

**Meeting Minutes  
October 27 - 28, 2025**

**MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina met in Special Meeting Session at Valerie C. Woodard Center, 3205 Freedom Dr Ste 1000, Charlotte, North Carolina beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, October 27th, through Tuesday, October 28, 2025, for the BOCC Fall Retreat.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Present:** Chair Mark Jerrell, Vice-Chair Leigh Altman and Commissioners George Dunlap, Arthur Griffin, Vilma D. Leake, Laura J. Meier, Elaine Powell, Susan Rodriguez-McDowell, Yvette Townsend-Ingram  
County Manager Michael A. Bryant  
County Attorney Tyrone C. Wade  
Clerk to the Board Kristine M. Smith  
Deputy Clerk to the Board Arlissa Eason

**Absent:** None

**CALL TO ORDER**

*The meeting was called to order by Chair Mark Jerrell, which was followed by reading of the County's Mission and Vision and the FY2026 Board Budget Priorities, introductions, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.*

**25-0593 BOCC Fall Retreat, October 27-28, 2025**

**FALL RETREAT – DAY 1 – OCTOBER 27, 2025**

**9:00 AM - 9:05 AM Welcome**

Mike Bryant, County Manager, welcomed the attendees and gave opening remarks.

**9:05 AM - 9:10 AM Remarks**

Chair Mark Jerrell gave opening remarks.

**9:10 AM - 9:20 AM Agenda Overview & Binder Materials**

LaShaun Carter, Chief Equity and Inclusive Officer, provided the Board with an overview of the retreat agenda and binder materials.

**9:20 AM - 10:05 AM Affordable Housing**

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Board Priority Alignment: Economic Development

Chair Mark Jerrell, District 4, gave the presentation.

*Description: Affordable housing is a critical aspect of economic development; it enables people to live near employment centers and reduces barriers to workforce participation. It has the potential to stimulate the local economy and increase demand for affordable goods and services. Moreover, stable housing fosters healthier communities, which in turn attract investment and support long-term growth.*

The slide features the Mecklenburg County seal on the left, which includes the text 'MECKLENBURG COUNTY' and 'NORTH CAROLINA' around a central emblem. To the right of the seal, the title 'Affordable Housing: A Strategic Priority for Mecklenburg County' is displayed in large white font. Below the title, the text reads: 'Chair Mark Jerrell, District 4', 'Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners', 'Fall Retreat', and 'October 27-28, 2025'. At the bottom of the slide, a dark blue banner contains the text 'FY25–FY26 BOCC Priorities' in white.

- Economic Development
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Health Equity & Wellness
- Services for Seniors
- Workforce Development
- Reducing Racial Disparities

## Mecklenburg County Snapshot

- Population (2024 est.): ~1.2M | +157 new residents per day
  - Projected 2050 Population: ~1.7M
  - Median Household Income: ~\$81,000
  - Median Rent: ~\$1,550/month
  - Homeownership Rate: ~58%
- Too many people cannot afford to live here—it is a threat to the future of our community.

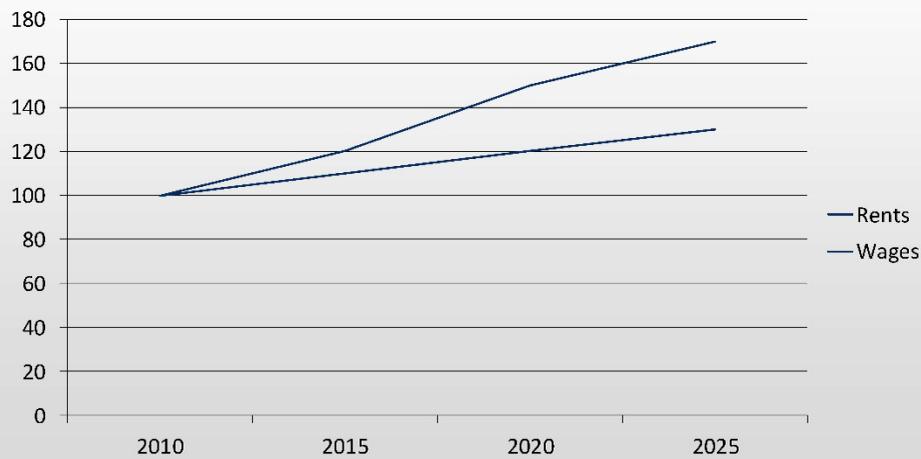
## Questions to Consider

- What does it mean to invest in mental health when someone is sleeping in their car?
- How can we talk about workforce development when our workforce can't afford to live here?
- If we build parks and schools but families can't afford to stay, who are we really building for?
- Is it truly economic development if we're displacing the very workers who make our economy run?
- What happens to racial equity when housing costs force families out of opportunity zones?

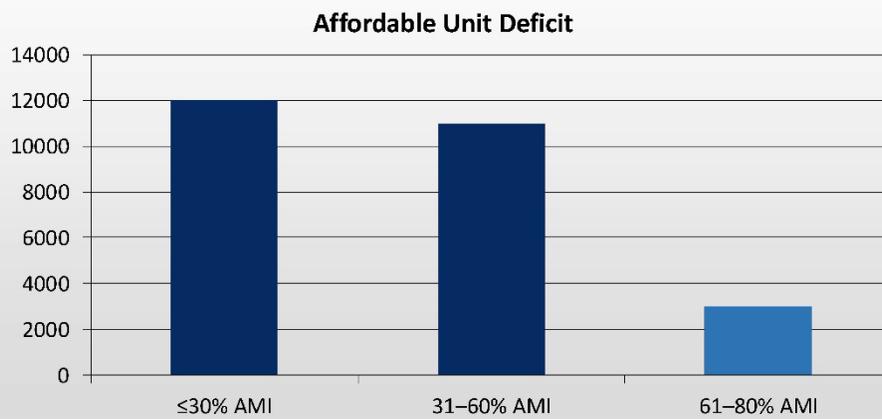
## Definition of Affordable Housing / Housing Insecurity

- Affordable housing means housing that costs no more than 30% of a household's gross income.
- Housing insecurity includes high housing costs, poor quality, unstable neighborhoods, overcrowding, or homelessness.

## Affordability Trend: Rents vs. Wages (2010–2025)



## Housing Shortage ( $\leq 60\%$ AMI)



## AMI Income Parameters (2024)

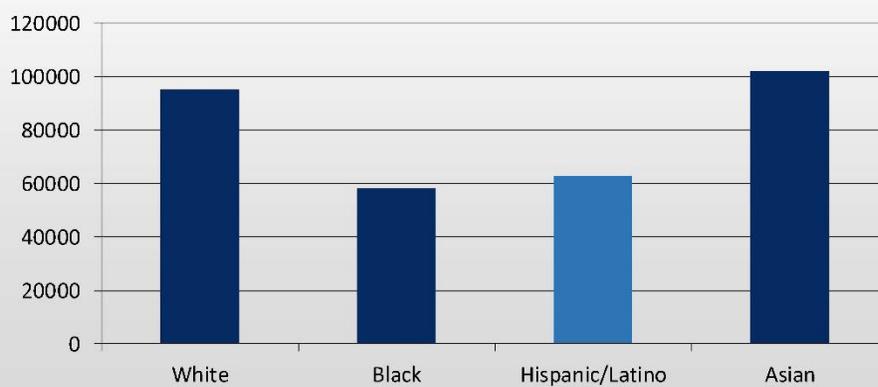
- 100% AMI (Family of 4): \$101,200
- 80% AMI: \$80,960
- 60% AMI: \$60,720
- 30% AMI: \$30,360

## Cost of Housing in Mecklenburg County

Apartment Size	Avg Monthly Rent	Yearly Income to Afford
1 Bedroom	\$1,450	\$58,000
2 Bedroom	\$1,750	\$70,000
3 Bedroom	\$2,250	\$90,000

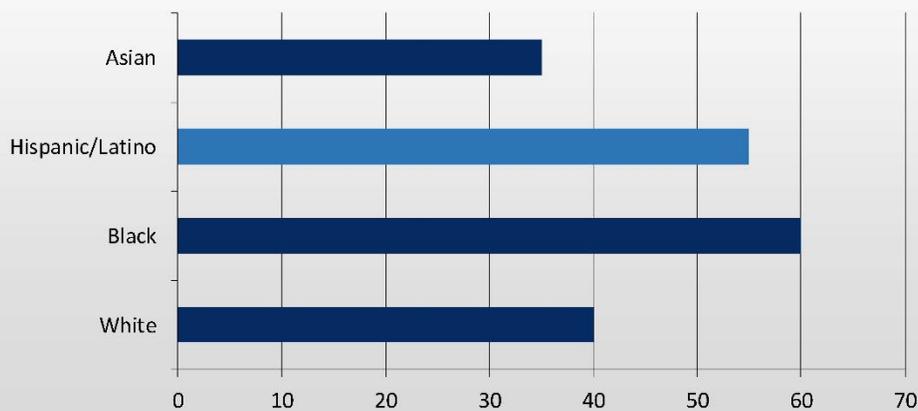
## Median Household Income by Race (2024)

Median Income (\$)



## Racial Breakdown of Rent Burden

Cost-Burdened Renters (%)



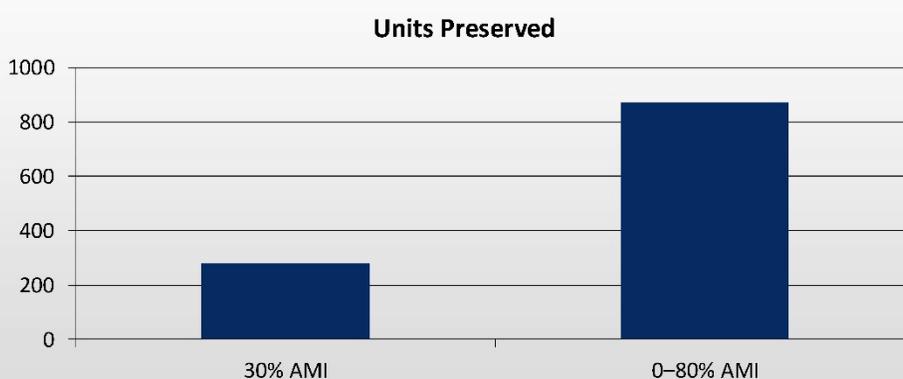
## Housing as a Social Determinant of Health

- Jobs: Housing stability improves job retention.
- Healthcare: Safe, stable housing lowers chronic disease burden.
- Transportation: Reduces commute time and cost.
- Education: Improves attendance and performance.
- Equity: Reduces disparities in opportunity.

## Non-Statutory but Essential Investments

- Mandated: DSS, Courts, Public Health, Jails, Elections
- Non-Mandated: Parks, Libraries, Meck Pre-K, Affordable Housing
- Affordable housing is not mandated—but it is essential.

## Current County Efforts & Impact



More than 2,700 residents have stable homes today because of County-led NOAH preservation efforts.

## Policy Prescriptions & Path Forward

- Land Banking & Strategic Acquisition
- Inclusionary Zoning Advocacy
- Public, Private & Nonprofit Partnerships
- HOMES Program Expansion
- NOAH Preservation
- CMS Site Repurposing for Housing
- Countywide Affordable Housing Fund

## Call to Action

- If not us—who? If not now—when?
- Affordable housing is the foundation of equity, health, and economic vitality.



Thank You

Mecklenburg County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Fall Retreat  
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**Comments**

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked if it was possible to do a survey to ensure no County employees were housing insecure. *County Manager Bryant said the County previously had that information on file and said they could look into it. He said the County was in the process of discussing raising the minimum wage for County employees.*

Commissioner Leake thanked Chair Jerrell for his presentation and said she was concerned with the burden on the people from increasing the taxes. She said the seniors on fixed incomes could not afford that. She said the community and infrastructure was not strong enough to care for all the new residents they were taking in.

Chair Jerrell said he agreed that they could not tax their way out of the situation. He said they should not go above what was needed and he did not believe housing insecurity was strictly a County problem. He said housing insecurity was a community, state, and national problem. He said they should focus on incentives with developers and collaborating with Charlotte and the surrounding Towns. He said they could properly plan and provide the tools to assist the people.

Commissioner Griffin said black homeownership had decreased since 1970 because the purchasing power of the dollar had decreased. He said, following a previously performed study, it was suggested they reach out to businesses in the private sector about increasing their wages, but the idea was laughed off.

Commissioner Griffin, in terms of racial equity, 70% of the homeless were African Americans but they only consisted of 33% of the total population which proved that racial disparities played a large role in the issues. He said an intentional effort was made to have land around the schools so natural housing would occur.

Commissioner Griffin said, combined, the City and County produced 32,000 units of affordable housing but they had to figure out a way to address the economics of wages to assist those who needed it. He said wages played a major role in housing insecurities.

Commissioner Powell said, since 2018, the County had been doing work regarding housing in a balanced way. She said 2 out of 3 people would say it was their number one priority. She said she did not believe the Catawba River could support the growing population because they did not have the structure to meet the needs of the people that were already there. She asked if it was legal to land bank for affordable housing. *County Attorney Wade said there was a process for that, and they would look into it.*

Chair Jerrell said addressing the issue of affordable housing was a multi-purpose process and they had to think about what it cost the county when people were unhoused.

Commissioner Meier asked how often the County worked and partnered with the City. *County Manager Bryant said they did not have an exact answer, but they worked with them often and felt they had a great working partnership.*

Commissioner Meier said The Pearl was a huge non-profit entity the County partnered with to receive affordable housing, and she wanted to see that in the future.

Chair Jerrell provided a brief update on The Pearl's affordable housing.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said affordable housing was a national crisis, and they could not fix it alone.

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Commissioner Altman said they needed to address both populations of those who were housing insecure and those unsheltered. She said it was important to think about their public spaces and ensure they did not have people who had to sleep on the streets. She said they should look at other cities who were further down the road of housing instability to recognize their failures and learn from them.

Chair Jerrell said they also partnered with local entities and provided a rental subsidy which was a very important policy subscription.

County Manager Bryant thanked Chair Jerrell for his presentation and said the new Deputy County Manager position was to focus on upward mobility. He said the County needed to bank what land they could.

County Manager Bryant said CMS, the City Manager, and the County collectively agreed to compile a master list of all the land they had available and to discuss their various needs to assist each other with land swaps.

Chair Jerrell said he was not advocating to take away from other needs or priorities. He said it was a “Both and...” situation.

**10:05AM -10:50AM Workforce Development**

Board Priority Alignment: Workforce Development

Vice Chair Leigh Altman, At-Large, gave the presentation.

*Description: Workforce development is vital for the County’s long-term economic resilience, ensuring that community members have the skills necessary to meet changing industry demands. Keeping workforce development as a priority shows a commitment to boosting individual prosperity and also promotes inclusive, sustainable growth throughout the community.*



Vice-Chair Altman provided the following information:

- County Manager Bryant created a new Deputy County Manager position to help focus on the ecosystem of connecting residents to the jobs in demand and aligning the community

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to the jobs in the future.

She said she felt less concern regarding the topic because she trusted him with the work he and Deputy County Manager Leslie Johnson would be doing.

She said they had many demands on the limited tax dollars available.

- The county spent over \$400 million per year on expenses that the General Assembly was responsible for.
- The community needed to understand the progress they could make if the General Assembly did what they were supposed to.

Employers lack talent pipelines to meet economic goals.

- Americans remain disconnected from high paying career paths.
- The workforce system is fragmented, lacks accountability, and AI is changing workforce faster than the workforce can adapt.

Vice-Chair Altman said she looked forward to coming up with integrated workforce systems to maximize effectiveness and to provide accountability for workforce development programs. She said they would not just be paying people to train others but also invest in people with wrap around services

- All college and training programs needed to be utilized and focused on, not just one or the other

They have a shrinking and aging population

- They'll have fewer people to meet those needs while AI continued to effect things
- Opportunities for growth
  - Looking for true partnership with CMS. They should go deeper with CMS to ensure they were really being supported, all the way down to elementary school
  - I76 South was going to be a \$3 billion dollar project with lots of jobs and opportunities for economic mobility.
  - MPTA was a \$30 billion project that spanned over the next 30 years with an enormous impact

## Comments

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked what guarantees they had in place to hold certain organizations accountable to fulfill their promises. She said there were some things that were not under the County's authority, but they had to be able to do things differently to assist. She asked if there was a way to incentivize a percentage of available jobs to be designated for Mecklenburg County residents. *Vice-Chair Altman said, based on information she gathered from around the County, most people were not aware of the job opportunities. She said the County had to find a way to tell the residents about available jobs as well as jobs that would be coming in the future so they could have proper time to prepare and know what to expect. She said their capacity to help was much larger by clearly delivering those opportunities as opposed to dealing with the legal aspects of requiring incentives.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked if the County had a person who went to the local high schools to inform them of the jobs that were coming to the area and what specialties they were expecting to need. *Economic Director, Roger Johnson, said North Carolina was a Dylan Rule State so there was only so much they could do and require. He said, two years prior, they added aspirational goals into their contract and asked companies to report on what they were and were not doing with local hiring, environmental stewardship, and other philanthropic activities, etc.; however, only one company responded thus far because most companies did not start building or ask for incentives right away. He said they would likely not begin to see the relevant information for a few years.*

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Commissioner Leake said they should focus on both college and vocational training within the school system. She said politics played a role in shifting the focus on vocational training to ensure the community colleges had students enrolled and the County needed to uplift the training. She said they needed to help middle and high school students become informed on what the County needed in terms of careers.

Commissioner Griffin said he was surprised the Board did not get or receive the completed or consummated contracts from the business incentives programs and was astounded to learn that, out of the 10 contracts he received, only 2 companies agreed to attempt to work with workforce development and only one of them showed up to a discussion. He said there was a clause in Corning Optical contract that gave the business an option to receive a 25% increase bonus if they worked with either workforce development or the County's HR, with a yes or no box. He said it was not mandated to get the incentive; it was only an offer to plus up the incentive and that clause should go back into the contract to give corporations an option.

Commissioner Griffin said finance, technology, health sciences, business management, and advanced manufacturing were the five areas the County had been recruiting for the last decade. He said they should be able to fix a broken workforce development ecosystem and focus on training in those specific areas since they were the general fields the County had been recruiting for. He said there were fundamental policy things they could do in addition to the front-line stuff, in terms of getting students ready for those types of jobs. He said he hoped the Board could start getting the finished contracts from all those businesses as well.

Commissioner Griffin said he wasn't sure what the Board could do, in terms of mandated and nonmandated participation of the businesses, but the County should aspire to be a catalyst in fixing the ecosystem to help the people get prepared for the jobs that were coming to the County.

Commissioner Altman said a lot of the Board priorities were very expensive, but workforce development likely had a much smaller price tag. She said she was looking for the County to provide the leadership and vision because she did not think there was anyone in the County that identified where the gaps were. She said mission critical trades were trades that would prevent the community from collapsing as a society if they sustained an attack or could not access their outside partners and that was the area of focus, they should pursue.

Chair Jerrell said they were always looking at the maps that showed the areas of disparities in the crescent. He said the maps gave them a roadmap on what the focus of the County could and should be. He said, in all their passion areas, they could not be all things to all people, but they could help tip the scales.

County Manager Bryant said the County strategy included focusing on the shrinking middle. He said, based on an expert presentation, it was determined that there was a higher yield of positive outcomes and return on investment (ROI) when focusing on the shrinking middle. He said the County position remained open, but screening had begun.

### **Framework: Community & Corporate**

Michael Griswold, Office of Strategy and Innovation Director gave the presentation.

*Description:* The Board received an update on the County's revised Performance Management Framework. This included updates on the County's engagement with community leaders as well as the opportunity for the Board to provide feedback on a draft Balanced Scorecard developed by the Office of Strategy & Innovation.



**MANAGING  
FOR RESULTS**  
EVALUATING TODAY.  
STRENGTHENING TOMORROW.

Michael Griswold, MPA  
Director, Office of Strategy & Innovation  
October 27, 2025

## Managing For Results

- Mecklenburg County has a long history leveraging the Managing for Results framework.
- The County is recommitting to performance management and the balanced scorecard – including a visual refresh of our Managing For Results brand.

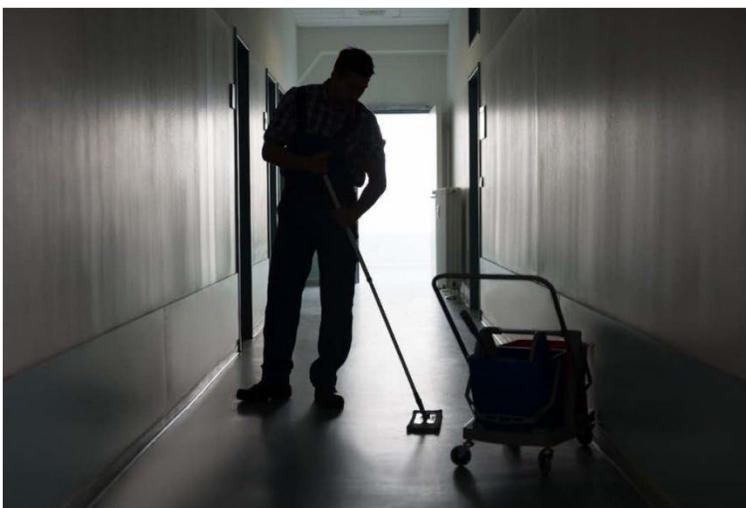
2002 Branding



2025 Branding

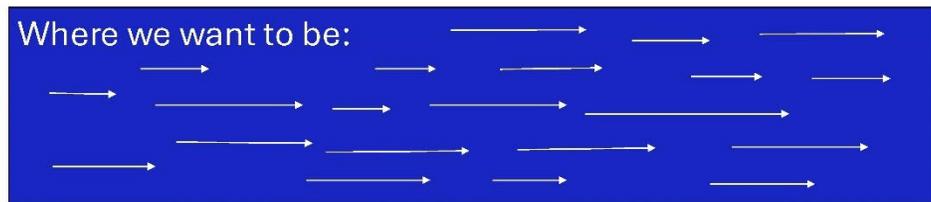
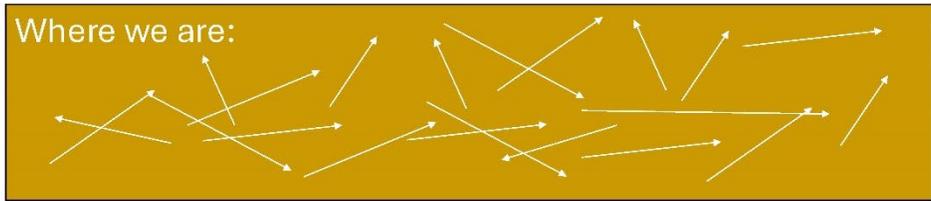


## Start With Why...



Make Strategy  
Everyone's  
Job

Aligning the Organization



Alignment to County Mission and Vision

**BOCC Community Vision:**  
 Mecklenburg County will be a community of pride and choice for people to **LIVE, LEARN, WORK** and **RECREATE**.

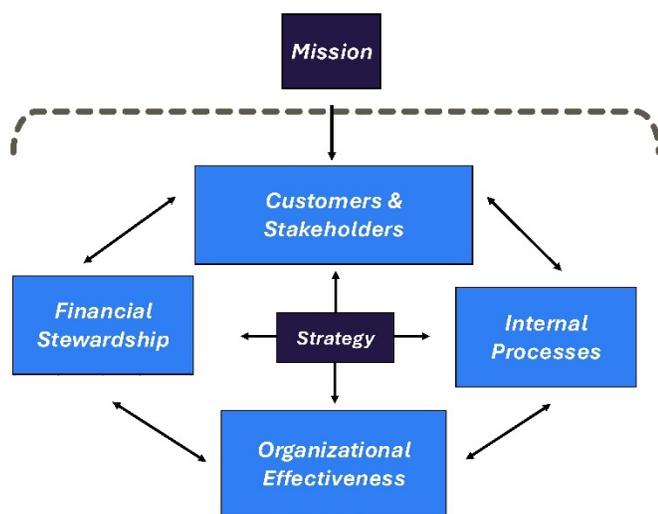
**Mecklenburg Vision:**  
 Mecklenburg County will be the best local government service provider.

