

WAKE COUNTY

- 1,239,000 people live in Wake County
- The population has increased by 21% over the past decade
- NC's population increased by 11% over the past decade

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questions, contact us at
info@ncbudget.org



* 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 \$62,400 in 2023, the most recent year with available income data.

Wake County communities thrive when ...



... people can meet
their basic needs

- Rent is unaffordable for 47% of renters
- 8% of people don't have health insurance
- There is one mental health provider for every 250 residents



... good jobs are
accessible to everyone

- There are 0.9 candidates for every job opening*
- The number of unemployed people actively seeking work has decreased by 3% from Dec. 2023 to Dec. 2024



... the economy works
for everyone

- 19% of residents are considered low-income (less than \$62,400 for a family of four)**
- The richest 5% of households make an average of 23 times more than the poorest 20% of households

Table 1: Poverty and Economic Hardship

	County	State
Living in poverty, 2019-2023		
Percentage of people living in poverty	8%	13%
Black	13	20
White	5	9
Latine	14	21
Asian & Pacific Islander	6	9
American Indian	6	24
Percentage of children living in poverty	9	18

Table 2: Employment

	County	State
Employment, December 2024		
Unemployment rate	2.9%	3.4%
Number of unemployed people actively seeking work	18,700	178,000
Number of employed people	638,000	5,067,000
Percent change in employment over the past year (December 2023 to December 2024)		
Change in unemployed people actively seeking work	-3%	3%
Change in people employed	1%	0%

Table 3: Educational Attainment

	County	State
High school graduation, 2024		
High school graduation rate	91%	87%
Black	87	85
White	>95	90
Latine	83	83
Asian & Pacific Islander	>95	>95
American Indian	90	82
College degrees, 2019-2023		
Percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher	56%	35%
Men	56	33
Women	56	36
Median earnings for men with a bachelor's degree [†]	\$98,200	\$77,900
Median earnings for women with a bachelor's degree [†]	\$61,600	\$52,700

[†] Does not include people who also have a graduate degree.

Table 4: Income and Ability to Afford the Basics

	County	State
Living Income Standard, 2025		
Living Income Standard annual income (1 adult, 2 kids) ^{††}	\$102,100	\$87,700
Median earnings and income, 2019-2023		
Median worker earnings	\$62,300	\$47,200
Median household income	\$101,800	\$69,900

^{††} The Living Income Standard is a measure of what a family needs in order to cover basic expenses. See more at NCBudget.org/LIS

Table 5: Access to Affordable Housing

	County	State
Rent burden, 2019-2023		
Percentage of renter households paying more than 30% of income on rent	47%	48%
Percentage of renter households paying more than 50% of income on rent	22%	23%
Fair market rent, 2025		
Fair market monthly rent for a two-bedroom home	\$1,760	\$1,410
Number of work hours at minimum wage it takes to afford a two-bedroom home at fair market rent	187 hours per week	150 hours per week

Table 6: Healthy Lives and Communities

	County	State
Health insurance, 2019-2023		
Percentage of residents without health insurance	8%	10%
Medicaid enrollment, February 2025		
Percentage of residents enrolled in Medicaid	17%	28%
Life expectancy, 2019-2021		
Life expectancy in years	81	77
Black	77	73
White	82	77
Mental health providers, 2023		
Residents per mental health provider	250	320
Food assistance, February 2025		
Percentage of residents receiving SNAP	7%	13%

NA values indicate insufficient data for this county.

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