ADVANCING OUR LIVABILITY
ADDENDUM

LIVABILITY INDICATORS
GUILFORD COUNTY, NC
DECEMBER 2025

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Resources and Additional Information

County Health Rankings countyhealthrankings.org
County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R), a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, draws attention to why there are differences in health within and across communities. The program highlights policies and practices that can help everyone be as healthy as possible. CHR&R aims to grow a shared understanding of health, equity, and the power of communities to improve health for all. This work is rooted in a long-term vision where all people and places have what they need to thrive.

Healthy Communities NC healthycommunitiesnc.org
The Healthy NC 2030 task force, led by NCIOM and NCDHHS, brought together experts and leaders from multiple fields to develop a common set of public health indicators and targets for the state over the next decade. The full report, released in January of 2020, established a north star for localities and organizations to mobilize to accomplish North Carolina's most pressing goals across housing, education, public health, and economic opportunity.

Census Reporter censusreporter.org
Census Reporter is an independent project to make data from the American Community Survey (ACS) easier to use. We are unaffiliated with the U.S. Census Bureau.

Guilford County School Data Dashboard www.gcsnc.com/about/data-dashboards

My Future North Carolina myfuturenc.org
Searchable data dashboards and profiles by counties.

NC Child Data Dashboard
The NC Child Data Center centralizes more than 35 metrics assessing child welfare, early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, child health and well-being, and family economic security. The data can be filtered by county and by legislative district.

Data USA DataUSA.io/profile/geo/guilford-county-nc
Data USA puts public US Government data in your hands. Instead of searching through multiple data sources that are often incomplete and difficult to access, you can simply point to Data USA to answer your questions. This open, easy-to-use platform turns data into knowledge.

About this Guide

Livability is the foundation of a thriving community, a measure of how well people can live, learn, work, and play in a desirable and supportive environment. As Guilford County continues to strengthen its commitment to data-informed decision-making, understanding the conditions that shape quality of life has become increasingly essential. Livability indicators provide a structured, evidence-based way to measure these conditions, identify disparities, and track progress over time.

This strategic planning addendum presents a set of core livability indicators designed to complement existing departmental plans and countywide priorities. These indicators draw from data across key domains such as housing, health, safety, mobility, economic opportunity, and community belonging. Together, they offer a shared frame of reference for understanding community well-being and help guide leaders in aligning programs, resources, and partnerships to improve outcomes.

The livability indicators included in this addendum are intended to be dynamic and adaptable. As data quality improves, community needs shift, and strategic priorities evolve, the indicator set can be updated to reflect emerging conditions. This framework equips departments, partners, and decision-makers with data that is timely, actionable, and aligned with the county's long-term vision for a more equitable and livable community.

How to Use This Addendum

Livability Indicator

Graphic:
 A chart, metric, or other visual representation of the indicator.

Data Source:
 A citation of the dataset or system used to produce the measure.
*Indicators with an asterisk (*) after the data sources can be viewed on the County Health Rankings website. This tool allows a user to view information from multiple counties at once for the purposes of comparison.

About The Data:
Explains what the indicator measures. Describes how the measure or calculation is performed.

Why This Is Important:
Provides context on why the indicator matters to the community. Situates the measure within a broader understanding of community health, equity, and quality of life.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Interprets the measure in context. Compares Guilford County's performance to state and national benchmarks when available.

Livability Indicators

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High School Graduation
3rd Grade Reading Proficiency
3rd Grade Math Proficiency
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Childhood Poverty
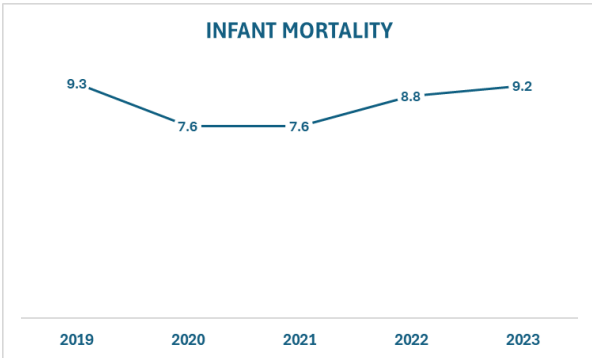Disconnected Youth
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Property Tax Revenue Per Penny

Infant Mortality

INFANT MORTALITY

9.3
7.6
7.6
8.8
9.2

2019   2020   2021   2022   2023

Source: National Center for Health Statistics - Natality and Mortality Files *

About The Data:
Number of infant deaths (before their first birthday) for every 1,000 live births.

Why This Is Important:
Infant mortality serves as a crucial public health indicator that reflects the overall health of a community, its healthcare system, and the well-being of its mothers and infants. Higher rates can signal gaps in access to care, challenges during pregnancy and birth, and broader social and economic conditions that affect early life outcomes. Tracking this indicator helps communities understand health inequities and monitor progress in improving maternal and infant well-being.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to the National Center for health statistics data for 2023, Guilford County's infant mortality rate of 9.2 is higher than North Carolina's rate 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births. In 2022, the infant mortality rate in the United States was 5.6 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Maternal Vulnerability

57

Source: Surgo Ventures; 2021 U.S. Maternal Vulnerability Index

About The Data:
The MVI scores counties from 0–100 using 43 indicators across health, social, and environmental domains to reflect maternal health risk. Higher scores reflect greater vulnerability.
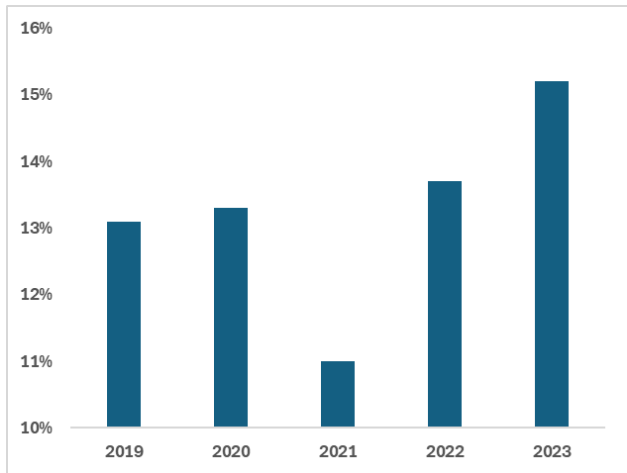
Why This Is Important:
The MVI highlights how community conditions influence maternal health, including access to care, mental health supports, socioeconomic stability, and environmental factors. Higher vulnerability suggests greater risk for complications during pregnancy and childbirth, even when individual behaviors are similar. Tracking this index helps communities understand where support systems may be strained and where investments could improve maternal and infant outcomes.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to the 2021 calculations, Guilford County has an MVI score of 57, which is lower than the North Carolina score of 76.

Food Insecurity

Source: Feeding America *

About The Data:
Food Insecurity estimates the percentage of the population who did not have access to a reliable source of food during the past year.
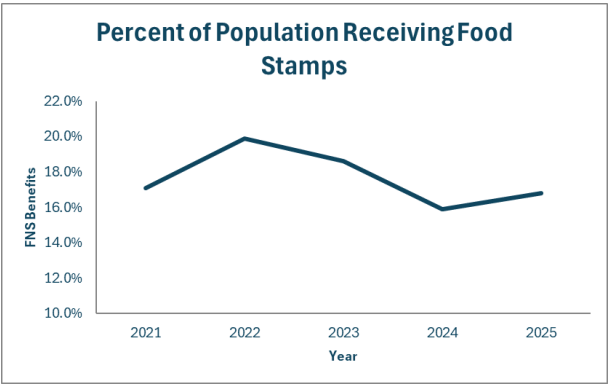
Why This Is Important:
Reliable access to nutritious food is a basic foundation of community well-being. Higher food insecurity signals deeper challenges related to income, housing costs, transportation, and access to healthy food retailers, all of which shape residents' health and quality of life. Food insecurity is also linked to poorer physical health, higher rates of chronic disease, and increased stress. Monitoring this indicator helps show the overall scale of need in a community and whether conditions related to affordability and access to food are improving.

How is Guilford County Doing:
The rate of food insecurity in Guilford County is slightly higher than the national average of 14%. The rate is consistent with the statewide rate of 15%.

People Receiving Food Assistance

Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

About The Data:
Population receiving Food and FNS Nutrition Services (FNS) divided by total population.
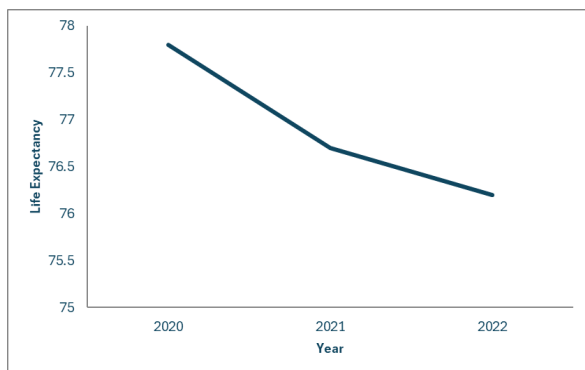
Why This Is Important:
Enrollment in Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) reflects how many households are struggling to meet basic needs. Because FNS helps low-income residents afford nutritious food, participation levels provide a high-level view of economic hardship within a community. Tracking participation over time shows how local conditions and supports are influencing residents' ability to meet basic needs.