**Mecklenburg Mission:**  
 To serve Mecklenburg County residents by helping them improve their lives and community.

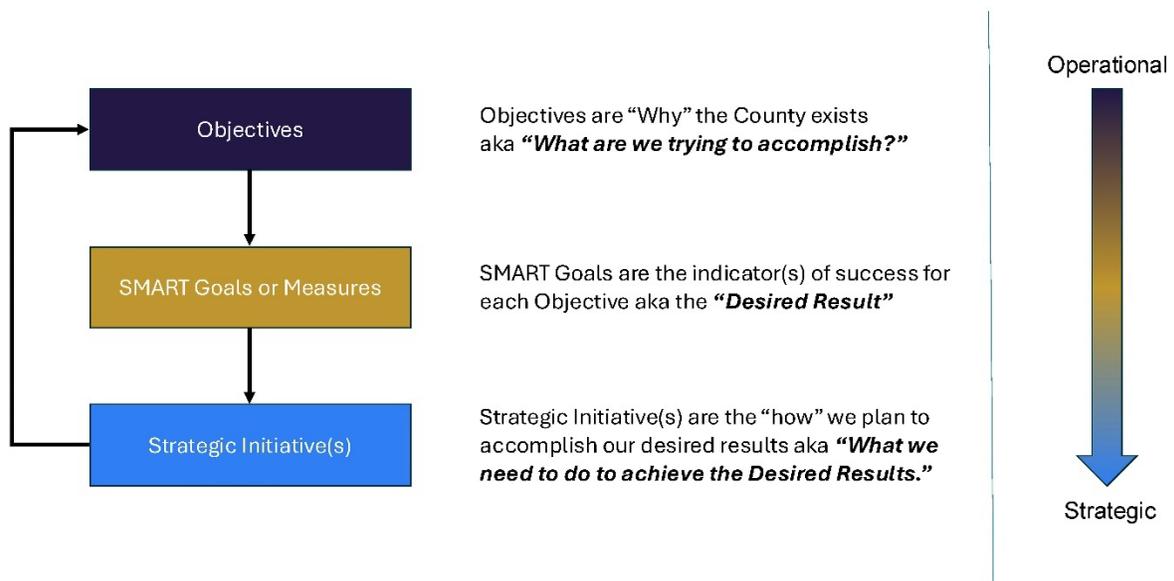
The Balanced Scorecard translates these aspirations into **measurable objectives**

What is the Balanced Scorecard?

- The Balanced Scorecard is a **management system that enables organizations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action**
- Provides an organization with feedback of both the *internal processes* and *external outcomes*, which allows for **continuous improvement of strategic performance and results**
- The Balanced Scorecard **blends both operational and strategic views** of the organization.



## Elements of the Balanced Scorecard



## Why Readopt the Balanced Scorecard?



### Previous Approach

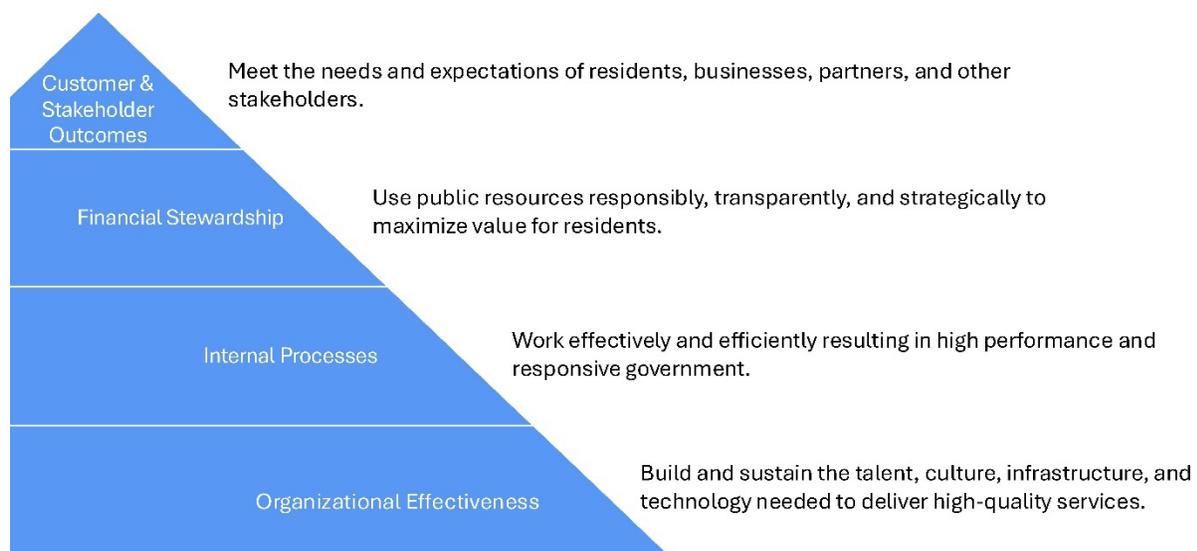
- **Fragmented efforts** – Strategic Business Plans operated in silos with limited connection to Countywide priorities.
- **Scope creep** – Focus drifted from core operations toward funding new initiatives, impacting organizational capacity.
- **Weak linkages** – Strategy, budget and performance were not consistently aligned or reinforcing one another.
- **Limited storytelling** – Data existed but didn’t clearly communicate progress or community impact, focusing more on outputs than outcomes.



### Moving Forward

- **A unified framework** – Connects every department’s core functions to the County’s strategic vision and Board priorities.
- **Simplified and sharpened focus** – Moves from volume to value with fewer, more meaningful measures centered on core operations.
- **Stronger alignment** – Connects strategy, performance, and budget, enabling more integrated planning and resource allocation.
- **Builds a culture of learning and improvement** – Encourages cross-departmental collaboration, continuous learning, and outcome-based story-telling.

## Four Scorecard Perspectives



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**Focus Areas**

Mecklenburg County will be a community of pride and choice  
 for people to  
**LIVE, LEARN, WORK and RECREATE**

LIVE		LEARN	WORK	RECREATE
Health	Safety	Education	Jobs	Environment and Recreation
<b>Healthy and Thriving Community</b>	<b>Safe and Prepared Community</b>	<b>Learning and Educational Opportunities</b>	<b>Jobs and Economic Opportunities</b>	<b>Environment, Culture, and Recreation</b>
This focus area promotes a high quality of life through healthy, safe, and affordable living conditions for all residents.	This focus area centers on protecting residents and promoting trust through effective public safety and emergency preparedness.	This focus area supports lifelong learning and educational advancement to empower residents and prepare a skilled future workforce.	This focus area promotes economic opportunity and workforce development for residents and businesses.	This focus area promotes wellness, connection, and enjoyment through accessible environmental, recreational, and cultural opportunities.

**Level-set for Today**

- Today's goals are:
  - To review the **Strategic Objectives** in the draft scorecard to get feedback on:
    - **What is included**
    - **What is missing**
    - **What may need revision**
  - Review an example of how the scorecard works
- Out of scope for today:
  - A full review of the details of every Strategic Objective – this will come after County staff receive feedback from the Board today

Draft Corporate Scorecard – October 27, 2025 | Asterisk (\*) = BOCC Priority Alignment | Dotted Lines = Partnership / Collaboration Required

Improve overall Quality of Life for Mecklenburg residents					
	Healthy and Thriving Community	Learning and Educational Opportunities	Jobs and Economic Opportunities	Environment, Culture, and Recreation	Safe and Prepared Community
Community Customer / Stakeholder	Improve access to care*	Improve K-readiness for Meck Pre-K students*	Promote economic mobility by connecting residents to jobs, training, and career growth*	Enhance environmental stewardship through conservation, monitoring, and sustainable practices*	Support justice system policies and practices that enhance public safety and reduce recidivism
	Enhance resident access to safe and affordable housing	Promote literacy and digital access	Make Mecklenburg County a premier place to start, grow, and sustain a business*	Expand access to parks, open space, and recreation*	Ensure the safety of buildings and public infrastructure
	Reduce hunger and improve nutrition across our community	Support student success through partnerships with local public schools and higher education*	Reduce financial barriers by connecting families to vital economic support services	Protect and promote the historic, arts, and cultural resources in Mecklenburg County	Provide programs that protect residents and promote recovery, resilience, and safety
	Increase stability for individuals and families*				Promote timely and reliable emergency response and forensic investigations
Drive internal service excellence through people, processes, and stewardship					
Internal	Financial Stewardship		Manage County resources responsibly, transparently, and sustainably to maximize value for residents	Maintain affordable and competitive tax rate	
	Internal Processes	Strengthen partnerships and community collaboration	Promote a high-performing government through efficiency, accountability, and transparency	Increase community awareness and engagement through proactive communication and outreach	Mitigate enterprise risk and ensure policy compliance
	Organizational Effectiveness	Build a dynamic workforce that reflects our community and fosters belonging*	Improve technology utilization and capacity	Strengthen County culture and invest in the County workforce	Enhance data available for decision-making

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**Example Strategic Objective Alignments: Healthy and Thriving Community**

<p><b>Improve access to care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Primary and Behavioral Care</li> <li>• Vaccinations/Immunizations</li> <li>• Dental</li> <li>• HIV / STD Prevention and Care</li> </ul> <p>BOCC Priority</p>	<p><b>Enhance resident access to safe and affordable housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Home Repair (Includes Seniors)</li> <li>• Housing and Homelessness Programs</li> <li>• Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)</li> </ul> <p>BOCC Priority</p>
<p><b>Reduce hunger and improve nutrition across our community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Security Programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increase stability for individuals and families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Welfare Programs</li> <li>• Services for Adults / Services for Seniors</li> </ul> <p>BOCC Priority</p>

**Example Strategic Objective Alignments: Organizational Effectiveness**

<p><b>Build a dynamic workforce that reflects our community and fosters belonging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity and Inclusion (Enterprise)</li> <li>• Internal Department Equity Action Teams (DEATs)</li> <li>• Internal Department Initiatives</li> </ul> <p>BOCC Priority</p>	<p><b>Improve technology utilization and capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT-led strategic organizational improvements</li> <li>• Internal Department Initiatives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strengthen County culture and invest in the County workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Manager’s Organizational Reset</li> <li>• Succession Planning</li> <li>• Retention, Turnover, Vacancy Rates</li> <li>• Employee Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities</li> <li>• Internal Department Initiatives</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enhance data available for decision-making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced Scorecard and Performance Management Framework</li> <li>• Budget and Performance Alignment</li> <li>• Geospatial data from GIS</li> <li>• IT-led strategic organizational improvements</li> <li>• Internal Department Initiatives</li> </ul>

**Example Strategic Objective Detail**

<b>Scorecard Alignment</b>	Internal Processes	<b>Board Priority Alignment</b>	N/A
<b>Objective</b>	Promote a high-performing government through efficiency, accountability, and transparency		

SMART Goal(s) (Example)	Target (Example)	Recent Results (Example)	Strategic Initiatives (Example)
Achieve 90% or greater customer satisfaction with call center service by FY2028	90%	FY23: X% FY24: Y% FY25: Z%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance training of call center staff to increase first call resolution rate</li> <li>• Reduce the dropped call rate by investing in updated technology</li> </ul>

## An Example of the Balanced Scorecard in Action

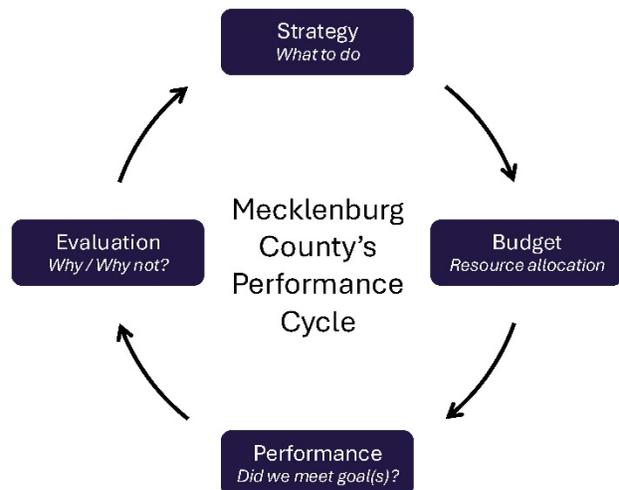


## Managing for Results (MFR) and the Balanced Scorecard



- **The Balanced Scorecard defines our strategic direction** by establishing the Objectives, SMART Goal(s), and Strategic Initiatives that represent County and community priorities.
- **MFR provides the management system** that ensures strategies translate into measurable, sustainable results.
- **MFR connects strategy to action.**
- **MFR aligns budgets and resource allocation to strategic priorities.** The County can't budget strategically unless we're managing for results.
- **MFR drives continuous improvement.** It is not about *collecting* data – it is about *using* data to get better.
- **MFR strengthens transparency and public trust** by allowing the County to show – not just say – that we're achieving results for the community.

## Managing for Results (MFR) Framework



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### Next Steps to Finalize the Scorecard

- Receive BOCC feedback on structure and content
- Incorporate BOCC feedback and build SMART Goals and Strategic Initiatives for all Objectives
- Incorporate community feedback from Quality of Life Collaborative convening, as appropriate
- Finalize Enterprise Objectives, SMART Goal(s), and Strategic Initiatives for possible presentation at January's BOCC retreat

#### **Once approved:**

- Define and implement Focus Area Collaboration Teams (FACTs) to monitor and report on progress for each Focus Area
- Define and implement updated reporting processes for Executive Team and Board
- Partner with Departments to develop Department-level scorecards
- Partner with Human Resources to cascade goals and alignment to employees



#### Event Details

- **Date(s):** November 20-21, 2025
- **Audience:** Public, private, nonprofit, and community leaders
- **Duration:** Two (2) days in-person
- **Location:** Central Piedmont Community College's Parr Center

#### Purpose

- **Position Charlotte-Mecklenburg as a premier place to live** by aligning cross-sector efforts around shared quality of life goals.
- **Strengthen cross-sector collaboration and collective impact** through unified priorities, coordinated strategies, and shared measures that track progress.

#### Comments

Commissioner Powell said they could not have a healthy and thriving community without Environmental Stewardship. She said there was so much overlap, and it reminded her of how Livable Meck was born in 2012 from a concern for the rapid growth and environmental impact, which then became so big from all the community input. She said the County needed a meeting between Livable Meck and the Environmental Stewardship Committee to ensure it was woven in the way it needed to be. She said she liked the LUESA example because the Board often only got information that was filtered. She said it was a long time worry on how to prevent flooding with all the rapid growth and increased impervious. She said, if they started out right with input from her perspective, Livable Meck, and environmental stewardship, it would be strong. *Mr. Griswold said they planned to work with departments and functions to build out their work after receiving the Board feedback so her recommendation for a meeting with Livable Meck and Environmental Stewardship was in line with their next steps.*

Commissioner Griffin said he was interested in discussing how the work was done and how management change brought an opportunity for the County to put their arms around, not only the outcomes, but also how the work was done in terms of how it related to the resources. He

## Meeting Minutes

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said this was important because the Board had to respond to the County Manager's budget request and give him the resources if they expected certain outcomes.

Commissioner Griffin said the management approach of a balanced scorecard was something embraced while he was on the school board in the 90's and it helped them to reach another level of management.

Commissioner Griffin asked if what they were referring to when they stated "improved access to primary care" because there were different ways to define access to primary care, whether it be geographic, financial, or functional access. He said if they could define that, they would be able to move on to their various steps and be able to say what the outcome was as opposed to what the output was.

Commissioner Griffin said it was good work, but the challenge was they would have to decide on the approach for implementing the plan because it would be a shift in culture and needed to be introduced to over 6000 employees. *County Manager Bryant said, with regards to incorporation, it would require a change in management plan and communications. He said it was critical to ensure the County rolled it out to the entire organization. He said the Executive Team and directors discussed rolling it out by having the employees incorporate it into their work plans while the County provided a link to their new balanced scorecard as well.*

*Dr. Kimm Campbell, Deputy County Manager, said, with regards to primary care, she would characterize it as increased access to services that went beyond primary care because there were issues with access across many of the County services in many of the County divisions and departments. She said they had not mapped out what the objectives would be but defining access would have a different answer depending on service, division, and department. She said the scorecard should be all inclusive beyond primary health care and elevated up to services in general.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the Board of Commissioners were being asked to attend the Quality-of-Life collaborative. *County Manager Bryant said the Community Collaborative meeting was something he would discuss with the Board and many of their community partners. He said he asked the partners if they would be willing to collaborate with the County to address many of the known issues and he received a resounding yes from them. He said the purpose of the meeting would be to identify all the indicators they agreed would result in a higher quality of life and determine what the metrics associated with them were. He said it was important they all be able ensure they were all in alignment.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked how the County determined what data was needed. She said the County wanted to move from collecting data to using that data. She said they had to define what kind of data they were obtaining because there was both qualitative and quantitative data. She said they could make it sound however they wanted to in order to meet the objectives.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked if they produced all the data themselves or if they would source it out to others. She asked if there would be overlap and what the scope of the scorecard would be. She said she thought of how their advisory boards operated, in that they were supposed to be advising the Commissioners on their decisions. She said, if they did not know how the advisory boards were coming to their decisions, how could the Board know if what they were advising them with aligned with what they were attempting to achieve. *Mr. Griswold said they were working with each department to understand the purpose of their programs/services and recommending revisions to their portfolio provisions. He said there were 1,700 or so across the County so they recognized some services had quality measures which were fine, but some maybe had a lot of measures that were not as high quality or impactful as they should have been. He said they were trying to determine the best data point to understand whether they were moving the needle in the direction of the stated purpose of that program or service. He said, in certain*

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*instances, that data point may be something they already tracked, but maybe some things they didn't track, and they could work on identifying how to do that.*

*Mr. Griswold said, in relation to overlaps, the Urban institute and Quality of Life Explorer were groups invited to the QLC because if there were overarching community level indicators they wanted to track, they could help the County measure those things.*

*Mr. Griswold said, in terms of the scope of scorecard, it was essentially to determine how the County would operationalize things, so it was primarily an internal tool though some relevant things could come out of the community meeting that could influence the County scorecard and be incorporated. He said the purpose of the managers collaborative convening was to identify how they would collectively, as a community, measure and address those things.*

*County Manager Bryant said the scorecard would be used to get an alignment and have some commonality in terms of how they reported around the organization to ensure, when they were defining what success looked like, they were defining it collectively. He said although the partners were assisting in that space, they were managing in all different directions.*

Commissioner Altman said there was a very close nexus for what successful companies were trying to achieve through management and whether they achieved it on a quarterly basis. She said the County was different than that but acted as a steward of the public's money. She said they knew they didn't have enough money to remotely address all the needs. She said it was essential to identify what programs were working and what ones may have been well intentioned good ideas but were not delivering, so they could repurpose that for things that would do the most good for their residents. She said she was excited for the higher rigor and tighter nexus.

Commissioner Altman said she loved the Manager's vision of defining success with partners and moving towards it collectively. She said they should identify the problems and bring the community together for the work they needed to do to address the issues. She said it was good for the community to hear in a transparent way, that the Manager was helping them get to that direction relative to the guidance received by the Board.

Chair Jerrel said he always wanted to avoid trying to do too much where they wouldn't be able to measure anything because they could think of so many elements to add. He said it's a great starting point with additional feedback that would happen.

### **11:50AM – 12:50PM Lunch**

The Board took a break for lunch.

### **12:50PM – 1:35PM Youth Crime**

Board Priority Alignment: Health Equity and Wellness

Commissioner George Dunlap of District 3 gave the presentation.

*Description: Addressing youth crime creates safer communities that promote mental and physical health for everyone, especially in underserved areas. It provides greater access to education, recreation, and healthcare without violence or fear. By prioritizing prevention and support, communities reinforce their dedication to health equity and long-term wellness.*



## Youth Crime in Mecklenburg County

Commissioner George Dunlap, District 3  
Mecklenburg County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Fall Retreat  
October 27-28, 2025



## Youth Crime in Mecklenburg County

2025 Fall Board of County Commissioners' Retreat

Commissioner George Dunlap

### Overview

- Data and Trends
- Current Prevention Programming and Investments
- Recommendations to Reduce the Rates of Youth Crime



## Profile of Justice Involved Youth in Mecklenburg County

### YASI Data

- The YASI assesses the risks and needs of justice involved youth
- It measures the risk of recidivism of justice involved youth and is used by NC DJJDP for service planning
- In FY25, NC DJJDP administered the YASI on 507 Mecklenburg County youth



MeckNC.gov

## Profile of Justice Involved Youth in Mecklenburg County

### FY25 Legal History

- Previous Delinquent Referrals
  - Meck: 64% State: 46%
- Juvenile with Felony Referral
  - Meck: 72% State: 35%
- Previous Weapons Offense
  - Meck: 45% State: 18%
- Referral for Person Crimes
  - Meck: 66% State: 41%



Data provided by NCDPS DJJDP



MeckNC.gov

## Profile of Justice Involved Youth in Mecklenburg County

### FY25 Legal History

- Prior Detention Admissions
  - Meck: 50% State: 20%
- Prior Youth Development Center Custody
  - Meck: 4% State: 3%



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## Mecklenburg Top 3 Offenses by Group, 2021 - 2023

### Non-Raise the Age Offenses

- 2021**  
**Larceny of motor vehicle (f) (106)**  
 Resisting public officer (104)  
 Simple assault (102)
- 2022**  
 Simple assault (250)  
**Larceny of motor vehicle (f) (236)**  
 Resisting public officer (102)
- 2023**  
**Break or enter a motor vehicle (396)**  
**Larceny of motor vehicle (f) (259)**  
 Simple assault (211)

### Raise the Age Offenses

- 2021**  
 Break or enter a motor vehicle (130)  
**Possess handgun by minor (119)**  
 Simple assault (104)
- 2022**  
 Simple assault (156)  
**Possess handgun by minor (127)**  
 Resisting public officer (104)
- 2023**  
**Possess handgun by minor (112)**  
 Simple assault (108)  
 Felony Possession of Stolen Vehicle (96)



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Data provided by NCDPS/DJJP

## Profile of Justice Involved Youth in Mecklenburg County

### FY25 Family History

- Kicked Out
  - Meck: 9%    State: 8%
- Runaway
  - Meck: 41%    State: 21%
- Family History of Substance Use & Mental Illness
  - Meck (SU): 11%    State: 12%
  - Meck (MH): 11%    State: 12%
- Family Criminal History
  - Meck (Criminal): 28%    State: 24%
  - Meck (Violent): 10%    State: 6%



