PENDER COUNTY

- 71,100 people live in Pender County
- The population has increased by 25% over the past decade
- NC's population increased by 12% over the past decade

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Data sources, dashboard, and other counties at
NCBudget.org/Snapshots

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NC BUDGET & TAX CENTER

Pender County communities thrive when ...



... people can meet their basic needs

- Rent is unaffordable for 50% of renters
- 9% of people don't have health insurance
- There is one mental health provider for every 580 residents



... good jobs are accessible to everyone

- There are 17 candidates for every job opening*
- The number of unemployed people actively seeking work has increased by 9% from Dec. 2024 to Dec. 2025†



... the economy works for everyone

- 26% of residents are considered low-income (less than $64,300 for a family of four)**
- The richest 5% of households make an average of 21 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 $64,300 in 2024, the most recent year with available income data.

PENDER COUNTY ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT 2026

Table 1: Poverty and Economic Hardship

	County	State
Living in poverty, 2020-2024		
Percentage of people living in poverty	10%	13%
Black	21	20
White	7	9
Latine	18	21
Asian & Pacific Islander	NA	8
American Indian	15	22
Percentage of children living in poverty	11	18

Table 2: Employment

	County	State
Employment, December 2025		
Unemployment rate	3.2%	3.4%
Number of unemployed people actively seeking work	1,030	181,300
Number of employed people	30,700	5,108,600
Percent change in employment over the past year (December 2024 to December 2025)		
Change in unemployed people actively seeking work	9%	2%
Change in people employed	1%	1%

Table 3: Educational Attainment

	County	State
High school graduation, 2025		
High school graduation rate	92%	88%
Black	92	86
White	94	91
Latine	85	83
Asian & Pacific Islander	NA	>95
American Indian	NA	85
College degrees, 2020-2024		
Percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher	31%	36%
Men	27%	34%
Women	34%	37%
Median earnings for men with a bachelor's degree†	$83,100	$80,500
Median earnings for women with a bachelor's degree†	$46,500	$54,400

† 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)††	$83,400	$87,700
Median earnings and income, 2020-2024		
Median worker earnings	$48,900	$49,300
Median household income	$80,400	$72,400

†† 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, 2020-2024		
Percentage of renter households paying more than 30% of income on rent	50%	49%
Percentage of renter households paying more than 50% of income on rent	26%	24%
Fair market rent, 2026		
Fair market monthly rent for a two-bedroom home	$1,170	$1,400
Number of work hours at minimum wage it takes to afford a two-bedroom home at fair market rent	124 hours per week	149 hours per week

Table 6: Healthy Lives and Communities

	County	State
Health insurance, 2020-2024		
Percentage of residents without health insurance	9%	10%
Medicaid enrollment, November 2025		
Percentage of residents enrolled in Medicaid	27%	27%
Life expectancy, 2021-2023		
Life expectancy in years	76	76
Black	70	72
White	76	76
Mental health providers, 2024		
Residents per mental health provider	580	290
Food assistance, February 2026		
Percentage of residents receiving SNAP	8%	11%

NA values indicate insufficient data for this county.

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