How is Guilford County Doing:
In Guilford County, 16% of residents receive FNS benefits, higher than the state rate of 13% and the national rate of 12.3%

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Life Expectancy

Source: National Center for Health Statistics - Natality and Mortality Files; Census Population Estimates Program *

About The Data:
Life expectancy at birth indicates the number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.

Why This Is Important:
Life expectancy shows how social, economic, environmental, and health system conditions shape residents' ability to live long and healthy lives. Factors such as income, education, access to care, safe housing, exposure to hazards, and opportunities for physical activity all influence this measure. Tracking life expectancy helps communities monitor population health over time and assess overall livability.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In 2022, life expectancy in Guilford County was 76.2 years, continuing a three-year decline that began in 2020. This mirrors the statewide average of 76.2 years and is slightly below the national average of 77.5 years.

Medicaid Enrollment

32%

Source: NC DHHS NC Medicaid Enrollment Report April 2025

About The Data:
Population receiving Medicaid or NC Health Choice divided by the total population.

Why This Is Important:
Medicaid and NC Health Choice provide essential health coverage for income-eligible individuals and families, especially children. Enrollment levels offer a view into economic need and reliance on publicly funded care. Higher participation may reflect limited access to employer-based insurance or broader financial hardship. Tracking this indicator helps communities understand coverage needs and whether residents can access essential healthcare services.
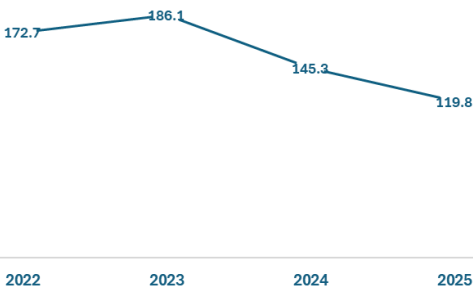
How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County's Medicaid and NC Health Choice enrollment is 32%, compared with 28% statewide.

Overdose-Related ER Visits

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS FOR OD RATE

172.7   186.1   145.3   119.8

2022   2023   2024   2025

Source: NC DHHS NC Overdose Epidemic Data

About The Data:
Number of drug overdose emergency department visits per 100,000 population.
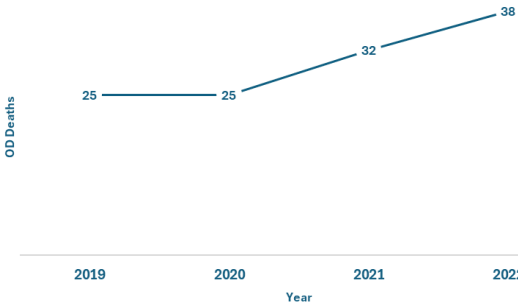
Why This Is Important:
Emergency department visits for drug overdoses show how often residents experience serious substance-related health crises that require urgent medical care. This data helps communities understand the overall burden of acute overdose events and whether the need for emergency intervention is growing or declining over time. Monitoring this indicator supports evaluation of prevention, treatment access, and broader community conditions that influence substance use harms

How is Guilford County Doing?
In 2024, Guilford County reported 145.3 overdose-related emergency department visits per 100,000 residents, compared with 113.8 statewide. Overdose-related ED visits decreased from 2023 through 2025.

Overdose Mortality

OVERDOSE MORTALITY RATE

OD Deaths

25   25   32   38

2019   2020   2021   2022

Year

Source: NC DHHS NC Overdose Epidemic Data *

About The Data:
Number of drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 population.

Why This Is Important:
Drug overdose deaths reflect the profound and often preventable impact of substance use disorders on a community. These deaths signal unmet needs related to treatment, recovery supports, and broader social and economic conditions. Because substance use disorders are chronic illnesses that affect health, family stability, and community well-being, monitoring this indicator helps communities understand the long-term toll of substance use and assess progress in reducing fatal outcomes.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County's drug poisoning death rate rose steadily from 2019 to 2022. In 2022, the county recorded 38 deaths per 100,000 residents, compared with 36 statewide.

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Access to Primary Care Physicians

1258:1

Source: Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association *

About The Data:
Ratio of population to primary care physicians.

Why This Is Important:
Primary care providers are a community's front line for preventive care, chronic disease management, and early detection of health concerns. Having enough primary care physicians supports routine checkups, reduces reliance on emergency care, and improves continuity of care. A lower population-to-provider ratio suggests better access, while higher ratios may indicate challenges with scheduling, care coordination, and timely treatment.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County has a better population-to-primary care provider ratio than both the state and national averages. North Carolina's ratio is 1,413 residents per physician, compared with 1,330 nationally. A ratio of 1,030 or lower is considered top performance.

Access to Mental Health Professionals

283:1

Source: Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association *

About The Data:
Ratio of population to mental health providers.
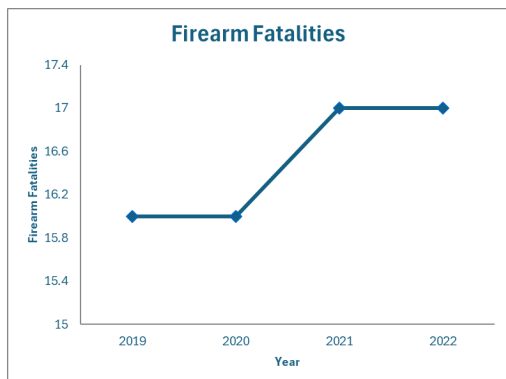
Why This Is Important:
Reliable access to mental health providers is essential for early intervention, therapy, medication management, and ongoing support for behavioral health needs. When provider capacity is limited, residents may wait longer for appointments or struggle to find care that fits their insurance or needs. The population-to-provider ratio helps show whether a community has an adequate mental health workforce and if shortages could contribute to unmet needs and worsening symptoms.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County performs better than both the state and national averages for mental health provider availability. North Carolina has a ratio of 299 residents per provider, compared with 300 nationally. Top-performing counties have a ratio of 220 or lower.

Firearm Fatality

Firearm Fatalities

Source: National Center for Health Statistics - Natality Files *

About The Data:
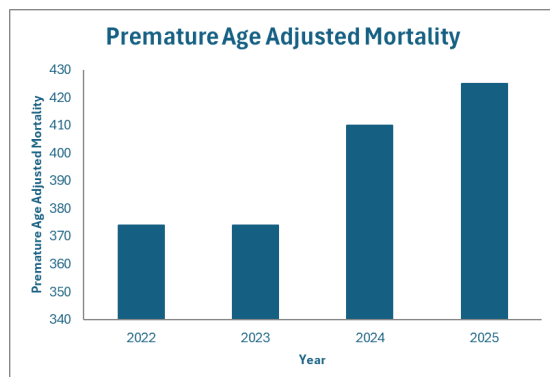Number of deaths due to firearms per 100,000 population.

Why This Is Important:
Firearm deaths are a major, preventable contributor to premature mortality and directly affect residents' sense of safety. In the U.S., 54% of firearm fatalities are suicides and 43% are homicides, and the suicide and homicide rates are 9.8 and 24.9 times higher than in other high-income countries. Tracking firearm fatalities helps communities understand the overall burden of violence and self-harm and monitor whether conditions are improving or worsening over time.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In 2022, Guilford County had 17 deaths per 100,000. This rate is higher than the North Carolina average of 16 deaths per 100,000.

Premature Mortality

Premature Age Adjusted Mortality

Source: National Center for Health Statistics - Mortality Files; Census Population Estimates Program *

About The Data:
Number of deaths among residents under age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted)**.**
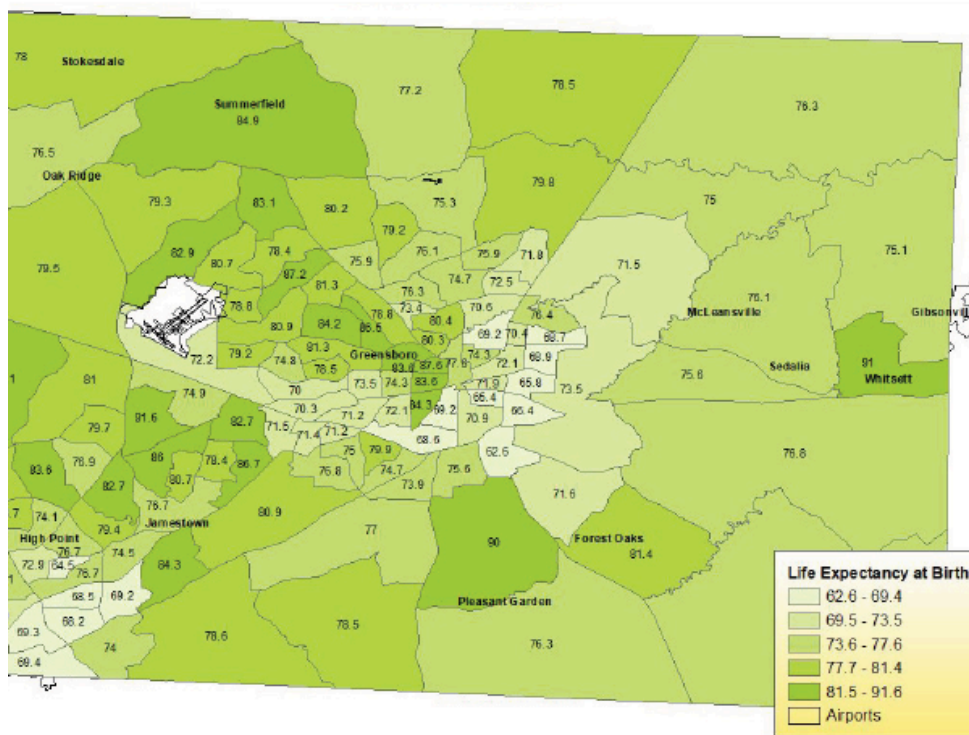
Why This Is Important:
Premature mortality, defined as deaths before age 75, reflects how well a community supports long and healthy lives. Because this measure gives more weight to deaths at younger ages, it highlights preventable deaths that often stem from social, economic, environmental, and health system conditions. Tracking this indicator helps communities understand the burden of early death and whether local conditions are improving over time.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County's age-adjusted premature death rate is 425 per 100,000 residents, which is slightly lower than the statewide rate of 445.