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Data provided by NCDPS/DJJP

## Profile of Justice Involved Youth in Mecklenburg County

### FY25 School History

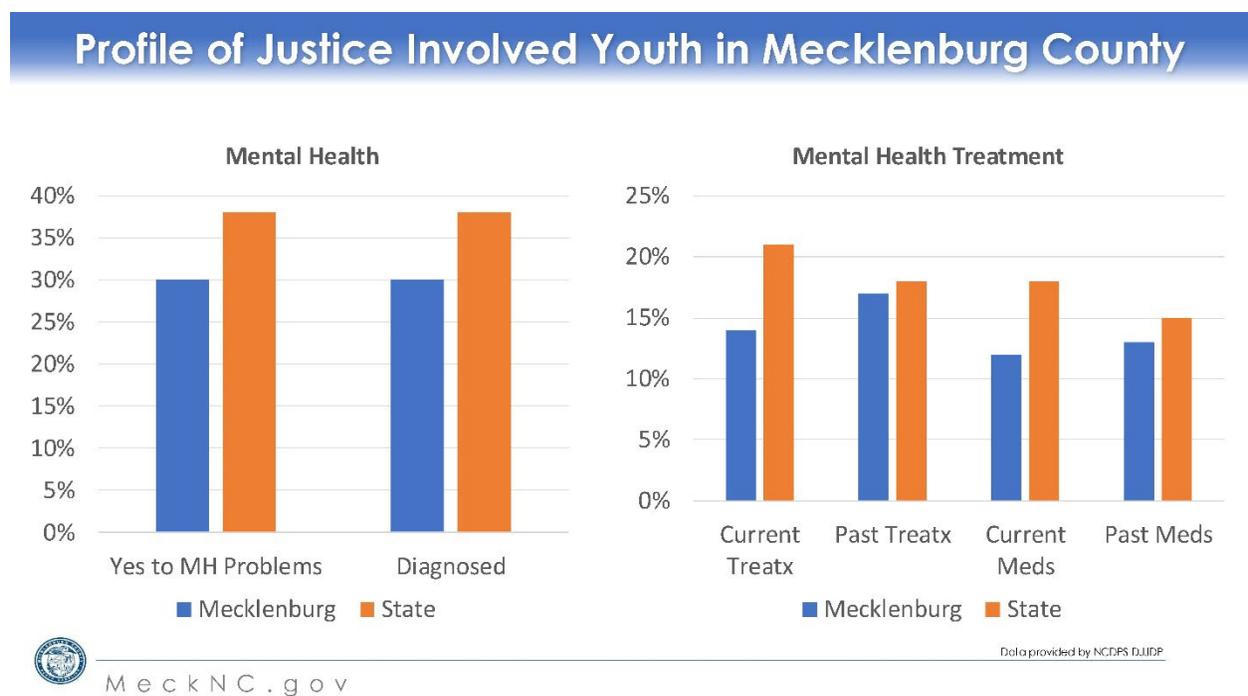
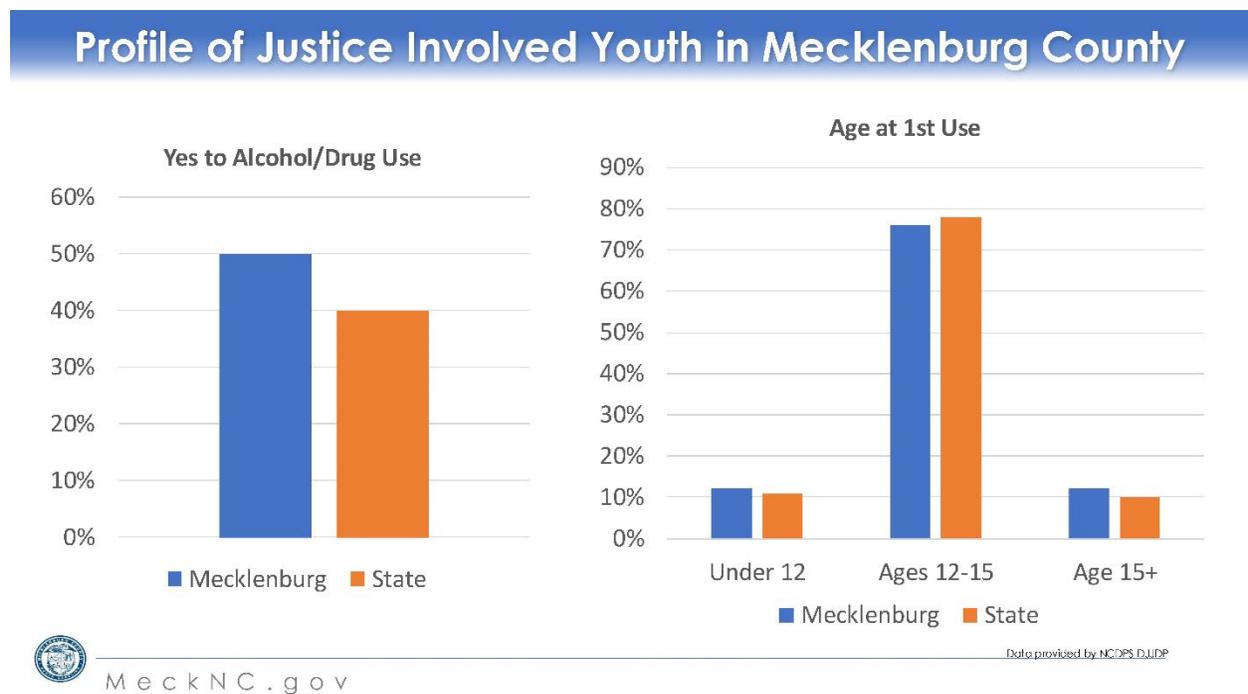
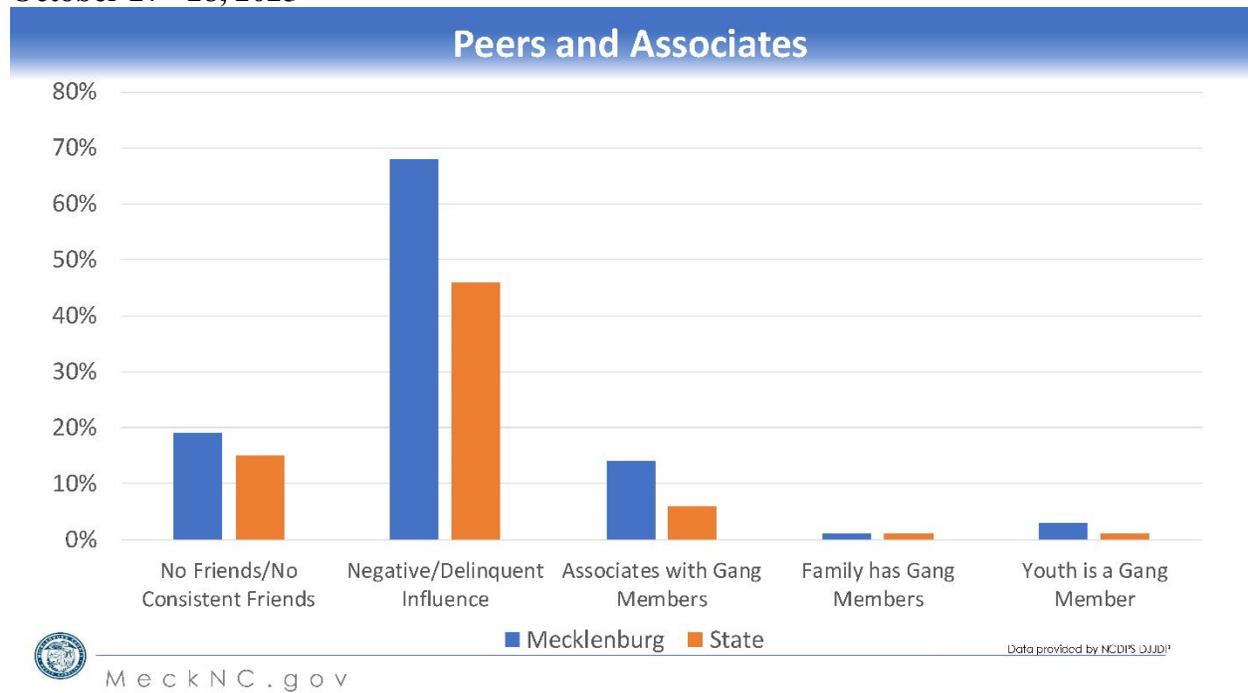
- Enrollment Status
  - Meck (Dropped Out): 6%    State: 5%
  - Meck (Suspended): 2%    State: 3%
- Attendance in the Past Three Months
  - Meck (Attends Regularly): 41%    State: 57%
  - Meck (5 or More Absences): 25%    State: 19%
- Academics
  - Meck (C- or Lower): 16%    State: 14%
  - Meck (Failing Some): 14%    State: 15%
  - Meck (Failing Most): 16%    State: 14%



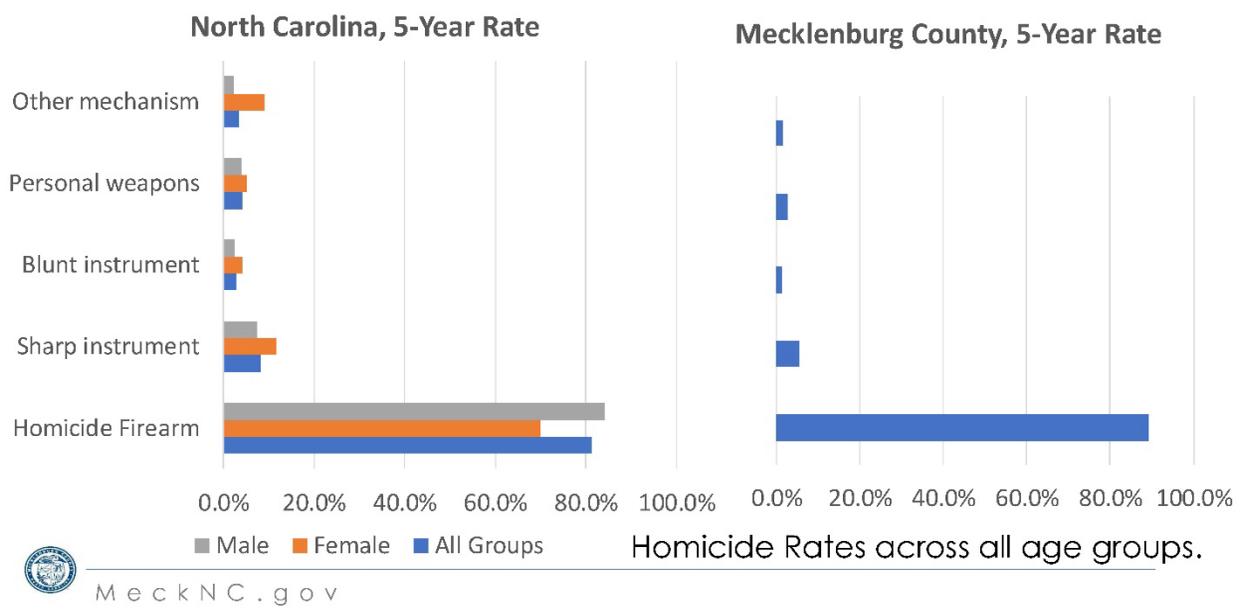
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Data provided by NCDPS/DJJP

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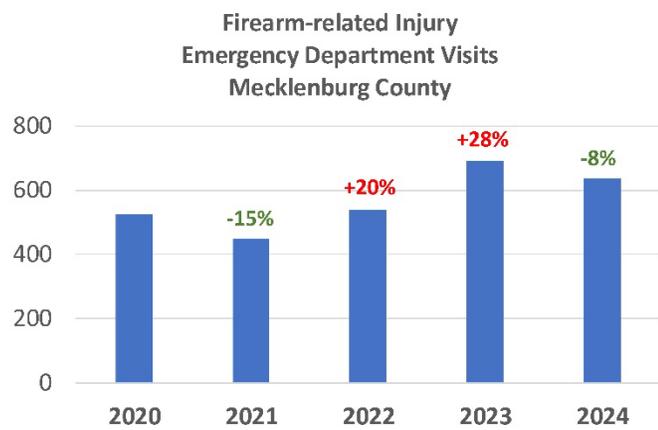


## Percent of Homicide Data by Type



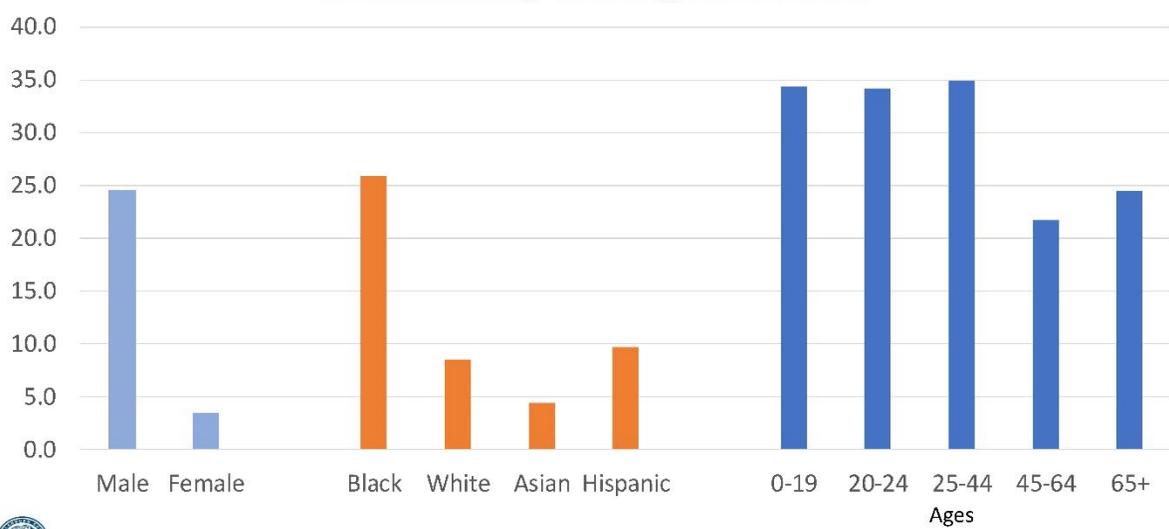
## Mecklenburg County Data

- **In 2024, a total of 636 Mecklenburg County residents visited the emergency department due to firearm injury. Emergency department visits due to firearm injury decreased by 8% in the past year among Mecklenburg County residents**



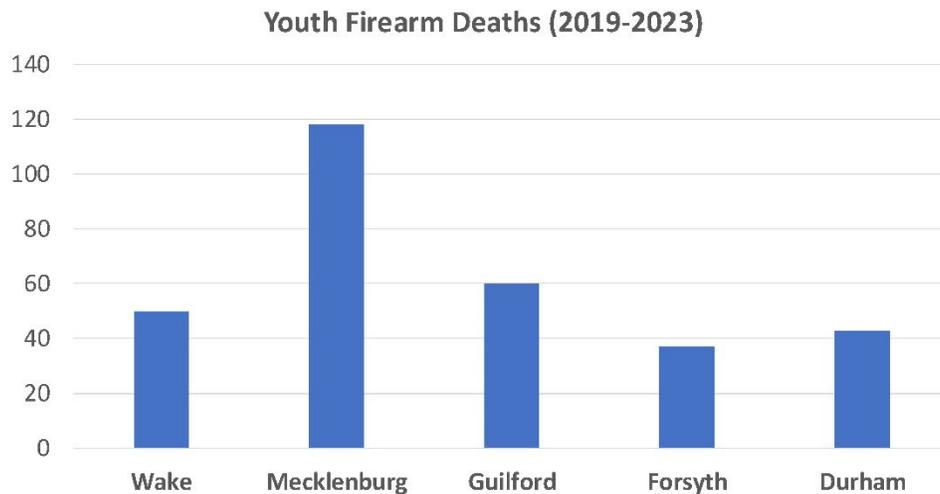
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## Violent Death Rate by Demographics Mecklenburg County, 2014-2023



MeckNC.gov

## Most Populous NC Counties



MeckNC.gov

## Current Programs Overview

### • County Initiatives

- Office of Violence Prevention
- ReCAST
- CJS Family and Youth Recovery Courts
  - Youth Advocate Program (YAP)
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
- Criminal Justice Advisory Group
- Teen Court



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## Current Programs

- Violence Prevention Education & Awareness
- Mental Health Education, Awareness, & Supports
- Supports of Youth & Young Adults
- Data Stewardship for Violence Prevention
- Cross-Sector & Intergovernmental Collaboration



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## Current Programs & Services

### Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)

- Over \$2,000,000 awarded annually to community-based organizations that support justice involved and at-risk youth



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## FY26 JCPC Funded Programs

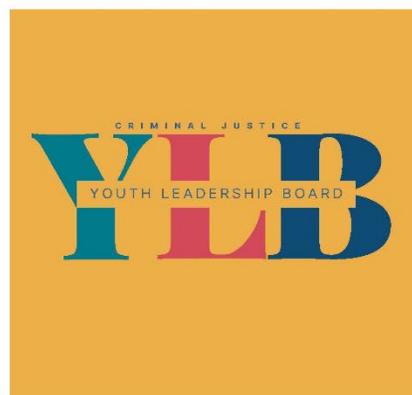
Agency	Amount	Type of Service
JCPC Administration	\$15,499	N/A
CMPD - Youthful Diversion Program	\$240,000	Skill Building
Tresports - Positive Action Program	\$270,178	Skill Building
Team Up Connections	\$241,247	Mentoring
Achieving Success on Purpose - B.R.I.C.K.	\$163,917	Substance Abuse Counseling
YDI - Family Life Skills Academy	\$77,960	Parent/Family Skill Building
YDI - Vocational and Career Development	\$164,950	Vocational Skills
Thompson - Juvenile Court Assessment Program	\$223,173	Assessment
TYM-SHIFT Restitution/Community Service	\$160,000	Restitution/Community Service
McLeod Center for Wellbeing-Substance Abuse Counseling	\$219,108	Substance Abuse Treatment
McCormick Cares Inc.-Mediation/Responsive Circles	\$75,421	Restorative Justice
Right Moves For Youth-Mentoring	\$88,540	Mentoring
Promise Youth Development, Inc-Promise Pathways Mentoring	\$111,720	Mentoring
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,051,713</b>	



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## Criminal Justice Advisory Group (CJAG)

- Community Engagement Task Group
- Youth Leadership Board



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## Current Programs Overview

- **City Initiatives:**
  - Alternatives to Violence
  - City of Charlotte Youth Opportunities Programs
    - Youth Safety, Development & Career Experiences
- **Community Initiatives:**
  - Hospital Violence Intervention Program (HVIP)
  - Handle With Care (in partnership with OVP)
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools**
  - School Based Therapy
  - Case Management and Services for youth at-risk.



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## Current Programs

### Alternatives to Violence (ATV)



Primary focus is mediating conflict



Funding sources



Locations

Beatties Ford Rd Area (2021); West Boulevard/Remount Areas (2023); Nations Ford/Arrowood Areas (2023)



Evaluation



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## Recommendations

### From Youth and Young Adults

- Increased access to confidential mental health resources
- Safe spaces for youth to gather/play
  - Involve youth in planning
- Conflict resolution training and resources
- More opportunities to help shape policies
- Bystander training and resources



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## Recommendations

### Local

- Opportunities for Safe Space
- Mental Health Access
- Prevention Programming
- Expansion of Handle With Care

### National and Evidence Based

- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
  - Opportunities Program Pierce Co, WA
- Prevention Programming
- Centralized Referral Systems



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## Youth Crime in Mecklenburg County

2025 Fall Board of County Commissioners' Retreat

Commissioner George Dunlap

### Comments

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said the community questioned where the money went, even when they were having to cut nonprofits and things of that nature. She said the community was only seeing the violence continue but what they did not see was that the County was growing quickly, and they did not have the infrastructure to manage it. She said the County was using outdated remedies for their current situation. She asked if the parents were busy, had little to no support, or were having to work several jobs, how could they monitor the youth. She asked how the County was obtaining the data they were using and if they had any young people on their advisory committees. *Commissioner Dunlap said there was an advisory council that did involve youth but one thing that stood out to him was the amount of youth that carried guns in their community when compared to others.* He asked Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Services (CJS) director Sonya L. Harper if they determined that young people feared being caught without a gun more than they feared carrying a gun. *Ms. Harper said they believed in carrying for personal safety and worried about what would happen if they did not have one.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said she heard the same from her own son and his friends.

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Commissioner Meier thanked Commissioner Dunlap for showing the relationship between youth and mental health. She said there was hope and they needed more.

Commissioner Leake thanked Commissioner Dunlap for his presentation and said her concern was that the youth did not just start with drugs and violence. She said she was concerned with the quality of parenting and how young some of the people having children were. She said they were not holding the parents accountable for their children.

Commissioner Powell asked if there were any examples that could be provided of structured youth programs that had been successful. *Commissioner Dunlap said what some people considered successful, may not be the same for others and provided examples of other programs. He said the communities that saw progress gave the youth more things to do, gave them work, and allowed them to explore different career opportunities.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was surprised to see that the percentage between male and female regarding the homicide data was so close. *Commissioner Dunlap said he was surprised too because they never really heard about firearm deaths committed by females.*

Commissioner Powell asked if the numbers included suicide. *Commissioner Dunlap said it did not.*

Commissioner Griffin said Dr. John Haynes lived in Charlotte and created a structured juvenile youth program that was very successful. He said Dr. Haynes worked through the Charlotte Housing Authority and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and before they tore down the public housing neighborhood off Oakland Avenue, he worked with the kids there. He said one of the services provided was that they would try to get them meaningful jobs to keep them out of trouble.

Commissioner Griffin said they were obviously smart kids but lacked structure. He said they needed some turning around with adults and programs. He said he was sure they could find more examples of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention program that could work.

Commissioner Altman said the goal was not to be right but to get it right. She said the Ella B. Scarborough center seemed to have low foot traffic and, if it was determined the community was not responding to it as it was intended, they should consider that facility becoming the summit for their youth. She said they could get kids to help them develop the programming they found engaging and could repurpose a County facility to become a state-of-the-art training center in collaboration with CMS, such as a regional training magnet for their middle or high school students. She said they should continue to think outside of the box and examine what they had and were doing.

Commissioner Powell said it would be helpful if they could get how many suicides were committed with firearms to be included in that report. Commissioner Dunlap said the population in question included only the 507 young people identified as youth in Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Leake said there used to be a program founded at a couple of the local high schools that involved 25 young men. She said it was very effective, but it ended because they struggled to get people involved and did not get help from the community. She said the parents were still responsible for their own children.

Chair Jerrell said, when looking at the 8% drop of persons appearing to the hospital with firearm injuries, it could be telling them that, even with the way their community was expanding, the County's preventative measures were working. He said they would expect the number to be increasing with relation to the population increasing but to see a decrease was not something to overlook. He said parents could be struggling but if a child would not listen to their parents, there was a low probability the child would listen to someone else. He said mentorship was good but

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having a solid home was very important. He said the government shouldn't try to raise children as they could not effectively play the role of a parent, but they should support the parents and programs. He said they should continue to drill down into the programs and take inspiration from other places.

County Manager Bryant said the foot traffic at their community resource centers was very different from what was previously presented to the Commissioners, and they would need a new update. He said they were closing other centers so it would be changing the foot traffic at the mentioned facilities.

County Manager Bryant said the earlier they accessed the mentioned youth population, the better it was. He said they were looking to invest in the facility on the corner of Lasalle and Beattie's Ford Road with hope to assist the children before they became judicated delinquents. He said the Commissioners should be mindful as they invested in the programming that, although they might not be judicated delinquents, the goal was to get to them before they were.

Chair Jerrell requested that it become an action item and come back to it the following day during an open discussion moment.

**1:35PM – 2:20PM      Workforce Development**

Board Priority Alignment: Workforce Development & Reducing Racial Disparities

Commissioner Arthur Griffin, At-Large, gave the presentation.

