes away just to get to any hospital or doctors appointmentBecause being a first time mom as of October 10, 2021 it makes my life 100% easier knowing that I have any and all resources available to me locally than happy to drive 30 minutes away just to get to any hospital or doctors appointment.</i>
<i>Walmart, food lion, smoke shop</i>	<i>Convenience</i>
<i>We really don't have any resources and if we do you have to have certain requirements to get help</i>	
<i>Wic</i>	
<i>Wic</i>	<i>It gives me resources to feed my family</i>
<i>WIC medicaid</i>	
<i>Wic program, library, and parks</i>	<i>To help parents and raising children</i>
<i>Wrlp</i>	<i>They help u when in need</i>
<i>Wrlp because they help with there resources we need</i>	<i>Because they help they offer</i>
<i>YMCA</i>	<i>Open to all, honors diversity and access, focus on health and wellness</i>
<i>YMCA</i>	<i>I love to work out it's extremely important to me.</i>
<i>YWCA, HP Library</i>	<i>I think the YW does a lot for the community with the different programs that they offer for women and children and within the Hispanic community as well. The library is also great with the programs they have to offer for all people</i>



*What have we not asked that you feel is important and related to needed services and resources in Guilford County?*

- *Access to assistance with mortgage and bills*
- *Affordable housing access for Senior citizens, that landlords/property manage will accept vouchers, without being judged by those landlords/property management. Repeal the prohibition of rent control in NC.*
- *Affordable housing. Ability for low income to purchase home. Lower rent*
- *Affordable, reliable and safe transportation is needed for low-income people, and elders in particular .*
- *Applying more assistance everyday to younger crowd*
- *Assistance in owning a house or assistance in paying the rent*
- *Assisting w/ rent & childcare*
- *Availability*
- *Best resources to find affordable apartments in safe neighborhoods for children.*
- *Better mental health questions*
- *Better public transportation for those that need it, more sidewalks and bike lanes to allow people to safely travel. Better resources for those that need things like food or for kids in school that can't afford lunches.*
- *Can't think of anything.*
- *Child care. There are vouchers but also a ridiculous waiting list. Also drop-in daycare, which I need to work on the evenings/ weekends, are not usually covered by child care voucher.*
- *Childcare support/ resources especially in summer*
- *Communication*
- *Crime rate in neighborhood*
- *Do you know how to apply for utility assistance*
- *Due you need legal services*
- *Fatherhood support, visitation exchange centers, Coparenting support*
- *Financial Assistance*
- *Financial literacy*
- *Food, Fun, & Funding for communities experiencing various disparities is crucial.*
- *For Young People, I more concerned on the new generation coming, most of the Young People right now are involved at Bad Gang activity than community activities services that would improve the community than destroy the community. ,*
- *Get notifications about issues that involves everyone in the country*
- *Guilford County should put real effort into making sure everyone is housed. Contractors are constantly building more town homes and giant houses in remote neighborhoods that few people can afford. Tons of people need affordable housing, yet houses are crumbling in every town. We need more buses with more routes and more frequency. We also need cheap, fresh foods available in poor neighborhoods.*
- *Have you ever been in need of services but did not qualify because of income restrictions?*
- *Here there was not a section to mark transgender as the demographic*
- *Housing*
- *How can we ensure that everyone in Guilford County who needs food/shelter/education/health care can be served?*