Life Expectancy Disparities

Source: 2016-2020 mortality data from NC State Center for Health Statistics. Population estimates used in calculations are from the
2016-2020 American Community Survey.

About The Data:
Life expectancy at birth reflects how long a newborn is expected to live if mortality patterns at their time of birth remained consistent throughout their lifetime. This measure is shown at the census-tract level to highlight geographic differences within Guilford County.
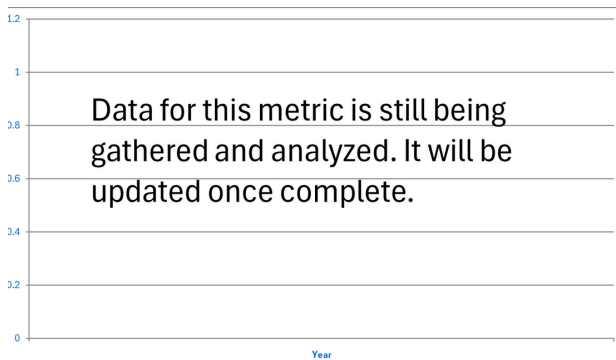
Why This Is Important:
Life expectancy by census tract reveals differences in health and well-being within a community that countywide averages may conceal. These variations often reflect social determinants of health, including income, education, housing stability, and access to healthcare and healthy environments. Tracking life expectancy at a local scale helps identify areas facing greater barriers to health and informs where targeted investments and supports may reduce disparities.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Life expectancy varies widely across Guilford County, with a difference of up to 20 years between different neighborhoods. The data highlights a strong correlation between life expectancy and socioeconomic factors like income, education, and race/ethnicity, underscoring the influence of social determinants of health. In 2020, the countywide average life expectancy was about 76.8 years, while tract-level averages ranged from 69.3 to 88.0 years.

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Youth Recidivism

Data for this metric is still being gathered and analyzed. It will be updated once complete.

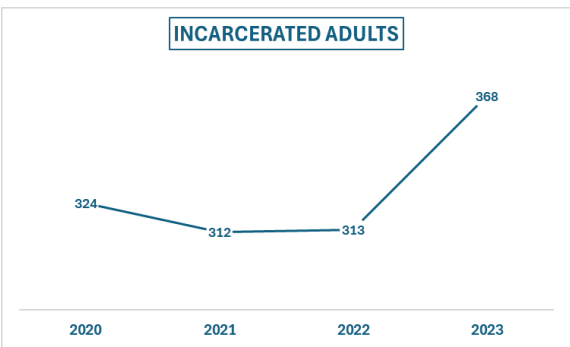Source: Guilford County Juvenile Detention Center

About The Data:
The number of youth sentenced to the Guilford County Juvenile Detention Center more than once.

Why This Is Important:
Tracking youth who return to detention helps assess whether the juvenile justice system is supporting positive outcomes. High rates of youth recidivism indicate a failure to break the cycle of crime, leading to high social and economic costs and negatively impacting victims and offenders alike. Monitoring this indicator helps communities understand long-term impacts on youth well-being and highlights opportunities to strengthen diversion, education, and behavioral health interventions.

How is Guilford County Doing?

Adult Incarceration

INCARCERATED ADULTS

Year	Value
2020	324
2021	312
2022	313
2023	368

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Safety Office of Research and Planning

About The Data:
Incarcerated adults by reported county of residence pre-incarceration per 100,000 residents.
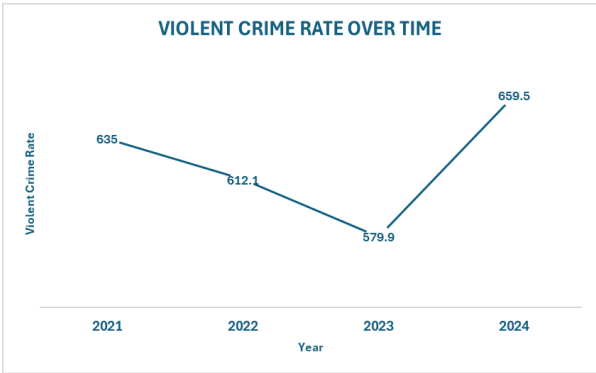
Why This Is Important:
Incarceration affects health, economic stability, and long-term opportunity for individuals, families, and communities. People who experience incarceration face higher rates of chronic illness, mental health challenges, and barriers to employment and housing after release. County-level incarceration counts help show how many residents are impacted and offer a high-level view of how justice involvement intersects with community well-being.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County's adult incarceration rate is considered moderately low. As compared to all other counties in North Carolina, Guilford County ranks 51st for the 2023 reported numbers.

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Violent Crime

VIOLENT CRIME RATE OVER TIME

Source: North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation

About The Data:
The number of violent offenses in a fiscal year per 1,000 residents. Violent offenses include crimes such as homicide, aggravated assault, and robbery.
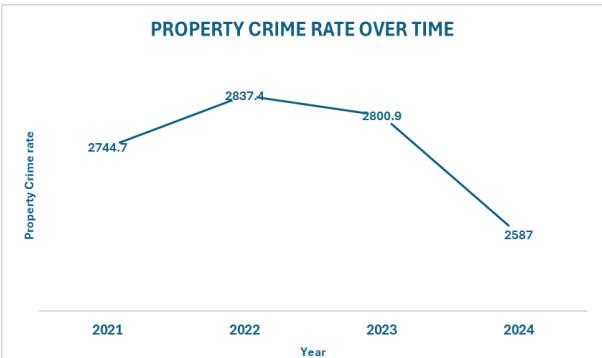
Why This Is Important:
Violent crime can affect daily life, community trust, and residents' sense of safety. Fear of crime may limit outdoor activity, reduce social interaction, and contribute to stress and poorer health. At a community level, higher rates can discourage investment, reduce neighborhood cohesion, and undermine livability. Tracking violent crime helps communities understand safety conditions and perceived well-being.

How is Guilford County Doing?
North Carolina's violent crime rate in 2024 was 389.2 per 100,000 residents, compared with 660.5 in Guilford County.

Property Crime

PROPERTY CRIME RATE OVER TIME

Source: North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation

About The Data:
The number of property offenses in a fiscal year per 1,000 residents. Offenses include burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft.

Why This Is Important:
Property crime affects financial security, quality of life, and overall perception of safety. Incidents such as theft or burglary can create stress, increase household costs, and reduce trust among neighbors. Communities with high property crime may experience reduced economic investment and lower satisfaction with local conditions. Monitoring these trends provides a broad view of safety and stability for residents.
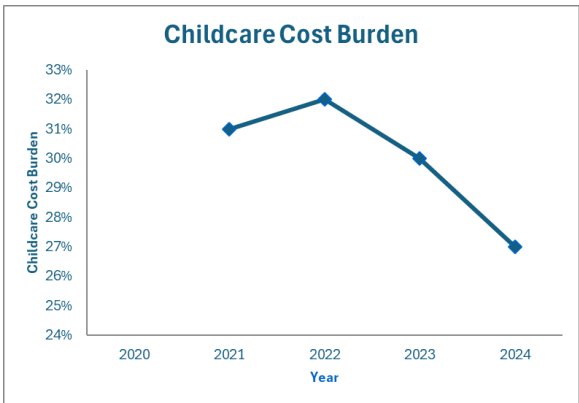
How is Guilford County Doing?
The 2024 property crime rate was 2053.3 per 100,000 statewide compared with 2589 in Guilford County.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Child Care Affordability

Childcare Cost Burden

(line chart: Childcare Cost Burden vs Year)
- 2021: 31%
- 2022: 32%
- 2023: 30%
- 2024: 27%

About The Data:
Child care costs for a household with two children as a percent of median household income.

Why This Is Important:
When child care is affordable, parents can work, pursue education, and maintain financial stability. High costs force families to choose between employment and caregiving or reduce spending on essentials like housing, food, and transportation. Access to high-quality care also supports healthy child development, helping children thrive socially, academically, and emotionally. Tracking cost burden shows how affordable care is for families in a community.

How is Guilford County Doing?
The national average is 28%, a community is considered doing well at 20% or below. North Carolina is 25% and Guilford County is 27% for 2024.