*Description: Workforce development is a form of education that equips individuals with the skills and training needed to access quality jobs and advance their careers. Including underserved populations, it helps reduce opportunity gaps and promotes economic mobility. This approach strengthens the labor market by investing in training and education that attract new businesses and build up the local talent pipeline.*



The Paradox of Prosperity:  
Widening Economic Gaps

Commissioner Arthur Griffin, At-Large  
Mecklenburg County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Fall Retreat  
October 27-28, 2025

## Agenda

**WHO WANTS A LIVING WAGE JOB?**

**BARRIERS**

**LIVING WAGE ECOSYSTEM**

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## Jobs in Charlotte



Source: WSOC-TV, "Charlotte's appeal drives population growth, with 157 new residents daily," August 22, 2025

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## Job Opportunities

### Business Investment Program (BIP) Grant Agreements

Date Approved	Company	New Jobs	Average Pay
Dec 6, 2022	Bosch Rexroth Corporation	92	\$67,016
Jan 18, 2023	Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC)	51	\$95,000
Feb 7, 2023	Albemarle Corporation	205	\$87,381
Jun 6, 2023	Reynolds Consumer Products, LLC	73	\$48,227
Jul 6, 2023	Atom Power	205	\$95,379
Aug 2, 2023	Alpitronic Americas, LLC	300	\$90,158
Sep 6, 2023	TTX	150	\$179,400
Apr 16, 2024	Siemens Energy	475	\$82,052
Mar 18, 2025	RXO Logistics	216	\$100,605
Mar 18, 2025	Groninger USA, LLC	60	\$76,037
Apr 1, 2025	DetraPel, Inc.	35	\$71,794
May 6, 2025	HSP US, LLC (Trench Group)	74	\$77,315
Sep 3, 2025	Citigroup Technology	510	\$133,441
Sep 3, 2025	AssetMark	252	\$110,518
Sep 3, 2025	Toromont AVL	326	\$76,052

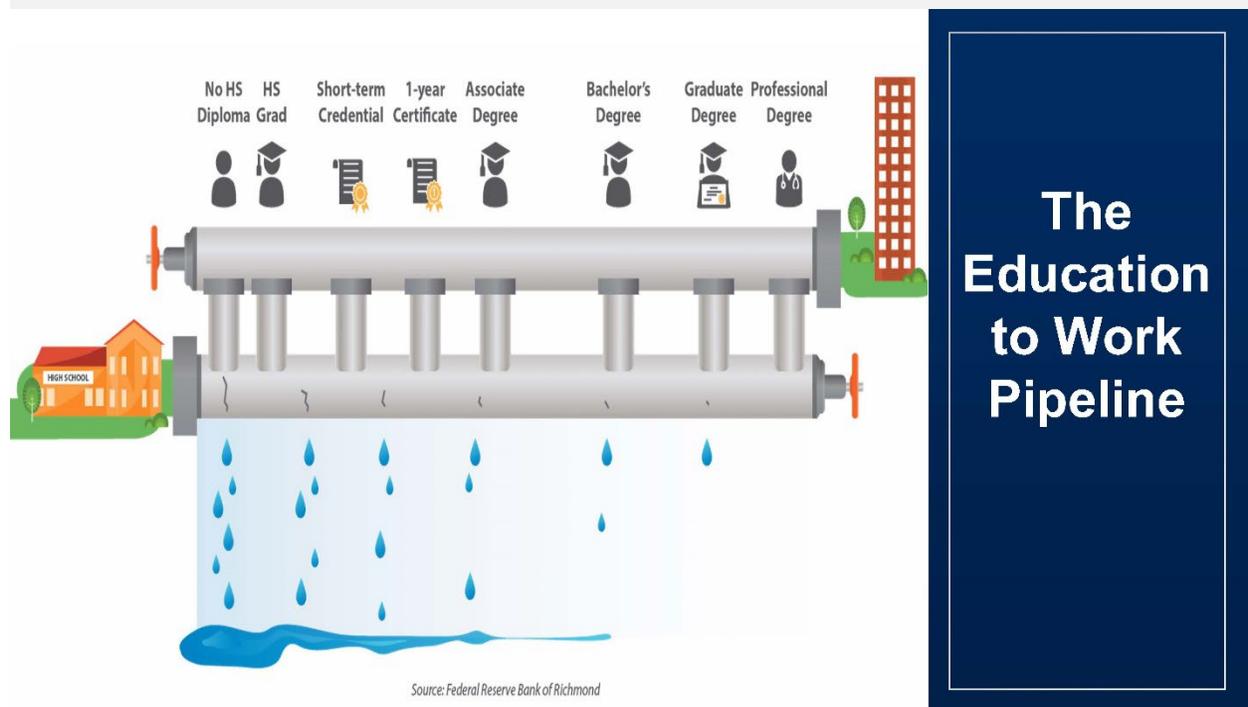
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# Serving as a Talent Connector



# Income Maintenance Program Recipients as of August 31, 2025

Program Demographics	Food & Nutrition Services (FNS)	Work First	Medicaid	Long Term Care	Energy (Crisis Intervention Program)
<b>Race</b>	%	%	%	%	%
Black / African American	66%	80%	55%	52%	85%
White / Caucasian	26%	16%	35%	42%	9%
Other or Multiple Races	5%	3%	6%	3%	3%
Unreported	3%	1%	5%	2%	3%
<b>Gender</b>	%	%	%	%	%
Female	57%	57%	55%	51%	63%
Male	43%	43%	45%	49%	37%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	%	%	%	%	%
Hispanic or Latino	19%	13%	22%	6%	9%
Not Hispanic or Latino	78%	85%	72%	87%	89%
Unreported	3%	1%	7%	7%	2%
<b>Age</b>	%	%	%	%	%
0-17 years	46%	76%	42%	9%	50%
18-24 years	8%	5%	14%	7%	7%
25-34 years	12%	10%	14%	11%	14%
35-44 years	11%	7%	10%	10%	14%
45-54 years	6%	1%	7%	7%	7%
55-64 years	7%	0%	6%	12%	4%
65 or older	9%	0%	6%	44%	3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>135,955</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>374,503</b>	<b>4,447</b>	<b>3,533</b>



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

## ALICE Communities

	Households		Percent	
	Black / Af-Amer	White	Black / Af-Amer	White
Totals	149,722	242,327	100%	100%
Less than \$10,000	12,971	7,577	8.7%	3.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5,112	3,921	3.4%	1.6%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	4,005	3,784	2.7%	1.6%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	7,154	3,892	4.8%	1.6%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	2,737	4,637	1.8%	1.9%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	5,271	5,042	3.5%	2.1%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	4,471	6,182	3.0%	2.6%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	6,824	5,545	4.6%	2.3%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	6,981	5,078	4.7%	2.1%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	13,849	13,910	9.2%	5.7%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	13,948	18,606	9.3%	7.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	21,673	27,163	14.5%	11.2%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	15,068	24,893	10.1%	10.3%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	9,121	20,038	6.1%	8.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10,896	29,509	7.3%	12.2%
\$200,000 or more	9,641	62,550	6.4%	25.8%
Median Income	\$66,915	\$114,400		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, extracted from data.census.gov  
B19001: Household Income, Census Bureau Table – B19013: Median Household Income, Census Bureau Table

### WHO IS ALICE?

**ASSET LIMITED** ALICE has no safety net in times of crisis.

**INCOME CONSTRAINED** ALICE's income falls short of essentials.

**EMPLOYED** ALICE is working, yet not earning enough.

Image Credit: United Way Southern Maine

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## Area Median Income (AMI) Thresholds



Income Limits, 4-Person Family	FY 2025
30%	\$33,650
50%	\$56,100
80%	\$89,750
Median Income	\$112,200

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia Metro Area, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/ai.html>

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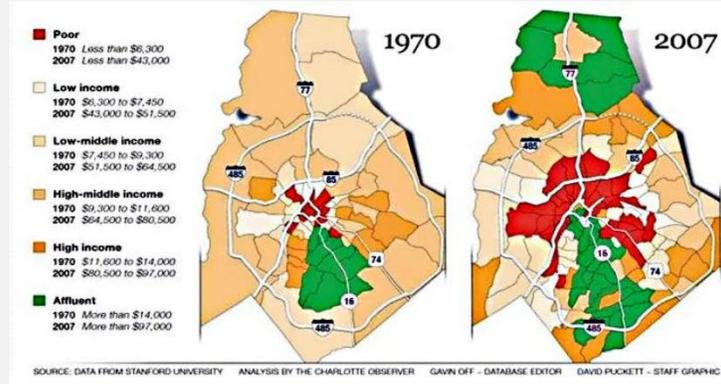
## Workforce Development Profile

Profile	Paycheck Jobs	Opportunity Jobs	Career Jobs
<b>Job Seeker Type</b>	Entry-level, short-term, temporary or transitional employment to cover basic expenses	Position to gain experience, develop skills and move towards stability and growth	Long-term professional journey built on personal interest, skillset and previous experience
<b>Barriers to Employment</b>	<i>Housing instability, criminal justice involvement, mental health concerns, substance misuse, transportation and childcare</i>	<i>Lack of hard skills, childcare, transportation, Limited guidance or support for career navigation and advancement</i>	<i>Limited access to pay for higher education/credentials, lack of social capital. Limited resources to maintain household while pursuing extended education</i>
<b>Typical Roles</b>	Retail, food service, warehouse, Janitorial and hospitality	CDL drivers, medical assistants, HVAC techs, phlebotomist, nursing assistant, office assistants and entry-level government	Nurses, IT professionals, electricians, managers, medical technicians and social workers
<b>Education/Skills</b>	Minimal or no formal training. Skills are learned on the job. Transferable essential skills are needed	Short-term training less than one year or certification. Transferable essential skills are needed	Postsecondary education or significant experience is needed
<b>Support Needs</b>	Job readiness, essential skills, clothing, transportation and childcare	Training access, career coaching and wraparound supports	Advanced training, licensing, networking and mentorship

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## Wedge and Crescent

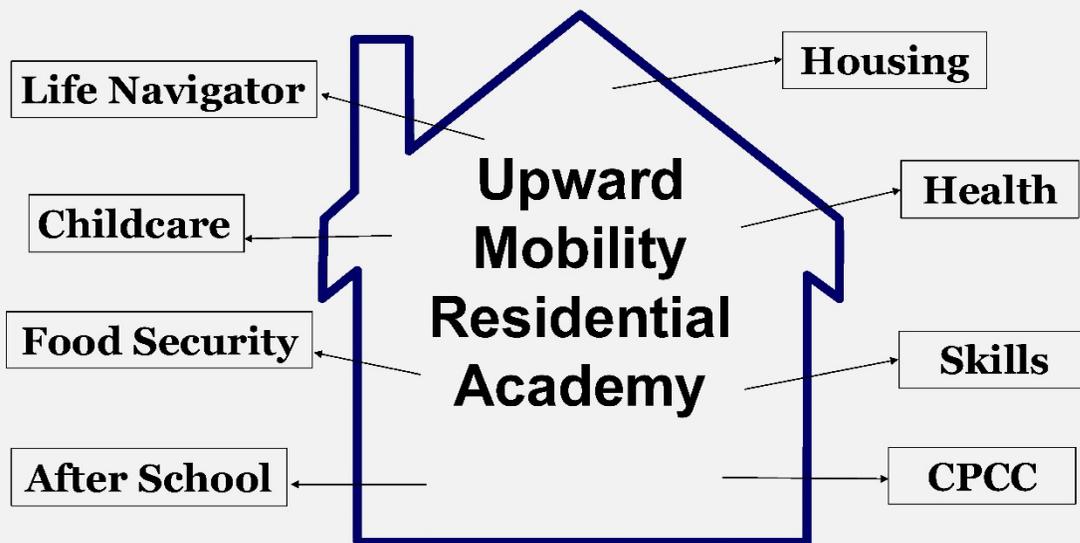
Since 1970, some Mecklenburg County middle-class neighborhoods have transformed into poor or affluent neighborhoods. The proportion of families living in poor neighborhoods in the Charlotte area has increased 140%, while the proportion in affluent neighborhoods has increased 83%.



Source: CLT Public Relations, "Charlotte's Arc and Wedge," December 8, 2020, <https://www.cltpr.com/articles/arc-wedge>

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## Upward Mobility Conveyor



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Open  
 Discussion

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**Comments**

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said CMS was stuck with preparing and measuring their kids for something the world did not measure. She said they weren't being prepared adequately because they had to be measured on something else according to State standards. She said she wanted to see the racial gap and disparities between white and black with professional degrees. She said people got into situations where they had to take any job they could find to deal with the socioeconomic issues they had at that moment to care for their family which would make them unable to train for something more. She said there was so much work to do.

Commissioner Griffin said the Upward Mobility Residential Academy would be available for people who didn't receive services. He said it was something for the community if people wanted to scale up.

Commissioner Dunlap said people who had been there historically often spoke of the Crescent and the Wedge, but he recalled when Hidden Valley was an all-white community. He said it turned historically black, and it was once again turning the other way. He said the same was happening in other communities. He asked if they were still discussing the same groups of people when discussing the Crescent and Wedge.

Commissioner Griffin said they were actively in a transition and although the edges of the Wedge were transitioning, the majority was not. He said, though the areas were changing, they could still characterize them as Crescent and Wedge.

Commissioner Griffin said there was previously a slide that contained the zip codes of the people who received food stamps, WIC, Workforce, etc. and it reflected the Wedge swung out toward University. He said the Crescent was a moving target and he would send that information to the Commissioners. He said he would send that slide out.

Commissioner Powell thanked Commissioner Griffin for his information and passion. She said she appreciated the mention of tough love and high expectations because they needed more of that as well as mentioning the investments the County made. She said it was disturbing that any of the companies that received Business Investment Program (BIP) Grant Agreements would check the "No" box, stating they would not work with the County. She said, by law, the County could only have certain requirements but for the previous couple years, Mecklenburg County did way better and communicated what was important to them.

Commissioner Powell said the County needed more of the high expectations and tough love for businesses. She said, by law, the County could only have certain requirements but the for the previous few years, the County did a better job at saying what they wanted and negotiating. She said, if the company's wanted something from the County, they had to show they would be a good partner and their willingness to commit to things the community needed. She said they were shown maps from 1970 and 2007, but she would like to see a 2024 map as well. She thanked Commissioner Griffin for his presentation and hard work.

Commissioner Griffin gave credit to Economic Development for moving some of that to section 2.5 of the BIP agreements to ask if they would hire local. He said, prior to doing that, there was no real push for the companies to work with the County locally or to identify the number of jobs that locals had a shot at.

Commissioner Leake thanked Commissioner Griffin for his presentation and information. She said she recalled taking four graduates from law school at Chapel Hill to get jobs at Siemens, but they wouldn't interview them because they didn't have the time to do that so. She said they often were confronted with the negatives. She said they wanted the graduates to move beyond middle

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class, but they presently did not have a middle class anymore. She said they had a long way to go with economics, and the people had not been taught about budgeting or transferring money to the next generation.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the last slide regarding the Upward Mobility Residential Academy was something he wanted to see happen.

Commissioner Griffin said they previously debated the Graham Street site and mentioned it would be a great opportunity because they could gut it and turn it into residential apartments and create the learning spaces necessary for life navigation, social work, and health care. He said the campus was perfect for that and would solve many of their issues and mothers with young boys could have an opportunity to ensure those kids didn't end up in the delinquency ranks. He said it was something to consider but, with all the other priorities, he would still advocate for it.

Commissioner Dunlap asked if at some point they would receive a report on the work LaShonda Hart and her team did on the property. *County Manager Bryant said they were not yet prepared for presentation.*

County Manager Bryant asked if Commissioner Griffin's Graham Street idea was a concept that existed in a different jurisdiction he came across or if it was solely an interest he had that he would like for staff to explore. *Commissioner Griffin said his research was local and while he was in the Renaissance West Community Initiative, Laura Clark put the concept together. He said they would get the school system to build a school, the private sector to build day care center, and the housing authority developers to build new apartments. He said they saw that all the pieces would be there, but they did not consider how to get the residents engaged.*

Chair Jerrell said it was a great presentation, and he believed there was a role for the private sector in their economy.

Chair Jerrell said they often created a narrative, specifically when talking of the African American community and families, of the disproportionate nature of the disparities. He said they didn't often level set on the scale of what they were trying to solve. He said when they looked at the African American community, about 14% of them lived in poverty but it didn't reflect the many upwardly mobile families and individuals in the missing middle they could move into other buckets as well. He said it was a heavy lift but not really as heavy as the narrative would make it seem. He said they were trying to be more mindful of the narratives they pushed out and they should be mindful of the scale as they approached all those subjects.

Commissioner Griffin said when looking at the health of the community and institutions affected, they saw that not only were less people attending but those people also did not have as much money to offer the institutions. He asked how they would keep the institutions healthy because they were the ones providing services that the government and private sectors were not.

Commissioner Griffin said when the schools were coming out of segregation in Mecklenburg County, the kids who were ready to take advantage of all those opportunities soared and if people were ready, they would have the choice to soar as well.

**2:20PM – 2:35PM      Break**

**2:35PM – 3:20PM      Critical Home Repair**

Board Priority Alignment: Services for Seniors

Commissioner Vilma Leake of District 2 gave the presentation.

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*Description: Critical home repair services are vital for seniors, helping them maintain safe, accessible, and healthy living environments as they age. These repairs prevent accidents, improve energy efficiency, and support independent living, reducing the need for costly institutional care. By investing in home stability, the county honors aging with dignity and promotes wellness across generations.*



Lashonda Hart, Interim Director of Housing and Community Development and Samantha Cutinello, Facility Maintenance Manager, gave the presentation.

Commissioner Leake, Ms. Hart, and Ms. Cutinello provided the following information:

- After speaking with seniors at the West Charlotte Recreation Center roughly six years prior, many seniors complained about the condition of their homes. It was soon after the County decided to start Critical Home Repair.
- The houses were in great need and Commissioner Leake said she informed them to write down what their needs were because there had to be stipulations regarding the qualification of receiving the service(s) through the County.

The process was detailed by Ms. Hart as follows:

- The program went into the RFP's (Request for Qualifications) for the current fiscal year
- They had four vendors they worked with including
  - a. Rebuilding together
  - b. She Built this City
  - c. Habitat Charlotte Region
  - d. Greater Matthews Habitat
- Throughout the RFP process, they looked at each vendor, after which, each agency had their applications processed and established their pipeline.
  - They all had their respective processes on how they reached out to those who applied
- After approval the County went through the walkthrough process
  - Once they received the application, they would speak to the resident to determine what was needed
- Following the approval process, they would talk to other vendors and subcontractors to create a scope of work and do a pre-walk with the Critical Home Repair vendor so they could see what the County was being asked to pay for.

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- They would also be able to obtain pre-job photos and ensure permits and inspections were handled correctly.

Their biggest goal was to ensure their community was being cared for in the proper way and the work was being done the right way, leaving residents with a better situation than they started with.

- Critical Home Repair helped over 450 households with the critical care process.
- Budget director Adrian Cox said they spent roughly \$9.3 million on critical home repairs since the start of the program.

Commissioner Leake said she hoped they would continue to provide the services needed for the people of the County. She said there was a waiting list of over 300 houses to be serviced. She requested the Board to consider maintaining the program to ensure the community was safe.

Ms. Hart said the families assisted were low to moderate income and the majority were seniors, mostly women. She said they serviced many widows as well as those who were disabled or needed ADA access.

Ms. Cutinello said it was hard to find capable contractors to do the work because the houses were usually old and required a lot of lead-based testing and they had to do the remediation work. She said they were trying to work with different agencies to see if they could streamline the work and get more contractors in the area.

Ms. Hart said the Public Information Department was able to make a Critical Home Repairs website so people could see the agencies they contracted with, their contact information, and the work they did.

Commissioner Leake said the houses had to be individually owned homes and could not be rented. She said the individual requesting the work had to have their name on the property to ensure they were the owner.

### Comments

Commissioner Dunlap asked if they handled issues outside of the home, for example, if a tree was in disrepair. He asked if there was any limit as to what repairs could be done. *Ms. Hart said the tree removal was not part of the repairs done and they did not do any work outside of the home.*

Chair Jerrell said he was disconnected as to why they could not find another partner to assist with tree maintenance. *Ms. Hart said that would be a good action item for them to look into.* Commissioner Leake said it would be up to the Board as to whether they could or could not do those services by voting for them to receive more funding. *Ms. Hart said there was a cap of \$35,000. She said they should increase that number and the City was up to \$50,000.*

Commissioner Meier asked if any of the agencies they partnered with accepted volunteers. *Ms. Hart said they did, and they had a formal training program. She said training was needed for critical home repair. Ms. Cutinello said there was always a licensed general contractor on the job sites.*

Commissioner Meier asked how much of the work was done by volunteers. *Ms. Hart said she would obtain that information.*

Commissioner Griffin said he hoped they would consider increasing their \$35,000 limit. He said it was also an opportunity to train young people to do some of the repairs so they could get into

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the business. *Ms. Hart said she would find out what type of programs existed for training in that realm.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked if there was an age, income, or AMI limit. She asked if the person had to own the home. *Ms. Cutinello said their income could not exceed 80% AMI and, while there was no current age limit, they had a goal to target more senior citizens.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if there was a waiting list. *Ms. Hart said there was a waitlist as they did not have enough agencies to do the work so there was a pipeline that existed.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how it was determined if the County or the City would do the work. *Ms. Hart said the City funded the same vendors as the County, so they kept open conversations with the City to ensure there was no overlap. She said there was conversation to see if they could have only one application so the seniors were not having to complete multiple applications, nor would there be an overlap of work. She said the City also offered emergency critical home repair and they worked with Code Enforcement as well.*

Commissioner Powell asked if they had to have homeowners' insurance. Commissioner Leake said they were required to have homeowners' insurance.

Commissioner Powell asked what the biggest expense usually was. *Ms. Hart said it was typically removing the lead paint as well as repairing or replacing roofs.*

Commissioner Powell said it was good work because it prevented people from becoming displaced.

Chair Jerrell said he wanted to see a side-by-side comparison with the City's program to see what they provided. *Ms. Hart said they did the side-by-side comparison previously and determined they needed to implement the one-application process.*

Chair Jerrell said that emergency home repair was critical.

### **Chair Jerrell opened the floor up to the Board for open dialog.**

Commissioner Dunlap said, regarding youth engagement, it would be interesting to see how much time park and recreation rented out their facilities versus how much time the public had access to them. He said he would like to see the financial impact of cutting back on time for renting the facilities to repurpose that time for youth engagement activities, such as a gaming room. *County Manager Bryant said similar ideas were discussed with Director of Park and Recreation Nick Walker and Deputy County Manager Dr. Leslie Johnson. He said Mr. Walker had a lot of great ideas regarding programming to address Commissioner Dunlap's mentioned concerns.*

Commissioner Powell said she received a call from a senior with a broken water heater and received a response from the City within 48 hours.

Commissioner Powell said she was worried about the concept and wording of land banking. She said the best way to go about it would be to say "strategic land acquisition for future affordable housing" so people would know that was the intention for that land. She said she heard community feedback regarding youth and park and recreation services which included requests for later hours of availability.

Commissioner Leake asked what happened to those who aged out of foster care. She said she spoke to college presidents of Livingstone college and Clinton College of Rockhill who stated they

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would provide housing for those students who would be first year students as well housing during holiday breaks and provide them with meal tickets.

Commissioner Griffin said the Manager mentioned meeting with counterparts regarding excess and surplus land. He said there was previously an interlocal agreement between the County and the school system to share that information on a regular basis, but he believed there should be some historical data somewhere for him to obtain as they moved forward.

Commissioner Griffin said at some point, they should review the practice that limited people from sitting down and talking with the superintendent. He said it could be helpful to get first-hand information because, just looking at the data, they had to figure something out. County Manager Bryant said there was a mutual willingness with the City manager and the Superintendent to share that information and collaborate on how it could be utilized.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked the Board for their open communication and presentations.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram thanked the Board for their presentations. She said she had a friend who had ideas and programs relating to the topic of Commissioner Dunlap's presentation pertaining to black youth males. She asked if there was a way her friend could present to the Board or a portion of it.

Commissioner Meier said she realized how interconnected everything was.

Commissioner Dunlap thanked the staff members and said he supported the notion of land banking/sharing/etc. He said if they partnered with the schoolboard, they would not have to pay for the land.

**3:20PM – 3:25PM Day 1 – Closing Remarks**

Chair Jerrell, County Manager Bryant, and Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer LaShaun Carter gave closing day remarks.

**RECESS**

The Board Recessed at 3:33 p.m. and will resume at 9:00 a.m. on October 28, 2025.

**FALL RETREAT – DAY 2 – OCTOBER 28, 2025**

**9:00AM – 10:00AM Community Service Grant Redesign**

Adrian Cox, Office of Management & Budget Director, gave the presentation.