- *How can you improve the experience of the services being given through these resources. I.e: Staff is less friendly and accommodating, location interior is typically not as inviting as other places. Lack of uniformity*
- *How do I feel about educational and recreational opportunities for young people? They need so much more!*
- *How has inflation affected everyone .*
- *I am needing help with understanding all the services and benefits I can apply for and anything I'm qualified for to help assist me since I'm unfamiliar as well unsure towards all the benefits I can get to help assist myself*
- *I asked*
- *I do feel that services for low/no-cost mental health screening, crisis intervention, and ongoing assistance are vital. Also expanding public transportation options and availability is very important and would help many folks in our city.*
- *I feel like there should be some type of mentor program geared towards minority teen males. I do not feel like they have enough resources in our community that will benefit them in the future.*
- *I feel like treatment/counseling for mental health issues needs to be accessed more and with ease but this has a lot to do with insurance issues to start with.*
- *I think All basic questions was covered in this survey.*
- *I think everything is good*
- *I think Guilford County should have programs that work proactively to help families who are at risk of being homeless. There also should be more programs that mentor young people and help guide them. There also should be more financial literacy programs for school aged children and teens.*
- *I think some of the biggest issues in the county are related to a lack of reliable transportation. That makes it challenging for individuals to get to and maintain jobs, access medical care, and obtain food. I'd like to see more focus on accessible, affordable, and reliable transportation.*
- *I wish WIC card can be use to self check outs like Food Lion or Walmart because they lack of cashiers and I can only pay WIC items through cashiers it frustrating that cashiers complain they wanna go home early use self check out instead smh*
- *Income versus the need for childcare/after school care*
- *Is the amount of the services you receive enough to last each month?*
- *Just because people are in need does not mean we deserve less and unfavorable food and housing*
- *Make all services available to the working class that still can't afford certain things because of inflation or just due to no help anywhere else.*
- *Make it easier to get assistance from government agencies. The funds are there to be used so stop making people jump through hoops to get it. We're made to pay taxes from jobs we don't want to work in a society that we have no control over, just give the help. Common people need a break from constant bills and responsibilities we never asked for or agreed to.*
- *Make it so us very poor can get help instead of saying you make to much, I can barely pay rent and all my bills, help with other things that might hold people back from financial assistance.*
- *Maybe monthly flyers sent via mail or ads advising of programs that would give more people information how to apply/what options are out there*
- *More affordable housing!*
- *more affordable public transportation, more financial assistance with education, job training*
- *More housing affordability & job wages*

- *More programs for the teens and elderly*
- *More rental subsidies for single moms that work*
- *More resources*
- *More resources for homeownership.*
- *my neighborhood needs sidewalk*
- *n/a*
- *N/a*
- *N/A*
- *Na*
- *NA*
- *Need well water checked without cost. Need roads maintained in our area. Road going from Friedens Church passed North East Park is awful*
- *No se me ocurre nada sorry*
- *None*
- *None that I can think of*
- *Nos aludan mucho con la comida que es muy importante en mi hogar son muy amables*
- *Not sure*
- *nothing*
- *Nothing*
- *Nothing that I can think of*
- *Nothing. You asked me all questions.*
- *Our schools aren't bad but they are underfunded and the school system is too systemic to make time effective impacts on true student and family needs.*
- *Overall I just want to see more friendly staff working for Guilford County. It's so bad that sometimes I want to call and ask for resources or help but hold back because people are so rude and demeaning. Ex: Guilford County Health Department & Human services & Guilford County Courthouse.*
- *Pay wages. We need much better pay wages in our states especially since the prices of rent and everything else has gone up so high. We also need to have a rent cap in place. No one should be able to charge the money they are charging for a place to live!! These prices are insane and there are so many homeless people now because landlords are able to charge what they want for properties that should not cost that much.*
- *Please provide Halal food in the county. I don't know why the county doesn't do this already... other people don't care where the meat come from but Muslims do. There would be more people going to restaurants and fast food places. Its better for the community.*
- *Poor driving in this city*
- *Recreational resources accessibility and do you mean physically assault or psychically assaulted (two very different things), check your spelling to be sure you are asking what you want to ask in that question*
- *Regarding police presence (lack there of)*
- *School enrollment process and financial aid process should be made easy. My brother under the age of 18 was living with me(he migrated from Pakistan and my dad works in NY and my mom was not here) I had a great trouble enrolling him as the staff at Andrews high school did not cooperated well and responded to our application timely. It took us over 3 months to get him in school*
- *School information*