Child Care Subsidy Access

13.4%

Source: North Carolina Early Childhood Education Coalition

About The Data:
Percentage of eligible children who receive childcare subsidies.
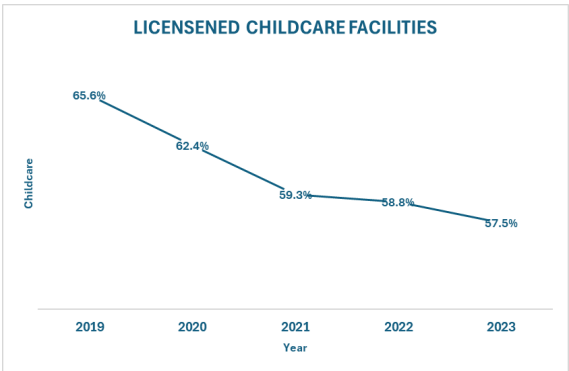
Why This Is Important:
Child care subsidies help families afford safe and reliable care, which allows parents to work or attend school. Access to early childhood programs also supports early learning and development, improving future outcomes in language, math, and social skills. Monitoring subsidy use gives a high-level view of how many eligible children are being served and whether demand for assistance may exceed available resources.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In Guilford County, 13.42% of eligible children received child care subsidies during the 24-25 school year, compared 12.55% statewide. In North Carolina and Guilford County, there is a substantial waitlist for subsidies.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success
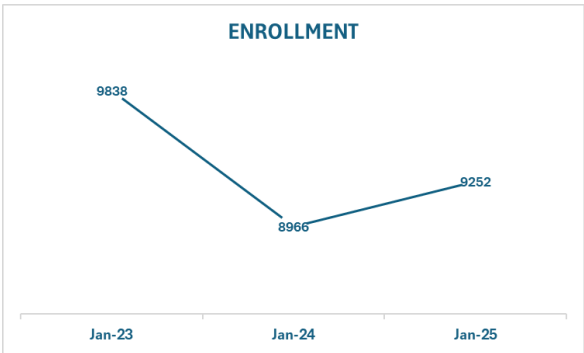
Licensed Child Care Availability

LICENSENED CHILDCARE FACILITIES

(Childcare vs Year)
- 2019: 65.6%
- 2020: 62.4%
- 2021: 59.3%
- 2022: 58.8%
- 2023: 57.5%

Source: North Carolina Early Childhood Education Data Repository *

About The Data:
Number of child care centers per 1,000 population under 5 years old.

Why This Is Important:
Accessible child care expands opportunities for parents to work or pursue education, supporting family financial stability and workforce participation. High-quality care also supports children's healthy development and early learning, with lasting benefits into adulthood. This indicator reflects one dimension of child care accessibility and is best understood alongside affordability and subsidy access.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County has experienced a steady decline in licensed child care centers since 2019, suggesting reduced capacity for families seeking care.

Child Care Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

- Jan-23: 9838
- Jan-24: 8966
- Jan-25: 9252

Source: North Carolina DHHS Division of Child Development and Early Education
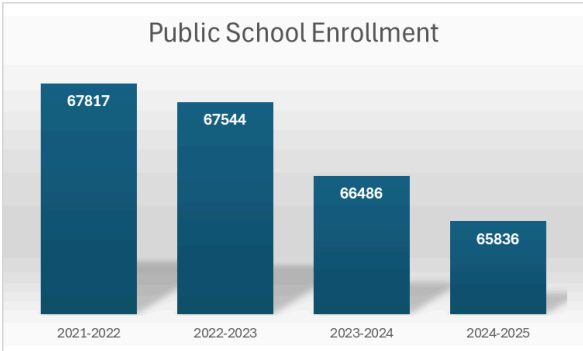
About The Data:
Total number of children enrolled in licensed child care centers in Guilford County as of June of each year.

Why This Is Important:
Early childhood programs build school readiness and support children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Participation in preschool is linked to improved long-term academic outcomes and reduced disparities by income and race. Enrollment levels can signal both availability of slots and family demand for formal early education. Tracking enrollment helps communities monitor access to early learning opportunities that contribute to lifelong well-being.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County has seen some variation of enrollment in the last three years. Compared to 2023, 2025 enrollment was down by 6%.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Public School Enrollment

Public School Enrollment

Year	Enrollment
2021-2022	67817
2022-2023	67544
2023-2024	66486
2024-2025	65836

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

About The Data:
Percent of school-aged children enrolled in Guilford County Public Schools.

Why This Is Important:
Public school enrollment influences funding levels, since North Carolina allocates state dollars based on the number of students served. Enrollment trends can also reflect family confidence in public schools, as increases suggest more families are choosing them over private, charter, or home-based options. Tracking enrollment provides a high-level view of system participation, community demand, and potential resource impacts.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Enrollment in Guilford County Public Schools has been steadily decreasing the last four years. This is consistent with both state and national trends, as well.

School Suspensions

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION RATE

Year	Rate
2021	0.041
2022	1.11
2023	1.29
2024	1.27

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; Discipline, ALP, and Dropout Annual Reports, Suspension Tables

About The Data:
Short-term suspension count for Guilford County Public Schools.

Why This Is Important:
Suspensions and expulsions remove students from the classroom and reduce instructional time, which can harm academic achievement and increase disengagement from school. Exclusionary discipline practices have been shown to affect students of color and students with disabilities disproportionately. Monitoring this measure offers a high-level view of how often students are removed from learning environments and supports efforts to create more equitable conditions.
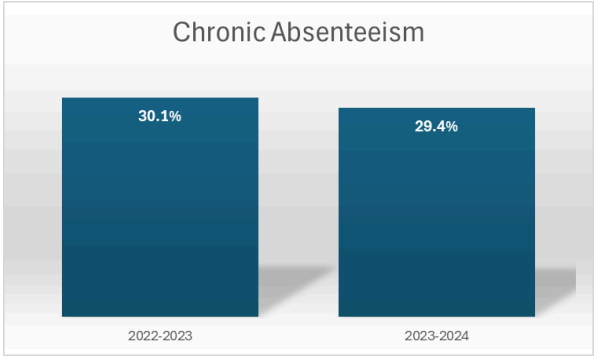
How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County's rank of short-term suspension in North Carolina for 2024 is 35th in the state. This means we are doing better than 65 other school districts.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism

- 2022-2023: 30.1%
- 2023-2024: 29.4%

Source: Guilford County Schools

About The Data:
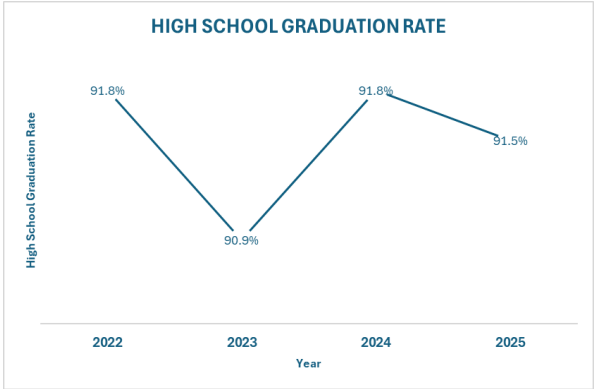Percent of students absent more than 10% of instructional days during the school year.

Why This Is Important:
Chronic absenteeism counts all absences—excused, unexcused, or disciplinary—making it broader than truancy, which tracks only unexcused absences. The amount of instructional time lost by chronically absent students puts them at risk of falling behind academically. Consistent presence in school supports learning, skill-building, and grade-level achievement, especially in early grades. High absenteeism can also affect classroom progress and peer learning.

How is Guilford County Doing?
For the 2023-2024 school year, 30% of Guilford County students were chronically absent, compared with 25% statewide and ~25% nationally.

High School Graduation

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

- 2022: 91.8%
- 2023: 90.9%
- 2024: 91.8%
- 2025: 91.5%

Source: Guilford County Schools *

About The Data:
Percentage of ninth-grade cohort that graduates in four years.

Why This Is Important:
Graduation rates play a fundamental role in individual and community well-being. Graduating high school increases access to college and career opportunities, higher lifetime earnings, and better health outcomes. Community graduation rates reflect both school conditions and broader supports such as family stability, early literacy, attendance, and caring adult relationships. Tracking graduation rates provides a high-level view of student success and educational attainment in a community.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County has maintained a four-year graduation rate above 90% for five consecutive years.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

45.7%

Source: Guilford County Schools, 2023-2024 *

About The Data:
Percentage of students in Guilford County schools who scored at or above grade level for third-grade English Language Arts standardized tests.

Why This Is Important:
Reading proficiency is a strong predictor of educational outcomes. Children who are not proficient in reading by the end of third grade face greater challenges in subsequent years of their education. Third grade is a pivotal year in primary education, because, up until third grade, children are learning to read; after third grade, children must be able to read to learn.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to information from the NC Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina's reading proficiency at the 3rd grade level for the 2023-2024 school year was 50.1%, which is higher than Guilford County's proficiency of 45.7%.