*Description: The Board was presented with a proposed strategy to redesign the Community Service Grant program, which was paused for FY2026 due to funding constraints.*



## Community Service Grant Redesign

Adrian Cox, Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Mecklenburg County  
Fall Retreat  
October 27-28, 2025

# Community Service Grant Redesign

BOCC Fall Retreat  
October 28, 2025



## Overview

CSG History

Challenges & Opportunities

Recommendations

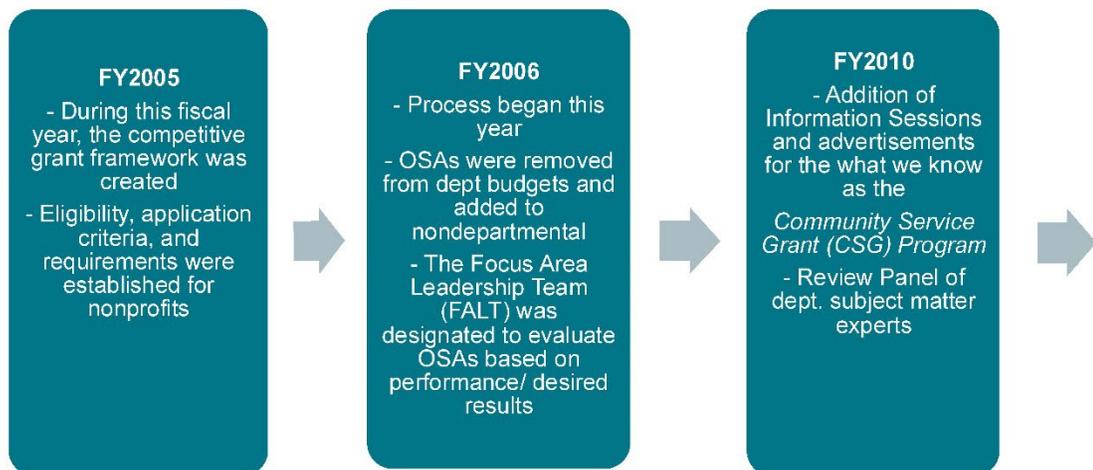
Next Steps

## CSG History

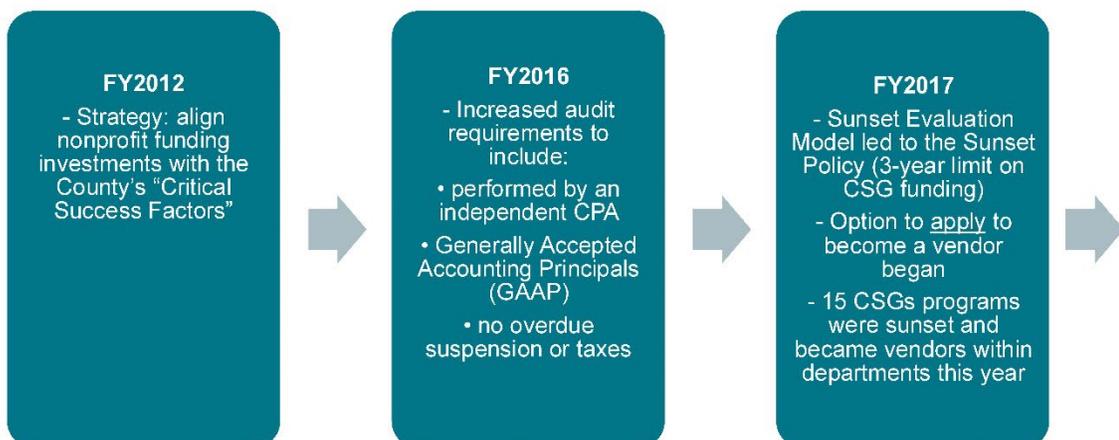
- Prior to FY2006, nonprofits were funded throughout the budget as vendors
  - Outside Service Agencies | OSAs
- The following nonprofits were vendors within many categories that we would consider part of the Arts, Commissions, and other Partners today:

Advantage Carolina	Lake Norman and Wylie Marine Commissions
Arts and Science Council	Latin American Coalition
Carolina Regional Partnership	Legal Services of Southern Piedmont
Catawba Land Conservancy	Senior Centers
Charlotte Area Fund	Shelter for Battered Women
Community Building Initiative	Latta Place
Historic Charlotte	Salvation Army Women and Children's Shelter
House of Grace	United Way

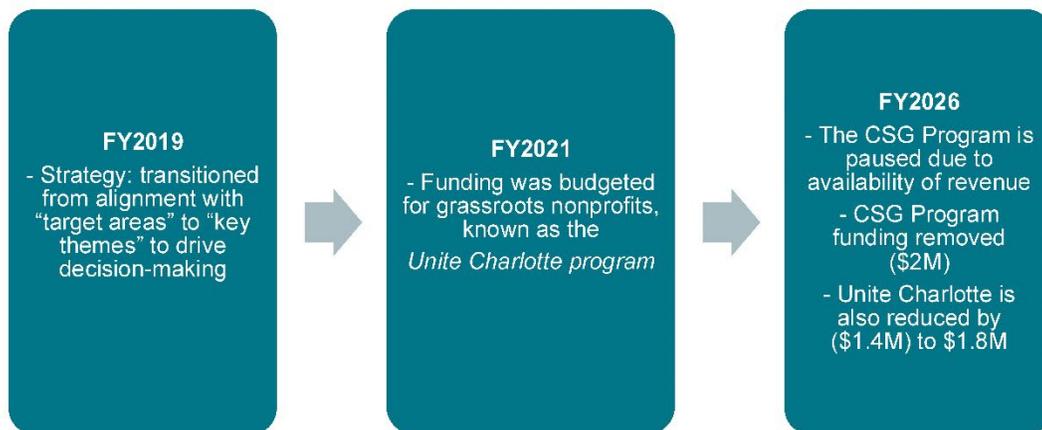
## CSG History



## CSG History



## CSG History



## Programs That Were Formerly CSGs

Former CSGs now Vendors	Funding*
MedAssist of Mecklenburg: Free Pharmacy Program	\$600,000
Communities In Schools: Building Student Success	450,000
Studio 345 – Arts Plus	430,000
Charlotte Community Health Clinic	425,000
Youth Advocate Program, Inc.: Mecklenburg County YAP	397,000
CW Williams: Improving Access to Healthcare	390,000
Camino Community Development Corporation, Inc.	360,000
Cook Community Clinic	325,000
Care Ring – Nurse Family Partnerships	250,000
Care Ring – Physician’s Reach Out	250,000
Veterans Bridge Home	200,000
Mental Health America of Central Carolinas	165,000
YBLA - YLeader Program	150,000
Levine Senior Center	102,000
Shelter Health Services: Healthcare	69,000
Latin American Coalition: Economic Mobility Center	50,000
Urban League: Continuum of Opportunity	50,000
Big Brothers Big Sisters: School Based Mentoring	50,000
Time Out Youth	30,000
Ada Jenkins Families and Careers Development Center	25,000
Big Brothers Big Sisters: Mentoring 2.0	25,000
100 Black Men: Movement in Youth	20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,813,000</b>

Added From FY2017- Present

\$4.4M Total Vendor Funding

20 Organizations

22 Unique Programs

Within CFAS, CSS, CJS, DCR, EDO, and HLT

\* Does not include one-time funding

## Some Other Nonprofit Vendors

- Although some vendors began partnerships with the County through the CSG Program, the nonprofits below (along with others) contracted directly with departments for a distinct program.
- Some of these programs operate a distinct program that fit as a departmental vendor and others may fit better as an annual grant recipient.
- While assessing former CSG/vendors, it may be beneficial to also look at fit of these vendors.

A Sample Other Nonprofit Vendors	Funding
Legal Aid	\$1,209,163
Cabarrus Rowan Community Health	912,500
Road to Hire	884,036
Urban League	564,000
The ROC Charlotte	400,000
She Built This City	363,656
The Relatives	225,000
Levine Senior Center	102,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,660,355</b>

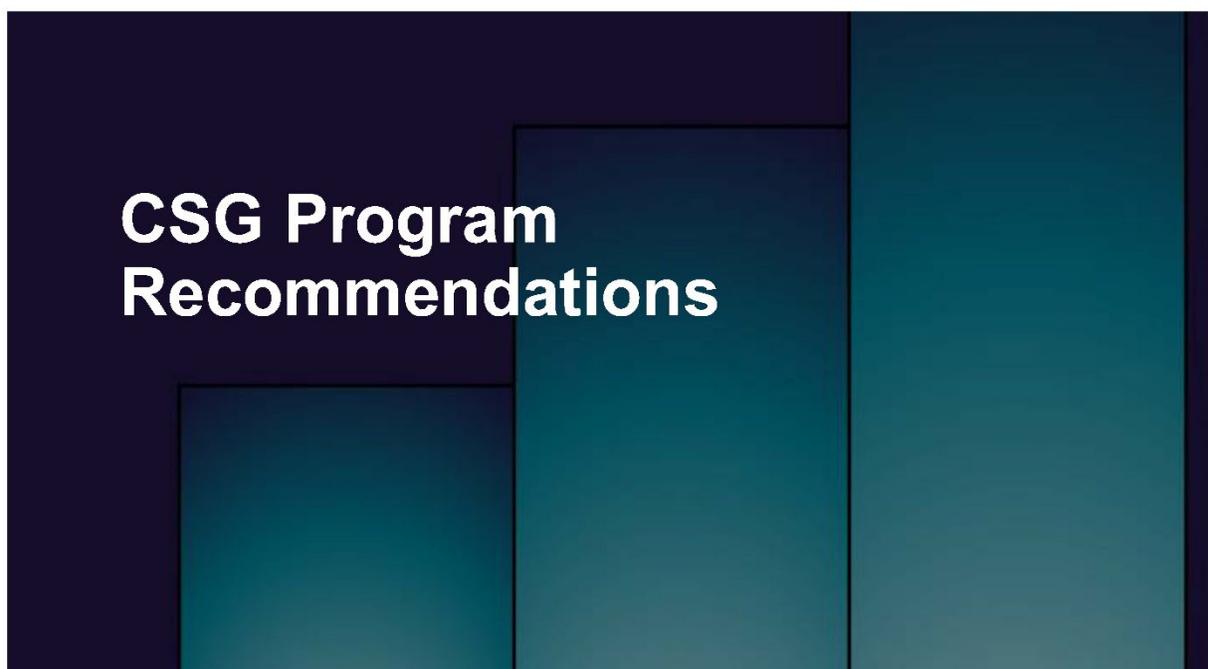
## Community Service Grants vs. Other Vendors

Grants	Typical Vendor Agreements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides funding to individual programs on a time-limited basis</li><li>• Grants are aimed to achieve specific outcomes defined by grant</li><li>• Funding is typically provided to new programs or expansions that a nonprofit is considering</li><li>• A competitive application process is used to award grants</li><li>• Grant applications are vetted by a panel of department experts</li><li>• Grants are paid as results are achieved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Departments contract with vendors for various services that support their programs</li><li>• Vendors are selected by departments based on the ability to fulfill a specific need of their business operation in accordance with County procurement standards</li><li>• Payment to vendors may be based on a per-unit basis or performance basis depending on the contract</li></ul>

Neither CSGs nor vendor agreements are intended to support the general operating of an organization.

## Challenges & Opportunities

- **No Funding:** The CSG program was paused for FY2026 due to a lack of funding and there is currently no funding identified for the program in FY2027
- **Growing Cost:** Over the years the CSG program has increased the ongoing cost to the budget as CSGs were often converted to vendors that do not compete annually for funding
- **Lack of Clarity for Applicants:** The previous CSG program did not provide potential applicants with clarity on the available funding, because funding for the program was unknown when application process began
- **Alignment to County Objectives:** Although grants have been tied to the County's strategies, there is opportunity to increase the focus on the specific outcomes that we need to address
- **Ensure a Competitive Process:** It is important to ensure that a wide range of CSG can compete to achieve the best outcomes for residents
- **Ensure Grantees Can be Successful:** A new CSG program must maintain controls to ensure that nonprofits are successful & use public dollars in a responsible manner



## Eliminate three-year sunset policy & require programs that were formerly CSGs to compete for funding

### How it would work

- The CSG program would no longer have a 3-year limit with the option to apply to be a vendor after 3 years
- 20 CSGs that become vendors since FY2017, would need to compete annually through the CSG process to receive funding
- Nonprofits would be notified regarding the change as soon as it is approved, so they can prepare next grant cycle

### Benefits

- Prevents the CSG program from ballooning the County operating budget
- Would establish a more competitive process for County funding to nonprofits

### Potential Drawbacks

- Existing vendors would need to adjust to a competitive process

## Fund the CSG program with fund balance based on a predetermined % of available balance

### How it would work

- Calculate the available fund balance over the policy minimum after the close of the fiscal year
- Use a predetermined percentage of fund balance to provide the total funding for the CSG program along with caps and other safeguards

Example: 5% of the fund balance over the minimum policy threshold (millions)

Year End→	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25*
Available FB	\$492.0	\$541.4	\$534.1	\$540.3	\$512.5	\$530.9
FB Over Minimum Threshold	\$106.4	\$132.2	\$106.5	\$90.0	\$53.7	\$65.5

Budget Year→	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27*
CSG Funding Example 5%	\$5.32	\$6.61	\$5.33	\$4.5	\$2.69	\$3.28

Actual CSG funding (millions)

	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
CSG Grants	\$1.85	\$1.83	\$2.15	\$2.13	0	TBD
Vendor/Formal CSGs	\$5.13	\$4.28	\$5.32	\$5.8	\$4.5	TBD
<b>Combined</b>	<b>\$5.98</b>	<b>\$6.11</b>	<b>\$7.47</b>	<b>\$7.93</b>	<b>\$4.5</b>	<b>TBD</b>

All grants would be awarded as a one-time award with a one-time source

### Benefits

- Reinvest a portion of fund balance back to the community
- Ongoing funds are used to support core County services
- Opens options to cycles outside of the fiscal year

### Potential Drawbacks

- Continual use of one-time funds
- Would require discipline to the policy not to add in "one more grant"

\* Fund balance estimate following budget adoption

## Design the application to focus on pre-identified performance outcomes

### How it would work

- OSI working with departments would develop a set of performance metrics that align to our Balance Scorecard
- Applicants would apply based on their programs ability to improve these metrics or some intermediate outcomes with a clear alignment

Example- Health & Thriving Community applicants might apply to:

- Improve hypertension outcome (% blood pressure < 140/90) for uninsured / underinsured residents
- Improve diabetes outcomes (% A1c ≤ 9) for uninsured / underinsured residents
- Increase uninsured / underinsured resident maintaining medication compliance
- Increase the percentage of HIV diagnosed patients returning for care

Other desired outcomes as determined by OSI & departments

Note: Currently all vendors that are former CSGs align to Health & Thriving Community, Jobs & Economic Opportunities, Learning & Educational Opportunities

### Benefits

- Provides clear goals for applicants at the beginning of the process
- Allows the County to better fund solutions that align to the areas of greatest need
- Builds on the "paying for results" philosophy of the CSG program
- Integrates the CSG awards with the comprehensive plan of the County

### Potential Drawbacks

- Time required to identify outcomes and revise the application

## Establish application minimums & maximums

**How it would work**

- CSG grants would only be available between a set amount
  - \$55K and \$500K**
- Ensure alternatives for smaller requests
  - The Unite Charlotte program, funded by the County, will award grants of \$35K and \$55K for smaller organizations
- The budget will also reestablish a small amount of contingency funding for the Board to invest in small one-time, innovative programs
  - \$125K up until 2020
  - Eliminated due to underutilization
- Minimum and maximums would be revisited in some years based on economic changes

**Benefits**

- Provides applicants with clear expectations on the scale of the programs funding by the county, often requested by potential applicants
- Minimums would establish a baseline for program impact, implementation, and ability to report on performance
- Maximums would help to ensure funding is available for multiple organizations

**Potential Drawbacks**

- Without alternatives for smaller organizations, minimums may unintentionally exclude programs

## Allocate total funding to CSG & award grants later in the year

**How it would work**

- Funding the CSG program with a predetermined amount of fund balance allows the program operate on an implementation timeframe independent from the fiscal year

FY27 Allocation / CY27 Implementation	Start	Finish	Days
1 Allocate a total (based on FY2025 Fund Balance) for CSGs to be identified	7/1/2026		
2 Application Submission	7/15/2026	9/14/2026	61
3 Review & Prepare Recommendations	9/14/2026	12/14/2026	91
4 Update the BOCC & Finalize Contracts	12/14/2026	1/29/2027	46
5 Implementation	2/1/2027	1/31/2028	364

FY28 Allocation / CY28 Implementation	Start
1 Allocate CSG funding (based on FY2026 Fund Balance) for CSGs to be identified	7/1/2027

↓

**Benefits**

- Similar to the ARPA process, it separates Board from having to pick CSG in the annual Budget process.
- Application submission and review can occur independent of other budget decisions
- Allows for more intentional focus on both investments in County departments and nonprofits
- Nonprofits can address opportunities that emerge from prior budget cycle
- Would allow grants to begin as soon as February 2027

**Potential Drawbacks**

- Unable to communicate specific grant awards at the same time the budget is presented

## Provide grants up-to a 2-year period

**How it would work**

- Extend the award period for CSGs to allow for a 2-year implementation period
- Allocated funding would be held as committed for both years when grants are awarded

**Example**

Grants Awarded Jan. 2027		Grant Implementation		
		Feb 2027 – Jan. 2028	Feb 2028 – Jan. 2029	Feb 2029 – Jan. 2030
Grant 1	100,000	50,000	50,000	
Grant 2	200,000	100,000	100,000	
Grant 3	120,000	60,000	60,000	
Grant 4	75,000	50,000	25,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>495,000</b>			

Grants Awarded Jan. 2028		Grant Implementation		
		Feb 2027 – Jan. 2028	Feb 2028 – Jan. 2029	Feb 2029 – Jan. 2030
Grant 5	500,000		250,000	250,000
Grant 6	70,000		35,000	35,000
Grant 7	400,000		200,000	200,000
Grant 8	300,000		150,000	150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,770,000</b>			

**Benefits**

- Provides additional time for grantees to achieve results
- A multi-year strategy is more feasible for many programs

**Potential Drawbacks**

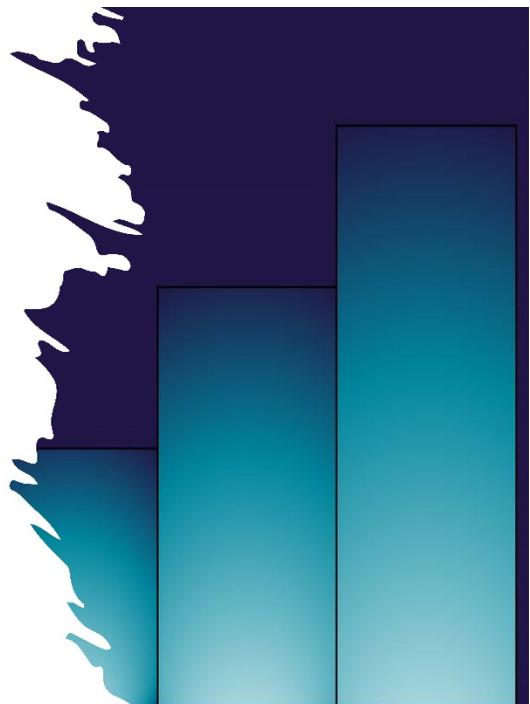
- Two-year grants will utilize a greater share of available funding
- Nonprofits are more likely to design programs with ongoing dependence on County funding
- More complicated grant review

## Summary

	Provide a funding source for CSGs	Prevent CSGs from ballooning the budget	Provide clarity to potential applicants	Improve alignment to County objectives	Ensure a competitive process	Ensure grantees can be successful
1. Eliminate the three-year sunset policy & require programs that were formerly CSGs to compete for funding		✓			✓	
2. Fund with fund balance based on a predetermined % of available balance	✓	✓	✓			
3. Design the application to focus on pre-identified performance outcomes			✓	✓	✓	
4. Establish application minimums & maximums			✓		✓	✓
5. Allocate total funding to CSG then & award grants later in the year				✓		
6. Provide grants up to a 2-year period						✓

## Next Steps

1. Receive Board feedback today
2. OMB will draft a CSG program guidance document
3. Once decisions are final, OMB will notify existing vendors & any interested nonprofits of the new program design & timeline
4. Funding will be included in the FY2027 Recommended Budget to support the CSG program
5. OSI will develop a list of community metrics to guide potential applicants
6. Application & document submission portals will be updated
7. Begin accepting applications mid- July



## Comments

Chair Jerrell said it was a lot of information to provide feedback on and suggested they return to the topic again at a budget public policy meeting and allow the Board more time to process the information. *County Manager Bryant said it was important to receive feedback because if they suggested considering a different option, the clock was ticking, and they were already working on the upcoming budget. He said the Board should have time to process it and provide sufficient feedback, but they had to consider the timeframe they were working with.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the vendors went away and what the roles of the vendors were. *Mr. Cox said they were suggesting that the vendors who were CSGs would go back to the process of competing.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she worried that non-profits would be weakened by the recommended change because it seemed they would not be able to depend on County funding for their survival. She said the County had non-profits doing the work that needed to be done. She asked if Unite Charlotte fully funded themselves. *Mr. Cox said they were fully funded by the County and was managed by United Way.*

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Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if it took away the County's direct involvement as if they were subcontracting it out to United Way to make the choices regarding the grants. *Mr. Cox said that was a fair description. He said they were making the grants, had staff, and a board involved who made the grants to the smaller organizations.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if they were nonprofit. *Mr. Cox said they were not for profit.* Chair Jerrell said they were essentially administering the program on behalf of the County.

Commissioner Dunlap said the purpose of the funding given was to strengthen non-profit organizations. He said the CEO's and presidents of those nonprofits were required to go through their staff/team had to go through training to get the grants. He said the \$125,000 was removed for underutilization and he wasn't sure they really understood that. He said he was not sure he would have done away with it because there could be a time when they missed something. *County Manager Bryant said in addition to the under-utilization, the Board shifted to an interest in spending down fund balance as well.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked if, when they discussed the funding cycle starting in February, there would be consideration regarding the funding cycle for non-profits because he believed most were on an annual basis that began in either July or January. *County Manager Bryant said the purpose behind it was because of the alignment with some of the performance data that OSI would be assisting them with. He said it would align perfectly in terms of tracking their metrics.*

Commissioner Dunlap said two-year cycles were fine. He asked if people who applied and received grants in the first year would be able to apply in the second year. *County Manager Bryant said they would be able to, as the County made no decisions to preclude anyone from applying the subsequent year if they received funding.*

Commissioner Dunlap said he did not have a problem with vendors going back into the pool but if they looked at the significant amount of money some of the vendors were receiving, he believed there should be some kind of categories. He said, going from \$600,000 to something substantially less, because they're now back into the pool, could be a substantial hit for some of those organizations. *County Manager Bryant said, with the exception of Med-Assist, the others would fall into the grant range proposed of \$55,000 to \$500,000. He said Med-Assist would be the only one that did not fall into that range.*

Commissioner Altman asked County Manager Bryant what his recommendation was and why. *County Manager Bryant said it was more predictable in terms of the funding streams. He said they would know, based on the percentages provided by Mr. Cox, what the dollar amount would be designated for funding non-profits. He said, once the funding stream was approved, they would be able to look at the performance measurements and identify the metrics they would want to gear their process toward. He said the Board would not be able to determine winners and losers as it would be based solely on metrics. He said it was learned that it took time for new recipients to stand up their programs so limiting them to 12 months could be challenging for some so they would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but they would have the opportunity to receive up to two years of funding.*

Commissioner Altman asked what County Manager Bryant's thoughts were regarding the potential challenges posed to non-profits. *County Manager Bryant said they should not rely on County dollars. He said relying on County money was not good practice.*

Commissioner Altman said she was interested in giving his proposal a try. She said she appreciated the new approach and supported the County Manager.

Commissioner Powell said it seemed like there was an increased level of scrutiny which they

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needed. She said it seemed much more fiscally responsible and predictable. She said it was a good tracking method and appreciated the County Manager for mentioning learning from ARPA. She said they could not rely on County funding because it could go away. She said she supported it.

