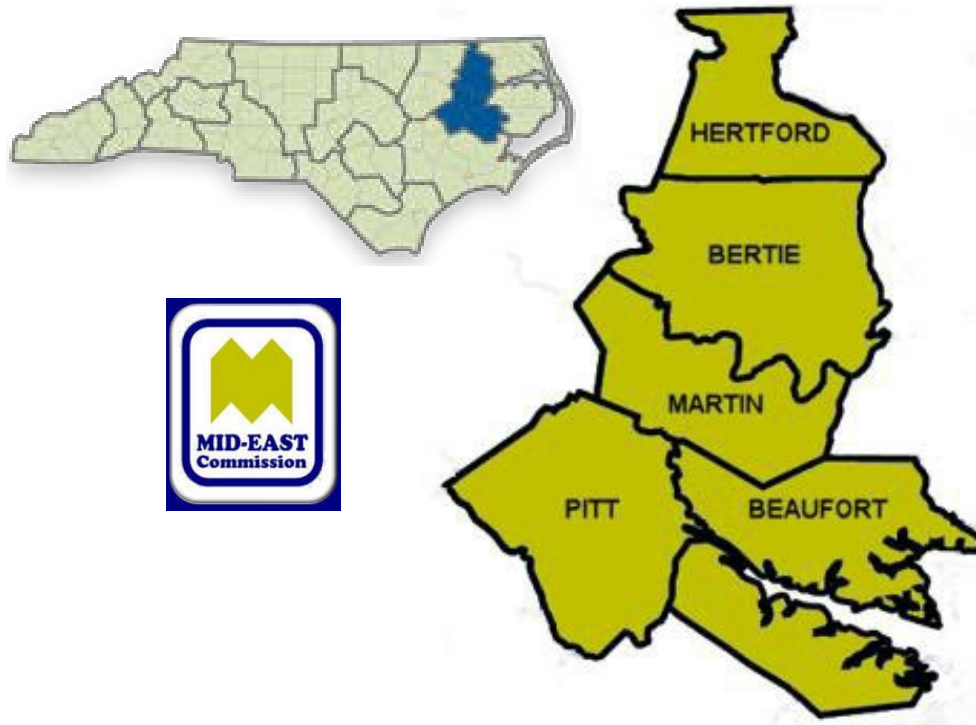# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Mid-East Commission
2022-2027 Planning Period
2025 Annual Update

Serving Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt Counties

Prepared By

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Member Governments

Beaufort County

Aurora
Bath
Belhaven
Chocowinity
Pantego
Washington
Washington Park

Bertie County

Askewville
Aulander
Colerain
Kelford
Lewiston/Woodville
Powellsville
Roxobel
Windsor

Pitt County

Ayden
Bethel
Falkland
Farmville
Fountain
Greenville
Grifton
Grimesland
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Bear Grass
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Hamilton
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CEDS Vision Statement

The 2025 Mid-East Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will help build a regional competitive advantage and leverage the marketplace by establishing and maintaining a robust regional infrastructure, thereby creating revitalized and vibrant communities which will develop healthy and innovative people.

Introduction

The Mid-East Commission was created by the State of North Carolina in May of 1967 as a Regional Council of Governments serving the local governments and residents of Region "Q", which is comprised of Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt Counties, as well as their municipalities. The Commission's mission is to assist people in the Region and its environs by providing professional technical assistance services from its Planning, Economic Development and Community Services Department, Workforce Development, and Area Agency on Aging. The multifaceted and vast experience of its highly trained, educated, and professional staff enables it to meet the needs of its clients, improving and sustaining their quality of life.

CEDS and NC Tomorrow Overview

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed and required to bring together the public and private sectors in creating a comprehensive and performance-based plan to strengthen the regional economy. A CEDS is required for a region to be eligible for assistance through Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs. The Mid-East Region CEDS 2022-2027 document provides an analysis of the regional economy and all of its elements and serves as a guide to establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, identifying investment priorities and funding sources, and assigning lead organizations the responsibility for executing the action plan. CEDS 2022-2027 is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with broad base and varied public and private sector participation.

North Carolina Tomorrow is a collaborative partnership, led by the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils (NCARC), with the US Economic Development Administration, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Community Investment and Assistance and the Us Department of Housing and Urban Development, to create a uniform statewide North Carolina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (NCCEDS).

The first initiative in 2012 was to create "Uniform" Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) across North Carolina. These regionally-significant CEDS serve as the foundation to create the statewide NC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – a statewide blueprint for creating an economically sustainable economy for North Carolina. The statewide CEDS supports growth and community development based on common sense, data collection and analysis, and sustainable best practices.

Funding for the 2012 NC Tomorrow initiative was provided by the US Economic Development Administration and the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Community Investment and Assistance through the NC Catalyst Program. The NC Department of Commerce provided planning grants to 16 non-entitlement local governments, one in each of the 16 Council of Governments (COG) regions. Regional CEDS documents are required to undergo a major update every five years in order for the region to qualify for EDA programs, with funding for the major updates provided by EDA. The NC Tomorrow Plan (Statewide CEDS) has most recently been updated in 2017, with funding for the update also provided by EDA.

Guiding Principles and Standards

The statewide NCCEDS centers on the Six Livability Principles established by the EPA, HUD & HUD Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the Six Investment Principles set forth by the US Department of Economic Development and the NADO CEDS Standards of Excellence. The planning process included all sectors of the economic development community including local, regional and state economic developers, planners, private industry, educational institutions, elected officials and multiple ground-level community organizations to help North Carolina regions develop strong economies and become more sustainable and resilient in the coming years.

Statewide NC CEDS Guiding Principles and Standards

HUD-EPA-DOT LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES	EDA INVESTMENT PRIORITIES	NADO STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
Provide more transportation choices	Collaborative regional innovation	Build more resilient economies and communities
Support balanced, affordable housing	Public-private partnerships	Nurture a regional collaborative framework to align resources
Enhance economic competitiveness	National strategic priorities	Use modern scenario, data and analysis tools and planning techniques
Support existing communities	Global competitiveness	Create a more strategy-driven planning process
Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investments	Environmentally sustainable development	Augment collaboration across boundaries and position regional CEDS into building blocks for statewide strategies
Value communities and neighborhoods	Economically distressed and insufficiently catered to communities	Communicate in compelling and modern communication techniques: online and social media
		Engage the public, private, non-profit and education sectors, along with the general public in the development of the CEDS

2024 & 2025 Updates

The 2025 CEDS represents a minor update completed by Mid-East Commission staff. There were updates to infrastructure sections, demographic and economic data, and implementation actions were added under the natural hazards objective.

For the 2024 update, Mid-East Commission staff did a deep dive on goals, objectives, implementation strategies and vital projects at a day long planning retreat. Staff then engaged Advisory Committee members who served during the 2022 major update, along with local government members, to identify any additional priorities, any economic shifts observed, and to assess progress made on achieving goals and objectives.

Staff used the information from the planning retreat, from Advisory Committee members, and from local government members to complete the 2024 minor update. Tasks included updating the existing infrastructure, regional profile data, cluster analysis, goals, objectives and implementation strategies, and vital projects sections of the document.

2022 Update

The 2022 CEDS is a five-year major update. For the 2020 minor update, Mid-East Commission staff added information on opportunity zones. For the 2022 major update, staff worked with a CEDS Advisory Committee consisting of 46 people with varied experience representing both the private and public sectors.

The CEDS Advisory Committee participated in 16 virtual meetings and also disseminated information for comment via email to develop the plan. Major tasks included updating the demographic and economic data, SWOT analysis, cluster analysis for each county and the region, updating area economic performance factors, updating the economic resilience section including vulnerabilities, steady state, and responsive state initiatives, updating goals, objectives and implementation strategies, and updating the vital projects list.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Mid-East Region is consistent with and dependent upon the citizen participation process. The 2022 major update included a virtual public open house and two in-person public open houses held in October 2022. The in person open houses were held at the Bertie County Community Space (Windsor, Bertie County) and at the Washington Civic Center (Washington, Beaufort County).

CEDS Advisory Committee

The CEDS Advisory Committee represents the economic interest of our region. The committee acts as an advisory committee to review and update the CEDS and to recommend its approval to the five counties in the region and the Mid-East Commission Board of Directors. Mid-East Commission staff worked closely with the committee and other key public and private sector members during the development of CEDS 2022-2027. The Mid-East Commission, the planning organization for the Economic Development District, in conjunction with each county's Economic Developer, appointed the persons to serve on the CEDS Advisory Committee.

The CEDS Advisory Committee members are made up of private sector representatives, public officials, community leaders, and representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, smaller demographics and labor collectives, and private citizens. The CEDS Advisory Committee membership roster is included as **Appendix B**.

Included in the Advisory Committee are five county Economic Developers who work solely in economic development. This list consists of the following persons:

Martyn Johnson – Economic Developer for Beaufort County, Retired
Brad Hufford – Economic Developer for Beaufort County
Steve Biggs – Economic Developer for Bertie County
Kelly Bowers – Economic Developer for Hertford County
Jason Semple – Executive Director of the Martin County Economic Development Commission
Wayne Rollins – Business Retention and Expansion Specialist for Pitt County Economic Development

These individuals were included because of their in depth knowledge of the needs, social characteristics, and goals of their respective counties. Their input is an essential element of public/private participation.

The following employees of the Mid-East Commission assisted in the development of the CEDS:

Jamie Heath, Planner (Lead person to Advisory Committee)
Bryant Buck, Executive Director
Pat Harris, Director of Community and Economic Development
Jennie Bowen, Workforce Development Director
Lisa Williams, Disaster Recovery Coordinator
Sam Singleton, Transportation Planner

Summary of Region

Region "Q" is located in Northeastern North Carolina but not in the extreme Northeastern corner of the state. The region is comprised of Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt Counties. It is a wide, essentially flat, coastal plain lying within the inner coast along the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. The region is dominated by rural undeveloped agricultural and woodland that is sparsely populated. Small municipalities make up most of the population centers in Region "Q". Pitt County is the only semi-developed county in the region and varies demonstratively from the other four counties.

The region is punctuated by flat, meandering rivers – the Tar-Pamlico, Pungo, Chowan, and Cashie, and the more turbulent waters of the Roanoke. The vast acreage on both sides of these rivers and their many tributary creeks are devoted to undevelopable floodplains. The entire system of sounds, rivers, tributaries and wetlands constitutes the second largest estuary ecosystem on the East Coast and in the lower 48 United States.

The land is dominated by wetland peat, and primarily sand and loam based prime agricultural soils. A large percentage of the land in the region has severe constraints for development, due primarily to a seasonal high water table and year-round wetness tendencies. These soils are also located in areas susceptible to flooding as specified by FEMA. The vegetation consists of that found in wet and floodplain areas with Carolina pines tending to dominate the landscape. Farm crops which are an important part of the natural resource based economy are cotton, grain corn, peanuts, tobacco, soybeans, and sweet potatoes. The region has a mild four-season climate with frequent humid conditions typical of the Southeastern United States.

Love Living Here Exercise

Members of the CEDS Advisory Committee and people attending public input meetings were asked, "Why do you love living here?" Their answers were used to form the following word cloud. Larger text represents a greater number of responses.

Area Economic Performance Factors
Land Use and Environment

The region suffers from restricted or constrained land use because of the floodplain or near-floodplain nature of the terrain - a terrain that in many locations cannot be economically developed or is environmentally sensitive. For example, in Bertie County nearly 80% of the soils in the County have limitations for septic tanks due to its poor drainage, seasonally high water tables, or permeability problems" (CAMA Land Use Plan). Further, in Beaufort County, "Over 70% of the County is underdeveloped land, including sensitive environmental areas..." (CAMA Land Use Plan).

The region's portion of the fragile Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary must be protected from degradation. Land use and environmental controls protect the life support system for the fishing industry and enhance several tourist activities. However, many developers of potential job creating projects find it uneconomical and time consuming to deal with these controls. Industrial and other business uses can find sites, but site selection is often compromised by the location of environmentally sensitive areas. The pull is strong in both directions.

The Mid-East Commission and the CEDS Advisory Committee are very aware of these divergent opinions and believe development should only occur if the integrity of the land and the quality of the region's air and water are not permanently compromised.

Local Land Use Plans and Zoning

Zoning refers to municipal or local laws or regulations that govern how real property can and cannot be used in certain geographic areas. The majority of municipalities in the region enforce local Zoning Ordinances. Hertford County and Pitt County have county-wide Zoning Ordinances, while Beaufort, Bertie, and Martin Counties do not have county-wide zoning.

Previously, there was no requirement for local governments to have Land Use Plans in order to have Zoning Ordinances. The General Assembly passed NC General Statute 160D in 2019. The legislation made a number of revisions to state planning statutes, most of which were minor, technical changes. One of the most substantive changes was the requirement to have a plan in order to have zoning. By July 1, 2022, local governments must have a reasonably maintained Comprehensive Plan or Land Use Plan in order to retain the authority to adopt and enforce zoning regulations. While "reasonably maintained" is not defined by statute, the School of Government is recommending updates on a 5-10 year basis. It is acceptable for a town to be on a county plan, as long as all requirements for the town are met, such as an individual future land use map that lays out future land uses within the town jurisdiction.

The following is a summary of local Land Use Plans in the region as of this writing:

Beaufort County -
- Beaufort County Joint CAMA Land Use Plan, 2010
    - Includes Beaufort County municipalities except Bath and Washington
    - Chocowinity portion undergoing update in 2022
- Town of Bath CAMA Land Use Plan, 2007
    - Undergoing update in 2022

- City of Washington CAMA Land Use Plan, 2007
- City of Washington Pride in the Past, Faith in the Future: 2023 Comprehensive Plan, 2013
  - Undergoing update in 2022

Bertie County –
- Bertie County Joint CAMA Land Use Plan, 2016
  - Includes municipalities except Windsor
- Town of Windsor CAMA Land Use Plan, 2018

Hertford County –
- Hertford County Joint CAMA Land Use Plan, 2011
  - Includes municipalities

Martin County –
- Martin County Comprehensive Plan with a Health and Wellness Component, 2013
  - Includes municipalities
- Town of Williamston Comprehensive Plan, 2012

Pitt County –
- Pitt County 2030 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2011
- Town of Farmville Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2022
- Horizons 2026: Greenville's Community Plan, 2016
- Town of Winterville Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2019
- Town of Ayden Community Vision 2030, 2019

Regional Land Cover

The National Land Cover Database is developed by the US Geological Survey. The Mid-East Region was most recently surveyed in 2019. The following map displays land cover in the region.

Mid-East Region
Land Cover, 2019
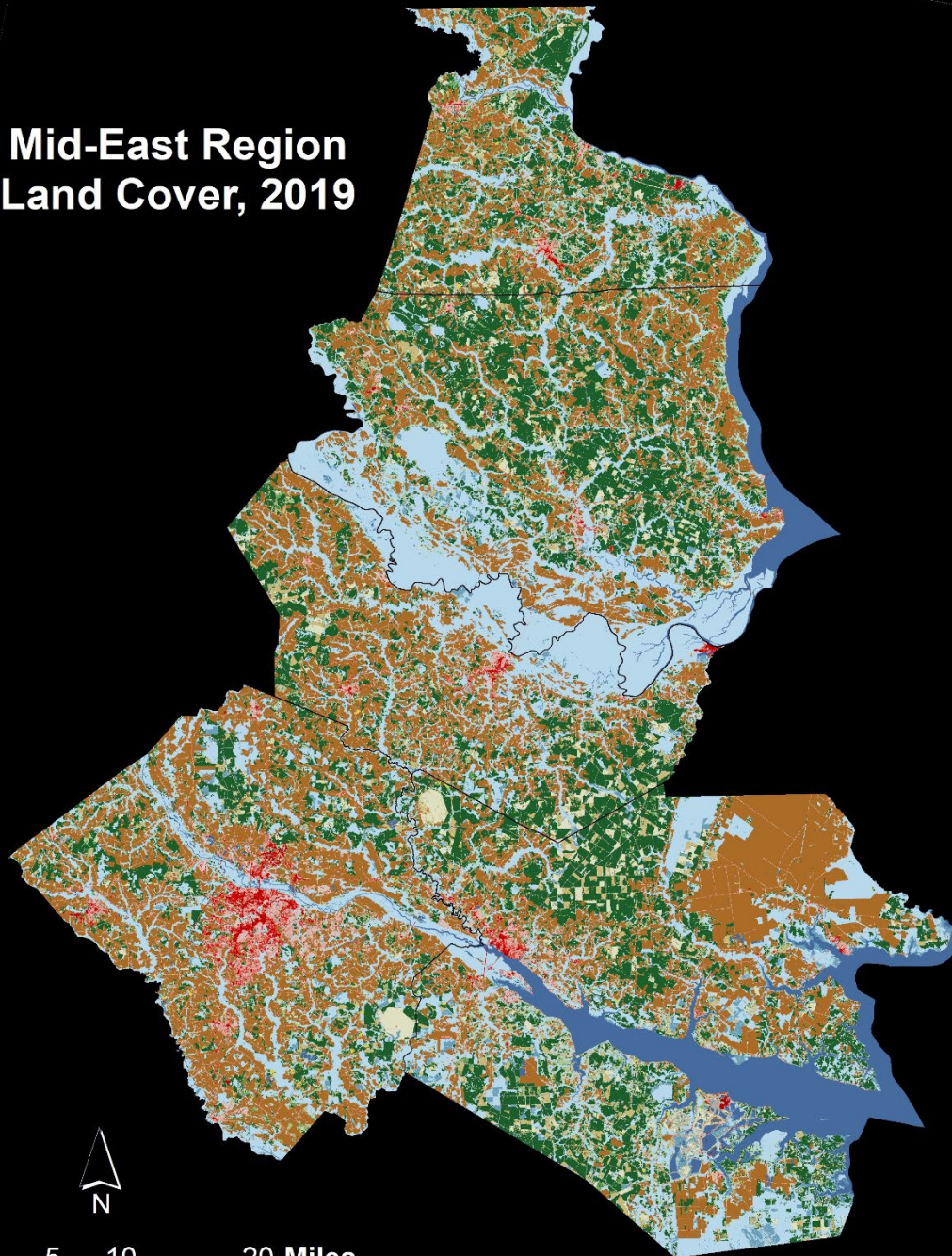
NLCD Land Cover Classification Legend

- 11 Open Water
- 12 Perennial Ice/ Snow
- 21 Developed, Open Space
- 22 Developed, Low Intensity
- 23 Developed, Medium Intensity
- 24 Developed, High Intensity
- 31 Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)
- 41 Deciduous Forest
- 42 Evergreen Forest
- 43 Mixed Forest
- 51 Dwarf Scrub*
- 52 Shrub/Scrub
- 71 Grassland/Herbaceous
- 72 Sedge/Herbaceous*
- 73 Lichens*
- 74 Moss*
- 81 Pasture/Hay
- 82 Cultivated Crops
- 90 Woody Wetlands
- 95 Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands

* Alaska only

0   5   10   20 Miles

N
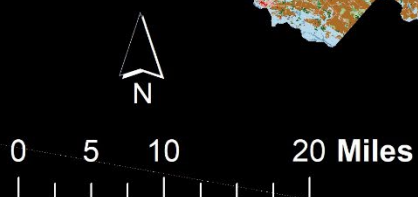
Source: National Land Cover Database

Financial Resources

Commercial capital within the region is largely controlled by lending institutions that are headquartered in other regions of the state or the country. Fortunately, the region generally finds that its servicing lending institutions do make adequate capital available on reasonable terms and conditions.

Due to the low per capita and median household incomes in the region, many residents do not have the discretionary income needed to support flourishing retail and service businesses. Traditional lenders are often unable to take some or any risk to finance these businesses. In such instances, the potential borrowers have acceptable alternative financing sources such as the Mid-East Certified Development Corporation's EDA Revolving Loan Fund, the USDA Intermediary Relending Program, or the NC Rural Center's Microenterprise Loan Program. Recently, there have been private angel and venture capitalist lenders locating in the region, providing another source of alternative financing.

Local government budgetary shortfalls make community improvements and other economic development investments impossible without help from grant funds in most areas of the region. There has been a recent influx of grant monies to local governments through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). As of the time of this writing, rural and small town governments are having issues with staff capacity to administer funds. Regional COGs are expecting EDA funding to provide local governments with ARPA grant administration assistance in the near future.

State and federal broadband grants have continued, and additional grants have become available since the previous CEDS update. There have recently been many grant programs available for local and regional resilience planning and flood reduction projects. State and federal grants continue to be available for new businesses/expansions based on the number of jobs created.

Business, Personal and Property Taxes

The personal income tax and the corporate tax of the State of North Carolina are applied on a uniform basis throughout the state. Neither is there a differing effect of the state sales tax from one region of the state to another.

Property taxes on business and personal real estate and equipment do vary widely from one county to another in proportion to the level of services needed or wanted and in inverse proportion to the per capita size of the list of ratable property.

Generally, most of the Mid-East counties are fairly frugal in the level of services supported. Of the five counties, three have high property tax rates. This, of course, is discouraging to businesses that are interested in expanding or relocation in these counties. However, the raw tax rates do not tell the whole story, as some counties have all-encompassing rates, with no separate tax streams.

The current county property tax rates are as follows:
- Bertie: 0.93 cents per $100

- Beaufort: 0.625 cents per $100
- Hertford: 0.84 cents per $100
- Martin: 0.81 cents per $100
- Pitt: 0.566 cents per $100

Existing Infrastructure

Existing infrastructure is a considerable, if not major, impediment to the attraction of prospective companies. The following sections summarize the current standing of broadband, electric, housing, natural gas, transportation, water, and wastewater infrastructure in the region.

Broadband

High-speed broadband internet has become a necessary utility. Broadband connection is no longer optional but vital for the region to compete economically and for citizens to not be left behind. Students can no longer fully participate in the education system without broadband access. The region needs high-speed internet to the last mile in rural areas.

The Mid-East Region is still lacking in high-speed broadband availability. Many rural areas in the region have no suitable options available. However, there have been many improvements made in every county since the last CEDS update, with some of those improvements being major.

The first round of grants that improved broadband infrastructure in the region were the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant, which was a state grant through the NC Dept. of Information Technology (formerly the NC Broadband Office when the grant was implemented), and the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) grant which was a federal grant through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Construction of projects has been completed and these grants are no longer active. The next round of grants was through two different phases of the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) grant which is a state grant through the NC Dept. of Information Technology. There will not be any future rounds of this grant. Some projects from the second round are still under construction. The current grant through the NC Dept. of Information Technology is the BEAD grant. Awards through this program will be managed by the NC Dept. of Information Technology and award decisions are pending approval from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

These grants have been a vital source of funding for implementation of broadband infrastructure projects. These grants provide funding for internet service providers to go into rural areas that would otherwise be unprofitable because of the upfront infrastructure costs and the low population densities. This has helped bring broadband projects to rural areas in the region. However, local governments have experienced issues with funding agencies not taking local input and needs into consideration when choosing a broadband provider to provide the service. This was improved during the CAB grant process where local input was more of a driving factor in provider selection.

The state has the intention to fill all the gaps and eventually cover all households in North

Carolina with high-speed broadband internet. It is incumbent for leaders in the Mid-East Region to take advantage of these broadband grant programs while they are available. The Mid-East Region Digital Improvement Plan was adopted in September 2025. This plan reviews the standing of broadband infrastructure in the region in more detail and also details access and education factors such as affordability, access to devices, digital skills education, and public wi-fi access.

Electric

Electric capacity in the region is found to currently be sufficient. Service in the region is provided by major nationwide providers, Electric Membership Cooperatives (EMCs), and local government systems supported by Electricities, depending on the area. Electric rates in the region are generally reasonable.

There has been a continued augment in solar energy facilities (or "solar farms") across the region since the last CEDS update. Many local governments have started regulating these solar energy facilities through local land use and zoning regulations and some local governments have enacted temporary moratoriums.

Housing

The Mid-East Region is comparably an affordable area to purchase a home, although costs have risen recently, as they have across the country. In most areas of the region, there is a lack of variety in housing options to choose from. Multi-family residential developments are very limited outside of the City of Greenville and are not adequate to meet demand. In the four more rural counties, there is also a severe lack of middle-income rental options.

One major impediment to more affordable housing construction in rural areas is the rules for the low-to-moderate-income (LMI) qualified tax credit. To qualify, the property must be within 2.5 miles of a grocery store, which only includes major chain stores, not local grocery stores or Dollar Stores. There is no flexibility in the rule (referred to as the "QAP" formula). For example, Bertie County had a proposed property within 2.6 miles of a grocery store, and it would not qualify. There is currently legislation for Tier 1 counties to have some flexibility. If passed, the definition of grocery stores would be changed to include local grocery stores and Dollar Stores. The legislation passing would be positive for the region as it would open up many more properties to receive the LMI tax credit, which is an attraction to potential developers.

In many areas of the region, there is a need to demolish blighted and dilapidated housing that is beyond the ability to repair. Larger "entitlement" communities receive Community Development and Block Grant (CDBG) funds to cover these residential demolitions, but smaller "non-entitlement" communities do not have this funding available. "Non-entitlement" communities can apply for the CDBG Demolition Program, but only if the local government has control of the site and it is intended for future industrial use. The only "entitlement" community in the Mid-East Region is the City of Greenville in Pitt County. There is a major need for residential demolition funding in the region to prevent the continued creation of blighted areas and slums.

Natural Gas

Natural gas, a prerequisite for the location of certain industrial and commercial uses, is now found to be more frequently scattered in areas of the Mid-East Region. However, natural gas service is still unavailable in the majority of the region. Natural gas pipelines have been extended to many industrial parks, but some industrial parks still lack access, such as the NC Rail and Commerce Park in Martin County.

It is important to extend natural gas service to all current and anticipated future industrial and heavy commercial areas. Possible sources of funding include NC Dept. of Commerce's (DOC) State Rural Grants Economic Infrastructure Program or DOC's Industrial Development Fund. However, the eligibility for both programs is strict and generally requires an employer or multiple employers who will be creating a significant number of jobs. There is a need for more flexible funding sources to expand natural gas infrastructure in the region.

Water

The availability of water service in the region is generally found to be adequate and the capacity of existing systems is sufficient. There are still some areas of the region where public water service is not available, and development must be served by private wells. It would be ideal to extend public water service to these areas.

There are common problems with the condition of public water systems throughout the five counties. Many town systems are 30-40 years old and have never been properly maintained. The result is failing systems – especially the lines.

For small towns and rural counties, upgrading water systems often seems impossible without outside financial assistance. Where water system condition problems directly affect the location or retention of an employer, a possible EDA public works project exists. Another potential opportunity for upgrading systems is FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) grant. However, the BRIC grant is very competitive, the application is time consuming, and requires a skilled grant writer. This prevents many small town and rural local governments from pursuing an application due to staff capacity limitations and limited funding to secure outside consultants. There have recently been some water system improvements planned with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, but the projects haven't happened yet. Small town and rural local governments require assistance administering the funds due to staff capacity issues and the complication of reporting requirements.

There are often affordability issues with small town and rural water systems due to having a low volume of users. High rates may discourage potential businesses from locating in these areas. System regionalization has been successful in lowering rates in some areas of the region. Regionalization should be explored further in areas where service affordability is an issue due to a lower user base. NC DEQ has merger/regionalization feasibility grants available. These grants fund studies to evaluate the potential consolidation or two or more systems into one system and the potential physical interconnection with another system for regional wastewater treatment or regional water supply.

There are some cases where major upgrades to water systems have been forced by the state due to requirements for groundwater and aquifer encroachment. Many local governments have had to switch from groundwater to surface water for public water systems due to restrictions, an expensive switch to make. Some communities have had to foot the bill for multi-million dollar system upgrades with little to no assistance from the state. These costs have been passed on to system users in communities which are already economically distressed. In some cases, the rates for service have risen to the point of sparking public outrage, with citizens organizing protests outside Town Halls. Local governments in the region recognize the value of our natural resources and want to be good stewards of those resources. It is important that future state mandates around public water systems come with available funding for local governments to comply and make the system upgrades, at least in Tier 1 counties.

There is also a need to upgrade public water systems to digital mapping platforms across the region. Many small town and rural local governments are operating from old paper maps dated back to when their water systems were originally constructed. These maps need to be updated and brought into a modern digital mapping system. NC DEQ's Asset and Inventory Assessment Grant provides funding to upgrade systems to digital mapping, as well as funding for conducting asset inventories and condition assessments.

Wastewater

The capacity of existing wastewater systems is generally sufficient to accommodate future growth within the systems' service areas. However, there are major issues with the lack of wastewater service availability across the region. Sewer is only available within and just outside some municipalities, while some municipalities and most county areas have no wastewater service available and must rely on on-site septic systems. In the four more rural counties, often even within urban areas of these counties, public wastewater service is not adequate to serve the next potential round of industrial development. The lack of wastewater service is a major impediment to the attraction of new businesses to the region.

There are common problems with the condition of public wastewater systems throughout the five counties. Many town systems are 30-40 years old and have never been properly maintained. The result is failing systems – especially the lines. This can lead to rain water infiltration into the system which reduces the overall system capacity and augments the cost of running the system. Leaking lines can also lead to water quality problems in nearby creeks and rivers. In areas served by private septic tanks, there are also concerns with failing systems leading to water quality problems, in addition to the risk of contaminating nearby private wells.

For small towns and rural counties, upgrading wastewater systems often seems impossible without outside financial assistance. The primary grant opportunities for wastewater systems are through the NC Division of Water Infrastructure and the US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). Both agencies have grants and low interest loans available. Grants are usually only available to distressed systems and disadvantaged communities. Where wastewater system condition problems directly affect the location or retention of an employer, a possible EDA public works project exists. There have recently been some wastewater system improvements completed with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, but these were one time funding opportunities.

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The Mid-East Region Wastewater Improvement Plan is currently being developed. The plan will provide a summary of all wastewater systems in the region and provide recommendations for each local government jurisdiction. This will help Mid-East Commission staff to better support local governments with their wastewater system needs.

The following map depicts which areas are served by public sewer systems and which areas are served by individual septic tanks by jurisdictional boundary in the Mid-East Region.

Mid-East Region Wastewater Systems

Legend

- Counties*
- Rivers (light blue)

Municipalities
Wastewater

- Septic (red)
- Sewer (green)

*All counties are on septic, with the exception of specific areas (Town ETJs, Industrial Parks, etc.) that are nearby municipal sewer systems.

Como

Murfreesboro
Winton
Cofield

HERTFORD

Ahoskie
Harrellsville

Aulander
Powellsville
Roxobel
Colerain
Kelford

Lewiston-Woodville
Askewville

BERTIE

Windsor

Oak City
Hamilton

Hassell
Parmele
Williamston
Everetts
Jamesville
Robersonville

Bethel
Bear Grass
MARTIN

PITT

Falkland

Fountain
Greenville
Farmville
Simpson
Grimesland
BEAUFORT
Pantego
Belhaven

Washington
Washington Park

Chocowinity
Bath

Winterville
Ayden

Grifton

Aurora

0 5 10 20 Miles

N

Transportation

Aviation

The Pitt-Greenville Airport (PGV) provides air freight and commuter service to Greenville, which is in the southwestern portion of the region. Commuter flights into or from the airport are commercial flights connected to the International Airport in Charlotte (Charlotte-Douglas). The Martin County Airport, Tri-County Airport (located in Hertford County and also serving Bertie County), and the Washington-Warren Airport (Beaufort County) serve general and corporate private flights.

Air freight into the region is generally infrequent and must be supplemented by common carrier freight hauls from the Norfolk-Virginia Beach and Raleigh-Durham Airports. This level of service is marginal for the Mid-East Region's current needs and inadequate for a future which could see high technology commerce and growth.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

The City of Greenville in Pitt County has a comprehensive greenway system. Greenways are severely lacking in the rest of the Mid-East Region. There are a few smaller greenways scattered throughout the region, but not nearly enough to serve public demand. There is currently a prime opportunity to take advantage of funding programs related to 2023 being branded as NC's Year of the Trail. There is also an opportunity to tie into the East Coast Greenway's planned NC Alternate Coastal Route.

In addition to the public recreation benefits, it is desirable from an economic development standpoint for the region to be part of a trail that runs the entire east coast of the country from Maine to Florida. A Feasibility Study was recently funded for a greenway to connect the City of Greenville in Pitt County to the City of Washington in Beaufort County and should begin in the next few months. If constructed, the greenway will be part of the East Coast Greenway system.

Safe on-road bicycle facilities are lacking in the entire region. Some people bicycle for their daily transportation needs, and they face dire safety issues. The availability of sidewalks and crosswalks in urban areas varies. Improvements and expansions of the sidewalk system is a need for most municipalities in the Mid-East Region.

All local governments and especially those in small town and rural areas require outside funding to construct bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. A primary source of funding is the submittal of bicycle and pedestrian projects for competitive NC DOT funding through the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (Greenville MPO) or the local Rural Planning Organization (Mid-East RPO or Peanut Belt RPO). A primary issue with this funding source is that the match required by NC DOT is difficult or impossible for some local governments to pay, especially in small towns and Tier 1 counties. There is currently an effort to reduce the required local match for bicycle and pedestrian projects in Tier 1 counties.

In order to submit bicycle and pedestrian projects for NC DOT funding through the local MPO or RPO, the projects must be in an adopted local plan. NC DOT's Integrated Mobility Division

offers Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grants which many communities in the region have used to develop local plans. There is also the opportunity to include bicycle and pedestrian projects into County Comprehensive Transportation Plans, but these plans are only updated by NC DOT approximately once every ten years.

Once a project is in a locally adopted plan, the community can then submit projects from the plan to their MPO or RPO for funding consideration, provided the required local match is available. Projects submitted to MPOs and RPOs are not guaranteed to be funded but are subject to NCDOT's prioritization process. This is a competitive funding process in which projects are scored based on metrics defined by NCDOT. Projects can compete for three pots of NCDOT money; statewide, regional, and division. The statewide pot is the most competitive but has the largest amount of funding available, while the division pot is the least competitive but has the smallest amount of funding available, with the regional pot being in between.

There are also grant programs available through US DOT (RAISE grant) which are very competitive but offer a large pot of money for projects demonstrating a regional impact. There are several community-based grants from private organizations and non-profits that provide funding for smaller projects.

There is currently a need to develop a Mid-East Region Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and a Mid-East Region Comprehensive Greenway Plan, which could possibly be funded through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant program. Existing Bicycle Plans, Greenway Plans, and Pedestrian Plans across the region are as follows:

Beaufort County -
- Beaufort County Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- City of Washington Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- City of Washington Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

Bertie County -
- Town of Windsor Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Hertford County -
- Town of Ahoskie Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- Town of Murfreesboro Greenway Plan
- Town of Murfreesboro Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

Martin County -
- Walk Williamston: A Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

Pitt County -
- Pitt County Greenway Plan
- Town of Farmville Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan
- Town of Farmville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- Town of Winterville Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan
- Town of Winterville Greenway Master Plan
- Greenville MPO Active Transportation Plan
- Greenville MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Electric Vehicles

There has been a recent rise in ownership of electric vehicles (EVs), and it is clear that the use of EVs is only going to augment in the future. There has already been a measurable impact on the gas tax which is used by DOT to fund highway projects. There will need to be a way to tax usage of electric vehicles to make up for funding shortfalls due to reduced gas tax. There has been recent discussion on using a plug in device to tax people based on the number of miles driven in the EV. This will not be the most beneficial for rural areas where people drive further distances to attend to daily needs.

There are extremely limited options for EV charging in the Mid-East Region. There is a need for public and private EV charging stations in convenient locations across the region. There have been recent grant programs to fund community owned charging stations but few communities in the region have taken advantage of these programs to date. A major impediment to the augment in privately operated EV charging stations is a regulation that businesses are not able to have an EV charging station available to the public unless they also provide gasoline. There is currently an effort to get this regulation changed.

Ferries and Water Transport

The Aurora-Bayview Ferry in Beaufort County crosses the Pamlico River, serving both tourists and commuters to and from the Nutrien facility in Aurora. The ferry provides the only option to cross the river east of Washington in Beaufort County.

The San Souci Cable Ferry in Bertie County crosses the Cashie River and primarily serves tourists. The Parker's Cable Ferry in Hertford County crosses the Meherrin River and also primarily serves tourists. Unlike the larger boats of the state's coastal ferry system, cable ferries carry a maximum of two vehicles and are guided across a river by cables connected to both shores. These are two of only three remaining inland cable ferries in the state.

There have been recent planning level discussions on connecting Outer Banks Ferries with smaller inland high speed ferries for tourists to enjoy a one day or multiple day Inner Banks Adventure. If funded, this could be a major tourism boom for the region.

There is also a potential opportunity to augment local water-based transportation for residents and visitors thorough publicly or privately operated "water taxis", which could, for example, provide river-based transport between two municipalities on a river or between various historic downtown districts in a county.

There are currently multiple "blueway" water recreation trails in the region frequented by paddlers. There are camping platforms for paddlers available along the Roanoke River and the Tar-Pamlico River. There is the opportunity to construct camping platforms on the Meherrin River as well.

Highway

Generally, the only less accessible regions of North Carolina than Region "Q" are portions of Western North Carolina in the Great Smoky Mountains and some beaches of the Outer Banks

along the extreme East Coast. The Smoky Mountains and the Outer Banks compensate for their inaccessibility by being the top two tourist attractions in the state by which tourists will overcome the areas inaccessibility to gain the enjoyment they want. Such is not the case for Region "Q".

The highway system in the region possesses features which contribute to substandardness and inaccessibility:

1. At grade (highway level) perpendicular crossings of highways with rural roads and state routes.
2. Tight curves.
3. Occasional access to highway directly from private property.
4. Complete breakdown of highway standards in urban centers.

Truck and commuter dependent manufacturers and wholesalers are likely to choose many other locations in the state prior to choosing the Mid-East Region, given these serious highway deficiencies mentioned above. Even the four-laning of highways is not adequate if they are not designed and built to Interstate standards.

There have been improvements made to the highway system in the region since the last major update. US-64 has been designated as Future I-87. DOT is working on bringing the corridor to Interstate standards in sections. Currently, they are adding shoulders and raising bridges. Part of the I-87 corridor has been redone and resurfaced to be stronger, almost up to Martin Community College. Additional funding is needed to bring the entire corridor up to Interstate standards.

US-264 has been four laned in the region with the exception of the eastern most portion in Beaufort County. A section of US-264 in Pitt County has been brought up to Interstate standards and designated as I-587. I-587 follows the US 264 (East-West) Wilson By-Pass which opened in 2004, improving the accessibility to I-95 (North-South). I-587 also provides access to the Piedmont area of the state, including the greater Raleigh area. The remaining portions of US-264 are still below Interstate standards, and some portions have serious access management issues.

A portion of US-17 in Bertie and Martin Counties has been designated as Future I-87. I-87 provides access to Tidewater Virginia and the Norfolk Port. There is a lot of work needed to bring US-17 up to Interstate standards in this area. Funding needs to be allocated to do so. Construction of the US-17 Washington By-Pass (North-South) has been completed. The Washington to Williamston portion of US-17 is funded to be four laned. Currently utility relocation is occurring, and the project is under contract for construction. After completion, the only portion of US-17 in the region remaining as a two lane highway is the Beaufort County to Craven County portion.

US-13 has been four laned in Hertford County but is still two laned in Bertie County. US-158 is primarily a two laned highway but has been four laned in some areas of Hertford County. US-258 is only two laned in the region. These US highways and some state highways in the region are commuting routes that have heavy truck traffic. Yet the majority of these routes are two laned and in major need of upgrades. Sections of NC-11 have been four laned, but the highway still has two laned portions. With the volume of truck traffic considered, the entire

corridor needs to be four laned. NC-33, another state highway with heavy truck traffic, is almost completely two laned, with the exception of a section in the Greenville MPO area. The NC-125 bypass in Martin County has been completed and is four laned. Prison Camp Rd. will be part of NC-125 once it is widened and improved, but it will still be two laned.

While there have been significant improvements to inter-regional highway infrastructure since the last major CEDS update, we still have a long way to go, and community leaders must keep working to ensure that improvements to highway infrastructure occurs. Perhaps one of the largest impediments to securing more project funding is the weight that NC DOT puts on congestion in its funding formulas, which causes the majority of project funding to go to major urban centers outside the region. There is currently an effort to reduce the weight of congestion in the funding formula to provide greater benefit for rural areas such as the Mid-East Region.

Port

The ports nearest the Mid-East Region are the container ports in Norfolk and Wilmington and the breakbulk and bulk port in Morehead City. The flow of goods between the region and these ports is considered adequate, with access to the ports by common carrier or rail. From Williamston in Martin County (a central location in the region), it is 130 miles to Norfolk, 120 miles to Wilmington, and 80 miles to Morehead City. The expansion of Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) 20 by the port of Virginia and the expansion of FTZ 214 at the Global Transpark in Kinston provide cost advantages to companies involved in import/export activity and made becoming a satellite location easier.

Public Transit

The City of Greenville operates the GREAT bus system, the only fixed route system in the region. All other areas of the Mid-East Region are served by rural on demand transportation systems. Service is generally only offered during daytime hours, a challenge for those with non-traditional work schedules and for people taking night classes. Expanding the hours that rural public transit systems operate should be a priority, however, there is concern that evening ridership rates will be too low to sustain operations. Rural park and ride lots are another option to implement with rural transit systems, but there is a similar concern on whether there would be enough demand. If implemented, park and ride lots could connect with greenways and/or on road bicycle facilities, enabling residents in rural areas to commute without using a personal vehicle.

NC DOT will be developing a Regional Public Transit Plan in the near future. This is a pilot plan which will include multiple other counties in addition to the Peanut Belt RPO counties (which includes Bertie and Hertford Counties in the Mid-East Region). A similar plan is needed for the Mid-East RPO (includes Beaufort, Martin, and Pitt Counties). This is a potential for the second phase of NC DOT's Regional Public Transit Plans.

Rail

Freight rail service is found to be generally adequate to many of the industrialized locations within the region at present. There are funding opportunities to assist businesses with getting

rail spurs to their locations.

There was an intermodal CSX hub constructed in Rocky Mount known as the "Carolina Connector Terminal" which opened in November 2021. The intermodal facility combines the superior economics of rail transportation with the short-haul flexibility of trucks and offers a competitive cost advantage over mid to long-haul trucking. Although the facility was reduced from its original scope, it still has significant capacity, featuring three wide-span, zero emission electric cranes with a lift capacity of 110,000 containers per year. The majority of container handling is completely automatic with operators remotely controlling the initial lift and final placement from inside the terminal building.

Direct rail passenger service does not exist for the region; travelers must travel to Wilson (40 miles from Greenville) or Rocky Mount (40 miles from Ahoskie) for the nearest Amtrak stations. Peanut Belt RPO is working to get passenger rail back in Weldon, which will be closer than current options.

There is currently a Light Rail Feasibility Study funded to study the area between Greenville and Raleigh, which should begin in the next few months.

Impacts of Natural Disasters

The location of the Mid-East Region makes it susceptible to the effects of natural disasters, especially hurricanes. Long lasting effects are most felt by the low income segment of the population, who are more likely to occupy the most hazard prone areas and less able to recover after a disaster occurs.

Hurricane Floyd passed through the region on September 15, 1999 and caused the most damage of any storm since Hurricane Hazel in the 1950s. All five counties in the Mid-East Region were severely constrained by the damage done during this storm. The worst damage was not caused by the high winds, as with many hurricanes. The rains that accompanied the storm caused the most severe and lasting damage to the region and all of eastern North Carolina. Flooding associated with this storm was an economic burden to all of the Region "Q" counties.

Although all areas of the region were severely affected by the storm and the flood, some were more visible than others were. Pitt County was the center of national news coverage for several weeks as the floodwater receded. One of the most widespread effects of this storm and flood was on the farmers of the region. The cash crops, these farmer's livelihoods, were destroyed or damaged. Many homes in the region were deemed uninhabitable and many others needed flood remediation. The region was unprepared for a natural disaster of this magnitude. Federal agencies such as FEMA were visible for years after the flood. Many areas of the region will not be inhabited again because of flood risks.

Hurricane Isabel made landfall and moved through the region on September 18, 2003. This Category 2 Storm caused an estimated $170 million dollars in damage to insured property in North Carolina alone. There was a recorded 6 to 10 foot above normal tide level storm surge leaving many waterfront areas of the region inundated with storm water. Although the flood damage from this storm was not as extensive as Hurricane Floyd, it still caused major hardship

for many areas of the region. The wind damage from this storm was very extensive. Bertie and Hertford Counties, the two most northern counties in the region, sustained some of the worst damage during Hurricane Isabel. The winds downed both trees and power lines causing many secondary roads to become impassable. These two counties were without power in some areas for extended periods after the storm.

On August 27, 2011, Hurricane Irene hit the North Carolina coast as a strong Category 1 Storm with winds over 85 miles per hour. All five Mid-East counties were designated as federal disaster areas. There were over $125 million in damages in North Carolina alone.

Hurricane Matthew brushed past the North Carolina coast on October 8, 2016 bringing devastating flooding across central and eastern North Carolina. More than a foot of rain fell 100 miles inland, swelling streams and rivers to levels above what was seen in Hurricane Floyd in 1999. All five Mid-East counties were designated as federal disaster areas. Bertie and Pitt Counties in particular suffered major damage due to the flooding. Federal disaster aid was far from sufficient to cover the damaged infrastructure.

Hurricane Florence hit the North Carolina coast as a strong Category 1 Storm on September 14, 2018. Hurricane Florence was slow moving and long lasting, causing devasting flooding in its path. Significant flooding and widespread power outages remained after the storm. Florence caused an estimated $30 billion in damages and is on record as the most expensive storm to ever hit the Carolinas. In the Mid-East Region, Beaufort and Pitt Counties sustained the most damage from the storm and were declared federal disaster areas. Eastern Beaufort County was severely impacted and had widespread flood damage.

Hurricane Dorian hit the North Carolina coast as a Category 1 Storm on September 6, 2019. Beaufort and Pitt Counties were declared federal disaster areas. The storm caused over $74 million in damages in North Carolina.

Hurricane Isaias hit the North Carolina coast as a Category 1 Storm on August 4, 2020. Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford and Pitt Counties were declared federal disaster areas. The storm caused over $30 million in damages in North Carolina.

Hurricane Ian tracked through North Carolina after making landfall for a second time as a Category 1 Storm in South Carolina on September 30, 2022. The storm brought minor flooding to coastal communities in North Carolina and brought down trees and power lines across the eastern and central parts of the state. All five Mid-East counties were declared federal disaster areas, but fortunately there was minimal damage as a result of this storm.

In some county's most recent FEMA floodplain map updates, properties which flooded during past hurricanes have been removed from FEMA's official floodplain. Beaufort County is a prime example where this has occurred with a significant number of properties. The properties being removed from FEMA's official floodplain is a concern because of the flooding history of the properties which new residents may not be aware of, and the fact that if the property is outside the FEMA floodplain, flood insurance is not required.

