

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2023-2027

# Waccamaw Region



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## Section 1:

# Introduction

01 | CEDS 2023–2027, WACCAMAW REGION

# INTRODUCTION



Created in 1969, the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) is one of South Carolina's ten regional planning agencies known as COGs. WRCOG serves Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties, including the counties' sixteen municipalities.

A twenty-five member Board of Directors oversees the agency's budget, appoints an executive director, and serves as the agency's policy making body. The board is appointed by the legislative delegations from the three counties and includes a mixture of public and private sector residents. A list of the WRCOG's Board of Directors can be found in appendix.

As part of its core mission, WRCOG provides in-depth assistance to local governments and serves as the technical planning staff for a few planning and zoning commissions, assists in securing and administering grant funds for local projects and services, and coordinates varied social service programs geared toward the elderly and economically disadvantaged. Through its workforce

development program, WRCOG maintains, in coordination with the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, the area's three SC Works Re-employment centers.

The Waccamaw Region was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the United States Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 1970. For the past fifty plus years, WRCOG has partnered with EDA as the Regional EDD promoting economic development in the region. Through its community and economic development department, WRCOG assists in the administration of programs and activities related to the area's Economic Development District designation. A major part of this responsibility is to provide staff support in the periodic update or rewrite of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The CEDS is designed to guide regional economic growth. This planning process and subsequent report provide strategies for job creation, diversified economies, and aim to increase the quality of life. In addition, CEDS promotes collaboration and coordination between the various individuals and groups, both public and private, engaged in economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area.

The development and adoption of a CEDS is a requirement to qualify for Economic Development Administration (EDA) assistance in public works, economic adjustment, and other planning programs. Additionally, an adopted CEDS is a prerequisite for the EDA's designation as an area Economic Development District (EDD). All EDD's must address resilience in their CEDS utilizing a two-pronged approach (steady-state and responsive initiatives) to help identify and counter the vulnerabilities that each region may face.

CEDS has been an integral part of economic development planning in the Waccamaw Region for the last five decades. The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) has facilitated, through its Board of Directors and the CEDS Strategy Committee, the annual review and five year CEDS rewrite. This comprehensive strategy for the

Waccamaw Region, 2023–2027 replaces the region’s 2017 CEDS. In addition, this plan is designed not only to meet federal CEDS requirements but also to provide meaningful guidance to policy makers in economic development engaging in decisions affecting the region over the next several years.

## WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?



- **Economic development is the creation of prosperity from which community benefits are realized. It is an investment in growing your economy and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for all.**
- **On a broad scale, anything a community does to foster and create a healthy economy can fall under the umbrella of economic development.**
- **From a public perspective, local economic development involves the allocation of limited resources – land, labor, capital and entrepreneurship in a way that has a positive effect on the level of business activity, employment, income distribution patterns, and fiscal stability.**
- **Economic development can lead toward opportunities that can influence sustained economic growth to provide resource allocation, sufficient income for the labor force, profitable business opportunities for employers, and tax revenue to maintain infrastructure.**



## Section 2:

# Regional Summary



# REGIONAL SUMMARY

**The Waccamaw Economic Development District also known as the Waccamaw Region is located in the northeastern coastal area of South Carolina. The region consists of Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties.**

The region comprises approximately 2,901 square miles and is bound to the north by the North Carolina state line; the Atlantic Ocean to the east; the Santee River which borders Berkeley and Charleston counties to the south; and Clarendon, Florence, Marion, and Dillon counties to the west.

Georgetown County has experienced mild growth over the past decade and includes a land mass spanning 822 square miles with a population density of 77.13 persons. Georgetown County has over 34 miles of coastline and seven inlets, and boasts natural scenery along with many historic sites.

Williamsburg County is very rural area encompassing 937 square miles with a population density of 33.11 persons. The Black River, state-designated Scenic River, runs through the county offering recreation and natural beauty to the region. Williamsburg County is designated as a persistent poverty county, and has experienced a declining population for decades.

Myrtle Beach, located in Horry County, is the most populous city in the region and it is also designated as part of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) which is the 4th largest MSA in the state. The US Census Bureau report on the fastest growing metros in the US ranked the Myrtle Beach MSA as third in the nation for annual growth (3.7%) from July 2020 to July 2021. According to the 2020 Census, the population in Horry County ballooned by 30% since the 2010 Census. With a land mass of 1,255 square miles and a population density of 279.7 persons, Horry County is both the largest, and fastest growing county in South Carolina. Horry County's 60 miles of beautiful beaches attracts millions of tourists each year.

## ECONOMIC ASSETS

The Waccamaw Region has five major economic assets which include **Geography, Climate, Transportation, Population, and Education**

- The **geography** of the Waccamaw Region is one of its biggest economic assets. It is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean lined with beaches and offers hundreds of thousands of acres of flat and fertile land.
- With mild winters and a subtropical **climate**, the Waccamaw area is an attractive location for both visitors and residents.
- The Waccamaw Region offers numerous **transportation** options including six U.S. highways, twenty state highways, and numerous roads which crisscross throughout the area. In addition, three main railroad lines and two spur railroad lines are currently used for both freight and passengers; Kingstree is home to an Amtrak station. Myrtle Beach International Airport serves as the region's main commercial airport and also includes a General Aviation terminal. Six smaller airports located in North Myrtle Beach, Loris, Conway, Georgetown, Andrews, and Kingstree are also utilized. These transportation systems allow for the movement of freight, commuters, shoppers, and visitors.
- Areas along the coastline of the Waccamaw Region are rapidly growing in **population** and are typically among the fastest growing regions in the U.S. The increasing population offers economic development opportunities for the entire region.
- Opportunities for **education** continue to thrive within the Waccamaw Region, as the area offers a variety of private and public K-12 schools, technical colleges, a growing public university, and multiple other trade schools. The educational opportunities enable residents to obtain skills needed to enter the workforce.

## **ECONOMIC CLUSTERS**

**Economic clusters are defined as groups of businesses or institutions that have some similarity in industry type, method of operations, technology, or supply chain.**

Businesses or institutions which fall within a cluster may, in some cases, be competitors within the same industry or directly compete for the same raw and finished materials. The clustering of similar or complementary businesses can be beneficial to the local economy in that they tend to promote a workforce with a compatible skill set, promote focused workforce training programs, and reduce infrastructure expenditures by concentrating needed improvements to smaller geographic areas. Economic clusters can also promote collaboration in production fields leading to greater innovation and efficiency.

Within the Waccamaw Region, several prominent and longstanding economic clusters were identified.

These regional clusters include the following:

***Hospitality and Retail***

***Healthcare and Health Science***

***Manufacturing***

***Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics***

***Agriculture and Forestry***

## ECONOMIC INDUSTRIES BY COUNTY

In addition to regional economic clusters, each county within the Waccamaw Region has identified key industries to focus on for economic development:

### Georgetown County:

Manufacturing  
Timber  
Paper  
Chemical Operations  
Metal Fabrication  
Machinery

### Horry County:

Aerospace  
Manufacturing  
Technology  
Healthcare  
Marine

### Williamsburg County:

Aerospace & Aviation  
Automotive Suppliers  
Agribusiness  
Chemical Operations  
Manufacturing  
Metal Fabrication

## **LARGEST EMPLOYERS IN WACCAMAW REGION**

**City of Myrtle Beach**

**Coastal Carolina University**

**Conway Medical Center**

**Food Lion**

**Founders National Golf**

**Georgetown County Department of Education**

**Hilton Grand Vacations Company**

**Horry County**

**Horry County Department of Education**

**Horry Telephone Cooperative**

**Lowe's Home Centers**

**Nan Ya Plastics Corporation America**

**New Penn Financial**

**Southeast Restaurants Corporation**

**Walmart Corporation**

**Wyndham Vacation Ownership, Inc.**

SOURCE: S.C. DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE - 2021 Q4, SC DEW COMMUNITY PROFILE-JUNE 2022

**The Waccamaw Economic Development District has experienced tremendous population growth. This growth is projected to continue through the year 2030.**

**Regional growth has not been evenly distributed. The region's rural areas, Williamsburg County and western Georgetown County, have seen stable to declining populations. Population growth has not been centered in the area's municipalities, as most municipalities have also witnessed stable to declining populations.**

**The population of the Waccamaw Region is aging. The region's median age exceeds the state and national average. The aging of the population is attributable to national demographic trends but is amplified by the relocation of retirees to the area.**



## POPULATION

The Waccamaw Economic Development District encompasses sixteen municipalities throughout the counties of Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg and while eight of the region's sixteen municipalities lost population between 2000 and 2020, data from the US Census Bureau indicate three of these municipalities (Andrews, Hemingway, and Lane) have experienced minor growth (although this growth is still less than population totals from the year 2000).

In contrast, the city of Conway has experienced the greatest percentage of population growth amongst all municipalities in the region averaging 44.7% growth within the last decade, and 94.6% within the last two decades.

*SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY*



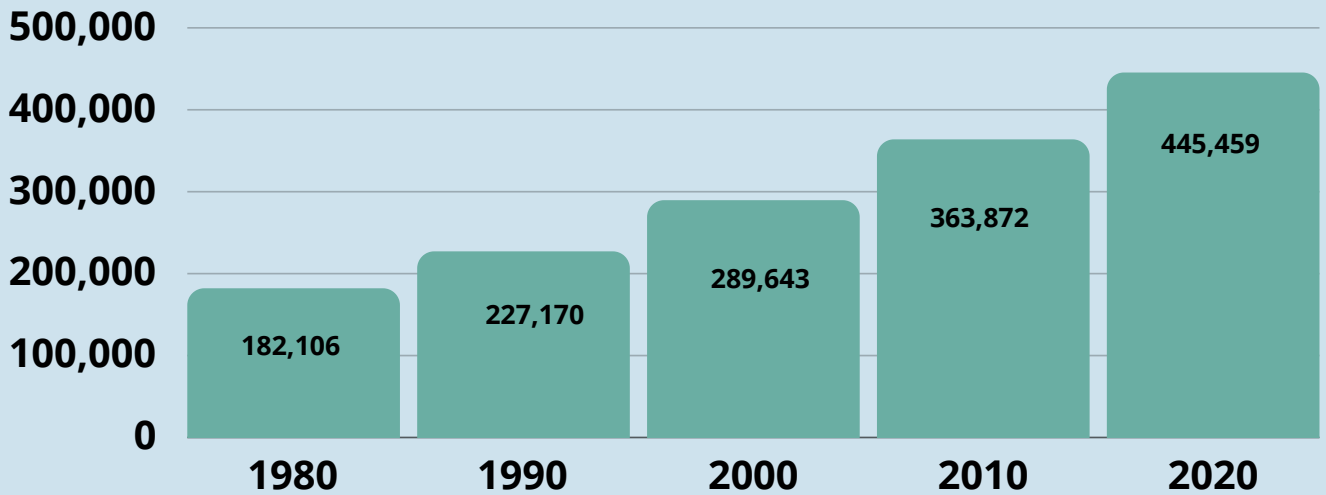
Photo credit: Visit Myrtle Beach

<u>City/Town</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>20-Year Change Growth Rate %</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>10- Year Change</u>
Andrews	3,068	3,041	-0.89	2,861	3,041	6.29*
Atlantic Beach	351	237	-32.5	334	237	-29.0
Aynor	587	785	33.7	560	785	40.2
Briarcliffe Acres	470	529	12.6	457	529	15.6
Conway	12,719	24,747	94.6	17,103	24,747	44.7
Georgetown	8,950	8,884	-0.74	9,163	8,884	-3.0
Greeleyville	452	344	-23.9	438	344	-21.5
Hemingway	573	522	-8.9	459	522	13.7*
Kingstree	3,496	3,058	-12.5	3,328	3,058	-8.1
Lane	585	569	-2.7	508	569	12.0*
Loris	2,079	2,676	28.7	2,396	2,676	11.7
Myrtle Beach	22,759	33,638	46.6	27,109	33,638	23.1
North Myrtle Beach	11,251	16,684	48.3	13,752	16,684	21.3
Pawleys Island	138	83	-39.9	103	83	-19.4
Stuckey	263	349	32.7	245	349	42.4
Surfside Beach	4,425	4,470	1.0	3,837	4,470	16.5

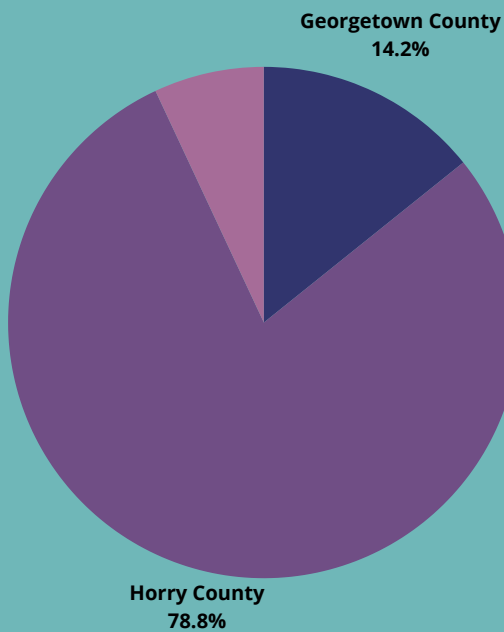


# REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROFILE

Waccamaw Region 40 Year Population Growth, 1980–2020

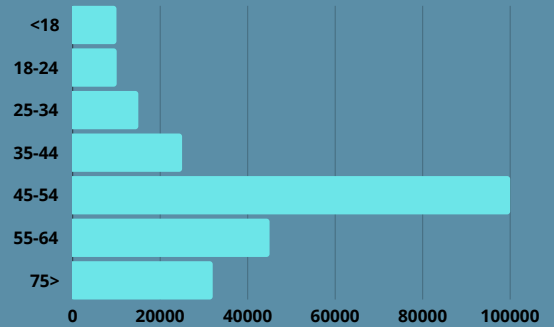


Waccamaw Region  
Population: 455,459



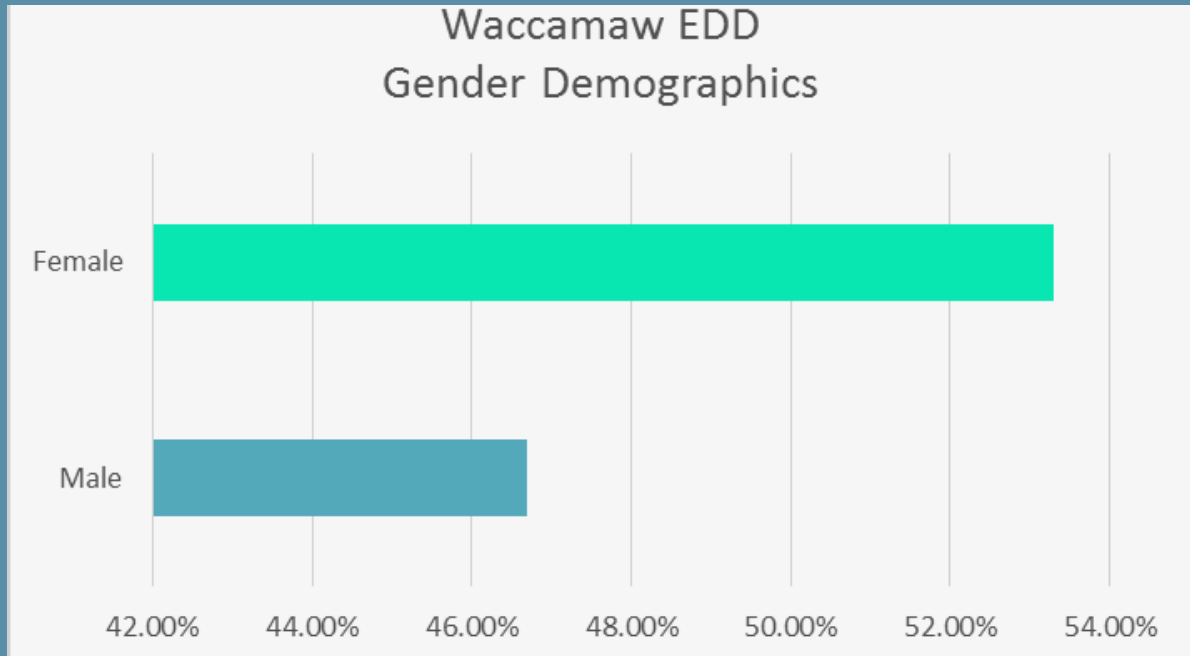
US CENSUS BUREAU: STF-DATUM, 1970-2010, DECENNIAL CENSUS VINTAGE 2020.

