MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
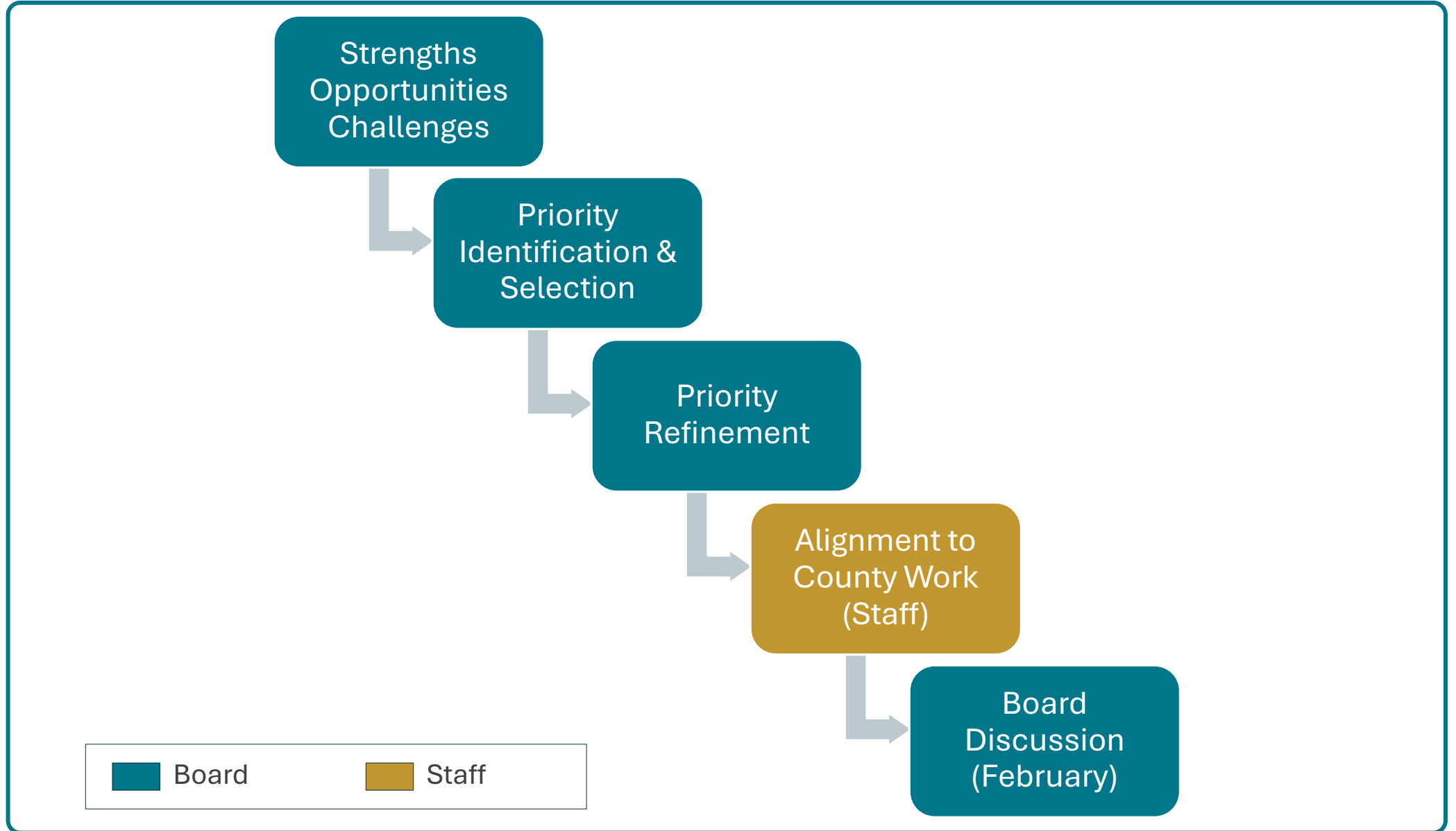
FY2026-2027 Priorities

Presented by the Office of Strategy & Innovation
February 25, 2025

Strengths
Opportunities
Challenges

Priority
Identification &
Selection

Priority
Refinement

Alignment to
County Work
(Staff)