Regional Profile Data
Population Information

	Table 1.				
	Mid-East Commission Region Population Growth, 2000-2023				
County	Census 2000	Census 2010	ACS 2023	Growth 2010-2023	% Growth 2010-2023
Beaufort	44,958	47,759	44,597	(-3,162)	(-6.6%)
Bertie	19,773	21,282	17,482	(-3,800)	(-17.9%)
Hertford	22,601	24,669	20,492	(-4,177)	(-16.9%)
Martin	25,593	24,505	21,773	(-2,732)	(-11.1%)
Pitt	133,798	168,148	172,279	4,131	2.5%
Region Total	**246,723**	**286,363**	**276,623**	**(-9,740)**	**(-3.4%)**

Source: US Census Bureau (2000 Decennial Census, 2010 Decennial Census, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 1 shows population growth for counties in the Mid-East region. It shows the total population for each county from 2000, 2010, and 2023 as well as the population and percentage growth during that timeframe. [1]

The data shows that Pitt County is much more populated than the other four counties. Pitt County was the only county to grow in population (2.5%) from 2010 to 2023. The other four counties saw a population decline from 2010 to 2022. The Mid-East Region as a whole had a population loss of -3.4% from 2010 to 2023.

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[1] The CEDS Advisory Committee determined that the 2020 US Census data is inaccurate for a majority of the region. There were particular issues with undercounting, especially in rural areas of the region. Additionally, there seemed to be inaccuracies in other data sources from the same time period. This is likely due to issues related to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic effecting data collection efforts.

Change in Working Age Population, 2011-2021

State: 7.6%

Percent Change - Age 15 to 64

- -5 to -19.8% Loss (25)
- Less than 5% Loss (29)
- 0.1 to 7.6% Growth (28)
- 7.6 to 28.1% Growth (18)
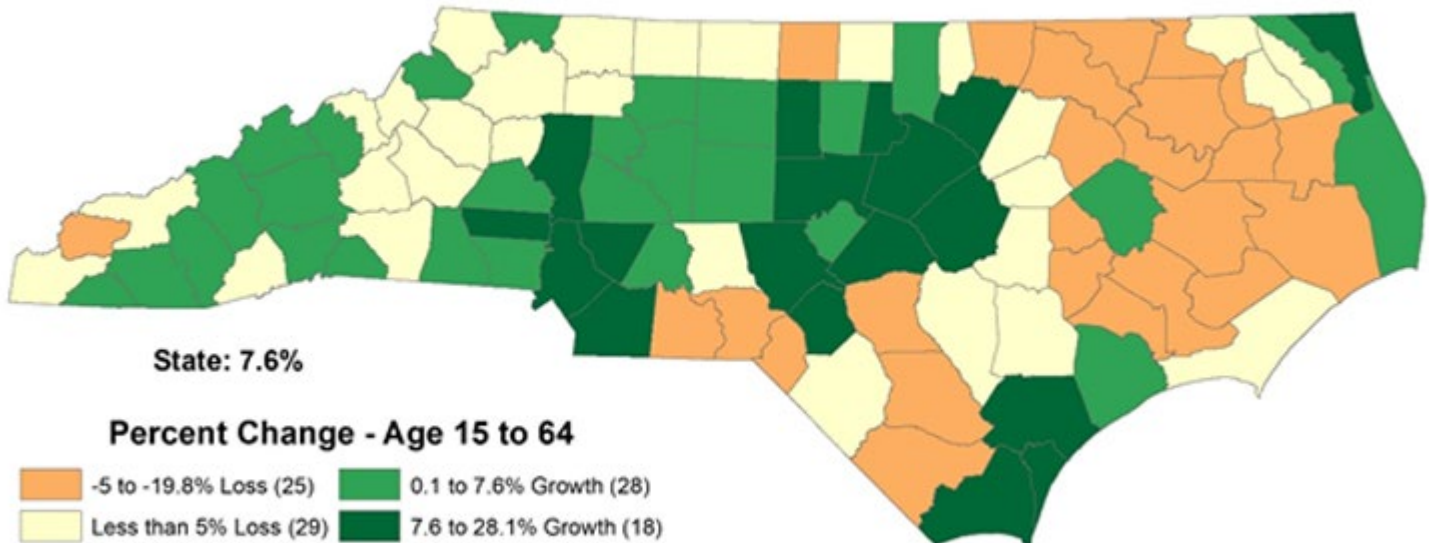
Source: NC OSBM Population Estimates, Vintage 2019 and Population Projections, Vintage 2020

OSBM
OFFICE OF STATE BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT

This map by the NC Office of State Budget and Management shows the change in working age population (ages 15 to 64) by county from 2011-2021. While not the only factor, changing population in the Mid-East Region contributes to a challenging labor market. Part of the challenge has to do with the Baby Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) aging out of the workforce. Another challenge is the migration of younger generations from rural areas to urban areas.

As the region's population continues to age, we experience slower rates of growth (and in some areas, decline) in our prime working age population. This means that finding enough workers can be challenging for local businesses. This is a trend that the Mid-East Commission, local governments, and partner agencies are working hard to reverse.

The data shows that Pitt County experienced growth in the working age population for the 2011-2021 period (0.1% to 7.6% growth category). Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford and Martin Counties all experienced a decline in the working age population for the period (-5% to -19.8% loss category).

	Population By Background						Population by Background			
County	White	% White	African-American	% African-American	Other	% Other	Latino	% Latino	Non-Latino	% Non-Latino
Beaufort	33,112	74.2%	10,892	24.4%	3,235	7.3%	3,482	7.8%	41,115	92.2%
Bertie	6,398	36.6%	10,766	61.6%	882	5.1%	379	2.2%	17,103	97.8%
Hertford	7,727	37.7%	12,071	58.9%	1,334	6.5%	1,328	6.5%	19,164	93.5%
Martin	12,283	56.4%	9,199	42.2%	1,485	6.7%	939	4.3%	20,834	95.7%
Pitt	98,558	57.2%	63,822	37%	18,701	10.9%	13,263	7.7%	159,016	92.3%
Region Total	158,078	54.4%	106,750	36.8%	25,637	8.8%	19,391	7%	257,232	93%

Table 2.

Mid-East Commission Region Population by Background, 2023

Source: US Census Bureau (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 2 shows the Mid-East Region population by background. Background is broken down by Caucasian or White, African American, and Other (includes American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, some other background, and two or more backgrounds), and then background is split into Latino and Non-Latino.

Beaufort (74.2%), Martin (56.4%) and Pitt (57.2%) Counties have a larger White population while Bertie (61.6%) and Hertford (58.9%) Counties have a higher percentage of African Americans. Overall, the Mid-East Region has a 54.4% White population and a 36.8% African American population. Pitt County has the largest Other background population at 10.9% followed by Beaufort (7.3%), Martin (6.7%), Hertford (6.5%), and Bertie (5.1%) Counties. The Mid-East Region's Other background population is 8.8%.

The next background part of the table shows Latino populations of each county. Beaufort County had the largest percentage with 7.8%, followed by Pitt at 7.7%, Hertford at 6.5%, Martin at 4.3%, while Bertie County had the smallest Latino population at 2.2%. The Mid-East Region had a population of 7% Latino and 93% Latino.

County	% Under 18 Years	% 18-24 Years	% 25-44 Years	% 45-64 Years	% Over 65 Years	Median Age
Beaufort	19.4%	7%	21%	27.7%	25%	47.1
Bertie	16.4%	7.7%	24.5%	27.1%	24.3%	45.9
Hertford	18.9%	11.5%	22.6%	25.7%	21.3%	42.3
Martin	20.3%	6.7%	21.6%	26.3%	25%	46.7
Pitt	21.5%	16.7%	25.4%	22.1%	14.3%	33.6
Region Total	**20.6%**	**13.4%**	**24.1%**	**23.9%**	**18%**	43.1

Table 3.
Mid-East Commission Region Population by Age, 2023

Source: US Census Bureau (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 3 shows the region's population breakdown by age range and the median age for each county. Each county's percentage of people 18 or younger ranges from 16.4% (Bertie) to 21.5% (Pitt). Pitt County (16.7%) has the highest and Hertford County (11.5%) has the second highest percentage of people in the 18-24 year age range, with the other three counties ranging from 6.7% to 7.7% in this age range. This is at least partially due to East Carolina University's location in Pitt County and Chowan University's location in Hertford County. Each county's percentage of people in the 25-44 year age range ranges from 21% (Beaufort) to 25.4% (Pitt). Each county's percentage of people in the 45-64 year age range ranges from 22.1% (Pitt) to 27.7% (Beaufort).

Pitt County has the lowest percentage of people in the 65 years and over age range at 14.3%. The other four counties ranged from 21.3% (Hertford) to 25% (Beaufort and Martin) in the 65 years and over age range.

The Mid-East Region average is 20.6% under 18 years, 13.4% 18-24 years, 24.1% 25-44 years, 23.9% 45-64 years, and 18% 65 years and over.

Pitt County has the youngest median age at 33.6 years, followed by Hertford County at 42.3 years. The other three counties range from 45.9 – 47.1 years median age. The Mid-East Region average is 43.1 years median age.

Income, Wages and Poverty

County	2015	2021	2024	Change 2015-2021	% Change 2015-2021	Change 2021-2024	% Change 2021-2024
Table 4. Mid-East Commission Region Average Annual Wage, 2015-2024							
Beaufort	$35,932	$41,912	$50,355	$5,980	16.6%	8,443	20.1%
Bertie	$30,004	$38,480	$44,847	$8,476	28.2%	6,367	16.5%
Hertford	$35,516	$44,980	$48,252	$9,464	26.6%	3,272	7.3%
Martin	$28,912	$35,360	$38,563	$6,448	22.3%	3,203	9.1%
Pitt	$41,912	$51,688	$59,881	$9,776	23.3%	8,193	15.9%
Region	**$39,104**	**$48,256**	**$55,952**	**$9,152**	**23.4%**	**7,696**	**15.9%**

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (annual periods 2015, 2021 and 2024)

Table 4 shows the average annual wage for each county and the region for the years 2015, 2021 and 2024. Also shown is the change and percentage change from the periods 2015-2021 and 2021-2024.

From 2015-2021, there was a major gain in the average annual wage for all five counties, including Beaufort County at 16.6%, Bertie County at 28.2%, Hertford County at 26.6%, Martin County at 22.3%, and Pitt County at 23.3%. The Mid-East Region as a whole had an average annual wage gain of 23.4% from 2015-2021. While there is awareness of a wage gain during this period, the numbers reported seem to be higher than the augments that actually occurred in many areas, based on local knowledge. There is the possibility of a few high paying employers skewing the numbers as well.

From 2021-2024, there was an augment in the average annual wage for all five counties, including Beaufort County at 20.1%, Bertie County at 16.5%, Hertford County at 7.3%, Martin County at 9.1%, and Pitt County at 15.9%. The Mid-East Region as a whole had an average annual wage gain of 15.9% from 2021-2024. There was also a great deal of inflation during this period due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

	Table 5. Mid-East Commission Region Poverty Rates 2023 & Food Insecurity Rates 2023		
County	**All Persons Poverty Rate (%)**	**Under 18 Poverty Rate (%)**	**Food Insecurity Rate**
Beaufort	18%	32.1%	16.9%
Bertie	19.8%	26.7%	17.9%
Hertford	21.4%	31%	17.9%
Martin	19.6%	32.9%	17.9%
Pitt	20.2%	24.5%	17.1%
Region Average	**19.8%**	**29.4%**	**17.5%**

Source: US Census Bureau (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates), Feeding
America 501(c) (3) non-profit (2023 Map the Meal Gap study)

Table 5 shows poverty rates and food insecurity rates. It shows the percentage of all people in poverty as well as just those persons under the age of 18. The table also shows the food insecurity rate for each county as well as the region's average.

The poverty rate for the Mid-East Region ranged from 18% in Beaufort County to 21.4% in Hertford County. The region's average poverty rate was 19.8%. The percentage of persons under the age of 18 living in poverty was higher, ranging from 24.5% in Pitt County to 32.9% in Martin County. The average poverty rate of persons under the age of 18 was 29.4% for the Mid-East Region. (It is worth noting that Pitt County's poverty rate is impacted by a large student population from East Carolina University that work part-time for relatively low wages.)

The food insecurity rate for the region was very similar in all counties, ranging from 16.9% - 17.9%. The average food insecurity rate for the Mid-East Region was 17.5%. All five counties were greater than the State of North Carolina's average food insecurity rate of 15%.

Table 6. Mid-East Commission Region Median Household Income & Per Capita Income 2023		
County	**Median Household Income**	**Per Capita Income**
Beaufort	$57,997	$33,912
Bertie	$45,931	$27,082
Hertford	$47,472	$27,562
Martin	$46,793	$27,007
Pitt	$58,851	$34,229
Region Average	**$51,409**	**$28,711**

Source: US Census Bureau (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 6 shows the region's median household income and per capita income. The region's average median household income was $51,409. Pitt County had the highest median household income at $58,851, followed by Beaufort County at $57,997, Hertford County at $47,472, Martin County at $46,793, and Bertie County at $45,931. The Region's average per capita income was $28,711. Pitt County had the highest per capita income at $34,229, followed by Beaufort County at $33,912, Hertford County at $27,562, Bertie County at $27,082, and Martin County at $27,007.

Housing

Table 7. Mid-East Commission Region Housing Units, 2010-2023				
County	**2010**	**2023**	**Change 2010-2023**	**% Change 2010-2023**
Beaufort	24,688	24,385	(-303)	(-1.2%)
Bertie	9,822	8,988	(-834)	(-8.5%)
Hertford	10,635	9,831	(-804)	(-7.6%)
Martin	11,704	11,100	(-604)	(-5.2%)
Pitt	74,990	81,656	6,666	8.9%
Region Total	**131,839**	**135,960**	**4,121**	**3.1%**

Source: US Census Bureau (2010 Decennial Census, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 7 shows the number of housing units in 2010 and 2023, including the change and percent change from 2010 – 2023.

Pitt County had the most housing units with 81,656 and saw an augment in housing units of 8.9% from 2010 – 2023. Beaufort County had 24,385 housing units and saw a decrease in housing units of -1.2% from 2010 – 2023. Martin County had 11,100 housing units and saw a decrease in housing units of -5.2% from 2010 – 2023. Hertford County had 9,831 housing units and saw a decrease in housing units of -7.6% from 2010 – 2023. Bertie County had 8,988 housing units and saw a decrease in housing units of -8.5% from 2010 – 2023. Overall, the Mid-East Region saw a 3.1% augment in housing units from 2010 – 2023, due to the augment in Pitt County.

Based on local knowledge, the housing units data seems incorrect for some counties. There was more growth in housing units than reported in Pitt County. A lot of homes were built in Martin County during this period, yet there is a loss shown. There is the possibility that only demolitions and losses were counted in Martin County but nothing new that was built was counted. This situation may be similar in other counties showing a housing loss for the period.

	Table 8.			
	Mid-East Commission Region Median Home Value, Homeowner Vacancy Rate, Rental Vacancy Rate & % of Units with No Vehicle Available 2023			
County	**Median Home Value**	**Homeowner Vacancy Rate**	**Rental Vacancy Rate**	**% of Units with No Vehicle Available**
Beaufort	$181,200	0.9%	4%	6.8%
Bertie	$95,800	0.7%	2.6%	9.8%
Hertford	$111,100	0.4%	4.8%	8.1%
Martin	$109,900	0.8%	6.1%	8.6%
Pitt	$194,300	0.9%	4.1%	8.7%
Region Average	$138,460	0.7%	4.3%	8.4%

Source: US Census Bureau (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 8 shows the median home value, homeowner vacancy rate, rental vacancy rate, and percentage of units with no vehicle available for each county and also gives the region's average.

Pitt County had the highest median home value at $194,300, followed by Beaufort County at $181,200, Hertford County at $111,100, Martin County at $109,900, and Bertie County at $95,800. The region's average median home value was $138,460.

The homeowner vacancy rate ranged from 0.4% (Hertford) to 0.9% (Beaufort and Pitt), while the rental vacancy rate ranged from 2.6% (Bertie) to 6.1% (Martin). Beaufort County had the lowest percentage of units without a vehicle available at 6.8%, followed by Hertford County at 8.1%, Martin County at 8.6%, Pitt County at 8.7%, and Bertie County at 9.8%.

Education

County	High School Graduate or higher	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Graduate or Professional Degree
Table 9. **Mid-East Commission Region Educational Attainment of Population 25 years and over, 2023**			
Beaufort	88.1%	20.6%	7.5%
Bertie	82%	17.8%	6.8%
Hertford	84.7%	16.7%	6.4%
Martin	83.3%	15.1%	4.2%
Pitt	90.9%	33.9%	14.2%
Region Average	**85.8%**	**20.8%**	**7.8%**
North Carolina	**89.7%**	**34.7%**	**12.9%**

Source: US Census Bureau (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 9 shows the percentage of high school graduates aged 25 and older, the percentage of people with a Bachelor's Degree aged 25 and older, and the percentage of people with a Graduate or Professional Degree aged 25 and older. The North Carolina High School graduation rate was 89.7% while the Mid-East Region's average High School graduation rate was 85.8%. Pitt County was the only county higher than the state at 90.9%. The other counties had High School graduation rates below the state average with Beaufort County at 88.1%, Hertford County at 84.7%, Martin County at 83.3%, and Bertie County at 82%.

The North Carolina percentage of persons 25 years and older with a Bachelor's Degree or higher was 34.7%, while the Mid-East Region's average Bachelor Degree rate was 20.8%. All counties were lower than the state for the population 25 years and older with Bachelor's Degrees or higher with Pitt County at 33.9%, Beaufort County at 20.6%, Bertie County at 17.8%, Hertford County at 16.7%, and Martin County at 15.1%.

The North Carolina percentage of persons 25 years and older with a Graduate or Professional Degree was 12.9%, while the Mid-East Region's average rate was 7.8%. Pitt County (14.2%) was higher than the state, while Beaufort County (7.5%), Bertie County (6.8%), Hertford County (6.4%) and Martin County (4.2%) were lower than the state for the population with Graduate or Professional Degrees.

Crime Rate

Table 10. Mid-East Commission Crime Rate, 2023		
County	**Total Crime Rate**	**Violent Crime Rate**
Beaufort	4,030 per 100,000 population	731 per 100,000 population
Bertie	1,651 per 100,000 population	493 per 100,000 population
Hertford	2,211 per 100,000 population	502 per 100,000 population
Martin	582 per 100,000 population	106 per 100,000 population
Pitt	2,723 per 100,000 population	452 per 100,000 population
Region Average	**2,239 per 100,000 population**	**457 per 100,000 population**
State	**2,590 per 100,000 population**	**413 per 100,000 population**

Source: NC Dept. of Public Safety (Uniform Crime Report, 2023)

Table 10 shows the total crime rate and violent crime rate for each county, the region and the state for 2023. The total crime rate for North Carolina was 2,590 per 100,000 population. Bertie, Hertford and Martin Counties were below the state crime rate while Beaufort and Pitt Counties were above the state crime rate. Martin County was significantly below with a total crime rate less than 25% of the state rate. The average crime rate for the Mid-East Region was 2,239 per 100,000 population, below the state crime rate of 2,590 per 100,000 population.

The violent crime rate for North Carolina was 413 per 100,000 population. Martin County was significantly below the state's violent crime rate, Bertie and Pitt Counties were just slightly higher than the state's violent crime rate, and Beaufort and Hertford Counties were higher than the state's violent crime rate. The average violent crime rate for the Mid-East Region was 457 per 100,000 population, above the state violent crime rate of 413 per 100,000 population.

Employment Information

County	2015	2022	2024	Change 2015-2022	% Change 2015-2022	Change 2022-2024	% Change 2022-2024
Table 11. **Mid-East Commission Region Total Employment, 2015, 2022, 2024**							
Beaufort	15,654	15,966	15,805	312	2%	(-161)	(-1%)
Bertie	6,423	5,182	5,173	(-1,241)	(-19.3%)	(-9)	(-0.2%)
Hertford	8,906	8,547	8,625	(-359)	(-4%)	78	0.9%
Martin	6,935	6,104	6,149	(-831)	(-12%)	45	0.7%
Pitt	74,374	78,586	81,337	4,212	5.7%	2,751	3.5%
Region Total	112,292	114,385	117,089	2,093	1.9%	2,704	2.4%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages
(annual periods 2015, 2022 and 2024)

Table 11 shows employment numbers by county for the years 2015, 2022, and 2024. The region's total is also displayed. The change and percentage change for the periods from 2015-2022 and 2022-2024 are also given.

From 2015-2022, Pitt County (2%) and Beaufort County (5.7%) were the only counties to show an augment in employment. The other three counties showed decreases in employment, including Hertford County at -4%, Martin County at -12%, and Bertie County at -19.3%. Overall, the Mid-East Region employment numbers augmented by 1.9% from 2015-2022, due to the growth in Pitt County and Beaufort County.

From 2022-2024, Martin County (0.7%), Hertford County (0.9%), and Pitt County (3.5%) showed an augment in employment. Beaufort County had a decrease in employment from 2022-2024 at -1%, and Bertie County also had a decrease at -0.2%. Overall, the Mid-East Region employment numbers augmented by 2.4% from 2022-2024.

Based on local knowledge, it seems that the employment loss for Bertie and Martin Counties from 2015-2022 is overcounted. It is acknowledged that there was some loss for the period. There was an industry lost in Martin County during that timeframe, but neither county lost that many employees.

County	Table 12. Mid-East Commission Local Businesses 2021			
County	Total Private Industry	Manufacturing Establishments	Available Industrial Buildings	Total Retail Businesses
Beaufort	1,174	50	1	384
Bertie	270	No data	1	63
Hertford	437	14	5	151
Martin	437	12	3	143
Pitt	3,946	111	17	1,185
Region Total	6,264	187	27	1,926

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (March 2022 County Profiles)

Table 12 shows total private industry, manufacturing establishments, available industrial buildings, and total retail businesses for each county and the region. As expected, Pitt County had the highest total private industry with 3,946. Total private industry in Beaufort County was 1,174, Martin County 437, Hertford County 437, and Bertie County 270. Total private industry in the region was 6,264.

Pitt County and Beaufort County had the greatest number of manufacturing establishments, with Pitt having 111 and Beaufort having 50. Hertford County had 12 manufacturing establishments, Martin County had 12, and there was no data on Bertie County manufacturing establishments. The Mid-East Region's total number of manufacturing establishments was 187.

Pitt County had 17 available industrial buildings. Available industrial buildings in the other counties included 5 in Hertford County, 3 in Martin County, one in Beaufort County, and one in Bertie County. The total available industrial buildings in the Mid-East Region was 27.

Pitt County had the greatest number of retail businesses with 1,185. Beaufort County had 384 retail businesses, Hertford County had 151, Martin County had 143, and Bertie County had 63 retail businesses. Total retail businesses in the Mid-East Region was 1,926.

Beaufort County Employers & Occupations

Largest Employers (250+ employees):

1. Beaufort County Schools
2. Nutrien (formerly PCS Phosphate)
3. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
4. Beaufort County
5. Beaufort County Community College
6. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
7. City of Washington
8. Precionaire

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

Table 14. Beaufort County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-2020				
Occupation	2015	2020	Change in Jobs 2015-2020	2020 Earnings per Worker
Accommodation and Food Services	1,369	1,265	(-7.6%)	$15,028
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,111	1,256	13.1%	$30,420
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	444	669	50.7%	$41,028
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	152	140	(-7.9%)	$18,824
Construction	505	2,004	296.8%	$30,203
Educational Services	1,566	1,346	(-14.0%)	$38,532
Finance and Insurance	376	343	(-8.8%)	$55,744
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,982	1,958	(-1.2%)	$36,296
Information	167	157	(-6.0%)	$54,375
Management of Companies and Enterprises	62	108	74.2%	$66,352
Manufacturing	2,655	2,054	(-22.6%)	$71,552
Mining	351	283	(-19.4%)	$76,467
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	418	321	(-23.2%)	$34,320
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	432	304	(-29.6%)	$57,408
Public Administration	1,138	1,163	2.2%	$44,460
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	113	107	(-5.3%)	$29,328
Retail Trade	2,175	2,227	2.4%	$25,896
Transportation and Warehousing	432	415	-3.9%	$49,140
Utilities	193	116	-39.9%	$48,750
Wholesale Trade	558	965	72.9%	$47,424

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

Bertie County Employers & Occupations

Largest Employers (100+ employees):

1. Perdue Farms, Inc.
2. NC Dept. of Public Safety
3. Bertie County Board of Education
4. Bertie County
5. QSI, LLC
6. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

		Table 15.		
	Bertie County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-2020			
Occupation	**2015**	**2020**	**Change in Jobs 2015-2020**	**2020 Earnings per Worker**
Accommodation and Food Services	155	206	32.9%	$12,324
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	407	252	(-38.1%)	$34,580
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	404	325	(-19.6%)	$38,376
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	35	47	34.3%	$27,768
Construction	282	37	(-86.9%)	$29,380
Educational Services	605	562	(-7.1%)	$28,667
Finance and Insurance	72	57	(-20.8%)	$46,384
Health Care and Social Assistance	924	686	(-25.8%)	$34,736
Information	53	11	(-79.2%)	$38,012
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	0%	N/A
Manufacturing	1,629	1,315	(-19.3%)	$30,925
Mining	0	0	0%	N/A
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	96	61	(-36.5%)	$26,884
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	35	35	0%	$22,568
Public Administration	827	823	(-0.5%)	$46,176
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5	5	0%	$19,032
Retail Trade	318	274	(-13.8%)	$22,152
Transportation and Warehousing	145	142	(-2.1%)	$52,000
Utilities	21	81	285.7%	$78,450
Wholesale Trade	64	57	(-10.9%)	$53,872

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

Hertford County Employers & Occupations

Largest Employers (100+ employees):

1.   Duck Thru
2.   ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
3.   Nucor Corporation
4.   Hertford County Board of Education
5.   Hertford County
6.   Med Ex Medical Transport Service
7.   Chowan University
8.   Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center
9.   Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
10.   Integrated Family Services, LLC
11.   Kerr, LLC
12.   Roanoke-Chowan Community College
13.   Home Life Care, Inc.
14.   Carolinas Home Care, Inc.
15.   Enviva Management Company, LLC

Source NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

Occupation	2015	2020	Change in Jobs 2015-2020	2020 Earnings per Worker
Table 16. Hertford County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-2020				
Accommodation and Food Services	668	595	(-10.9%)	$14,144
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	443	101	(-77.2%)	$22,679
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	255	180	(-29.4%)	$45,292
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5	2	(-60.0%)	$11,250
Construction	297	347	16.8%	$56,524
Educational Services	709	869	22.6%	$40,404
Finance and Insurance	149	160	7.38%	$53,352
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,975	2,247	13.8%	$36,712
Information	59	30	(-49.2%)	$41,912
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	23	N/A	No data
Manufacturing	981	957	(-2.4%)	$82,368
Mining	0	0	N/A	N/A
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	212	218	2.8%	$34,008
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	81	64	(-21.0%)	$51,324
Public Administration	661	560	(-15.3%)	$36,920
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	92	85	(-7.6%)	$42,328
Retail Trade	1,075	1,498	39.3%	$25,480
Transportation and Warehousing	143	196	37.1%	$52,312
Utilities	79	97	22.8%	$81,900
Wholesale Trade	685	255	(-62.8%)	$47,372

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

Martin County Employers & Occupations

Largest Employers (100+ employees):

1. Martin County Board of Education
2. Snacks Holdings
3. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
4. Martin County
5. Martin General Hospital
6. Martin Community College
7. Industrial Manufacturing Co., LLC
8. Town of Williamston
9. Home Life Care, Inc.

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

Table 17. Martin County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-2020				
Occupation	2015	2020	Change in Jobs 2015-2020	2020 Earnings per Worker
Accommodation and Food Services	786	689	(-12.3%)	$12,012
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	134	98	(-26.9%)	$27,456
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	294	281	(-4.4%)	$40,820
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	31	18	(-41.9%)	$17,614
Construction	226	219	(-3.1%)	$45,812
Educational Services	619	640	3.4%	$39,164
Finance and Insurance	258	146	(-43.4%)	$54,288
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,087	1,035	(-4.8%)	$32,292
Information	47	65	38.3%	$72,800
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	N/A	N/A
Manufacturing	925	713	(-22.9%)	$44,408
Mining	0	0	N/A	N/A
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	67	108	61.2%	$27,300
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	114	126	10.5%	$39,520
Public Administration	653	657	0.6%	$36,036
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	31	30	(-3.2%)	$30,628
Retail Trade	1,122	1,026	(-8.6%)	$26,000
Transportation and Warehousing	97	117	20.6%	$41,496
Utilities	25	24	(-4.0%)	$19,605
Wholesale Trade	165	145	(-12.1%)	$41,964

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

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Pitt County Employers & Occupations

Largest Employers (500+ employees):

1. ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
2. East Carolina University
3. Pitt County Board of Education
4. Patheon Manufacturing Services, LLC (Thermo Fisher)
5. Hyster-Yale, Inc.
6. Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
7. Pitt County
8. City of Greenville
9. Pitt Community College
10. Physicians East Pa
11. Executive Personnel, LLC
12. Food Lion
13. UHS Physicians
14. Denso Manufacturing North Carolina
15. Mayne Pharma, Inc.

Source NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

Table 18. Pitt County Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-2020				
Occupation	2015	2020	Change in Jobs 2015-2020	2020 Earnings per Worker
Accommodation and Food Services	8,692	7,592	(-12.7%)	$15,808
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,748	4,948	4.2%	$58,500
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	593	667	12.5%	$39,398
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	556	445	(-20.0%)	$18,772
Construction	3,053	3,309	8.4%	$49,036
Educational Services	11,002	10,843	(-1.4%)	$57,668
Finance and Insurance	1,893	1,433	(-24.3%)	$69,472
Health Care and Social Assistance	16,527	17,715	7.2%	$55,432
Information	951	578	(-39.2%)	$49,920
Management of Companies and Enterprises	976	774	(-20.7%)	$95,784
Manufacturing	6,115	6,509	6.4%	$67,080
Mining	18	199	1,005.6%	$54,550
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	1,426	1,420	(-0.4%)	$33,644
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1,675	1,791	6.9%	$74,204
Public Administration	3,159	3,283	3.9%	$50,128
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	772	934	21.0%	$40,508
Retail Trade	9,048	9,081	0.4%	$30,888
Transportation and Warehousing	909	1,226	34.9%	$42,224
Utilities	519	559	7.7%	$67,964
Wholesale Trade	1,739	1,306	(-24.9%)	$53,456

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

Mid-East Region Employers & Occupations

Largest Employers (1000+ employees):

1.   ECU Health (formerly Vidant Medical Center)
2.   East Carolina University
3.   Pitt County Board of Education
4.   Perdue Farms, Inc.
5.   Patheon Manufacturing Services, LLC
6.   Hyster-Yale, LLC
7.   Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
8.   Pitt County

Source NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division (2021)

Table 19. Mid-East Region Employment by Industry & Earnings per Worker, 2015-2020				
Occupation	2015	2020	Change in Jobs 2015-2020	2020 Earnings per Worker
Accommodation and Food Services	11,670	10,347	(-11.3%)	$13,863
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,843	6,655	(-2.7%)	$34,727
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,990	2,122	6.6%	$40,983
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	779	652	(-16.3%)	$18,846
Construction	4,363	5,916	35.6%	$42,191
Educational Services	14,501	14,260	(-1.7%)	$40,887
Finance and Insurance	2,748	2,139	(-22.2%)	$55,848
Health Care and Social Assistance	22,495	23,641	5.1%	$39,094
Information	1,277	841	(-34.1%)	$54,380
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,038	905	(-12.8%)	$81,068
Manufacturing	12,305	11,548	(-6.2%)	$59,267
Mining	369	482	30.6%	$65,509
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	2,219	2,128	(-4.1%)	$31,231
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,337	2,320	(-0.7%)	$49,005
Public Administration	6,438	6,486	0.7%	$44,465
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,013	1,161	14.6%	$32,365
Retail Trade	13,738	14,106	2.7%	$26,083
Transportation and Warehousing	1,726	2,096	21.4%	$47,434
Utilities	837	877	4.8%	$59,334
Wholesale Trade	3,211	2,728	(-15.0%)	$48,818

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) used first, US Census Bureau (2015 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey) used when BLS data unavailable.

Assessment of the Area

The economic development assessment of the Mid-East Region can be directly stated through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis as follows:

Strengths

- The work ethic and ongoing training of the workforce
- Educational opportunities
- Partnerships
- Business & industry collaboration with education institutions
- Hospitals in the region
- ECU Health medical facilities across region
- Strong community college system across region
- Transportation systems improving
- I-187 and Future I-87
- Augmented capacity for leisure and recreation activities
- Job and career opportunities
- Lower cost of living
- Thriving entrepreneurial base
- Mining, fishing, agriculture of continued importance
- Low traffic volumes in most counties
- Strong rail system in most areas
- The People
- Natural resources
- Potential for growth
- Increasing willingness across the region to collaborate for the good of everyone
- Increasing airport capacity
- Community College Small Business Centers and ECU's Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC) programs
- Historic downtowns with growing, vibrant arts communities
- Proximity to the Hampton Roads region of Va.
- Inner Banks tourism
- History and natural beauty
- Clean water and air
- Industry clusters in boat building, life sciences, air filtration and defense
- Proximity to the Port of Norfolk
- NC East Alliance as a policy associate for the region
- Low cost of living

Weaknesses

- Workforce quantity
- Lack of available sites and buildings
- Lack of housing including moderate income rental housing
- Low traffic volumes makes competition for transportation projects difficult
- Vulnerability to natural disasters
- Lack of extracurricular/entertainment activities for adults
- Lack of citizen awareness on what is available to them
- Lack of healthcare facilities in some areas
- Lack of suitable public transit in most areas
- Lack of infrastructure funding
- High poverty rates
- Insufficient K-12 system and poor test scores
- Low graduation rates from high school
- Lack of broadband
- Perceived high property tax rate
- Lack of good paying jobs
- Lack of workforce housing
- Price of raw materials (lumber, steel)
- Lack of available buildings (product)

Opportunities

- CSX Intermodal facility in Rocky Mount
- Regional Workforce Innovation Center to train large numbers of employees
- Expand on biotechnology for all areas including agriculture
- Support services for the creative community
- River tourism
- Augmented access to venture capital
- Expansion of local airports
- Expansion of existing business sectors
- Expansion of tourism opportunities
- Make young professionals/graduates aware of local opportunities
- Development of entertainment venues
- Take advantage of local history as a tourism draw
- Broadband expansion
- Remote working of millennials and Gen Z
- Large number of entrepreneurs
- Affluent retirees who could serve as SCORE (business mentor) volunteers
- Mild climate
- Proximity to the Port of Norfolk
- Development of shell buildings and industrial sites
- Airbnb growth in rural areas
- Future 1-87
- Capitalize on timber/forestry industry

Threats

- The strong manufacturing base is insufficiently varied. Downturn in one or more key industries would have severe consequences.
- Continued devastation from frequent natural disasters such as hurricanes and associated flooding
- The idea that young professionals must leave the area to go live/work in larger cities like Raleigh or Charlotte to do well
- Lack of extracurricular activities and entertainment opportunities for adults
- Climate change
- Continued company locations to urban areas
- Aging workforce
- Brain drain
- Flood plain encroachment
- High poverty level
- Poorly funded education system
- Rural hospital closures (access to healthcare)
- Budgetary issues/funding shortfalls
- Lack of broadband service
- Declining infrastructure conditions

Climate Resilience and Economic Resilience

The Mid-East Region is steeped in history and community values and offers a relaxed atmosphere that contributes to the quality of life of its citizens. From quaint, friendly small towns dotted throughout the region, to quiet rural areas, to big city amenities and entertainment, there is something to offer for every lifestyle. Picturesque woodlands, agricultural fields and rivers serve as the backdrop for the varied communities in the region. A strong, resilient regional economy is critical to the long-term growth and stability of these communities.

In general, resiliency can be thought of as the ability to bounce back after a hardship or disruption. In the context of economic development, resiliency is all-encompassing of three primary attributes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock all together (EDA 2017). It is critical to incorporate both steady- state and responsive initiatives into any economic resilience strategy. Steady-state initiatives are long-term efforts that seek to bolster a community or region's ability to withstand or avoid a shock, while responsive initiatives include establishing capabilities to be responsive to the region's recovery needs following an incident (EDA 2017). A multi-phased approach was used to plan for economic resiliency in the Mid-East Region, beginning with identification of vulnerabilities and moving onto identifying both steady-state and responsive initiatives to counteract the identified vulnerabilities.

Vulnerability

- Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and drought.
- Man-made disasters such as terrorism, nuclear disaster, and infrastructure failure.
- Medical disasters such as the coronavirus pandemic.
- Climate change, including increasing temperatures, sea level rise, and encroachment on aquifers.

Steady State Initiatives
- Incorporate resiliency into all infrastructure planning.
  - No new wastewater systems in floodplain and flood proof existing systems in floodplain.
  - Buyout or elevate properties frequently destroyed by flood.
  - Address flooding issues on roads and bridges which would be used as evacuation routes.
- Make improvements to land drainage throughout the region.
- Continue and expand on local resiliency planning efforts. Follow up plans with implementation grant applications.
- Educate farmers on the use of non-water intensive methods such as drip irrigation for appropriate crops.
- Keep information on infrastructure such as water lines and natural gas lines classified, as necessary.
- Maintain in good condition infrastructure such as bridges and dams, which cause loss of life and property when failure occurs.
- Assist businesses and the workforce with training in adaptive capabilities and new

technologies to help address technology issues with any potential future medical pandemics.
- Develop plans for regional supply chains.
- Extend high speed broadband infrastructure to all areas of the region including the "last mile" in rural areas.
- Participate in regional resiliency efforts such as the RISE (Regional Resilience Portfolio) program and the Rural Partners Network.
- Incorporate sea level rise projections into local and regional land use, infrastructure, and resilience planning.
- Research strategies to protect coastal groundwater resources from saltwater intrusion.
- Develop programs to educate farmers on climate-smart agriculture practices in partnership with local Cooperative Extensions.

Responsive Initiatives
- Continue Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning efforts.
- Continue local emergency management planning and expand on evacuation planning and mapping.
- Continue providing education on how to get recovery assistance to homeowners, small business owners and others who have property damage and/or are displaced following disaster.
- Participate in the "NC Disaster Recovery Network" sponsored by Rural Forward NC. The collective includes all levels of government, non-profits and private industry. Identify roles and actions of each agency and any gaps in needed disaster response and recovery services. Use this network to analyze emergency response methods post-disaster in order to make needed improvements.
- Maintain evacuation shelters throughout the region.
- Maintain emergency warning systems throughout the region.
- Provide adequate resources for emergency response units in each community.
- Ensure that emergency responders are trained to respond to a wide variety of disaster scenarios.
- Conduct an assessment of county Emergency Operations Plans and Community Health Needs Assessments to determine where pandemic response updates are needed.
- Identify insufficiently catered to populations most impacted by the pandemic and connect with resources to facilitate health and economic development.
- Assist local governments with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Provide technical assistance to the extent needed by the particular local government.

Vulnerability
- Loss of a major employer.
- Large segment of the workforce does not have education/capabilities to switch between jobs or industries.

Steady State Initiatives
- Develop target industry clusters to broaden the economic base of the region.
- Incorporate resiliency training (i.e., importance of learning new skills and ability to

switch between jobs and industries) into workforce training programs.
- Support existing businesses to help make sure they prosper.

Responsive Initiatives
- Support existing Rapid Response Teams to get employees of closed industries back to work. This could include assistance in finding new employment or retraining for employment in another sector.
- Establish Rapid Response Teams in counties where they do not currently exist.
- Market vacant industrial/commercial properties and the benefits of locating in the region to potential new employers.

Vulnerability
- Downturn in national and/or international economy.
- Economic downturn in key industries.

Steady State Initiatives
- Help develop a strong, varied regional economy with prospering businesses that can withstand and recover from a temporary downturn.
- Develop value chains for major industries that close gaps in supply chains and allow complementary industries and service based businesses to open in the region, helping to insulate the regional economy against national/international downturns.

Responsive Initiatives
- Provide support services to businesses affected by a downturn and help identify financial resources to keep them from closing if needed.

Vulnerability
- Declining population in rural counties.
- Brightest students leaving upon graduation.

Steady State Initiatives
- Provide the amenities desired by the millennial generation, such as active communities with walkable downtowns, entertainment options, greenways, parks, etc.
- Ensure that a variety of housing types are available, including apartments at affordable rental rates.
- Help develop a strong, varied regional economy, where there are employment opportunities for young adults upon graduation from college.
- Develop business incubator facilities throughout the region and support an entrepreneurial spirit that encourages young entrepreneurs to open businesses in their hometowns.
- Develop and support local young professionals collectives.
- Market local events and updates of interest to young people through social media.
- Involve college students in community projects prior to their graduation, as class projects or via hiring interns.

- Support Community College programs that train the workforce to business and local government needs in the region. Courses should meet the needs of local employers.
- Workforce development should be place-based, meeting the needs of local employers.
- Spread the word and encourage new businesses to contact ApprenticeshipNC to take advantage of new grant funding for apprenticeship programs. The Community College, the business, and the apprentice can all receive funding through the program.
- Continue and support efforts to reenergize RAMP East (Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline).

Responsive Initiatives
- Continue offering free tuition at Community Colleges as long as feasible.
- Continue workforce development staff presence at Community Colleges and market local careers to students.
- Host Career Fairs collaboratively with Rivers East Workforce Development Board, multiple local governments, and the private sector.
- Support and garner support for programs that encourage students to return to rural areas after graduating from college, such as student loan forgiveness programs.

Vulnerability
- Expanding social unrest and governmental separation.
- Widening gulf between rich and poor.

Steady State Initiatives
- Strive to include all stakeholders and work together to solve regional issues.
- Connect with low income stakeholders in their own communities through partnerships with local community leaders.
- Leadership that brings governmental parties together and encourages people to understand each other is vital.

Responsive Initiatives
- Support programs that assist low to moderate income workers, such as daycare assistance and affordable housing.
- Each individual must make an effort to respect and understand others who have opinions differing from their own.

Vulnerability
- Lack of economic opportunity for disadvantaged populations.
- Lack of education on financial literacy.

Steady State Initiatives
- Start students not going to college on Career Paths in High School.
    - Augment marketing and local High School collaboration on existing Career Paths.
    - Continue educating teachers on Career Paths.
    - Add additional Career Paths as feasible, as identified by community needs.

- o Garner support for additional funding to add NENC Career Pathways staff capacity.
- Continue outreach programs for dropout prevention.
- Ensure availability of affordable housing in safe neighborhoods.
- Educate students on building resumes and interview skills starting in High School.
- Educate students on financial literacy starting in High School.
- Continue workforce development partnerships with Community Colleges to reach students prior to graduation.
- Start financial literacy education in Middle School and continue into High School. Develop better formats to present financial literacy curriculums to students.
- Support educational field trips to get students out into the real world.

Responsive Initiatives
- Support daycare assistance for low to moderate income workers.
- Support smaller demographics and low income scholarship programs.
- Continue offering free tuition at Community Colleges as long as feasible.
- Support expanding qualification for the Federal Pell Grant program.
- Continue to provide free employment services through NC Works.
- Continue programs to bring NC Works services out into the community.
- Continue the NextGen program through NC Works and expand enrollment numbers through local partnerships.

Vulnerability
- Retirement in skilled trades and lack of skilled workers to replace retirees.

Steady State Initiatives
- Start students not going to college on Career Paths in High School.
    - o Augment marketing and local High School collaboration on existing Career Paths.
    - o Continue educating teachers on Career Paths.
    - o Add additional Career Paths as feasible.
    - o Garner support for additional funding to add NENC Career Pathways staff capacity.
- Educate High School students on the level of income that can be achieved through a career in skilled trades.
- Continue workforce development partnerships with Community Colleges to reach students prior to graduation.
- Work with Community Colleges to advertise training programs for in demand fields.
- Develop local "Trades Formers" or similar organizations in each county as feasible. Connect local collectives with NENC Career Pathways staff. Educate local collectives on existing Career Pathways.
- Track results of the "Rivers East Advanced Manufacturing Academy" program (funded for 6 months March – August 2022) and seek funding to continue program if successful.
- Augment Career Path outreach to adult learners.
- Augment Career Path outreach to the previously incarcerated community.

Responsive Initiatives
- Companies can start apprenticeship programs in anticipation of key personnel retiring. The most promising apprentices could receive paid Community College tuition to be certified in the trade and eventually replace the retiree.
  - Help connect companies with apprentices.
- Spread the word and encourage new businesses to contact ApprenticeshipNC to take advantage of new grant funding for apprenticeship programs. The Community College, the business, and the apprentice can all receive funding through the program.
- Continue to provide free employment services through NC Works.
- Continue programs to bring NC Works services out into the community.
- Educate students on well-paying careers in the region that don't require a lot of post-secondary education.
- Develop new local small business succession programs and support existing small business succession programs.

Vulnerability
- Criminal fairness system reform is needed.
- There is a lack of mental health support services and addiction recovery support services.

Steady State Initiatives
- Treat addiction and mental health disorders as diseases and ensure that proper treatment is given, not just a cycle of arrest and release.
- Criminal fairness reform is needed to focus on rehabilitation rather than just punishment. This would involve changes to policy at all levels of government and changes to the criminal fairness education system.

Responsive Initiatives
- Garner support for state and federal resources for mental health physicians and addiction treatment centers to get people the help they need without long waiting lists.
- Work with Universities to provide incentives for mental health professionals to locate in rural areas.
- Research the potential of developing a regional addiction recovery center by combining county awarded Opioid lawsuit funds.

Vulnerability
- Lack of education on workforce needs and retraining needs of certain sectors.

Steady State Initiatives
- Continue inventories of existing higher education, workforce and vocational training related to each industry and continue updating gap analyses to determine unmet needs.
- Educate employers on the workforce development services available to them and who to contact to enroll.
- Continue workforce development staff's reaching out to employers on an individual

basis.

Responsive Initiatives
- Establish a regional network for the communication of business workforce development needs. Include representatives from each industry, workforce development professionals, Community Colleges and Universities, economic development entities, etc. to determine short-term and long-term workforce development needs for each industry.
- Support development of industry specific Advisory Boards and connect Community Colleges with private sector participants.
- Continue offering Customized Training programs at the place of business through each Community College.
- Continue offering small business staff training (such as SERV Safe Certification) at the place of business through each Community College's Small Business Center.
- Continue offering On the Job training and Incumbent Worker Training programs through the Rivers East Workforce Development Board.

Vulnerability
- Lack of comprehensive, coherent immigration policy.

Steady State Initiatives
- Education on the importance of migrant workers to the agriculture and construction industries.
- Provide vocational training for migrant workers and market these services in partnership with community non-profit organizations.

Responsive Initiatives
- Garner support for immigration policy reform at the federal level. Develop a clear path for obtaining work visas and for citizenship

Vulnerability
- Youngest children are not reaching education milestones in many cases.
- The region's High School graduation rate is below the state average, even as the state average has recently surpassed the national average. The region's College graduation rate is significantly below the state and national average.

Steady State Initiatives
- Continue dropout prevention programs and other initiatives to improve the High School graduation rate, which is getting close to the state average.
- Continue the Career and College Promise program, where students can get college credits during High School free of charge.
- Get Phonics back into Elementary School education.