Waccamaw Region Population  
by Age Group

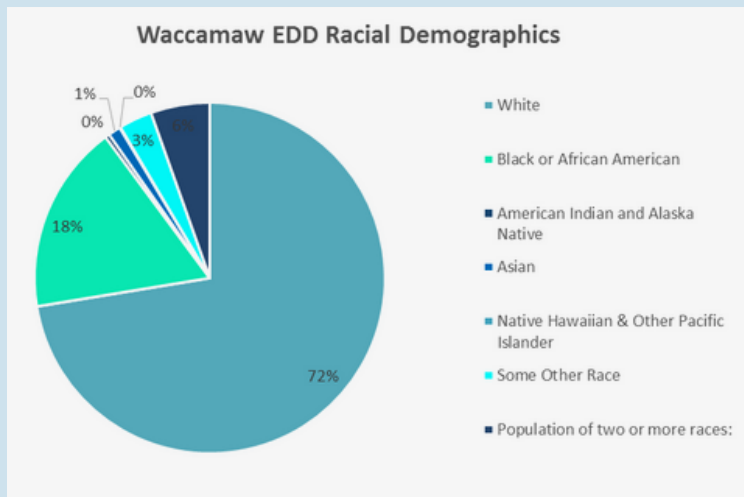


Since 1980, the region's population has grown at more than twice the rate of the state of South Carolina (Waccamaw Region: 144.62 percent, South Carolina: 63.90 percent).

# REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROFILE



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, 2020



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, 2020

The Waccamaw Economic Development District's racial demographics vary significantly by County. For example, Horry County's White population is 77% of the county's total population whereas the White population makes up 33% of the total population in Williamsburg County. Georgetown County's population is 66% white. The largest racial demographic groups in the region are White at 72% and Black or African American at 18%.

SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, 2020

**AIRPORTS LOCATED IN  
THE WACCAMAW REGION**

**Georgetown County:**

**Georgetown Airport, GGE  
Andrews Airport, PHH**

**Horry County:**

**Myrtle Beach International Airport, MYR  
Conway-Horry County Airport, HYW  
Grand Strand Airport, CRE  
Loris-Twin Cities Airport, 5J9**

**Williamsburg County:**

**Williamsburg County Regional Airport, CKI**

## MAJOR ROADS & HIGHWAYS

The region is traversed by several significant state highways, (South Carolina Highways 9, 22, 31, 41, 51, 90, 261, 319, 410, 512, 513, 527, 544, 707, and 905) and seven federal highways (U.S. Highways 17, 52, 76, 378, 501, 521, and 701). There is not an interstate located in the region. Interstate 95 is accessible by traveling west on U.S. 521 and west on U.S. 501.

**Major  
US Highways**

**7**

**Major  
South Carolina Highways**

**15**



## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

The region's passenger rail services are provided by Amtrak. Two Amtrak trains, the Palmetto and the Silver Meteor, make stops in Kingstree (Williamsburg County). The Silver Meteor services a route from Miami, Florida to Boston, Massachusetts, while the Palmetto services a route from Savannah, Georgia to Boston.

Regional and interstate freight service is provided by the CSX railroad. The railroad maintains three lines in the Waccamaw Region with rail access in the City of Georgetown, Town of Andrews, Town of Hemingway, and Town of Kingstree. In Horry County, R.J. Corman Rail operates 90 miles stretch of track from between Myrtle Beach and Whiteville, N.C. which is used to transport freight materials.

**Amtrak-  
Passenger Rail  
Service**

**CSX- Freight Rail  
Service**

**R.J. Corman-  
Freight Rail  
Service**



## BUS SERVICE

In Horry and Georgetown counties, the Coast Regional Transportation Authority (Coast RTA) provides bus and shuttle service. Coast RTA maintains routes extending from Conway to Myrtle Beach and from North Myrtle Beach through the City of Georgetown and Andrews. Paratransit service is available through subscription and by demand response.

The Williamsburg County Transit System provides bus service through Williamsburg County. This service's primary function is to transport inland workers to the Grand Strand area to work in the hospitality industry. The transit system also provides demand response service from Williamsburg County to Florence, Manning, Georgetown and Charleston.

**Coast RTA**

**Williamsburg  
County RTA**



## WATERWAYS & PORTS

The Intracoastal Waterway which follows the Waccamaw River is accessible in Horry County and the eastern side of Georgetown County. This waterway is a tourist paradise and has some residential development along its corridor. Despite its accessibility in the two counties, the Intracoastal Waterway is limited for industrial development usage.

According to the South Carolina Port Authority, the second largest seaport in the state is the Port of Georgetown located on the Sampit River. While the port has long served as a breakbulk and bulk cargo port, this port is currently no longer active and is only used for storage.

The Sampit, Black, and Pee Dee rivers snake through Georgetown and Williamsburg counties and provide beautiful recreation opportunities, but have little potential for industrial development due to the high cost and demand for residential development. All three major rivers empty into the Winyah Bay which provides a direct link to the Atlantic Ocean. The Black River will soon become South Carolina's first new state park in approximately 20 years. The Black River State Park will provide 70 miles of public access to the river between Williamsburg County and Georgetown County.

**Intracoastal Waterway**

**Port of Georgetown**

**Sampit River**

**Black River**

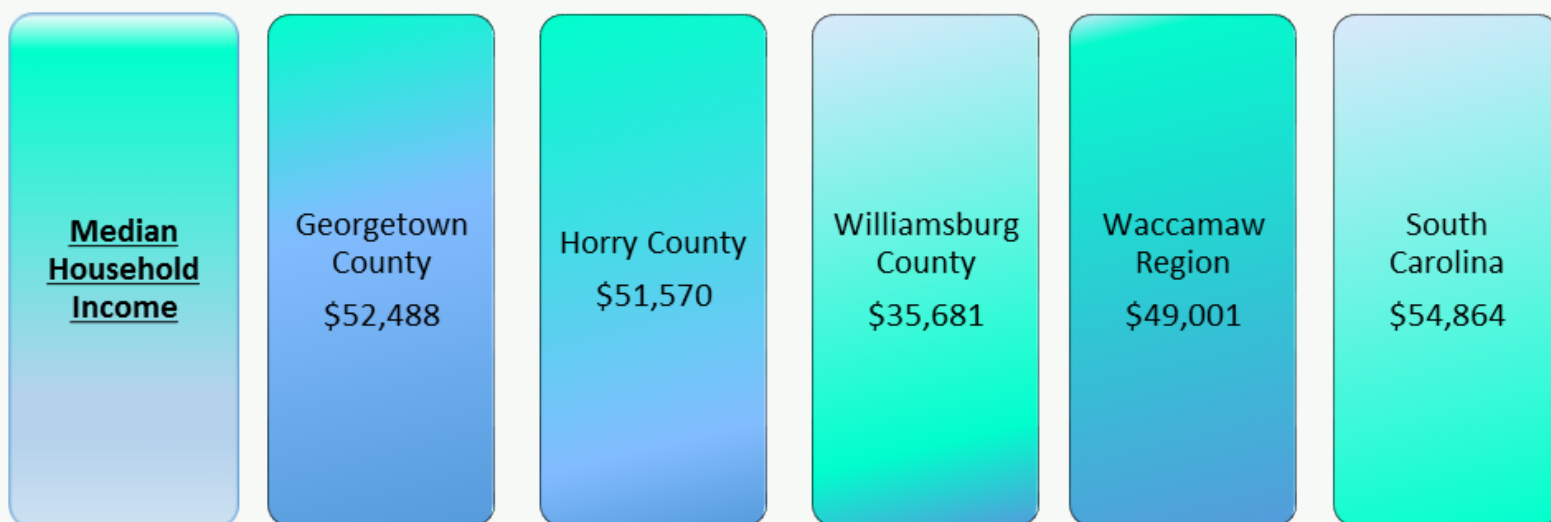
**Pee Dee River**



## The Median House Value in the Waccamaw Region is \$174,206

Source: JOBSEQ

Median household and per capita income vary significantly across the region. Historically, income rates for Georgetown and Horry County have been at or just slightly below the state's average, while Williamsburg has historically recorded incomes far below the regional and state average.

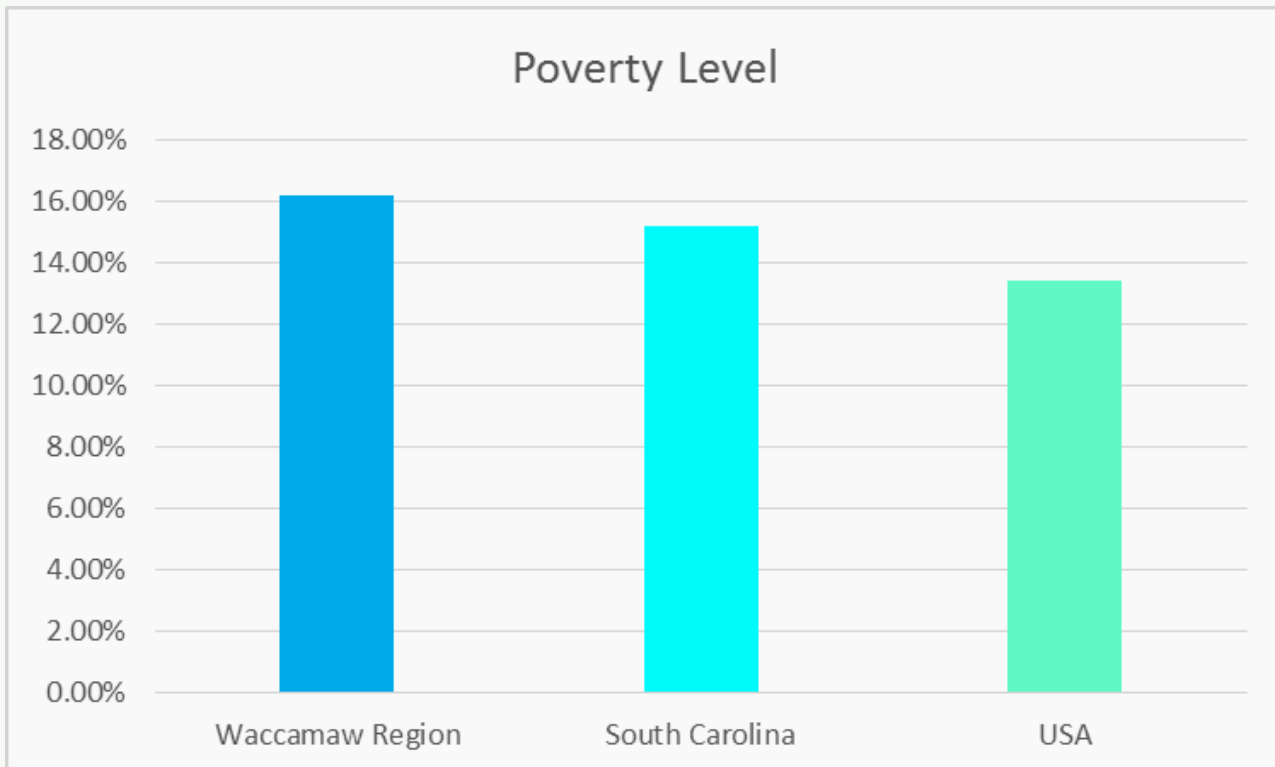


Source: US Census Bureau Quick Facts, 2016-2020 ACS 5-year Estimates, Jobs EQ Regional Economic Overview



## POVERTY RATES

Approximately 16.2% of all people in the Waccamaw Region are living in poverty, which is greater than the poverty levels in South Carolina and the United States of America.