Commissioner Meier asked if they funded some of the organizations anywhere else in the budget. *Mr. Cox said some organizations had separate agreements, not for those particular programs, but as vendors.*

Commissioner Meier asked if they went back to the competitive format, their other contract would stay in place. *Mr. Cox said they were not suggesting any changes to contracts.*

Commissioner Meier asked if the oversight would be the same because it seemed staff would be gaining significant additional work. *County Manager Bryant said it was an increase in workload but worth it.*

Commissioner Meier asked if there was a claw back. *County Manager Bryant said it would be considered as part of the contract.*

Commissioner Griffin said he supported the direction County Manager Bryant was headed. He said a valuable question to ask was who the customer was and what they were trying to accomplish with that customer. He said, hopefully, the staff and team would recraft objectives to answer those questions as well as being able to determine whether the goal was accomplished. He said the process was good framework.

Commissioner Griffin said when he requested data in the past, he received data regarding processing and output, not outcomes. He said the manager was trying to pull them back together to really determine who the customer was, what the impact was, and what the outcomes were. He said the process was good framework but how did they shape up those outcomes for their contractors. He said the next largest budget item was HHS and when he asked for contracts, they were kind of open ended. He said it was more processing, but it would be helpful if they had the ultimate impact on the customer. He said the question was "How well is the customer doing now because of taxpayer dollars".

Commissioner Leake asked if the public understood the budgeting process and looked at the grants that went to the Board. She asked if they ever looked at the budgets of the recipients of the County dollars to ensure the tax dollars were being well spent. *Mr. Cox said they requested CSGs to provide their budget and other sources of funding. He said they asked for salaries for their boards and CEO. He said, when the payments were made, the County paid all the grantees based on their actuals. He said they were required to provide an expense report. County Manager Bryant said, each year there was an orientation which was well attended. He said it was marketed by Public Information.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said the framework was excellent, but they needed to understand the lifeline the funds were to the programs. She asked if, without providing ongoing technical assistance, does the County tell them why they were being cut off or reduced. She said they were always supposed to be looking through an equity lens but if they told them they had to compete, it would reduce their ability to impact equity.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said things that used to be a sure-thing were no longer that way. She said they needed to take a closer look or use a tiered process of weaning them off.

County Manager Bryant said the adoption budget included a tax rate increase as well as an elimination of community services grants. He said that was not often seen. He said the uncertainty continued and they needed to continue displaying fiscal discipline.

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Chair Jerrell said it was fair of them to move to a space of predictability, and it was a good idea not to balloon the budget just for the sake of doing it. He said the two-year grant cycle term would be better for the non-profits due to the predictability of it.

Chair Jerrell said he wanted to see a level of feedback from the recipients so the Board could understand what the unintended consequences would be. He said, with regards to moving people off the vendor list, he would like to see a ramped down portion of that because, as they ripped the band-aid off, they would get several calls from the non-profits pertaining to things the Board did not hear or understand. He said the Board would then have to return to the County Manager for discussion. He said, if they could give the organizations time to ramp down, they would then have the ability to see what was coming and have a timeframe while applying for other grants. He said they could prepare without the County pulling the rug out from under them while not having to balloon the budget.

Chair Jerrell said they should look at the multiple contracts. He said, if someone had contracts in multiple areas of the County, it would be worth looking into.

Chair Jerrell said they knew of the \$125,000 in contingency funding but the Board did not know how to use it, but he would like to see it increased to \$500,000.

**10:00AM – 10:15AM Break**

**10:15AM – 11:00AM Mental Health**

Board Priority Alignment: Health Equity & Wellness

Commissioner Laura Meier, District 5 gave the presentation.

*Description: Mental health is essential for a thriving county, affecting everything from workforce productivity to community safety. When residents have access to mental health support, they're better able to contribute, connect, and lead fulfilling lives. Prioritizing mental wellness builds resilience, reduces disparities, and strengthens the social fabric of the entire region.*



# Mecklenburg County and Behavioral Health Services

Presenter: Commissioner Laura Meier

Staff Support: Cotrane Penn

## Objectives

- To gain an understanding of the history of behavioral health funding in North Carolina and Mecklenburg County
- To gain an understanding of the need of increased funding for behavioral health in Mecklenburg County

## How We Got Here

A Behavioral Health Funding and Services Timeline

## From County-Led to Managed Care-Led Behavioral Health

1970s-2000

NC counties deliver behavioral health service and manage state and Medicaid funding.

2001-2014

2001- NC passes the MH Reform Act, aiming to reduce the number of entities managing state and Medicaid funds. Gradually, NC counties stop delivering services and administering state and Medicaid funds.

Mecklenburg continues service delivery and state/Medicaid funding administration. By 2007, Meck was the only county doing this.

2014

After a few years of controversy, County decides to work with Cardinal Innovations for the administration of Medicaid and state funding.

Mecklenburg County stops providing Medicaid/state-funded behavioral health services and no longer administers these funds for behavioral health.

2014-2021

Cardinal Innovations administers Medicaid and state funding for behavioral health services in Mecklenburg County.

All County spending on behavioral health is using local funds or grants.

2021

County shifts from Cardinal Innovations to Alliance Health Plan

2021-Present

The state begins the move to "Managed Care", further broadening how Medicaid funds are administered.

5 insurance companies start administering Medicaid for most residents. Medicaid expansion takes place in NC.

Alliance continues administering Medicaid and state funding for the uninsured and those with the most severe behavioral health needs. They also administer federal block grant funding for mental health and substance abuse.

Mecklenburg County funding prioritizes safety net behavioral health services for the uninsured and underinsured, and services that are not insurance eligible.

## The Takeaway

- In the past 25 years, North Carolina's management of behavioral health services and funding for low income and uninsured residents has changed dramatically
- With it, the role that counties play has changed too.
- Currently, supporting residents' access BH services is technically a state and managed care organization responsibility only.

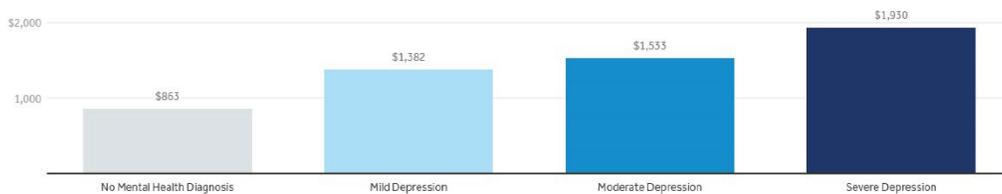
**If that is the case, what is our County investment, and why?**

## Access to Services in Mecklenburg County Residents' Insurance Status

### Residents with Private Insurance or Medicare

- In 2023, 75.7% (855,410) of County residents had private, Medicare, or military/VA insurance.
  - This is a 4-percentage point increase over 2015.

Annual out-of-pocket spending for privately-insured individuals treated for depression, by severity, 2021



Includes nonelderly adult enrollees with private insurance from large employers. Enrollees are categorized as mild, moderate, or severe based on the highest severity of depression for which they received treatment in 2021. Enrollees with or without co-occurring anxiety diagnoses are included. Enrollees are included in the no mental health diagnosis group if they were not treated for any mental health diagnosis in 2021. Enrollees with mental health diagnoses other than GAD and depression are not represented in figures. Data does not include payments for services that enrollees do not claim under their employer coverage.

Source: KFF Analysis of Merative MarketScan Commercial Database, 2021 • PNG

Peterson KFF  
 Health System Tracker

### Residents with Medicaid Insurance

#### Medicaid

- 347,152 residents enrolled

#### Medicaid Expansion

- 84,832 residents enrolled when NC voted for expansion

No copays but low reimbursement rates make serving people with Medicaid less attractive for clinicians

- As of 10/1/25, the state cut reimbursement rates by 3-8% for many behavioral health services, placing greater strain on providers who accept Medicaid.

## Residents with No Insurance

**Over 130,000 residents in Mecklenburg County have no health insurance.**

- Limited access to care– can use County-funded services and if the BH needs get bad enough, then they could possibly access state funded services through Alliance.
- Undocumented persons cannot access care through Medicaid or state funding.

## The Takeaway

- As Medicaid cuts loom due to the passage of the latest federal budget, less of our residents will be enrolled in a health insurance plan, whether it is Medicaid or private insurance.
- The burden of treating the uninsured will fall on Mecklenburg County, including behavioral health access.

## How are we doing?

What the Behavioral Health Data Tells Us

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## LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

Identifying the leading causes of death in Mecklenburg County helps us understand the most significant health challenges facing our community. These causes highlight where prevention and early intervention can save lives and improve quality of life.

Data provided in this section underscores the latest updates on local leading causes of death including breakdowns by race and ethnicity, gender, and age.

## Suicides

Table 2. Top Ten Causes of Death Mecklenburg County, 2023

Rank	Cause	Total Deaths	% of Total Deaths
1	Cancer	1,371	19.03%
2	Heart Disease	1,269	17.61%
3	Unintentional Injuries	640	8.89%
4	Stroke	408	5.68%
5	Alzheimer's Disease	350	4.86%
6	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	227	3.15%
7	Diabetes	223	3.10%
8	Kidney Disease	147	2.04%
9	Suicide	126	1.75%
10	Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	125	1.73%
<b>Total Deaths 2023: All Causes</b>		<b>7,205</b>	

Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; Division of Public Health; State Center for Health Statistics, Mecklenburg County Vital Statistics

Table 5. Mecklenburg County, Cause of Death by Age, 2023

Rank	Infant (< 1 year)	Ages 1-14 yrs	Ages 15-24 yrs	Ages 25-44 yrs	Ages 45-64 yrs	Ages 65 yrs +
1	Conditions in the perinatal period	Unintentional Injuries	Unintentional Injuries	Unintentional Injuries	Cancer	Cancer
2	Congenital*	N/A	Homicide	Heart Disease	Heart Disease	Heart Disease
3	N/A	N/A	Suicide	Suicide	Unintentional Injuries	Alzheimer's Disease

\*Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities

N/A: data is based on provisional estimates and is not available at the time of the report.

Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; Division of Public Health; State Center for Health Statistics

## Youth Behavioral Health

### YOUTH BEHAVIORS

The choices young people make today can shape their health into adulthood. The table below highlights key behaviors among Mecklenburg County youth that impact overall well being.

Table 8. Percentage of Charlotte-Mecklenburg High-School Age Teens Reporting Conditions

	2019			2021			2023*		
	Meck	NC	US	Meck	NC	US	Meck	NC	US
<b>Psychological Health</b>									
Teens ever attempted suicide or tried to kill themselves	12.0%	10.0%	9.0%	9.0%	10.0%	10.2%	*	*	*
Teens who made a plan to commit suicide	17.0%	15.0%	16.0%	15.0%	18.0%	17.6%	*	*	*
Teens who felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities	37.0%	36.0%	37.0%	43.0%	43.0%	42.3%	*	*	*
<b>Substance Abuse</b>									
Had at least one alcoholic drink one or more days in the past 30 days	23.0%	24.0%	29.0%	17.0%	19.0%	22.7%	*	*	*
Used marijuana one or more times in the past 30 days	24.0%	22.0%	22.0%	13.0%	16.0%	15.8%	*	*	*
<b>Weight Management</b>									
Physically active for a total of 60 minutes or more per day on 5 or more of the past 7 days	34.0%	38.0%	44.0%	33.0%	34.0%	15.8%	*	*	*
<b>Violence</b>									
Teens reported carrying a weapon to school in the past month	12.0%	16.0%	13.0%	N/A	N/A	3.1%	*	*	*
Teens reported being physically hurt by their partner	7.0%	7.0%	8.0%	9.0%	13.0%	8.5%	*	*	*

\*Data not available. 2023 YRBS data release has been delayed. Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg YRBS, 2019 - 2023

## Substance Abuse

- Overdose deaths among Black and Hispanic residents in Mecklenburg County have increased by 20% since 2019, compared to a 15% increase among White residents.
- Fentanyl contamination in cocaine and counterfeit pills is a major contributing factor to these disparities

## General Mental Health

Table 11. MECKtrics Population Health Indicators (continued)



Indicators	Goal	Status	Baseline	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Suicides</b> <i>Suicide Rate per 100,000</i>	8.6	Worsening	9.6 (2018)	8.6	9.7	11.7	9.6	11.0	n/a
<b>Youth Suicide Attempts</b> <i>Rate of Youth ED visits due to suicide attempts per 100,000</i>	185	Worsening	102.4 (2018)	115.4	111.4	139.6	213.5	205.6	199.1
<b>Opioid Overdose (Deaths)</b> <i>Opioid Overdose Deaths per 100,000</i>	13.1	Worsening	15.5 (2018)	13.6	15.6	17.4	24.1	25.8	n/a
<b>Mental Health ED Visits (Depression)</b> <i>Rate of ED visits due to Depression per 100,000</i>	751.2	Worsening	1451.7 (2018)	1194.3	885.6	784	853.9	834.7	894.1
<b>Mental Health Days Not Good</b> <i>% Adults reporting mental health not good for 8 or more days per month</i>	14%	Worsening	15.7% (2018)	14.8%	17.6%	15.8%	19.4%	20.1%	21.2%

## The Takeaway

As the mental health of our residents is worsening, coupled with even more of our residents predicted to be uninsured, Mecklenburg County is facing tough funding decisions around behavioral health.

## How the County Supplements the Existing Service Array

Safety Net Services for At-Risk Residents

## County Funding for Behavioral Health

Department	Service Type	County Funding
Child, Family, and Adult Services	Behavioral Health Contracts for Community-Based Services	\$13,415,574
Child, Family, and Adult Services	Mental Health America of Central Carolinas- Community Service Grant	\$165,000
Community Support Services	Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Continuum- Services for Shelter Residents	\$2,628,459
Criminal Justice Services	Forensic Evaluations- Psychological assessments for Justice-Involved Adults	\$1,481,893
Criminal Justice Services	Drug Treatment Court	\$2,695,936
Public Health	Child Development Community Policing- Services for Children Impacted by or Witnessing Traumatic Events	\$2,914,617
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,301,479</b>

## County-Funded Program and Services FY2025

Vendor/Provider	Clinical & Contractual Services	Mental Health America of Central Carolinas
Alliance Center for Education	Community Support Services	Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center
Anuvia Prevention and Recovery Center	Criminal Justice Services	Project 658 dba Hope Community Clinic
ARJ (Acceptance, Responsibility, Judgement)	Daymark Behavioral Health Urgent Care	Promise Resource Network (PRN)
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)	Family First Community Services (FFCS)	Public Health
School-Based Mental Health Program	Forensic Evaluations (multiple contractors)	SPARC
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Student Assistance Program	Hinds' Feet Farm	Stride Services
	Hope Haven	Supportive Housing (Vendor name not provided)
	HopeWay foundation	SYDKIMYL
	INREACH	Teen Health Connection
	JCPC BH Contracts (not listed)	The Relatives
	Lifespan	Thompson Child and Family Focus
	McNiel Family Counseling	Time Out Youth

## The Big Takeaway

- It is imperative that the county continue to provide funding support for Behavioral Health Services, particularly for those who are uninsured and underinsured, allowing our most vulnerable residents access to critical prevention and intervention services.
- As we continue to support services for individuals, we in turn support their families, their neighbors and the community at large.

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**Comments**

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said they had to invest more into the programs, especially because Medicaid was at risk. She asked how they could do the appropriate level of advocacy and how they could work with the North Carolina General Assembly because everything was being pushed down to the states. She asked how they could appropriately advocate for their kids with the hopes of those services spreading out to additional people who needed them. She said there was also a cultural aspect they had to consider. *Intergovernmental Affairs Manager Lissette Nimmons said the topic was a high-level item on the legislative agenda. She said if they saw something related to their legislative agenda go through the General Assembly, they would advocate for it and support or oppose it. She said she leaned on her colleagues at HHS when she had questions so she would be able to formulate a response or make suggestions to their delegation on how they would like to see them vote on a particular matter. She said there were always opportunities when having one-on-one meetings with members of their delegation to discuss things as well as during their annual events. Division Director of Clinical and Contractual Services Dr. Cotrane Penn said the stigma against mental health was decreasing as they got down into the younger generations, but they were still in a state where youth could not independently seek mental health services without parental permission. She said they had to determine if they should consider advocating for access to care for youth regardless of parental approval.*

Commissioner Leake expressed her upset with the number of young people committing suicide. She said the record did not reflect suicides in the black community and the parents did not want to be confronted with it. She said they had to come up with real actions and suggested people lobby with the County, their legislators, Raleigh, and Washington to reestablish the mental health facilities of which were previously shut down.

Commissioner Meier said advocating with the government and parents was necessary. She said the mental health forums in her district were well attended.

Commissioner Griffin said the topic was important and he was trying to determine how they could improve the performance within the County. He asked how they could categorize the challenges of ADL's (Activities of Daily Living) and asked for examples on how they could do better addressing the ADL's. *Dr. Penn said they contracted with quite a few behavioral health services and, while they don't yet have the capacity to measure outcomes directly related to behavioral health, they requested vendors to provide social determinants of health and how those who participated in County funded behavioral health services were doing relative to social determinants of health. She said they were interested in getting to a place where they could understand how their quality of life was different as a result of receiving behavioral health services from the County. She said it was on the horizon for them, and they would like to see that tied into value-based care.*

Commissioner Dunlap said he was still confused about what the County paid for versus what Alliance paid. He asked where the difference was regarding the new tailored plan. *Dr. Penn said there was criteria that would designate one as being eligible to be on the tailored plan. She said, if a person had Medicaid, they were on either standard or tailored plan and if the person had more severe behavioral health, substance use and IDD (intellectual and developmental disability) needs, they would be assigned the tailored plan. She said, after so many behavioral health related ER visits or so many inpatient stays, one would be transferred to the tailored plan.*

Commissioner Dunlap said only the County plans could support the undocumented and asked how they were managing that. He said they too had mental health issues. *Dr. Penn said some of the \$13 million figure given in the presentation was specifically assigned to vendors who provided services to a large percentage of immigrants. She said they had contracted services in place to meet those needs as well as on the physical health side.*

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Commissioner Dunlap asked what measures were put in place to ensure the funds paid by the County for mental health services were actually used to improve a person's state of health. *Dr. Penn said they did have a provider monitoring process that included on-site visits with mental health vendors, both looking at their documentation as well as collecting feedback from those who showed up on their paperwork as having received services.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the \$23 million funded by the County was void of state funding. *Mr. Cox said that was correct.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the state prioritized mental health, would that same \$23 million be paid through State funding. *Mr. Cox said it would be State and federal funding.*

Chair Jerrell asked what their total contribution to Alliance Health on a yearly basis was and how many people they served versus what the community needs were. He said he believed the 130,000 people mentioned were a combination of both uninsured and under-insured.

Chair Jerrell asked what their capacity was with the partners they funded. He asked how many people CareRing could serve and how they reached those 130,000 people. He asked what they were doing to reach those people and how many additional partners were needed to break into that number. *Commissioner Meier said it was hard to determine who was uninsured or underinsured because they were less likely to seek services.*

### **11:00AM – 11:45AM Natural Resources: The Priority of Land Acquisition with the Conservation & Preservation Framework**

Board Priority Alignment: Environmental Stewardship

Commissioner Elaine Powell, District 1, gave the presentation.

*Description: Land conservation and preservation play a critical role in supporting our environmental stewardship priorities by securing space for green infrastructure, pollution mitigation, and equitable access to natural resources. It empowers communities—especially those historically marginalized—to shape healthier, more resilient environments. By prioritizing land for conservation and community use, the county can address disparities and promote long-term environmental and social well-being.*

Commissioner Powell provided the following information:

#### Shrinking Tree Canopy

- 10% impervious/paved becomes unhealthy
- 2008
  - o The last time it was considered a healthy tree canopy
  - o 50% which tree canopy
    - Affects air quality.
  - o 6% impervious

When you work in air quality, you can't help but work with water quality because natural resources are vital to life.

- 2016
  - o More impervious, more impervious, less trees.
  - o Tree canopy has gone from 50% to 48.9
  - o Impervious at 12%

We can't do more than the state sets as minimum.

- 2024

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- Down to 47.5%, tree canopy
- 24% Impervious

County is rapidly growing

- Smart growth hasn't been smart.

The National Association of Park and Rec has three pillars,

- Health and Wellness
- Equity
- environmental stewardship and resilience

Commissioner Powells focus while on the Parks Commission was on protecting natural resources

- A great partnership that Park and Rec had with stormwater

You cannot separate health and Wellness from the natural environment. They are completely intertwined.

- 2019

- Commissioner Powell requested an environmental stewardship committee
- Established an environmental leadership action plan, conservation and preservation framework, a farmland preservation framework, voluntary AG districts

Desperate need for strategic thinking about land acquisition now

- We have to figure out what we can get as quickly as we can get it to protect it.
- Impervious is the number one threat to water quality

Land protection, land acquisition

- Land protection is the best way to keep our streams clean and our drinking water safe
- For all these decades there has been by right development, by right
  - No urban growth boundaries, no impact fees
  - The state limits local control.
- The only way to protect this is public ownership.
- The bulk of this protection is done by strategic land acquisition, by storm water services and park and recreation.
- Endangered grasshopper Sparrow living on the Rural Hill nature preserve

Commissioner Powell introduced her presentation photos and highlighted how critical the wildlife habitats were within the County as well as their benefits to the air and water quality.

- Not only is it good for wildlife and water and air, but it it's good for humans because there's the health and Wellness and recreation component.
- A lot of people don't have any respect for natural systems, don't understand the importance, but it all works together.
- But when you interrupt a forest to pave an industrial site, it's not like you can get it back by tree planting. You have ruined the natural system.
- Development sedimentation going into our creeks and streams.
  - It's cancer on the water so the sedimentation is killing everything alive in the Creek and every stream.
  - Every stream in Charlotte is impaired and almost every stream in Mecklenburg County is impaired because of things like this.

Commissioner Powell shared fond remembrance of Rusty Rozelle, former Manager of Mecklenburg County Water Quality Program who passed away unexpectedly in May of 2025.

Commissioner Powell said strategic land acquisition was urgent, and the 2024 map should have sirens all around it. The out of balanced-ness impacted health and Wellness. She said it impacted humanity and increased suffering. She said it was up to elected leaders to do better.

Commissioner Powell said she learned that communicating well with each other was important because Mr. Levine said he never knew how natives were until he did the ask for the tax incentive.

- We have a responsibility to care for the environment, for sustainability and stewardship, to decrease suffering.

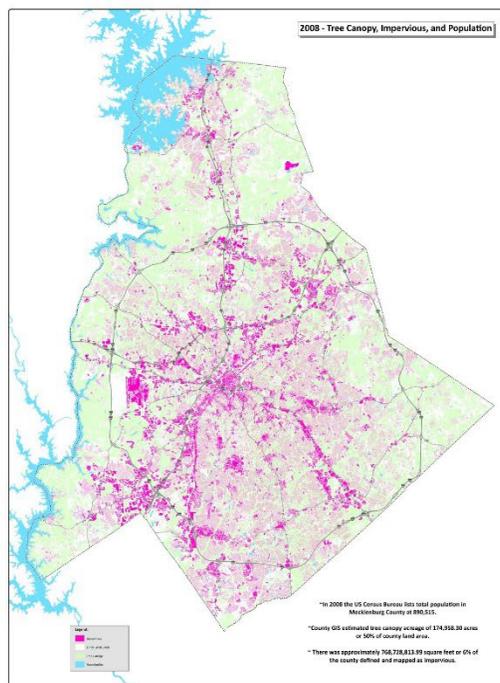
**Meeting Minutes**  
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Commissioner Powell called upon her subject matter experts Nature Preserves and Natural Resources Expert Chris Matthews, Capital Planner for Park and Recreations Bert Lynn, and Deputy Director of Park and Recreation Peter Cook for questioning.