Responsive Initiatives

- Support existing tutoring programs and start tutoring programs in schools where they don't exist.
- Support and expand Head Start programs so that quality Pre-K education is available to all children.
- Support scholarship programs and grant programs that allow promising students to attend College.
- Continue offering free tuition at Community Colleges as long as feasible.
- Garner support for additional funding to catch-up students who fell behind on their reading level, math skills, etc. during the pandemic.

Vulnerability
- Automation, globalization and consolidation of industry.

Steady State Initiatives
- Include the most recent technological innovations in workforce training.
- Provide competitive incentives for businesses to headquarter in the region.
- Encourage employers to develop flexibility in the work environment and flexibility in work schedules to attract qualified employees (many employers switch to robotics because they can't hire).

Responsive Initiatives
- Retrain workers displaced by automation and/or consolidation of industry.
- Develop strategies and partnerships to identify and connect with displaced workers.
- Each industry must take the initiative to adapt to and profit from globalization.
- Garner support for state grants to be investment based rather than job based.
- Identify retraining and retooling needs of the workforce to provide robotic equipment maintenance.

Vulnerability
- Lack of shared vision for the region.

Steady State Initiatives
- Continue regional planning efforts such as the CEDS and Regional Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- Encourage every municipality and county to develop a Comprehensive Plan and combine these documents into a Regional Comprehensive Plan (includes integration of land use, hazard mitigation, transportation, housing, recreation, economic development and other planning efforts).

Responsive Initiatives
- Create a coalition of counties East of I-95 and brand the region for marketing purposes.
- Create a Regional Marketing Plan.
- Create a visual marketing piece that highlights the benefits of each community.
- Develop a regional newsletter. Share success stories and ideas for improving the region.

Vulnerability
- Lack of representation in State Legislature.
- The formula for state investment favors urban areas.

Steady State Initiatives
- Start a supporting efforts collective for the region that will garner support for rural needs in Raleigh.

Responsive Initiatives
- Examine state investment formulas and garner support for appropriate changes to benefit rural areas.
- Garner support for Legislative representation based on area instead of population, or for a certain number of Representatives from each county/district.

Vulnerability
- Lack of broadband infrastructure in many rural areas of the region.
- Lack of sewer service in many rural and small town areas of the region.
- Lack of natural gas service in a majority of the region.

Steady State Initiatives
- Plan for the prioritized expansion of broadband infrastructure to the last mile in rural areas.
- Plan for the prioritized expansion of sewer service and natural gas service. Plan for development into the future in addition to serving existing Industrial Parks.
- Develop a study of renewable energy across the region.
- Take advantage of existing grant programs through the NC State Broadband Office.

Responsive Initiatives

- Establish mobile broadband solutions to serve low income communities in the interim until broadband infrastructure is developed.
- Provide support to local government infrastructure grant applications.
- Create local government partnerships for regional grant applications as feasible.
- Garner support for local input to be a true driving factor in the selection of firms to deliver on grant funded infrastructure projects.
- Develop a Regional Broadband Taskforce to plan for and apply for grants to fund broadband infrastructure in the region.

Diversification of the regional economy is a key goal in planning for economic resiliency. Determining what existing clusters form the economic base of the Region is the first step in planning for additional target sectors, as well as planning for value chains for existing clusters and the targeting of complementary businesses. The following section outlines a cluster analysis conducted for each county and the region.

Cluster Analysis

This cluster analysis was developed in partnership with each county's Economic Developer and the Rivers East Workforce Development Board.

Beaufort County

Beaufort County is well represented in all three areas classified as primary economic drivers. Mining, agriculture and manufacturing all employ a large number of people and generate a tremendous amount of income. Additional sectors include aquaculture and commercial fishing.

Opportunities exist in all sectors of advanced manufacturing and general manufacturing. Beaufort County Economic Development has identified existing manufacturing clusters of boat building, air filtration, and metalworking.

The healthcare sector will continue to grow in Beaufort County as it will across the region. The county will support initiatives by the NC Dept. of Commerce, the Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC) and other partnerships that will drive business to Beaufort County and will improve opportunities for its citizens.

Bertie County

In Bertie County, the Perdue Farms Facility – a poultry processor located in Lewiston-Woodville is the largest employer within the county and is the largest driving economic force. The Bertie County Correctional Facility is also a major employer. The County's Economic Development Commission is interested in continuing to recruit support services for this major complex.

The next highest employment sectors are healthcare and education, as is the case for much of the state. Agriculture continues to employ many people in Bertie County. There are also many small businesses in the county and entrepreneurship has been increasing in recent years.

The Economic Development Commission is focusing on tourism and on all types of manufacturing. Existing manufacturing clusters include food, value added agriculture and agricultural biotechnology. The county is already home to Mane Ingredients USA, Inc., which is a bio-mass extraction company. The county is also home to Darling (formerly Valley Protein), a rendering company which takes excess product from the Perdue Facility and turns it into a protein to be put in animal feed.

Possible cluster opportunities for Bertie County include alternative energy (bio-mass and solar), marine trades, food production and distribution, automotive, and tourism, including but not limited to, adventure tourism and the Lost Colony.

The Economic Development Commission has been heavily involved in marketing the county for travel and tourism in recent years. Bertie County purchased 147 acres of land on the Albemarle Sound, referred to as the "Tall Glass of Water" project. The site was developed as the "Bertie Beach" and serves as an amenity for both residents and visitors to the county including a public beach/swimming area, a science education center, hiking trails, and

camping opportunities. There are plans to add additional hiking trails. The Economic Development Commission is partnering with municipalities in the county to create a tourism trail which makes visitors to Bertie Beach aware of opportunities across the county, such as local foods, restaurants, and retail experiences. The film industry is growing in Bertie County and the county is working with a non-profit organization that has a bold vision to build a film ecosystem in northeastern NC.

Bertie County also recognizes the potential for waterfront and retirement residential development. A company has recently purchased the old Scotch Hall site and is doing a complete revitalization of the golf course and building spec homes, along with a new restaurant and community center.

Hertford County

Hertford County's location along the North Carolina and Virginia border offers direct business and employment ties to the Richmond and Hampton Roads area, which includes military and shipyards located there. The Hertford County Economic Development Department indicates that steel and other metal fabrication, metal recycling, agriculture and forestry are also major business clusters for them. Nucor Steel is a major economic force in the county and many subsidiary businesses exist due to their presence.

Alternative energy, specifically solar and biomass, have been growing clusters. It is worth noting that large scale solar developments are now subject to new county ordinances, which may limit the growth of this cluster in the future.

Hertford County is identified as a multi-county mini hub for healthcare and retail shopping. Hertford County is dominated by the healthcare sector. Another top sector is small business, which represent 84% of the businesses in the county. Hertford County also recognizes the potential for waterfront and retirement residential development.

Martin County

The current cluster areas for Martin County are wood and pulp processing, food processing, value added agriculture, green energy, chemicals and plastics, and advanced manufacturing. Martin County is also positioned as a regional hub for retail business and tourism, because of its location at the intersection of future Interstate-87 and US-13/US-17.

Domtar has the largest manufacturing footprint in Martin County, followed by Flagstone Foods, which is the largest private employer in the county. The county owns a rail-served industrial park in Everetts, which was rebranded in 2019 as the NC Rail and Commerce Park.

The Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center is the largest equine facility in Eastern North Carolina, containing 456 permanent stalls. It hosts equine events from the Mid-Atlantic and Southern states, adding to Martin County's tourism economy. Martin Community College has the only equine program in the eastern part of the state, further contributing to the equine niche in the county. The community college is planning on adding other unique programs in the future, such as forestry.

Pitt County

The Pitt County Economic Development Department has identified its high growth industry sectors as life sciences, specifically biopharmaceuticals and medical devices, along with the downstream supportive industries. The county leadership has worked for many years with multiple partners to position Pitt County as a leader in biopharma and related industries in North Carolina.

Assets include East Carolina University, ECU Brody School of Medicine, ECU School of Dental Medicine, ECU Department of Engineering, ECU Health (formerly Vidant Health), Pitt Community College and its BioWork program, the NC Community College System's BioNetwork Center, the Technology Enterprise Center of Eastern Carolina, home of the NC Pharmaceutical Services Network, and Pitt County Schools' Health Sciences Academy. Also notable is the opening of the ECU Life Sciences Building in November 2021, which will be the home of the Golden Leaf funded Eastern Region Pharma Center.

Key support partners include the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, ECU's Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), ECU's Division of Research, Economic Development and Engagement (REDE), Thermo Fisher Scientific, Mayne Pharma, CMP Pharma, Xtant Medical, and DR Burton. Thermo Fisher Scientific expanded in December, 2020 ($500 million, 500 jobs) and September 2021 ($154 million and 290 jobs).

The largest sector in Pitt County is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 15,646 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Educational Services (13,622 workers) and Retail Trade (9,912).

The industry cluster in Pitt County, North Carolina with the highest relative concentration is Pharmaceuticals with a location quotient of 12.13. This cluster employs 2,116 workers in the region with an average wage of $67,561. Employment in the Pharmaceutical cluster is projected to expand in the region about 0.5% per year over the next ten years. Pitt County continues to be a regional leader in the healthcare, education, and retail sectors.
As of 2020, total GDP in Pitt County was $8,669,380,000. Of all the sectors in Pitt County, Manufacturing contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2020, ($2,111,384,000) The next-largest contributions came from Educational Services ($1,367,141,000); and Health Care and Social Assistance ($1,336,364,000). Renewable energy product manufacturing (primarily solar related products) is a growing industry in Pitt County.

Mid-East Region

Healthcare/social assistance, education, and manufacturing dominate the regional economy. The Rivers East Workforce Development Board has identified healthcare and biotechnology as two growth sectors for the region. This combines two of the region's top current employment sectors.

Many of the regional assets for biotechnology are centered in Pitt County. However, there are five hospitals and many primary physicians throughout the region that can participate in clinical trials. Mane Ingredients USA, Inc. is a bio-mass facility located in Bertie County. Nutrien-Aurora, Weyerhaeuser, and Perdue are also national leaders in agricultural

biotechnology. Each of these has major processing facilities that are located in the region, yet they are located outside of Pitt County.

Educational opportunities related to biotechnology are spreading throughout the region. East Carolina University and the Community College system throughout the region are leading the way with educational programs designed to prepare individuals for work in biotechnology and related fields. All of the region's Community Colleges are in a biotechnology consortium. Additionally, training for this area is filtering down to the High School level.
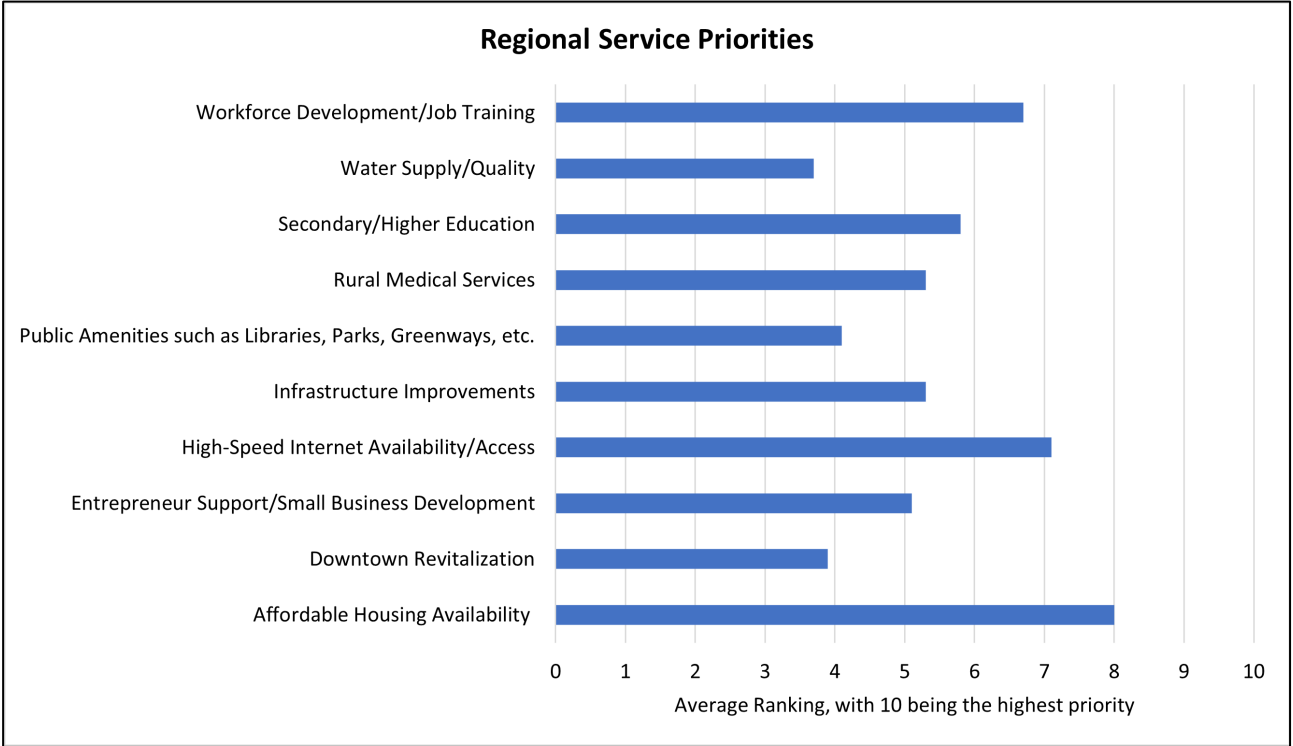
The region has a broad base of industries in the manufacturing sector that includes heavy process to light manufacturing.

Large public sector employers throughout the region include East Carolina University, ECU Health, each of the Community Colleges and each County Board of Education.

Existing clusters for the region include advanced manufacturing, biopharmaceuticals, boat building/marine trades, chemical processing, life sciences, local education and training providers, local government services, logistics, plastics, production technology and heavy machinery, small business, tourism, and value-added agriculture.

Regional Service Priorities

Members of the CEDS Advisory Committee and attendees at public input meetings were asked to rank the following regional service priorities on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest priority. They were asked to use each number only once. The following graph represents the mean average of their responses. In addition to availability of funding, the responses provide guidance for staff on which CEDS goals and objectives to focus on first.

Regional Service Priorities

Category	Average Ranking
Workforce Development/Job Training	~6.7
Water Supply/Quality	~3.7
Secondary/Higher Education	~5.8
Rural Medical Services	~5.3
Public Amenities such as Libraries, Parks, Greenways, etc.	~4.1
Infrastructure Improvements	~5.3
High-Speed Internet Availability/Access	~7.1
Entrepreneur Support/Small Business Development	~5.1
Downtown Revitalization	~3.9
Affordable Housing Availability	~8.0

Average Ranking, with 10 being the highest priority

Goals and Objectives

NC Tomorrow	BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE
Goal 1	**Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.**
Objective 1	**Continue making regular updates to regional and local cluster analyses and identify clusters that offer competitive advantages.**
Implementation Actions	• Begin with existing plans that have been developed already in other counties and by regional or • Begin with existing plans that have been developed at the local level and by regional organizations. • Collect and compare any existing cluster analysis reports. • Develop a cluster analysis for each county and a regional cluster analysis. • Update the cluster analyses regularly. • Identify competitive advantages the region has to offer. Interview key economic development professionals, private companies and developers about what they consider makes them competitive. • Repeat the process every 2-3 years.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Rivers East Workforce Development Board
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• $2,500 per update
Potential Funding Sources	• EDA CEDS Planning Funds
Performance Measures	• Development of updated cluster analysis every 2-3 years. • Identification of additional clusters that offer competitive advantages updated every 2-3 years.

NC Tomorrow	BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE
Goal 1	Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.
Objective 2	Use the cluster analysis to target existing businesses and start-ups and market the benefits of locating in the region.
Implementation Actions	- Market the region as entrepreneurial friendly to attract start-up businesses. - Advertise in industry and entrepreneurial magazines and journals. - Advertise online on related websites and via social media. - Continue assisting new and expanding businesses in applying for and administering state grants. - Look into the Certified Entrepreneurial Community program. - Keep a database showing all local tax incentives and other local incentives for new businesses and existing businesses looking to expand updated on a regular basis and share with partner organizations. Keep this information on an easy to access and update website. - Offer competitive incentives for new employers to locate in the region. - Research incentives in surrounding areas. Identify any additional incentives that can be implemented to make the region more competitive. - Keep a database of grant programs, tax credits, etc. for business owners updated on a regular basis and share with partner organizations. Keep this information on an easy to access and update website. - Create a regional database that shows available industrial and commercial buildings. - In addition to marketing on local databases, utilize NC East Alliance's existing regional available property database.

	• Create a targeted mailing package that shows a visual marketing image, other information that highlights quality of life, the cluster analysis, the incentives available, grant programs and appropriate available buildings. • Research businesses in target clusters that may be interested in expanding and mail them the package. • Follow up on targeted mailings with phone calls. Offer to give a tour of the region or a specific building/location. • Synthesize individual business marketing efforts into a coherent regional marketing campaign.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• NC East Alliance • Local Governments
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• $200,000
Potential Funding Sources	• EDA • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • Local Governments
Performance Measures	• Creation of marketing materials • Development of online databases • Number of advertisements • Number of targeted mailings • Number of tours given as a result of targeted mailings/advertisements • Number of new businesses opened as a result of targeted mailings/advertisements • Number of jobs created as a result of targeted mailings/advertisements

NC Tomorrow	**BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE**
Goal 1	**Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.**
Objective 3	**Engage partner organizations to regularly update the Mid-East Region CEDS Implementation Plan (the most recent edition being the 2020 Regional Collaborative Strategic Plan).**
Implementation Actions	• Include action steps, organization responsible, and timeline within the CEDS Implementation Plan. • Compare existing plans from the NC East Alliance, other Regional Economic Development Plans, and any local Economic Development Plans. • Meet with industry leaders. • Utilize CEDS to use identified strengths and opportunities. • Survey/input from successful manufacturers with our target clusters. • Have regular meetings to discuss progress on implementation. • Update the plan every five years. • Review performance measures annually. • Conduct local and regional asset mapping. • Update the catalog of partner organization activities and make recommendations for how efforts can be combined to be more impactful.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Rivers East Workforce Development Board
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Broadband Providers • Chambers of Commerce • Committees of 100 • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • County Health Departments • Downtown Organizations/Main Street Programs • EDPNC • Electric Providers • Environmental Organizations

	- Food Banks/Pantries - Homeless Shelters/Soup Kitchens - Hospitals - Housing Organizations - Institutes of Higher Education - K-12 education providers - Law Enforcement Organizations - Local Governments - MPOs and RPOs - Natural Gas Providers - NCDOT - Partnerships for Children - Private Industry - Recreation Departments/Organizations - Social Service Departments - Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus - Vocational Training Providers - Wastewater Providers - Water Providers
Planning Level Cost Estimates	- $20,000
Potential Funding Sources	- EDA - Golden Leaf - NC Works Local Innovation Fund
Performance Measures	- CEDS Implementation Plan is updated every five years.

NC Tomorrow	BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE
Goal 1	**Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.**
Objective 4	**Conduct an analysis that identifies the existing and potential improved place brand for the region.**
Implementation Actions	- Explore the possibility of partnering with other regions east of I-95. - Create a brand for the Mid-East Region and/or Eastern NC Region. - Research potential funding opportunities including grant options such as Golden Leaf. - Use information gathered from Tourism Authorities and community leaders during the Regional Collaborative Strategic Plan process to help identify the current perceived place brand. - Work with partner organizations to scope an RFQ that can go out to potential "branding" companies. - Develop a selection committee and a list of interview questions for companies responding to the RFQ. - Set specific action items with deliverable dates. - Develop a logo based on the branding campaign for marketing purposes. - Consider the use of an intern to assist with marketing efforts. - Map community and historic assets across the region. - Build off existing place making campaigns in counties and communities across the region. - Utilize the film industry to assist with place making campaigns.
Lead Agency(s)	Mid-East Commission
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- Chambers of Commerce - Community Organizations - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Institutes of Higher Education - Local Governments - NC East Alliance - Private Industry - Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus
Planning Level Cost Estimate	$50,000

Potential Funding Sources	• EDA • Golden Leaf • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • Local Governments • Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus
Performance Measures	• Identification of a place brand for the Mid-East Region and/or Eastern NC. • Development of a logo based on the place brand. • Map of community and historic assets. • Number of marketing films.

NC Tomorrow	BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE
Goal 1	**Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.**
Objective 5	**Develop and implement a Regional Marketing Plan.**
Implementation Actions	- Identify funding mechanisms. - Hire a qualified private advertising/marketing agency to develop the Regional Marketing Plan. - All partners work with the consultant to develop the Regional Marketing Plan. - Determine target markets. - Ensure that the Regional Marketing Plan includes detailed action steps, responsible organizations and timelines. - Have regular meetings to discuss progress on implementation. - Update the plan every five years. - Review performance measures annually. - Use local Marketing Plans as samples to guide the Regional Marketing Plan. - Utilize the film industry as a marketing technique.
Lead Agency(s)	Mid-East Commission
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- Chambers of Commerce - Community Organizations - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Institutes of Higher Education - Local Governments - NC East Alliance - Private Industry (representing key clusters) - Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus
Planning Level Cost Estimate	$100,000
Potential Funding Sources	- EDA - Golden Leaf - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Local Governments - Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus

| **Performance Measures** | • Creation of a Regional Marketing Plan. |

NC Tomorrow	BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE
Goal 1	**Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.**
Objective 6	**Create a marketing image that reflects the quality of life and unique assets of each area, such as water resources, peanuts, glassworks, historic and community sites, sports arenas, campgrounds, etc.**
Implementation Actions	- Identify funding mechanisms. - Hire a professional design firm to create the marketing image. - Have the firm use research that was done for the branding campaign and Regional Marketing Plan when creating the marketing image. - Consider the use of an intern to assist with marketing efforts. ECU's Graphic Design Dept. is a potential for the marketing image. - Consider the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist with the marketing image.
Lead Agency(s)	Mid-East Commission
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- Chambers of Commerce - Community Organizations - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Institutes of Higher Education - Local Governments - NC East Alliance - Private Industry - Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus
Planning Level Cost Estimate	$50,000
Potential Funding Sources	- EDA - Golden Leaf - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Local Governments

	• Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus
Performance Measures	• Creation of a regional marketing image.

NC Tomorrow	BUILD ON EACH REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEVERAGE THE MARKETPLACE
Goal 1	Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy, and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.
Objective 7	Assist businesses with the development of new adaptive capabilities.
Implementation Actions	• Continually identify attainable, new, adaptive capabilities for the region. • Provide workforce training programs that emphasize the most recent technologies. Incorporate the newest technologies into workforce training programs in partnership with Universities and Community Colleges. • Educate companies on the importance of adaptive capabilities. Instead of being good at one thing, each company must be good at learning how to do new things. • Identify successes that we can support and share. • Assist businesses with developing strategies to read signals and pivot or quickly adapt when change within their sector or in the overall economy occurs. • Train businesses on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
Lead Agency(s)	• Rivers East Workforce Development Board • Mid-East Commission
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Chambers of Commerce • Community Colleges • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • EDPNC • Local Governments • NC East Alliance • Private Industry • Small Business Centers • SBTDC
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on cost of incorporated technology.

Potential Funding Sources	• Community Colleges • EDA • Golden Leaf • NC Works Local Innovation Grant • Rivers East Workforce Development Board • SBTDC
Performance Measures	• Number of new technologies incorporated into workforce training programs. • Development of training materials for businesses. • Number of employees learning about new technology through workforce training. • Number of companies receiving training on adaptive capabilities. • Number of companies working adaptive capabilities into their business strategy. • Development of a training program for Artificial Intelligence (AI).

NC Tomorrow	ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Goal 2	**Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.**
Objective 1	**Develop multi-modal transportation plans that address existing and future year capacity deficiencies and implement multi-modal transportation projects across the region. (Multi-modal transportation includes all modes of transportation and their connections to each other.)**
Implementation Actions	- Consider the most up-to-date transportation data available from development commissions, county and municipal governments, and NCDOT when making land use decisions and conducting long-range planning processes. - Facilitate timely updates of Comprehensive Transportation Plans. - Ensure that Comprehensive Transportation Plans are truly multi-modal, including airport, bicycle and pedestrian, ferry/water transport, highway, public transit, and rail; and their connections to each other. - Consider adding non-traditional multi-modal forms of transportation to Comprehensive Transportation Plans based on local interest and needs, such as horses/horse trails, scooter based transportation, etc. - Garner support for removal or reduction of NCDOT's local match requirements for Tier 1 Counties (currently 10% for public transit projects, 5% for bicycle and pedestrian projects). - Garner support for a reduction of the weight on congestion in NC DOT's State Transportation Improvement (STI) highway funding formula. - Encourage local government participation in their MPO or RPO. - Educate local governments on how MPOs and RPOs function and on how NCDOT project funding works. - Develop a list of existing bicycle and pedestrian plans in the region and identify additional local needs. - Continue developing local bicycle and pedestrian plans. - Garner support for the completion of designated

	Future Interstates.
	• Create a Regional Greenway Plan and associated Greenway Feasibility Studies to facilitate development of an interconnected greenway system across the region which ties into the East Coast Greenway system and the NC Great State Trails Plan. NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant and State Planning and Research Grant could potentially provide funding for the plan and feasibility studies. • Develop regional partnerships to secure funding for larger transportation projects with regional impact, such as discretionary grants available through USDOT (currently RAISE Grant, formerly BUILD Grant and TIGER Grant). • Assist businesses with securing available grant funding for rail spurs to their locations. • Research the potential of Micro-Transit/Mobility-on-Demand (MOD) as a solution to improve rural on-demand public transit services in the region. • RPOs and MPOs continue general project and meeting facilitation tasks and acting as a liaison between local governments and NCDOT. • RPOs and MPOs strive to coordinate within all modes of transportation and submit multi-modal projects for NCDOT funding through the prioritization process. • Develop needed designs for road upgrade projects. • Support paddle trails such as the Blackbeard Trail, Blue Corridor, Mountains to Coast Paddle Trail, Roanoke River Partners Paddle Trail, and Sound Rivers Paddle Trail to support the "Blue Economy".
Lead Agency(s)	• Greenville MPO • Mid-East RPO • Peanut Belt RPO
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• NCDOT • Local Governments • Airports • Bicycle and Pedestrian Support Collectives/Organizations • Ferry System • Public Transit Providers • Rail System
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on project.
Potential Funding Sources	• MPOs/RPOs • NC DOT • US DOT • Local governments funds for smaller projects/local matches • Various community grants for smaller projects

Performance Measures	• All County Comprehensive Transportation Plans undergo a major update every 5-10 years, including meaningful input from all stakeholders. • Comprehensive Transportation Plans include all modes of transportation and their interconnections. • Number of new transportation projects in each mode. • Research on Micro-Transit/Mobility-on-Demand (MOD) and analysis of how it could be utilized to improve rural-on-demand public transit in the region completed. • Number of local government meetings and other educational events to educate on how MPOs and RPOs function and on how NCDOT project funding works. • Number of new feasibility studies and engineering/design projects in each mode.

NC Tomorrow	ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Goal 2	**Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.**
Objective 2	**Plan for and expand broadband infrastructure to all areas of the region, including the "last mile" in rural areas until all households, businesses and organizations are served.**
Implementation Actions	- Create a plan for the expansion of broadband infrastructure in the region. - Develop a Regional Broadband Taskforce to guide development and implementation of the plan. - Facilitate relationship building between local communities, broadband providers and funding agencies. - Apply for available grants through the FCC and NC Broadband Office to get projects implemented, such as the GREAT grant and the CAB grant. - Develop and implement a Mid-East Region Digital Improvement Plan. - Continue programs to assist seniors with digital skills and expand programs to reach additional audiences.
Lead Agency(s)	- Mid-East Commission - Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- Broadband companies - NC Broadband Office - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - EDPNC - NC East Alliance - Community Organizations
Planning Level Cost Estimate	$250,000
Potential Funding Sources	- EDA - Golden Leaf - Federation Communication Commission (FCC) - NC Broadband Office
Performance Measures	- Development of regional Broadband Plan - Development of regional Broadband Taskforce - Number of broadband grant applications - Number of broadband projects - Development of regional Digital Improvement Plan - Number of events to educate people on digital skills.

NC Tomorrow	ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Goal 2	**Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.**
Objective 3	**Research the current housing stock, identify additional needs and develop and implement a plan for the availability of a variety of housing options.**
Implementation Actions	- Encourage local governments to make workforce housing and a variety of housing options, including apartments, a priority in their Comprehensive Plans, Land Use Plans, Subdivision Ordinances, Zoning Ordinances and other development ordinances. - Develop and implement a Mid-East Region Housing Plan which focuses on providing a variety of housing options for people of all income levels and lifestyle preferences. - Use local plans as samples to guide the Mid-East Region Housing Plan. - Support local and regional Housing Task Forces and other housing collectives. The Regional Cooperative on Housing is a regional example. - Create a regional collective to address and support workforce housing. - Create and maintain a database of funding sources for workforce housing projects. - Partner with private developers on low to moderate income (LMI) housing projects by assisting with grant applications and administration. - Garner support for the revision and modification of LMI tax credits to better serve Tier 1 and rural areas. - Garner support for LMI development jobs to go to local contractors first. - Prioritize development of teacher and government employee housing. - Prioritize development of housing for agricultural workers. - Reuse existing vacant buildings that can be redeveloped into housing/apartment complexes. - Encourage mixed use housing and commercial in appropriate areas, i.e. retail downstairs with upper story apartments. - Maintain a database of tax credits for energy

		efficiency, weatherization, etc. to assist developers and property owners.
		• Continue the Senior Housing and Home Improvement Program through the Area Agency on Aging.
		• Continue the Community Crossroads Program to provide homeless services.
		• Continue administering the Essential Single Family Residential Loan Pool.
		• Continue managing the MEDC residential properties (three total).
Lead Agency(s)		• Mid-East Commission • Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships		• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • Housing Authorities • Local governments • NC Housing Finance Agency • USDA-Rural Development • Local affordable housing organizations
Planning Level Cost Estimate		• $150,000
Potential Funding Sources		• CDBG • Golden Leaf • HUD • NC Housing Finance Agency • USDA-Rural Development
Performance Measures		• Creation or participation in a regional workforce housing collective • Number of new apartments buildings in areas with a need • Number of new grant applications • Number of new workforce housing projects • Number of plans and ordinances updated to allow more housing choices • Development of a regional Housing Plan • Number of vacant buildings redeveloped for housing • Number of new upper story apartments/mixed use developments • Database of tax credits • Number of people served through Senior Housing and Home Improvement program • Number of people served through the Community Crossroads program. • Number of people served through the Essential Single Family Residential Loan Pool.

NC Tomorrow	ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Goal 2	**Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.**
Objective 4	**Map critical assets across the region.**
Implementation Actions	• Develop a list of local government utility systems that need database upgrades. • Assist local governments with grant applications to have databases upgraded, such as the Asset and Inventory Assessment (AIA) Grant available through NCDEQ for water and wastewater systems and the 205(j) Grant available through NCDEQ for stormwater systems. • Upgrade local utility systems to digital mapping databases, including electric, natural gas, water, wastewater and stormwater. • Utilize the FINMAN-T transportation asset database to conduct transportation asset mapping. • Build off the existing data from the NC Broadband Office and conduct asset mapping of broadband infrastructure across the region to the detail needed to identify unserved areas. • Map workforce housing, education, food, healthcare and other critical assets across the region.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• EPA • NC DEQ
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• $20,000 - $150,000 depending on what type of system and the size of the system
Potential Funding Sources	• NC DEQ Asset and Inventory Assessment Grant (AIA) • NC DEQ 205(j) Grant (for stormwater systems only)
Performance Measures	• Number of new grant applications • Number of local utility systems upgraded to digital mapping databases (electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, stormwater). • Transportation asset mapping completed • Broadband mapping completed • Mapping of other critical assets (workforce housing, education, food, healthcare, etc.)

NC Tomorrow	ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Goal 2	Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.
Objective 5	Expand sewer and natural gas infrastructure to existing and anticipated future industrial areas.
Implementation Actions	• Develop a list of existing industrial areas which lack sewer and/or natural gas access. • Work with economic development professionals and local governments to anticipate future industrial areas. Include major transportation corridors and other areas of local significance. • Identify potential grant programs and other funding mechanisms to expand sewer and natural gas infrastructure to identified areas. • Consider regional partnerships where appropriate.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Natural Gas Providers • EDPNC • NC East Alliance
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	• EDA • EDPNC Utility Account • Golden Leaf • NC Dept. of Commerce • USDA- Rural Utility Service
Performance Measures	• List of existing industrial areas standing and identification of future industrial areas. • Number of new grant applications • Number of new sewer and natural gas projects.

NC Tomorrow	**ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A ROBUST REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**
Goal 2	**Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.**
Objective 6	**Expand potable water infrastructure and wastewater infrastructure across the region.**
Implementation Actions	- Develop a map of existing areas which require expansion of water infrastructure and wastewater infrastructure, i.e. areas currently only served by private wells and septic tanks. - Identify and apply for grant programs and other funding mechanisms to expand water and wastewater infrastructure to identified areas. - Identify potential grant and low interest loan programs to assist low-income homeowners with upgrading septic systems in areas where sewer service is not feasible. Assist property owners with applications or refer to an organization already administering these programs. - Educate the public on proper septic and well maintenance. - Educate the public on the water quality dangers associated with unmaintained and failing septic systems. - Consider regional partnerships where appropriate. - Conduct regionalization studies for water and wastewater where appropriate. - Conduct water and wastewater asset and inventory assessments for systems across the region and identify repair and upgrade needs. - Identify and apply for grant programs to make needed water and wastewater system repairs and upgrades. - Develop guidance on available potable water sources and tapping into those sources. - Continue hosting educational events such as the Mid-East Region Water Summit.
Lead Agency(s)	- Mid-East Commission - Local Governments

Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • EDPNC • NC East Alliance • Utility Companies • NC DEQ • EPA • Southeast Rural Community Assistance Program (SERCAP)
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	• EDA • EPA • EDPNC Utility Account • Golden Leaf • NC Dept. of Commerce • NC DEQ • USDA- Rural Utility Service
Performance Measures	• Map of existing areas which require expansion of water infrastructure and wastewater infrastructure. • Number of new areas served with public water and wastewater service. • Water and wastewater funding database. • Number of homeowners assisted with or referred to programs for septic and well maintenance. • Number of public educational events or campaigns on septic and well maintenance. • Number of regionalization studies. • Number of completed water or wastewater regionalization projects. • Number of asset and inventory assessments completed. • Guidance documents/resources on available potable water sources and tapping into those sources. • Number of educational events such as the Mid-East Region Water Summit. • Number of new grant applications for water and wastewater system repairs, upgrades, and expansions. • Number of new water and wastewater projects.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 1	**Support environmentally sustainable development patterns.**
Implementation Actions	- Identify existing models of success. - Engage and educate architects, engineers, developers, and the general public within the region. - Conduct a survey following a public education campaign to determine demand for sustainable developments such as conservation subdivisions. - Educate developers on local demand and data showing that conservation subdivisions and similar developments bring higher profits. - Clean-up contaminated properties in the region. Apply for Brownfield Grants to clean up contaminated properties. - Share success stories of reused former brownfield properties. - Provide and share information regarding appropriate methods to support environmentally sustainable development patterns. - Encourage local governments to allow for environmentally sustainable developments such as conservation subdivisions, tiny home communities, planned unit developments, etc. within their development ordinances, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances. - Encourage local governments to provide incentives for environmentally sustainable development where feasible. - Offer local governments ordinance review and rewrite services to incorporate environmentally sustainable development patterns (setbacks, sprawl reduction, low impact development, reduction of impervious surfaces, surface water protection, etc.) - Educate the public on what they can do to make their properties more environmentally sustainable, i.e., stormwater education, septic maintenance education, use of fertilizers and other chemicals, creating rain gardens and wildlife gardens, etc. - Support use of the NC Green Growth Toolbox to local

	governments.
	• Develop partnerships with organizations such as US Fish and Wildlife, NC Wildlife Resource Commission, NC DEQ, and County Soil and Water Conservation districts to gather educational materials and host educational events.
	• Continue hosting educational events such as the Mid-East Region Water Summit.
	• Provide developer and property owner education on low impact development practices.
	• Provide developer and property owner education on living shorelines as an environmentally friendly option to control shoreline erosion.
	• Provide developer and property owner education on the importance of buffers adjacent to rivers and streams.
	• Identify appropriate projects and apply for grants to fund low impact development demonstration sites in public areas such as schools and parks.
	• Identify appropriate projects and apply for grants to fund living shorelines at waterfront public access sites.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program • Architecture and engineering design firms • College of Design (NCSU) • Community Organizations • Developers • East Carolina University • Environmental Engineers (NCSU) • Local Governments • NC Coastal Federation • NC DEQ • NC Wildlife Resources Commission • Private developers • Sound Rivers • County Soil and Water Conservation Districts • US Fish and Wildlife
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• $100,000
Potential Funding Sources	• Golden Leaf • NC Brownfield Program • NC DEQ • NC Sea Grant • NC Coastal Federation • Various community grants could be used to fund public education campaign

Performance Measures	• Creation and/or gathering of existing materials for an architect, engineer, developer, general public education campaign on environmentally sustainable development patterns and their benefits.
	• Number of in-person and virtual workshops held as part of the general public education campaign and number of people in attendance.
	• Online materials available as part of the general public education campaign.
	• Number of public places that physical public education materials such as brochures are available for the general public education campaign.
	• Number of ordinance changes and new incentives to encourage environmentally sustainable development.
	• Development of economic education materials for developers.
	• Number of in-person and virtual workshops held as part of developer economic education campaign and number of people in attendance.
	• Online materials available as part of developer economic education campaign.
	• Creation and/or gathering of existing materials for homeowner/property owner education.
	• Number of in-person and virtual workshops held as part of homeowner/property owner education campaign and number of people in attendance.
	• Online materials available as part of homeowner/property owner education campaign.
	• Number of public places that physical education materials such as brochures are available for the homeowner/property owner education campaign.
	• Number of success stories shared.
	• Number of new low impact development projects in public areas.
	• Number of new living shoreline projects in public areas.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.
Objective 2	Plan for and accelerate investments in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods and ensure that insufficiently catered to and distressed communities are engaged in the planning process.
Implementation Actions	- Review current plans and identifying additional planning needs. - Identify funding sources and apply for grants to implement projects. - Educate communities on the planning process and the importance of being involved. Conduct outreach to insufficiently catered to and distressed communities through partnerships with local community, neighborhood, and faith-based leaders. - When developing any new plans, meet people in their own communities to engage them in the planning process. - Develop local plans for the demolition of blighted residential structures. Include strategies to adaptively reuse or sell properties that may become owned by local governments after demolition. - Garner support for funding assistance to local governments for removal of blighted residential structures. - Hold regular meetings to assess progress made towards implementation. - Use the designations of Persistent Poverty County, Tier 1 County, Economically Disadvantaged Rural Community, etc. to secure additional community grant funding in eligible areas of the region. Research the availability of grant funding for counties with these designations and assist with applications. - Offer local governments assistance with code enforcement services or technical assistance/resources for local governments to conduct code enforcement in house. - Participate in partnerships such as the USDA Rural Partners Network. - Assist with capacity building in local communities. - Host regional events to share ideas and successes. - RPOs continue working with local governments on bicycle and pedestrian project identification. - Search for grant funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects outside of the normal NCDOT funding prioritization process.

Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Local Law Enforcement • NC Dept. of Commerce • Community Colleges • East Carolina University • Community and Neighborhood Organizations • Faith Based Organizations • K-12 School System • NCDOT • USDA
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• $25,000
Potential Funding Sources	• EDA • Golden Leaf • NCDOT • Southeast Crescent • Various community grants
Performance Measures	• Identification of additional planning needs and potential projects. • Number of grant applications. • Number of implementation meetings. • Number of public education/outreach events conducted within communities. • Number of local governments assisted with code enforcement activities. • Participation in regional collectives such as the USDA Rural Partners Network. • Number of demolished blighted structures. • Number of local bicycle and pedestrian projects.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 3	**Plan for and implement the restoration and preservation of urban and town centers.**
Implementation Actions	- Educate the public on tax credits available for restoration of historic properties. - Partner with the NC State Historic Preservation Office and local historic non-profit organizations to provide educational materials to the public on proper restoration and preservation of historic properties. - Review existing local downtown plans and interview community leaders to identify strengths and weaknesses. Conduct a needs assessment of all urban and town centers in the region. - Identify and share local success stories. - Create a database of available commercial properties in urban and town centers and participate in NC East Alliance's regional commercial property database. - Garner support for funding for removal of blight in downtown areas. - Encourage local incentives and public-private partnerships for historic building rehabilitation. - Continue to assist local governments in administering grants for historic property rehabilitation. - Support downtown areas through historic and community walking tours, festivals, small business events, etc. - Market downtown areas as great places to live, work and play. - Encourage mixed-use zoning in downtown areas. - Incorporate public art and pocket parks in downtown areas. - Slow traffic and maintain pedestrian infrastructure in downtown areas. - Widen sidewalks to allow sidewalk cafes where possible. - Provide technical assistance to local governments on development of local Historic Districts and associated ordinances. - Provide technical assistance to local governments for participation in the NC Dept. of Commerce's Main Street program.

- Garner support for revisions to the NC Dept. of Commerce's Main Street Program to allow small towns with downtown areas to participate, i.e. reduced requirements to not require full time staffing, bringing back Small Town Main Street program, etc.
- Develop strategies to support local government downtown revitalization efforts outside of the Main Street program. Look at successful downtown revitalization efforts that have occurred outside the program as examples.
- Encourage and provide information on the use of "Social Districts" in downtown areas.
- Offer assistance applying for and administering grants to revitalize publicly owned properties in downtown areas. Share local success stories.
- Contact property owners of downtown buildings that are vacant but not for sale. Encourage them to rent the building or sell it.
- Gather example ordinances and ordinance templates that address downtown blight.
- Local governments adopt ordinances and administer through code enforcement.
- Encourage renovation of upper story apartments in downtown areas for residential development.
- Calm traffic in downtown areas through the use of four way stops, street trees, planted bulb outs and medians, crosswalks, etc.
- Encourage ordinance revisions to allow bars, micro-breweries, distilleries, etc. in downtown districts.
- Conduct niche marketing campaigns to advertise unique assets in downtown areas. Local examples include whirly gigs and other public art, pocket parks, bluegrass music, glass blowing, river boardwalks, etc.
- Encourage partnerships with colleges to design artwork for downtown areas, i.e. murals, sculptures, etc.
- Work with community colleges to locate small business specialty training facilities in downtown areas. Local examples include a barber school and an upholstery school.
- Encourage and support community events and festivals in downtown areas.
- Conduct place making campaigns for downtown areas.
- Utilize the film industry to assist with downtown place making campaigns.
- Develop unique museums in downtown areas. Local examples include the NC Estuarium, NC Fossil Museum, and local history museums.
- Inventory all downtown buildings in each downtown

	district across the region. Identify needed repairs, renovations and upgrades. • Assist property owners as feasible with building renovations through planning and technical assistance, referring to professionals such as architects and engineers, providing education on state programs, offering local façade grant programs, etc. • Provide public space improvements in downtown areas, including infrastructure, pocket parks, streetscape improvements, sidewalk additions and repairs, etc.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Chambers of Commerce • Community Organizations • County and Municipal Arts Councils • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • Downtown Development Associations/Organizations • East Carolina University • Local Historic Associations/Organizations • NC DOC's Division of Community Assistance • NC Historic Preservation Office • NC Main Street Program • NCSU School of Design • Private Developers
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	• Golden Leaf • Local Governments • NC Dept. of Commerce • NC Main Street Program • Southeast Crescent • Various Community Grants
Performance Measures	• Development/gathering and distribution of public educational materials on historic tax credits, and proper historic property rehabilitation and preservation. • Needs assessment of all urban and town centers in the region is completed. • Regional database of available properties in downtown areas developed. • Number of new grant applications and number of local governments provided grant administration assistance for rehabilitation of historic properties. • Number of rehabilitated historic properties. • Number of new communities joining the Main Street program. • Number of downtown revitalization projects. • Number of new public art installations and pocket parks in

downtown areas.
- Number of new pedestrian projects in downtown areas.
- Number of new historic and community walking tours, festivals, and other downtown events held.
- Number of ordinances changed to allow more mixed-uses downtown.
- Number of new local historic districts and associated ordinances developed.
- Number of property owners of vacant buildings contacted.
- Number of new ordinances to address downtown blight.
- Number of new upper story apartments in downtown areas.
- Number of success stories shared.
- Number of new social districts in downtown areas.
- Number of revitalized publicly owned properties in downtown areas.
- Number of revitalized privately owned properties in downtown areas.
- Number of traffic calming projects in downtown areas.
- Number of new public art projects in downtown areas.
- Number of new niche marketing campaigns for downtown areas.
- Number of new small business specialty training centers in downtown areas.
- Number of new museums in downtown areas.
- Inventory of downtown buildings in each downtown district with identified needed repairs, renovations and upgrades.
- Number of new streetscape projects in downtown areas.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 4	**Collaborate with law enforcement on community policing initiatives.**
Implementation Actions	- Continue to update the list of which police departments already have community policing initiatives in place and what specific programs they are implementing. - Gather local success stories on community policing initiatives and share success stories publicly. - Gather a comprehensive list of example community policing initiatives. - Gather a list of resources for training officers. - Gather a list of potential funding sources for departments to implement initiatives. - Reach out to and encourage all local Police Departments and Sheriff's Offices to implement community policing initiatives - Celebrate and share success stories from local police departments regionally and locally. - Encourage development of Community and Neighborhood Watch organizations. - Augment collaboration between municipal Police Departments and County Sherriff's Offices. - Encourage augmented police officer presence in downtown areas. - Encourage foot patrol and cops on bicycles in downtown areas and other appropriate walkable areas. - Develop an Information Clearinghouse for community policing initiatives. - Support local events such as "Night Out on Crime" events.
Lead Agency(s)	- Mid-East Commission - Local Governments - Local Police Departments and Sherriff's Offices
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- Community leaders - Community Organizations - Community and Neighborhood Watch organizations - Faith-Based Organizations - K-12 School System - Local business owners
Planning Level Cost Estimate	$10,000 to develop materials and reach out to all departments in the region. - Varies based on initiative but should be relatively low-

	cost to implement initiatives. Community policing initiatives can be worked into officer's existing shifts.
Potential Funding Sources	• Golden Leaf • Local governments • Various Community Grants • US DOJ Community Policing Microgrants
Performance Measures	• Development of education materials for local law enforcement. • Number of local Police Departments and Sheriff's Offices contacted and provided with information. • Creation and distribution of success stories regionally and locally. • New community policing initiatives enacted. • New Community Watch organizations created. • New partnerships between municipal Police Departments and county Sherriff's Offices. • Number of new police officers with regular presence in downtown areas. • Number of new police officers on foot patrol and bicycles. • Development of an Information Clearinghouse for Community Policing. • Number of local events supported.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 5	**Ensure that all residents have access to healthcare, education, and affordable services. Identify areas that lack access or where access is not affordable.**
Implementation Actions	- Conduct an analysis of availability, adequacy and affordability of broadband service, healthcare, K-12 education, higher education, electric service, natural gas, water service and wastewater service. . - Determine which areas lack access to services, and where services are inadequate or unaffordable. - Identify funding sources for needed improvements. Garner support for needed funding if not available. - Where access is not available, plan for access and implement appropriate programs and projects. - Where access is inadequate, determine why and work with partners on improvements. - Where access is unaffordable, determine why and identify potential strategies, programs, and projects to improve affordability and/or assist low to moderate income citizens. - Explore the feasibility of partnerships with neighboring local governments and/or regionalization of systems where high water and wastewater rates exist. - Garner support for improved access to mental healthcare in the region. - Explore the feasibility of a county partnership to develop a regional substance abuse treatment facility. - Garner support for improved access to early childhood education. - Garner support for expansion of daycare assistance programs for the low-income working population. - Support development of a financial management curriculum. - Provide financial management courses starting in Middle School and continuing into High School. - Ensure that there is transportation available to healthcare for those who do not own a vehicle or are unable to drive. - Educate residents on the availability of Telehealth services and how it can benefit them. - Continue providing senior medical transport services and education on telehealth through the Area Agency on Aging.