SOURCE: JOBSEQ®



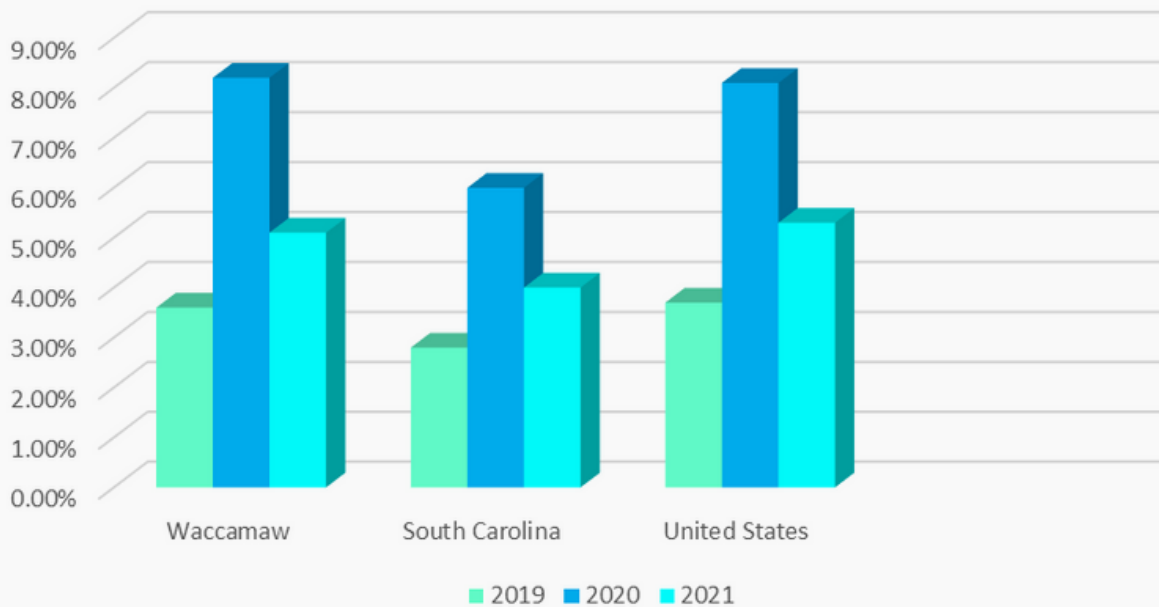
## ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The unemployment rate in the Waccamaw Region, and throughout the United States, experienced a significant increase in 2020 due to the Coronavirus/ COVID-19 Pandemic. The Pandemic resulted in massive business shut-downs, stay-at-home orders, and work-or-home orders throughout the country.

Statewide work-or-home orders were issued in South Carolina which resulted in business closures and layoffs for thousands of non-essential workers. Horry County experienced the highest unemployment rate in the region and state at 22.5% in April 2020. The unemployment rate for Georgetown County reached a high of 15.1% in April 2020 and Williamsburg reached its highest rate in May 2020 at 12.7%.

In an effort to fuel economic recovery, South Carolina implemented the Accelerate SC program to assist with getting businesses open and hiring again. As treatments and vaccines rolled out, the unemployment rate in the region, state, and nation have improved. The 2021 annual unemployment rates, however, are still above the pre-pandemic rates of 2019.

**Annual Unemployment Rates**



*Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce, Community Profile: Waccamaw Workforce Development Area, June 2022*

# ECONOMIC DISTRESS CRITERIA

24-MONTH AVG. BLS UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ENDING MAY 2022  
 2020 PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME (BEA PCPI)  
 2020 PER CAPITA MONEY INCOME (ACS 5-YEAR PCMI)

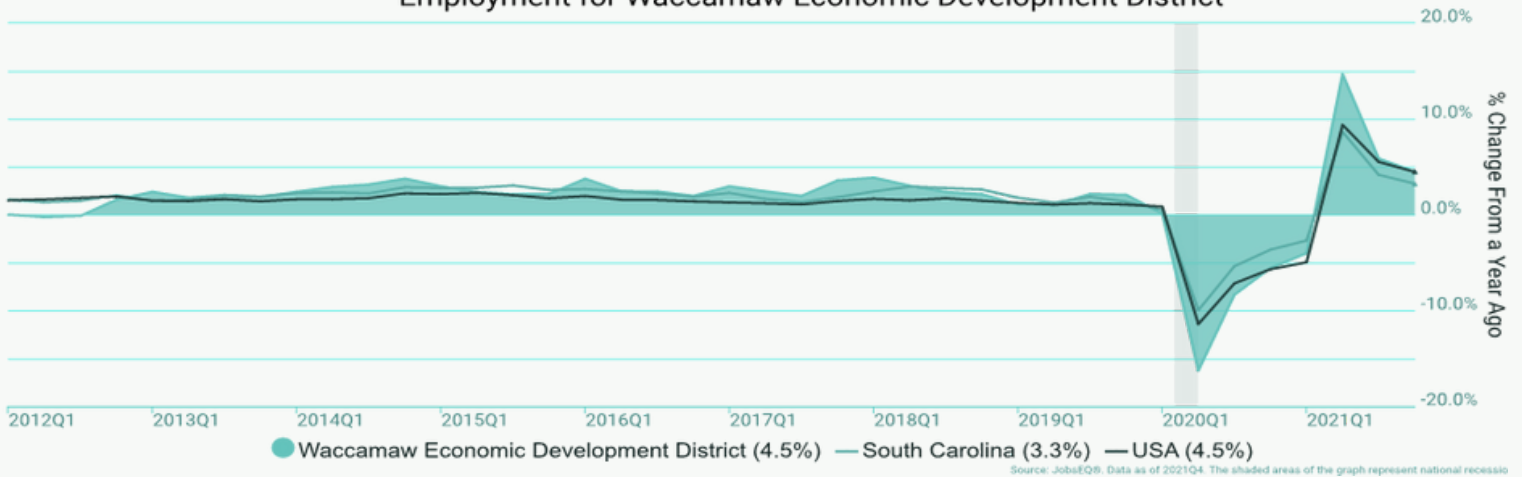
	24 Month Unemployment	Threshold Calculation	BEA PCPI	Threshold Calculation	ACS 5-Year PCMI	Threshold Calculation
<b>Waccamaw Region</b>	5.64	-0.21	\$43,212	72.6	\$29,170	82.4
<b>U.S.</b>	5.85	0.00	\$59,510	100.0	\$35,384	100.0
<b>Georgetown County, SC</b>	5.33	-0.52	\$51,775	87.0	\$34,629	97.9
<b>Horry County, SC</b>	5.62	-0.23	\$42,110	70.8	\$29,055	82.1
<b>Williamsburg County, SC</b>	6.64	0.79	\$38,528	64.7	\$19,438	54.9

Note: The threshold calculation for unemployment reflects the percentage point difference between the unemployment rate for the selected area and the U.S. figure. For example, if a region has a 24-month rate of 6.9 and the U.S. rate is 7.9, the difference shown in the threshold column is -1.0—meaning it is 1 percentage point lower than the national rate. The threshold calculation for income is the selected area’s per capita value divided by U.S. per capita income and shown as a percentage share of the U.S. figure. For example, if the selected area has a threshold calculation of 145.2, this means its per capita income is 45.2 percent higher than the nation at large.

Source: StatsAmerica, using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (unemployment), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (PCPI) and U.S. Census Bureau (ACS 5-year PCMI) data



Employment for Waccamaw Economic Development District



**Labor Participation Rate of Waccamaw Region (ages 16 and over)**  
55.2%

**Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate (ages 25-54)**  
80.1%

SOURCE: JOBSEQ®

As of 2021Q4, total employment for the Waccamaw Region was 175,404 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2021Q4, employment increased 4.5% in the region.

## COAL IMPACTED COMMUNITY

The Waccamaw Region is considered a coal impacted community as the State's electric company, Santee Cooper, has systematically begun closing coal-fired electric power generating stations in South Carolina. The Grainger Generating Station, located in Conway, SC (Horry County), was closed in 2012 and is located approximately 40 miles from Georgetown. Approximately 50 jobs were lost during the Grainger closing. Currently, the Winyah Generating Station located in Georgetown County is in the process of closing. The closure will take place in phases with a total of 200 jobs lost. It is anticipated that the entire closure will be complete by 2027.



*Demolition of the Grainger Generating Station stacks*

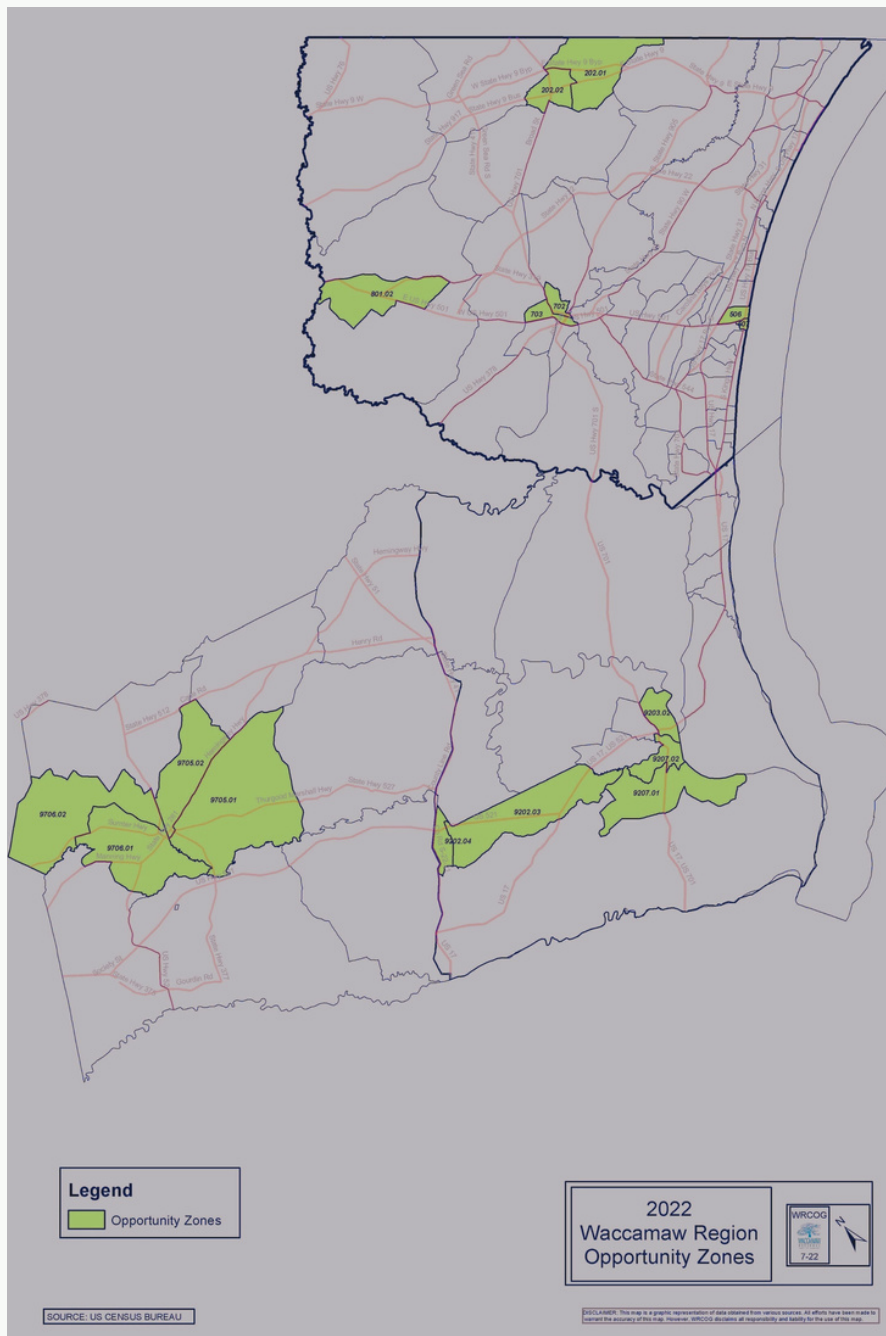
*Photo Credit: Jim Huff, Santee Cooper*

*PHOTO: HORRY COUNTY IMAGINE 2040 PLAN*

Additionally, the Jefferies Generating Station located in nearby Monks Corner was also closed and although it is not in the Waccamaw Region, it is located in the neighboring county. Due to its close proximity to Georgetown, its closure still impacts Waccamaw as employees often work and/or live in nearby cities/counties. The loss of jobs from the closures and pending closure of the coal-fired electric power generation stations has a trickle-down effect to other businesses and has a large negative impact on the economy for the counties in which they are located and the region. Economic development projects to benefit the economy and increase economic resiliency are needed.

# OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Opportunity Zones are a federal program created by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage economic development and job creation in low-income urban and rural communities by providing specialized federal tax reductions for eligible investments (SC Commerce). In 2018, South Carolina's governor designated 135 eligible Opportunity Zones. The Waccamaw region has 11 designated eligible Opportunity Zones.



## ECONOMIC INVESTMENTS IN THE WACCAMAW REGION

Company	Announcement Date	Investments	Jobs	Selected County	Objective	Products/Services	Activity/Category	Product Description
GreenCore Materials	1/29/2020	\$10,000,000	74	Georgetown	New	Composites & Advanced Materials	Manufacturing	Composite materials
WingIts Innovations, LLC (SC)	5/25/2022	\$7,400,000	40	Georgetown	New	Consumer Products	Manufacturing	Bathroom accessories
Sure Trac, Inc.	4/27/2018	\$2,500,000	20	Horry	Expansion	Machinery & Equipment	Manufacturing	Axles
CRP Industries, Inc. (SC)	8/21/2019	\$2,500,000	115	Horry	New	Automotive	Manufacturing	Automotive Parts
United Parcel Service - North Myrtle Beach	10/22/2019	\$11,000,000	50	Horry	Expansion	Packaging Materials	Warehousing & Distribution	Warehousing & Distribution
Global Metal Powders, LLC (SC)	7/8/2020	\$1,500,000	15	Horry	New	Metal & Fabricated Metal Products	Manufacturing	Metal powders
Skutchi Designs, Inc.	11/24/2020	\$3,500,000	41	Horry	Expansion	Construction, Building Products, & Demo	Manufacturing	Cubicles
Wild West of Myrtle Beach, Inc.	7/21/2021	\$2,500,000	40	Horry	Expansion	Consumer Products	Warehousing & Distribution	Footwear distribution center
DC Blox, Inc. (SC) - Myrtle Beach	5/10/2022	\$31,500,000	3	Horry	Expansion	Office, HQ, & R&D	Service	Data Center
Citadel Brands, LLC (SC)	10/20/2021	\$7,500,000	116	Williamsburg	New	Textiles	Warehousing & Distribution	Clothing distribution
Hemingway Sewing Solutions, Inc.	3/23/2022	\$3,300,000	242	Williamsburg	New	Textiles	Manufacturing	Textile products (circular knitters)

Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

The following Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants have been awarded in the Waccamaw Region since 2020. These EDA investments will improve economic development and resilience in the region through infrastructure improvements:

County	City	FY	Applicant	Project Short Description	EDA \$	Priv Investment \$	Total Proj \$
<b>Georgetown</b>	Georgetown	2022	City of Georgetown	Water Treatment Plan Improvement	\$3,428,000	\$857,000	\$4,285,000
	Georgetown	2021	City of Georgetown	Stormwater Improvement	\$3,365,409	\$841,353	\$4,206,762
	Georgetown	2021	Georgetown County	Stormwater Improvement	\$3,467,905	\$866,977	\$4,334,882
<b>Horry</b>	Murrells Inlet	2021	Georgetown County Water & Sewer District	Wastewater Improvement	\$1,458,960	\$364,740	\$1,823,700
	Conway	2021	City of Conway	Wastewater System Upgrade	\$6,094,971	\$1,523,743	\$7,618,714



The Region has also received additional investments in airports, infrastructure, and new business with commitment to jobs. These investments include the following:

Company	Announcement Date	Investment Amount	Number of Jobs	County	Objective	Category
Carolina Food Services	June 2022	\$3.7 million	71	Horry	Expansion	Warehouse & Distribution
Sherpa 6, Inc.	July 2021	\$19 million	43	Georgetown	New	Aviation
Myrtle Beach International Airport	July 2022	\$100 million	NA	Horry	Expansion	Aviation
DC BLOX	May 2022	\$31.5 million	3	Horry	New	Data Center
Wild West of Myrtle Beach	August 2021	\$2.5 million	40	Horry	Expansion	Warehouse & Distribution
Hemingway Sewing Solutions	March 2022	\$3.3 million	242	Williamsburg	New	Manufacturing
Citadel Brands, LLC	October 2021	\$7.5 million	116	Williamsburg	New	Manufacturing
Skutchi Designs, Inc.	November 2020	\$3.5 million	41	Horry	Expansion	Manufacturing
Vulcan Materials Company	July 2020	\$3 million	5	Horry	New	Warehouse & Distribution

## EDUCATION

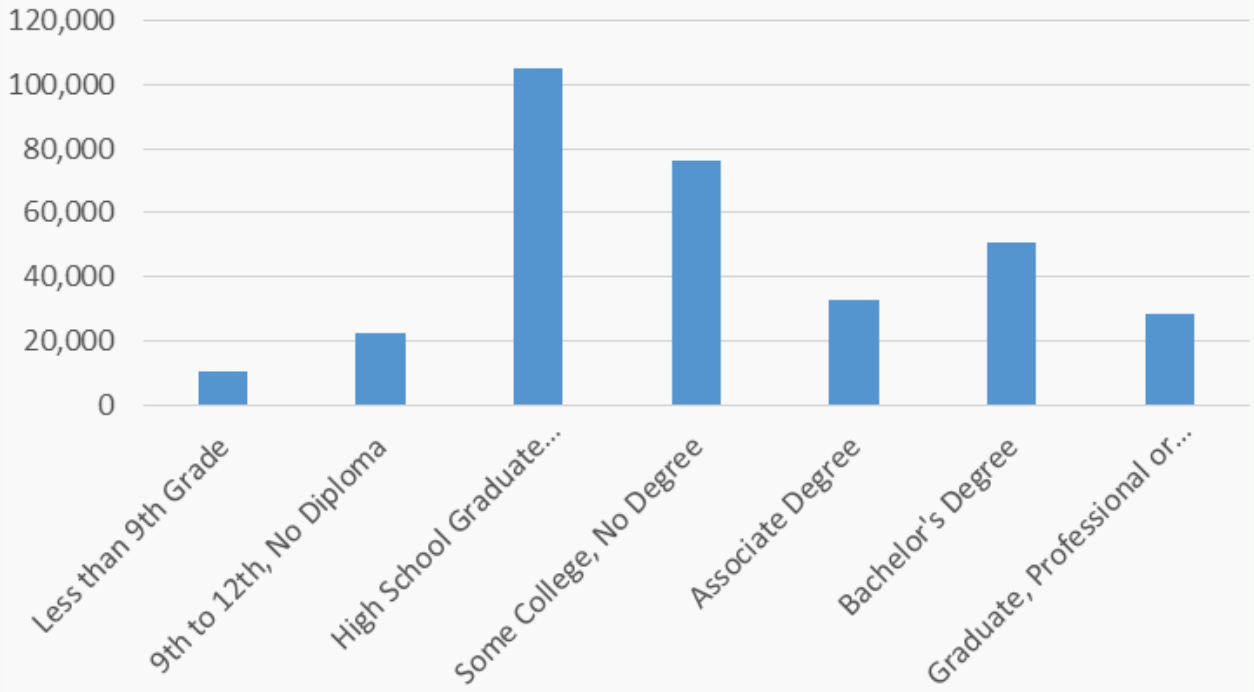
The Waccamaw Region boasts a strong commitment to educating, training, and developing its workforce. The development and training begins at the secondary level and evolves through postsecondary education at the region's five institutions of higher learning.

- Coastal Carolina University (CCU)
- Galen College of Nursing
- Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC)
- Miller-Motte Technical College (MMTC)
- Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics (PIA)
- Webster University
- Williamsburg Technical College (WTC)



# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

## Educational Attainment in Waccamaw EDD Population 25 and Older



## Regional Healthcare



The Waccamaw Region's need for quality healthcare has increased over the past few years in both urban and rural areas. Hospital expansions continue to increase along the coast where populations are increasing, however rural areas are also seeing better options for healthcare. Rural Williamsburg County, is seeing the construction of a hospital which will replace Williamsburg Regional Hospital.

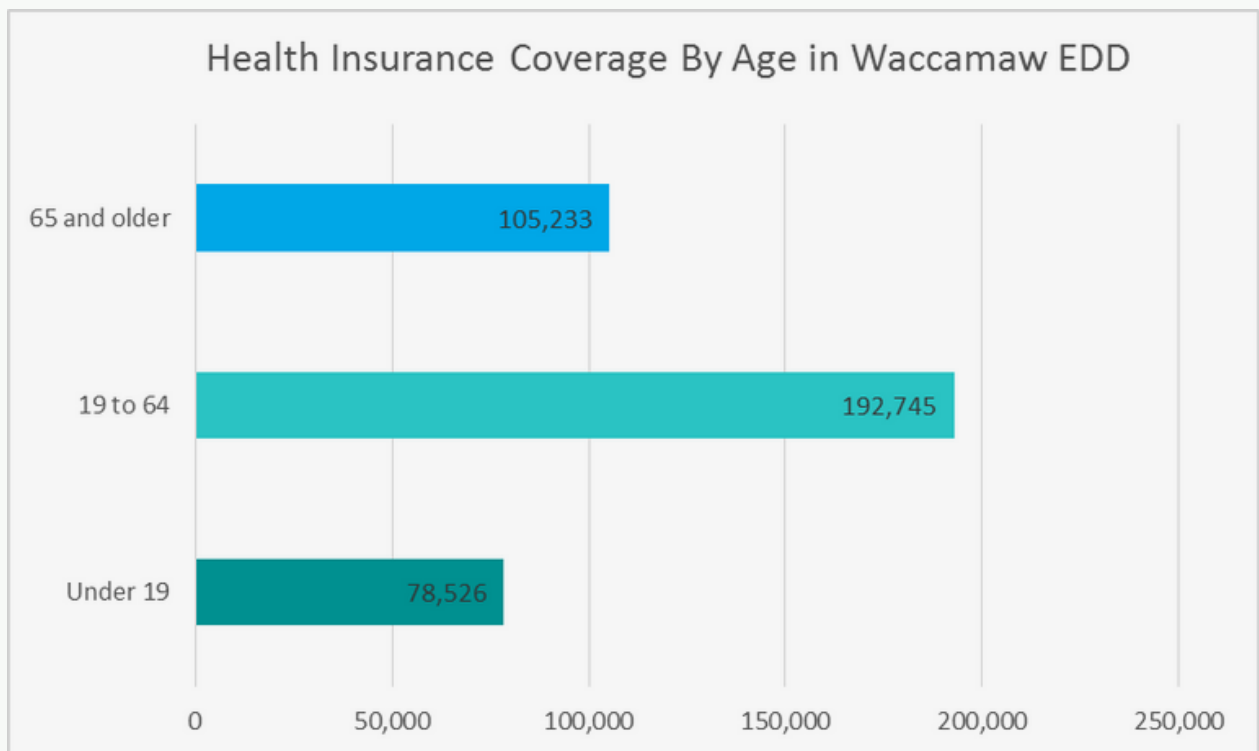
Williamsburg Regional Hospital was severely damaged during previous hurricanes and is currently operating out of a FEMA hospital unit. The new hospital is expected to open in 2023, and will be part of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). This new hospital, along with other medical facilities will offer better quality of care for the region. Additional healthcare facilities in the region include the following:

**Tidelands Georgetown Memorial Hospital**  
**Tidelands Waccamaw Community Hospital**  
**Conway Medical Center**  
**McLeod Health Seacoast (Little River)**  
**McLeod Health Loris**  
**Grand Strand Health Carolina Forest ER**  
**Lighthouse Behavioral Health Hospital**  
**Tidelands Health Rehabilitation Hospital (Little River)**  
**Tidelands Health Rehabilitation Hospital (Murrells Inlet)**  
**Williamsburg Regional Hospital**  
**(MUSC Health will replace Williamsburg Regional Hospital)**

## Regional Health Insurance Coverage

Healthcare is essential to the growth and viability of the region. In order for persons to have affordable access to quality healthcare, health insurance is often a necessity.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of access, including equitable access, to affordable health care and health insurance coverage. In 2020, approximately 85% of Waccamaw's population had health insurance coverage.



Source: Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016–2020 American Community Survey 5–Year Estimates



## Section 3:

# County Economic Profiles

# COUNTY ECONOMIC PROFILES

The Waccamaw Economic Development District also known as the Waccamaw Region includes Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties.



## Georgetown County



## Horry County



## Williamsburg County

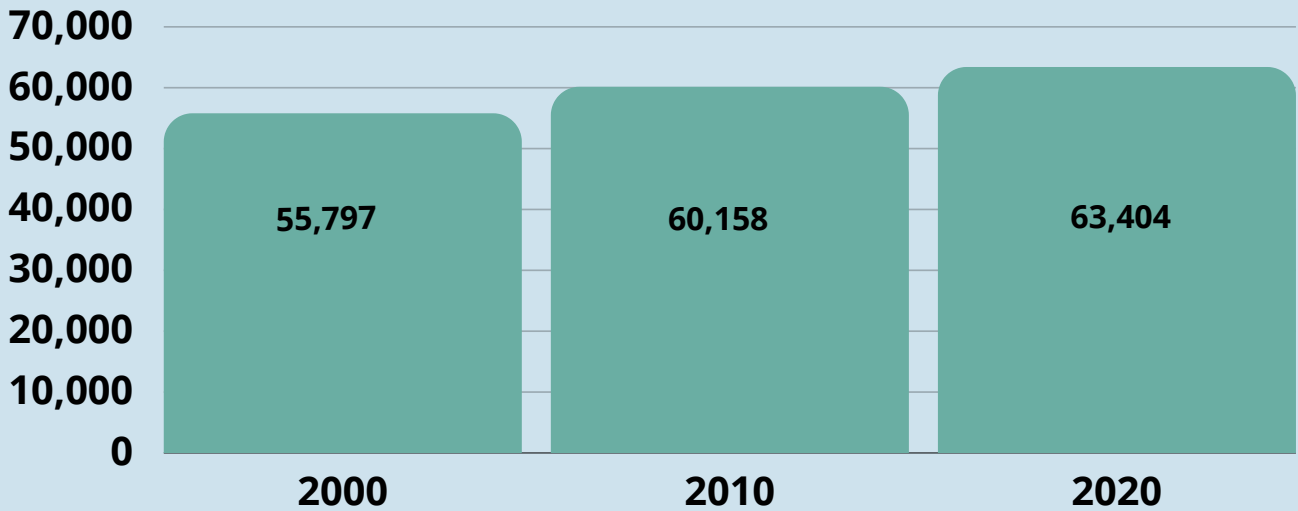


# Georgetown County

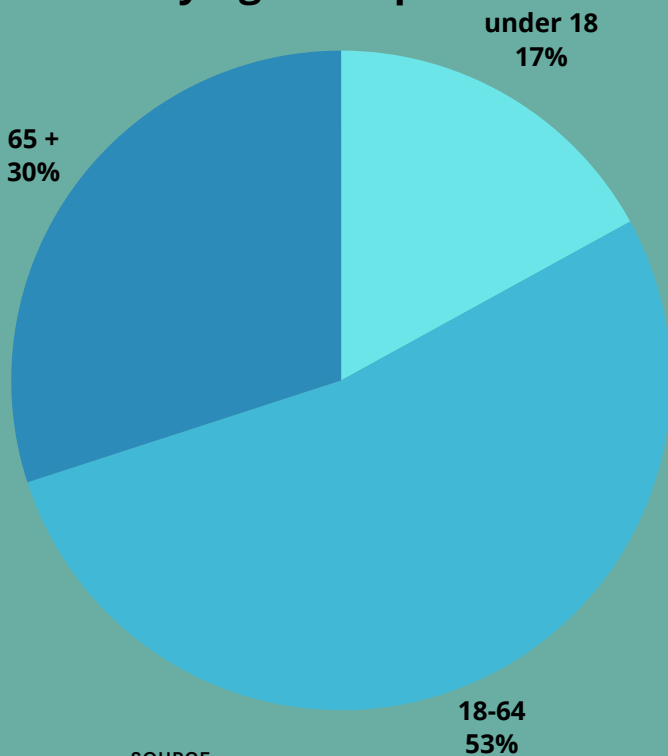


# GEORGETOWN COUNTY ECONOMIC PROFILE

## Georgetown County Population



## Georgetown County Population by Age Group 2020



SOURCE:

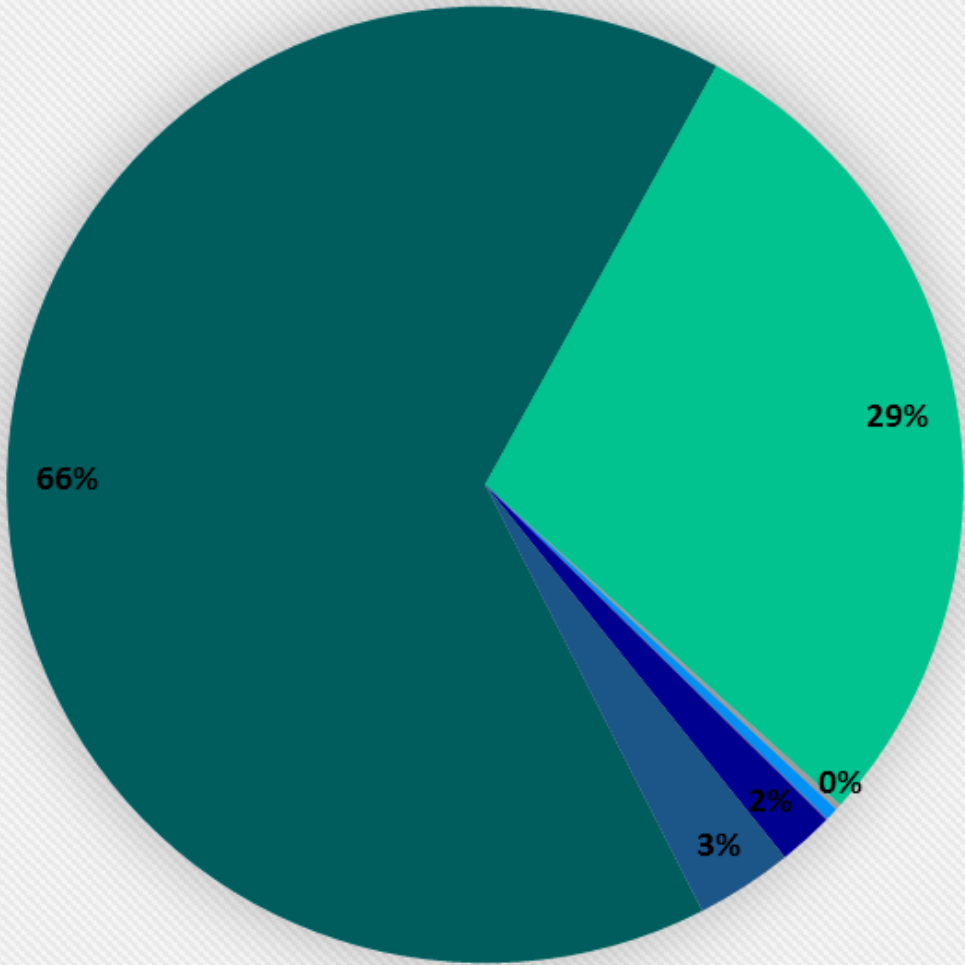
[HTTPS://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/QUICKFACTS/GEORGETOWNCOUNTYSOUTHCAROLINA](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/georgetowncountysouthcarolina)

Georgetown County, South Carolina has 813.6 square miles of land area and is the 8th largest county in South Carolina by total area. Georgetown County, South Carolina is bordered by Marion County, Williamsburg County, Horry County, Charleston County, and Berkeley County.

Georgetown County has the second largest county population (63,404) in the Waccamaw Economic Development District. The county's population has steadily increased over the last 20 years, even when its municipalities have experienced declining populations. During that period the City of Georgetown and the Town of Andrews have experienced less than 1% decline in population. However, the Town of Pawleys Island has experienced nearly 40% decrease in population.

# Racial Demographics

## Georgetown County Population by Race

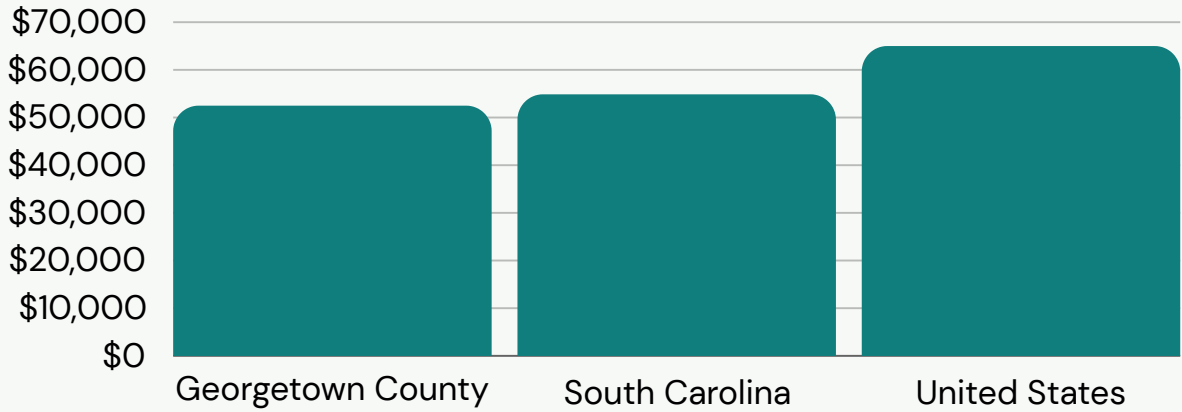


- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander
- Some Other Race
- Population of two or more races:

SOURCE: US CENSUS

# MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

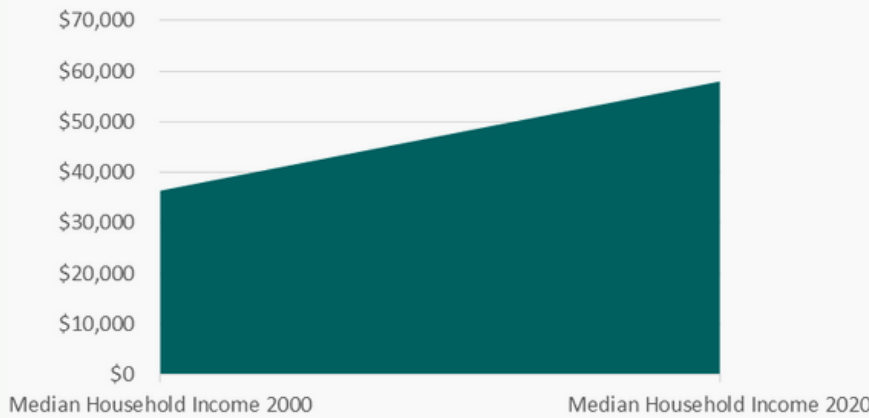
Georgetown County's median household income is less than the median household income for South Carolina (\$54,864) and is approximately 80% of nation's median household income of \$64,994.



**\$52,488**

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
(GEORGETOWN COUNTY)**

Median Household Income  
2020 vs. 2022



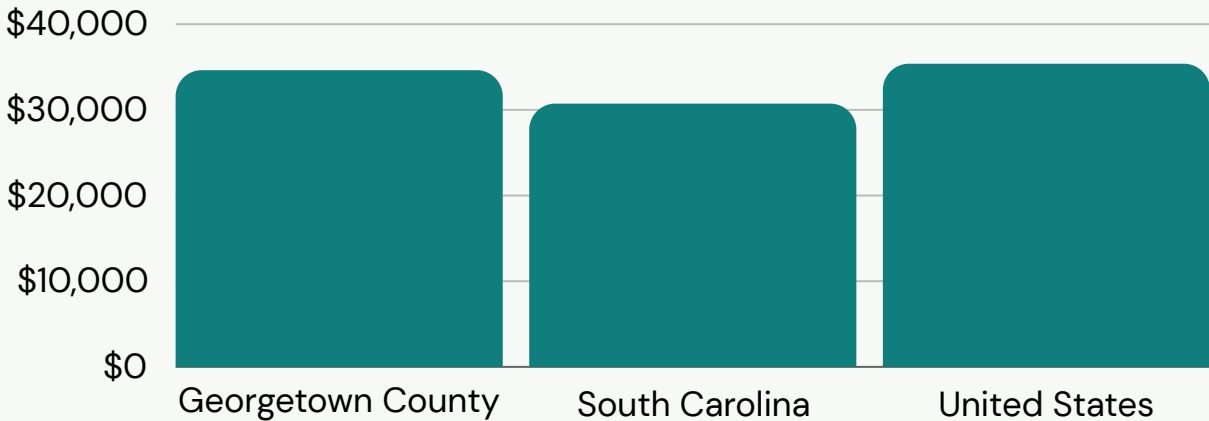
There has been a 59.3% increase in Georgetown County's median household income between 2020 and 2022.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2020). AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES. RETRIEVED FROM CENSUS REPORTER PROFILE PAGE FOR GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SC [HTTP://CENSUSREPORTER.ORG/PROFILES/05000US45043-GEORGETOWN-COUNTY-SC/](http://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US45043-georgetown-county-sc/)

# PER CAPITA INCOME

The per capita income is higher than the per capita income for the state of South Carolina (\$30,727) and is relatively close to the national per capita income of \$35,384



**\$34,629** PER CAPITA INCOME  
(GEORGETOWN COUNTY)



The poverty rate in Georgetown County is higher than the poverty rates in South Carolina and the nation.



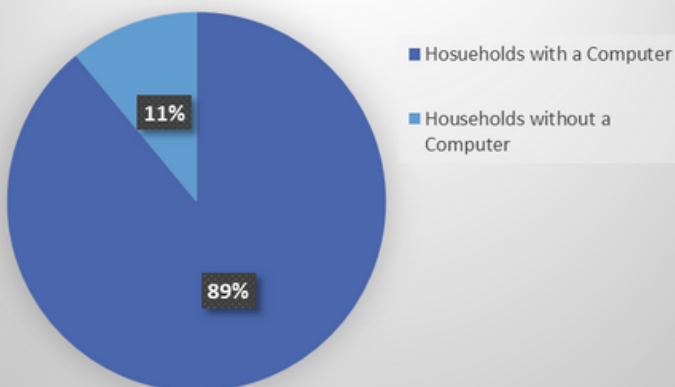
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2020). AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES. RETRIEVED FROM CENSUS REPORTER PROFILE PAGE FOR GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SC [HTTP://CENSUSREPORTER.ORG/PROFILES/05000US45043-GEORGETOWN-COUNTY-SC/](http://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US45043-georgetown-county-sc/)

# Computer & Internet Access in Georgetown County

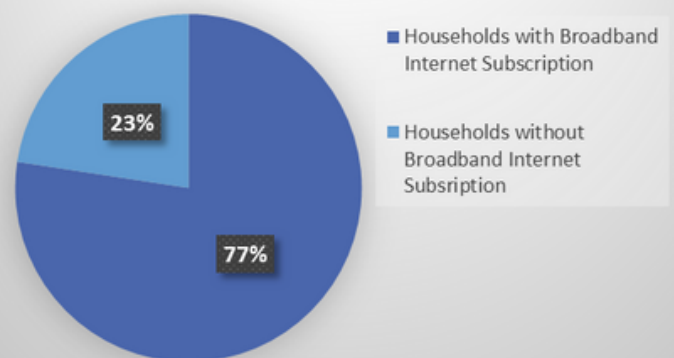
Access to computers and high-speed internet are essential tools for education, work, commerce, healthcare, and access to information. The pandemic demonstrated how powerful and essential access to computers and high-speed internet has become in today's global society. The importance of equity in access to high-speed internet and affordable computer devices was highlighted during the pandemic as schools, businesses, and healthcare providers moved to more online/remote capabilities. Those who did not have access to internet and computers experienced a greater level of difficulty in gaining access to essential information, education, and even healthcare (such as online registration for vaccination).

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/QUICKFACTS/GEORGETOWNCOUNTYSOUTHCAROLINA](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/georgetowncountysouthcarolina)

### Computers in Households



### Households with Broadband Internet Subscriptions

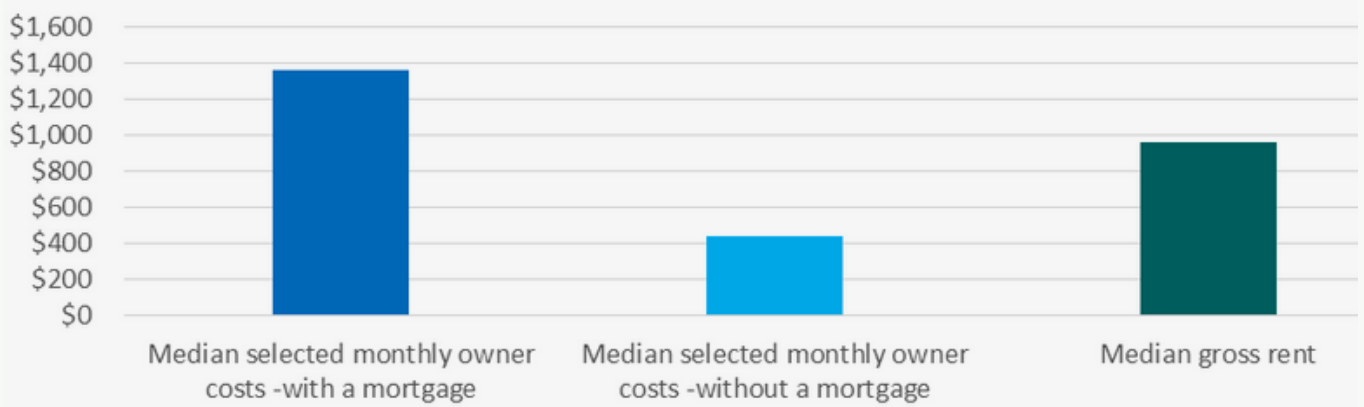


# Housing in Georgetown County



The owner-occupied housing unit rate in Georgetown County is 79.8%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$197,700. There are 25,758 households and 2.39 persons per household.

### Mortgage and Rent Costs



Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/georgetowncountysouthcarolina>

# Municipalities

The population within the municipalities have ebbed and flowed. During the last decade, Andrews has experienced a 6.29% growth in its population. Although the population is still below the town's population in the year 2000, it has increased since the year 2010. In 2010, the City of Georgetown's population increased beyond the year 2000 population and then took a downward turn by decreasing by 3% between 2010 and 2020.

Population Growth Rate for Georgetown County Municipalities						
City/Town	2000	2020	20- Year Growth Rate %	2010	2020	10- Year Growth Rate %
Andrews	3,068	3,041	-0.89	2,861	3,041	6.29*
Georgetown	8,950	8,884	-0.74	9,163	8,884	-3.0
Pawleys Island	138	83	-39.9	103	83	-19.4

# Secondary Education in Georgetown County

**Georgetown County School District:** The mission of the Georgetown County School District is to provide all students with world class knowledge and skills that prepare them for citizenship in a diverse society.