3rd Grade Math Proficiency

50%

Source: Guilford County Schools, 2023-2024 *

About The Data:
Average grade level performance for 3rd graders on math standardized tests.
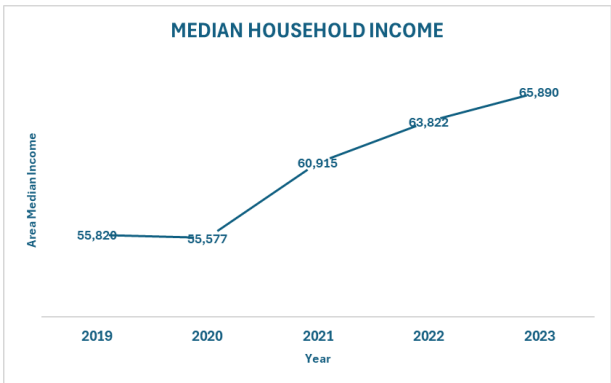
Why This Is Important:
Math proficiency reflects access to quality learning experiences both inside and outside of school. Early math skills support later achievement in science, technology, and problem-solving and are linked to long-term educational and economic outcomes. Higher academic achievement is associated with improved health, increased earnings, and life satisfaction. Monitoring math performance offers a broad view of early academic progress.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to information for the NC Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina's math proficiency at the 3rd grade level for the 2023-2024 school year was 54.6%, which is higher than Guilford County's proficiency of 50%.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Median Household Income

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Source: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates; American Community Survey, five-year estimates *

About The Data:
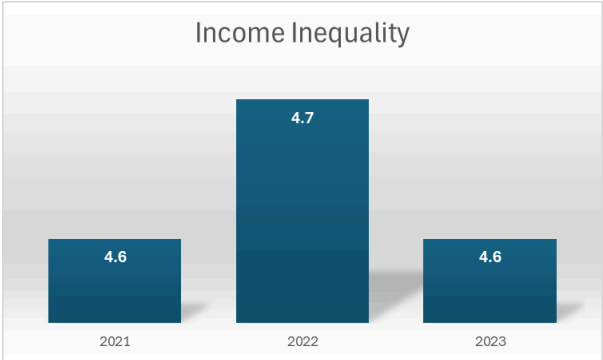The income level at which half of households earn more and half earn less.

Why This Is Important:
Household income reflects the combined earnings of everyone living in a household and provides a broad view of how families, rather than individual earners, are doing financially. It is closely linked to education, employment, and cost of living, and often varies by race, ethnicity, and household type. Tracking median income over time helps communities understand overall economic conditions and whether residents are experiencing gains in financial stability.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to the US Census, North Carolina's median household income in 2023 was $70,838, compared with Guilford County's median income of $65,890.

Income Inequality

Income Inequality

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Income Inequality in Guilford County, NC [2020RATIO037081]. *

About The Data:
Ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to income at the 20th percentile. Lower values indicate less income inequality.
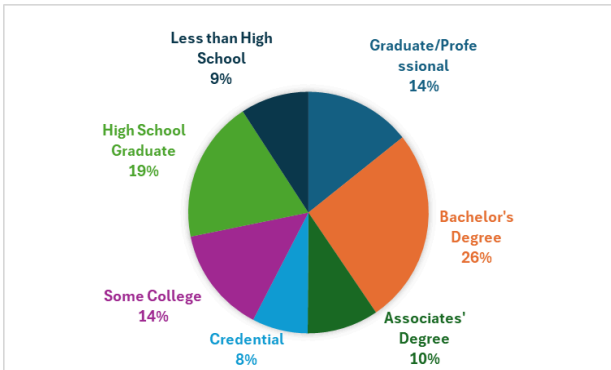
Why This Is Important:
Income inequality has a strong causal connection to health, independent of the individual income. Large disparities in income can heighten social stress, reduce trust and social support, and weaken a sense of community. Higher inequality is associated with worse health outcomes, including increased mortality and cardiovascular risk. The extent of inequality in a community reflects opportunity, inclusion, and how benefits of growth are shared.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In 2023, Guilford County's income ratio was 4.6, while North Carolina's was 4.7 and the national ratio was 4.9.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table C15002

About The Data:
The highest level of educational attainment for adults over age 25, expressed as a percentage.
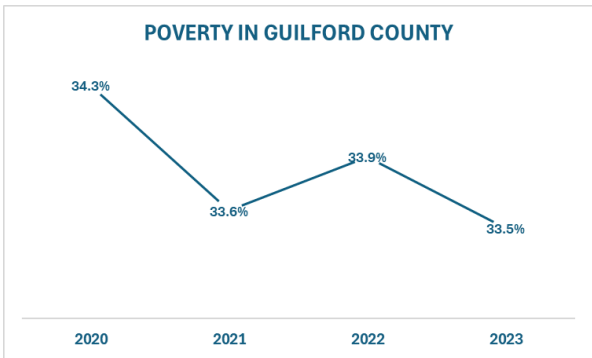
Why This Is Important:
Adult education levels are closely related to individual economic opportunity, financial stability, and even health. Adult educational attainment is closely linked to economic opportunity, financial stability, and health. Education levels also influence business location decisions by signaling workforce qualifications and market capacity. Attainment varies by age, income, and race, and neighborhood differences often persist across generations. Children in areas with higher adult education levels are more likely to pursue and achieve higher education and career goals.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2023, 9.2% of Guilford County adult residents have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent, while just over 40% have a bachelors degree or higher.

Household Poverty

Source: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates; American Community Survey, five-year estimates, S1701

About The Data:
Percent of households living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.
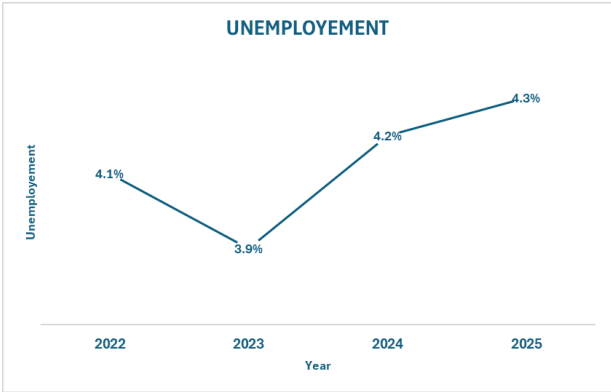
Why This Is Important:
Living below 200% of the poverty level indicates limited resources for basic needs like housing, food, transportation, and healthcare. Financial hardship is associated with poorer short- and long-term health outcomes and increased stress. This measure helps identify the share of households facing economic instability and those most likely to benefit from supports such as nutrition programs, housing assistance, and workforce development.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County's rate has remained near 34% for four years, ranking 39th out of 100 NC counties (1 = lowest poverty rate, 100 = highest).

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Unemployment

UNEMPLOYEMENT

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics *

About The Data:
Percentage of the population ages 16 and older who are unemployed but seeking work.
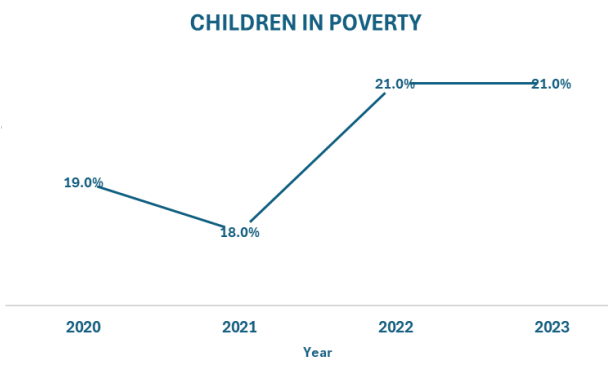
Why This Is Important:
Employment is the key driver to economies on all scales. Residents with stable employment and sufficient income are able to support themselves, their families, and the local economy. A high employment rate means that the economy is strong enough to provide jobs for everyone who can work. The employment rate may also measure how well, or how poorly, the skills of the workforce match the available jobs in the region.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Guilford County had an unemployment rate of 4.2% for 2024. This is compared to the national rate of 4.0% and state rate of 3.6%.

Childhood Poverty

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Source: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates; American Community Survey, five-year estimates *

About The Data:
Percentage of people under age 18 in poverty.

Why This Is Important:
Child poverty indicates families lack resources to meet basic needs such as housing, food, healthcare, and transportation. Growing up in poverty is linked to lower academic achievement, poorer health, and reduced income later in life. Children in low-income households are also more likely to experience chronic health conditions and injuries, creating long-term impacts that can persist into adulthood.
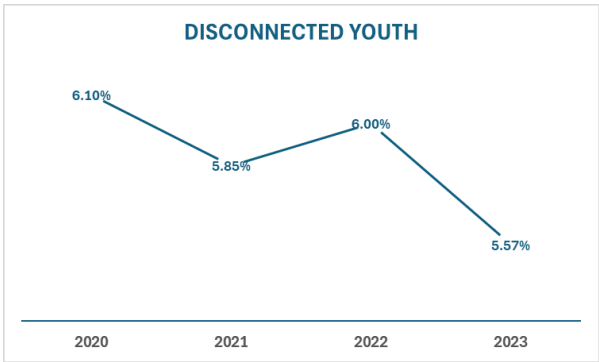
How is Guilford County Doing?
In 2023, an estimated 16% of children in the U.S., 18% in North Carolina, and 21% in Guilford County lived below the poverty line.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Disconnected Youth

DISCONNECTED YOUTH

	2020	2021	2022	2023
	6.10%	5.85%	6.00%	5.57%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, table B14005 *

About The Data:
The percentage of the population ages 16 to 19 that is neither in school nor working.