	• Garner support for more input on local needs for the "community-based mental health services" funding. The specific needs of the local community need to be the driving force behind project selection. • Continue providing senior mental health services and programming to prevent isolation, etc. through the Area Agency on Aging. • Continue providing job transportation to eligible candidates through workforce programs. • Partner with RPOs and rural transit providers such as BATs, PATs, Martin County Transit, and Choanoke Public Transit to provide affordable transportation for education, employment, and medical needs. • Continue providing taxi vouchers, gas cards, etc. to assist seniors with transportation needs through the Area Agency on Aging.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Broadband Companies • Community Colleges • Community Organizations • County Health Departments • County Social Services Departments • ECU Health • K-12 Schools • NC Rural Center • Public Transit Operations • Private Medical Providers • Private Passenger Transportation Companies • Universities • Utility Companies • Water/Sewer Authorities
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• $10,000 for study/analysis • Project cost varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	• Golden Leaf • NC Rural Center • Various Community Grants • Funding sources vary depending on project
Performance Measures	• Study/analysis of availability, adequacy, and affordability of services completed. • Number of partner organizations worked with. • Number of grant applications for improvements/projects. • Number of improvements to access, adequacy, and affordability of services in all communities. • Construction of a regional substance abuse facility. • Development of a financial management curriculum. • Implementation of financial management curriculum in Middle Schools and High Schools.

- Number of people transported to healthcare appointments.
- Number of people educated on Telehealth or number of Telehealth related targeted advertisements.
- Number of people transported to employment or education.
- Number of seniors served through Area Agency on Aging mental health programs.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 6	**Capitalize on natural resources and recreation opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for citizens and support ecotourism.**
Implementation Actions	- Market the region for ecotourism. - Work with Tourism Authorities to advertise the area for ecotourism through niche marketing, i.e., hikers, bird watchers, kayakers, etc. - Encourage local governments to have Ecotourism Zoning Districts where appropriate. - Assist local governments in applying for and administering grants for greenways and park development. - Identify ecotourism related businesses that may be interested in expanding and reach out to them. - Market existing camping platforms/blue trails on the Meherrin, Roanoke and Tar- Pamlico Rivers. - Market the unique ecosystems and ecotourism activities of the Albemarle Sound and Pamlico Sound. - Implement regional greenway projects which tie in with the East Coast Greenway Coastal Route and the NC Great State Trails Plan. - Improve public waterfront access and fishing access across the region. - Develop public beach/swimming access sites. A recent success is the Tall Glass of Water/Bertie Beach project. - Develop additional boat ramps across the region. - Improve access to public parks across the region. - Support development of joint use agreements between local governments and school districts and market availability of facilities to the public where joint use agreements already exist. - Support efforts to link the inner and outer banks through ecotourism and high-speed ferries. The Harbor Town project is a recent success. - Develop local Travel and Tourism Master Plans. - Develop campgrounds across the region. - Develop nature education centers across the region. - Expand local recreational programming. - Expand local recreation staff and office space. - Utilize the film industry to support tourism and ecotourism in the region.
Lead Agency(s)	Mid-East Commission

	- Local Governments - Tourism Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Ecotourism related businesses - K-12 school districts - Roanoke River Partners - Sound Rivers
Planning Level Cost Estimate	- Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	- Land and Water Management Trust Fund Grants - NC DCM Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grants - NC DOT - PARTF Grants - Tourism Development Authorities/Departments/Visitors Bureaus
Performance Measures	- Number of ecotourism related advertisements. - Number of new ecotourism businesses opened. - Number of new ecotourism zoning districts created. - Number of new grant applications. - Number of new greenways developed. - Number of new parks developed. - Number of new public waterfront access sites. - Number of new joint use agreements. - Number of new waterfront access sites developed. - Number of new fishing access sites developed. - Number of new public beach/swimming access sites developed. - Number of new boat ramps developed. - Number of local Travel and Tourism Master Plans developed. - Number of new nature education centers. - Number of new local recreational programs. - Number of new local recreation staff members. - Number of films advertising recreational programs, tourism and ecotourism.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 7	**Address food deserts where there is a lack of options for healthy, fresh foods. Develop healthy eating resources to address dietary challenges in low income rural areas.**
Implementation Actions	- Plan for access to healthy foods in food desert areas. - Expand Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) programs to each county. - Continue gathering updated data from USDA, NC Cooperative Extension, Feeding America, etc. Determine any additional local data needs. Gather data down to the Census blockgroup level if not already available. - Work with developers/business owners on grocery store development in food desert areas where feasible. - Explore the option of co-op grocery stores and co-op kitchens. - Work with convenience stores and dollar stores on offering healthy food choices and accepting WIC & SNAP benefits. - Start weekly Farmer's Markets in food desert areas and accept SNAP benefits. - Provide weekly transportation to Farmer's Markets from disadvantaged neighborhoods. - Start community gardens in food desert areas. - Partner with local educational and community organizations to provide healthy shopping & cooking classes to with transportation available from disadvantaged neighborhoods. - Support development of food trucks offering healthy foods traveling between food desert areas, like mobile grocery stores. - Support free breakfast and lunch programs and summer meal programs at low to moderate income schools. - Continue and expand Meals on Wheels programs for low income seniors. - Educate children on nutrition beginning in Elementary School. - Continue improvements to healthy school meals. - Partner with local Cooperative Extensions to offer home

	gardening classes on site in food desert communities. Offer free home gardening resources as an incentive to participate. If not feasible to offer programming on site, provide transportation.
	• Support local food pantries with funding assistance for refrigeration equipment, mini grocery carts, facility expansion, staff/volunteer training, etc.
	• Provide transportation to local food pantries from disadvantaged neighborhoods in food desert areas.
	• Garner support for the revision and modification of LMI tax credits to better serve Tier 1 and rural areas.
	• Support purchases from local farmers by major chain stores. Develop or gather outreach materials to convince owners/managers that buying from local farmers is more affordable than buying in bulk from other areas. It also supports local economies, is better for the environment, and provides better food because it is fresher. It is a marketing strategy for them as well.
	• Visit local chain grocery stores to provide the outreach materials and speak with owners/managers in person regarding purchasing from local farmers.
	• Support the development of Food Commercialization Centers to provide a regional sales venue for produce farmers.
	• Encourage and support voucher programs for fruits and vegetables.
	• Encourage the use of Commercial Nodes in local ordinances to bring food retailers close to neighborhoods.
	• Develop regional Refrigeration Centers.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Community Organizations • County Cooperative Extensions • County Health Departments • East Carolina University • Faith Based Organizations • Food Banks • Food Pantries • K-12 School System • Private Developers • Public Transit Systems
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies Depending on Project

Potential Funding Sources	• Feed America Non-Profit Organization • Golden Leaf Food Distribution Assistance Program • Kate B. Reynolds Foundation • NC Cooperative Extension • NC Dept. of Agriculture • USDA • USDA – Healthy Food Financing Initiative • Various Community Grants
Performance Measures	• Food desert data down to the Census blockgroup level kept updated. • Number of new grocery stores, co-op stores, or co-op kitchens in food desert areas. • Number of new Farmer's Markets in food desert areas. • Weekly transportation to Farmer's Markets from disadvantaged neighborhoods in food deserts provided. • Number of new food trucks serving food deserts areas. • Number of convenience stores that add healthy food options. • Number of community gardens started. • Number of new HEAL organizations started. • Number of food pantries assisted to receive additional resources. • Expanded number of Wheels on Meals programs. • Development of a nutrition curriculum. • Provide students with nutrition curriculum starting in Elementary School. • Number of gardening classes provided. • Number of healthy shopping and cooking classes provided. • Number of people transported to classes from disadvantaged neighborhoods in food desert areas. • Outreach materials created/gathered to support purchasing from local farmers by chain grocery stores. • Number of grocery stores provided outreach materials and visited in person. • Number of new Food Commercialization Centers. • Number of ordinance revisions to allow Commercial Nodes. • Number of new regional Refrigeration Centers.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 8	**Assist local governments with day to day management and planning needs.**
Implementation Actions	- Provide local governments in need with financial capacity assistance, i.e. providing rotating staff to assist with financial accounting and management services. The "Unit Assistance List" from the Local Government Commission may highlight deficiencies and financial policy audits and revisions. - Provide local governments in need with a rotating Town Manager. - Provide local governments in need with day to day planning administration services, i.e. zoning and subdivision administration. - Provide local governments in need with code enforcement services. - Provide local governments in need with grant writing and grant administration services.
Lead Agency(s)	- Mid-East Commission - Local Governments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- Local Government Commission - NC School of Government - NC Rural Center - EDA - Various Grant Agencies
Planning Level Cost Estimate	Varies depending on staff needs and contracts.
Potential Funding Sources	- Local governments - Golden Leaf - EDA - Various State and Federal Grants
Performance Measures	- Number of local governments served with financial capacity assistance. - Number of local governments served with a rotating Town Manager. - Number of local governments served with day to day planning administration services. - Number of local governments served with code enforcement services. - Number of grants written for local governments.

- Dollar value of successful grant applications.
- Number of grants administered for local governments.

NC Tomorrow	CREATE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Goal 3	**Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.**
Objective 9	**Improve community and regional resilience to flooding and other natural hazards.**
Implementation Actions	- Relocate businesses out of the floodplain. - Relocate severe repetitive loss homes out of the floodplain. - Elevate homes in the floodplain. - Relocate critical infrastructure out of the floodplain. - Provide community level public education on preparedness to flooding and other natural disasters, and on strategies to become more resilient to these events. - Improve regional stormwater infrastructure. - Implement nature-based solutions to flooding across the region. - Assist local governments with resilience planning through programs such as the Resilient Coastal Communities Program. - Ensure that all county Emergency Management Plans are up to date. - Participate in Regional Hazard Mitigation planning processes. - Participate in regional resilience planning efforts, such as the Regions Innovating for Strong Economies and Environment Program (RISE). - Update repetitive loss property lists for each county. - Garner support for FEMA to update Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) in counties where maps are inaccurate compared to on the ground conditions. - Encourage local government participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) program. - Conduct hydrology studies and develop regional and local drainage plans and drainage improvement projects. - Develop or upgrade 911 centers across the region as needed. - Ensure access to Evacuation Centers across the region and develop new Evacuation Centers where needed. - Demolish flood damaged properties beyond saving.

	• Ensure access to Evacuation Centers across the region and develop new Evacuation Centers where needed. • Pursue funding opportunities to support businesses in reinforcing existing structures to mitigate wind-related damages, and, where necessary, construct safe rooms and safe houses to enhance life safety during wind events.
Lead Agency(s)	• Mid-East Commission • Local Governments • County Emergency Management Departments
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Albemarle Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP) • NC Sea Grant • NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency • NC Division of Coastal Management • FEMA • Private Sector Engineering Firms • Private Businesses • Homeowners • Community Organizations • Faith Based Organizations • East Carolina University • NC State University
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on staff needs and contracts.
Potential Funding Sources	• NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency • NC Division of Coastal Management • FEMA • Golden Leaf Flood Mitigation Grant • NC Land and Water Fund • Environmental Enhancement Grant
Performance Measures	• Number of businesses relocated from the floodplain. • Number of homes relocated from the floodplain. • Number of homes elevated. • Critical infrastructure relocated from the floodplain. • Number of public education events. • Public education materials developed and distributed. • Number of local Public Information Plans. • Number of regional stormwater infrastructure projects. • Number of nature-based solution projects. • Number of communities with local Resilience Strategies. • Number of counties with updated Emergency Management Plans. • Participation in Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years.

	- Implementation of the Mid-East RISE Plan. - Participation in regional resilience planning projects. - Number of counties with up to date repetitive loss property lists. - Number of inaccurate FIRMs that are updated to be consistent with on the ground flooding conditions. - Number of local governments participating in the CRS program. - Number of hydrology studies and drainage plans. - Number of drainage improvement projects. - Number of new or upgraded 911 centers. - Number of new or upgraded evacuation centers. - Number of demolished flood damaged properties.

NC Tomorrow	DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE
Goal 4	Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.
Objective 1	Nurture the development, recruitment and retention of a workforce with 21st Century skills.
Implementation Actions	- Work with representatives from all educational entities, as well as private industry and other major employers. - Continue to utilize workforce development partnerships. - Education on 21st Century skills starts in Elementary School and continues through High School and College or workforce/vocational training. - Strategically market employment opportunities to young people. - Work with leaders from each industry and local employers to determine 21st Century skills that the workforce is lacking. - Workforce development, education and vocational training providers continue striving to be up to date in educating themselves and incorporating new technologies into training programs. - Incorporate globalization, creativity & innovation, critical thinking & problem solving, and life & career skills needed in the 21st Century into training programs. - Continue offering workforce training for employees at their workplace, incorporating 21st Century skills into the training. - Employers can offer to pay for computer classes and other related classes at Community Colleges for those employees who are behind in 21st Century skills but have a desire to learn. - Maintain Work Ready Community Certification in Beaufort, Martin, Hertford and Pitt Counties. Obtain this certification in Bertie County. - Continue the 21st Century Skills Initiative in NC Public Schools. - Continue Early College programs for High School students. - Start students not going to college on Career Paths in High School, focusing on 21st Century skills needed

	for their chosen field, as well as training for adaptability in a fast-paced globalizing world. Emphasize the need for continuing education throughout their career. • Continue free tuition programs at Community Colleges as long as feasible. • Encourage employers to offer flexible work options when possible. • Explore the feasibility of creating a regional purchasing collective to obtain software licensing discounts. • Develop a program to train counselors and career advisors at NC Works Career Centers to use and incorporate technology into career readiness and career counseling programs. • Continue to use and support NCCareers.org for career readiness and job placement, which is a universal tool that is accessible to all at no cost. • Expand business participation in apprenticeship programs. • Expand student participation in apprenticeship programs. • Continue Career Readiness certification at local High Schools and continue additional certifications for High School students, such as SERV Safe certification. Add additional certifications as appropriate. • Utilize interns from local colleges and universities and facilitate local government intern placement. • Encourage interns to remain with the organization for employment or to remain in the region. • Continue the Rivers East Academy for advanced manufacturing. Encourage augmented school participation in the program. • Continue offering digital skills training such as Microsoft certification at Community Colleges. • Continue the STEM East Industry in Schools Initiative to spread awareness of job opportunities in eastern NC by training teachers on existing industries through focused workshops. Encourage augmented school participation in the program.
Lead Agency(s)	• Rivers East Workforce Development Board • NC East Alliance
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Chambers of Commerce • Community Colleges • Community Organizations • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • ECU Rise 29 Program

	• IES and private businesses involved in STEM (i.e., pharmaceutical, manufacturing, engineering design firms, etc.) • K-12 School Systems • Mid-East Commission • NC Works Centers • NENC Career Pathways • Other industries and employers (including industrial, commercial and service based businesses) • Universities • Vocational Training Providers
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	• Golden Leaf Workforce Assistance Grant • NC Works Innovation Grant • NC DOC Workforce Development Grants • NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants
Performance Measures	• All counties certified as Work Ready Communities. • Addition of 21st Century skills to current workforce/vocational training programs and Career Path program. • Number of 21st Century skills related trainings, such as training on new technology, attended by Workforce Development staff. • Training program developed for NC Works staff. • Number of NC Works employees trained on new technology such as Tratify software. • Percentage of employers satisfied with 21st Century skills of the workforce. • Number of new businesses participating in apprenticeship programs. • Augment in number of students participating in apprenticeship programs. • Career Readiness Certification available at all local High Schools. • Number of new certification programs available at local High Schools. • Number of interns placed with local governments. • Number of schools participating in the Rivers East Academy. • Number of schools participating in the STEM East Industry in Schools Initiative. • Number of students provided with digital skills training.

NC Tomorrow	DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE
Goal 4	**Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.**
Objective 2	**Identify and analyze all educational, workforce, and vocational training resources and conduct a gap analysis based on employer needs.**
Implementation Actions	• Develop surveys pertinent to targets. • Conduct a survey of High Schools, Community Colleges, Universities, and employers. • Form a collective that includes representatives from each industry and other major employers, workforce development professionals, Community Colleges, and others involved in workforce/vocational training. • Work with the collective to determine workforce development needs that are lacking. • Perform an inventory of training programs including workforce training, vocational training and higher education. • Identify any Advisory Committees already formed for each industry. • Conduct a gap analysis to see where training needs are not being met. • Connect employers to any resources they are not aware of. • Incorporate identified needs into workforce training, vocational training and higher education. • Continue offering workforce training for employees at their place of work. Customize the training to fit employer needs. • Market available programs, educating the public and business owners on the robust offering of education and training programs available in the region. • Hold regular meetings to assess progress and update the gap analysis every 3-5 years.
Lead Agency(s)	• Rivers East Workforce Development Board • Mid-East Commission
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Chambers of Commerce • Community Colleges • Community Organizations • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations

	- EDPNC - IES and private businesses involved in STEM (i.e., pharmaceutical, manufacturing, engineering design firms, etc.) - K-12 School Systems - NC East Alliance - NC Works Centers - NENC Career Pathways - Other industries and employers (including industrial, commercial and service based businesses) - Universities - Vocational Training Providers
Planning Level Cost Estimate	- $5,000
Potential Funding Sources	- Rivers East Workforce Development Board - NC Works Innovation Grant (if completed as part of CEDS Implementation Plan update)
Performance Measures	- Gap analysis updated in partnership with employers and education/training providers every 3-5 years. - Needs identified in gap analysis incorporated into training programs. - Number of marketing efforts to educate business owners and the public on available education and training programs.

NC Tomorrow	**DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE**
Goal 4	**Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.**
Objective 3	**Develop ways to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem across the region which supports existing small businesses and nurtures the development and growth of new small businesses.**
Implementation Actions	- Create a database of available local, state, and federal support and training resources for entrepreneurs and share with partner organizations in easy to distribute formats. - Support educational options through workshops and educational materials. - Celebrate entrepreneurs. - Engage small business owners who have experienced the start-up process to mentor local entrepreneurs. - Support local events such as Entrepreneur Expos and explore the possibility of hosting a regional Entrepreneur Expo. - Create a regional guide for entrepreneurs showing resources for training and support, zoning/permit assistance, potential grants, low interest loans, available properties, market analyses, etc. - Look into the Certified Entrepreneurial Community program. - Market the region as being entrepreneur friendly. - Identify and address any gaps in entrepreneur training and support services. - Market training and support services available to entrepreneurs. There are many free options that entrepreneurs may not be aware of. - Identify funding sources for incubator facilities.

	- Develop business incubator facilities across the region. Each can specialize in certain types of businesses so that equipment can be shared. - Create a regional forum for entrepreneurs and small business support organizations. - Develop residential neighborhoods focusing on segments of entrepreneurs. An example is artist districts where artists live, share incubator space, and have a venue to sell their products. - Offer entrepreneurial education courses at the Middle School and High School level. - Continue partnerships with Small Business Centers at each Community College. - Seek funding to augment staff capacity to get small business and workforce development professionals out into the community. Meet small business owners at their businesses to see what training and technical support services they need. - Keep a database of grant programs, tax credits, etc. for small business owners updated on a regular basis and share with partner organizations. Keep this information on an easy to access and update website. - Develop Workforce Training Centers across the region in partnership with Community Colleges. - Utilize American Rescue Plan Act Work Based Learning Grant funds to focus on work with small businesses with 25 or less employees. This includes funding for IceHouse Entrepreneurial Training and Incumbent Worker Grants for upskilling existing workers. Partnerships include the Small Business Centers at Community Colleges, the Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at ECU's Crip Small Business Center, and NCIdea.
Lead Agency(s)	- Mid-East Commission - Rivers East Workforce Development Board - Local Governments - Community College Small Business Centers - SBTDC at ECU
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	- Angel, private funding, and venture capital companies with an interest in helping the region grow - Chambers of Commerce - Committees of 100

	- Community Colleges - Community Organizations - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Downtown Development Associations/Organizations - ECU Rise 29 Program - EDPNC - Electricities - K-12 School Systems - Small Business Owners - Universities
Planning Level Cost Estimate	- Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	- EDA - Golden Leaf - NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants - NC DOC Workforce Development Grant - NC Rural Center - NC Works Innovation Grant - US Small Business Association (SBA) - Various Community Grants
Performance Measures	- Database of support and training resources created and shared. - Number of small business/entrepreneur events held. - Regional entrepreneur guide created and shared. - Information on Certified Entrepreneurial Community Program gathered and shared. - Number of regional marketing efforts that include small business/entrepreneur targeted marketing. - Gap analysis of entrepreneur training and support services conducted in partnership with support organizations and small business owners. - Number of marketing efforts geared toward informing entrepreneurs of resources and services available to them. - Number of new business incubator facilities or business incubator facility expansions. - Regional forum for entrepreneurs and small business support organizations created. - Number of residential neighborhoods focused on segments of entrepreneurs developed. - Development of entrepreneurial education

	courses for Middle School and High School levels. • Entrepreneurial education courses offered at Middle School and High School levels. • Number of small businesses provided outreach at their place of business. • Number of small businesses receiving training or support services at their place of business. • Augments in enrollment in Small Business Center and SBTDC courses and business counseling programs. • Database of available grants and tax credits created and shared. • Number of new Workforce Training Centers.

NC Tomorrow	**DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE**
Goal 4	**Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.**
Objective 4	**Improve marketing of current Career Paths, develop additional Career Paths that recognize the needs of employers, and start students in developing on these pathways in High School.**
Implementation Actions	- Ensure that Career Path training programs continue to meet the needs of local employers. - Expand business participation in apprenticeship programs. - Expand High School student participation in apprenticeship programs. - Begin exposing students to Career Path opportunities in Middle School. - Begin vocational training for students on Career Paths in High School. - Continue educating principals, teachers, and career counselors in local High Schools on Career Paths and expand outreach. - Seek augmented buy-in on Career Paths from Career Coaches at local High Schools. - Continue reaching adult learners through Community College partnerships and expand outreach to adult learners on Career Path opportunities. - Expand outreach to high school students, parents, and the wider community to augment awareness of Career Paths. - Augment partnerships between Community Colleges, ECU, and local High Schools to better serve students and support Career Paths. Start a monthly or quarterly meeting involving all parties to augment collaboration. - Develop additional Career Paths which meet the needs of local employers.

- Seek funding to augment staff capacity and have workforce development presence in local High Schools to help guide students into Career Paths.
- Support the formation of local volunteer organizations to host events and market Career Paths. Possibly pull volunteers from local community collectives and civic organizations. Partner with these organizations and educate volunteers.
- Hold a training "boot camp" for all locally developed volunteer collectives.
- Continue educating NC Works staff on Career Paths and work Career Path outreach into work readiness programs. Seek augmented buy in on Career Paths from NC Works staff.
- Expand employer participation in Strategic Planning Committees for each Career Path.
- Develop a Career Path Training Guide.
- Develop strategic Career Path marketing materials.
- Conduct a marketing campaign including online via websites, social media, local newspapers, and local television. Write press releases for newspapers and ask journalists to write articles. Ask for free spots on local news shows and other local public broadcasting. Explore the feasibility of advertising via billboards.
- Partner with local businesses to market Career Paths. Send developed marketing materials to businesses, especially those with Marketing Departments, and request assistance.
- Partner with Community Colleges and ECU to market Career Paths. Send developed marketing materials to their Chancellors/Presidents, and request assistance.
- Work with school system to allow senior projects to focus on career readiness/job opportunities.
- Continue partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce to support Career Paths and apprenticeship programs.
- Speak at Middle School, High School, Community College and University classes to educate students on career options.
- Use university students to develop plans and studies for local governments.
- Market on the job training (OJT), work experience (WEX) and other workforce programs to students.

	• Continue updating Career Pathways materials as an interactive poster hosted on the website for marketing purposes. • Continue developing and supporting "Made In" campaigns for all five Mid-East Region counties focused on local products and Advanced Manufacturing careers. • Continue annual Career Guidance workshops for K-12 schools, Community Colleges, and NC Works Centers. Continue increasing the event to being offered biannually. • Career Pathways staff should serve as a "workforce connector" to build sector partnerships and augment engagement with employers.
Lead Agency(s)	• NENC Career Pathways • Rivers East Workforce Development Board • High Schools
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Community Colleges • Community Organizations • County School Boards • Local employers • NC Dept. of Education • NC Works Centers • Vocational Training Providers
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	• Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant • EDA • Golden Leaf Workforce Assistance Grant • NC Works Innovation Grant • NC DOC Workforce Development Grants • NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants • Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds
Performance Measures	• Number of new businesses participating in apprenticeship programs. • Augment in number of students participating in apprenticeship programs. • Augment in number of Career Path students attending vocational training in High School. • Number of presentations and events at Middle Schools. • Number of educational events and visits to High Schools to educate principals, teachers and career counselors. • Number of educational events and visits to Community Colleges and ECU to educate

Chancellors/Presidents, teachers, and career counselors, and to conduct outreach to adult learners.

- Augmented buy-in of Career Paths by Career Coaches at local High Schools.
- Number of outreach events for students, parents and the community.
- Augment in High School students enrolled in Career Paths.
- Monthly or quarterly meetings for NENC Career Pathways, Rivers East Workforce Development Board, Community College, ECU, and local High School staff to augment collaboration on serving students and supporting Career Paths.
- Augment in adult learners enrolled in Career Paths.
- Number of new Career Paths developed and certified by the NC Dept. of Public Instruction.
- Workforce Development staff presence at local High Schools to help guide students into Career Paths.
- Number of new volunteer organizations supporting Career Paths.
- Training "boot camp" held for volunteer organizations.
- Number of outreach events held by local volunteer organizations.
- Number of educational events and visits to NC Works Centers to educated NC Works staff on Career Paths.
- Augmented buy-in of Career Paths by NC Works staff.
- Number of local employers participating in Strategic Planning Committees for each Career Path.
- Career Path Training Guide developed.
- Strategic Career Path marketing materials developed.
- Number of relevant advertisements by type of media.
- Number of local businesses sent marketing materials.
- Number of advertisements by local businesses by type of media.
- Marketing materials sent to all Community Colleges and ECU.

	- Number of advertisements by Community Colleges and ECU. - High School senior projects are able to focus on career readiness/job opportunities. - Number of presentations to students on career options. - Number of local government plans and studies developed by students. - Number of outreach events to educate students on OJT, WEX and other workforce programs. - Number of people enrolled in OJT, WEX and other workforce programs.

NC Tomorrow	**DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE**
Goal 4	**Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.**
Objective 5	**Provide the atmosphere and amenities desired by the millennial and Gen-Z generations.**
Implementation Actions	- Support vibrant, walkable, mixed-use downtown districts. - Develop more greenways and parks. - Develop more sidewalks and bicycle lanes. - Attract businesses millennials and Gen-Zs are drawn to, such as microbreweries and farm-to-table restaurants. - Encourage local governments to have zoning that allows mixed-uses downtown. - Host community activities of interest to young people. - Develop a robust regional economy, with jobs available for those wanting to return to their hometowns after graduating from College. - Support entrepreneur friendly communities and business incubator facilities across the region. - Market the region to millennials and Gen-Zs through social media. - Incorporate public art into communities. - Offer scholarships for students to attend Community College prior to transferring to a University and continue free tuition programs at Community Colleges as long as feasible. - Encourage local employers to offer flexible work options when possible. - Support the development of local young professionals' collectives. - Connect entrepreneurs with resources for financial assistance and loan institutions.
Lead Agency(s)	- Local Governments - County Economic Development Departments/Corporations - Mid-East Commission

Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Chambers of Commerce • Community College Small Business Centers • Community Colleges • Community Organizations • County and Municipal Arts Councils • County and Municipal Recreation Departments • Downtown Development Associations/Organizations • ECU's SBTDC • EDPNC • NC DOT • NC East Alliance • Private businesses
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Varies depending on project
Potential Funding Sources	• CDBG Grants • EDA • Golden Leaf • Main Town and Small Town Main Street Grant community grant funds • National Endowment for Arts • NC DCM Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant • NC DOC Division of Community Assistance • NC DOT • PARTF Grants • US Small Business Association • Various Community Grants
Performance Measures	• Number of improvement projects in downtown areas. • Number of new greenways and parks. • Number of new sidewalks and bicycle lanes. • Number of new businesses opened that are attractive to millennial and Gen-Z generations. • Number of zoning ordinances changes to allow mixed-use development. • Number of events held geared toward young people. • Number of social media marketing efforts geared toward millennial and Gen-Z generations. • Number of new business incubator facilities. • Number of new public art installations. • Number of new young professionals' collectives. • Number of entrepreneurs connected to resources. • Augment in millennial and Gen-Z ages in county and regional demographics.

NC Tomorrow	DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE
Goal 4	**Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.**
Objective 6	**Bring career counseling, career readiness, business development, and workforce development programs out into the community.**
Implementation Actions	- Continue Workforce Development staff presence in Community Colleges. Expand to have an office located in each Community College in the region. There are currently NCWorks Centers located on campus at both Martin Community College and Roanoke-Chowan Community College. There is a weekly presence at Beaufort County Community College and there are plans to develop office space at Pitt Community College in the near future. - Seek funding to augment staff capacity and augment workforce development office hours at Community Colleges. - Continue programs to get NC Works staff out into communities to assist citizens with career readiness, career counseling, and job searches. - Continue programs to get Small Business Center staff out into communities to assist small businesses at their place of business. - Seek funding to augment Small Business Center staff capacity to augment the number of businesses served at their place of business. - Seek funding to augment staff capacity and have Workforce Development staff presence in local High Schools. - Nurture partnerships with local businesses, community organizations and faith-based organizations in order to meet citizens within their own communities. - Continue visiting manufacturers, tech companies, corporate headquarters, wholesale distributors and other businesses in the region to educate

	them about regional and state programs. • Directly assist businesses creating jobs with development and expansion projects through planning support, technical assistance, and grant writing. • Directly assist struggling businesses to retain their workforce and save jobs. • Facilitate field trips to get students and teachers out into local industries to augment career exposure of opportunities available in their "backyard". Develop solutions and/or seek funding for transportation and substitute teacher costs.
Lead Agency(s)	• Rivers East Workforce Development Board • NC Works Centers • Community College Small Business Centers • EDPNC
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Chambers of Commerce • Community Colleges • Community Organizations • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • ECU's SBTDC • Faith-Based Organizations • Local Businesses • Local Governments • Mid-East Commission • NC East Alliance • K-12 School Systems
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• Cost to get existing staff out into communities is minimal but capacity is not adequate to serve the five-county region. • Cost to augment staff capacity $40,000 - $75,000 annually per position.
Potential Funding Sources	• EDA • Golden Leaf • NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants • NC DOC Workforce Development Grant • NC Rural Center • NC Works Innovation Grant • US Small Business Association (SBA) • Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds
Performance Measures	• Workforce development presence staff at Martin Community College continues. • Workforce development staff office set-up at all Community Colleges in the region. • Augment in workforce development staff hours at Community Colleges.

	- Number of people assisted with career readiness, career counseling, and job searches by NC Works staff within their communities. - Workforce development presence staff at local High Schools. - Number of events held within communities. - Funding received for augmented Workforce Development staff capacity. - Number of small businesses provided services at their place of business. - Funding received for augmented Small Business Center staff capacity. - Number of visits to businesses to educate them about regional and state programs. - Number of businesses assisted with development and expansion projects. - Number of businesses assisted to retain jobs.

NC Tomorrow	DEVELOP TALENTED AND INNOVATIVE PEOPLE
Goal 4	**Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.**
Objective 7	**Augment marketing of workforce development programs and apprenticeship programs available to employers.**
Implementation Actions	- Gather existing outreach materials for available workforce development and apprenticeship programs and related grants. - Call and visit businesses in person to let them know about the programs available to them, such as On the Job Training, Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training, apprenticeships, etc. - Make businesses aware of available grant funds which make these programs free or low cost to them when grants are utilized. - Partner with local community organizations to market available workforce development programs and apprenticeship programs to the community. - Conduct a marketing campaign to advertise available services to employers and the fact that they are free or low cost with available grants. Include advertising online via website and social media, local newspapers, and local television. Write press releases for newspapers and ask journalists to write articles. Ask for free spots on local news shows and other local public broadcasting. Explore the feasibility of advertising via billboards. - Continue partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce to support available Workforce Development and apprenticeship programs. - Support the formation of local volunteer organizations to help support available Workforce Development and apprenticeship programs in their communities. Partner with these organizations and train volunteers.

	• Continue the Business Services Specialist position focused on supporting workforce development services to businesses in the region. Add additional business engagement staff members as feasible. • Continue partnering with the state to have veteran services and agricultural services staff visiting employers. • Continue updating the rack card supporting business services. Have the rack card available at all workforce offices and have on hand for traveling employees. • Continue working with ApprenticeshipNC to augment the footprint in the Mid-East Region. Develop solutions and partner to address staffing shortages.
Lead Agency(s)	• Rivers East Workforce Development Board
Strategic Public/Private Partnerships	• Chambers of Commerce • Community Colleges • Community Organizations • County Economic Development Departments/Corporations • County School Boards • EDPNC • High Schools • Local Employers • Local Governments • Local Media • NC Works Centers • Universities • Vocational Training Providers • NC Dept. of Veteran's Affairs • NC Dept. of Agriculture • ApprenticeshipNC
Planning Level Cost Estimate	• $100,000
Potential Funding Sources	• EDA • Golden Leaf Workforce Assistance Grant • NC Works Innovation Grant • NC DOC Workforce Development Grants • NC DOC Program Enhancement Grants • Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds
Performance Measures	• Number of businesses contact by phone. • Number of businesses visited in person. • Number of partnerships and events at local

	community organizations. • Number of relevant advertisements by type of media. • Number of events held in partnership with Chambers of Commerce. • Number of local volunteer organizations formed. • Number of events hosted by local volunteer organizations.

Vital Projects

This section identifies regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the goals and objectives of the CEDS. The vital project list is general rather than location specific. The vital project is alphabetically listed and not in any prioritized order.

- Garner support for NCDOT to change the STI funding formula to benefit rural areas.
- Attract retirees by marketing the benefits of retiring in the region and through certification programs such as "Retirement Friendly Communities".
- Bring existing roadways up to modern standards.
- Communicate to leaders that funding must accompany any new state and federal mandates, especially in low-income municipalities and Tier 1 counties, to assist local governments with the cost of compliance.
- Completion of infrastructure throughout industrial and/or technology parks.
- Conduct place-making exercises throughout the region.
- Conduct resiliency outreach and offer resiliency planning support services across the region.
- Construction or expansion of workforce training centers.
- Continued improvements to air passenger service to the region.
- Continued improvements to highways throughout the region.
- Create a regional partnership to ensure that high-speed broadband internet access is available in all areas of the region, including the last mile in rural areas. Take advantage of available grant programs and garner support for local input to be a driving factor when selecting firms to deliver on contracts.
- Creation of disaster resistant jobs through workforce training, vocational training and education with a focus on 21st Century skills.
- Develop a regional greenway system that ties in with the East Coast Greenway and the NC Great Trails State Plan.
- Develop a regional substance abuse treatment facility.
- Develop additional affordable housing stock, including apartments, and support affordable housing to encourage growth in communities.
- Develop ways for retirees to stay involved in communities, i.e. volunteering for boards, etc.
- Enhance the regional meeting capabilities throughout the region.
- Ensure access to a variety of housing options and quality K-12 education in all areas of the region.
- Establishment of business incubator facilities throughout the region.
- Expand hotels/accommodations for visitors to the region.
- Expansion of sewer and natural gas infrastructure to additional areas, especially anticipated future industrial areas.
- Explore additional cross-county and regional cost sharing opportunities for infrastructure and services.
- Extension of infrastructure including water, wastewater, roads, electric, rail, gas and broadband to new industries.
- Nurture continued development of target clusters identified in the local and regional cluster analyses.
- Nurture the development of new, desirable industrial buildings (shell buildings) which can be customized to meet the needs of a variety of industries.

- Further develop tourism opportunities throughout the region through a unified branding campaign that shows benefits and highlights of our counties and counties in surrounding regions, including a visual map for marketing purposes.
- Host a recurring Preparedness Day for local governments.
- Identify best practices throughout the region and create an easy to access platform to share ideas and successes.
- Improve mobility and connectivity throughout the region.
- Improve public transportation systems.
- Improve rail including passenger rail availability.
- Incorporate the arts, community activities and festivals in the economic development strategy for the region.
- Augment access to community-based mental healthcare across the region.
- Augment capacity to develop and support Career Paths.
- Install electric vehicle charging stations.
- Mitigate damage from natural disasters by protecting public utilities from flooding where feasible and improving land drainage across the region.
- Obtain more funding for community development projects.
- Offer a public assistance class for disaster recovery reimbursement.
- Prioritize safety improvements on roadways/segments with high accident rates.
- Support affordable housing in rural areas by advocating for the revision and modification of LMI tax credits to better serve Tier 1 and rural areas. This includes changes to the QAP formula to change the definition of grocery store, making qualification for the tax credit easier, and providing more money for the tax credit.
- Provide education and outreach on services provided to benefit citizens in the region.
- Regionalization of water and wastewater systems where appropriate.
- Revitalization of downtown areas throughout the region.
- Start a collective for support efforts to the state and federal government to communicate the region's needs and to garner support for investment in the region.
- Utilize partnerships to get information out and educate communities.

Funding for past projects and these prospective projects has/will come from a combination of the following sources:

1. Local Government Funds
2. Economic Development Administration
3. NC Broadband Office
4. NC Community Development Block Grant- Economic Development
5. NC Community Development Block Grant- Infrastructure
6. NC Dept. of Commerce- Economic Infrastructure and Building Reuse
7. NC Dept. of Commerce- Workforce Development Funds
8. NC DEQ State Wastewater and Drinking Water Reserves Program
9. NC DOT- Rail Industrial Access Program
10. NC Golden LEAF Foundation
11. NC Industrial Development Fund
12. NC Land and Water Management Trust Fund
13. NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
14. NC Recreational Trails Program

Opportunity Zones

An Opportunity Zone is an economically distressed community where private investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for capital gain tax incentives. Opportunity Zones were created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to stimulate economic development and job creation, by incentivizing long-term investments in low-income neighborhoods (EDA).

Investments made by qualified entities known as Opportunity Funds into certified Opportunity Zones will receive three key federal incentives to encourage investment in low-income communities including (NC Dept. of Commerce):

- Temporary tax deferral for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Step-up in basis for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Permanent exclusion from taxable income of long-term capital gains

Opportunity Zones promise to drive billions—even trillions—of dollars in long-term investment into low-income urban and rural census tracts across the country. But to make that happen, community stakeholders, state and local government leaders, investors and developers must work together to engage responsibly with this powerful but untested tool, and to help create the kinds of communities that benefit residents and the U.S. economy as a whole. For community stakeholders, that engagement demands careful, collaborative and all-encompassing planning, establishing incentives and guardrails for investment, collecting metrics on community impact, and reporting on outcomes in a transparent and accessible manner (Rural LISC).

There are more than 8,760 designated Qualified Opportunity Zones located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five United States territories (EDA). The federal law allows each state to designate up to 25 percent of its total low-income census tracts as zone candidates. North Carolina has just over 1,000 of these tracts, so only 252 census tracts could be selected as Opportunity Zones (NC Dept. of Commerce).

Region Q contains eight Opportunity Zones. Opportunity Zone boundaries coincide with census tract boundaries. Opportunity Zones exist in all five counties, with one Opportunity Zone in Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, and Martin Counties, and four Opportunity Zones in Pitt County. The following map shows certified Opportunity Zones in the region.

Certified Economic Opportunity Zones

Mid-East Economic
Development District (Region Q)

MID-EAST
Commission

N
W E
S

HERTFORD

BERTIE

MARTIN

PITT

BEAUFORT

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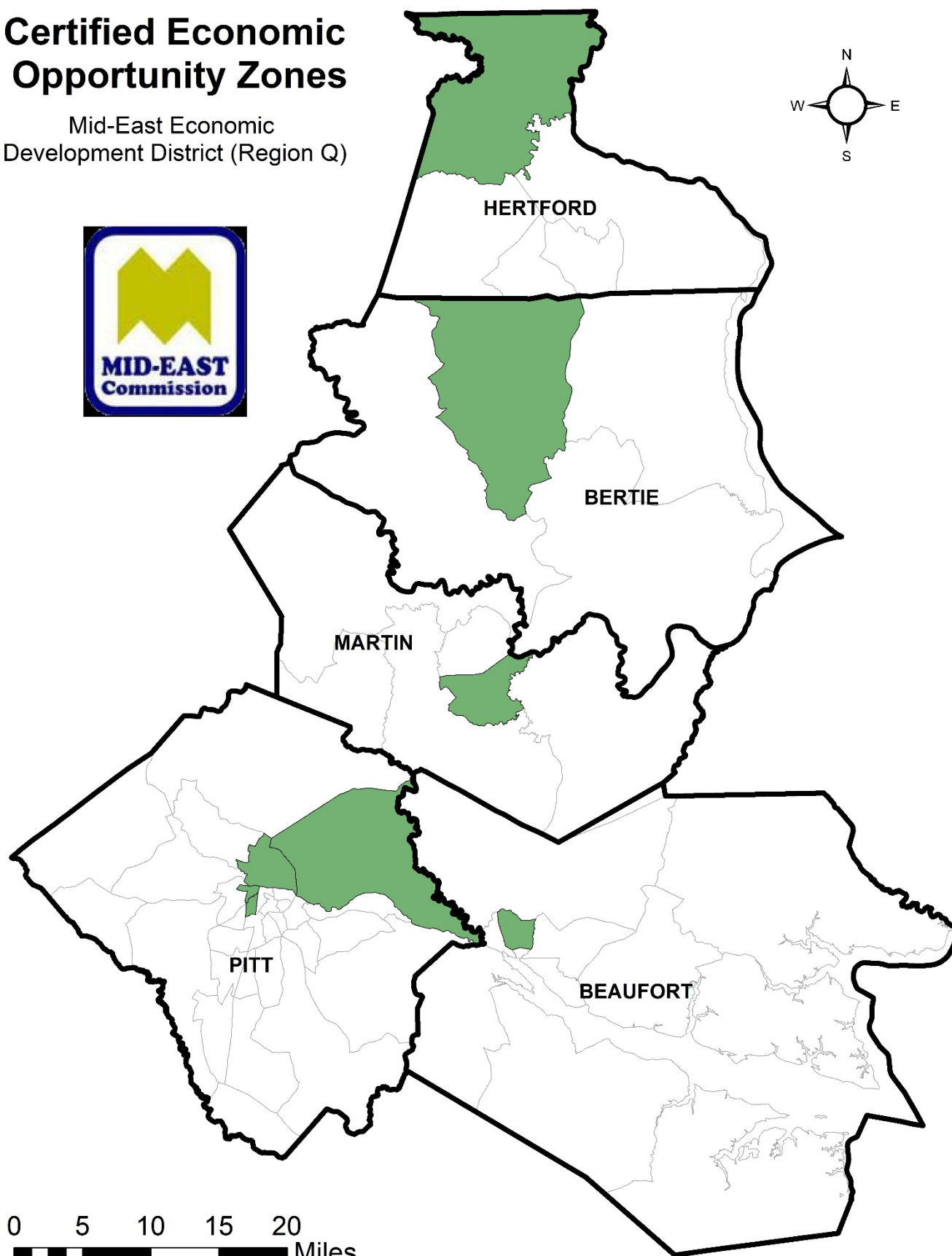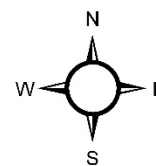
Demographic data for each Opportunity Zone in the Mid-East Region is summarized in Table 20, including total population, median household income and percent of the population in poverty.

Table 20. Mid-East Commission Region, Certified Economic Opportunity Zones' Demographics				
Jurisdiction(s)	Census Tract	Total Population	Median Household Income	Population Below Poverty Level
Beaufort County City of Washington (northern section)	37013930400	4,724	$30,547	32.5%
Bertie County Town of Aulander	37015960200	3,953	$38,448	30.3%
Hertford County Town of Como Town of Murfreesboro	37091950100	7,384	$38,891	24.5%
Martin County Town of Williamston (eastern section)	37117970200	3,905	$38,607	21.0%
Pitt County City of Greenville (northeastern section)	37147000900	8,102	$50,422	29.1%
Pitt County City of Greenville (northern section)	37147000800	3,270	$38,139	38.2%
Pitt County City of Greenville (north-central section)	37147000701	3,248	$25,601	40.4%
City of Greenville (central section)	37147000702	2,910	$22,633	56.1%

(2019 US Census American Community Survey)

The question at hand is how the Mid-East Region can take advantage of Opportunity Zones and use these designations as catalysts to help achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the CEDS. Rural LISC has developed an Opportunity Zone Playbook for community stakeholders which recommends the following action steps:

1. Hold a stakeholder meeting.
2. Embark on a plan for work in the Opportunity Zones.
3. Incentives and guardrails in the Opportunity Zones.
4. Collaborate to build pipeline and leverage local expertise.
5. Ramp up your investor marketing.
6. Develop impact metrics and encourage transparency.

The CEDS Advisory Committee is uniquely qualified to lead the way on action steps one and two above, holding a stakeholder meeting and embarking on a plan for work in the Opportunity Zones. There are already a number of public, private, and non-profit organizations represented on the committee from across the region.

The planning phase is a critical opportunity to bring a range of community stakeholders to the table, to safeguard a balanced and all-encompassing process, and to elevate the community's voice. For Opportunity Zones to fulfill their intended purpose, this aspect of the process is crucial (Rural LISC).