Board
Discussion
(February)

Board   Staff

FY2026-2027 Board Budget Priorities

Economic Development: Stimulate business vitality, expand employment opportunities, grow property tax base, and enhance quality of life in communities and neighborhoods

Education: Promote healthy early childhood development and education from ages birth to five while aligning investments to improve college and career readiness outcomes for all students

Environmental Stewardship: Preserve and protect the County's environmental resources

Health Equity and Wellness: Improve access to physical and behavioral healthcare – and promote healthy behaviors – for all County residents

Services for Seniors: Expand and enhance services for seniors to improve quality of life and opportunities to age in place

Workforce Development: Champion initiatives to better understand the workforce needs of the community and implement solutions to close jobs-skills gaps, address job access, and improve economic mobility

Reducing Racial Disparities:
Ensure that investments by the County focus on closing racial and ethnic gaps so that race does not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all

A Quick Note about Indicators

Two types of indicators to track and collect data on for reporting to leadership and the public

Community Indicators (Non-Direct County Accountability)	Organizational Indicators (Direct County Accountability)
Indicator Examples: • Income/Wages Attained • Education Status • Housing Supply • Health Outcomes **Report Examples:** • OSI – Community Pulse Report • Finance – Economic Update	**Indicator Examples:** • Number of Individuals served • Percent of cases processed on time • Percent of individuals placed in jobs **Report Examples:** • OSI – Annual Performance Report • OSI – Prior Board priority presentations • Department Management Monthly Reports Provided to BOCC • Internal list of department and service level indicators (~1,700 tracked via Performance Mgmt. System)

A Quick Note about Indicators

Two types of indicators to track and collect data on for reporting to leadership and the public

Generally, the measures of success aligned with Board Priorities will be **Organizational Indicators**, since this is what the County has most direct control over.

Where applicable, performance reporting will also include broader Community Indicators for context.

Organizational Indicators (Direct County Accountability)

Indicator Examples:
- Number of Individuals served
- Percent of cases processed on time
- Percent of individuals placed in jobs

Report Examples:
- OSI – Annual Performance Report
- OSI – Prior Board priority presentations
- Department Management Monthly Reports Provided to BOCC
- Internal list of department and service level indicators (~1,700 tracked via Performance Mgmt. System)

Economic Development

Stimulate business vitality, expand employment opportunities, grow property tax base, and enhance quality of life in communities and neighborhoods

At the Board Retreat, staff heard the Board discuss:

- Exploring the RISING framework: **R**elieving **I**nequality, **S**ecuring **I**nvestments, **N**urturing **G**rowth

- Intentional investment in underinvested areas

- Better understanding the return on investment

- Working with smaller partners and businesses than the County is used to

- Improving the ability to track MWSBE investments

- Review MWSBE Policy and Procedures

	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success

County Goals	Invest in New and Existing Business Growth	Business Investment Grants
		   • Number of Jobs Created
		   • New Taxable Investments (Dollars)

	Invest in Small Business & Entrepreneurial Growth	Small Business Consultation & Coaching
		   • Number of Customers Served
		
		Business Development Cohort Programs
		   • Number of Participants (Annual and Cumulative)
		
		Meck Lending
		   • Number of Approved Loans (Cumulative)
		   • Total Value of Approved Loans (Cumulative)
		   • Demographic Representation
		      • Minority-owned
		      • Women-owned
		      • Veteran-owned

	Invest in Strong Communities & Neighborhoods	Measures To Be Determined

	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
County Goals	Enhance Opportunities for Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprises (MWSBE)	Total Actionable Spend: Prime Contractors • Total Actionable Spend Paid (Annual) • MWSBE Certified Total Spend Paid (Dollars) • MWSBE Certified Spend Paid (Percentage) MWBE Prime Contractors: Competitively Bid Paid to Date (Minority-owned and Women-owned) • Total Number of Firms • Total Paid to Date • Percent Paid to Date (Annual and Cumulative) MWBE Subcontractors: Competitively Bid Paid to Date (Minority-owned and Women-owned) • Total Number of Firms • Total Paid to Date • Percent Paid to Date (Annual and Cumulative)

Best Practices for Reducing Racial Disparities

- **Expanding investment opportunities for MWSBEs** and individuals of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds **helps reduce racial wealth gaps** and fosters economic growth in underserved communities.