Why This Is Important:
Youth who are neither in school nor working face higher risks of long-term unemployment, lower earnings, and ongoing poverty as adults. Disconnection can also reflect barriers such as limited transportation, unstable housing, or lack of access to training and supports. Monitoring this measure helps communities understand how many young people may be missing key education and employment opportunities and where additional pathways and supports are needed.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County's percentage of disconnected youth has been steadily dropping since 2012. The 2023 percentage of 5.57% is lower than the North Carolina average of 7%.

Small Business Density

143

Source: North Carolina Department of Administration

About The Data:
Number of small business enterprises (SBE) in Guilford County certified through the North Carolina historically underutilized businesses (HUB) office.
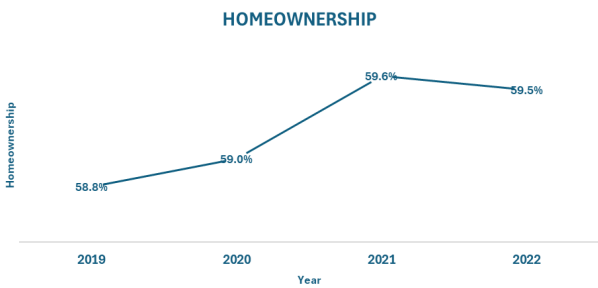
Why This Is Important:
Historically underutilized businesses and other small enterprises play a significant role in local job creation, innovation, and wealth-building. Tracking the number of HUB-certified small businesses provides a high-level view of how many local firms are positioned to compete for public contracts, support inclusive economic growth, and keep more economic activity within the region.

How is Guilford County Doing?
There are 723 small businesses certified in the 27 County combined statistical area (CSA) that includes Guilford County. Guilford County businesses represent 20% of the total in the area.

Homeownership

HOMEOWNERSHIP

58.8%　59.0%　59.6%　59.5%

2019　2020　2021　2022

Year

Homeownership

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates *

About The Data:
Percentage of owner-occupied housing units.

Why This Is Important:
Housing is central to opportunities for living long and well, and stable and affordable housing is an essential element to healthy communities. Homeownership is associated with better health, fewer illnesses, and lower rates of depression and anxiety. Owning one's housing can, over time, help build savings for retirement or other opportunities important to health and future family wealth. High levels of homeownership are associated with more stable housing and tightly knit communities.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Just under 60% of housing units in Guilford County are owner-occupied. In the state, 66% of units are considered owner-occupied.

Housing Occupancy

93%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). Occupancy Status American Community Survey 1-year estimates

About The Data:
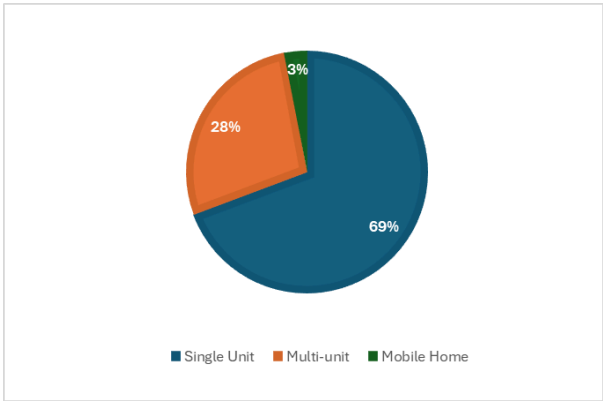Percentage of total housing units occupied.

Why This Is Important:
Measuring occupied housing units is crucial for understanding housing market conditions, planning community development, and allocating resources. It helps determine housing needs, monitor affordability and overcrowding, track economic indicators, and ensure equal access to housing by providing data for government programs, policy decisions, and emergency planning.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to the 2023 US Census data, Guilford County is at a 93% occupancy rate, which is greater than North Carolina's total rate of 88.2% and the national rate of 90.4%.

Housing Type

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates

About The Data:
Percent of housing structures located in Guilford County by structure type, including single units, multi-units, and mobile homes.

Why This Is Important:
Housing structure type helps illustrate the variety and availability of housing options in a community. This information supports planning, housing development, funding decisions, and assessment of market trends. Understanding whether homes are single-family, multifamily, or mobile helps agencies evaluate housing demand, affordability needs, and the suitability of housing stock for different household sizes, ages, and income levels.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County has the same percentage of single-unit housing as North Carolina as a whole. Guilford County has less mobile home housing than North Carolina (11%) and the United States (6%).

Rental Costs

$1150

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey

About The Data:
Fair market rent for a 2 bedroom rental in Guilford County. Fair Market Rent is set at the 40th percentile level of gross rents for each metropolitan area and nonmetropolitan county.
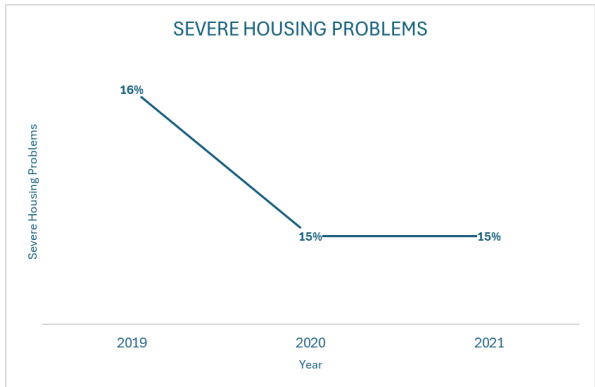
Why This Is Important:
Every year, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates fair market rents (FMRs), which are used to determine payment standards and rental assistance levels for housing programs. If FMR keeps pace with rental costs, families have better access to safe and affordable homes. When FMR lags behind rising market rents, voucher holders may face limited choices, higher rent burdens, or difficulty finding units. Tracking FMR helps assess affordability trends and the purchasing power of rental assistance.

How is Guilford County Doing?
According to HUD, the fair market rent for Guilford County is $1150.

Goal 3: Safe and Resilient Communities

Housing Conditions

SEVERE HOUSING PROBLEMS

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data *

About The Data:
Percentage of households experiencing one or more of the following: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing.
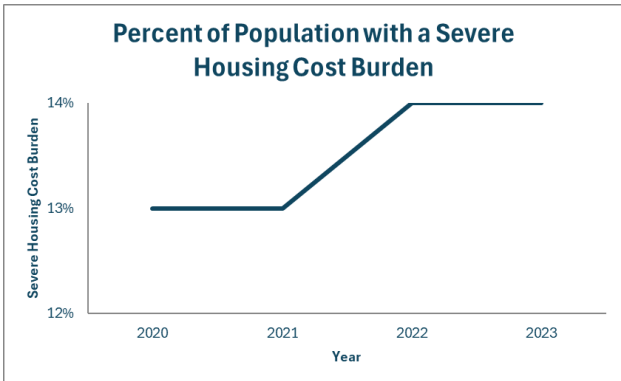
Why This Is Important:
Safe, stable housing supports physical and mental health. Inadequate housing can expose residents to hazards and is linked to chronic disease, injury, and poor childhood development. Severe housing problems also reflect broader socioeconomic conditions, as households struggling with cost or quality often face barriers meeting basic needs. Tracking this measure helps illustrate housing quality and equity in the community.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In 2021, 15% of Guilford County households experienced severe housing problems, compared with 14% statewide.

Housing Affordability

Percent of Population with a Severe Housing Cost Burden

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates *

About The Data:
Percentage of households that spend 50% or more of their household income on housing.
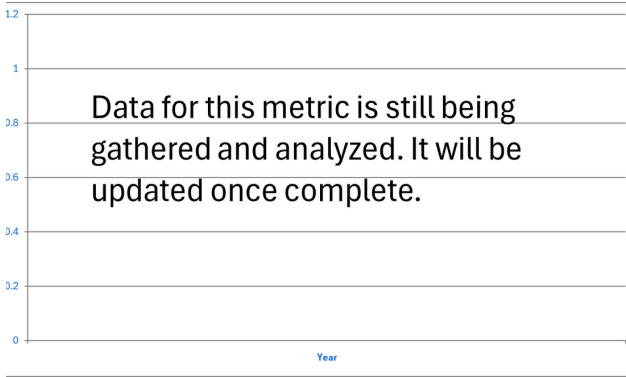
Why This Is Important:
When the majority of a paycheck goes toward the rent or mortgage, it makes it hard to afford essentials like food, healthcare, medication, and transportation. Severe housing cost burden can increase stress and financial instability and reduce the ability to build savings. Monitoring cost burden provides a high-level view of affordability and economic pressure on households.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In Guilford County, 14% of households experience severe housing cost burden, compared with 13% of households across North Carolina.

Animal Control Calls

1.2
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0

Data for this metric is still being gathered and analyzed. It will be updated once complete.

Year

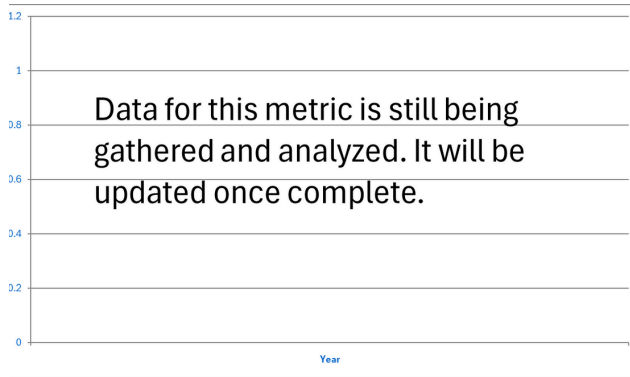Source: Guilford County Animal Control Department

About The Data:
The number of calls for animal care and control in the year divided by the total population.