Action step three refers to identification and creation of incentives and guardrails in the Opportunity Zones. Outside of the federal incentives discussed previously, there are currently no state or local incentives for Opportunity Zones investments in Region Q. The Rural LISC playbook recommends principal financing tools that can be harnessed for launching Opportunity Zone projects, including:

- Tax Increment Finance (TIF)
    - Tax Increment Finance (TIF) is a mechanism for capturing the future tax benefits of real estate improvements to cover the present costs of those improvements. This tool is used to pay for infrastructure, land acquisitions, demolition and planning on sites where development would not otherwise occur. TIF districts, which extend from 10 to 40 years, depending on jurisdiction, could be created in or around Opportunity Zones to support key infrastructure.
- Private activity bonds
    - Private Activity Bonds are issued by a state or local authority on behalf of a nongovernmental project, such as the expansion of a small manufacturer or hospital. When these bonds are "qualified," by being issued for one of several defined purposes, they are exempt from federal income taxes. The tax exemption enables the project to access capital at a lower interest rate than could otherwise be achieved, thereby facilitating a larger or more secure project.
- Access to capital tools
    - Entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses often have a difficult time accessing capital, as they may not have the credit or sufficient business history to qualify for conventional financing. This presents an opportunity for state and local entities to create new financing tools or target existing ones to these types of businesses in Opportunity Zones, including revolving loan funds and micro-loan funds, both of which currently exist in Region Q.
- Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)
    - Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is an innovative tool that allows property owners to access affordable financing for energy efficiency improvements on their homes or businesses—and could encourage investments in older, less efficient buildings that may otherwise sit vacant. Over 30 states including North Carolina have PACE legislation.
- Tax incentives and abatements
    - State and local incentives, primarily in the form of tax abatements, are one of the most popular and efficient forms of direct development assistance. They can offer relief from sales, income or other tax liabilities, typically with strict

performance based award requirements and due diligence measures to ensure the abatement creates the desired effect. Tax abatement programs could attract investors and developers to Opportunity Zones.

- Federal financing tools
  - There are more than 100 different federal programs that support economic development. Many provide funding to state or local governments, while others directly finance a business, industry or intermediary. Knowing the landscape of federal programs will help state and local practitioners take advantage of opportunities that may apply to Opportunity Zone projects. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is one applicable example of a program that could be utilized in conjunction with Opportunity Zones.

The Rural LISC playbook also recommends the following guardrails for Opportunity Zone projects:

- Adhere to existing Comprehensive Plans.
  - Existing Comprehensive Plans for Region Q are already categorized in a database.
- Create impact standards required to receive additional state and local incentives.
- Find private partners dedicated to creating impact.
- Review and revise existing zoning ordinances.
  - Many local governments are currently in the process of doing this due to new North Carolina General Statutes 160d legislation.
- Clearly articulate types of projects desired in an Opportunity Zone Investment Prospectus.

Action step four refers to collaborating to build a pipeline and leverage local expertise. One recommendation is to form a state or regional consortium, which can also be thought of as an implementation committee. With the addition of key representation including private developers and investment firms, the existing CEDS Advisory Committee is uniquely qualified to lead the way on this action step in Region Q.

Another recommended approach to advance the process is financial feasibility modeling, where models are created for the financial feasibility of particular asset class priorities that emerge in the planning process. By doing a preliminary analysis of development costs and sources of capital (including Opportunity Zone proceeds) and reconciling these sources and uses with operating projections, stakeholders can sharpen what strategies and resources they will need to create critical neighborhood assets such as affordable housing, day care centers, health centers, commercial and other community facilities.

Action step five refers to ramping up investment marketing. Marketing is also a common theme throughout the Mid-East CEDS and the Regional Collaborative Strategic Plan, with committee members stressing the importance of augmented marketing for the region as a priority goal. Once there's a plan in place for Opportunity Zones, local officials must cultivate strategies to attract Opportunity Zone investors. A prospectus is a key way to highlight the potential for investment, describe the types of financing needed, emphasize work that has already been done to develop neighborhoods, and define a vision for the future. This prospectus could then be marketed to developers inside and outside of the region.

Moreover, community partners can leverage the interest in Opportunity Zones to attract attention to their tracts. Presenting at Opportunity Zone forums beyond the region can generate interest. State, regional and local officials, meanwhile, could create interactive websites to help investors identify the various Opportunity Zones within a particular jurisdiction and assess the resources, incentives and development possibilities that exist. A consortium or Implementation Committee website could also send a strong signal to investors and developers that stakeholders are working together to develop their Opportunity Zones.

The final action step refers to developing impact metrics and encouraging transparency. Rigorous evaluation and accessible reporting are keys to all-encompassing and balanced success in the Opportunity Zones. One of the chief concerns about Opportunity Zones, especially for community leaders and government officials, is that some investments will prioritize profit over the needs and desires of communities. Currently, Opportunity Funds are not required to demonstrate that they are providing tangible benefits to communities.

There are different approaches to measuring the impact of these investments, ranging from voluntary and self-defined monitoring to required fairness related benchmarks. Some experts call for fund-level monitoring of investments; others seek to track community changes over time. Rural LISC recommends that state, regional and local government leaders collaborate with communities to establish specific, reasonable Opportunity Fund reporting requirements. With input from community residents and organizations, they can help encourage transparency and accountability, and point funds toward community-benefiting activities. Rural LISC also recommends that reporting focus on the direct connection between investments and outcomes, not just on broader indicators.

Economic Opportunity Zones in Region Q provide an opportunity to help implement many of the goals and objectives of the CEDs. Goals and objectives for which implementation projects could take direct advantage of Opportunity Zone legislation include the following:

- Goal 1: Brand and market the Mid-East Region in order to support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, highlight educational opportunities, nurture continued development of target clusters, attract new employers, broaden the regional economy
- and retain the millennial and Gen-Z generations.
    - Objective 2: Use the cluster analysis to target existing businesses and start-ups and market the benefits of locating in the region.
- Goal 2: Complete and maintain the physical infrastructure needed to support industrial, commercial and residential development in rural areas, including broadband service, multi-modal transportation connections, affordable housing, and utilities such as electricity, water, sewer and natural gas service.
    - Objective 2: Plan for and expand broadband infrastructure to all areas of the region, including the "last mile" in rural areas until all households, businesses and organizations are served.
    - Objective 3: Research the current housing stock, identify additional needs and develop and implement a plan for the availability of a variety of housing options.
    - Objective 5: Expand sewer and natural gas infrastructure to existing and anticipated future industrial areas.
- Goal 3: Support and help revitalize safe, walkable communities with vibrant urban and

town centers, thriving rural areas, a variety of housing options, affordable services, and healthy citizens.

- o Objective 2: Plan for and accelerate investments in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods and ensure that insufficiently catered to and distressed communities are engaged in the planning process.
- o Objective 3: Plan for and implement the restoration and preservation of urban and town centers.
- o Objective 6: Capitalize on natural resources and recreation opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for citizens and support ecotourism.
- o Objective 7: Address food deserts where there is a lack of options for healthy, fresh foods. Develop healthy eating resources to address dietary challenges in low income rural areas.

- Goal 4: Develop a workforce with 21st Century skills by retaining the millennial and Gen-Z generations, expanding access to higher education, workforce, and vocational training, increasing collaboration with employers, expanding access to entrepreneurial support, and providing incubator spaces for small businesses.
  - o Objective 3: Develop ways to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem across the region which supports existing small businesses and nurture the development and growth of new small businesses.
  - o Objective 5: Provide the atmosphere and amenities desired by the millennial and Gen-Z generations.

Identified vital projects which could take direct advantage of Opportunity Zone legislation include the following:

- Establishment of business incubator facilities throughout the region.
- Construction or expansion of workforce training centers.
- Completion of infrastructure throughout industrial and/or technology parks.
- Extension of infrastructure including water, wastewater, roads, electric, rail, gas and broadband to new industries.
- Nurture continued development of target clusters identified in the local and regional cluster analyses.
- Regionalization of water and wastewater systems where appropriate.
- Revitalization of downtown areas throughout the region.
- Enhance the regional meeting capabilities throughout the region.
- Expand hotels/accommodations for visitors to the region.
- Create a regional partnership to ensure that high-speed broadband internet access is available in all areas of the region, including the last mile in rural areas. Take advantage of available grant programs and garner support for local input to be a driving factor when selecting firms to deliver on contracts.
- Ensure access to a variety of housing options and quality K-12 education in all areas of the region.
- Develop additional affordable housing stock, including apartments, and support affordable housing to encourage growth in communities.
- Nurture the development of new, desirable industrial buildings (shell buildings) which can be customized to meet the needs of a variety of industries.
- Expansion of sewer and natural gas infrastructure to additional areas, especially anticipated future industrial areas.

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As emphasized previously, communicating the benefits of investing in Opportunity Zones to developers and investors will be key to using the Opportunity Zone legislation as a catalyst to get projects on the ground.

General Evaluation Criteria

While specific performance measures are located under each objective, the following general performance measures will be used to evaluate the Mid-East Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS.

1. Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS.
2. Number and types of investments undertaken in the region.
3. Number of jobs retained in the region.
4. Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS.
5. Changes in the economic environment of the region.

Thank you very much to those of you who helped make this plan possible – and to everyone who is dedicated to working on its implementation.

Appendix A: Past and Present EDA Investments

FY (yyyy)	EDA Approval Date	Appl Short Name	Project Short Descrip	Proj County Name	EDA $	Local/Applicant $
1965	3/31/1965	Employment Security Off	Housekeeper	Pitt	$0.00	$0.00
1966	3/25/1966	Aurora Township	Extend Sewage Facility	Beaufort	$1,761.00	$0.00
1966	6/2/1966	Belhaven Town of	Water & Sewer System	Beaufort	$528,000.00	$528,000.00
1966	3/28/1966	E Carolina College	Dev Center East Carolina	Pitt	$129,000.00	$0.00
1966	3/25/1966	Greenville Util Comm.	Sewage Outfall Line	Pitt	$875.00	$0.00
1966	3/3/1966	Greenville Util Comm.	Sewage Outfall Line	Pitt	$330,000.00	$330,000.00
1966	3/2/1966	Washington City of	Water & Sewer	Beaufort	$107,000.00	$117,000.00
1966	3/2/1966	Washington Twnshp	Water And Sewer	Beaufort	$1,377.00	$0.00
1966	4/25/1966	Windsor North Carolina	Ind Waste Treat Fac	Bertie	$42,000.00	$42,000.00
1967	5/5/1967	Ayden Town of	Treatment Lagoon/sewer	Pitt	$54,000.00	$54,000.00
1967	5/22/1967	E Carolina College	Cont Expansion NC Inst	Pitt	$130,000.00	$23,000.00
1968	4/8/1968	E Carolina College	Tech Asst Com Econ Dev	Pitt	$111,000.00	$55,000.00
1968	6/28/1968	Mid-East Commission	Plan Asst Grant	Beaufort	$40,000.00	$13,000.00
1968	4/30/1968	Utility Assn Inc	Sewer And Water System	Bertie	$143,000.00	$143,000.00
1969	6/3/1969	Beaufort Cnty Tech Inst	1-Story Voc Tech Bldg	Beaufort	$0.00	$120,000.00
1969	4/18/1969	E Carolina College	Cont Expansion NC Ins	Pitt	$135,938.00	$145,051.00
1969	5/31/1969	Utility Assn Inc	Sewer And Water System	Bertie	$24,500.00	$24,500.00
1970	12/24/1969	Martin Technical Inst	Expand Technical Inst	Martin	$0.00	$305,000.00
1970	6/22/1970	Mid-East Commission	Public Service Career	Beaufort	$105,000.00	$0.00
1970	10/15/1969	Mid-East Commission	Continuation Plan Grant	Beaufort	$48,000.00	$16,225.00
1970	11/3/1969	Winterville Town of	Wtr Line/swg Coll Line	Pitt	$0.00	$75,000.00
1971	12/15/1970	Greenville Util Comm.	Expand Gas Lines	Pitt	$181,200.00	$120,800.00

1971	12/15/1970	Greenville Util Comm.	Swg. Trt. Facilities	Pitt	$627,350.00	$501,890.00
1971	12/15/1970	Greenville Util Comm.	Water Plt Exp	Pitt	$649,200.00	$432,800.00
1971	9/8/1970	Mid-East Commission	Feas/Indus Complex	Beaufort	$75,000.00	$0.00
1971	11/17/1970	Mid-East Commission	Second Continuation	Beaufort	$45,600.00	$22,880.00
1972	6/20/1972	East Carolina Univ	Auditorium Building	Pitt	$294,600.00	$98,200.00
1972	10/6/1971	Mid-East Commission	Third Continuation	Beaufort	$45,600.00	$17,898.00
1972	6/15/1972	Roanoke-Chowan Tech Coll	Technical School	Hertford	$900,000.00	$300,000.00
1972	6/22/1972	Williamston Town of	Wtr/swr Ext TO Ind PK	Martin	$124,000.00	$64,900.00
1973	6/13/1973	East Carolina Univ	Auditorium Building	Pitt	$39,000.00	$26,000.00
1973	6/20/1973	Farmville Town of	Water Supply/storage	Pitt	$243,000.00	$162,000.00
1973	11/6/1972	Mid-East Commission	Fourth Continuation	Beaufort	$79,800.00	$45,441.00
1973	5/1/1973	Mid-East Commission	Print Indust Park Study	Hyde	$5,000.00	$0.00
1973	6/21/1973	Williamston Town of	Wtr/swr Ext TO Ind PK	Martin	$57,500.00	$57,500.00
1974	5/17/1974	Mid-East Commission	Supp Plan Grant	Beaufort	$45,600.00	$15,200.00
1975	6/25/1975	Mid-East Commission	A-95 Review	Beaufort	$4,000.00	$1,334.00
1976	10/28/1975	Econ Improvement Corp	Eic, Inc Community Food	Pitt	$0.00	$0.00
1976	5/21/1976	Farmville Town of	Ind PK Feas Study	Pitt	$30,000.00	$10,000.00
1976	4/22/1976	Greenville Util Comm.	Sewer System Additions	Pitt	$223,500.00	$223,500.00
1976	9/2/1976	Hertford County	Ind PK Feas Stdy	Hertford	$30,000.00	$10,000.00
1976	7/13/1976	Mid-East Commission	Supp Plan Grant	Beaufort	$12,600.00	$4,200.00
1976	7/20/1976	Mid-East Commission	Supp A-95 Review	Beaufort	$5,000.00	$1,666.00
1976	8/18/1975	Mid-East Commission	Fifth Continuation	Beaufort	$50,200.00	$16,732.00
1976	8/1/1975	Williamston Town of	Pa+nt & Clean Houses	Martin	$0.00	$0.00
1977	3/16/1977	Beaufort Cnty Tech Inst	Vocational Educa Bldg	Beaufort	$480,000.00	$320,000.00
1977	1/7/1977	Jamesville Town of	Swr-Wtr Tmt Plant	Martin	$0.00	$0.00
1977	9/19/1977	Mid-East Commission	Supp A-95 Review	Beaufort	$3,000.00	$1,000.00
1977	9/30/1977	Mid-East Commission	Prof Svcs Grant	Beaufort	$20,000.00	$6,667.00
1977	11/5/1976	Mid-East Commission	Sixth Continuation	Beaufort	$50,200.00	$16,734.00
1977	8/24/1977	Tri County Airport Auth	Air Terminal	Hertford	$167,000.00	$150,000.00

1978	10/21/1977	Beaufort Cnty Tech Inst	Vocational Educa Bldg	Beaufort	$62,459.00	$41,640.00
1978	4/12/1978	Martin County	Ind Site Study	Martin	$30,000.00	$10,000.00
1978	10/27/1977	Mid-East Commission	Seventh Continuation	Beaufort	$50,200.00	$16,734.00
1979	3/23/1979	Mid-East Commission	Planning Suppl	Beaufort	$5,025.00	$1,675.00
1979	12/11/1978	Mid-East Commission	Planning Cont	Beaufort	$50,200.00	$16,734.00
1980	6/13/1980	American Contract Pkgrs	Gw/c Drug Packaging	Martin	$0.00	$0.00
1980	6/13/1980	American Contract Pkgrs	Gfa Drug Packaging	Martin	$0.00	$0.00
1980	11/7/1979	Mid-East Commission	Planning Cont	Beaufort	$55,225.00	$18,409.00
1981	10/31/1980	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Cont Plng Grant	Beaufort	$55,225.00	$18,408.00
1981	8/31/1981	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$13,807.00	$4,602.00
1981	1/14/1981	Robersonville Town of	Sewer Line Ext TO Ind	Martin	$780,000.00	$150,000.00
1982	5/6/1982	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$27,613.00	$9,205.00
1982	8/4/1982	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$27,613.00	$9,205.00
1983	2/2/1983	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$12,978.00	$4,326.00
1983	8/11/1983	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$42,248.00	$14,083.00
1983	9/5/1983	Williamston Town of	Expand Wtr Distr Sys	Martin	$336,000.00	$336,500.00
1984	8/27/1984	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$55,225.00	$18,409.00
1984	8/27/1984	Washington City of	Wtr/swr & Elec Ser	Beaufort	$324,000.00	$216,000.00
1985	9/9/1985	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$55,225.00	$18,409.00
1986	9/9/1986	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$45,200.00	$15,067.00
1987	8/24/1987	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$53,000.00	$17,667.00
1988	8/25/1988	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$53,000.00	$17,667.00
1988	10/19/1987	Robersonville Town of	Exp Wtr Sup,Elev Tank	Martin	$478,800.00	$319,200.00
1989	6/21/1989	Mid-East Commission	Dstrct Suppl Plng Grt	Beaufort	$53,000.00	$17,667.00
1990	3/10/1990	Mid-East Commission	RLF	Beaufort	$300,000.00	$100,000.00
1990	7/2/1990	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	$53,000.00	$17,667.00
1990	4/2/1990	Washington City of	Exp Wtr&wstwtr Collec LN	Beaufort	$537,500.00	$537,500.00
1991	6/14/1991	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	$53,000.00	$17,667.00
1992	6/29/1992	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	$56,000.00	$18,667.00
1993	6/17/1993	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	$55,000.00	$18,334.00

1994	6/24/1994	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	$57,000.00	$19,000.00
1995	5/12/1995	Beaufort Cnty Cmty Coll	2-Way Voice,Video & Data	Beaufort	$900,000.00	$600,000.00
1995	6/19/1995	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	$87,000.00	$29,000.00
1996	7/15/1996	Mid-East Commission	Dist Renl Pln&adm Grt	Beaufort	$52,000.00	$47,334.00
1997	8/6/1997	Martin County	Ind PK Dev Plan	Martin	$15,000.00	$5,000.00
1997	6/16/1997	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Beaufort	$142,000.00	$47,334.00
1997	8/15/1997	Robersonville Town of	Wstwtr Trtmnt Improv	Martin	$1,155,000.00	$1,025,000.00
1998	11/10/1997	Ayden Town of	Wtr Sys Dist Improv	Pitt	$39,491.00	$200,000.00
1998	2/25/1998	Beaufort Cnty-Washington	Wtr,Swr Ext	Beaufort	$1,009,338.00	$229,788.00
1998	7/14/1998	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Beaufort	$52,000.00	$17,334.00
1998	10/21/1997	Pitt County	Eastern Carolina Tech CT	Pitt	$400,000.00	$445,000.00
1999	7/1/1999	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Beaufort	$59,500.00	$19,834.00
1999	7/7/1999	Robersonville Town of	O/R on Constn.Contract	Martin	$270,000.00	$270,000.00
2000	9/27/2000	Mid-East Commission	EDA Mitigation Grant	Beaufort	$100,000.00	$25,000.00
2000	7/3/2000	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Multi	$52,000.00	$17,334.00
2000	11/4/1999	Mid-East Commission	Economic Impact Study	Multi	$46,000.00	$0.00
2000	8/17/2000	Winton	Upgrade WWTP & Sewer Sys	Hertford	$911,038.00	$200,000.00
2001	5/9/2001	Greenville	Floodproofing	Pitt	$1,543,000.00	$1,543,000.00
2001	6/8/2001	Hertford Co. So. Wtr.Dis	Water System Improvement	Hertford	$500,000.00	$0.00
2001	7/12/2001	Mid-East Commission	Dist Pl&adm Grant	Multi	$52,000.00	$17,334.00
2001	4/2/2001	Mid-East Commission	Hurricane Floyd Recovery	Multi	$40,000.00	$10,000.00
2001	4/2/2001	Robersonville Town of	Wastewater Improvements	Martin	$661,000.00	$661,000.00
2001	6/28/2001	Washington City of	Wastewater Floodproofing	Beaufort	$1,500,000.00	$1,000,000.00
2002	7/23/2002	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$52,000.00	$17,334.00
2002	9/24/2002	Regional Science Center	Science Ctr design study	Multi	$50,000.00	$50,000.00
2002	8/15/2002	Washington, City of	WastewaterTreatmt Plant	Beaufort	$1,500,000.00	$1,716,500.00
2003	4/25/2003	Beaufort Co Committee	Skills Ctr Construction	Beaufort	$356,000.00	$356,100.00
2003	8/4/2003	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$52,000.00	$17,334.00

Year	Date	Recipient	Project	County	Amount 1	Amount 2
2003	12/31/2003	Windsor, Town of	Infrastructure Imprvemnt	Bertie	$1,500,000.00	$1,285,400.00
2004	9/13/2004	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$52,000.00	$17,334.00
2005	6/21/2005	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$52,000.00	$17,334.00
2006	6/23/2006	Farmville	Water System Improvement	Pitt	$1,000,000.00	$6,261,570.00
2006	6/17/2006	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment		$53,500.00	$35,667.00
2007	7/1/2007	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Invest- 6 mo. Ext	Multi	$26,500.00	$26,500.00
2007	11/28/2007	Greenville/GUC	Aquifer Storage Recovery	Pitt	$703,000.00	$704,375.00
2007	12/14/2007	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Investment	Multi	$53,000.00	$35,333.00
2009	12/23/2009	Beaufort County/ BCCC	Allied Health Building	Beaufort	$2,500,000.00	$4,123,593.00
2010	8/25/2010	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Investment(Supp)	Multi	$20,000.00	$13,333.00
2011	9/20/2011	Mid-East Commission	Hurricane Irene Mitigation	Multi	$50,000.00	$21,429.00
2012	1/30/2012	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$189,000.00	$126,000.00
2013	9/11/2013	City of Washington	Hurricane Irene	Beaufort	$1,442,049.00	$1,410,107.00
2014	12/24/2014	Pitt County/PCC	Science & Tech. Bldg.	Pitt	$2,000,000.00	$16,310,805.00
2014	12/30/2014	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$189,000.00	$189,000.00
2015	FY 2015	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$189,000.00	$189,000.00
2017	FY 2017	Mid-East Commission	EDD Plng Investment (Supp)	Multi	$7,000.00	$7,000.00
2017	FY 2017	East Carolina University	eNC Innovates! Project	Pitt	$498,443.00	$503,176.00
2018	FY 2018	Mid-East Commission	EDD Planning Investment	Multi	$210,000.00	$90,000.00
2019	FY 2019	Mid-East Commission	Disaster Recov. Coordinator	Multi	$200,000.00	$50,000.00
2020	FY 2020	Mid-East Commission	CARES ACT	Multi	$400,000.00	0.00
2020	FY 2020	Mid-East Commission	Revolving Loan Fund	Multi	$671,000.00	0.00
					$33,798,879.00	$46,622,076.00

Appendix B: 2022 CEDS Advisory Committee Members

Beaufort County

Economic Developer
Beaufort County Economic Development
Martyn Johnson, Director, Retired

Beaufort County Economic Development
Brad Hufford, Director

Beaufort County Economic Development
Susan Squires, Economic Development Specialist

Education
Beaufort County Community College
Dr. Stacey Gerard, Vice President of Continuing Education

Beaufort County Community College
Lentz Stowe, Small Business Center Director

Private Sector
Carver Machine Works
Lindsey Crisp, President & CEO

The Mulberry House Brewery
Mohamed Ali Darar, Owner

Community
Washington-Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce
Catherine Glover, Director

Public Official
Beaufort County Board of Commissioners
Ed Booth, County Commissioner

Bertie County

Economic Developer
Bertie County Economic Development
Steve Biggs, Director

Bertie County Economic Development
Robin Payne, Grant Writer

Education
Served by Martin Community College

Private Sector
Southern Bank
Crystal Godwin, City Executive

Agricultural
Carl Bond, Bertie County Economic Development Board Member
Retired from US Dept. of Agriculture

Community
Windsor-Bertie Chamber of Commerce
Lewis Hoggard, Director

Public Official
Bertie County Board of Commissioners
Ron Wesson, County Commissioner

Hertford County

Economic Developer
Hertford County Economic Development
Kelly Bowers, Director

Education
Roanoke Chowan Community College
Dr. Murray Williams, Director

Roanoke Chowan Community College
Dr. Stephanie Benson

Private Sector
Alfiniti Inc.
Steve James, President

Community
Ahoskie Chamber of Commerce
Amy Braswell, Director

Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce
Daryl Williams, Director

Public Official
Hertford County Board of Commissioners
John Hornton, Vice Chairman

Martin County

Economic Developer
Martin County Economic Development Commission
Jason Semple, Director

Education
Martin County Community College
Maureen Green, Director of Research/Effectiveness/Liaison

Martin County Community College
Charles Banks, Small Business Center Director

Private Sector
Flagstone Foods
Tony Hinton, Employee and Community Relations Manager

Community
Martin County Chamber of Commerce
Rebecca Harned, Director

Public Official
Town of Bear Grass
Charlotte Griffin, Mayor

Pitt County

Economic Developer
Pitt County Economic Development
Wayne Rollins, Business Retention and Expansion Specialist

Education
Pitt Community College
Dr. Johnny Smith, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement

Pitt Community College
Jim Ensor, Small Business Center Director

Private Sector
Winnie Jenkins
Farrior Steel Works, HR Manager

Community
Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce
Kimber Stone, Director of Member Relations & Programs

Public Official
Pitt County
Melvin McLawhorn, Pitt County Commissioner

Town of Winterville
Veronica Roberson, Councilwoman

Workforce Development
Rivers East Workforce Development Board Staff
Jennie Bowen, Director

Rivers East Workforce Development Board Member
Robert Williams, Rivers East WDB Chairman & Small Business Owner (WMS Marketing)

Economic Development
Economic Development Partnership of NC
Sarah Bernart, Manager of Northeast Region

Greenville-ENC Alliance
Uconda Dunn, Vice President of Business Development

NC East Alliance
Van Rogerson, President

NC East Alliance
Trey Goodson, Regional Economic Developer

Transportation
Greenville MPO
Eliud De Jesus, Transportation Planner

Mid-East RPO
Sam Singleton, Transportation Planner

Peanut Belt RPO
Stephanie Harmon, Transportation Planner

Disaster Recovery
Mid-East Commission
Lisa Williams, Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Education
East Carolina University
Office of Community Engagement and Research
Dr. Sharon Paynter, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Economic and Community Engagement

Smaller Demographics
Association of Mexicans in NC
Juvencio Rocha-Peralta, Director

Appendix C: Pandemic Recovery Addendum

<u>Introduction</u>

With the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing a defining and pivotal moment in our nation's history that will shape the future of our communities. The decisions and resulting actions of our leaders will set the course for either resilience and recovery or economic decline. The 2022 Mid-East CEDS Advisory Committee, a collective of public and private sector representatives from across the five-county region, assisted in the development of this Pandemic Recovery Addendum. A full list of 2022 CEDS Advisory Committee members is included as Appendix B.

To ensure that the Mid-East Region is equipped to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Advisory Committee convened seven times between January – April 2022 to discuss each goal area of the CEDS. Goal areas include Business Recruitment, Retention and Marketing; Physical Infrastructure; Healthy and Safe Communities; and Small Business and Workforce Development. The purpose of each meeting was to determine how the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have shifted or otherwise altered the landscape across the region within each goal area and how the Mid-East Commission, its member governments, and partners, can adjust course under the CEDS.

The purpose of this addendum is to present additional or modified strategies to aid in the region's COVID-19 pandemic response, recovery, and resiliency. This addendum will provide a strategy for regional stakeholders to respond to the economic injuries resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, recover from those existing and ongoing injuries, prevent further economic injuries, and prepare for future economic injuries.

<u>Economic Impact of COVID-19</u>

The economic injuries and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Mid-East Commission's five county region are still emerging and the full extent is not yet realized. However, the following data helps to measure the severity of this pandemic on the region's economy and document the need for a cohesive response, recovery, and resiliency strategy. These baselines, along with project specific data, can be used to measure the response/recovery efforts and contributions of projects and their impacts on the region.

<u>Percent Home on Workdays</u>

The University of Chicago's US COVID Atlas provides data on the percent of workers home on workdays. In January 2020 (pre-pandemic), Beaufort, Bertie, Martin and Pitt Counties had a 23-27% work from home rate, while Hertford County had a 27-30% work from home rate. In January 2021, Beaufort, Martin and Pitt Counties had a 27-30% work from home rate, Bertie County had a 30-36% work from home rate, and Hertford County had a 27-30% work from home rate. In the five county region, Hertford County was the only county with no significant augment in the percentage of at home

workers. While there was an augment in all the other counties, Bertie County had the largest augment in the percentage of at home workers. Figure C-1 shows the January 2020 and January 2021 percent home on workdays.
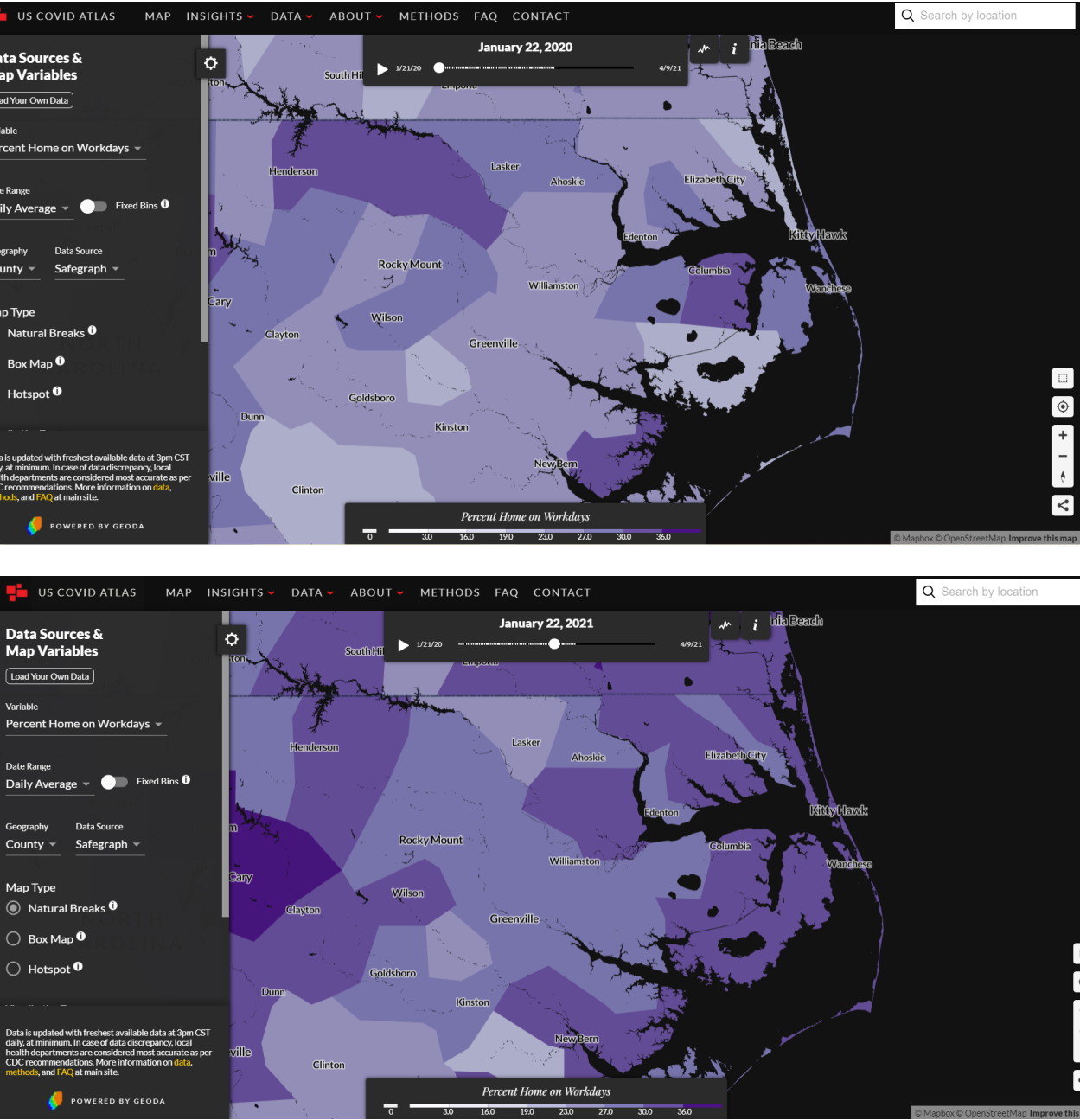

Figure C-1: Percent Home on Workdays (Source: University of Chicago, US COVID Atlas)

Regional Unemployment Rate

From January 2020 (pre-pandemic) to January 2021 (post-pandemic), the Mid-East region saw a 2.0% augment in the unemployment rate, compared to a 3.4% augment for the state as a whole. From January 2021 to December 2021, the region experienced a 2.6% decrease in the unemployment rate, compared to a 2.8% decrease for the state as a whole. The regional unemployment rate has recovered, with the January 2020 pre-pandemic unemployment rate being 4.0%, and the December 2021 unemployment rate being 3.4%. Results were similar for all five counties. While there was an augment in the unemployment rate from January 2020 – January 2021, all counties are now back to pre-pandemic unemployment rates. Figure C-2 shows the COVID-19 impact on the regional unemployment rate.

Regional Unemployment Rate - COVID-19 Impact					
Area	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2021	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - Jan. 2021	Dec. 2021	Percent Change Jan. 2021 - Dec. 2021
Beaufort County	4.2%	6.0%	+1.8%	3.2%	-2.8%
Bertie County	4.9%	6.3%	+1.4%	4.0%	-2.3%
Hertford County	4.7%	6.9%	+2.2%	4.5%	-2.4%
Martin County	4.5%	6.7%	+2.2%	3.6%	-3.1%
Pitt County	3.8%	5.9%	+2.1%	3.2%	-2.7%
Mid-East Region	4.0%	6.0%	+2.0%	3.4%	-2.6%
North Carolina	3.6%	6.0%	+3.4%	3.2%	-2.8%

Figure C-2: Regional Unemployment Rate – COVID-19 Impact (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

Labor Force

There were 136,263 people in the labor force in the Mid-East Region as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 123,606 people in April 2020. Numbers steadily improved and as of December 2021, there were 138,301 people in the labor force in the Mid-East Region. While the region as a whole shows recovery of the number of people in the labor force, there is geographic variability within the region. Figure C-3 shows the number of people in the labor force in the Mid-East Region.

Geography: Rivers East WDB
Type: Not Seasonally Adjusted
Data Type: LaborForce
Graph Type: Original Data Value

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	136,253	137,388	131,160	123,606	127,478	127,092	130,774	130,207	134,989	136,713	136,121	136,459
2021	135,676	136,094	135,837	136,259	135,490	135,673	135,910	134,804	138,329	138,626	138,505	138,301
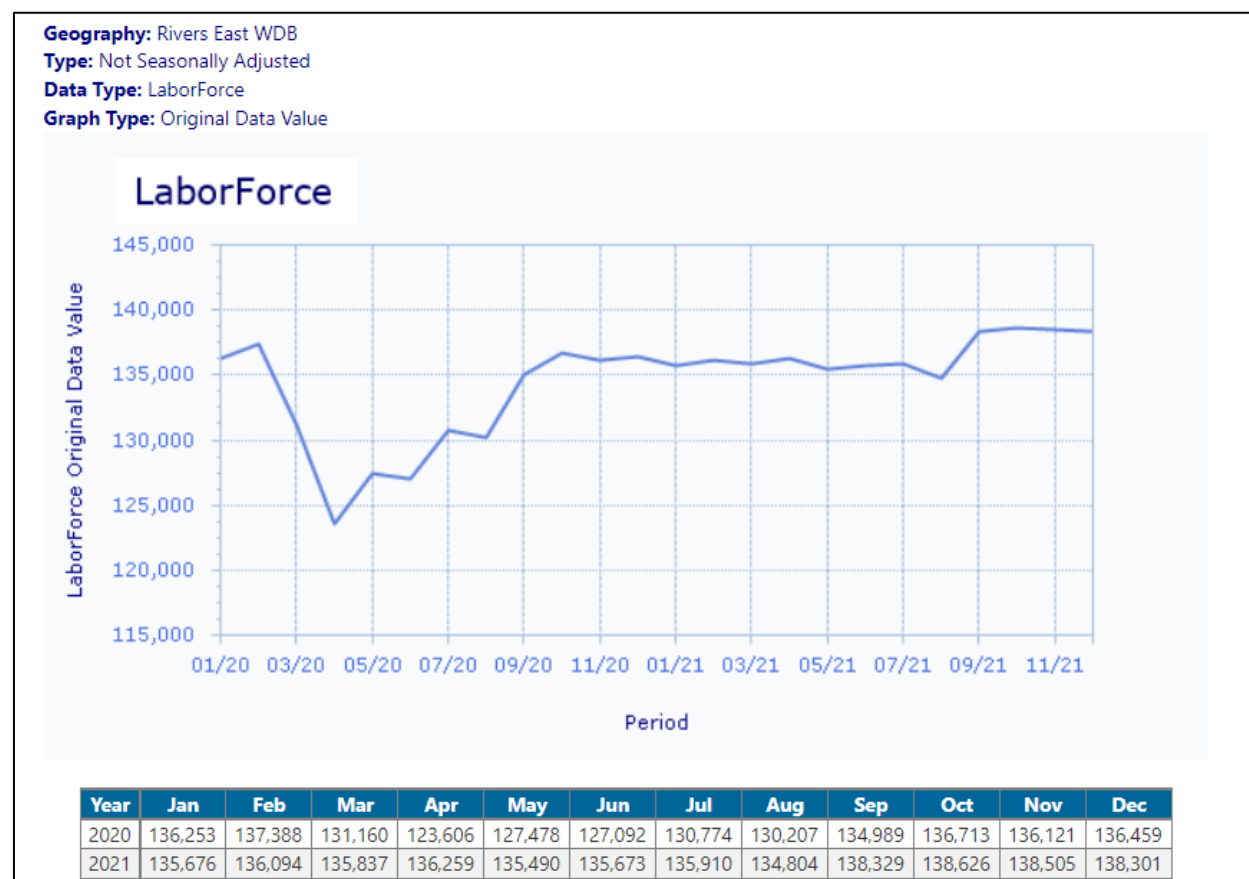
Figure C-3: Mid-East Region Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 19,768 people in the labor force in Beaufort County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 18,049 people in April 2020. Numbers steadily improved and as of December 2021, there were 19,938 people in the labor force in Beaufort County, showing recovery back to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-4 shows the number of people in the labor force in Beaufort County.

Geography: Beaufort County
Type: Not Seasonally Adjusted
Data Type: LaborForce
Graph Type: Original Data Value
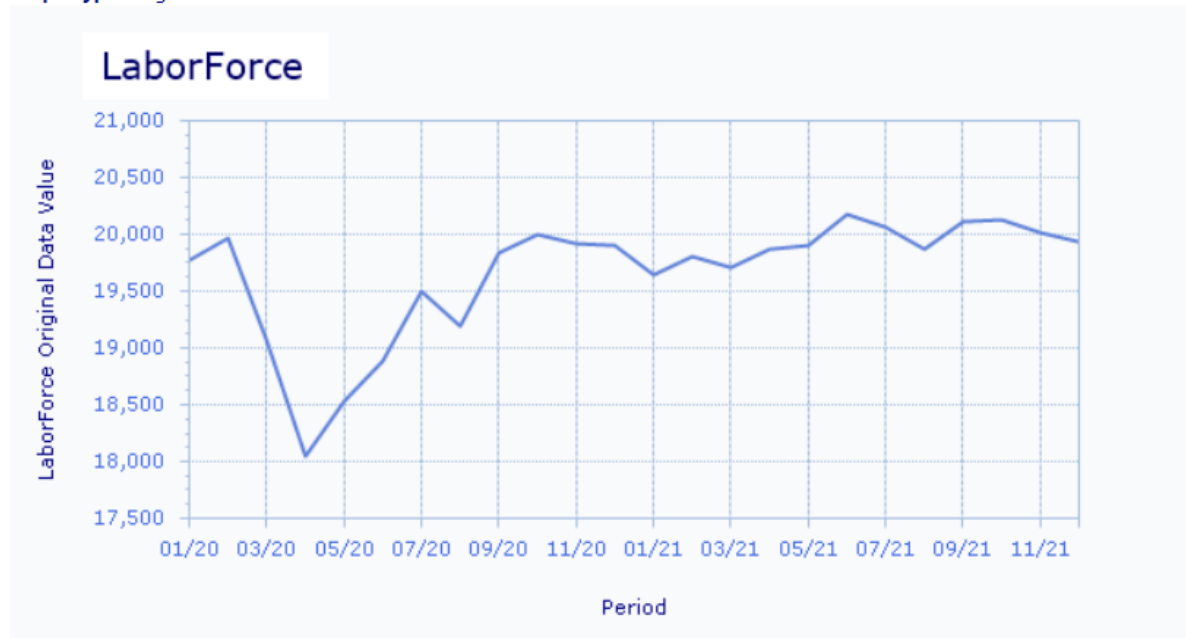
LaborForce

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	19,768	19,968	19,064	18,049	18,540	18,885	19,504	19,189	19,837	20,007	19,923	19,899
2021	19,652	19,801	19,703	19,872	19,898	20,174	20,068	19,873	20,108	20,125	20,021	19,938

Figure C-4: Beaufort County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 7,969 people in the labor force in Bertie County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 7,192 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Bertie County has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 7,450. Figure C-5 shows the number of people in the labor force in Bertie County.
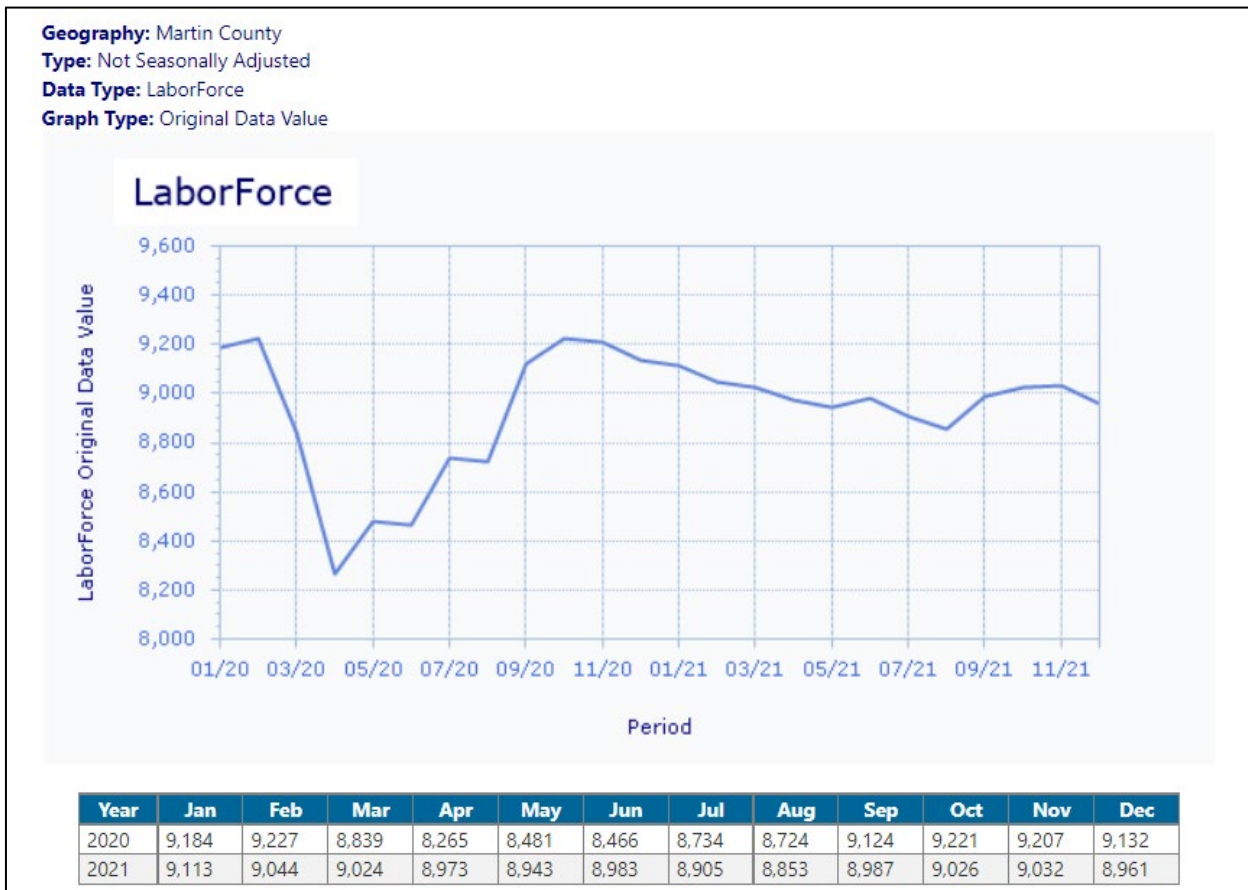
Geography: Bertie County
Type: Not Seasonally Adjusted
Data Type: LaborForce
Graph Type: Original Data Value

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	7,969	7,955	7,572	7,192	7,390	7,290	7,544	7,360	7,698	7,827	7,808	7,813
2021	7,707	7,730	7,570	7,576	7,561	7,541	7,517	7,445	7,451	7,523	7,500	7,450

Figure C-5: Bertie County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 9,357 people in the labor force in Hertford County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 8,547 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Hertford County has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 8,954. Figure C-6 shows the number of people in the labor force in Hertford County.

Geography: Hertford County
Type: Not Seasonally Adjusted
Data Type: LaborForce
Graph Type: Original Data Value

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	9,357	9,352	9,023	8,547	8,849	8,753	8,993	8,769	9,087	9,181	9,140	9,144
2021	8,975	9,007	8,962	9,002	8,984	8,986	8,967	8,863	8,956	9,022	8,992	8,954

Figure C-6: Hertford County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 9,184 people in the labor force in Martin County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 8,265 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Martin County has almost recovered to pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 8,961. Figure C-7 shows the number of people in the labor force in Martin County.

Geography: Martin County
Type: Not Seasonally Adjusted
Data Type: LaborForce
Graph Type: Original Data Value

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	9,184	9,227	8,839	8,265	8,481	8,466	8,734	8,724	9,124	9,221	9,207	9,132
2021	9,113	9,044	9,024	8,973	8,943	8,983	8,905	8,853	8,987	9,026	9,032	8,961

Figure C-7: Martin County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

There were 89,875 people in the labor force in Pitt County as of January 2020. The number in the labor force declined during the pandemic and reached a low of 81,553 people in April 2020. Numbers have fluctuated but shown a general trend toward improvement. The number in the labor force in Pitt County has recovered and augmented from pre-pandemic levels. As of December 2021, the number of people in the labor force in was 92,998. Figure C-8 shows the number of people in the labor force in Pitt County.

