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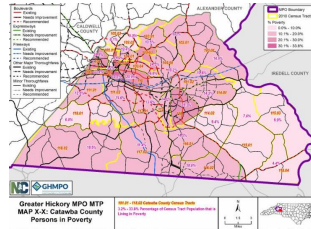
WPCOG - Newsletter

January 2018



Community & Regional Planning

Winter 2017 Economic Indicators Newsletter highlights Hickory MSA results from the 2016 American Community Survey. [Learn more.](#)



IT/GIS Services

Department recently completed a series of maps for the Title VI and Environmental Justice section of the Greater Hickory MPO. [Learn more.](#)



Regional Housing Authority

Waiting List procedures update - applicants will now receive their waiting list position two times each year, by mail. [Learn more.](#)



Workforce Development Board

Community Partnerships show young adult



Area Agency on Aging

Community Advisory Committee works to give



Community & Economic Development

Staff is currently taking applications for the Single

opportunities and success through the WDB NEXTGen program. [Learn more.](#)

residents a voice to help advocate, listen, and understand their concerns. [Learn more.](#)

Family Rehabilitation Program for eligible Alexander County Residents. [Learn more.](#)

Community & Regional Planning

Winter 2017 EIN Highlights Hickory MSA

Results from the 2016 American Community Survey

The latest issue of the Economic Indicators Newsletter (EIN) was released by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments. In print since 1998, this quarterly publication focuses on economic trends and issues affecting the Hickory Metro Region. The current issue addresses Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) unemployment rates, Hickory Metro average annual wages, and Hickory MSA 2016 income and poverty, educational attainment and health insurance coverage results from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Here are a few key highlights of the EIN:

- The Hickory MSA's unemployment rate increased slightly from 3.9% in April 2017 to 4.0% in October 2017.
- Between April and October, the estimated number of employed persons decreased from 165,050 to 164,799, while the civilian labor force fell from 171,769 to 171,654.
- Over 80% of Hickory MSA workers receive income through private sector wage and salary jobs.
- More than 7% of Hickory MSA workers were self-employed. ACS results indicated that most North Carolina MSAs had a lower percentage of self-employed workers than the Hickory Metro.
- The average Hickory MSA household income from earnings is \$58,749. Only three North Carolina Metros had lower mean household earnings than the Hickory MSA.
- About 38.4% of Hickory MSA households gained income from Social Security. Only the New Bern MSA had a greater percentage of households getting Social Security income than the Hickory MSA.
- The number of persons below the poverty level in the Hickory MSA decreased from 71,802 (20.2%) in 2012 to 56,232 (15.8%) in 2016. Most age and ethnic/race groups, saw decreases in the number of persons below poverty level between 2012 and 2016.
- The number of persons over 25 in the Hickory MSA with an attainment level of "associate degree" grew 91.8% from 15,139 in 2000 to 29,039 in 2016. The 13,900 increase is the most of any Hickory MSA educational attainment category.
- In 2016, the Hickory MSA had the second lowest percentage of persons over age 25 with an attainment level of high school or higher among the State's 15 metro areas.
- The Rocky Mount MSA was tied with the Hickory MSA for having the lowest percentage of persons 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher (17.0%).
- The percentage of Hickory MSA population that has health insurance coverage increased from 84.9% in 2012 to 88.9% in 2016.
- In 2016, the number of uninsured persons in the Hickory MSA fell below 40,000.