- **Continued support of MWSBEs** through policy incentives, technical assistance, and networking opportunities that strengthen local economies and create jobs in historically marginalized communities.

- **Ensure equitable investment** in affordable housing and commercial development in communities of color, **which promotes long-term economic stability and prosperity**.

Education

Promote healthy early childhood development and education from ages birth to five while aligning investments to improve college and career readiness outcomes for all students

At the Board Retreat, staff heard the Board discuss:

- Education as a foundational key to economic mobility.

- MECK Pre-K and ensuring that students start kindergarten ready

- Access to childcare

- The importance of considering all ages, Prenatal-to-5, K-12, CPCC

- Partnering to address disparities in education

	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
County Goals	Increase service connectivity and care coordination for expectant mothers and families with young children (CFAS 1.1)	• Operationalize prenatal-to-three implementation plan and service index (CFAS 1.1.A) • Develop centralized prenatal-to-three website and provide access to relevant prenatal-to-three data (CFAS 1.1.B) • Enhance care coordination across internal & external programs (CFAS 1.1.C) • This is a new initiative. The County will use year one to gather baseline data and establish tracking metrics to evaluate the initiative's effectiveness.
	Continue to improve Meck Pre-K classroom & instructional quality and enhance supportive services (CFAS 1.2)	• Percent of students reaching standard educational, physical, and social-emotional benchmarks (Targets: Math = 75%, all other domains = 80%) • Percent of Meck Pre-K Seats filled (Target = 99%) • Number of fully staffed Meck Pre-K classrooms • Number of students enrolled in Meck Pre-K
	Increase access to childcare for Mecklenburg county families (CFAS 1.2)	• Average number of children utilizing a subsidy voucher each month • Number of children waiting to be processed for childcare subsidy
Partner Goals	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) achieves its Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) Goals as per the district's 2024-2029 Goals and Guardrails*	• Goal 1: Increase the percent of K-2 students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS (Target = 83% by June 2027) • Goal 2: Increase the percent of students scoring CCR (college and career ready) on reading end of grade assessments in grades 3-8 (Target = 43% by June 2027) • Goal 3: Increase the percent of students scoring CCR (college and career ready) on Math I assessments. (Target = 47% by June 2027) • Goal 4: Increase the percent of rising 12th grade students on track to graduate from high school enrolled, enlisted or employed. (Target = 80% by June 2027)

*Goals and annual targets provided by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Best Practices for Reducing Racial Disparities

- **Influence the incorporation of diverse perspectives and histories in education** to foster inclusion, engagement, and academic success for students of all racial backgrounds.

- **Track school discipline data** and understand policies that reduce the school-to-prison pipeline and ensure fair treatment for all students.

- **Encourage recruiting and retaining educators from diverse backgrounds**, provide students with role models, and improve cultural understanding in the classroom.

- **Continued support of expanded access and equal opportunities** to enroll in AP courses, gifted programs, and college readiness initiatives that help bridge achievement gaps and increase higher education access.

Environmental Stewardship

Preserve and protect the County's environmental resources

At the Board Retreat, staff heard the Board discuss:

- Land Acquisition and the expansion of Green Space / Greenways / Parks / Preserves

- Available land is quickly disappearing

- The County must continue to preserve what land we have for future generations

- Clean water and air are foundational to a high quality of life

- Commitment to protecting natural resources

- Importance of farmland preservation

	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
County Goals	Ecosystem Management	• Number of creek miles restored each year (Target = Annual CIP goal) • Number of acres treated for invasive species (Target = 750 acres/year) • Number of acres treated via prescribed burns (Target = 500 acres/year)
	Enhance Parkland and Open Space in Mecklenburg County	• Maintain a rate of 19 acres per 1,000 residents • Number of new greenway miles
	Mitigate Flood Risk in Mecklenburg County	• Annual reduction in flood points
	Farmland Preservation and Agricultural Enhancement	• Number of acres in Voluntary Agriculture District (VAD)
	Reduce Mecklenburg County Government's Carbon Footprint	• Total tons of Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs) reduced • Number of Electric Vehicles planned for purchase • Number of Electric Vehicles (EVs) purchased • Energy Use Per Square Foot in County Facilities
	Minimize Waste in Mecklenburg County	• Total Landfill Tonnage • Total Recycling Tonnage • Total Yard Waste Tonnage • Waste Diversion Rate (Target = 35%)

Best Practices for Reducing Racial Disparities

- **Address environmental disparities by influencing regulations that prevent industrial pollution in marginalized communities** that ensure all people have access to clean air and safe drinking water.