Geography: Pitt County
Type: Not Seasonally Adjusted
Data Type: LaborForce
Graph Type: Original Data Value
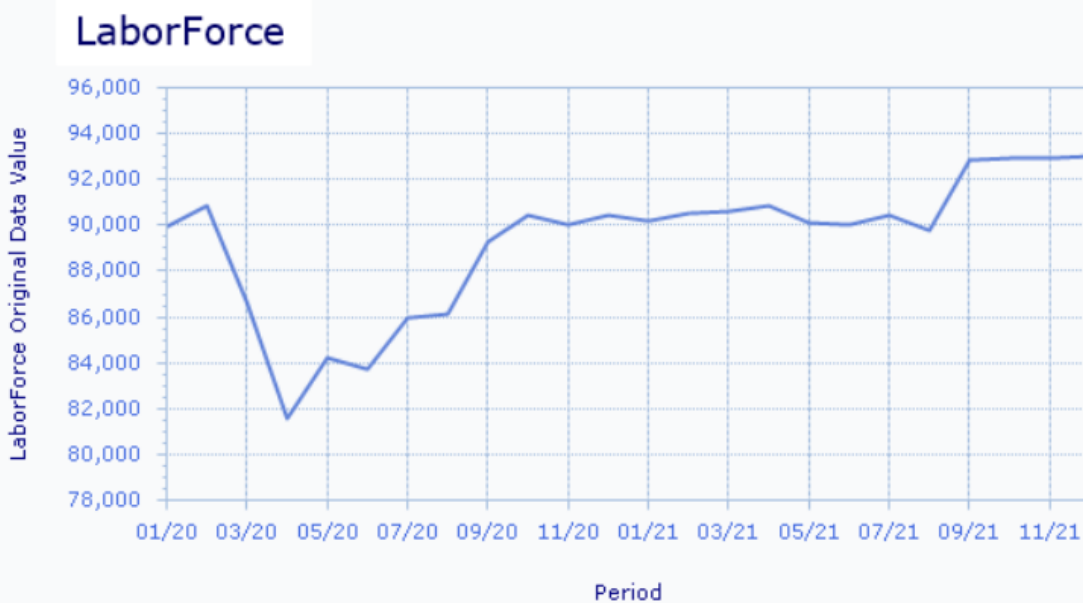
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	89,975	90,886	86,662	81,553	84,218	83,698	85,999	86,165	89,243	90,477	90,043	90,471
2021	90,229	90,512	90,578	90,836	90,104	89,989	90,453	89,770	92,827	92,930	92,960	92,998

Figure C-8: Pitt County Labor Force (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

Unemployment Claimants

The number of initial unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region spiked from
March 2020 – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the
augment in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment
claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in
May-June of 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants and continued
unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region has recovered to pre-pandemic
levels. However, there is geographic variability within the region. Figure C-9 shows
initial unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region and Figure C-10 shows
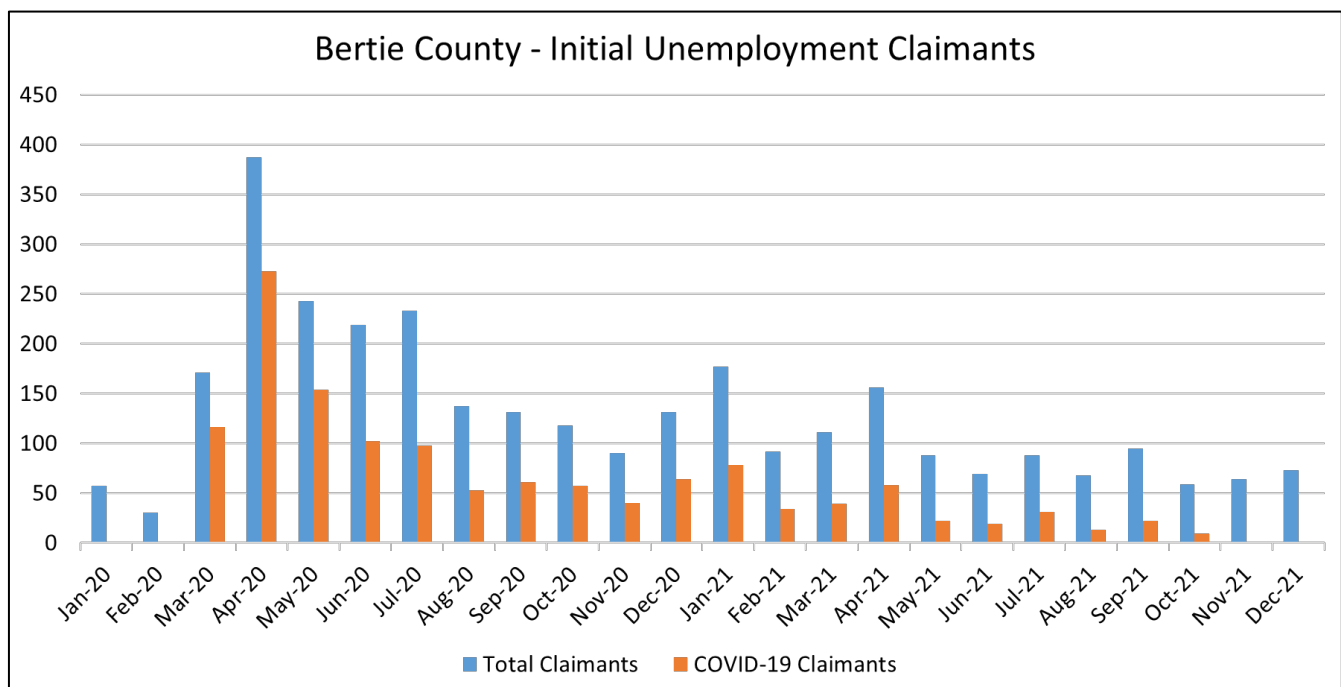continued unemployment claimants in the Mid-East Region.
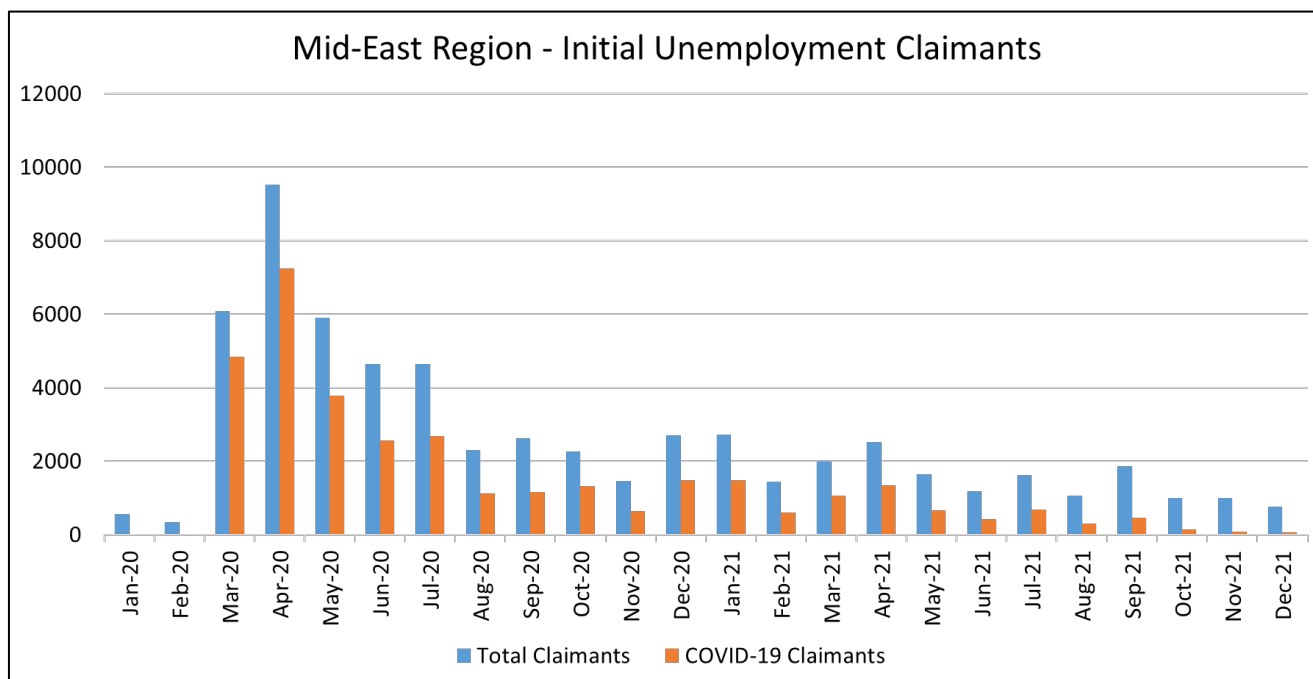
Figure C-9: Mid-East Region Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce,
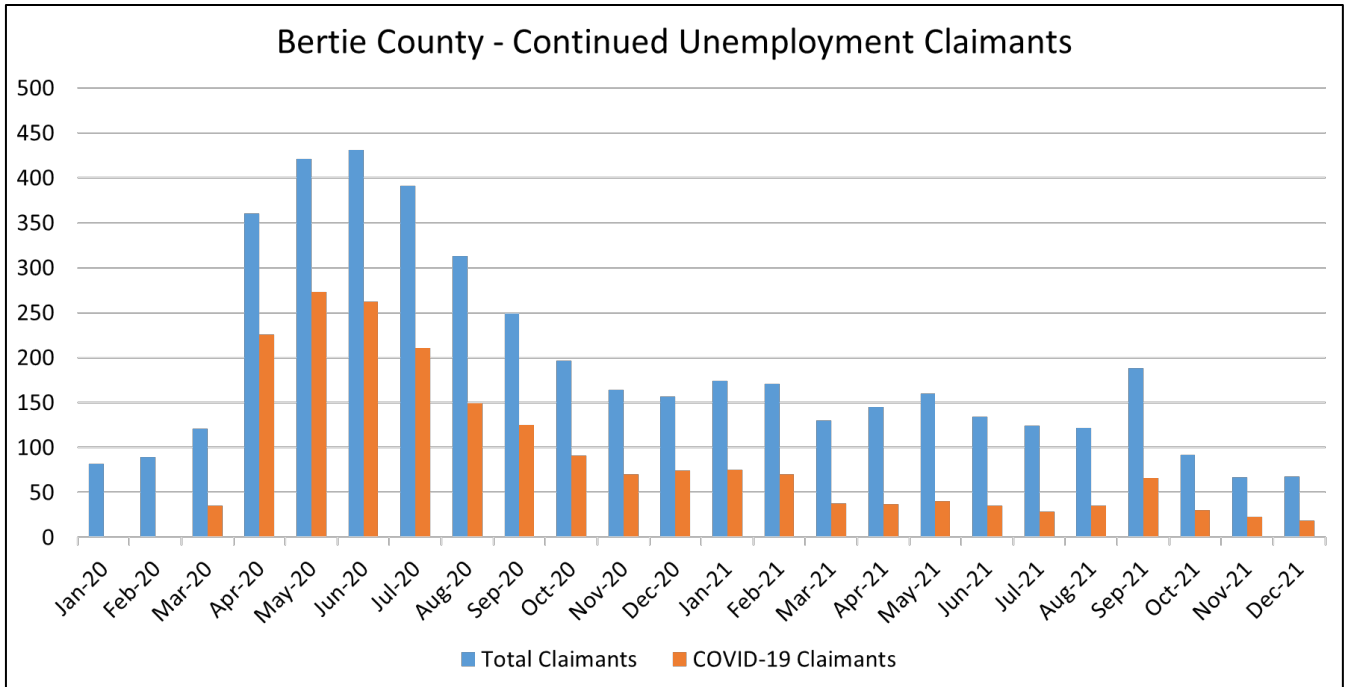Labor and Economic Analysis Division)
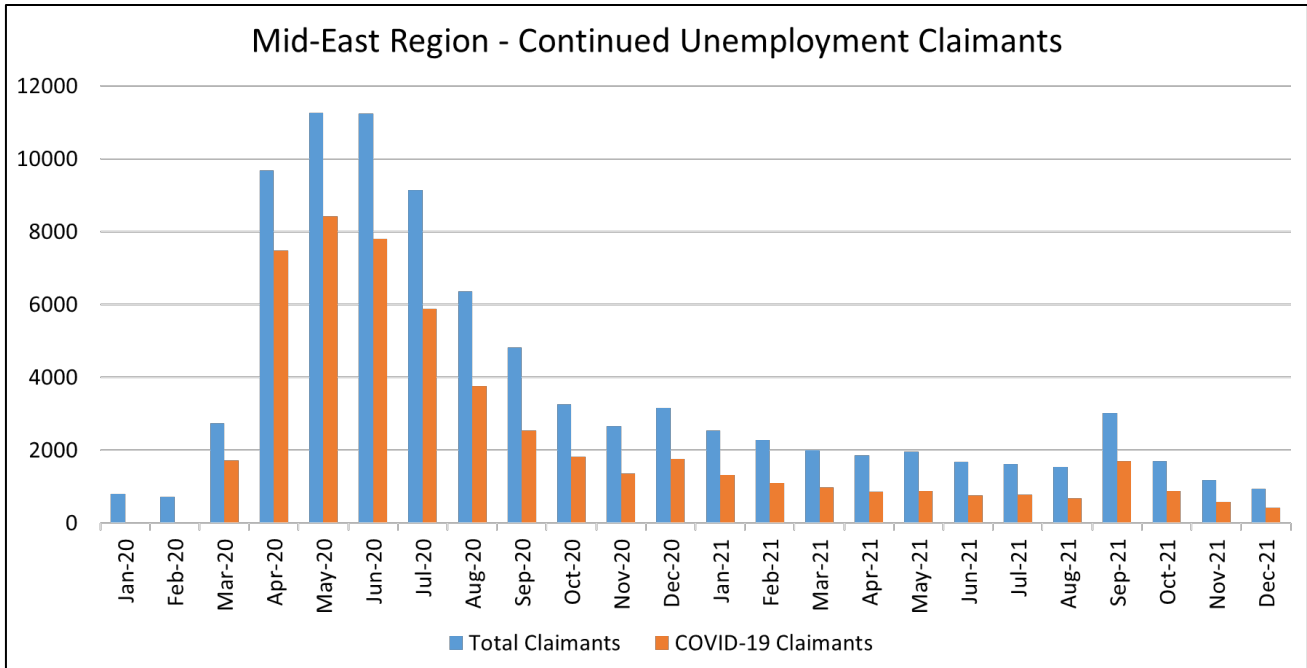
Figure C-10: Mid-East Region Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Beaufort County spiked from March 2020 – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the augment in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in May 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants and continued unemployment claimants in Beaufort County has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-11 shows initial unemployment claimants in Beaufort County and Figure C-12 shows continued unemployment claimants in Beaufort County.
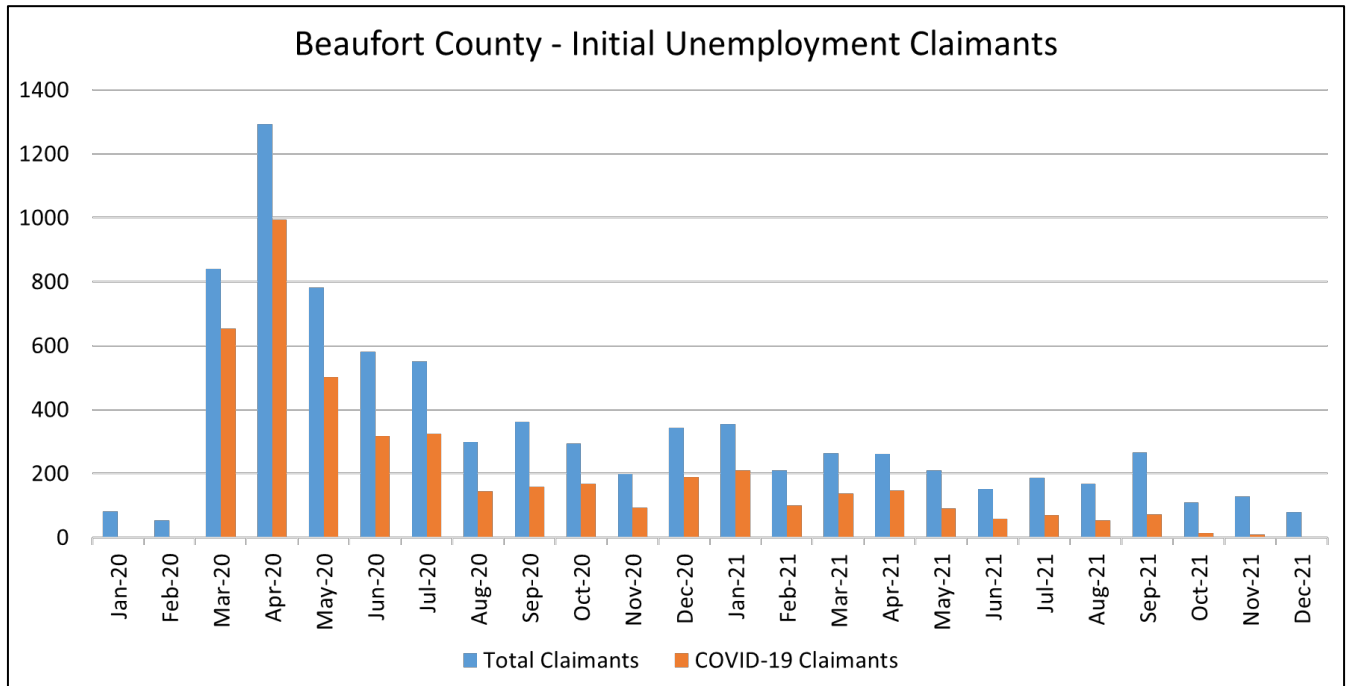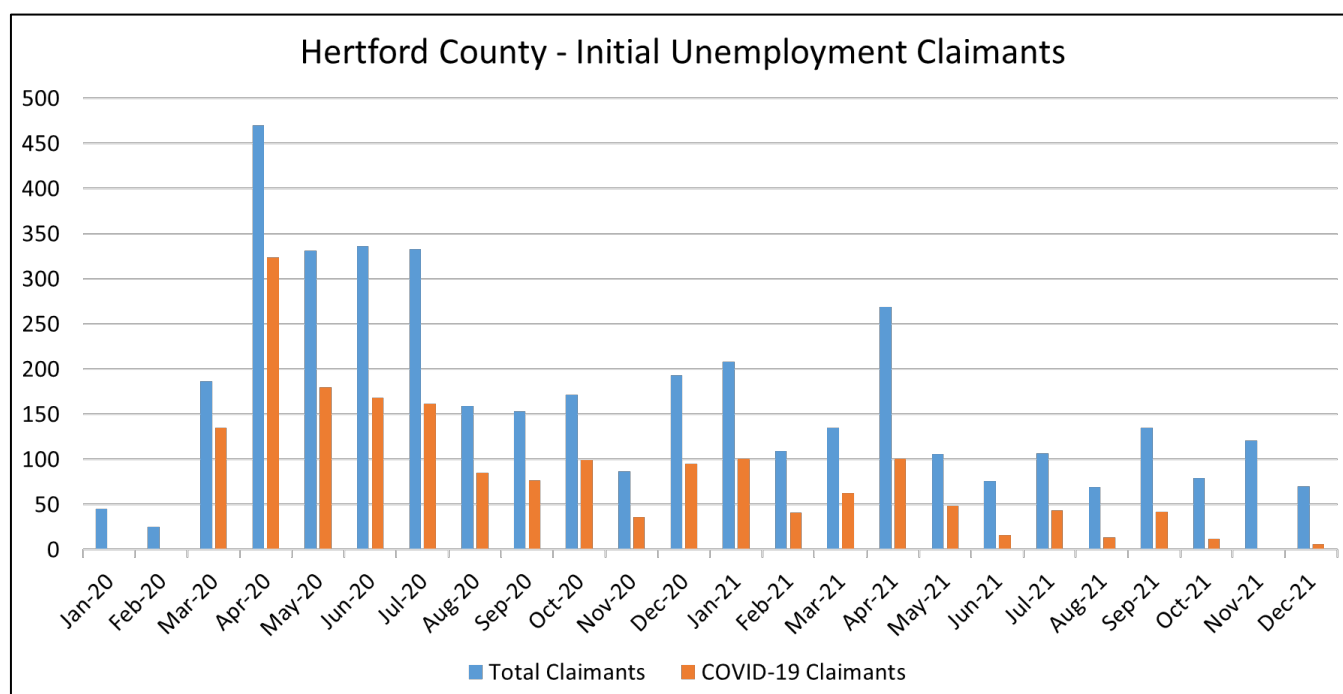

Figure C-11: Beaufort County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)
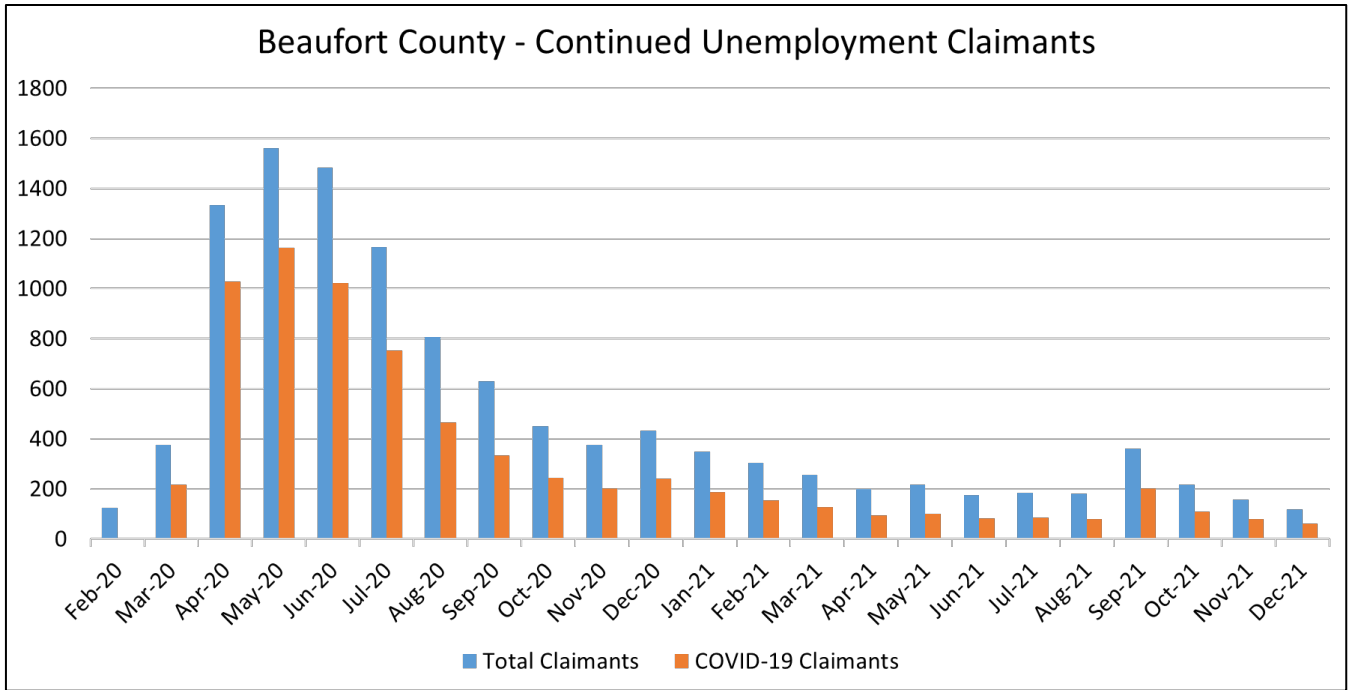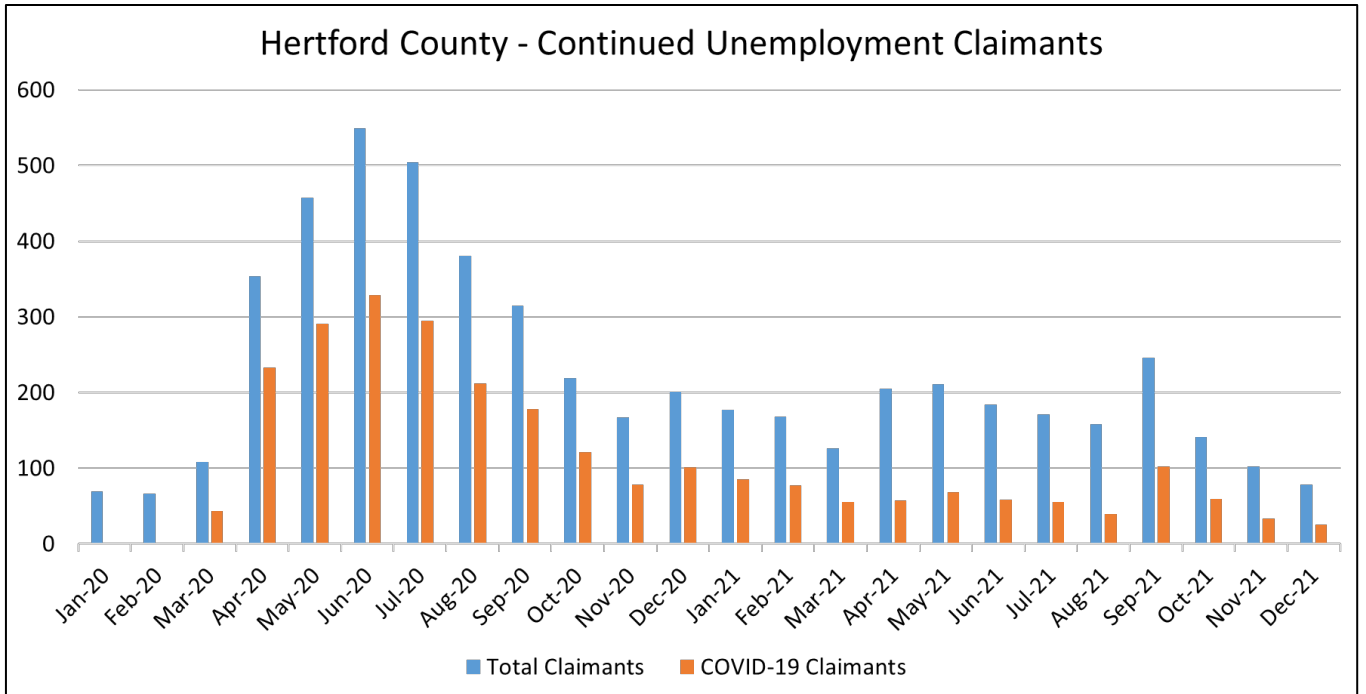
Figure C-12: Beaufort County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Bertie County spiked from March – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the augment in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in June 2020. There has been a trend toward recovery, but it has been uneven and there have been several smaller spikes in initial and continued unemployment claimants in Bertie County. The situation is looking up, as initial unemployment claimants in Bertie County have nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and continued unemployment claimants in Bertie County have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-13 shows initial unemployment claimants in Bertie County and Figure C-14 shows continued unemployment claimants in Bertie County.
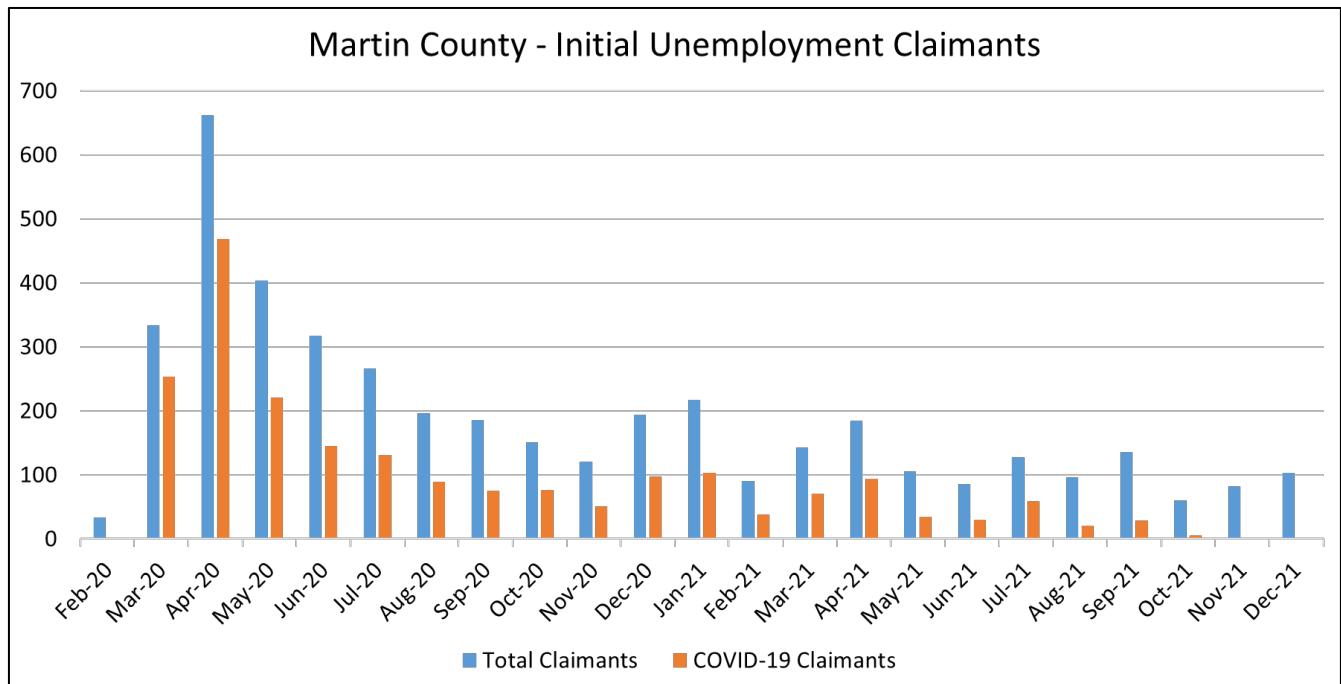

Figure C-13: Bertie County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

Figure C-14: Bertie County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Hertford County spiked from March – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the augment in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in June 2020. There has been a trend towards recovery, but it has been uneven and there have been several smaller spikes in initial and continued unemployment claimants in Hertford County. The situation is looking up, as initial unemployment claimants in Hertford County have nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and continued unemployment claimants in Hertford County have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-15 shows initial unemployment claimants in Hertford County and Figure C-16 shows continued unemployment claimants in Hertford County.

Figure C-15: Hertford County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)
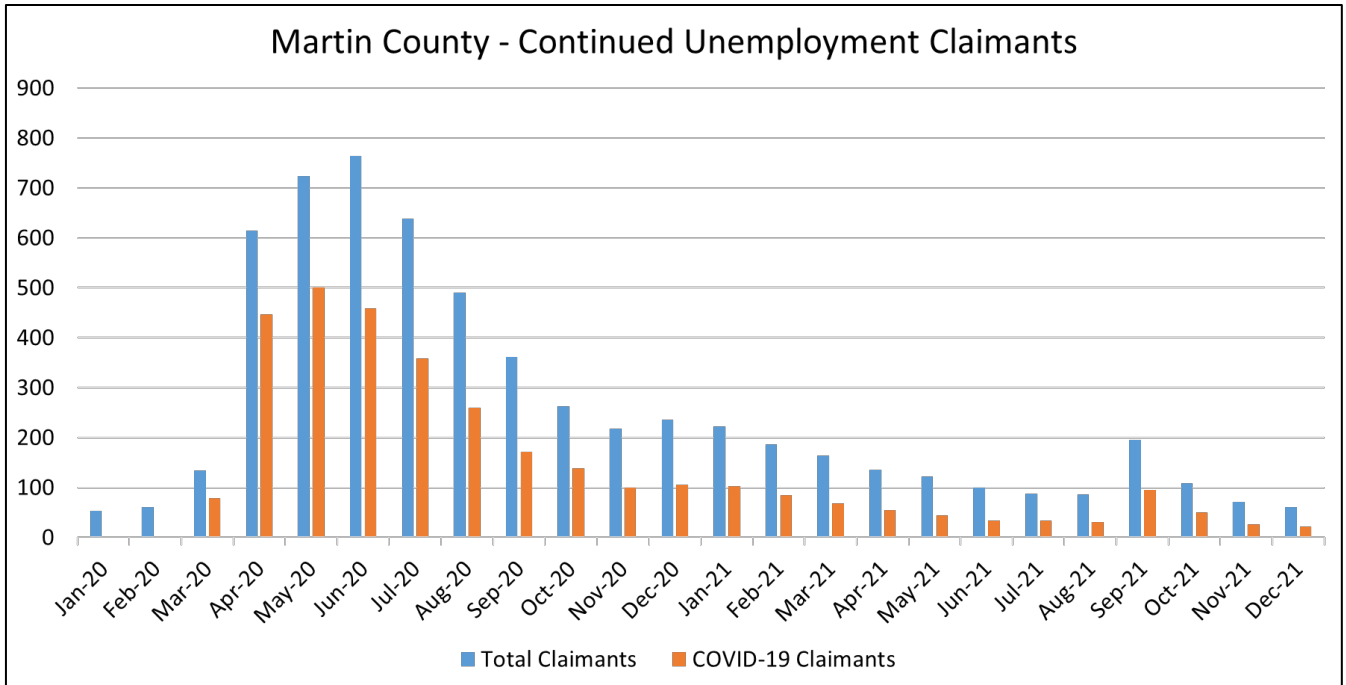
Figure C-16: Hertford County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Martin County spiked from March 2020 – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the augment in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April 2020 – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in June 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants in Martin County has nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and the number of continued unemployment claimants has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-17 shows initial unemployment claimants in Martin County and Figure C-18 shows continued unemployment claimants in Martin County.
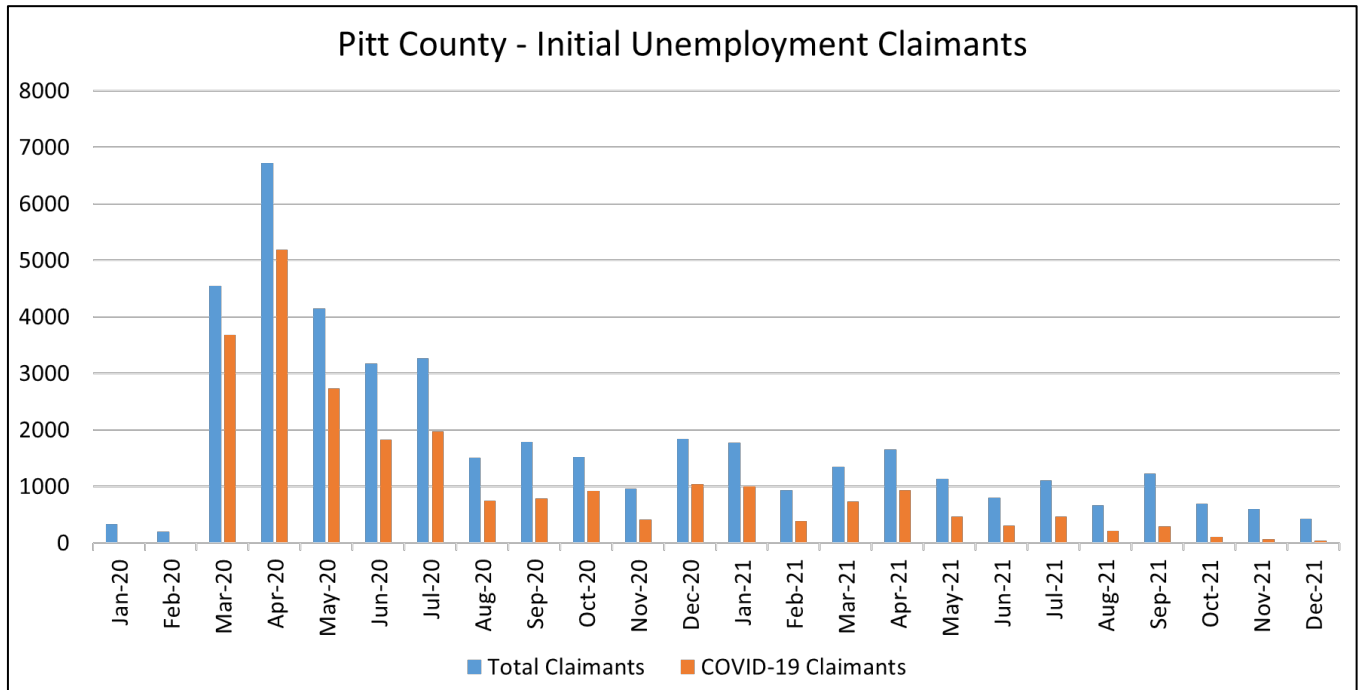

Figure C-17: Martin County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)
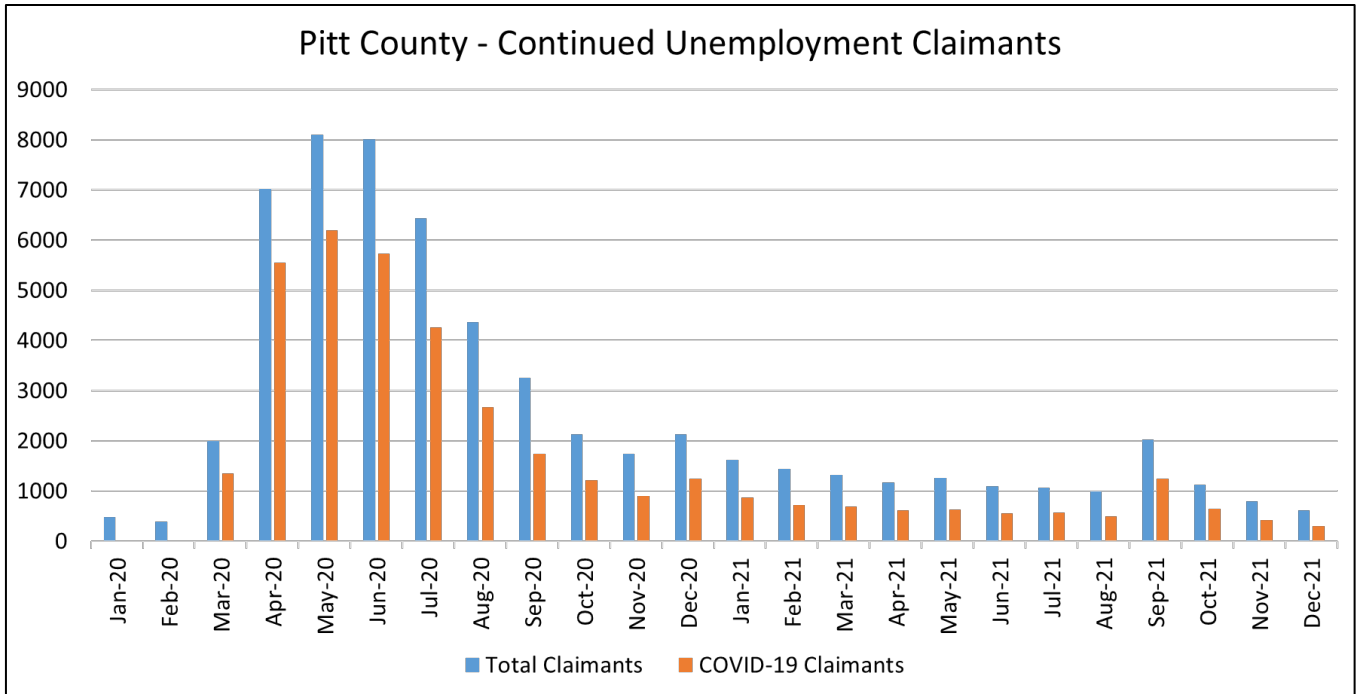
Figure C-18: Martin County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

The number of initial unemployment claimants in Pitt County spiked from March – July 2020, with the largest spike occurring in April 2020, due to the augment in COVID-19 related claims. The number of continued unemployment claimants spiked from April – September 2020, with the largest spike occurring in May – June 2020. The number of initial unemployment claimants and continued unemployment claimants in Pitt County has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Figure C-19 shows initial unemployment claimants in Pitt County and Figure C-20 shows continued unemployment claimants in Pitt County.

Figure C-19: Pitt County Initial Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

Figure C-20: Pitt County Continued Unemployment Claimants (Source: NC Dept. of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division)

Employment by Industry

Employment by industry in the Mid-East Region was affected by the pandemic. From January 2020 – June 2020, seven industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; arts, entertainment and recreation; educational services; management of companies and enterprises; other services (except public administration); professional, scientific and technical services; and wholesale trade.

From June 2020 – June 2021, accommodations and food services recovered about half the number of jobs lost. There was no data on arts, entertainment and recreation for the period. Educational services recovered less than half of the jobs lost. Management of companies and enterprises continued to lose jobs. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs that were lost. Professional, scientific and technical services showed growth, recovering more jobs than were lost. Wholesale trade also showed growth, recovering more jobs than were lost.

The only industry that grew by more than 5% in both the January 2020 – June 2020 and June 2020 – June 2021 period was transportation and warehousing.
Data was not available for the construction, information, manufacturing, and utilities industries.

Figure C-21 shows employment by industry for the Mid-East Region for both periods. Figure C-22 shows the percent change in employment by industry for the Mid-East Region from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-23 shows the percent change in employment by industry for the Mid-East Region from June 2020 – June 2021.

NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
	Mid-East Region: Employment by Industry					
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,917	1,997	4.17%	1,794	-10.17%
21	Mining	39	41	5.13%	32	-21.95%
22	Utilities	data missing	data missing	data missing	689	data missing
23	Construction	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
31	Manufacturing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
42	Wholesale Trade	2,826	2,543	-10.01%	3,224	26.78%
44	Retail Trade	14,316	13,847	-3.28%	14,398	3.98%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1,957	2,082	6.39%	2,235	7.35%
51	Information	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
52	Finance and Insurance	2,130	2,093	-1.74%	2,165	3.44%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,128	1,161	2.93%	1,253	7.92%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,372	2,244	-5.40%	2,572	14.62%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,012	877	-13.34%	802	-8.55%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,677	6,587	-1.35%	7,305	10.90%
61	Educational Services	15,167	12,998	-14.30%	13,770	5.94%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	24,105	23,386	-2.98%	23,259	-0.54%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	770	718	-6.75%	data missing	data missing
72	Accommodation and Food Services	12,052	9,695	-19.56%	10,595	9.28%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,243	2,067	-7.85%	2,241	8.42%
92	Public Administration	6,490	6,380	-1.69%	6,309	-1.11%

Figure C-21: Mid-East Region Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
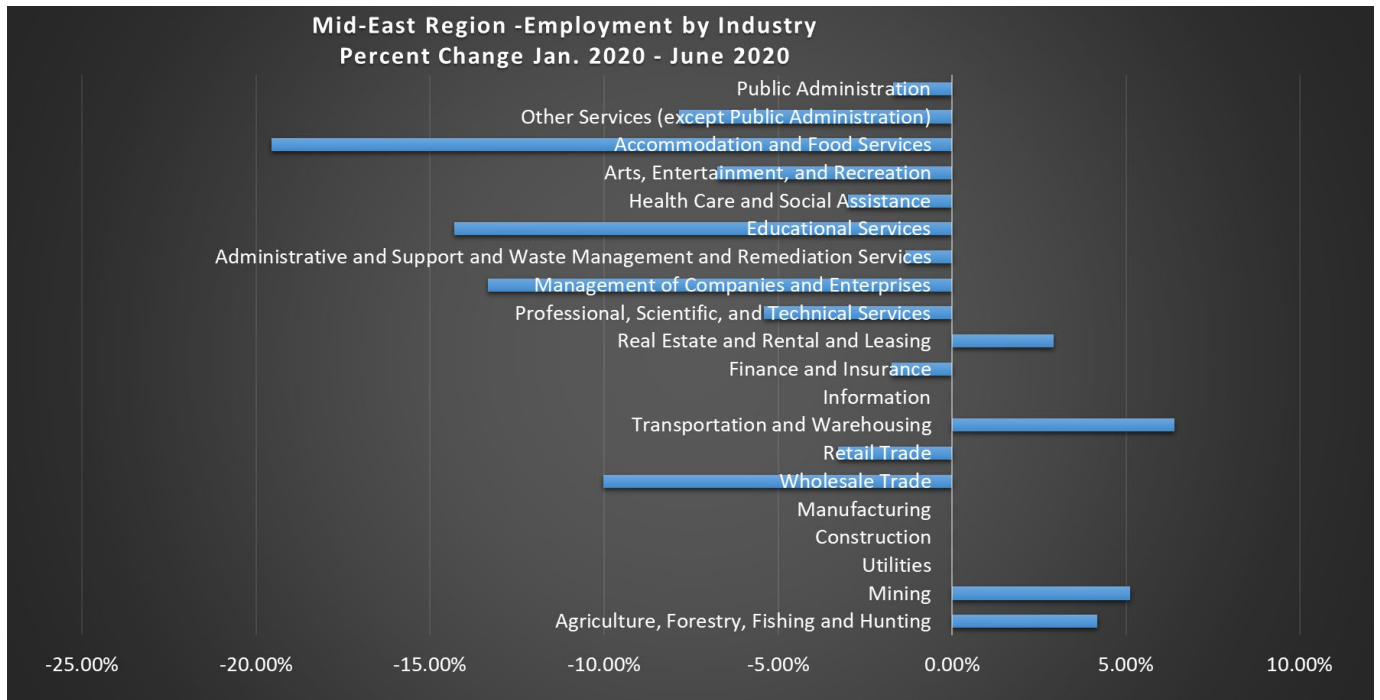
Figure C-22: Mid-East Region Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
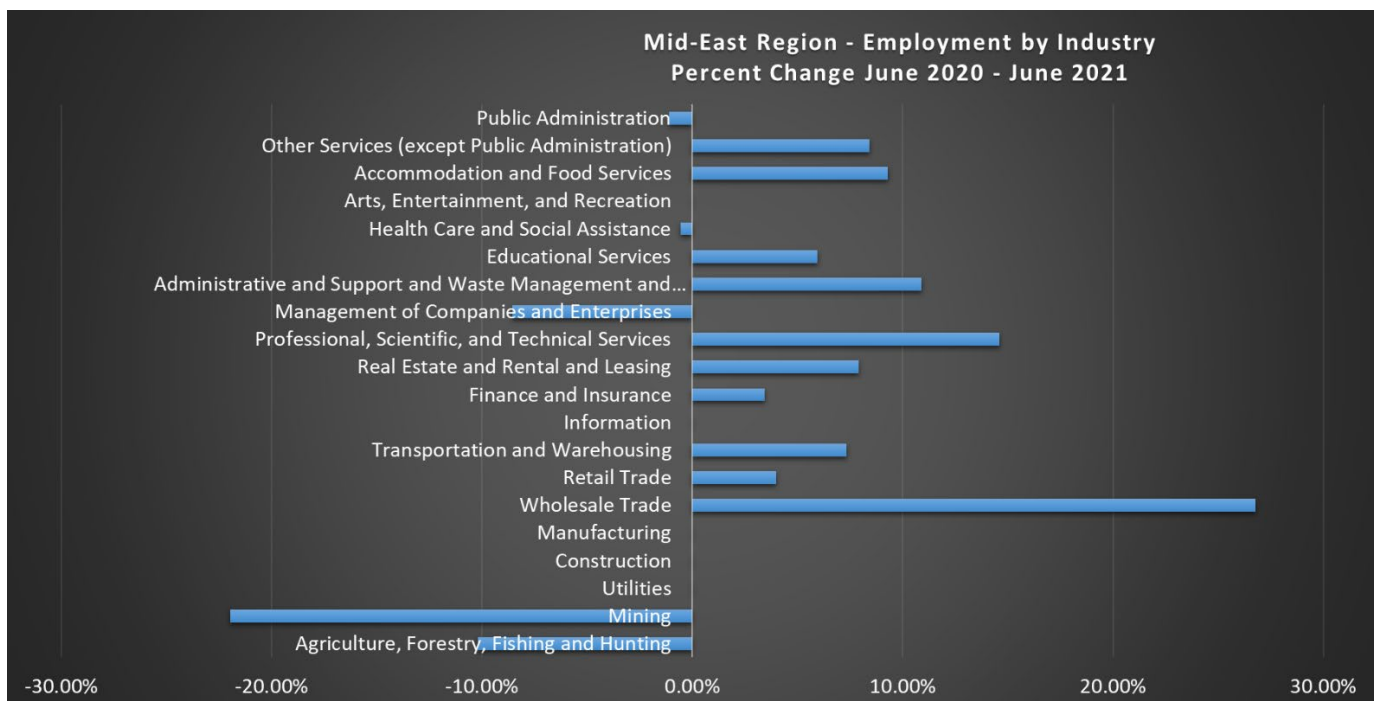

Figure C-23: Mid-East Region Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Beaufort County, five industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; educational services; healthcare and social assistance; management of companies and enterprises; and other services (except public administration).