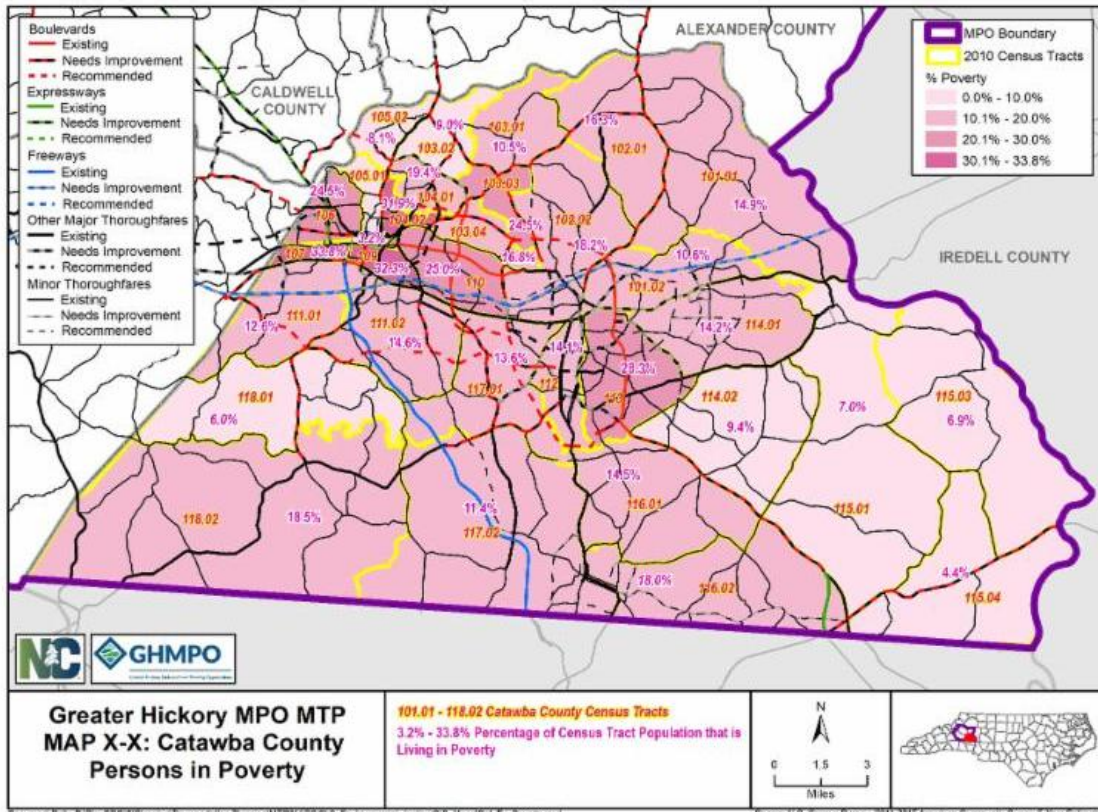
The EIN is produced quarterly and is a publication of the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board. The EIN is now available digitally. To join the EIN subscription list, please click the button below. For questions concerning the EIN, please contact Taylor Dellinger, Data Analyst at 828-485-4233 or by email taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org.

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Article by Taylor Dellinger

IT/GIS Services

Title VI and Environmental Justice



WPCOG GIS/IT Department recently completed a series of maps for the Title VI and Environmental Justice section of the Greater Hickory MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a statute that protects individuals from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Compliance with provisions of Title VI extend to all transportation investments and planning processes. Title VI compliance needs to be considered in metropolitan and statewide planning.

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental Justice helps to ensure that programs, policies and activities that have adverse effects on communities do not have disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority populations and low-income populations. Environmental Justice also helps ensure that minority and low-income populations share in the benefits provided by programs, policies and activities.

To determine potential impacts of transportation projects, the GHMPO used Census data to identify Title VI and Environmental Justice communities across the four county region. By mapping Title VI populations, the GHMPO can identify areas that may experience, or currently are experiencing, disproportionately adverse or negative effects caused by transportation projects. These maps also help identify where the GHMPO should conduct public outreach efforts.

Below is an example of one of the 36 maps completed for the Title VI/Environmental Justice chapter of the report. The map analyzes poverty census data with the existing road network. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau show the most concentrated poverty areas in Catawba County were in Census Tracts 104.02, 107, and 109 and ranged from 30.1% to 33.8% of the overall Tract population. Tract 105.01 had the lowest number of persons in poverty at 3.2%.

For more information concerning the Greater Hickory MPO or MTP, go to wpcog.org/transportation or wpcog.org/metropolitan-trans-plan-mtp.

Article by Trey Schweitzer, Todd Stroupe and Taylor Dellinger

Regional Housing Authority Changes to Waiting List Procedures

Starting January 1, 2018, the Regional Housing Authority (RHA) will no longer release waiting list positions.

Applicants will receive their waiting list position two times each year, by mail. The RHA plans to purge the waiting list every six months in February and August. At that time, applicants will receive a letter requesting a response. Once those responses have been processed, we will notify applicants of their position on the waiting list.

The RHA would like to encourage applicants to continue to keep their address updated with us. We notify applicants by mail when they reach the top of the waiting list.

Please understand that our only method of communication with waiting list applicants is by mail. Therefore, it is critical that we have the most up to date mailing address.