- **Prioritize historically underserved communities in disaster preparedness and climate adaptation strategies** that help reduce the disproportionate impact of extreme weather events on systemically undervalued communities.

- **Increase the representation of people from all demographics in environmental decision-making processes** to ensure that policies reflect the needs of all communities.

- **Expand programs in renewable energy and conservation sectors for communities of color** fosters economic empowerment and diversifies the environmental movement.

- **Support the development of grassroots environmental organizations in diverse communities** that promote locally driven solutions to pollution, conservation, and sustainable development challenges.

Health Equity and Wellness

Improve access to physical and behavioral healthcare – and promote healthy behaviors – for all County residents

At the Board Retreat, staff heard the Board discuss:

- Improving access to mental health care – including substance abuse and addiction – for both adults and youth

- Improving access to health care for the uninsured and underinsured – cradle to grave

- Addressing the rise in food insecurity

- The importance of behavioral health

- Partnering with MEDIC to ensure MEDIC is staffed and aligned with recent growth

	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
County Goals	Increase Youth and Family Services and Services for Adults access to behavioral health services (CFAS 4.1.A)	• Number of clinical consultative referrals received • Number of qualified providers identified
	Improve the safety and well-being of residents impacted by intimate partner violence and/or substance use (CSS 1.1)	• Domestic Violence Knowledge Improvement Rate • Total number of new intakes in Domestic Violence Services (Adult and Children) • Total number of individuals served at all Substance Use locations (shelters and jails) • Percent of customers connected to community resource after treatment (Target = 98%)
	Develop understanding of veteran's needs and barriers to entry in the community to enhance services and improve outcomes (CSS 3.1.B)	• Refine and implement individual assessment capabilities to meet the needs of veterans and their families. • Lead community engagement that maximizes collective impact and utilizes shared data to inform efforts to improve outcomes.
	In partnership with veteran's organizations, lead suicide prevention efforts that empower post-traumatic growth in veterans and their families (CSS 3.2.B)	• Percent of participants completing veteran-focused suicide prevention training classes

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Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
Enhance the community's capacity to provide primary care to uninsured and underinsured individuals and families (HLT 1.2.C)	• Number of people served with primary care services by Access to Care partners • Percent of hypertension patients at Access to Care partners with blood pressure ≤ 140/90 (Target = 80%)
Increase childhood immunization rates for 2-year-olds and school age children (HLT 1.4)	• Number of school children out of compliance with vaccine requirements • Percent of children served by the Health Department who are up to date by 24 months of age with the recommended vaccination (Target = 80%)
Enhance community access to HIV testing and programs	• Percent of newly diagnosed HIV positive clients linked to care within 6 days • Number of new PrEP enrollments for uninsured & underinsured persons who are at high risk of acquiring HIV • Number of PrEP encounters occurring throughout the year • Number of HIV tests administered (community + clinic)
Enhance community access to family planning and reproductive health services	• Number of Family Planning visits for reproductive health • Number of unique patients receiving Family Planning Services

County Goals

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	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
County Goals	Offer routine and comprehensive dental care for children who are uninsured or underinsured (MeckDental Program)	• Percent of children seen in the dental clinic who have completed treatment plans (Target = 88%)
	Continue to offer services to improve health and behavioral outcomes for children birth to three	• Percent of children who have gains in social and emotional skills while enrolled in Child Development Service Agency (CDSA) program for at least 6 months (Target = 70%) • Number of families with children birth to three who receive trauma informed mental health services via the CDSA program expansion (Target = 60) • Percent of children served via the CDSA program expansion who improve on formal measures of traumatic response and behavior (Target = 85%)
	Enhance programming, systems and education initiatives that create healthy environments in food security (HLT 1.2.B)	• Number of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) household double bucks transactions at farmers markets • Number of food insecure clients receiving an additional serving of fruits and vegetables per day

Best Practices for Reducing Racial Disparities

- **Ensuring affordable and culturally competent health and wellness services in underserved communities helps mitigate racial disparities** in disease prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment outcomes.