From June 2020 – June 2021, accommodations and food services recovered the jobs lost. Educational services recovered about half of the jobs lost. Healthcare and social assistance recovered less than half of the jobs lost. Management of companies and enterprises continued to lose jobs. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs lost.

The only industry in Beaufort County that grew by more than 5% in both periods was arts, entertainment, and recreation. While this industry lost jobs in most areas, jobs grew in Beaufort County. The highest job growth occurred in wholesale trade, which grew by over 30%. The highest loss was in management of companies and enterprises, in which over half of jobs were lost.

Data was not available for the construction, information, mining, and utilities industries. Figure C-24 shows employment by industry for Beaufort County for both periods. Figure C-25 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Beaufort County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-26 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Beaufort County from June 2020 – June 2021.

	Beaufort County - Employment by Industry					
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	654	650	-0.61%	*	data missing
21	Mining	*	*	data missing	*	data missing
22	Utilities	*	*	data missing	*	data missing
23	Construction	*	*	data missing	712	data missing
31	Manufacturing	1,994	2,030	1.81%	2,136	5.22%
42	Wholesale Trade	965	996	3.21%	1,329	33.43%
44	Retail Trade	2,118	2,260	6.70%	2,175	-3.76%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	399	419	5.01%	433	3.34%
51	Information	*	*	data missing	*	data missing
52	Finance and Insurance	354	340	-3.95%	329	-3.24%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	109	110	0.92%	113	2.73%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	302	303	0.33%	361	19.14%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	161	79	-50.93%	74	-6.33%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,136	1,359	19.63%	1,306	-3.90%
61	Educational Services	1,469	1,288	-12.32%	1,359	5.51%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,038	1,890	-7.26%	1,941	2.70%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	132	155	17.42%	175	12.90%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,415	1,258	-11.10%	1,407	11.84%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	326	307	-5.83%	325	5.86%
92	Public Administration	1,166	1,176	0.86%	1,146	-2.55%

Figure C-24: Beaufort County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
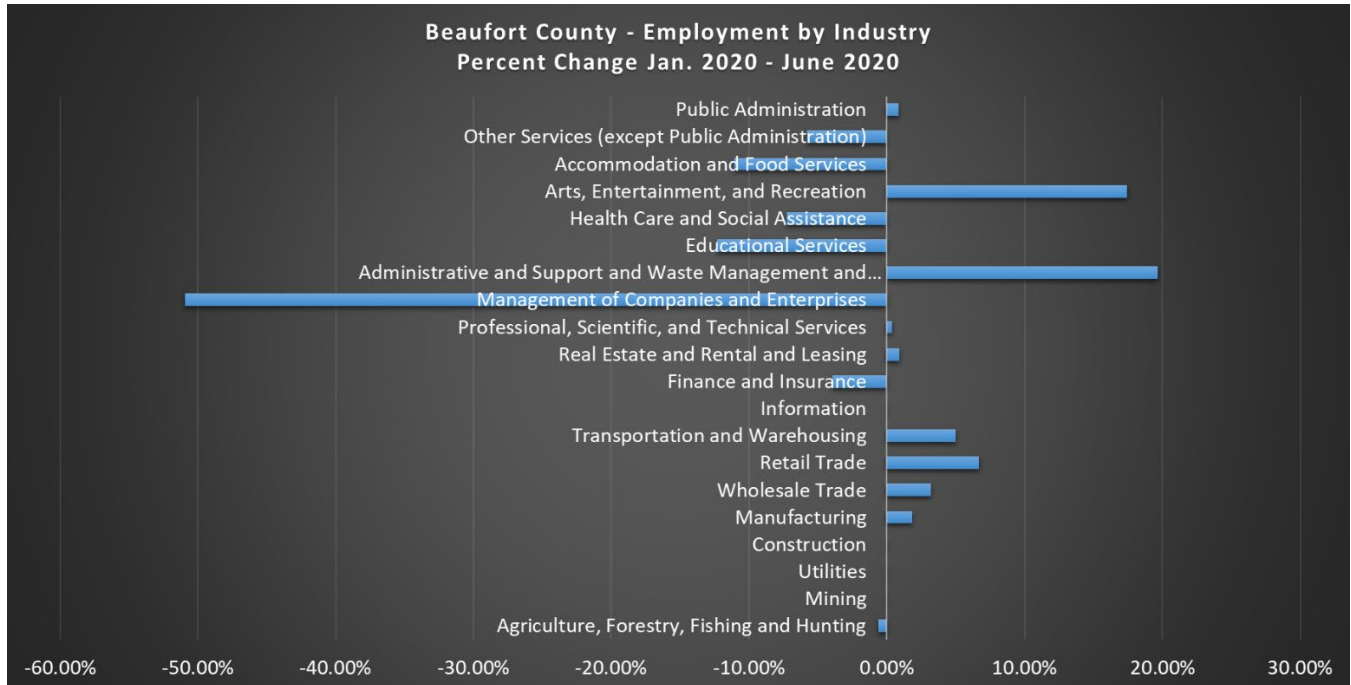
Figure C-25: Beaufort County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
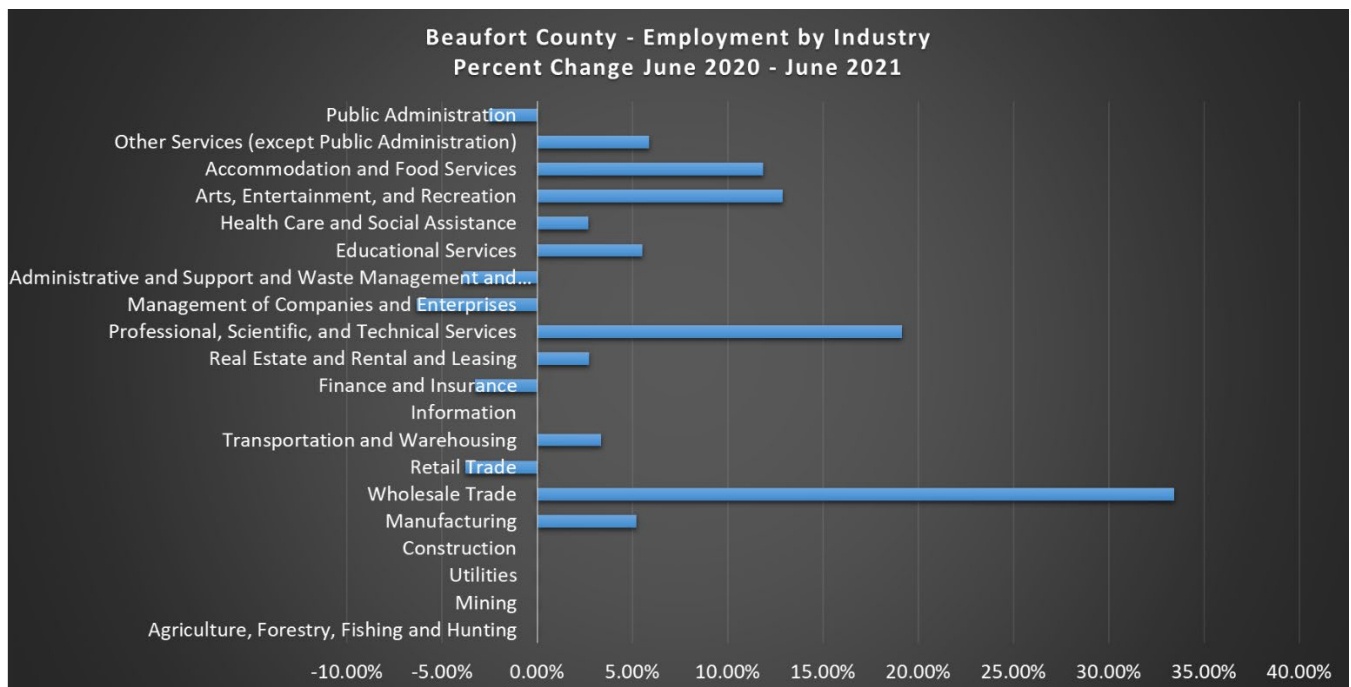

Figure C-26: Beaufort County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Bertie County, four industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: arts, entertainment and recreation; healthcare and social assistance; information; and other services (except public administration).

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Bertie County, arts, entertainment and recreation continued losing jobs. Healthcare and social assistance did not recover the jobs lost. Information continued losing jobs. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs lost.

The greatest job growth in Bertie County occurred in the construction industry, which grew by over 30%, followed by real estate and rental and leasing, which grew by 25%. The highest loss was in arts, entertainment and recreation, in which over half of jobs were lost.

Data was not available for the educational services, manufacturing, management of companies and enterprises, and mining industries.

Figure C-27 shows employment by industry for Bertie County for both periods. Figure C-28 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Bertie County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-29 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Bertie County from June 2020 – June 2021.

Bertie County - Employment by Industry
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	289	327	13.15%	309	-5.50%
21	Mining	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
23	Construction	27	37	37.04%	data missing	data missing
31	Manufacturing	data missing	data missing		data missing	data missing
42	Wholesale Trade	59	58	-1.69%	59	1.72%
44	Retail Trade	268	263	-1.87%	279	6.08%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	138	144	4.35%	141	-2.08%
51	Information	12	11	-8.33%	10	-9.09%
52	Finance and Insurance	59	58	-1.69%	50	-13.79%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4	5	25.00%	5	0.00%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	30	33	10.00%	30	-9.09%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	241	245	1.66%	290	18.37%
61	Educational Services	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	715	638	-10.77%	648	1.57%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	54	50	-7.41%	24	-52.00%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	226	215	-4.87%	182	-15.35%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	67	60	-10.45%	68	13.33%
92	Public Administration	832	803	-3.49%	801	-0.25%

Figure C-27: Bertie County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
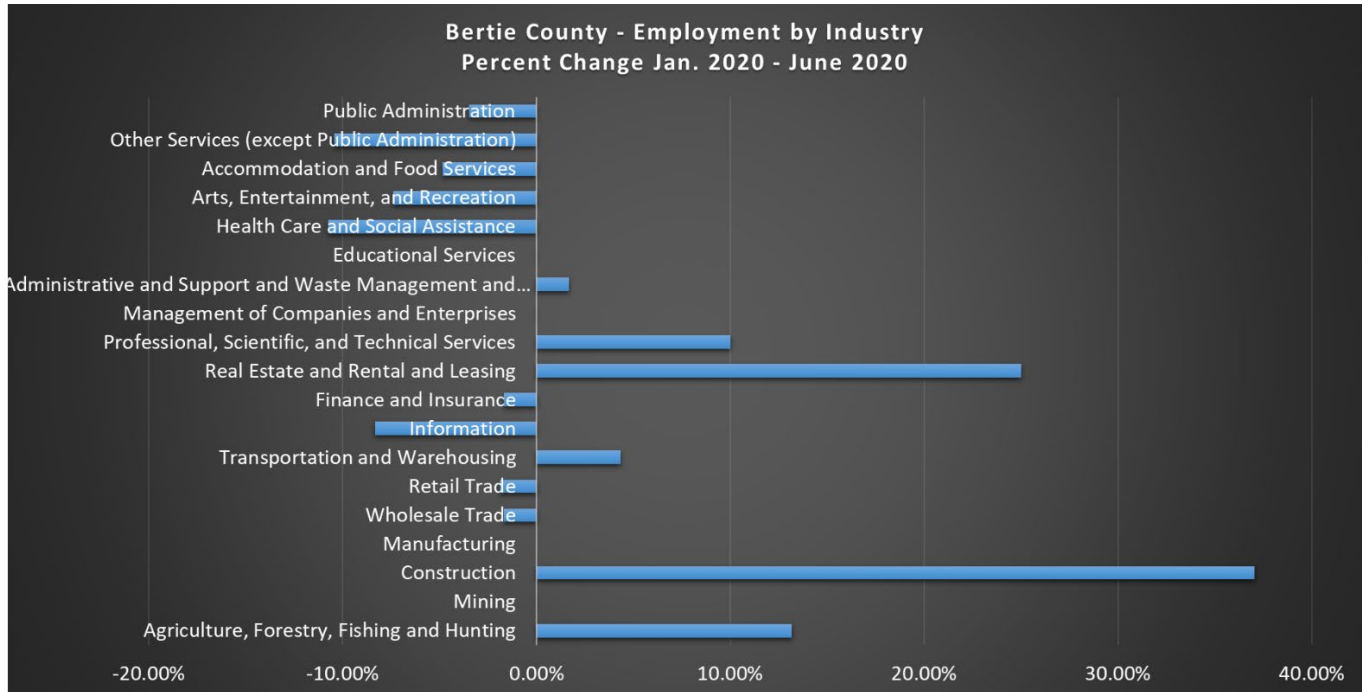
Figure C-28: Bertie County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
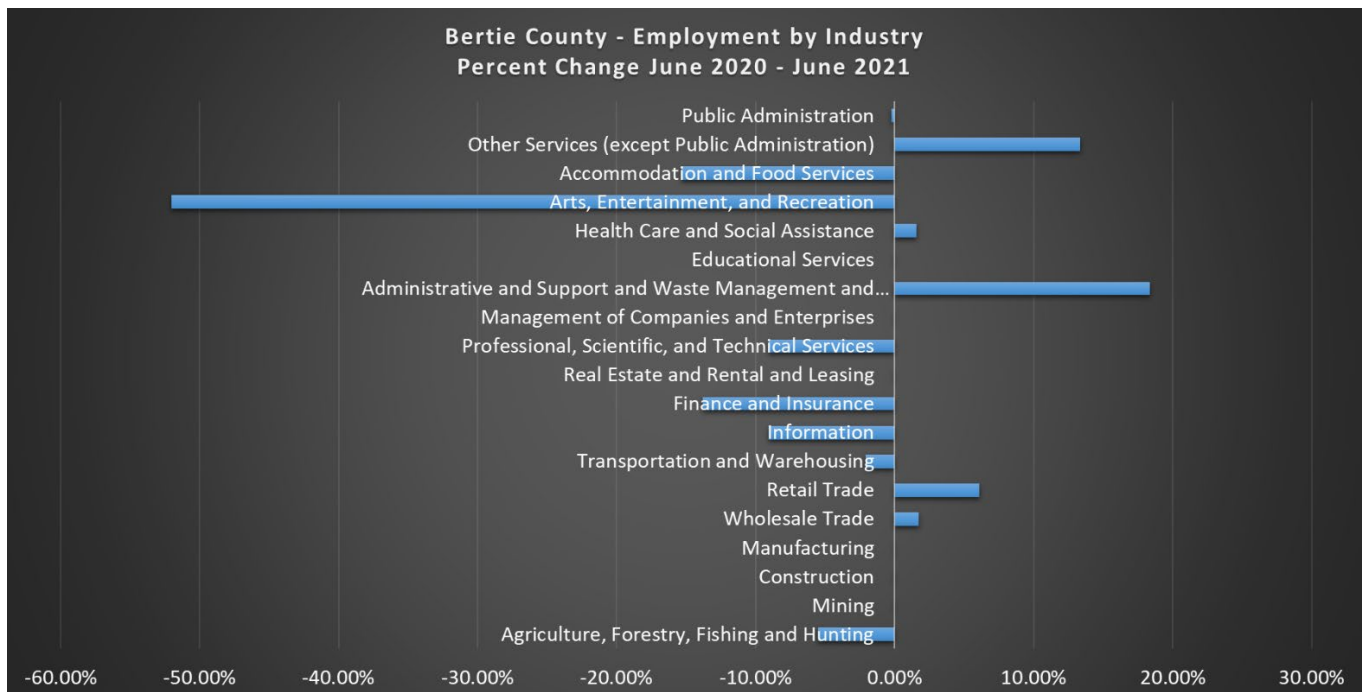

Figure C-29: Bertie County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Hertford County, seven industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; construction; educational services; healthcare and social assistance; information; public administration; and wholesale trade.

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Hertford County, accommodations and food services did not recover the jobs lost. Construction continued to lose jobs. Educational services recovered less than half of the jobs lost. Healthcare and social assistance recovered about half of the jobs lost. Information recovered about half of the jobs lost. Public administration did not recover the jobs lost. Wholesale trade did not recover the jobs lost.

The greatest job growth in Hertford County occurred in the transportation and warehousing industry, which grew by over 20%. The highest loss was in administrative and support and waste management, in which over 70% of jobs were lost from June 2020 – June 2021.

Data was not available for the arts, entertainment and recreation industry and the management of companies and enterprises industry.

Figure C-30 shows employment by industry for Hertford County for both periods. Figure C-31 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Hertford County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-32 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Hertford County from June 2020 – June 2021.

NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
	Hertford County - Employment by Industry					
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	176	186	5.68%	169	-9.14%
22	Utilities	96	99	3.13%	99	0.00%
23	Construction	373	339	-9.12%	316	-6.78%
31	Manufacturing	946	974	2.96%	941	-3.39%
42	Wholesale Trade	263	249	-5.32%	247	-0.80%
44	Retail Trade	1,513	1,488	-1.65%	1,503	1.01%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	196	189	-3.57%	236	24.87%
51	Information	34	29	-14.71%	31	6.90%
52	Finance and Insurance	160	162	1.25%	161	-0.62%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	83	81	-2.41%	85	4.94%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	64	65	1.56%	71	9.23%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	426	432	1.41%	104	-75.93%
61	Educational Services	959	764	-20.33%	818	7.07%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,342	2,182	-6.83%	2,259	3.53%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
72	Accommodation and Food Services	677	541	-20.09%	562	3.88%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	230	233	1.30%	182	-21.89%
92	Public Administration	597	524	-12.23%	538	2.67%

Figure C-30: Hertford County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
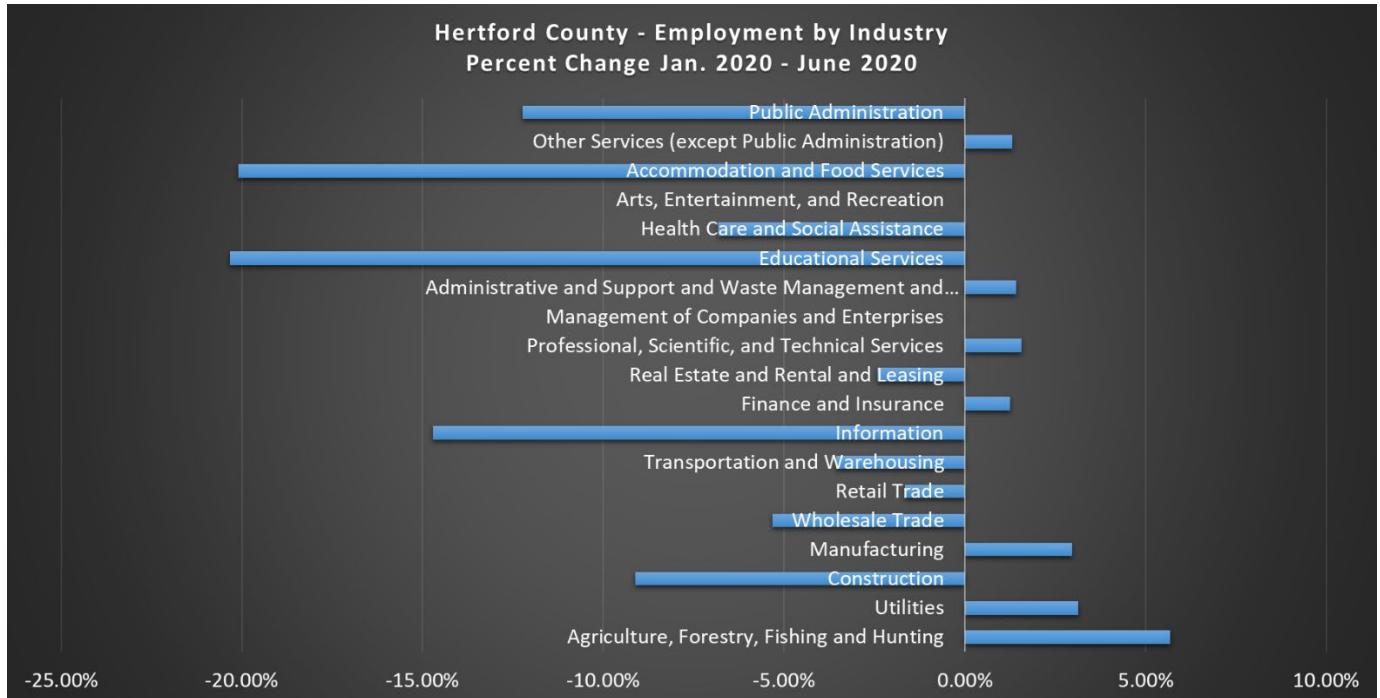
Figure C-31: Hertford County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
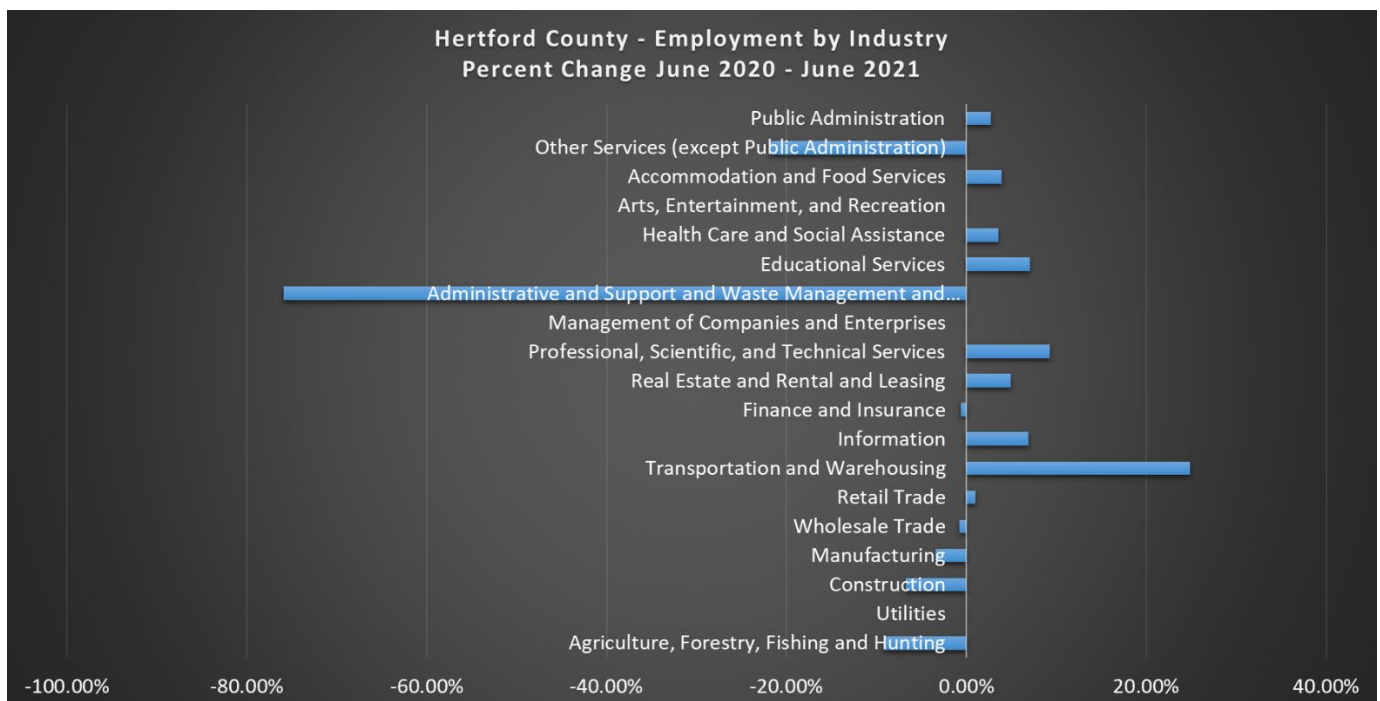

Figure C-32: Hertford County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Martin County, seven industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; administrative and support and waste management; information; other services (except public administration); professional, scientific and technical services; real estate and rental and leasing; and wholesale trade.

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Martin County, accommodations and food services recovered the jobs lost. Administrative and support and waste management lost additional jobs. Information recovered over half of the jobs lost. Other services (except public administration) recovered the jobs lost. Professional, scientific and technical services gained all jobs back plus added additional jobs, showing growth. Real estate and rental and leasing lost additional jobs. Wholesale trade lost additional jobs.

The greatest job growth in Martin County occurred in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, which grew by about 25%. The highest loss was in wholesale trade, in which over 40% of jobs were lost.

Data was not available for the arts entertainment and recreation; educational services; management of companies and enterprises; and utilities industries.

Figure C-33 shows employment by industry for Martin County for both periods. Figure C-34 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Martin County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-35 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Martin County from June 2020 – June 2021.

NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
	Martin County Employment by Industry					
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	290	285	-1.72%	277	-2.81%
22	Utilities	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
23	Construction	219	216	-1.37%	206	-4.63%
31	Manufacturing	703	711	1.14%	683	-3.94%
42	Wholesale Trade	165	131	-20.61%	101	-22.90%
44	Retail Trade	1,020	1,046	2.55%	1,020	-2.49%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	111	115	3.60%	113	-1.74%
51	Information	72	57	-20.83%	65	14.04%
52	Finance and Insurance	148	148	0.00%	137	-7.43%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32	29	-9.38%	28	-3.45%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	141	105	-25.53%	158	50.48%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	103	86	-16.50%	84	-2.33%
61	Educational Services	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,047	1,003	-4.20%	988	-1.50%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	data missing	data missing	data missing	30	data missing
72	Accommodation and Food Services	740	641	-13.38%	716	11.70%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	123	109	-11.38%	126	15.60%
92	Public Administration	643	639	-0.62%	628	-1.72%

Figure C-33: Martin County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
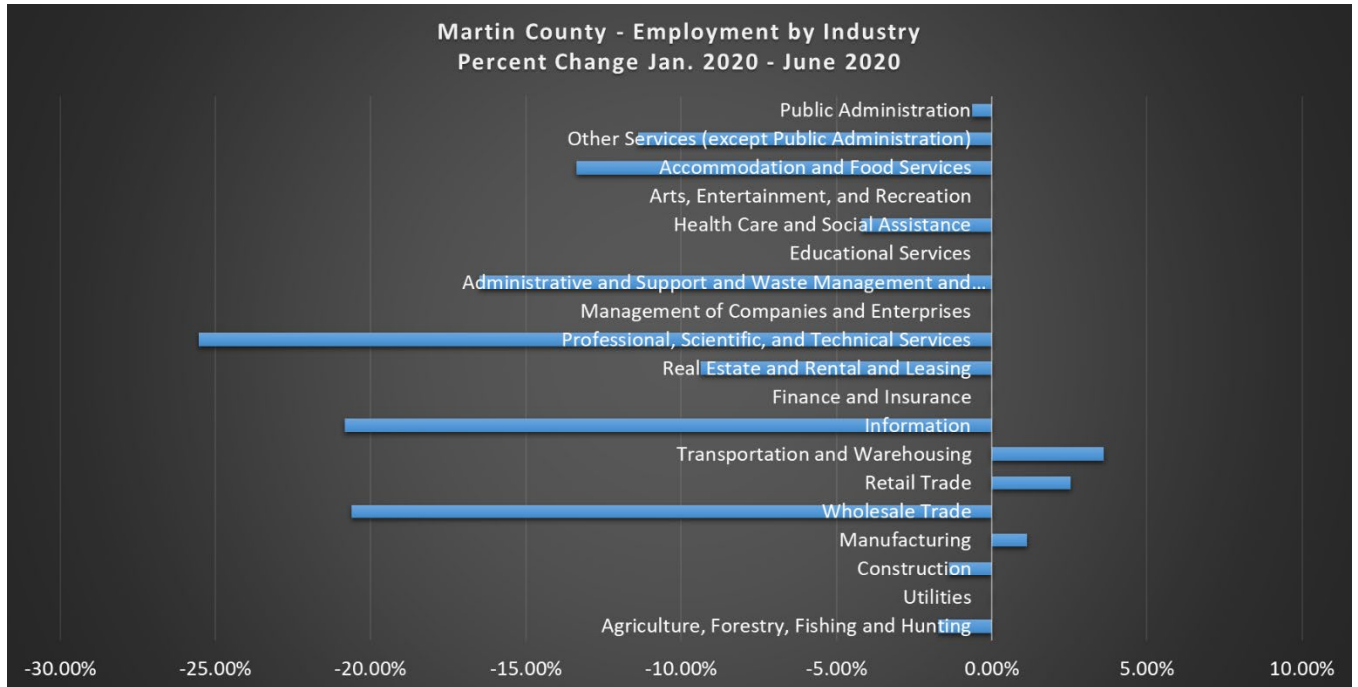
Figure C-34: Martin County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
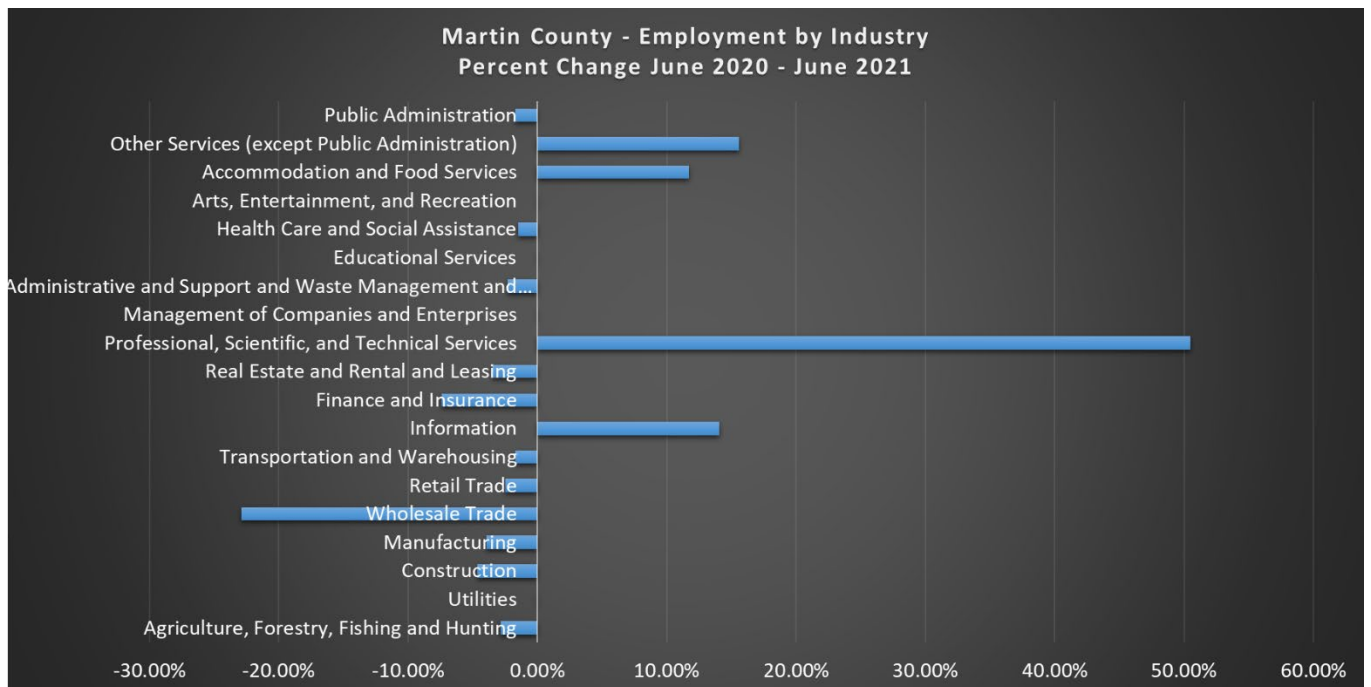

Figure C-35: Martin County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

194

From January 2020 – June 2020 in Pitt County, four industries experienced a 5% or greater loss of jobs, including: accommodations and food services; arts, entertainment and recreation; information; and management of companies and enterprises.

From June 2020 – June 2021, in Pitt County, accommodations and food services did not recover the jobs lost. Arts, entertainment and recreation gained all jobs back plus added additional jobs, showing growth. Information recovered the jobs lost.

Management of companies and enterprises recovered less than half of the jobs lost. The greatest job growth in Pitt County occurred in arts, entertainment and recreation, which grew by over 25%. While this industry lost jobs in most areas, jobs grew in Pitt County. The highest losses were in the accommodations and food services industry and the management of companies and enterprises industry, which each lost about 13% of jobs.

Data was not available for the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry and the mining industry.

Figure C-36 shows employment by industry for Pitt County for both periods. Figure C-37 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Pitt County from January 2020 – June 2020. Figure C-38 shows the percent change in employment by industry for Pitt County from June 2020 – June 2021.

Pitt County Employment by Industry						
NAICS Code	Industry	January 2020 Employment	June 2020 Employment	Percent Change Jan. 2020 - June 2020	June 2021 Employment	Percent Change June 2020 - June 2021
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	508	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
21	Mining	33	data missing	data missing	data missing	data missing
22	Utilities	565	557	-1.42%	554	-0.54%
23	Construction	3,375	3,273	-3.02%	3,663	11.92%
31	Manufacturing	6,633	6,453	-2.71%	6,668	3.33%
42	Wholesale Trade	1,374	1,367	-0.51%	1,488	8.85%
44	Retail Trade	9,397	9,162	-2.50%	9,421	2.83%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1,113	1,220	9.61%	1,312	7.54%
51	Information	652	540	-17.18%	658	21.85%
52	Finance and Insurance	1,409	1,471	4.40%	1,488	1.16%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	900	925	2.78%	1,022	10.49%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,835	1,757	-4.25%	1,952	11.10%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	833	744	-10.68%	718	-3.49%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,771	5,249	10.02%	5,521	5.18%
61	Educational Services	11,459	10,983	-4.15%	10,457	-4.79%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	17,963	17,547	-2.32%	17,423	-0.71%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	541	437	-19.22%	682	56.06%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	8,994	7,751	-13.82%	7,728	-0.30%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,497	1,491	-0.40%	1,540	3.29%
92	Public Administration	3,252	3,364	3.44%	3,196	-4.99%

Figure C-36: Pitt County Employment by Industry (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
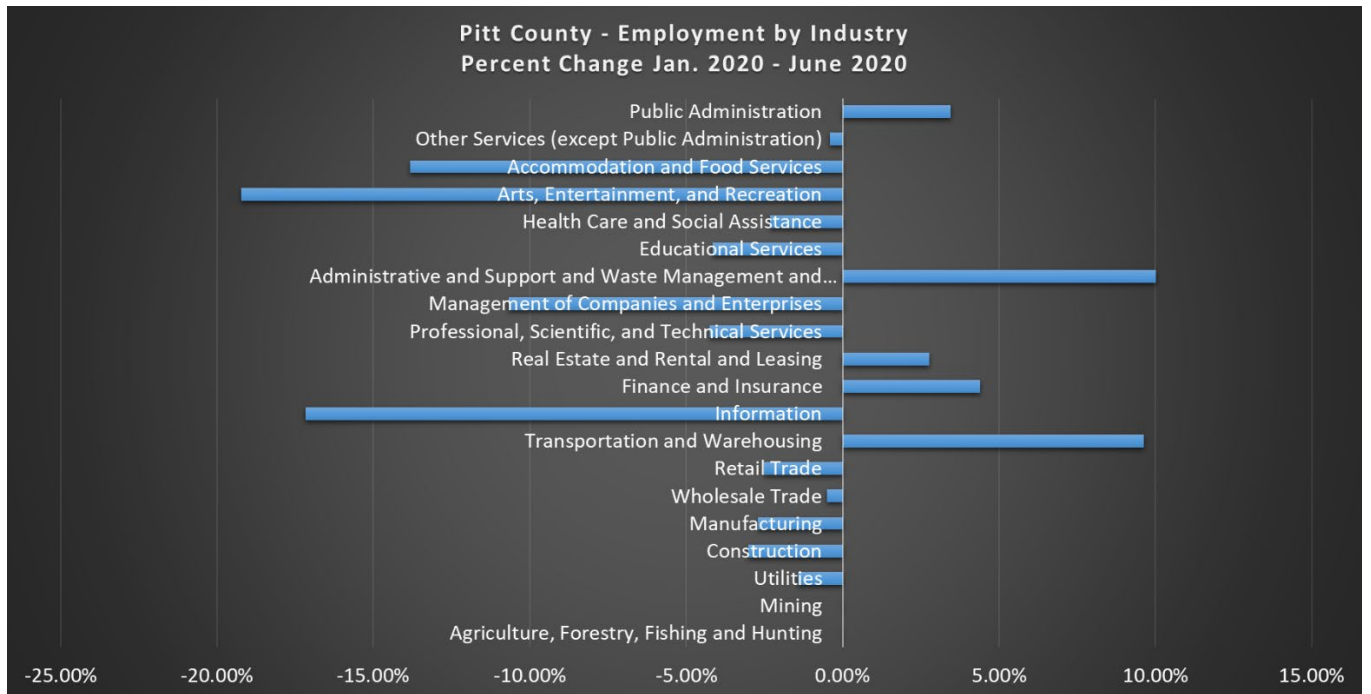
Figure C-37: Pitt County Employment by Industry, Percent Change January 2020 – June 2020
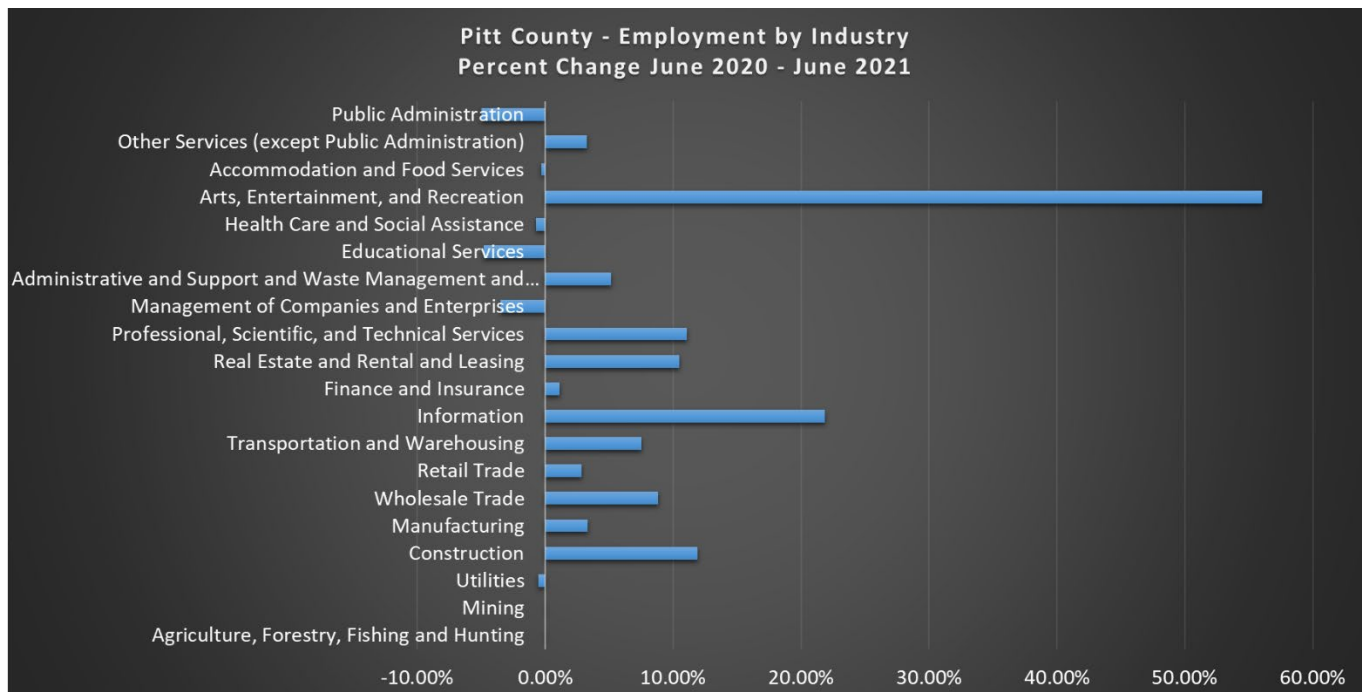(Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

Figure C-38: Pitt County Employment by Industry, Percent Change June 2020 – June 2021
(Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

Financial Impact of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as a direct allocation to states, counties, and metropolitan areas. Allocations to non-entitlement units of local governments (municipalities serving populations under 50,000) were distributed through the state and the local government had to apply to receive funds.

The Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund provided $195.3 billion to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Of this amount, the Act required $25.5 billion to be allocated to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The remaining $169 billion was distributed based on the average estimated number of seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals, using the latest data available U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

The Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund provided $65.1 billion to counties. The Act required that these funds be allocated based on each county's population share of the total population of all counties, using the latest available population data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Within the categories of eligible uses, recipients have broad flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet the needs of their communities. Recipients may use Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to:

- Support public health expenditures, by funding COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff;
- Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector;
- Replace lost public sector revenue, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic;
- Provide premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support to those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors; and,
- Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet.*

*Expenditures must comply with federal and state law, which may have additional restrictions on types of spending, such as municipal or county spending on broadband internet.

Unfortunately, many smaller and rural units of local government with limited staff capacity have struggled with the reporting requirements required to spend ARPA funds. Figure C-39 shows the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds distributed in the Mid-East Region.

Cornavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Area	Total Funding
Beaufort County allocation	$9,128,034.00
Bertie County allocation	$3,680,233.00
Hertford County allocation	$4,598,980.00
Martin County allocation	$4,358,707.00
Pitt County allocation	$35,107,015.00
City of Greenville allocation	$24,689,311.00
Mid-East Region total direct allocation	$81,562,280.00
NC allocation for non-entitlement units of government	$705,384,207.00
State of North Carolina allocation	$5,439,309,692.20

Figure C-39: Mid-East Region Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Source: US Dept. of the Treasury)

<u>Disaster and Public Health Response Plans</u>

Existing disaster and public health response plans for the Mid-East Region include a Community Health Needs Assessment and an Emergency Operations Plan for each county. Some municipalities have their own Emergency Operations plans, as well. Most Emergency Operations Plans have been updated post-pandemic in the region, while most Community Health Needs Assessments have not. There should be an assessment of these local plans to determine where pandemic response updates are needed.

- Beaufort County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019
- Beaufort County Emergency Operations Plan, 2016
- Bertie County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2018
- Bertie County Emergency Operations Plan, 2020
- Hertford County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2018
- Hertford County Emergency Operations Plan, 2021
- Martin County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2018
- Martin County Emergency Operations Plan, 2021
- Pitt County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019
- Pitt County Continuity of Operations Plan, 2021
- Pitt County Emergency Operations Plan, 2021

<u>Regional Strategic Response</u>

Pandemic recovery strategies were developed in partnership with the CEDS Advisory Committee and are organized under the four overarching goals of the Mid-East Region CEDS: Business Recruitment, Retention and Marketing; Physical Infrastructure; Healthy and Safe Communities; and Small Business and Workforce Development.

<u>Goal 1: Business Recruitment, Retention & Marketing Pandemic Recovery Strategies</u>

- It is vital for economic development organizations, small business centers, local governments, and others involved in business recruitment and retention to get back to meeting with businesses in person. Virtual meetings should also be available depending on the business' needs.
- Develop and maintain a toolkit to provide support to partner organizations in adaptive capabilities and implementation of new technologies. Provide workshops on use of the toolkit as needed.
- Start a regular regional economic recovery call to support county economic recovery calls, business and industry roundtables, and other local collaborations geared toward business retention and economic recovery. Use the call as a regional forum to learn and share success stories.
- Conduct a Regional Supply Chain Study to identify specific supply chain issues facing local businesses. Research and determine strategies that establish a more reliable and resilient supply chain, including an analysis of where manufacturers within the region can potentially fill gaps.
- Conduct business marketing campaigns around access to skilled workers and quality of life, including natural resources and ecotourism. Develop marketing niches based on education and workforce training programs available in the region with strong enrollment numbers.
- Develop a remote worker target analysis and an accompanying marketing strategy.
- Support local business retention through shop local marketing campaigns, made in marketing campaigns, etc., building on existing trends and encouraging citizens to continue shopping locally. See the "Made in BOCO" example in Beaufort County and the "Small Business Saturday" example in Williamston/Martin County.
- Reach out to businesses and have partner organizations reach out to businesses to make them aware of ARPA funding and how it applies to them.
- Augment collaboration with business owners through participation on advisory committees, focus collectives, industry roundtables, local and regional events, etc.
- Start a quarterly event where we invite businesses and the larger community/public to participate in economic development planning. Trade off hosting county.

<u>Goal 2: Physical Infrastructure Pandemic Recovery Strategies</u>

- Create a Regional Broadband Taskforce to develop a Regional Broadband Plan and apply for available grant funding for broadband expansion across the

region.