Why This Is Important:
Animal control activity reflects both animal welfare needs and public safety conditions. Many factors affect the number of animal control calls in an area, such as the density of residents, the number of animals owned, proximity to undeveloped land, and the diligence of residents - both animal owners and not. Tracking calls helps the County monitor trends in stray animals, nuisance situations, and safety risks, while also informing strategies for responsible pet ownership and animal services demand.

How is Guilford County Doing?

Rural Fire Response Times

1.2
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0

Data for this metric is still being gathered and analyzed. It will be updated once complete.

Year

Source: Guilford County

About The Data:
Response time in minutes that rural fire stations in Guilford County to arrive at an emergency call.

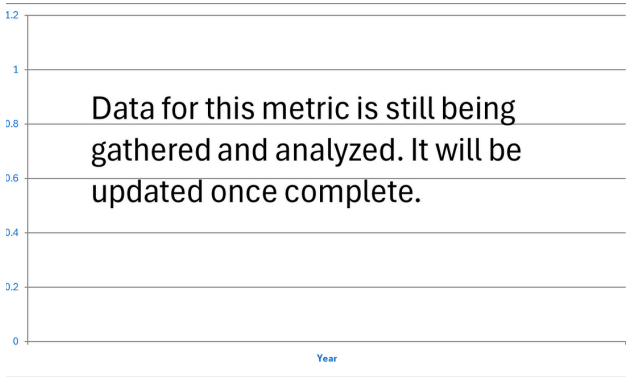**Why This Is Important:**
Fast fire response reduces fire spread, property loss, and risk of injury or death. Response times in rural areas can be influenced by station spacing, roadway access, geography, and call volume. Tracking this measure helps fire services evaluate performance, plan stations and staffing, and improve emergency outcomes for rural residents.

How is Guilford County Doing?

EMS Response Times

Data for this metric is still being gathered and analyzed. It will be updated once complete.

Year

Source: Guilford County EMS

About The Data:
Response time in minutes for the Guilford County Emergency Services to arrive at a class A emergency call.

Why This Is Important:
Emergency response time is a critical determinant of survival and recovery in life-threatening events such as cardiac arrest, trauma, and stroke. Quicker arrival reduces injury severity and long-term complications. Monitoring response times helps evaluate system performance, identify bottlenecks, and support resource deployment to ensure timely care and public safety.

How is Guilford County Doing?

Goal 3: Safe and Resilient Communities

Natural Disaster Risk

86.22

Source: FEMA National Risk Index Map

About The Data:
Risk Index scores combine Expected Annual Loss from natural hazards, Social Vulnerability, and Community Resilience. Scores are shown as composite and hazard-specific percentiles relative to other communities.

Why This Is Important:
The National Risk Index highlights communities most at risk from 18 natural hazards, including hurricanes, tornadoes, heat waves, flooding, drought, and winter storms. It blends hazard exposure with social vulnerability and local capacity to recover, offering a clearer picture than hazard data alone. Understanding risk helps communities plan mitigation investments, strengthen resilience, and reduce loss of life and property.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County scores moderate for expected annual loss, high for social vulnerability, and moderate for community resilience when compared with the U.S. overall.

Flood Planning and Resilience

7

Source: FEMA.gov Flood Plain Management

About The Data:
Community Rating System (CRS) class ratings range from Class 10 (no discount) to Class 1 (45% discount), awarded in 5% increments based on floodplain management practices.
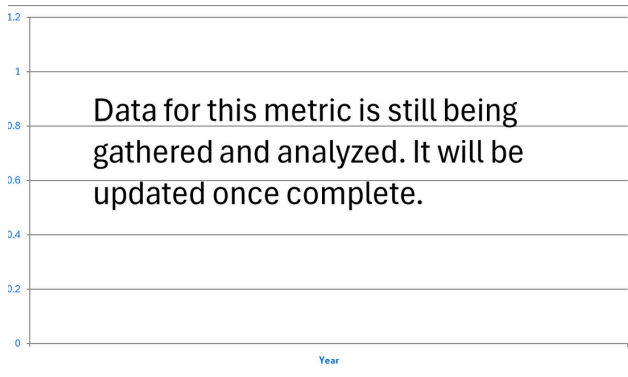
Why This Is Important:
The Community Rating System encourages local governments to exceed minimum floodplain standards. Communities that reduce flood risk through planning, mapping, drainage improvements, and public education receive premium discounts for insured residents. Strong CRS performance lowers insurance costs, reduces flood damage, and supports long-term resilience, particularly in areas facing increasing storm frequency and intensity.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Since the latest effective date of October 2018, Guilford County is rated Class 7, providing residents a 15% discount on flood insurance premiums.

Blighted Structures

Data for this metric is still being gathered and analyzed. It will be updated once complete.
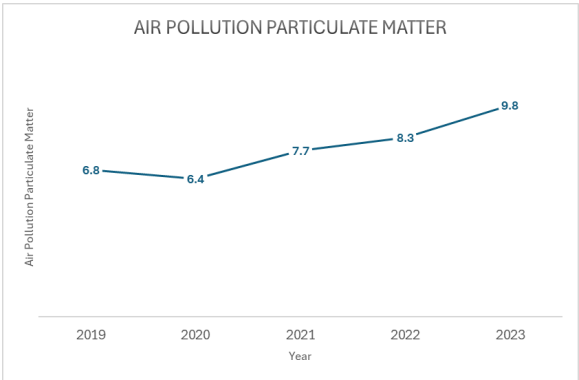
Year

Source:

About The Data:
Number of Blighted Structures in Guilford County

Why This Is Important:
Blighted structures can depress property values, pose safety hazards, and impact community health. By quantifying blight, communities can accurately assess the scale of the problem to prioritize revitalization efforts, allocate resources efficiently, and create strategies to improve quality of life, attract investment, and reduce costs associated with neglected properties.

How is Guilford County Doing?

Air Quality

AIR POLLUTION PARTICULATE MATTER

Air Pollution Particulate Matter

6.8   6.4   7.7   8.3   9.8

2019   2020   2021   2022   2023

Year

Source: Environmental Public Health Tracking Network *

About The Data:
Average daily density of fine particulate matter in micrograms per cubic meter (PM2.5).
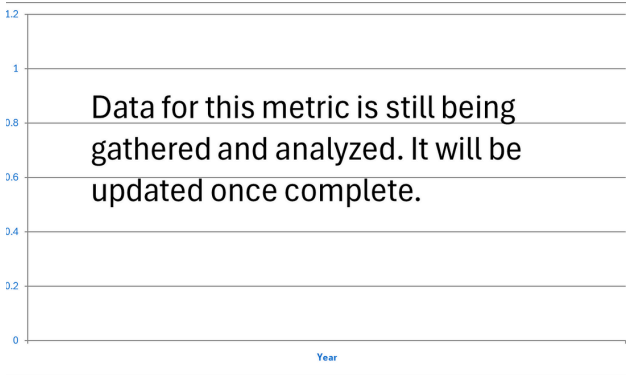
Why This Is Important:
Air pollution, particularly fine particulate matter, poses significant health risks. Long-term exposure increases risk of asthma, bronchitis, reduced lung function, and premature death, particularly among older adults and medically vulnerable populations. Tracking fine particle levels helps communities assess air quality and health impacts.

How is Guilford County Doing?
At a rate of 9.8, Guilford County has what is considered good air quality, and air pollution poses little to no risk for the population.

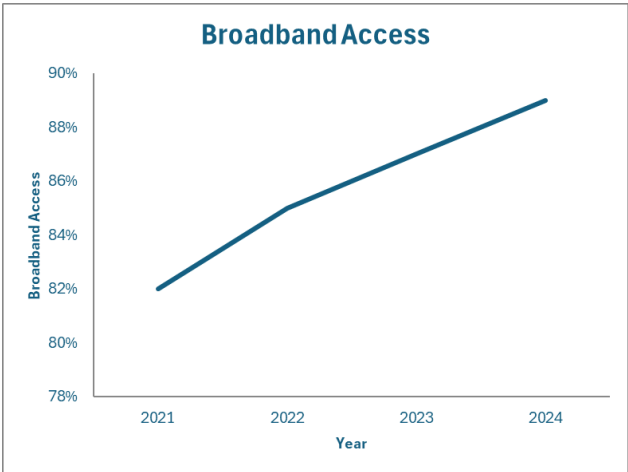# Goal 4: Sustainable & Vibrant Communities

Water/Sewer Infrastructure Miles

Data for this metric is still being gathered and analyzed. It will be updated once complete.

About The Data:
Total miles of water and sewer infrastructure.

Why This Is Important:
Piper water and sewer infrastructure is important for any community to grow and serve its residents. Housing that has access to piped water and sewer infrastructure is valued higher than properties that don't. One study indicates as much as 50% higher. The availability of piped water and sewer speaks to a community's capacity for growth and future development.