- **Addressing the social determinants of health helps to tackle the root causes of racial health disparities** and promotes overall well-being.

- **Influence the recruitment and training of more healthcare professionals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds**, which fosters trust and improves patient-provider communication, leading to better health outcomes.

- **Influence the implementation of standardized protocols within the county that eliminate racial disparities in chronically disproportionate outcomes** like pain management, fetal and maternal health, and chronic disease care across the communities where the presence of disease is most acute.

- **Support local health programs, wellness centers, and mental health resources** tailored to the unique needs of our communities that improve engagement and access to care.

Services for Seniors

Expand and enhance services for seniors to improve quality of life and opportunities to age in place

At the Board Retreat, staff heard the Board discuss:

- The County's need to be prepared for the "Silver Tsunami" as the number of seniors in Mecklenburg County is increasing

- The importance of strengthening infrastructure for seniors:

  - Housing (critical home repair, opportunities to age in place, access to housing)

  - Health / Wellness (food insecurity, access to medical care, mental health)

  - Quality of Life (transportation, activities, accessible parks, sidewalks)

  - Adult Day Care / In-Home Aid

	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
County Goals	Facilitate educational sessions and workshops to address social determinants of health and improve the quality of life for seniors (CFAS 2.1.B)	• Number of community members aged 50-65 engaged as part of educational sessions and workshops • Community awareness of age-friendly Mecklenburg initiative • Community awareness of senior nutrition programming
	Expand nutrition support services for seniors at risk of food insecurity to increase reliable access to healthy food (CFAS 2.2)	• Percent of homebound participants reporting program helps them live independently (Target = 93%) • Number of meals served through the senior nutrition programs • Number of customers served through homebound meal delivery program, congregate meal program, and the mobile market program
	Improve County transportation services to enhance reliable and efficient service delivery (CFAS 2.3)	• Number of trips provided by Mecklenburg Transportation Services • Number of Bus Passes (total) • Number of trips scheduled online
	Collaborate with appropriate vendor to maintain housing for seniors experiencing homelessness (CSS 2.2.A)	• Percent of households stably housed at Forest Point Place
	Provide Critical Home Repair services for seniors in Mecklenburg County	• Planned work includes a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for Critical Home Repair vendors for FY2026 through FY2030 • Maintain the rate of Critical Home Repairs provided to senior residents (Target: 70%)

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Best Practices for Reducing Racial Disparities

- **Providing culturally aware and competent services ensures that seniors from diverse backgrounds receive respectful and effective care** that aligns with their values and needs.

- **Reducing racial disparities enhances access to affordable senior housing and high-quality assisted living arrangements** that support all aging individuals in safe and dignified living conditions.

- **Community health programs in underserved areas help address chronic disease management, preventative care, and medical treatment for seniors** that is often difficult to access.

- **Creating senior-specific programs** that address language barriers, transportation challenges, and digital literacy gaps **ensures that all older adults can access essential services, regardless of their background or lived experiences**.

- **Collecting and analyzing data on racial disparities in aging services will help support efforts to design equitable solutions that improve the quality of life for all seniors**, including those in historically marginalized communities.

Workforce Development

Champion initiatives to better understand the workforce needs of the community and implement solutions to close jobs-skills gaps, address job access, and improve economic mobility

At the Board Retreat, staff heard the Board discuss:

- Focusing on getting individuals medium to high paying jobs, rather than the $18 - $20 jobs that individuals currently get

- Need to anticipate potential job opportunities and prepare our residents for the opportunity

- That workforce development serves the population of residents that have multiple barriers to employment

- An interest in the County becoming a leader around a strategy in talent pipelining.

- The possibility of hiring an economic development/mobility manager.