- Seek funding to continue deployment of mobile broadband solutions to insufficiently catered to areas that do not meet definitions under current grant programs in the interim.
- Partner with local governments to provide free public wi-fi at public locations.
- Develop local bicycle plans and pedestrian plans across the region. Develop a regional comprehensive bicycle and greenway plan.
- Assist local governments in applying for grant funds for design/engineering and construction of bicycle, pedestrian and greenway projects.
- Submit bicycle, pedestrian and greenway projects from plans to MPO/RPO for competitive NCDOT funding.
- Tie greenway projects in with the regional East Coast Greenway where possible.
- MPO/RPOs take the lead in creating partnerships to apply for federal grants to fund regional projects that were delayed or cancelled in the STIP.
- MPO/RPO continue working with hardest hit transportation sectors such as public transit and aviation to provide support services and connect with DOT resources.
- Provide at least one workshop for regional infrastructure stakeholders on water and wastewater financing that considers the impacts and financing challenges presented by the pandemic.
- Develop a regional Water Transportation Plan to capitalize on the augment in boaters and paddlers. Connect local water trails via a regional system. Plan for water based public transit, whether publicly or privately operated.
- Enhance the ability to highlight best demonstrated practices across the region.
- Identify key/high priority areas for natural gas service, such as industrial parks and airports. Develop a plan to overcome impediments to natural gas access.
- Support the broader use and expansion of rail. Partner with the NC East Alliance. They have started a workshop on rail and rail development.
- Include renewables and green infrastructure in energy planning.

Goal 3: Healthy and Safe Communities Pandemic Recovery Strategies

- Work with local governments on reviewing and updating existing plans and policies including Emergency Management, Hazard Mitigation, and other related plans and ordinances to address pandemic mitigation.
- Identify insufficiently catered to populations most impacted by the pandemic and connect with resources to facilitate health and economic development.
- Assist with educational and informational outreach through partnerships with local, regional and statewide healthcare professionals. Facilitate public forums with experts and provide general guidance to public and member governments.
- Expand implementation of mobile medical units across the region. See the Brody School of Medicine mobile medical unit example and the Martin County mobile medical unit example.
- Develop regional solutions to the lack of mental healthcare and substance abuse rehabilitation facilities. Explore the feasibility of counties combining opioid settlement funds to build a regional treatment center.
- Develop strategies to attract nurses and other medical staff to the region.

Explore the feasibility of offering various local incentives. Partner with community colleges and ECU Brody School of Medicine to reach students prior to graduation.

- Develop Comprehensive Recreation Plans across the region to capitalize on the augment in outdoor recreation activities.
- Continue to assist local governments with PARTF and other grants to fund public parks. Identify all public recreation grant sources and provide assistance with both applications and administration.
- Provide input into regional resilience planning and project identification, such as with the current RISE program sponsored by NCORR.
- Garner support for local input to be considered by Trillium when making funding decisions.
- Provide local governments with assistance on ARPA fund applications and administration.
- Catalog available grant programs and provide local governments with assistance on grant applications and grant administration.
- Conduct an assessment of county Emergency Operations Plans and Community Health Needs Assessments to determine where pandemic response updates are needed.

Goal 4: Small Business and Workforce Development Pandemic Recovery Strategies

- Add a Transportation/Logistics career pathway to the NENC Career Pathways program.
- Develop Trades Formers programs in all counties to support the advanced manufacturing career pathway. See the Pitt County program as an example.
- Develop other local programs to support career pathways and job opportunities directly to students. See the "Grow Local" program example in Pitt County.
- Resume providing small business and workforce development training programs in person. Offer some programs virtually as needed by the individual business or industry.
- Continue developing mobile solutions to augment participation in workforce training programs and enrollment in educational programs. Meet students at their schools and employees at their workplaces.
- Continue free tuition programs at community colleges as long as financially feasible.
- Small businesses and home based businesses have augmented across the region. Develop incubator/coworking spaces to serve small businesses. See Bertie County example at Martin Community College building, done utilizing an existing resource.
- Continue successful virtual hiring/career fair events implemented during the pandemic. Expand the number of in person career fairs across the region.
- Expand on existing community college partnerships with a focus on filtering students directly into jobs. Expand on apprenticeship and internship programs in partnership with local employers.
- Enhance partnerships between community colleges. See the Martin Community College, Roanoke Chowan Community College example, in which students start

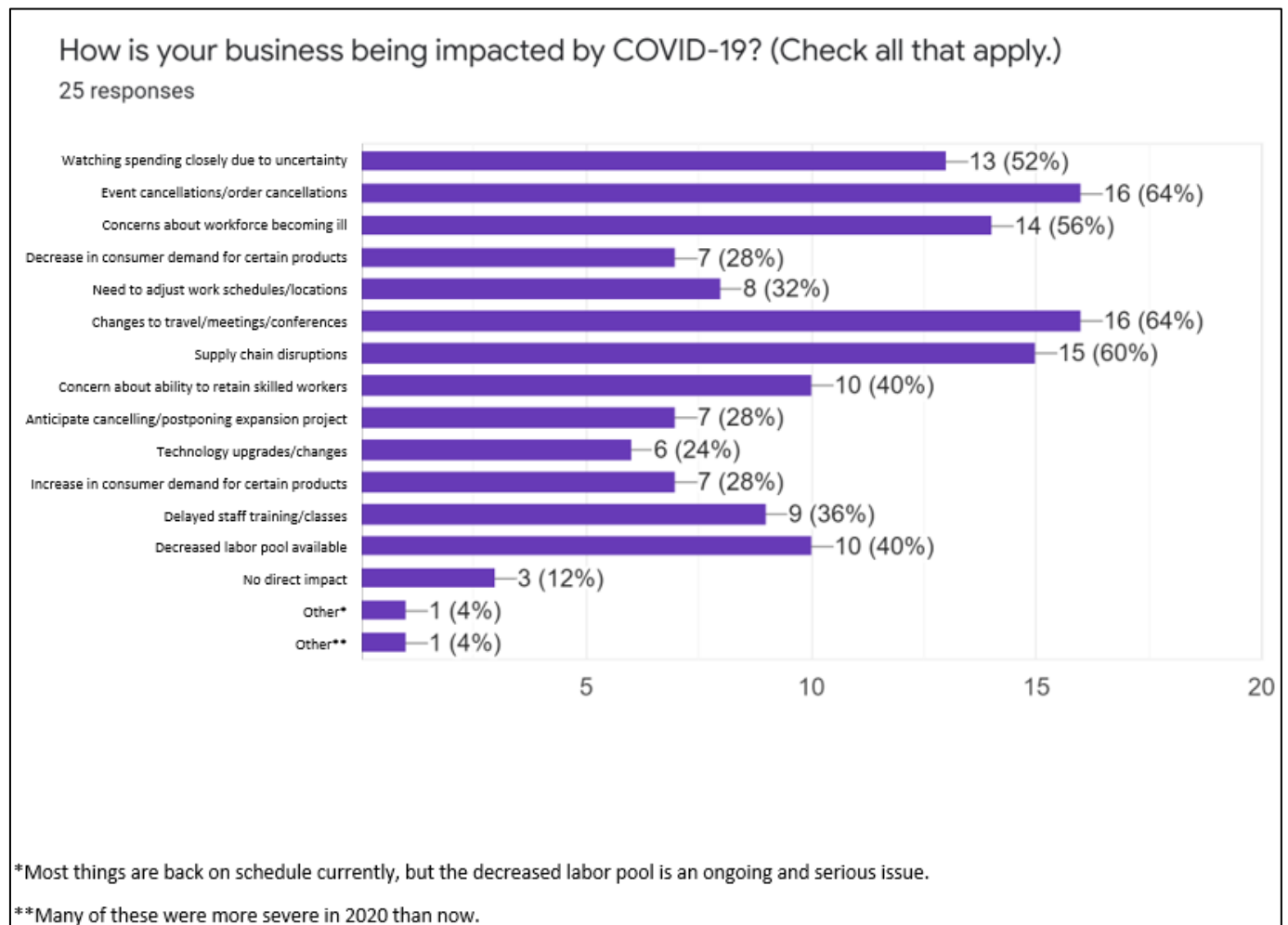at MCC and transfer to RCCC for the nursing program.
- Augment workforce development presence in high schools and community colleges in order to serve students directly. See the Rivers East Workforce Development Board satellite office example at Martin County Community College.
- Augment outreach to high school students on CTE programs such as SERV Safe.
- Offer employee training on CTE programs at the place of business, such as offering restaurant staff SERV Safe training on site.
- Market programs to students in simple yet memorable ways. See Martin Community College's "Career in a Year" example and Pitt Community College's "Halfway Home" student example.

General Strategies for All Goals

- Secure implementation funds to ensure that this planning work is turned into action.
- Share Best Demonstrated Practices around highlighted priorities. We can all learn by sharing successes.
- Create a monthly newsletter that briefly highlights opportunities, concerns, and information sharing.
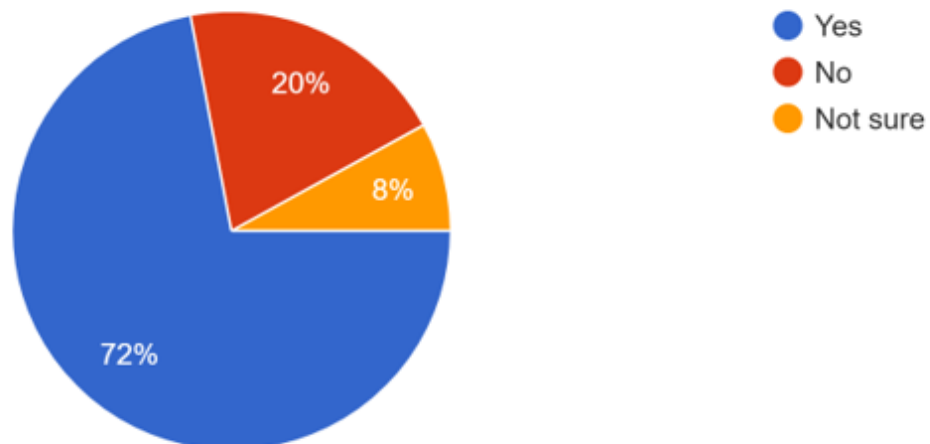
Pandemic Recovery Addendum Business Input Survey Results

A business input survey was conducted in order to better understand how local businesses have been impacted by COVID-19 and what existing issues and needs businesses have. The survey was advertised both online and via hard copy flyers by local governments and partner organizations across the region. A total of 25 businesses responded to the survey. There was a range of businesses sizes and responses were geographically varied. The results of the business input survey assisted the CEDS Advisory Committee in developing the pandemic recovery regional response strategies. Results of the business input survey are included below.
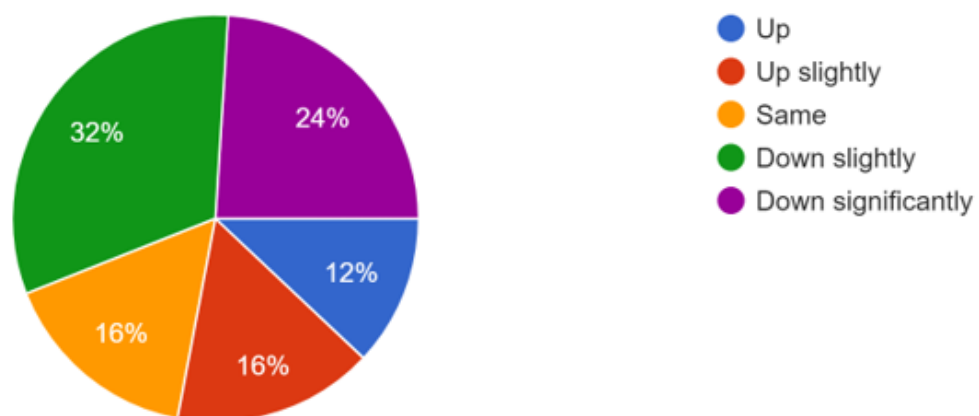

How is your business being impacted by COVID-19? (Check all that apply.)
25 responses

Impact	Count (%)
Watching spending closely due to uncertainty	13 (52%)
Event cancellations/order cancellations	16 (64%)
Concerns about workforce becoming ill	14 (56%)
Decrease in consumer demand for certain products	7 (28%)
Need to adjust work schedules/locations	8 (32%)
Changes to travel/meetings/conferences	16 (64%)
Supply chain disruptions	15 (60%)
Concern about ability to retain skilled workers	10 (40%)
Anticipate cancelling/postponing expansion project	7 (28%)
Technology upgrades/changes	6 (24%)
Increase in consumer demand for certain products	7 (28%)
Delayed staff training/classes	9 (36%)
Decreased labor pool available	10 (40%)
No direct impact	3 (12%)
Other*	1 (4%)
Other**	1 (4%)

*Most things are back on schedule currently, but the decreased labor pool is an ongoing and serious issue.

**Many of these were more severe in 2020 than now.

Are you satisfied with vaccination rates of your employees?
25 responses

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

72%
20%
8%

How has your revenue/sales been affected by COVID-19?
25 responses

- Up
- Up slightly
- Same
- Down slightly
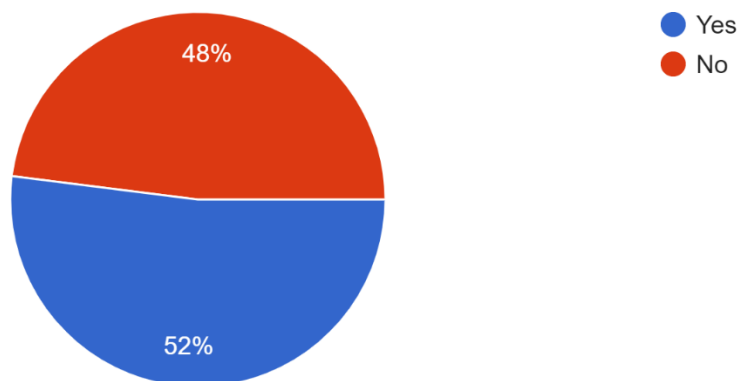- Down significantly

24%
32%
16%
16%
12%

Has your business reduced operational hours, shifts, workdays, or wages?

25 responses

- Yes
- No

72%

28%
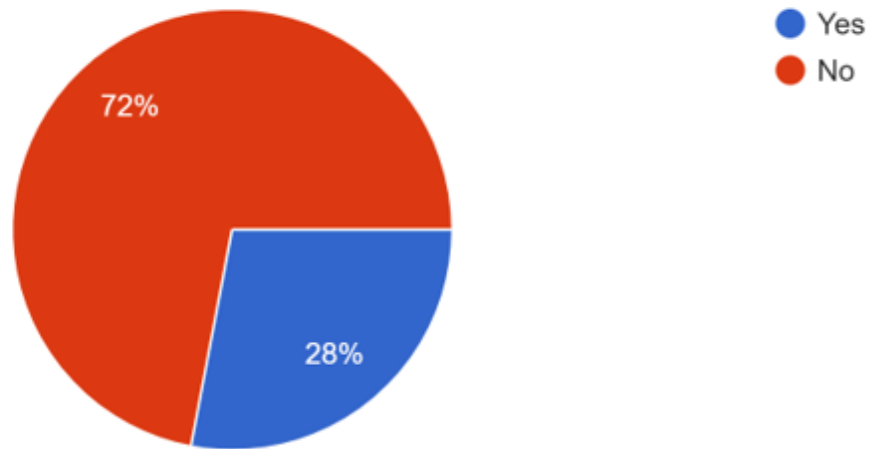
Has your business had to offer incentives or increased wages to attract/retain employees?

25 responses

- Yes
- No

48%

52%

206

Have you already, or do you expect to, reduce staff or layoff employees as a result of impact from COVID-19?
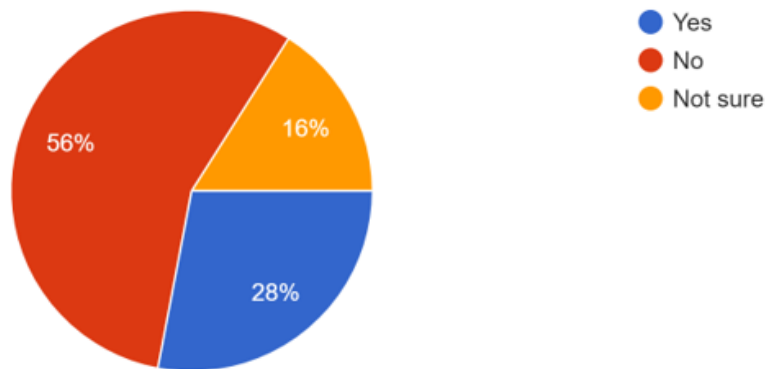
25 responses

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

76%
12%
12%
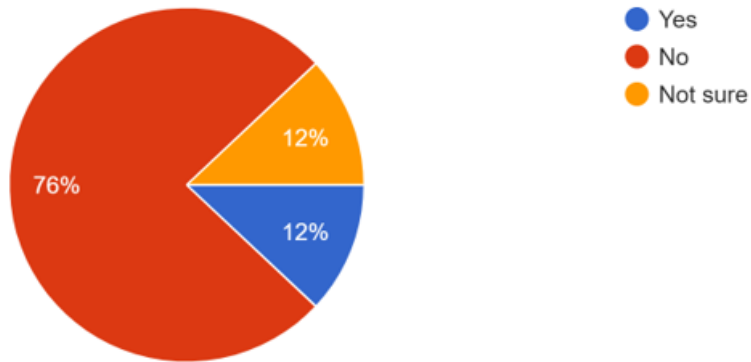
If yes, please estimate the number of employees who have or may be impacted by layoffs.

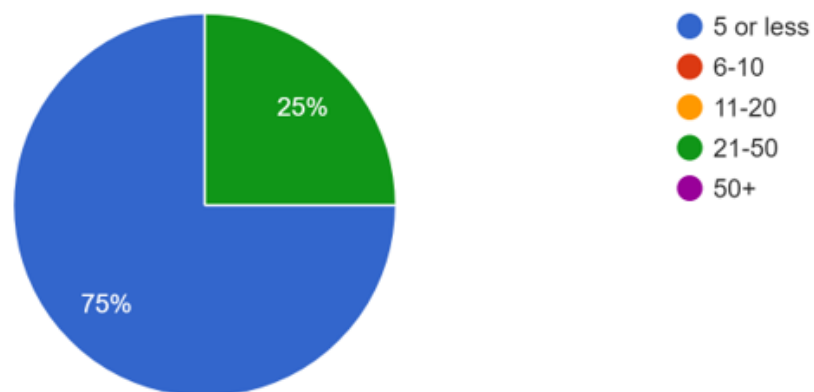6 responses

- 5 or less
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-50
- 50+

16.7%
16.7%
66.7%
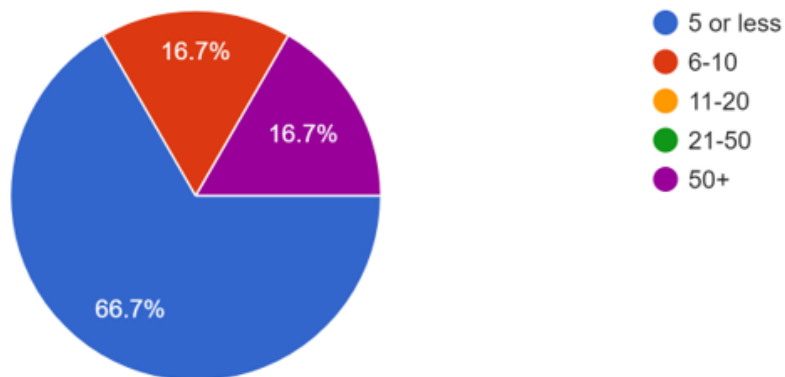
Have you already, or do you expect to, hire additional employees as a result of impact from COVID-19?

25 responses

- Yes — 28%
- No — 56%
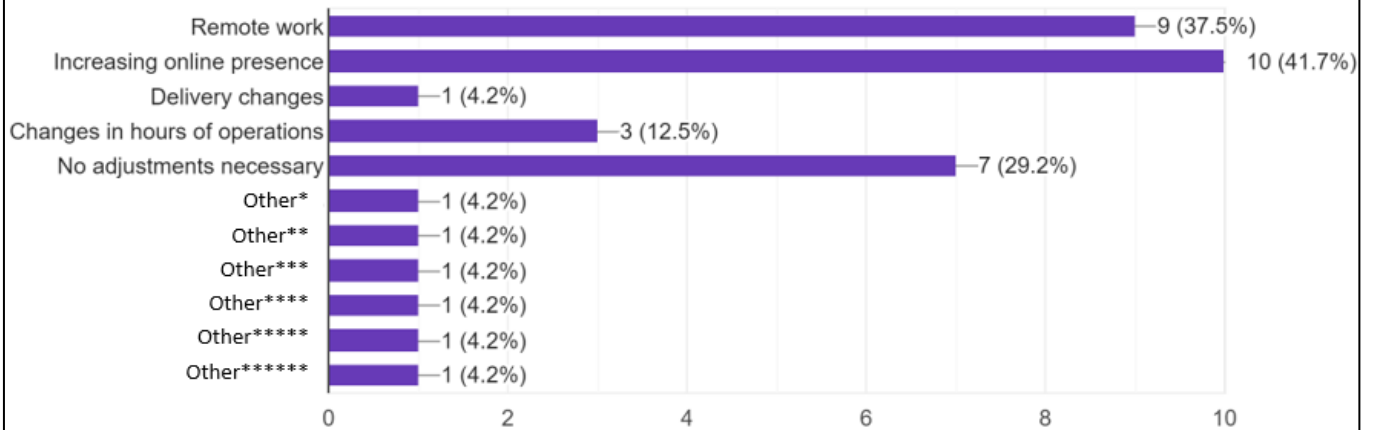- Not sure — 16%

If yes, please estimate the number of additional employees who have or may be hired.

8 responses

- 5 or less — 75%
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-50 — 25%
- 50+

How is your business adjusting operations? (Check all that apply.)

24 responses

Category	Count
Remote work	9 (37.5%)
Increasing online presence	10 (41.7%)
Delivery changes	1 (4.2%)
Changes in hours of operations	3 (12.5%)
No adjustments necessary	7 (29.2%)
Other*	1 (4.2%)
Other**	1 (4.2%)
Other***	1 (4.2%)
Other****	1 (4.2%)
Other*****	1 (4.2%)
Other******	1 (4.2%)

*In construction, you can't not be boots on the ground on worksites.

**Entering buildings by appointment only, cancelling services normally provided.

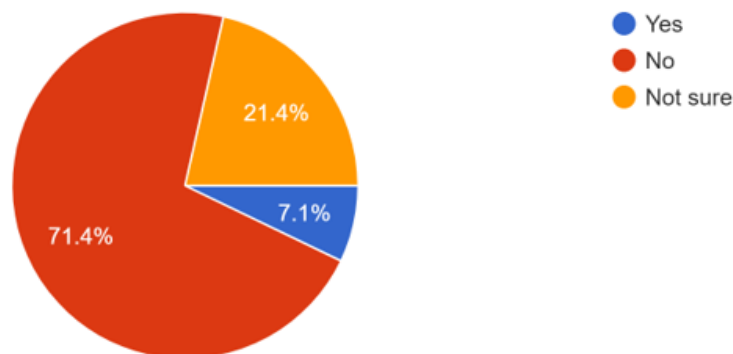***Changes in services offered, reduced hours and options for F&B

****Locked doors

*****Remote-based, even before pandemic. No change.

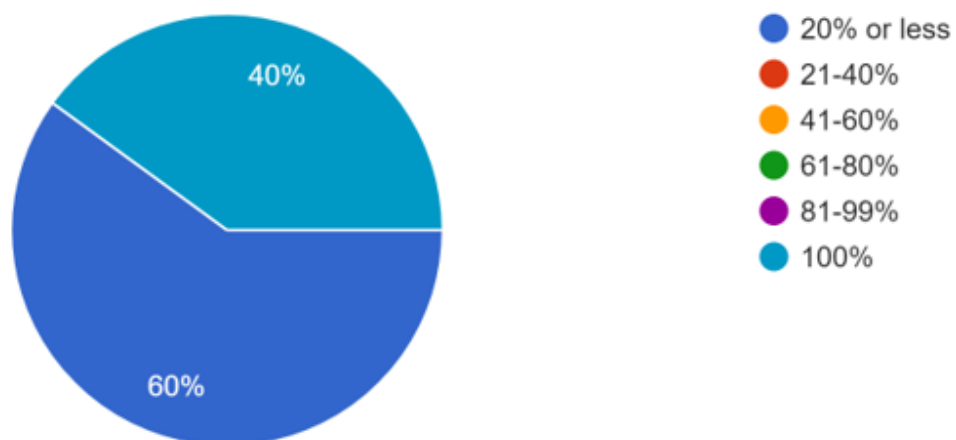******We did those two things in 2020. Not doing them any longer.

If your business has switched to remote work due to the pandemic, will remote employees be staying remote?
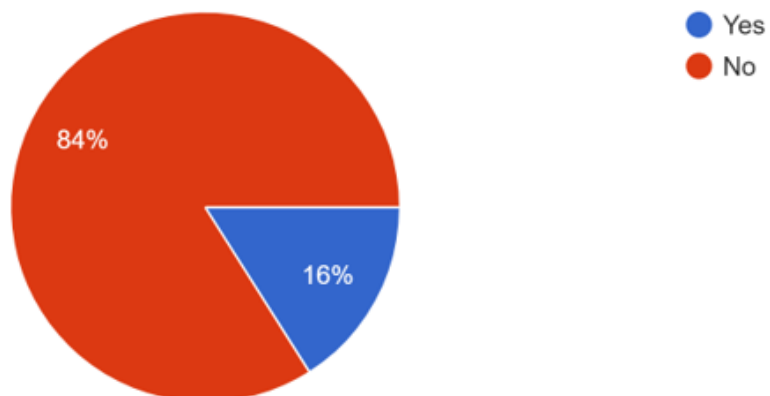
14 responses

- Yes — 7.1%
- No — 71.4%
- Not sure — 21.4%

If yes, what percentage of employees will continue to work remotely?
5 responses

Legend:
- 20% or less
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-99%
- 100%

40%
60%

Has your business reduced or eliminated office space due to the pandemic?
25 responses

Legend:
- Yes
- No

84%
16%

If yes, do you anticipate needing this office space again in the future?
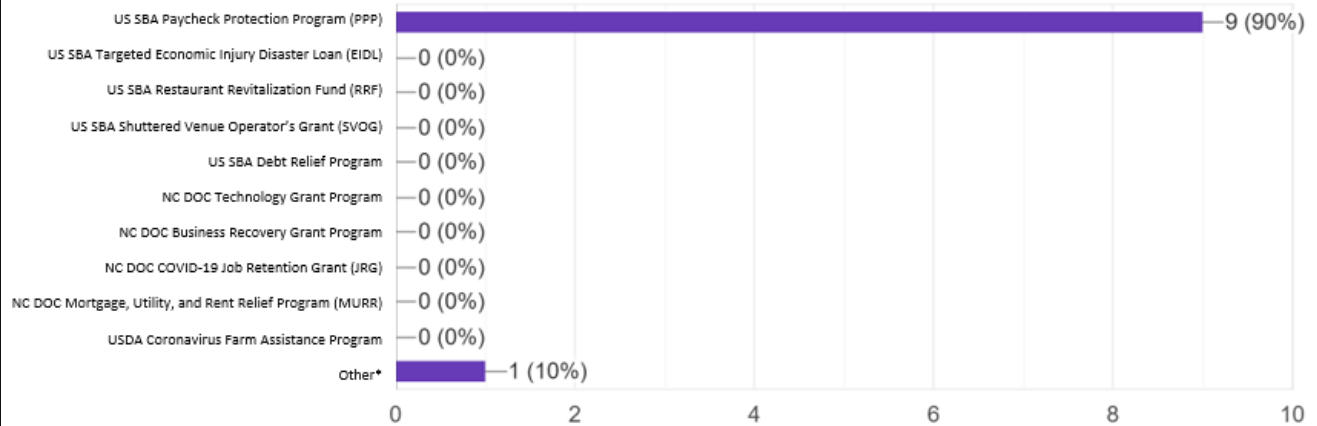
8 responses
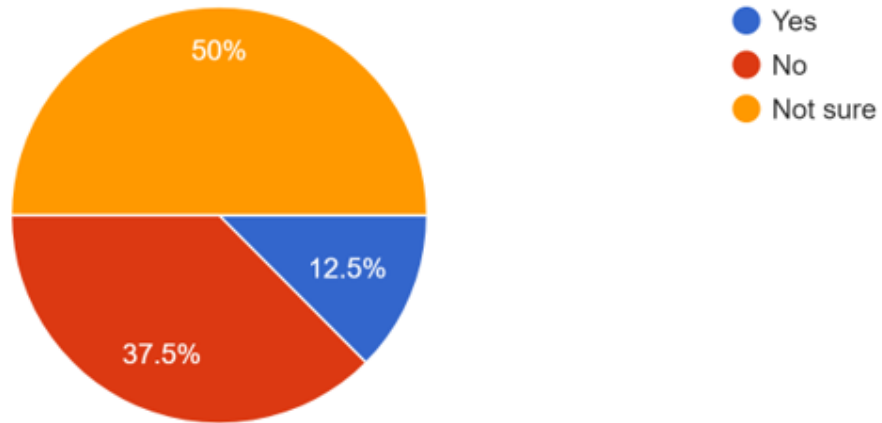
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

50%

12.5%

37.5%

Has your business utilized any federal, state, or local grants to help with COVID-19 recovery?

25 responses

- Yes
- No

56%

44%
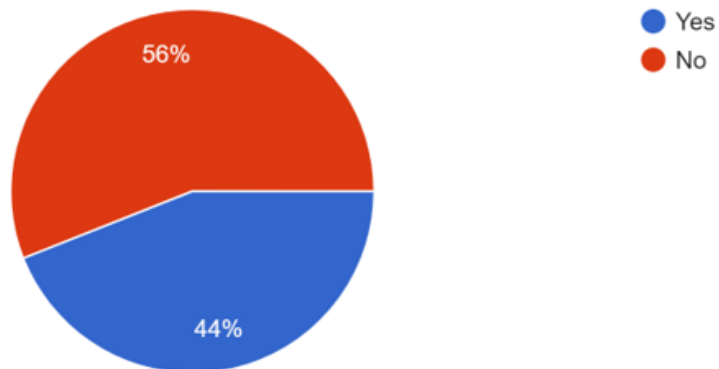
If yes, what grant(s) did your business utilize? (Check all that apply.)

10 responses

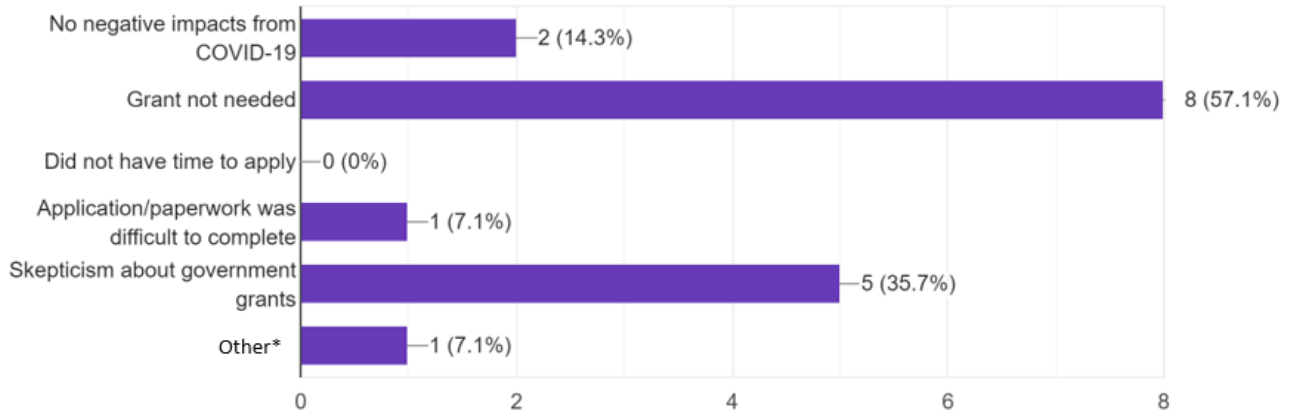| Grant	Count
US SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)	9 (90%)
US SBA Targeted Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)	0 (0%)
US SBA Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF)	0 (0%)
US SBA Shuttered Venue Operator's Grant (SVOG)	0 (0%)
US SBA Debt Relief Program	0 (0%)
NC DOC Technology Grant Program	0 (0%)
NC DOC Business Recovery Grant Program	0 (0%)
NC DOC COVID-19 Job Retention Grant (JRG)	0 (0%)
NC DOC Mortgage, Utility, and Rent Relief Program (MURR)	0 (0%)
USDA Coronavirus Farm Assistance Program	0 (0%)
Other*	1 (10%)

*ARPA

If no, why have you not utilized any federal, state or local grants to help with COVID-19 recovery? (Check all that apply.)

14 responses

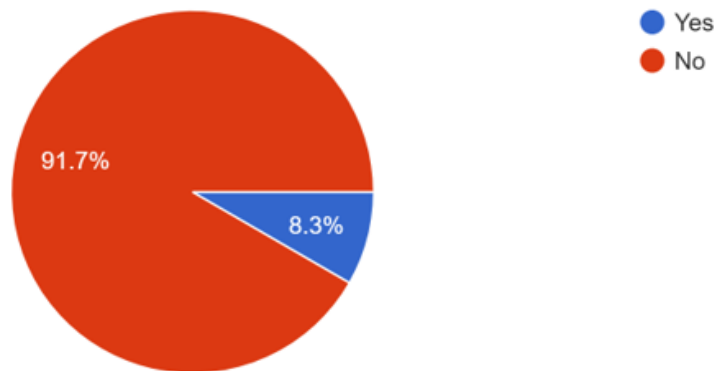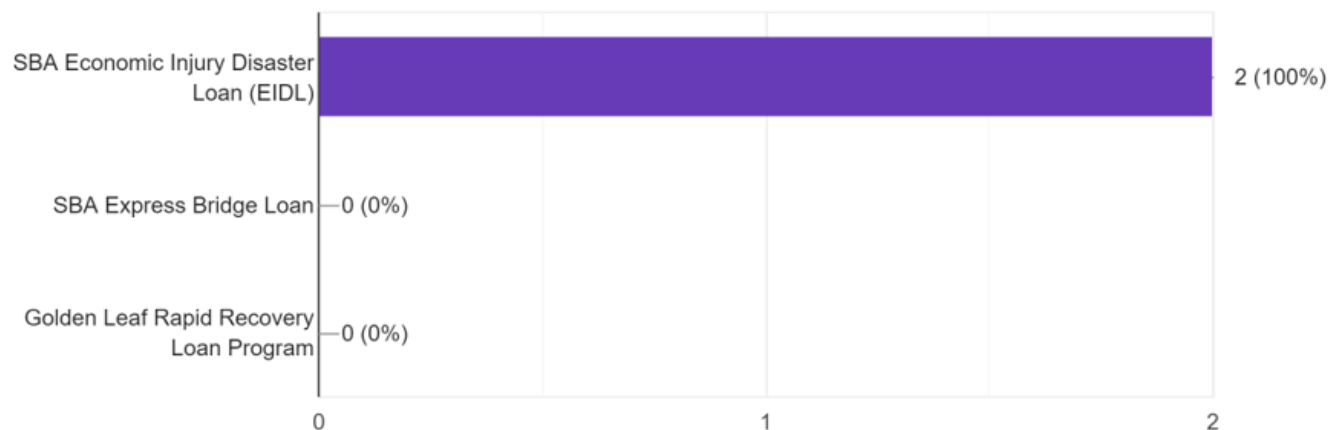| Reason	Count
No negative impacts from COVID-19	2 (14.3%)
Grant not needed	8 (57.1%)
Did not have time to apply	0 (0%)
Application/paperwork was difficult to complete	1 (7.1%)
Skepticism about government grants	5 (35.7%)
Other*	1 (7.1%)

*Corporate Business Plan was able to avoid this option.

Has your business utilized any federal, state, or local loans to help with COVID-19 recovery?
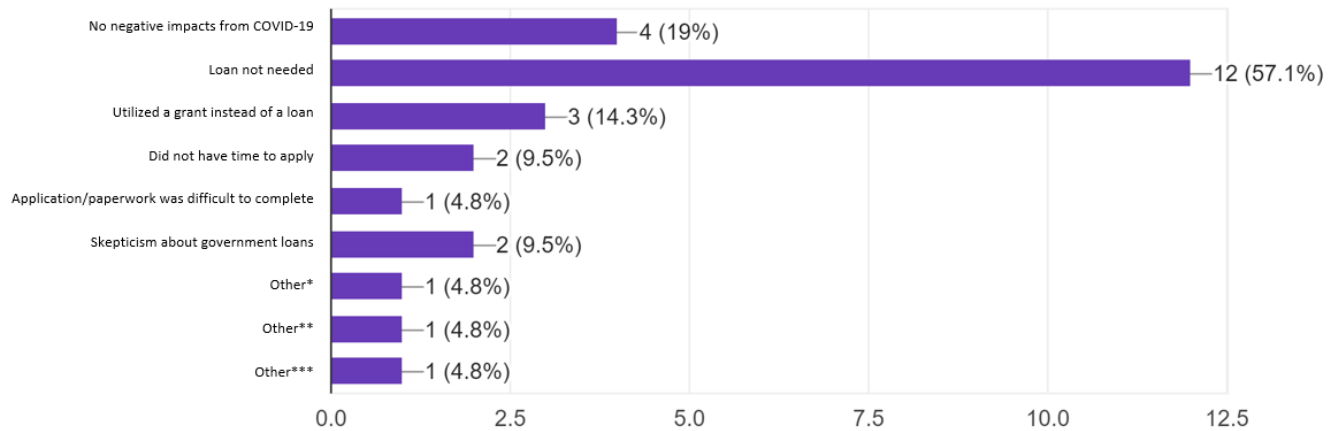24 responses

- Yes
- No

91.7%

8.3%

If yes, what federal, state, or local loan program(s) did your business utilize?
2 responses

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)	2 (100%)
SBA Express Bridge Loan	0 (0%)
Golden Leaf Rapid Recovery Loan Program	0 (0%)

If no, why have you not utilized any federal, state or local loan program(s) to help with COVID-19 recovery? (Check all that apply.)
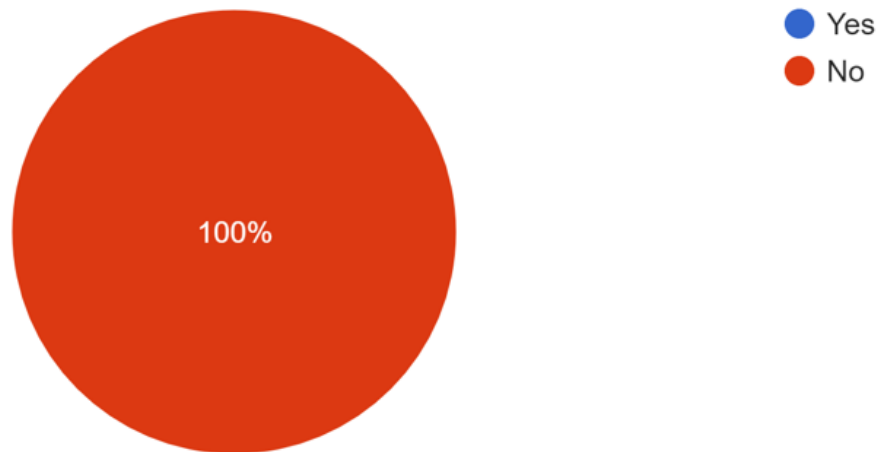
21 responses

*Not eligible to apply.
**Wasn't aware of and when I found out deadline had passed
***Same as prior response.

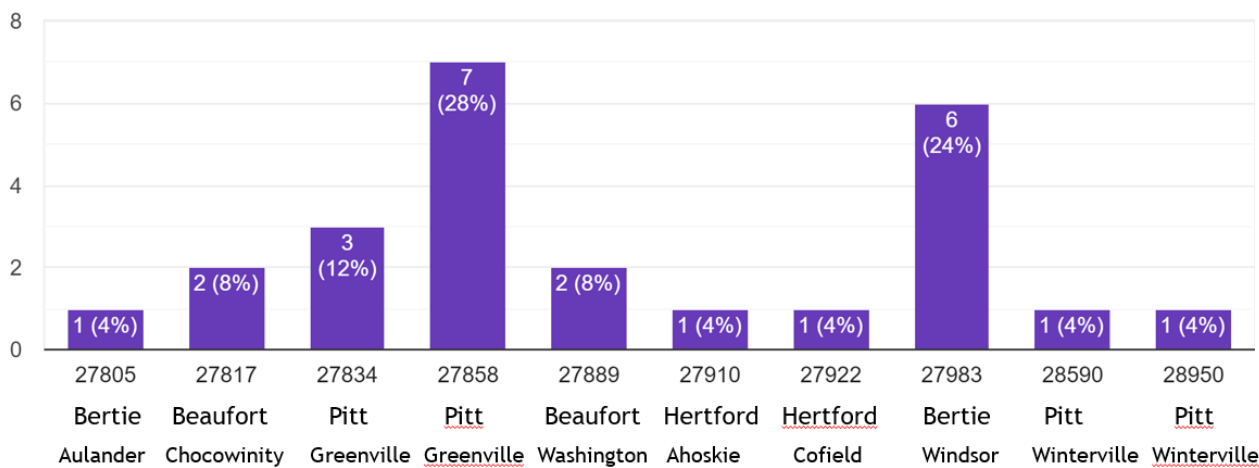Did your business utilize private loans to help with COVID-19 recovery?

25 responses

Yes
No

100%

Do you have anything else to share with us regarding COVID-19 impacts to your business?

7 responses

▶ County government department. Answers to questions about grants/loans pertain only to one department. Answers may differ for County government as a whole

▶ We are largely back to normal. These answers mostly pertain to actions/impact from 2020

▶ Thanks to PPP, we have been able to make it

▶ More employees can work remote, which is good for Eastern NC's growth opportunities

▶ IT IS TIME TO MOVE ON

▶ We are a travel and tourism entity which was hit hardest by COVID

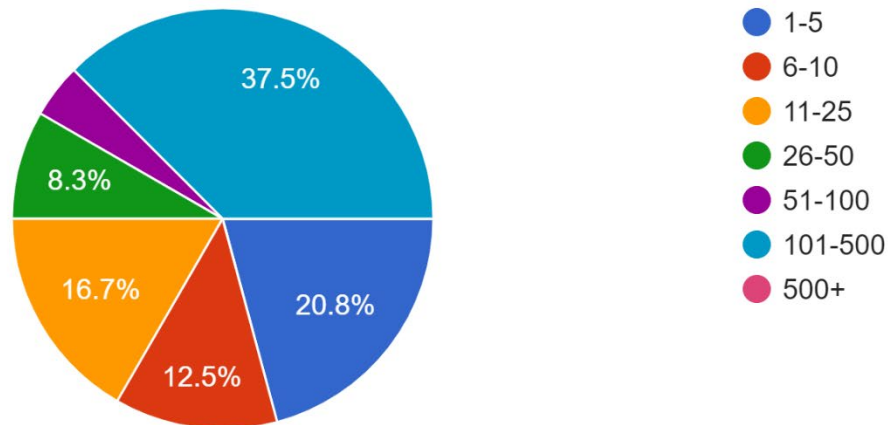▶ I would like to know of more opportunities for grants to help my small business.

### What is the zip code of your business?

25 responses

Zip	County	City	Count
27805	Bertie	Aulander	1 (4%)
27817	Beaufort	Chocowinity	2 (8%)
27834	Pitt	Greenville	3 (12%)
27858	Pitt	Greenville	7 (28%)
27889	Beaufort	Washington	2 (8%)
27910	Hertford	Ahoskie	1 (4%)
27922	Hertford	Cofield	1 (4%)
27983	Bertie	Windsor	6 (24%)
28590	Pitt	Winterville	1 (4%)
28950	Pitt	Winterville	1 (4%)

How many employees does your business have?
24 responses

1-5 — 20.8%
6-10 — 12.5%
11-25 — 16.7%
26-50 — 8.3%
51-100
101-500 — 37.5%
500+

What industry does your business represent?
24 responses
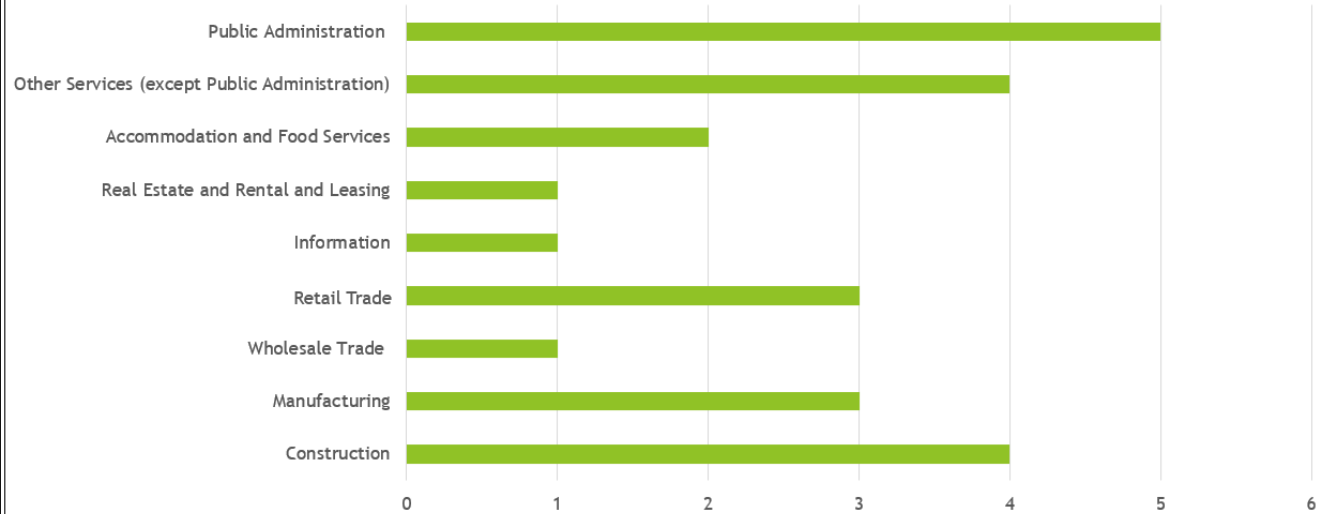
Conclusion

To assist in carrying out the regional priorities set forth in this addendum, the Mid-East Commission may utilize EDA CARES Act Supplemental Funding to competitively procure consultants as needed in order to supplement staff capacity or provide a higher level of expertise. Mid-East Commission and Rivers East Workforce Development Board staff will work with member governments, regional stakeholders, and other partners to carry out the strategies set forth in this Pandemic Recovery Addendum.

Additionally, the CEDS Advisory Committee will continue to advise on these strategies and this addendum will be considered as the Mid-East Commission begins the CEDS five-year major update process.

Given the new federal investments that will be deployed over the next several years, the Mid-East Commission will focus on prioritizing capacity building for counties and municipalities to ensure that they can effectively and efficiently utilize new funding sources to support a sustainable, balanced recovery. As a result, each of the planning efforts will focus on ways to inform resource decision-making and ways to develop and implement regional programming solutions and recommend local and state policy decisions that will facilitate recovery.

We must continue to be proactive and innovative in helping people get back to work, businesses to stay open, and work towards eliminating geographic, background, sex, and income disparities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. To make the impact that is needed, we need support from stakeholders across the region in the private, public and philanthropic sectors.

Thank you very much to those of you who helped make this plan possible – and to everyone who is dedicated to working on its implementation.

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