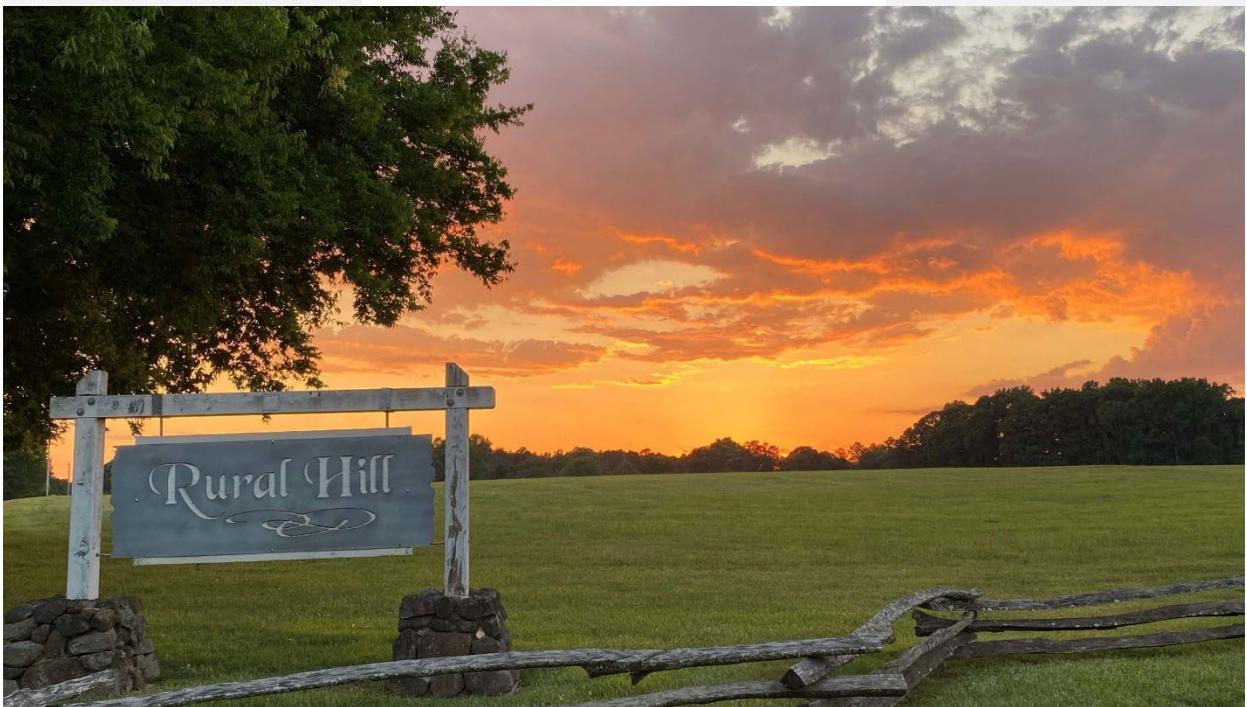
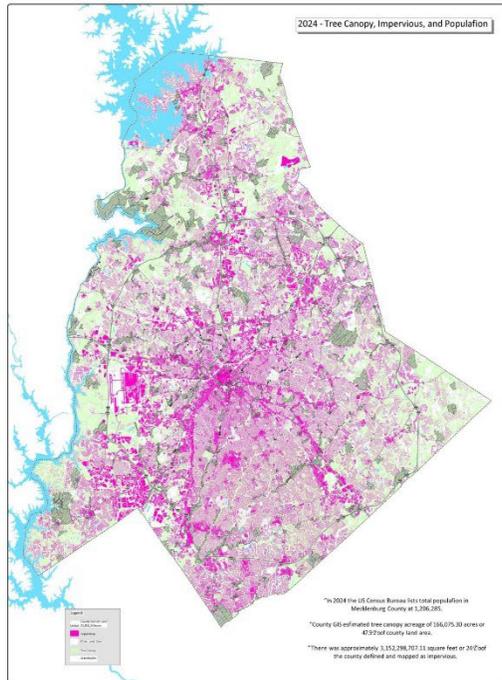
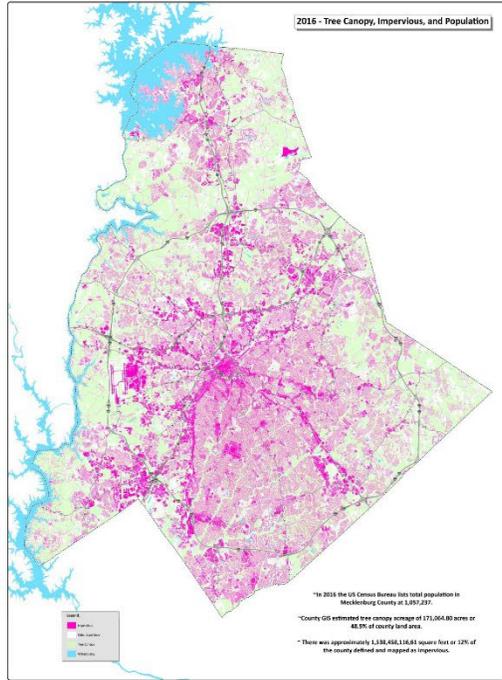


Natural Resources: The Priority of Land Acquisition with the Conservation & Preservation Framework

Commissioner Elaine Powell, District 1  
Mecklenburg County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Fall Retreat  
October 27-28, 2025



Meeting Minutes  
October 27 - 28, 2025



Meeting Minutes  
October 27 - 28, 2025



Meeting Minutes  
October 27 - 28, 2025



**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 27 - 28, 2025**



**Comments**

Commissioner Meier thanked Commissioner Powell for her presentation. She asked if the 50 by 2050 was a City goal or County goal. She asked if the County was partnering with the City and what the County was doing to stop the loss of tree canopy and increase in impervious. *Commissioner Powell said they needed to follow through with strategic land acquisition. She said she could not imagine the City would meet the 50 by 2050 in a natural way. She said it was good to have the partnership and talk to them but the only control the County had was over the land they owned. She said she requested GIS to put on the map what was owned by the County and it was not much. She said the bulk was around Mountain Island Lake to protect the drinking water.*

*Mr. Lynn said they worked with the City in different ways. He said they worked in a land acquisition standpoint and the City used some of their impact fees to purchase land for tree canopy protection. He said the County worked with Tree Charlotte for canopy restoration or expansion on some of their properties where they did not already have tree cover. He said they also worked with them on rewriting the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance), but they did not have anything mandatory, only incentive based. He said, in the 2.5 years they had it, only 3 developers attempted to use the incentive.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for clarification regarding Commissioner Powell's comment regarding being unable to do more than what the State says they could. She asked if Commissioner Powell could do anything, what would her answer be to the issue. She asked if higher density was the answer. *Commissioner Powell said density mattered because they did not want to use all green space. She said it was already very dense but regarding water capacity, the Catawba River could not handle much more. She said, if they were going to expand, they should do it on less precious land. Mr. Matthews said, in the past, the Board recognized drinking water needed to be protected. He said the Board charged Storm Water, Park and Rec, and real estate to buy up all the land around their drinking water supply which was around Mountain Island Lake. He said that was one of the best things environmentally that the Board had ever told them to do because it helped keep costs down for the residents. He said, when they went looking for land to buy, it was not only for playgrounds, ball fields, etc. but also to protect water supply and keep air quality as high as possible. He said asthma was on a major increase in the County so buying land along streams and creeks to help protect them from development, protect drinking supply, and keep tree canopy in place, they were not only protecting the insects and animals, but they were also protecting the people as well. He said it helped the residents be healthy physically and mentally.*

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Commissioner Dunlap said he struggled when it came to balancing his desire to acquire more land but if they never been hungry or homeless, it was hard to understand why acquisition was more important than feeding homeless children. He said the need was there but they needed to balance it against what so many others needed as well. *Commissioner Powell said they all agreed on their priorities. She said all the priorities were important and said it was a challenge to address them in a balanced way. She said Mecklenburg County was an economic engine and if they did not address the issue, the quality of life would decrease, and people would not want to live in the County. She said it was a both/and situation and neither trumped other priorities.*

Commissioner Altman said Commissioner Powell was one of the most successful Commissioners in terms of her record of achievements. She said she looked forward to the budget process to see what they looked at and all the dollars they were allocating to the different essential things. She said she was interested in Park and Recreation bringing forward an update. She said she recalled when there were real gaps in equity around park access six years ago. She said she looked forward to getting information and understanding where and what improvements had been made in terms of achieving equity with access and park resources.

Commissioner Altman asked how other similarly sized communities that shared Mecklenburg County's values looked at environmental protection.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked if public-private partnerships would help or hurt because the concept made her think of the relationship the County had with Duke Energy and how there were struggles with their relationship. *Mr. Matthews said they had a good relationship with Duke Energy. He said they worked with them to protect endangered species and were looking for ways to work together in increasing pollinators. He said they were also working together to address the issues related to the flooding along Riverside Drive below Mountain Island Lake. He said Duke was an organization that had a big impact on environment because of what they did but they had been working hard to soften their approach, and they had been receptive to working with the County to mitigate some of their impacts.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked how they could partner with the land acquisition part. She asked what the strategic part was and if the public partnership could be employed. *Mr. Matthews said the challenge they were facing, with regards to protecting and having open space, was because the County was the biggest entity in the County that owned land. He said the State had no State lands and the federal government had no federal lands in the County. He said they had such a focus on making sure they were providing the necessary infrastructure.*

*Park and Recreation Director Nick Walker said a large portion of the land they needed in gap areas and areas where they needed to work on equity were owned by other entities. He said strengthening those relationships and having a better understanding of their development need for those properties could go a long way to not buying a property twice.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said she would love to see, in addition to their priorities being read, a reminder of the linkages among the priorities because there was a method to their madness and the priorities were chosen because they all fed into one other.

Commissioner Leake asked if they were holding the City accountable for its responsibility. She said people were moving to the County for the land and the County was putting up more housing but not taking care of the infrastructure. She said she had to stay with the human services aspect. *Commissioner Powell said health and wellness was connected to humans.*

Commissioner Griffin said there was uncertainty regarding jurisdiction and who regulated the stormwater because, in some parts of the County, it was the City's jurisdiction and sometimes it was the County's. He said there was potential run off from a development project in Southwest

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that would runoff into Lake Wylie. He asked who took the lead when both the City and the County had jurisdiction. *Commissioner Powell said they worked together. Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi, Director of the Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency said they worked together.*

Chair Jerrell said they projected to have 1.7 million residents in the County by 2050 and Commissioner Powell said the Catawba River could not handle that. He asked at what point the growth would become a threat to the community and what the number of populations with their current levels could handle.

Chair Jerrell said it was a critical issue, all the bodies worked together. He said he would like to see Park and Recreation not working in isolation and said they should work with Ms. Hart and/or the Health Department. He said they needed to discuss what acquisition meant for housing and other components of their priorities. He said they should have someone embedded in the team to inform and approach the Board with acquisition proposals so it could be a comprehensive solution. *Mr. Matthews said many communities had their Park and Recreation departments and planning department working together but for Mecklenburg County, planning was in the City and parks was in the County. He said they were trying to strengthen that relationship and provide green space and open space as part of the package. He said they needed to ensure they work within themselves and work with the City.*

Commissioner Griffin said they had an interlocal agreement signed by the City Council, CMS, and Mecklenburg County. He asked if that could be reinvented. *Mr. Walker said, when they were looking at acquisition, one of their first conversations would be held with Ms. Hart to determine if it was logical. He said developers were very open to the conversations and often touted how close they were to the greenways. He said it was the same with affordable housing because it increased the value of affordable housing.*

Chair Jerrell said he would like the Board to come to a consensus and take a deeper dive into the information. He suggested more open discussions regarding the topic and formalizing the process maybe something to discuss.

### **11:45AM – 12:45PM Lunch**

### **12:45AM – 1:30PM Child Fatality and Protection Taskforce**

Board Priority Alignment: Health Equity & Wellness

Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell, District 6, gave the presentation.

*Description: Preventing child fatalities and protecting vulnerable youth requires a coordinated, data driven approach that brings together a coordinated and committed cohort of informed stakeholders. By identifying risk factors and implementing targeted interventions, communities can save lives and build safer, more equitable environments for children to thrive. This commitment reflects a deeper investment in the well-being and future of every child in Mecklenburg County.*



## Child Fatality Review (CFR) and Child Abuse Prevention

Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell, District 6  
Mecklenburg County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Fall Retreat  
October 27-28, 2025



## BOCC Fall Retreat Child Fatality Review (CFR) and Child Abuse Prevention

Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  
October 27-28, 2025



MECKLENBURG COUNTY  
North Carolina  
Public Health

### A Day in the Life – Safe Sleep Promotion



Photo Source: [Safe Sleep N.C.](#)



## What is Child Fatality Review?

A multidisciplinary team that assesses child death records age birth to 17 years old to:

- Encourage a community-wide approach to the prevention of child abuse/neglect
- Identify gaps/deficiencies across all public and private agencies who serve children and families
- Make recommendations for laws, rules, and policies to improve the health and safety of children
- **Goal is to eliminate preventable deaths and reduce all child deaths**



## Types of Cases Reviewed for CFR

**Cases specified in G.S. 7B-1406.5(c) will be reviewed:**

Deaths of resident children under 18 years whose death fall in the following categories:

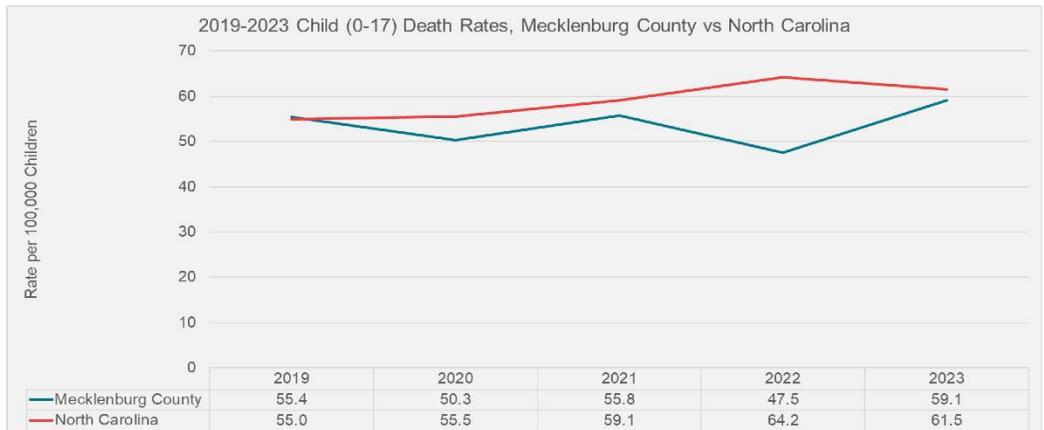
- Undetermined cases
- Unintentional injury
- Violence
- Motor vehicle incidents
- Sudden unexpected infant deaths
- Suicide
- Deaths not expected in the next six months
- **Deaths related to child maltreatment or child deaths involving a child or child's family who was reported to or known to child protective services**



## Mecklenburg County Child Fatality Review System



## Child (0-17) Death Rates, Mecklenburg County vs. North Carolina, 2019-2023



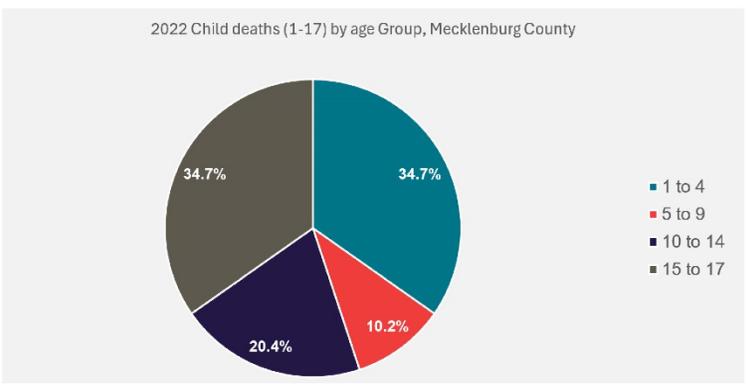
## All Child Deaths (0-17), Mecklenburg County, 2023

Cause of Death	Number of Deaths	% of Deaths
Perinatal Conditions	49	31.6%
Illnesses	33	21.3%
Birth Defects	21	13.5%
Suicide	10	6.5%
All Other Causes	10	6.5%
Motor Vehicle Injuries	9	5.8%
Homicide	8	5.2%
Other Unintentional Injuries	5	3.2%
Poisoning	4	2.6%
Suffocation/Choking/Strangulation	3	1.9%
Drowning	3	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- Leading causes of death for infants (less than 1 year) are due largely to natural causes; for ages 1-17 the causes are primarily injury-related.
- Perinatal conditions continue to be the largest category of deaths when looking at ages 0-17.



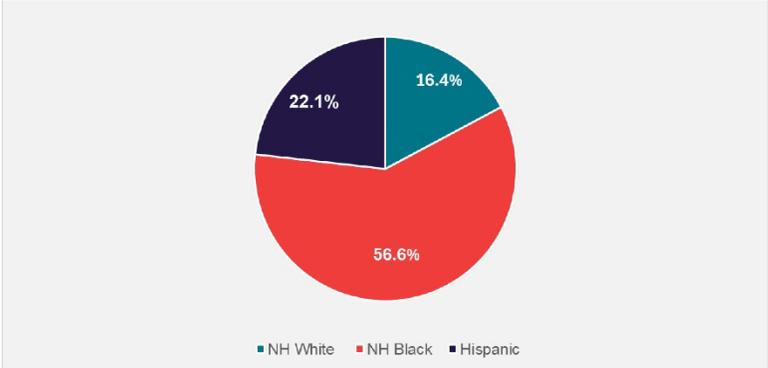
## 2022 Child Deaths (1-17), Mecklenburg County, by Age Group



- Youth aged 1 to 4 and 15 to 17 made up over two-thirds (69.4%) of child deaths.
- Among the leading causes of death in the 15-17 age group are assault (homicide), suicide, and other unintentional injuries.



## 2022 Child Deaths (0-17), Mecklenburg County, by Race & Ethnicity



- NH Black children made up over half (56.6%) of all child deaths in 2022 yet only made up 32.2% of the total population of children in Mecklenburg County.

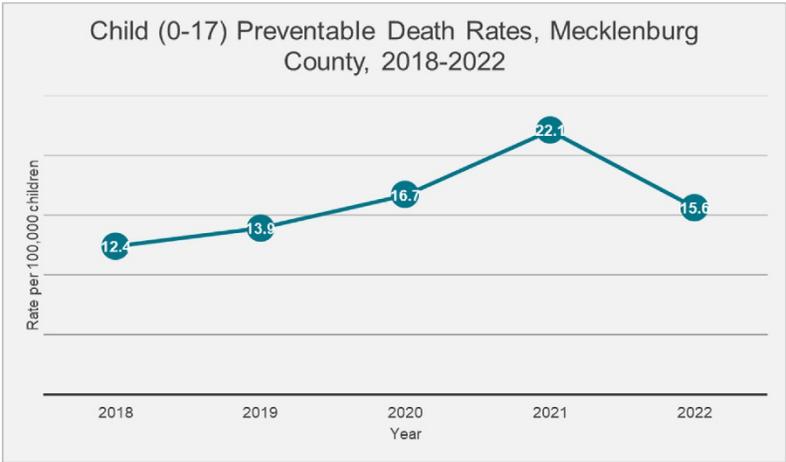


## Preventable Deaths

- Intentional Deaths
  - Consist of Homicide and Suicide
- Unintentional Deaths
  - Consist of motor vehicle injuries and all other unintentional injuries (accidents)
- Child Abuse
  - Direct result of violence against a child by a caregiver



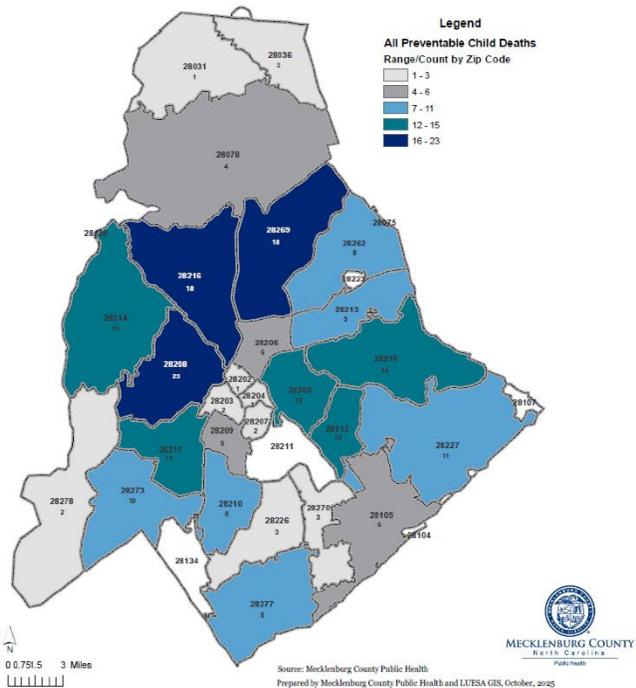
## 2018-2022 Mecklenburg County Preventable Child Death Rates



- 208 child deaths could have been prevented from 2018-2022.
- Preventable deaths made up nearly a third (32.8%) of all child deaths in 2022.
- Peaked in 2021 before decreasing in 2022



## All Preventable Child Deaths, 0-17 Years Mecklenburg County, 2019-2023

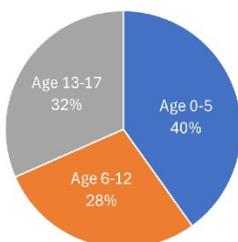


## Intensive Case Reviews – DSS Involved Fatalities

<b>2022</b> 9 cases	2 Fentanyl Toxicity 2 Gunshot Victims	4 Unsafe Sleep 1 Brain Injury due to Near Drowning
<b>2023</b> 9 cases	2 Gunshot Victims 3 Homicides 1 Strangulation	1 Motor Vehicle Collision 1 Unsafe Sleep 1 Drowning
<b>2024</b> 3 cases (last reviewed case: April 2024)	1 Homicide	1 Gunshot Victim    1 Motor Vehicle Collision

## Child Protective Services Data

### Children in Custody by Age



Age	#
Age 0-5	160
Age 6-12	113
Age 13-17	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>

### Number of Children Age 0-5 Substantiated or In Need of Services - Fiscal Year 2025

Case Decision	#
Child Protective Services Needed	770
Services Provided, CPS No Longer Needed	169
Neglect	107
Serious Neglect	5
Abuse	4
Dependency	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1057</b>

## Current Partnerships & Collaborations

Representation of Groups and Agencies in the Community Action Team (previously CFPPT)		
Alliance Health	NC Courts	Project 658
Atrium Health	Community Volunteers	Smart Start
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools	Juvenile Justice	Council for Children's Rights
Mecklenburg County Public Health Department	Safe Alliance	Jewish Family Services
Novant Health	Guardian Ad Litem	Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department
Pats Place	YFS Director	Teen Health Connection
Thompson Child and Family Focus	Youth and Family Services	Department of Social Services
Mecklenburg County Clinical Director	Mental Health America of Central Carolinas	Children, Family and Adult Services
Johnson C. Smith University	Care Ring	Community Support Services
NC Department of Public Safety	Mecklenburg County Commissioner	University of NC Charlotte



## Current Partnerships & Collaborations

### Community Action Team (Previously CFPPT) Recent Efforts:

- Child Abuse/Maltreatment Prevention Strategic Plan (paid collaboration with UNCC)
  - Working with both hospital systems to address the lack of effective protocols in their emergency rooms as it relates to potential cases of child abuse/neglect
- Marketing and Distribution of safe sleep related materials
  - Purchased Pack 'n Plays that supported families in local shelters
- Purchased gun locks and engaged in community events for distribution



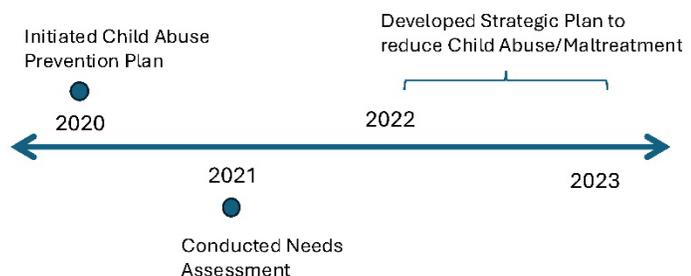
## Child Abuse/Maltreatment Prevention Strategic Plan

### Background:

- Created in partnership with UNCC
- Community wide strategic plan to align efforts, secure funding, and develop programs for safer families and thriving children

### Priority Areas for Prevention

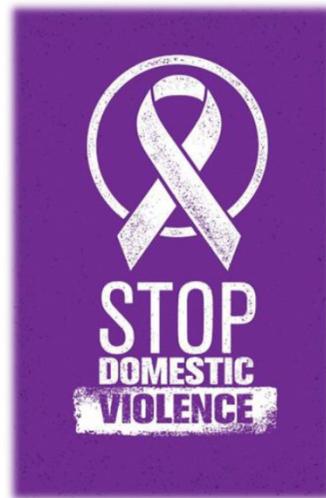
- Positive Parenting
- Parental Mental Health
- Parental Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence





## Domestic Violence Prevention

- Adult Intimate Partner Violence Counseling and Clinical Services
- Child and Teen Intimate Partner Violence Counseling and Clinical Services
- Housing for Good (H4G)
- Supervised Visitation Safe Exchange Center (SVSE)
- New Options for Violent Actions (NOVA)



## A Day in the Life – Promoting Firearm Safety

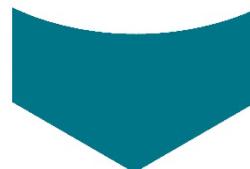


Photo Source: [NC.S.A.F.E.](#)



## Next Steps

- Disseminate and operationalize action items from the Child Abuse Prevention Plan
- Collect robust data across agencies for thorough and effect case reviews to identify key recommendations for prevention and interventions
- Collaborate with partnering agencies and organizations to maximize collective impact in priority areas to reduce child abuse/prevention and child fatalities



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**Comments**

Commissioner Griffin said the issue was critically important. He said the child mortality rate between ages 0-17 for 2023 was 59.1 for Mecklenburg County and 155 for all child deaths. He said 9 of those were DSS involved families, so it seemed intervention was working. He asked what the difference in interpretation those numbers were, between 59.1 and 155. *Health and Human Services Director Dr. Raynard Washington said 59.1 was the rate and 155 was the number.*

Commissioner Griffin asked what the gaps and deficiencies were. *Rosaria Trichilo, Assistant Public Health Director in Case Management, said part of the review process involved discussion, with respect to the events of the death, to determine if there were certain protocols or processes within their different partnering agencies that were present or involved that could have been improved upon.*

Commissioner Powell asked how DSS was notified of the child's injuries in the situation of a vehicular accident. Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said it would vary depending on the situation. *Denise Steele-Campbell, YFS Division Director, said it was not necessarily DSS involvement if it was just a motor vehicle accident but if someone already involved with DSS was in a motor vehicle accident, there would be notification. She said they would not get a call for every motor vehicle accident involving a child but if the child was in the hospital and their parents were not meeting their needs, the hospital would contact DSS. She said their highest reporter sources were the police and the hospital.*

Commissioner Altman said she was thankful for the presentation and thanked Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell for her service.