How is Guilford County Doing?

Broadband Access

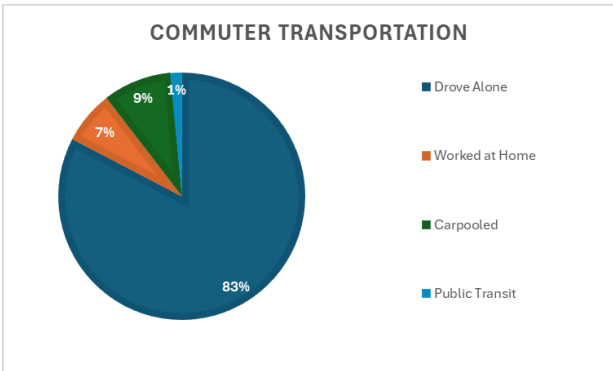Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates *

About The Data:
Percentage of households with broadband internet connection.

Why This Is Important:
Access to reliable, high-speed broadband internet improves access to education, employment, and health care opportunities and is associated with increased economic development. Gaps in access, often shaped by cost and infrastructure, reinforce economic and racial inequities (digital redlining). Increasing broadband access strengthens workforce opportunity, reduces isolation, and expands access to community resources.

How is Guilford County Doing?
High-speed internet access has increased steadily in Guilford County since 2020. 89% of households now have access, the same as the statewide average.

Goal 4: Sustainable & Vibrant Communities

Commuter Transportation

COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION

- Drove Alone
- Worked at Home
- Carpooled
- Public Transit

83% / 7% / 9% / 1%

Source: US Census American Community Survey 2023.

About The Data:
Percentage of workers commuting alone by car, carpooling, taking public transportation, or working from home.

Why This Is Important:
Commuting patterns shape transportation demand, infrastructure needs, and environmental health. Measuring commuter transportation is crucial for urban planning, economic development, and public health because it provides data to improve infrastructure, reduce costs, and ensure equitable access. Understanding how people travel also informs sustainable growth, air quality goals, and active transportation planning.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Over the last four years of collected data, carpooling and public transit commuting have remained consistent, while working from home has increased and driving alone has decreased.

Commute Time

LONG COMMUTE

23.0% — 19.4% — 18.8%

2021 — 2022 — 2023

Year

Long Commute

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates *

About The Data:
Percentage of workers who commute more than 30 minutes by car alone.

Why This Is Important:
Longer commuting distances in vehicles have been associated with increased blood pressure and body mass index (BMI) and decreased physical activity.[1] Every extra hour spent in a car each day increases the risk of obesity by 6%. Longer commute times have also been associated with poorer mental health.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County has a lower share of residents who commute more than 30 minutes to work alone than both North Carolina and the United States. Statewide, 25% of workers have long commutes, compared with 26% nationally.

Goal 4: Sustainable & Vibrant Communities

Access to Parks

61%

Source: ArcGIS Online; US Census TIGER/Line Shapefiles *

About The Data:
Percentage of residents living within a half mile of a park.

Why This Is Important:
Proximity to parks supports physical activity, mental well-being, and social connection. Access to green space encourages active play, reduces chronic disease risk, and improves community livability. Parks also provide environmental benefits such as cooling, habitat, and stormwater management. T

How is Guilford County Doing?
61% of Guilford County residents live within ½ mile of a park, compared with 41% statewide.

Greenway Miles

60

Source: Guilford County Parks Department

About The Data:
Miles of completed greenway infrastructure in Guilford County.

Why This Is Important:
Trails and greenways provide economic, environmental, health, and transportation benefits. They support walking and biking, promote active living and improved physical and mental health, and offer safe routes for non-vehicle travel. Greenways can boost nearby property values, attract tourism, protect natural areas, and reduce flood risk. Tracking greenway mileage helps measure progress toward expanding recreation and connectivity across the county.

How is Guilford County Doing?
The Guilford County parks department maintains 27 miles of the 60 miles of greenway in the County.

Library Access

2

Source: Institute fo Museum and Library Sciences *

About The Data:
Average number of annual library visits per resident living within the library service area.

Why This Is Important:
Libraries are vital public institutions that support learning, digital access, workforce development, and community connection. Beyond books, they offer free internet, job search assistance, early literacy programs, health services, technology access, and safe gathering spaces. Higher visitation suggests strong community engagement and availability of accessible public resources that contribute to social well-being.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In 2022, library use in Guilford County was 2 visits per resident, matching the national average and exceeding the North Carolina average of 1. Top counties average 5.

Arts Vibrancy Score

94

Source: SMU DataArts

About The Data:
The Arts Vibrancy Index measures arts activity using 13 per-capita indicators across three areas: Arts Providers (supply), Arts Dollars (market demand), and Government Support.

Why This Is Important:
A vibrant arts ecosystem contributes to livability by strengthening local identity, attracting talent, supporting creative jobs, and enhancing quality of life. Strong arts sectors foster tourism, innovation, and community connection. Measuring arts vibrancy helps communities understand cultural assets, identify areas for investment, and support equitable access to creative experiences.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County ranks among the top ~10% of U.S. counties in arts vibrancy, performing well in supply, demand, and public support. The philanthropic base is less concentrated than in top-tier arts hubs, but the county's strong creative infrastructure and highly educated population position it well for growth.

Goal 5: Operational Support and Fiscal Sustainability

Credit Rating

AAA

Aaa

Source: Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global Ratings and Moody's Investors Service

About The Data:
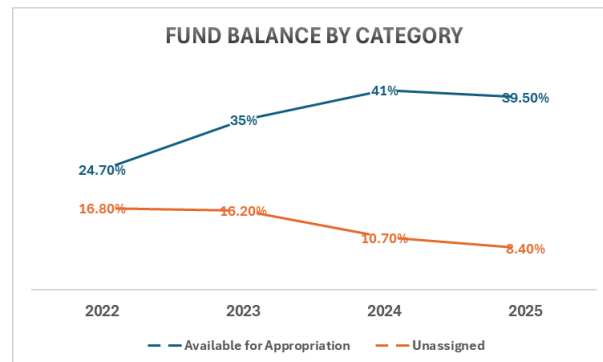The County's credit rating for General Obligation (GO) bonds as issued by national credit rating agencies.

Why This Is Important:
Credit ratings reflect a county's financial strength and ability to repay debt. A higher rating indicates strong fiscal management and lower borrowing risk, which can reduce interest costs on capital projects such as schools, parks, and infrastructure. Monitoring credit ratings provides a high-level view of financial stability and investor confidence in the County's long-term financial position.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County holds a AAA rating from S&P and Aaa from Moody's, the highest possible ratings, indicating exceptional financial health and very low credit risk.

Fund Balance

FUND BALANCE BY CATEGORY

Source: Guilford County Finance Department

About The Data:
Measures the County's fund balance as a percentage of General Fund expenditures. Two components are shown: Available for Appropriation, which represents resources that are not reserved under North Carolina statute, and Unassigned Fund Balance, which reflects amounts not restricted, committed, or assigned.

Why This Is Important:
Fund balance is a key indicator of a government's fiscal stability and capacity to manage unexpected costs or revenue shortfalls. Higher balances help maintain operations during emergencies, support cash flow, and strengthen the County's creditworthiness.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In FY2025, the amount Available for Appropriation was 39.5% of expenditures and the Unassigned Fund Balance was 8.4%. Available for Appropriation has risen from 24.7% in FY2022, while Unassigned reserves declined from 16.8% to 8.4% over the same period.

Goal 5: Operational Support and Fiscal Sustainability

Property Tax Per Capita

$956

Source: North Carolina Association of County Commissioners; North Carolina Department of Revenue

About The Data:
Countywide property tax levy per capita for fiscal year 2024-2025. The total property tax levy divided by the county population, showing how much property tax revenue is raised per resident.

Why This Is Important:
Property tax levy per capita provides a simple view of how much revenue a county raises through property taxes relative to its population. While it does not measure household tax burden, it helps compare the scale of property-tax-supported services across counties. When considered alongside revenue per penny, this indicator offers insight into the level of revenue generated per resident and the capacity of the local tax base to support public services.

How is Guilford County Doing?
In FY2024–25, Guilford County's property tax levy per capita was $956, slightly above the statewide average of $942. The County ranks 69th out of 100 North Carolina counties, where 1 represents the lowest levy and 100 the highest.

Property Tax Revenue Per Penny

$7.3M

Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue

About The Data:
The estimated revenue Guilford County receives from one penny on the property tax rate, based on 2024 valuations. Revenue per penny reflects the strength of the taxable base and varies with property values and land exempt from taxation.

Why This Is Important:
Revenue per penny measures the fiscal capacity of a county's tax base. A higher value means the county can generate more revenue from a small tax rate change, often reflecting strong property values or a broad taxable base. This indicator is essential for understanding how easily a county can fund services such as education, public safety, and infrastructure without placing additional tax effort on residents.

How is Guilford County Doing?
Guilford County generates $7,334,141 per penny, ranking 3rd out of 100 counties in North Carolina, where 1 indicates the highest revenue per penny. This reflects a comparatively strong property tax base.

Guilford County
STATE *of* NORTH CAROLINA

Visit Our Website
www.GuilfordCountyNC.gov/StrategicPlan