



Women's Advisory Board FY26 Budget Priority Recommendations

Presented to the Mecklenburg
Board of County Commissioners

March 11, 2025

Key Priorities

Identified Based on Statistical Data and Community Feedback

Access to Healthcare and Childcare

Women Entrepreneurship

Accessible Housing and Transitional Shelters

Enhancing Education and Job Training Opportunities

Mental Health Resources



Access to Childcare and Healthcare

Findings

Childcare Access:

- **Working Parents:** An estimated 66% of children under six in NC live in households where all parents are employed, underscoring the critical need for accessible childcare. (childcarenc.org)
- **Cost of Care:** The average annual cost of center-based care for a preschooler consumes 40% of the median income for a single-parent family in NC, highlighting significant affordability challenges. (childcarenc.org)

Healthcare Access:

- **Primary Care Access in Mecklenburg County:** Approximately 15% of residents aged 19-64 lacked health insurance in 2020, limiting access to essential healthcare services. (<https://health.mecknc.gov/>)



Childcare and Healthcare Access

Recommendations

Increase	Increase Subsidized Child Care Funding by expanding existing child care subsidy program to assist more low-and middle-income families. Streamline eligibility requirements to reduce barriers.
Support	Offer grants or tax incentives for businesses that provide onsite childcare or child care stipends. Encourage public-private partnership to establish workplace-based childcare centers.
Consider	Expanding Pre-K Access. Continue supporting of funding for NC Pre-K to accommodate more eligible children in Mecklenburg County.
Establish	Create a multi-agency task force focused on improving maternal health, reproductive rights, and chronic disease prevention. Leverage partnerships with healthcare providers, nonprofits and local universities.



Findings

- **Economic Inequality**

- As of 2022, 13.1% of women aged 18 and over in NC were living in poverty. (nationalpartnership.org)

- **Business Ownership**

- Women own approximately 44.2% of businesses across NC.
- In 2023, NC was ranked as the second-best state in the US for women-owned businesses, trailing only NY.
(2024 Wells Fargo Impact of Women-Owned Businesses Report)

- **Employment and Revenue**

- As of 2023, women-owned firms in the US employ 12.2 million people and generate \$2.7 trillion in sales. (governor.nc.gov)



Entrepreneurship

Recommendations

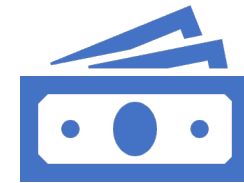


Continue and expand programs like Business Launchpad to continue to empower women-owned businesses



Expand Small Business Incubators for Women

Establish more business incubators and accelerators that provide mentorship, networking, and office space for women entrepreneurs. Continue to foster collaboration between public-private sectors to provide technical and leadership support to these business.



Provide funding for digital and financial literacy training through existing partnership with institutions like CPCC, etc. to assist women who are struggling with access to capital.



Accessible and Transitional Housing

Findings

- **Housing Wage:** In 2023, the housing wage in NC—the hourly wage needed to afford a modest two-bedroom rental was \$25.21. This means a minimum-wage worker (\$7.25/hour) would need to work approximately 139 hours per week to afford such housing. (nchousing.org)
- Approximately **25%** of renter households in NC are extremely low-income, with a shortage of about 195,661 affordable rental homes for these households.
- **Unsheltered Homelessness:** The 2024 Point-in-Time count reported 384 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the county, marking a 33% increase since 2023.
- **Poverty Rates:** NC ranks 38th nationally for the percentage of women living in poverty (13.6%), with rates exceeding 20% among Hispanic, Native American, and Black women.
- **Housing Instability:** Women, especially single mothers, are disproportionately affected by housing instability, often spending more than 30% of their income on housing.
- Between 11% and 36% of youth aging out of foster care experience homelessness during their transition to adulthood, a rate substantially higher than the 4% observed in the general young adult population.



Accessible and Transitional Housing

Recommendations

Continue Funding for Nonprofits Specializing in Women's Housing Needs
Strengthen partnerships with organizations that focus transitional housing.

Support Trauma-Informed Housing Programs
Ensure transitional housing facilities integrate mental health services, especially for domestic violence survivors or formerly incarcerated women.

Leverage County-Owned Land for Affordable Housing
Continue to support utilizing county-owned properties for housing developments.



Enhance Education & Job Training Opportunities

Findings

- Women represent nearly 61% of unemployment insurance claimants in Mecklenburg County, despite comprising 52% of the population. (charlottework.com)
- Industries such as Education & Health Services and Leisure & Hospitality, which are predominantly female-staffed, have experienced significant layoffs, exacerbating unemployment among women.



Education & Job Training

Recommendations



Continue to support pre-apprenticeship programs for women in male-dominated fields like tech, construction (e.g. She Built This City).



Expand partnerships for re-entry programs for women returning to work after caregiving, incarceration or domestic violence.



Provide additional funding for job placement and career coaching services to continue to provide these vital services.



Create more awareness campaigns of existing county programs that provide job training, specifically programs sponsored through the local DSS and libraries.



Mental Wellness

Findings

- One in four NC women has been diagnosed with a depressive disorder
- Recent CDC study found 1 in 10 women reported an episode of major depression within the last year.
- Nearly 3 in 5 teen girls (57%) felt sad or hopeless.
- Financial barriers, accessibility challenges, and stigmas surrounding mental health leave many reluctant to seek treatment.



Mental Wellness

Recommendations

- Continue to support facilities such as the Behavioral Health Urgent Care that provide greater access to care
- Continue to create more awareness for MeckHope and continue language expansion to include more languages
- Expand partnerships to co-locate mental health providers such as therapists or counselors within areas that community members frequently access such as nonprofits that partner with the county
- Provide additional funding for social workers and mental health professionals at CMS
- Explore pipeline program with local colleges to recruit clinicians and social workers to the County



WAB

Women's Advisory Board
MECKLENBURG COUNTY



Thank you!

Mecklenburg County Women's Advisory Board

Denawa Alberti, Chair