Student Enrollment: 8479  
Superintendent: Mr. Keith Price  
Board Chair: Mr. Jim Dumm  
Total Number of Schools: 21  
Elementary Schools:9  
Intermediate Schools: 1  
Middle Schools: 4  
High Schools: 4  
Charter School: 1  
Alternative Placement Program:1  
Adult Education Center: 1

## Alphabetical Listing of Schools in the Georgetown County School District

- Georgetown County School District
- Andrews Elementary School
- Andrews High School
- Brown's Ferry Elementary School
- Carvers Bay High School
- Carvers Bay Middle School
- Coastal Montessori Charter School
- Georgetown High School
- Georgetown Middle School
- Howard Adult Center
- Howard Alternative Placement Program
- Kensington Elementary School
- Maryville Elementary School
- McDonald Elementary School
- Plantersville Elementary School
- Pleasant Hill Elementary School
- Rosemary Middle School
- Sampit Elementary School
- Waccamaw Elementary School
- Waccamaw High School
- Waccamaw Intermediate School
- Waccamaw Middle School

The Georgetown County School District offers Career and Technology Education (CTE). The CTE program provides a structured instructional and technical platform to help students become college, career, and workforce ready. The CTE program initiative includes:

Technical Program Completion and Industry Certifications, WIN Assessments, Work-based Learning Opportunities, ASVAB Assessment, Program Marketing, Career Technical Student Organizations, Connecting with Business Partners, STEM Partnerships, Sisters in STEM Mentoring, Manufacturing Cohort Recruiting, Advanced Technical Scholars Programs (Horry Georgetown Technical College), Advisory Boards, and Professional Development.

The GCSD Advanced Technical Scholars Programs is part of the CTE Pipeline, Pathway 2 Careers initiative. It allows high school students to earn dual credit while working toward a certificate or associate degree in Electrical Engineering, Forestry, HVAC, Machine Tools, Mechatronics or Welding.



## Premier STEM Curriculum and Classes

Georgetown County School District is offering Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum to our students. Gateway to Technology is being used in middle school STEM classes, and the four high schools are offering courses in either PLTW Engineering or PLTW Computer Science.

### PLTW Computer Science:

Waccamaw High School  
Georgetown High School

### PLTW Engineering:

Carvers Bay High School  
Waccamaw High School  
Andrews High School

### PLTW Gateway – Design and Modeling:

Georgetown Middle School  
Waccamaw Middle School

### PLTW Gateway – Flight and Space:

Georgetown Middle School  
Waccamaw Middle School

## List of All CTE Programs & Training by High School

### Andrews High School

Family and Consumer Science, Health Science, Power Engine Technology, Welding Technology, Administrative Support Technology, PLTW Engineering

### Carvers Bay High School

Ag Science/Horticulture, Building & Construction, Culinary Arts, PLTW Engineering, Business

### Georgetown High School

Agriculture Science, Automotive Technology, Building & Construction, Business, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Graphic Communications, Health Science, Welding Technology, PLTW Computer Science

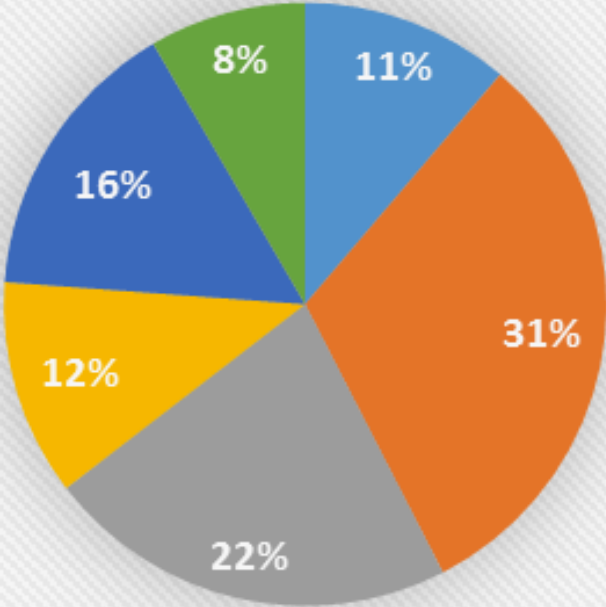
### Waccamaw High School

PLTW Engineering, Business





# Educational Attainment: Age 25-64



- No High School Diploma
- High School Graduate
- Some College, No Degree
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Postgraduate Degree

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/georgetowncountysouthcarolina>

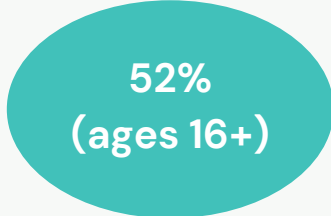
Eighty-nine percent (89%) of Georgetown County's population has attained at least a high school diploma or equivalency.

# Labor Force Participation

Georgetown County has a civilian labor force of 27,012 with a participation rate of 52%. Of individuals ages 25 and over in Georgetown County over a a quarter of them have a bachelor's degree or higher. The annual unemployment rate for Georgetown County is 4.8% which is below the nation's rate of 5.3% and above the state's rate of 4%.

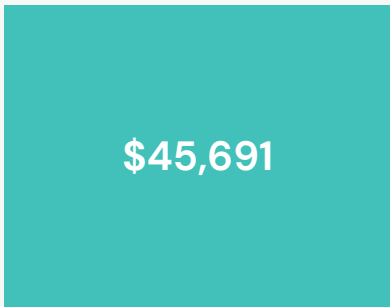
**Labor Force Participation Rate:**  
(civilian population 16 years and over)

Source: JobsEq



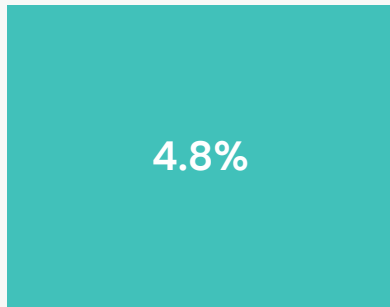
**Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate:**  
(civilian population 25-54)

Source: JobsEq



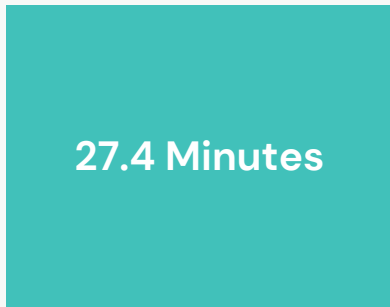
**Average Wage Per Job**

Source: StatsAmerica



**Annual Uemployment Rate**

Source: SC DEW

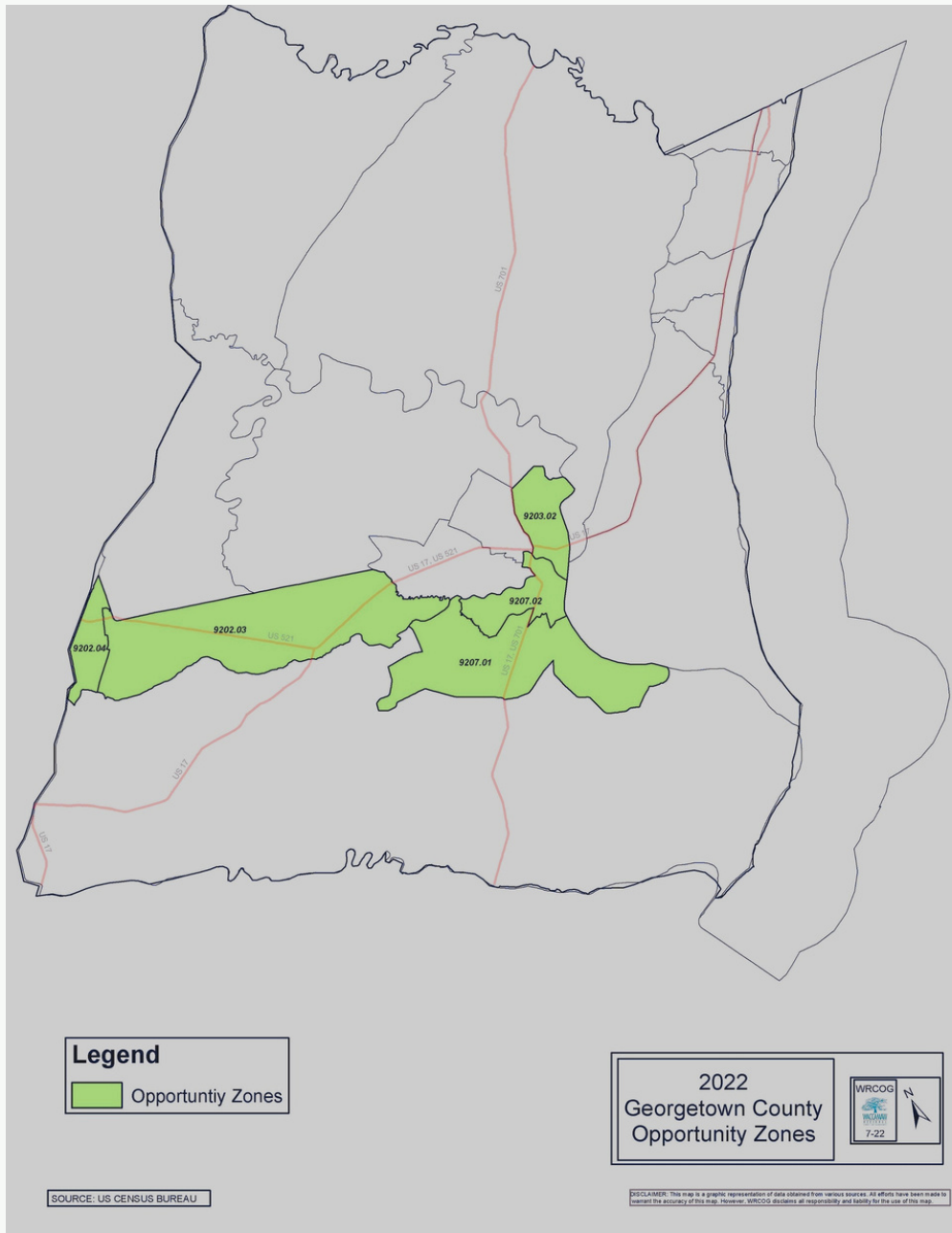


**Mean Travel Time to Work**

Source: StatsAmerica

# Georgetown County Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones are a federal program created by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage economic development and job creation in low-income urban and rural communities by providing specialized federal tax reductions for eligible investments (SC Commerce). In 2018, South Carolina's governor designated 135 eligible Opportunity Zones. Georgetown County has three designated eligible Opportunity Zones.



## **GEORGETOWN COUNTY Largest Industrial Employers**

---

**International Paper**

**Santee Cooper**

**3V Chemical**

**Peddinhaus Co.**

**Saferack**

**Interfor**

**Sid Harvey's American Gypsum**

**AgruAmerica**

**Coast Wire**

**Three D Metal Works**

**EnviroSep**

**Mercom**

**GWD Con-Serv Inc.**

**Screen Tight**

**Trebol**

**Andrews Metal Works**

**Gibbons Metal Works**

**Pierce Machinery**

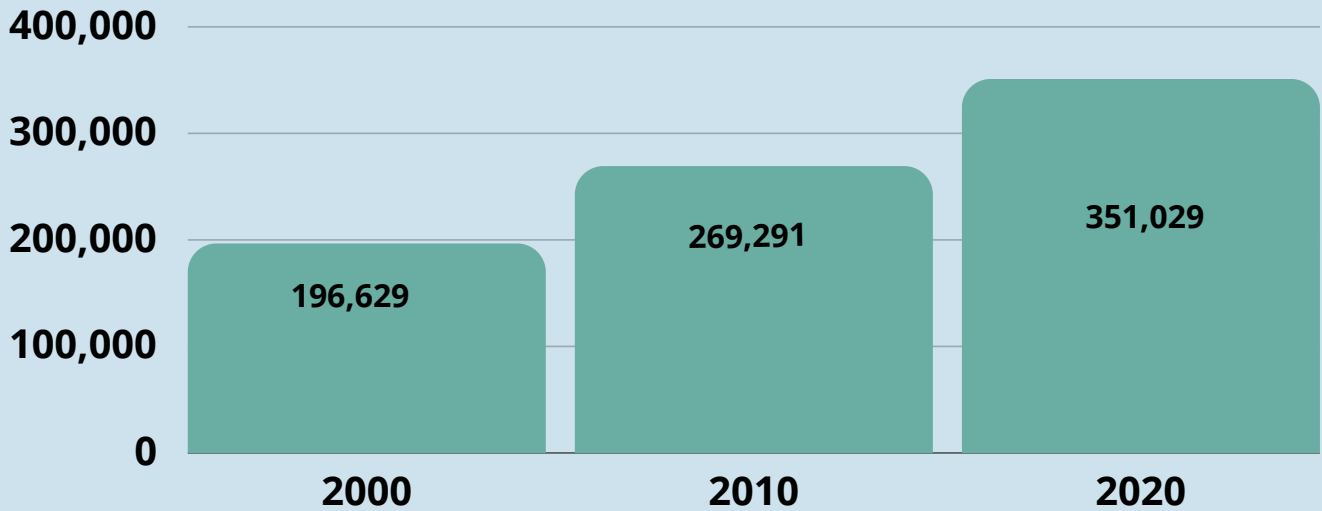
SOURCE: GEORGETOWN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, [HTTP://SEEGEORGETOWN.COM/EXISTING-INDUSTRY/](http://seegeorgetown.com/existing-industry/)