- How the County can support CMS, CPCC, and other organizations in creating and bolstering training and certification programs

- Access to internships

- Resident upward mobility

	Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
County Goals	Assist residents in improving their job skills, employment prospects, and economic stability (DCR 1.2)	• Number of workforce development participants receiving employment placement services (Target = 2,000 participants) • Employment services participants placed into employment (Target = 80%) • Percent of participants placed in employment who retain employment for 6+ months (Target: 75%) • Average hourly wage of upskilled participants placed in employment (Target: $21)
Partner Goals	Charlotte Works will build and expand career pathways and address hiring barriers with Charlotte-Mecklenburg employers	• Charlotte Works goals and measures to be determined in March 2025 in partnership with the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council (CELC) • Charlotte Works will build and expand career pathways by increasing the number of sector partnerships with leading industries in Charlotte-Mecklenburg • Charlotte Works will partner with businesses receiving incentives from County Economic Development for talent sourcing to provide access to jobs to all residents
	Continue MEDIC's hiring pathway programs for EMTs and Paramedics to ensure staffing stability and promote diversity in MEDIC's hiring process	• MEDIC will maintain annual staffing needs through continued engagement with EMT and Paramedic pathway programs

Best Practices for Reducing Racial Disparities

- **Expanding workforce development programs in underserved communities ensures that individuals** from all racial backgrounds **have universal opportunities to gain skills and certifications that lead to living-wage or high-paying jobs.**

- **Workforce Development unlocks the potential of working with partners to influence fair hiring practices** and mitigate the impact of employment practices that disadvantage marginalized groups.

- **Provide leadership that prioritizes mentorship, apprenticeship, and career advancement programs** designed to bridge long-standing employment and wage gaps.

- **Use disaggregated workforce data to identify disparities in hiring, wages, and career advancement** to allow policymakers to develop strategies that foster measurable economic growth.

Reducing Racial Disparities

Ensure that investments by the County focus on closing racial and ethnic gaps so that race does not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all

At the Board Retreat, staff heard the Board discuss:

- Reducing racial disparities

- Promoting upward mobility are both cross-cutting priorities

- Integrating this across all focus areas as a cross-cutting factor

- The possibility of needing to segment data differently to measure progress

Goal	Key Milestones / Measure(s) of Success
Sustain RAMP Up Pilot Program for the formerly incarcerated individuals returning home to Mecklenburg County	This pilot provides income support as a supplement to their re-entry services. • Reduce the recidivism rate for program participants • Increasing employment and economic mobility options
Sustain GEAR Up Pilot Program for qualifying youth that age out of foster care in Mecklenburg County	This pilot provides income support to supplement their Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) services. • Increase the number of youth transitioning to self-sufficient housing or enrolling in a qualified education or workforce program. • Increase employment and economic mobility options. • Decrease the number of youth that experience homelessness in their first year of aging out of foster care or contact with the judicial system.
Implement the AIM Up Pilot Program	This pilot invests funds in a North Carolina 529 account on behalf of all Meck Pre-K children who meet the eligibility criteria and successfully complete the program year. • Track the number of Meck Pre-K participants who complete the academic program • Track the number of families that complete the financial literacy program and enroll in matching contributions
Align the FY2026-2028 Strategic Business Plans and the FY2026-2028 Equity Action Plan (EAP)	• Staff can provide the Board an update once complete

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Context for Reducing Racial Disparities

- **The Equity Action Plan for the County identifies all relevant actions across all departments and divisions that work to reduce the observable gaps and racial disparities** that impact our outcomes.

- **Data for measures will be disaggregated – as appropriate and as possible – to better understand the local societal factors that impact participation**. (District, Zip Code, Race, Age, Gender, Socio-Economic Status, etc.)

- **Potential changes at the Federal and State levels could mitigate the impact of these efforts** if the County isn't intentional in highlighting the universal approach to our work while also analyzing our outputs and outcomes for any disproportionalities and/or disparities. This type of analysis is a nationally recognized best practice.

Closing and Next Steps

- The items discussed today will form the basis for future reporting on the status of the Board's FY2026-2027 Priorities

- These items are also planned for incorporation into the County's FY2026-2028 Corporate Strategic Business Plan

MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

FY2026-2027 Priorities

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