Commissioner Leake said the most valuable people they had were their children. She said it was upsetting to encounter children who were abused or neglected. She said there were more children being killed than ever before and advised the people to heed caution with who they allowed their children to be around.

Commissioner Dunlap thanked Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell for the presentation and said he would like to know more about the 399 kids they had in custody. He requested a breakdown of the 56% of African American children deaths and to know how many of those were by firearms. He said he would like to review the recommendations again. He said the focus should be on preventing those 200+ deaths that occurred. He said the staff involved should be commended because it was one of the first times he looked at a chart and saw that Mecklenburg County was reflecting better data than the State. *Ms. Steele-Campbell said they had 399 children who were in the custody of the department, she said their goal for those children was for them to seek permanence. She said they always tried to work with families to reunify their children with their biological parents if it was within their best interest. She said they were very good at identifying if the parents were unable to meet the needs of their children or ensure their safety. She said if they could not place the children with their biological parents, they would then identify kin of the child for placement. She said the 399 number represented the total number of children who were involved with DSS due to various maltreatment issues. She said their goal was to reunify them as quickly as possible with a family member, custodian, guardian, or permanent plan of adoption. She said the amount they had in custody was the lowest they had had in years. She said they had had as many as 1000 children in their custody. Ms. Rosie Trichilo said, with regards to the 56% of African American child deaths, as part of the legislation that became effective July 1, 2025, their team would be presenting to the Board and be able to do further analytical breakdowns of their data in the following year.*

Commissioner Meier asked if the 770 child protective services needed pertained to foster care. She asked how that number related to the 399. *Ms. Steele-Campbell said, with every*

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*investigation they were involved in, a case decision would be made at the end of the investigation. She said the graph showed a breakdown of case decisions and showed that, of the investigations they pursued, 770 were determined they could not close the case and additional child protective service were needed. She said they had not removed the child from the home, but they found the family was in need of additional services.*

Chair Jerrell said there were 208 preventable deaths, and it made him think of the loss of human resources and human capital. He said he wanted staff to understand, when the Board was lifting them up and calling them out on their good work, it was genuine. He said they were helping people and meeting them at their worst.

Chair Jerrell said he was constantly concerned for the staff whose work was done in the human services space and the mental load they took on as well as providing mental health support for them as well. He thanked the staff for their work and Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell for her presentation.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said they should be looking for ways to share out from their committees.

**1:30PM – 2:15PM Ad-Hoc Minority Business Global Growth Opportunity**

Board Priority Alignment: Economic Development

Commissioner Yvette Townsend-Ingram, At-Large, gave the presentation.

*Description: Minority-owned businesses are key drivers of innovation, job creation, and inclusive economic growth, especially when connected to global markets. Expanding access to opportunities empowers these enterprises to scale, diversify, and build generational wealth. Supporting minority businesses in global arenas strengthens economic resilience and fosters a more equitable future*



Equitable Lens of Global Trade  
through the African-Caribbean  
Diaspora

Commissioner Yvette Townsend-Ingram, At-Large  
Mecklenburg County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Fall Retreat  
October 27-28, 2025

## Objectives

- Present information to dispel myths about the image, civil development and profitability of countries on the continent of Africa.
- Present data for support of a marketing and communication model for Mecklenburg County small minority-owned businesses that aligns with the most prevalent and profitable services and commodities on the continent of Africa.
- Form relationships with international trade organizations that will assist Mecklenburg County Small Businesses compete in the emerging African Global Trade Diaspora.

## Objectives Continued

- Evaluate and reform data collection of Small Minority-Owned Businesses in Mecklenburg County.
- Align the county's priorities of workforce development and economic development with global trade opportunities.
- Explore the creation of an ad-hoc committee for global trade and economic development for Small Minority-Owned businesses with a focus on the continent of Africa.

## Important Points or Data

### **IMPORTANT FACT TO REMEMBER—TAXES ARE HOW WE PAY FOR SERVICES! TAXES ARE USED TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF INEQUALITY!**

- Because of quality workforce and overall economy, North Carolina named as number one state to do business in 2025 for the third time.
- NC is number one state to do business in 2025 because
  - Tax rate for businesses is 2.25% as of 2025
  - Projected 0% tax rate for businesses in 2030
  - Lowest utility and water rates in the nation



## Important Points or Data

### Best Ranked/Tiered Counties in NC to do Business

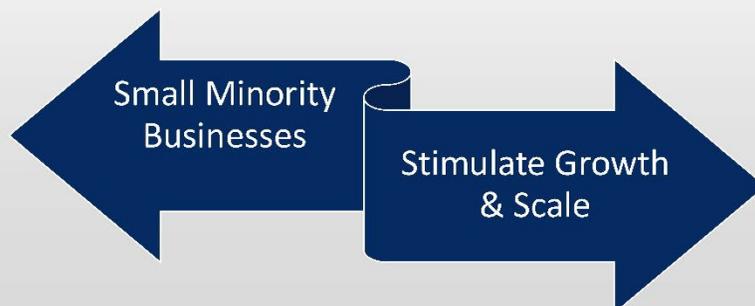
- ❖ **Wake County** has major corporate investors, and is where the capital city of NC, Raleigh is located. The Raleigh/Durham area, has the highest average household income which stimulates the overall economy.
- ❖ **Chatham County** is known as having the best “strategic growth for negotiation.”
- ❖ **Nash County** is known as a tier one county for manufacturing, food production, and logistics, and also offering the best business incentives.
- ❖ **Mecklenburg County** is known as the second largest banking capital in the country and is where Charlotte, the 14 fastest growing city in the country. It is home to Charlotte-Dougllass International Airport which is the largest driver of revenue.

**These benefits are only enjoyed by large corporations, not small businesses.**

**IMPORTANT FACT TO REMEMBER—TAXES ARE HOW WE PAY FOR SERVICES! TAXES ARE USED TO MITIGATE INEQUALITY!**

## New Incentives for Small Business Growth

In this current economic environment that is unduly influenced by politics, it's easier for minority businesses to regress, lose sales, market share, or even go out of business. Global Trade opportunities can slow or reduce the impact of varying threats.



## Data – Why do we need Global Trade?

### JOB CREATION

- ❑ In North Carolina, **1.3M jobs** were supported by trade, representing **20%** of all jobs in the state.<sup>1,2</sup>
- ❑ In 2023, **11K companies** exported goods from North Carolina, of which **87%** were **small and medium-sized enterprises**.
- ❑ In 2022, more than **300M people** were employed by affiliates of companies at least 50% foreign-owned.<sup>3,4</sup>

### EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

From 2023-2024, **24,468 international students** were enrolled in North Carolina colleges and universities, contributing **\$914 million** to the North Carolina economy.<sup>10</sup>

## Other Benefits of Global Trade on Small Businesses



## Data – Why does NC need Global Trade?

### EXPORTS AND GROWTH

#### WHO TRADES WITH NC?

North Carolina exported \$72 billion in goods and services to foreign markets in 2023. <sup>1, 5</sup>

- ✓ **Canada (\$10.0 billion)**
- ✓ **China (\$7.2 billion)**
- ✓ **Mexico (\$6.8 billion)**
- ✓ **Ireland (\$4.1 billion)**
- ✓ **United Kingdom (\$3.7 billion)**

**Mecklenburg County currently has trade contracts 39 different countries, but only 2 South African countries.**

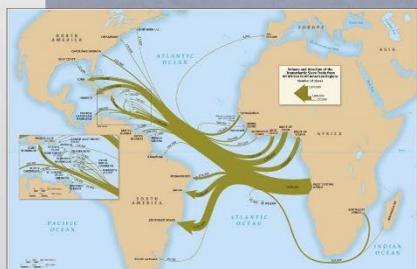
Shippi Fine Paper North America	South Africa	Mecklenburg	4-9	Wholesale Trade
Safmarine Inc.	South Africa	Mecklenburg	4-9	Transportation and Warehousing

## What Does Diaspora Mean?

**Diaspora = Disperse a group of people.**

**Diaspora = A movement of a people away from their ancestral territory.**

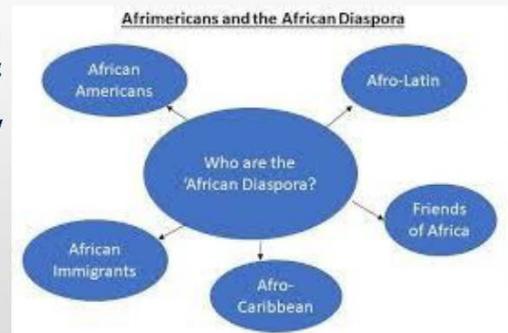
**Diaspora = A diaspora maintains emotional, cultural, or even political ties to the country of origin. This is often done through language, traditions, and active support for homeland affairs.**



## African-Caribbean Diaspora

### African-Caribbean Diaspora

The worldwide dispersal of people of African descent, historically linked to forced migration from the transatlantic slave trade, but also including voluntary migrations. It is important because these communities have created a global network with shared heritage, contributing significantly to the cultural, economic, and political development of both their new homelands and Africa through remittances, skill transfer, and advocacy



## Myths about African Countries & Trade

One of the systemic barriers to realizing the vast global trade opportunities of African Countries are myths that persist about the continent due to a lack of education on multiple levels of business.

1. Many don't understand that Africa itself is not a country, but a continent composed of 54 different countries.
2. All countries on the continent of Africa are impoverished, requires aid, and has no infrastructure to support varying business models.
3. Africa can only provide raw materials and cannot manufacture products or provide progressive services that involve technology.
4. US companies can't compete with cheaper Chinese and Indian goods.
5. Many are unaware of The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA): Since its enactment in 2000, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been at the core of U.S. economic policy and commercial engagement with Africa. AGOA provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products.



## Why Mecklenburg County should pursue African Trade

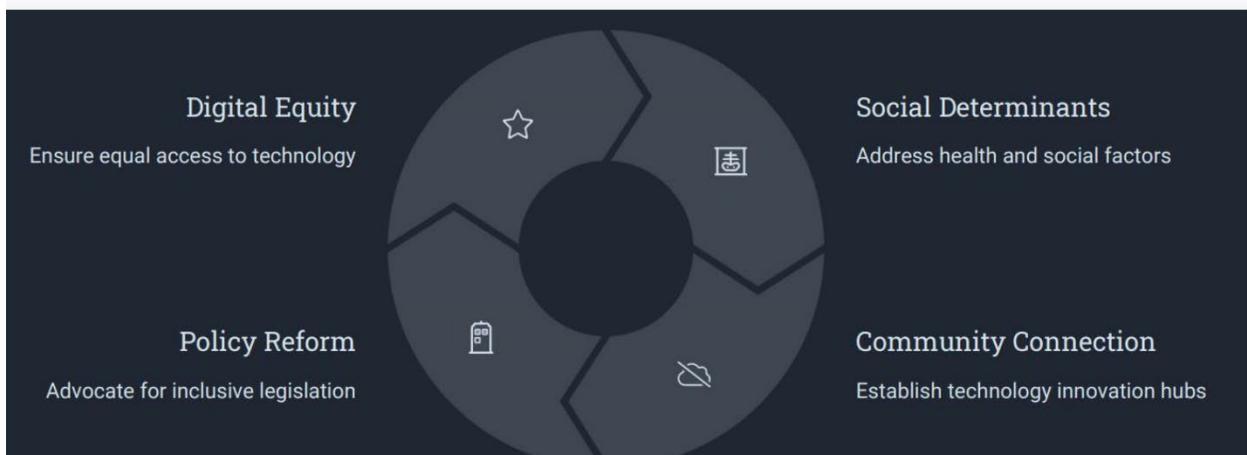
- ✓ North Carolina has seen an **850% increase** in its African immigrant population from 20K residents in 2000 to 190K residents in 2023.
- ✓ There are over **1,200 African-owned businesses in North Carolina**, contributing to the state's economy.
- ✓ North Carolina hosts **25 African cultural festivals, 450 African cuisine restaurants, and has 3,200 African students in its universities**, showcasing a strong cultural impact.
- ✓ The **Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)** has contributed to a **13% growth** in trade volume between Africa and the U.S. from 2020 to 2023, particularly in agriculture, textiles, and energy sectors.
- ✓ The future of U.S.-Africa trade relations will focus on sectors like **technology, green energy, and materials**, presenting promising opportunities for both regions between 2024 and 2034.

## NC Cities with Highest African Immigrant Population

CITY	POPULATION
Charlotte	45 K
Raleigh	32 K
Durham	27 K
Greensboro	15 K
Winston Salem	12 K
Fayetteville	11 K

## Why Mecklenburg County should pursue African Trade

### A Platform for Navigating Systemic Barriers



- 
1. Establish County Ad Hoc Advisory Committee
  2. Establish Civil Society Organization (CSO) Community
  3. Launch Collaborative Innovation Initiatives with Call to Action

### Implementation Roadmap & Next Steps



## Global Africa Summit 2025

October 14-15, 2025

The summit took place just ahead of the IMF/World Bank fall meeting from Oct. 17-19, 2025.

GAS DC 2025, hosted at The Catholic University of America, is the premier trade and investment summit bridging Africa and its global diaspora. This transformational event unites investors, visionaries, policymakers, and changemakers to explore game-changing opportunities in Agribusiness, Renewable Energy, Healthcare, Scientific Research, Innovation, Real Estate, Tourism, and Youth Entrepreneurship.

Through cutting-edge panels, exclusive networking experiences, and high-level investment matchmaking, attendees will connect with key decision-makers shaping the future of cross-continental collaboration.

Be part of a movement that empowers economic transformation and global partnerships. Don't miss your chance to lead, invest, and innovate at one of the most influential gatherings of the year.



### GAS – Global Africa Summit

October 14-15, 2025

Catholic University  
Washington, DC

### Pictures



Chair Jerrell asked if she was suggesting an Ad-Hoc committee or a standing committee. Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said she was unsure.

Commissioner Griffin asked if Commissioner Townsend-Ingram was referring to Mecklenburg County proper or Mecklenburg County government doing business with 39 different countries.

Commissioner Griffin said they were still waiting on a policy at some point. He said some of it may or may not be flushed out, but he would hope they would have one that gave some direction to the staff, but they did not presently have one at the time. *Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said Wake County was doing it and they could look at them as a model. She said they could have small businesses specifically target that population of people.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if it was Wake County government or Wake County doing it. *Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said it was a public-private partnership, so they were both involved.*

Commissioner Meier said global trade was federal and asked if there were regulations they had to maneuver. *County Attorney Wade said he was not familiar with the topic. County Manager*

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*Bryant said he was looking for clear direction from the Board relative to Commissioner Townsend-Ingram's interest in pursuing the mentioned path. He said they had to educate themselves on the topic. He said he needed Board consensus before committing time and resources to the topic.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said workforce development and education/research studies were the only two areas she was interested in stepping into and where she saw the most interest.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for further information regarding tariffs. *Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said, in terms of the AGORA, it was connected to the tariff portion. She said some countries were excluded from certain tariffs but because they did not do a whole lot of business, the tariffs were excluded. She said that would be something further down the road.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she did not understand the connection to workforce development. *Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said she was thinking they could train young people on what was needed to do business with those global corporations that were already there as well as those they could partner with that were in Africa.*

Commissioner Powell said she felt they needed a lot more information pertaining to what they could do and what the County's role would be. She said they needed to determine if it was the proper space for the Regional Business Alliance.

Commissioner Altman said she felt concerned with the lack of ties and she wanted to be sure they were pursuing economic opportunities. She said she was interested in getting recommendations from Deputy County Manager Johnson. She said she was interested in ensuring no stone was left unturned regarding business in Mecklenburg County. *County Manager Bryant said he needed clear directions from the Board.*

Commissioner Dunlap said he was not certain it was something the Board should be pursuing from a budgeting standpoint. He said he did not feel it was in the area of the County and, in terms of making it a Board function, one of the standing committees, it seemed most of the Board members were committed to other areas of interest.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said she did not see small businesses being incentivized or helped and she saw possibilities within Africa.

Commissioner Altman said she recalled they were undertaking Economic Development to come up with additional criteria to ensure their TIG and BIP incentives were more accessible to smaller groups. She said they were looking at ways to broaden the work in Economic Development.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she felt proud with the work they were doing in the minority space, and they were doing great work. She said it could be good to do a presentation in Economic Development around the work they were doing. She said the BIPs and TIG's were usually set up around the larger corporations, but they had always been trying to push down whatever they could do towards small businesses.

Chair Jerrell said they were not even close to an ad-hoc committee, but it was great information and perspective but the disconnect could be determining what their role would be. He said there was a consensus they were working with small businesses. He asked if it was possible to look at immigrant small businesses and figure out how they could engage with that subset of the population. He said if they were already doing that, it would be a level of redundancy. He asked what it was they were not doing that Commissioner Townsend-Ingram believed they should be doing.

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Chair Jerrell said if Wake County government was doing it, he would be interested to see what it was. He said they could reach out and get more information. He said their role could be facilitation and to provide support for small businesses and the immigrant community. He requested she continue to educate the Board and continue to have the conversation.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said there were no African countries with a hub. She said they had a large group of people but did not have a connection.

Chair Jerrell said she should return with more information and a fuller request to work with.

**Program Review/Budget Deep-Dive Assessment Update** *(This item was moved to a B/PP meeting)*

**The Commissioners were given three minutes each to give remarks about the retreat.**

**County Manager Bryant provided a status update regarding SNAP benefits**

County Manager Bryant provided the following information:

- US Department of Agriculture has directed the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to suspend the issuance of November 2025 SNAP benefits in North Carolina as Food and Nutrition Services due to the ongoing federal government shutdown.
- Per the USDA memorandum, which is dated October 24th, 2025, the suspension of benefits does not affect the ongoing determination of eligibility of applicant households.
  - o All counties are expected to continue normal operations for application intake and processing in accordance with federal and state policy.
  - o Individuals should still apply for those benefits with respect of what is looming on November 1st.
- To inform the public, a press release was issued on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, direct text messages to these participants were sent, and social media and traditional media outreach has been performed
- SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded.
- States are not permitted to issue benefits using state funds with the expectation of federal reimbursement.
- The County is currently engaging with our community partners, starting yesterday
- Notched up our engagement with our community partners and food resource organizations to mobilize a plan to help get food in the hands of families with acknowledgement that county doesn't have the resources to make up for the SNAP benefit Freeze
- North Carolina DHHS is meeting with our directors, our DSS directors,
  - o Yolanda Griffin will be attending that meeting tomorrow and possibly Doctor Campbell as well.
  - o They're participating in those meetings to discuss strategies and also hear from our Pier County directors about how they're responding to what is going on.
- Our response will factor with how the state is going to respond to what has happened at the federal level as well.
- Actions:
  - o At a minimum, we will expand our food pantry capacity with our partners
  - o The reality is they will not have enough food to serve the 63,000 Mecklenburg County households that are receiving SNAP benefits.
    - There's a total of 138,460 participants that make up that

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- The cost to provide a 7-day supply of food boxes would be \$2.8 million per week
- As of September 2025, the monthly value of SNAP benefits is \$24 million
- No county in the state is able to supplement the funding associated with this benefit.
  - o Breaks down to \$175 per participant.

County Manager Bryant said they anticipated receiving additional information and recommendations from their discussions by the following Friday. He said their efforts were not to supplant but to try to minimize the impact, the blow that was associated with it. He said if a budget was in place by November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, then they were in a good place but if not, they were prepared to have a plan of action.

### Comments

Chair Jerrell said there was a meeting the following day so they would have more information at that point. He said the Manager and himself would stay in communication and he would share that information with the Board.

Chair Jerrell said it was costly to try to supplant that level of funding and there was no reimbursement. He said 63,000 households were affected and the Board was also coordinating with partners.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for clarification regarding some of the possible things the Manager was considering when they referred to plans or what their actions could be. County Manager Bryant said, what he was confident sharing was, they were planning on partnering with their food pantries, but they lacked sufficient supply. He said he was reluctant to share much else at that point.

Commissioner Griffin said he hoped once County Manager Bryant got the information from the Chair on October 31<sup>st</sup>, he would provide the information to the public as quickly and clearly as possible. *County Manager Bryant said he completely agreed and there had been discussions to ensure clear communication with the public.*

Commissioner Powell asked County Manager Bryant to repeat what the weekly costs to provide 7 days' worth of meal boxes would be. *County Manager Bryant said it was \$2.8 million per week.*

### **3:00PM – 3:05PM Closing Remarks**

County Manager Bryant gave closing remarks.

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to adjourn at 3:34 PM.

  
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Kristine M. Smith, Clerk to the Board

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Mark Jerrell, Chair