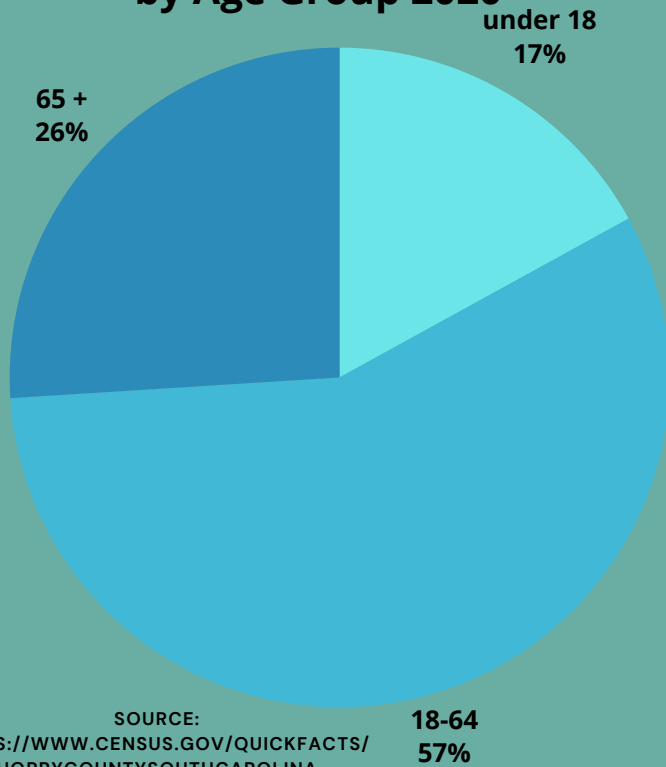
# Horry County

# HORRY COUNTY ECONOMIC PROFILE

**Horry County Population**



**Horry County Population by Age Group 2020**



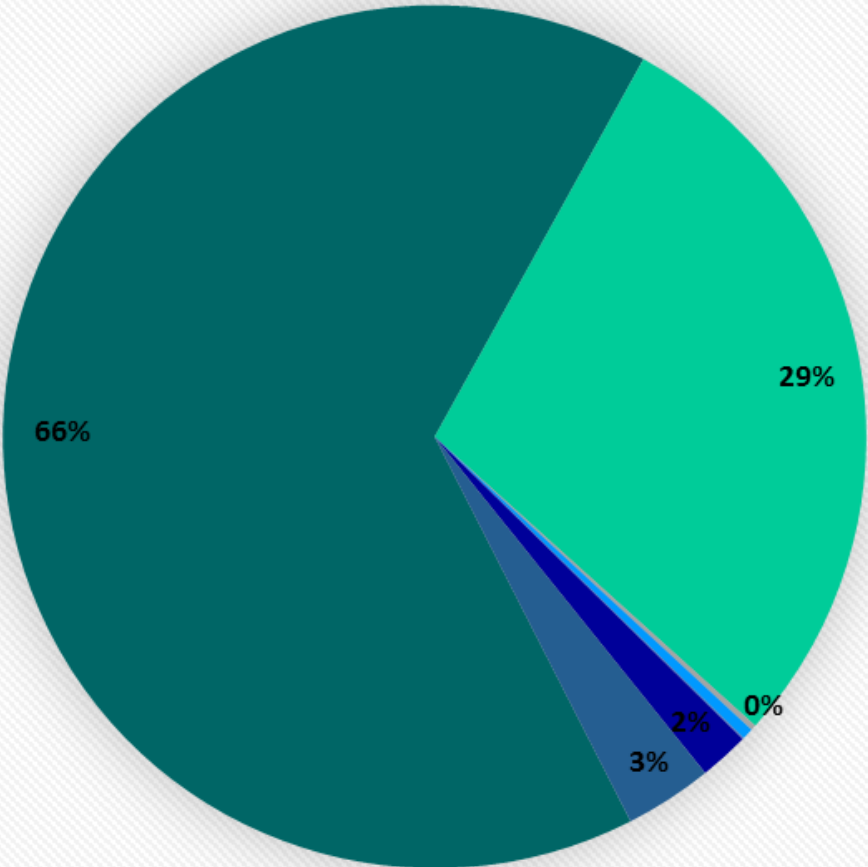
SOURCE:  
[HTTPS://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/QUICKFACTS/HORRYCOUNTYSOUTHCAROLINA](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/horrycountysouthcarolina)

Horry County SC has 1,134 square miles of land area and is the 1st largest county in South Carolina by total land area. Horry County is bordered by Robeson County, Marion County, Dillon County, Columbus County, Brunswick County and Georgetown County.

Horry County has largest county population in the Waccamaw EDD. Horry County's population was 351,029 per US Census Decennial 2020 data. The US Census Bureau 2021 population estimate is 365,579. The county's population has steadily increased over the last 20 years. However, the Town of Atlantic Beach is the only municipality in Horry County that has less population in 2020 than it had in 2000. The Town of Atlantic Beach's population declined 32.5%.

# Racial Demographics

## Horry County Population By Race

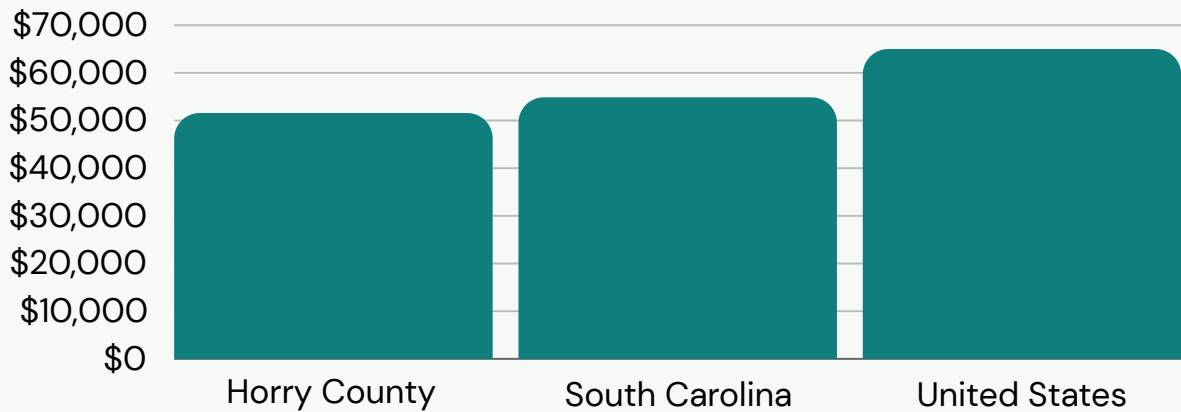


- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander
- Some Other Race
- Population of two or more races:



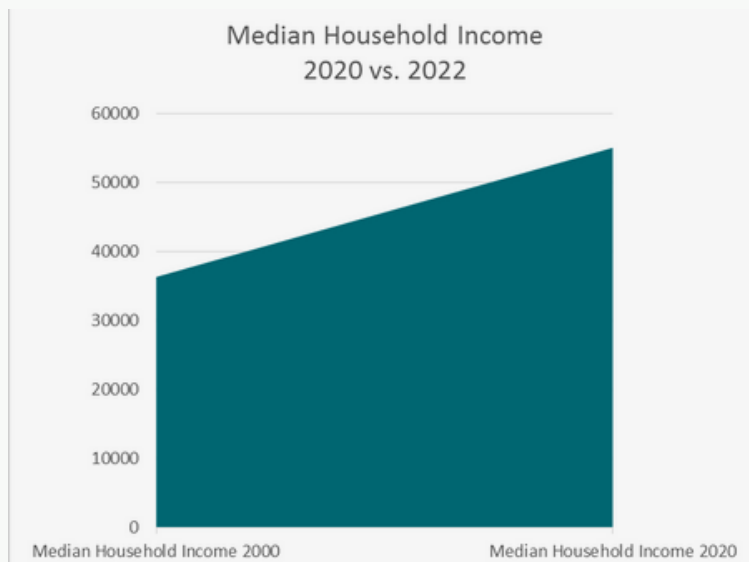
# MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Horry County's median household income is less than the median household income for South Carolina (\$54,864) and is approximately 80% of nation's median household income of \$64,994.



**\$51,570**

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
(HORRY COUNTY)**



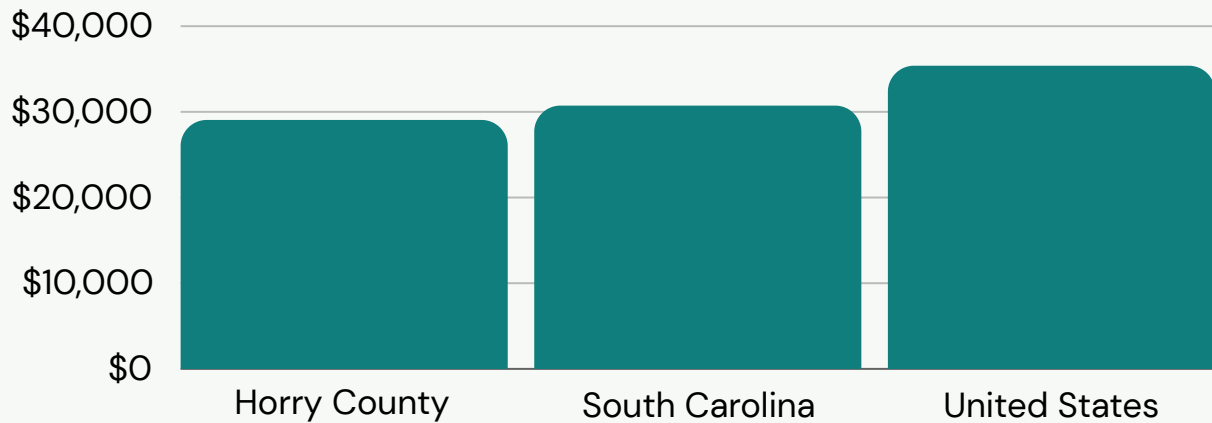
There has been a 51.6% increase in Horry County's median household income between 2020 and 2022.



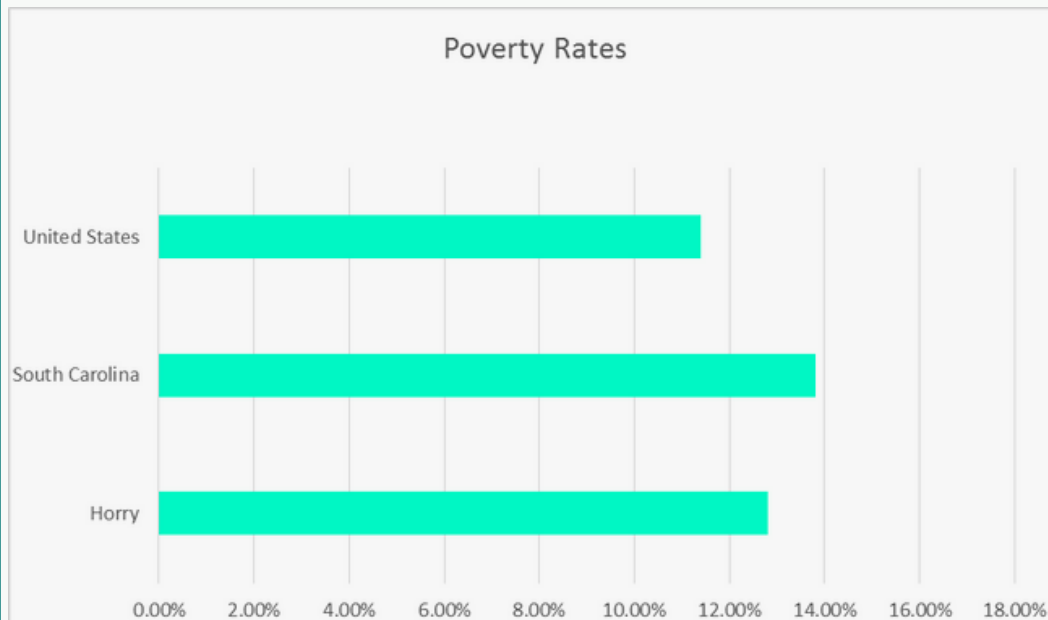
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2020). AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES.  
RETRIEVED FROM CENSUS REPORTER PROFILE PAGE FOR HORRY COUNTY, SC  
[HTTPS://CENSUSREPORTER.ORG/PROFILES/05000US45051-HORRY-COUNTY-SC/](https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US45051-horry-county-sc/)

# PER CAPITA INCOME

The per capita income is higher than the per capita income for the state of South Carolina (\$30,727) and is relatively close to the national per capita income of \$35,384



**\$29,055** PER CAPITA INCOME  
(HORRY COUNTY)



The poverty rate in Horry County is higher than the poverty rates in South Carolina and the nation.



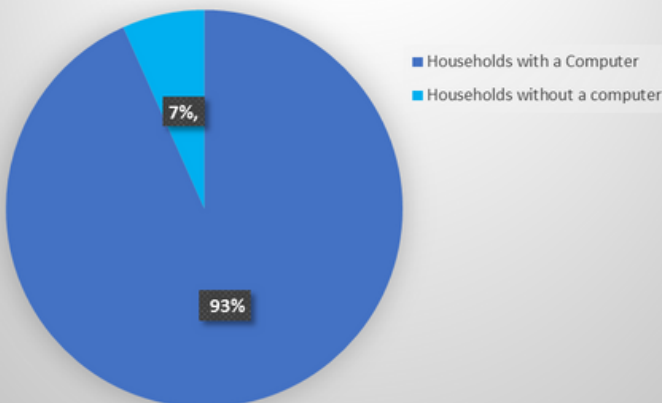
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2020). AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES.  
RETRIEVED FROM CENSUS REPORTER PROFILE PAGE FOR HORRY COUNTY, SC  
[HTTPS://CENSUSREPORTER.ORG/PROFILES/05000US45051-HORRY-COUNTY-SC/](https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US45051-horry-county-sc/)

# Computer & Internet Access in Horry County

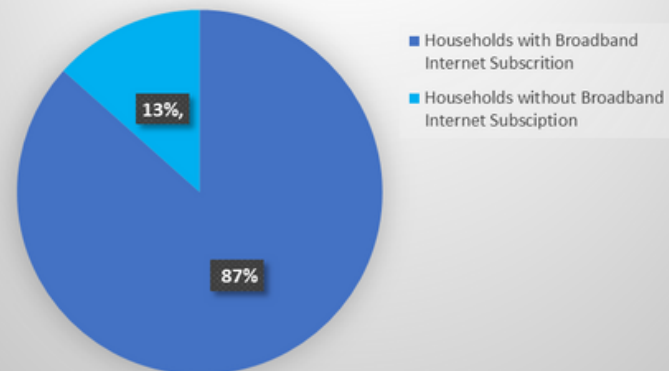
Access to computers and high-speed internet are essential tools for education, work, commerce, healthcare, and access to information. The pandemic demonstrated how powerful and essential access to computers and high-speed internet has become in today's global society. The importance of equity in access to high-speed internet and affordable computer devices was highlighted during the pandemic as schools, businesses, and healthcare providers moved to more online/remote capabilities. Those who did not have access to internet and computers experienced a greater level of difficulty in gaining access to essential information, education, and even healthcare (such as online registration for vaccination).