The RHA is dedicated to assisting as many families as quickly as possible. Not releasing waiting list positions will help us dedicate more time to providing housing assistance.

The RHA is continuously accepting applications for our waiting list. Due to certain preferences that we offer, waiting list positions can change. We encourage any interested persons to apply. Applicants are notified of their status within 30 days of submitting an application.

Contact Kala Guido for additional information or questions at 828-485-4282

Article by Kala Guido

Workforce Development Board NEXTGen

Youth and Young adults want, and need to succeed in life. With extra support and encouragement we can help see that success flourish. Through our NEXTGen program, NCWorks career advisors can assist eligible young individuals with career exploration, work experience and possible future educational attainment.

William was a NEXTGen participant who wasn't sure what he wanted to do until he came to the NCWorks Career Center. Caleb Crow, one of our career advisors, developed a coaching relationship with William, and through partnership with Goodwill Career Connections office was able to set him up in a work experience opportunity. While also getting work experience, William was enrolled in the CVCC Manufacturing Academy, which he graduated from, and was hired by Sarstedt.

The NCWorks NEXTGen Youth and Young Adult program is operated by the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board, and housed within the local area's NCWorks Career Centers. With guidance and funding from Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, NCWorks NEXTGen program is designed to help youth & young adults achieve their educational and employment goals.

Article by Wendy Johnson



William, our Intern,
and his Career
Coach Caleb 😊

Area Agency on Aging Community Advisory Committee



What is a Community Advisory Committee?

The Community Advisory Committee was established in legislation ratified by the North Carolina General Assembly. It was the intent of the General Assembly that each community in the state should take a more active role in promoting the interest and well-being of persons residing in nursing homes and adult care homes. The N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services, through a network of regional long term care ombudsmen, provide the committee members with training and assistance in the performance of their duties.

What do the Committees do?

The committees work to give the residents a voice to help advocate, listen, and understand their concerns. The committees work to maintain the rights of all long term care residents. The committee meets quarterly to visit and report on facilities in their county. The committee members are also the link between the community and

the facility, seeking to increase community involvement and, at the same time, keep the public informed about aspects of long term care and operation of the nursing and/or adult care homes.

Why are these Committees so important?

These committees can truly make a difference in our resident's lives. All it takes is one conversation, one laugh, or one smile to make someone's day just that much better. We would love for our community to come together for our residents and help us give them a voice.

Who do we serve?

We need committee members in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties. These residents need dedicated individuals such as yourself. You must live in the community in which you decide to serve. For example, if you live in Catawba County you must serve in Catawba County.

If you are interested in making a true difference in your community please contact:

Regional Ombudsman

Amber Thompson

Phone: 828-485-4280

Email: amber.thompson@wpcog.org

Article by Amber Thompson

Community & Economic Development

Single Family Rehab Program Available to Eligible Homeowners in Alexander County

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments has been awarded \$170,000 from the NC Housing Finance Agency to rehabilitate three moderately deteriorated homes in Alexander County. The primary goal of the SFR program is to encourage the comprehensive rehabilitation of scattered-site single-family housing units owned and occupied by lower-income households with an elderly and/or disabled full-time household member or with a child under the age of 6 whose health is threatened by the presence of lead-based paint hazards with incomes at or below eighty percent (80%) of the area median incomes. These funds come from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development Federal HOME Investment Partnership Program.

The amount of funds available for the rehabilitation of each home can vary from \$5,000 to \$45,000, depending on the condition of the home. The home must be economically feasible to rehabilitate. Each dwelling unit assisted must meet all requirements of the SFR Rehabilitation Standards at a cost that is within the program limits. Mobile homes are not eligible for this program.

The SFR Program will meet specific energy standards set forth by the State. These are standards designed to save energy and money on monthly utility bills.

Eligible applicants will be served without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, physical or mental handicaps, or family status. SRF assistance will be provided to eligible owner-occupants in the form of interest-free, forgivable loans covering the costs associated with rehabilitation of the unit. These interest-free loans will be forgiven at the rate of \$3,000 per year. For example, if \$30,000 is spent on housing rehabilitations and the owner lived in the home for ten years after the work is completed, the loan is totally forgiven.

Staff is currently taking applications for this program. Homeowners desiring additional information or wishing to apply for the SFR Program may do so by contacting Laurie Powell at 828-322-9191 ext. 249.

Article by Laurie Powell
