

## BUNCOMBE COUNTY

- 279,000 people live in Buncombe County
- The population has increased by 11% over the past decade
- NC's population increased by 11% over the past decade

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Data sources, dashboard, and other counties at  
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## Buncombe County communities thrive when ...



... people can meet their basic needs

- Rent is unaffordable for 53% of renters
- 11% of people don't have health insurance
- There is one mental health provider for every 130 residents



... good jobs are accessible to everyone

- There is 1 candidate for every job opening\*
- The number of people working increased by 4% from Feb. 2020 (pre-COVID) to Dec. 2023
- The number of people working increased by 21% from Dec. 2007 (pre-Great Recession) to Dec. 2023



... the economy works for everyone

- 30% of residents are considered low-income (less than \$59,900 for a family of four)\*\*
- The richest 5% of households make an average of 28 times more than the poorest 20% of households

\* Candidates include all people willing to work in the county, regardless of county of residence

\*\* A family of four is considered low-income if they make below 200% of the poverty level, or \$59,900 in 2022, the most recent year with available income data.

**Table 1: Poverty and Economic Hardship**

	County	State
<b>Living in poverty, 2018-2022</b>		
Percentage of people living in poverty	11%	13%
Black	24	21
White	9	9
Latine	26	22
Asian & Pacific Islander	10	9
American Indian	NA	23
Percentage of children living in poverty	14	19

**Table 2: Employment**

	County	State
<b>Employment, December 2023</b>		
Unemployment rate	2.4%	3.2%
Number of unemployed people actively seeking work	3,500	167,000
Number of employed people	140,000	5,059,000
<b>Percent change in employment since before COVID-19 pandemic (February 2020 to December 2023)</b>		
Change in unemployed people actively seeking work	-14%	-11%
Change in people employed	4%	5%

**Table 3: Educational Attainment**

	County	State
<b>High school graduation, 2023</b>		
High school graduation rate	91%	87%
Black	89	84
White	92	90
Latine	88	81
Asian & Pacific Islander	>95	95
American Indian	NA	80
<b>College degrees, 2018-2022</b>		
Percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher	43%	34%
Men	41	32
Women	45	35
Median earnings for men with a bachelor's degree <sup>†</sup>	\$57,000	\$74,400
Median earnings for women with a bachelor's degree <sup>†</sup>	\$43,600	\$50,200

**Table 4: Income and Ability to Afford the Basics**

	County	State
<b>Living Income Standard, 2022</b>		
Living Income Standard annual income (1 adult, 2 kids) <sup>††</sup>	\$64,300	\$60,700
<b>Median earnings and income, 2018-2022</b>		
Median worker earnings	\$41,100	\$45,100
Median worker earnings as a percentage of Living Income Standard <sup>††</sup>	64%	74%
Median household income	\$66,500	\$66,200

**Table 5: Access to Affordable Housing**

	County	State
<b>Rent burden, 2018-2022</b>		
Percentage of renter households paying more than 30% of income on rent	53%	48%
Percentage of renter households paying more than 50% of income on rent	22%	23%
<b>Fair market rent, 2024</b>		
Fair market monthly rent for a two-bedroom home	\$1,680	\$1,310
Number of work hours at minimum wage it takes to afford a two-bedroom home at fair market rent	178 hours per week	139 hours per week

**Table 6: Healthy Lives and Communities**

	County	State
<b>Health insurance, 2018-2022</b>		
Percentage of residents without health insurance	11%	11%
<b>Life expectancy, 2018-2020</b>		
Life expectancy in years	78	77
Black	74	73
White	79	78
<b>Mental health providers, 2022</b>		
Residents per mental health provider	130	340
<b>Food assistance, December 2023</b>		
Percentage of residents receiving SNAP	10%	13%

<sup>†</sup> Does not include people who also have a graduate degree.

<sup>††</sup> The Living Income Standard is a measure of what a family needs in order to cover basic expenses. See more at [NCbudget.org/LIS](https://NCbudget.org/LIS)

NA values indicate insufficient data for this county.