- *School related.*
- *Section 8 policies, private landlords/rental companies not accepting vouchers, the housing crisis and how it has affected Guilford County residents, resources for undocumented individuals*
- *Services for non-English speakers are severely lacking. DSS needs a way to walk in and get needs met IN-PERSON using Language Line for interpretation (which they do have) but NOT HAVE ANY FOLLOW-UP NEEDS USING PAPERWORK. Do not send paperwork in English to non-English-speaking families. Help them with processing the ENTIRE THING THEY CAME FOR WHEN THEY ARE THERE IN PERSON. DO NOT SEND THEM AWAY TO COLLECT EXTRA INFORMATION IN ENGLISH. They cannot do recertifications in English. They do not know what any of the paperwork is for. Many do not read in their own language either, so there needs to be a way to do this ORALLY, TALKING ONLY, NO WRITTEN COMMUNICATION. Also we need better childcare assistance. We should not have to wait until we lose a job, go on TANF, and THEN access childcare assistance - that is backwards. We need a way to get help BEFORE LOSING THE JOB, even if it is just a partial voucher, as this is the most impossible thing about being a single parent in Guilford County/NC.*
- *The answer to the first question*
- *The dollar amount given for produce on WIC is low considering how inflation has affected everyone.*
- *The housing crisis is real. Not enough housing for middle & low-income people.*
- *There should be more resources that help people without jobs. The ones that have a disability or caring for someone with a disability there should be more resources to help with transportation vouchers like for gas and the bus if need be. There should be more resources that help disabled person with Utilities.*
- *This survey seems geared towards poor or disabled which likely don't have the means or abilities to take this survey. Curious how this will get to the people whose voices should be heard.*
- *Todo está bien*
- *Total*
- *Tou asked everything thank you*
- *Transportation resources*
- *We are new here and thankfully do not need many public services but my perception is that the southern part of the country, where we live, is a bit overlooked as far as public amenities (library, community centers, recreation)*
- *We could use better up to date houses these houses been built years and years ago needs updating why not take time to up date people's homes before these houses crumble and fall completely apart*
- *We need better paying jobs, better kept up homes, more activities for our children, and affordable decent homes to live in without fearing that we are unsafe.*
- *We need housing resources. We need more community resources for folks who have mental illness and are homeless.*
- *We need more buses running a little more often than average*
- *We need walk ability in the more rural areas. It isn't safe for myself or my kids to walk or bike on these roads. Sidewalks and bike lanes would be wonderful. We live close enough to walk to the high school but there is no safe way to get there except in a car.*
- *We've got to somehow get lunches paid for at schools for kids. Not offer "modified " lunches for past due balances. Just feed the kids. By feeding them it shows them someone loves them. This may be the only meal they get.*
- *What is lacking in food at home?*

- *What type of neighborhood do you live in?*
- *When having meetings discussing issues related to improving these issues. There needs to be people who have voices, that will be receiving the service's at the table*
- *While I understand that increasing crime is a national problem, I feel like High Point in particular has an extremely high crime per capita. In our neighborhoods there are almost nightly car breakins that occur with some home breakins occurring. When I drive around High Point, I do not even feel safe driving around as I am aware of the multiple car jackings that have occurred over the past year. It makes me very sad for High Point that crime seems to be getting more and more frequent and more and more violent yet as far as it seems, the police don't seem to be keeping up with the crime increase.*
- *Would love if it were a bit easier to get a hold of someone in regards to our needs and cases when it comes to report changes.*
- *Yes*
- *You all didn't include the option to mark Transgender as a gender option.*
- *You asked all the right questions*
- *You asked everything*
- *You didn't really ask about public transportation. For a city this size we need real system. What we have currently is so bad it's unusable. I would like to be able to use public transportation regularly.*
- *You have not asked if there is assistance currently needed and how do we as the people about the steps that are taken to chose if assistance will be provided*