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/QUICKFACTS/FACT/TABLE/HORRYCOUNTYSOUTHCAROLINA/PST045221](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/horrycountysouthcarolina/PST045221)

### Computers in Households



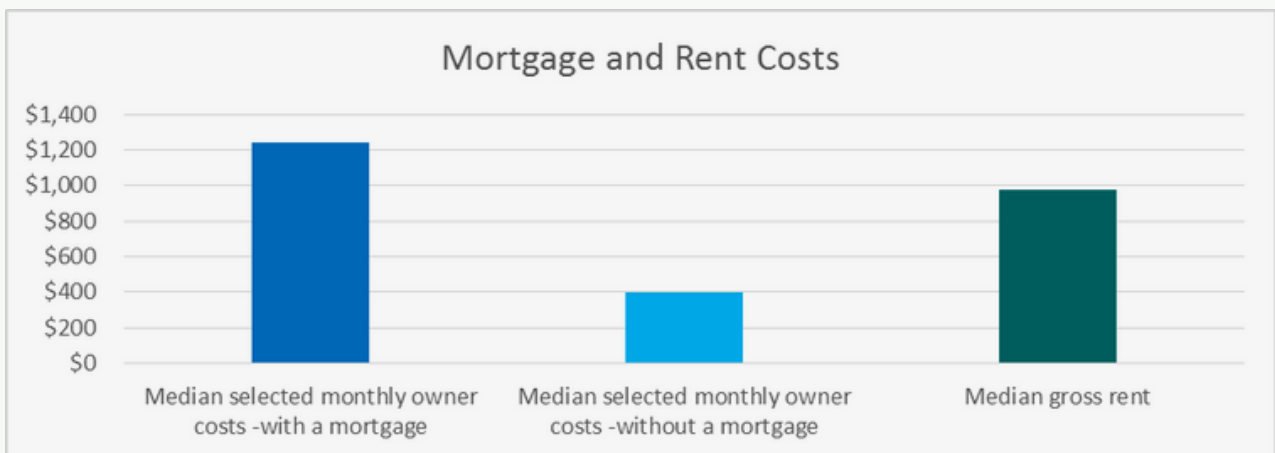
### Households with Broadband Internet Subscriptions



# Housing in Horry County



The owner-occupied housing unit rate in Horry County is 73.8%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$187,800. There are 136,219 households and 2.4 persons per household.



Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/horrycountysouthcarolina>

# Municipalities

Within the Last 20 years, Atlantic beach is the only municipality in Horry County that has experienced a decline in population of -32.5%.

Population Growth Rate for Horry County Municipalities						
City/Town	2000	2020	20-Year Growth Rate %	2010	2020	10- Year Growth Rate %
Atlantic Beach	351	237	-32.5	334	237	-29.0
Aynor	587	785	33.7	560	785	40.2
Briarcliffe Acres	470	529	12.6	457	529	15.6
Conway	12,719	24,747	94.6	17,103	24,747	44.7
Loris	2,079	2,676	28.7	2,396	2,676	11.7
Myrtle Beach	22,759	33,638	46.6	27,109	33,638	23.1
North Myrtle Beach	11,251	16,684	48.3	13,752	16,684	21.3
Surfside Beach	4,425	4,470	1.0	3,837	4,470	16.5

# Secondary Education in Horry County

Horry County Schools is inspiring possibilities for student success through a broad range of unique teaching and learning opportunities.

Horry County Schools is made up of 56 schools within nine attendance areas: Aynor, Carolina Forest, Conway, Green Sea Floyds, Loris, Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Socastee, and St. James. Horry County Schools has more than 45,000 students and is South Carolina's third-largest school district.

**On the 45th day of school in the fall of 2019, HCS reported an Average Daily Membership of 45,021. HCS is the third largest school district in the state of South Carolina.**

## **Student Enrollment (Fall 2019)**

### **Average Class Sizes by Grade Level**

**Grades 9–12 24.0 to 1**

**Grades 6–8 25.25 to 1**

**Grades 4–5 24.5 to 1**

**Grades 1–3 21.5 to 1**

**Kindergarten\* 25.5 to 1**

**Child Development\* 20.0 to 1**

**\* Kindergarten and CD classes also have a teacher assistant.**

### **Horry County Schools**

**Primary/Elementary Schools 27**

**Middle Schools 13**

**High Schools 10**

**Academies 3**

**Alternative School 1**

**Charter Schools 4**

# Post-Secondary Education

[Coastal Carolina University \(CCU\)](http://www.coastal.edu) is a dynamic public institution located in Conway. CCU offers over 100 undergraduate and over 30 graduate-level (doctoral, educational specialist, masters) major fields of study, including specialized concentrations. The University offers the Ph.D. in marine science: coastal and marine systems science, and the Ph.D. in education. The most popular undergraduate majors are marine science, management, exercise and sport science, and communication. CCU boasts a growing array of internship, research and international opportunities for students, as well as numerous online programs through Coastal Online. For more information visit [www.coastal.edu](http://www.coastal.edu)

[Webster University](http://www.webster.edu/locations/myrtlebeach/index.php) is an independent nonprofit institution which has a branch campus located in Myrtle Beach. The Myrtle Beach campus offers bachelor's and master's level academic programs. Both in-person/classroom and online programs are available. For more information visit [www.webster.edu/locations/myrtlebeach/index.php](http://www.webster.edu/locations/myrtlebeach/index.php)

[Horry-Georgetown Technical College \(HGTC\)](http://www.hgtc.edu) is a two-year community/technical college that offers more than 70 associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs for students who are either seeking quick entry into the workforce or desiring to transfer to a senior institution to pursue a bachelor's degree. HGTC offers three convenient campus locations which include Myrtle Beach, Conway and Georgetown. For more information visit [www.hgtc.edu](http://www.hgtc.edu)

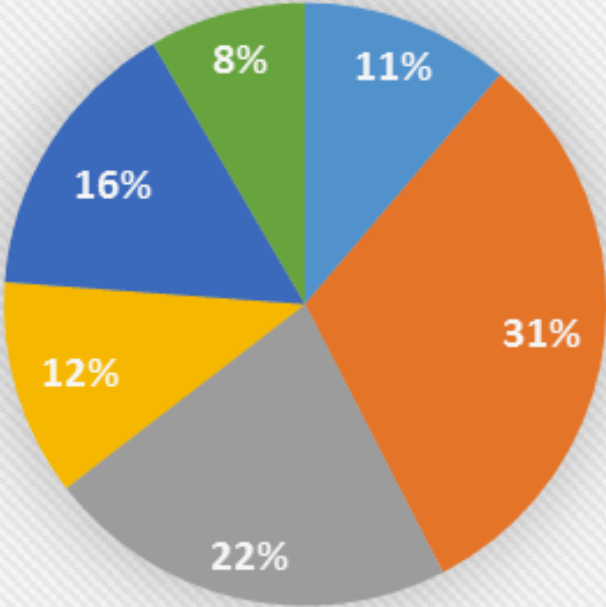
[Miller-Motte Technical College](http://www.miller-motte.edu/campuses/south-carolina/conway-career-training/), located in Conway, offers career-focused technical training to students looking to enter the workforce in as little as 1 to 18 months. For more information visit [www.miller-motte.edu/campuses/south-carolina/conway-career-training/](http://www.miller-motte.edu/campuses/south-carolina/conway-career-training/)

[Pittsburg Institute of Aeronautics](https://pia.edu/campuses/myrtle-beach/), located in Myrtle Beach at the International Technology and Aerospace Park, near Myrtle Beach International Airport. PIA's airport location provides an ideal atmosphere for aviation training as well as aircraft accessibility to the school's facilities. The campus offers the Aviation Maintenance Technology program. This program provides students with the opportunity to test for the FAA's Airframe and Powerplant Certification. For more information visit <https://pia.edu/campuses/myrtle-beach/>.

[Galen College of Nursing](http://www.galencollege.edu/campuses/myrtle-beach) is located in Myrtle Beach. The institution offers several pre-licensure programs. Galen features modern simulation and clinical learning labs that provide students hands-on training and an immersive nursing education experience. Galen is regionally accredited and solely focused on nursing education. For more information visit [www.galencollege.edu/campuses/myrtle-beach](http://www.galencollege.edu/campuses/myrtle-beach)



# Educational Attainment: Age 25-64



- No High School Diploma
- High School Graduate
- Some College, No Degree
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Postgraduate Degree

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/georgetowncountysouthcarolina>

Ninety-one percent (91%) of Horry County's population has attained at least a high school diploma or equivalency.



# Labor Force Participation

Horry County has a civilian labor force of 156,859 with a participation rate of 56.4%. Of individuals ages 25 and over in Horry County 24.2% of them have a bachelor's degree or higher. The annual unemployment rate for Horry County is 5.1 % which is below the nation's rate of 5.3% and above the state's rate of 4%.

**Labor Force Participation Rate:**  
(civilian population 16 years and over)

Source: JobsEq

56.4%  
(ages 16+)

**Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate:**  
(civilian population 25-54)

Source: JobsEq

82%  
(ages 25-54)

\$41,312

**Average Wage Per Job**

Source: StatsAmerica

5.1%

**Annual Unemployment Rate**

Source: SC DEW

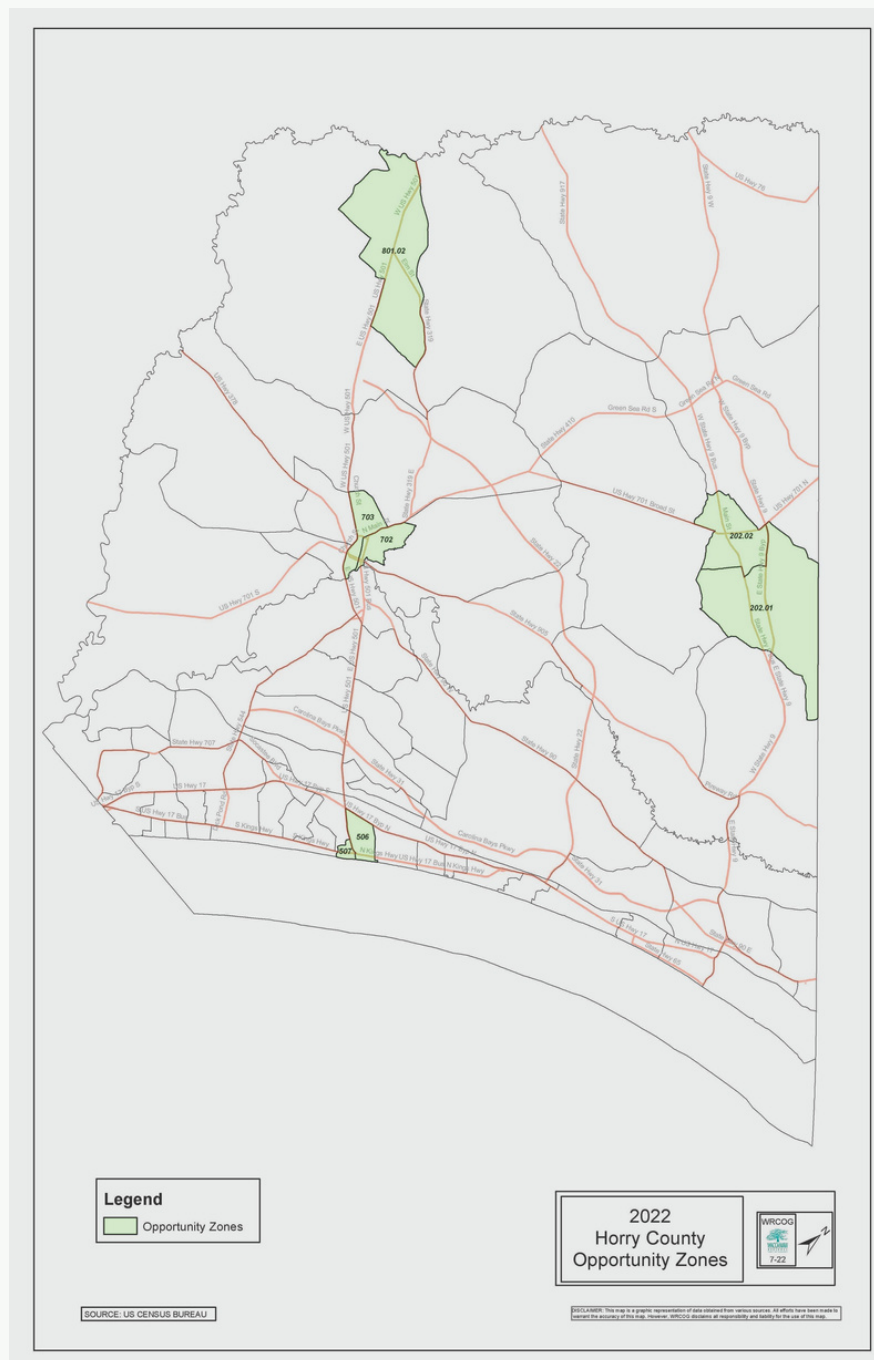
22.2 Minutes

**Mean Travel Time to Work**

Source: StatsAmerica

# Horry County Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones are a federal program created by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage economic development and job creation in low-income urban and rural communities by providing specialized federal tax reductions for eligible investments (SC Commerce). In 2018, South Carolina's governor designated 135 eligible Opportunity Zones. Horry County has six designated eligible Opportunity Zones.



# Tourism in Horry County



- Home to the world-recognized travel destination Myrtle Beach, Horry County is a premier location for business growth and development that's becoming increasingly recognized.

- According to the Chamber of Commerce, visitors to Horry County spend an average \$117 per person per day, while group business travelers spend an average of \$277 per person per day. This is significant considering the number of visitors to the County.

- In a study conducted by Coastal Carolina University, over \$4.8 billion in direct tourist related spending occurred in Horry and Georgetown counties in 2015. This led to a total economic impact of \$7.0 billion in the same year, supporting over 83,000 jobs. It generated \$2.2 billion in income for employees and business owners

- Myrtle Beach is Horry County's largest city and tourism is its largest industry. Tourism continues to be the most important industry on the Grand Strand. It drives accommodation and food services in addition to retail sales. The Grand Strand is considered one of the nation's top vacation destinations and hosts an estimated 17.95 million visitors annually (Myrtle Beach Economic Impact Study, 2016).

- Because Horry County's economy is so dependent upon tourism, it is susceptible to economic downturns. In addition, this industry can also be vulnerable to tropical storms and hurricanes, as travel can be impaired by flooded roadways, eroded beaches, and potential lack of power

# Largest Employers

Horry County benefits from a variety of companies and businesses that have planted their roots in our region, and work to strengthen the economy. The County's largest employers provide jobs for Myrtle Beach residents, and contribute to the overall vitality of our communities.

## Horry County's top 10 employers with number of full time employees

Horry County School District | 5,300  
Horry Telephone Cooperative  
Wal-Mart | 3,000  
Horry County Government | 2,200  
Coastal Carolina University | 2,200  
Conway Hospital | 2,000  
McLeod Loris Seacoast | 1,489  
Grand Strand Regional Medical Center | 1,400  
Food Lion | 1,000  
City of Myrtle Beach | 990  
Horry Telephone Cooperative | 700

## Horry County's top five industrial employers with number of employees

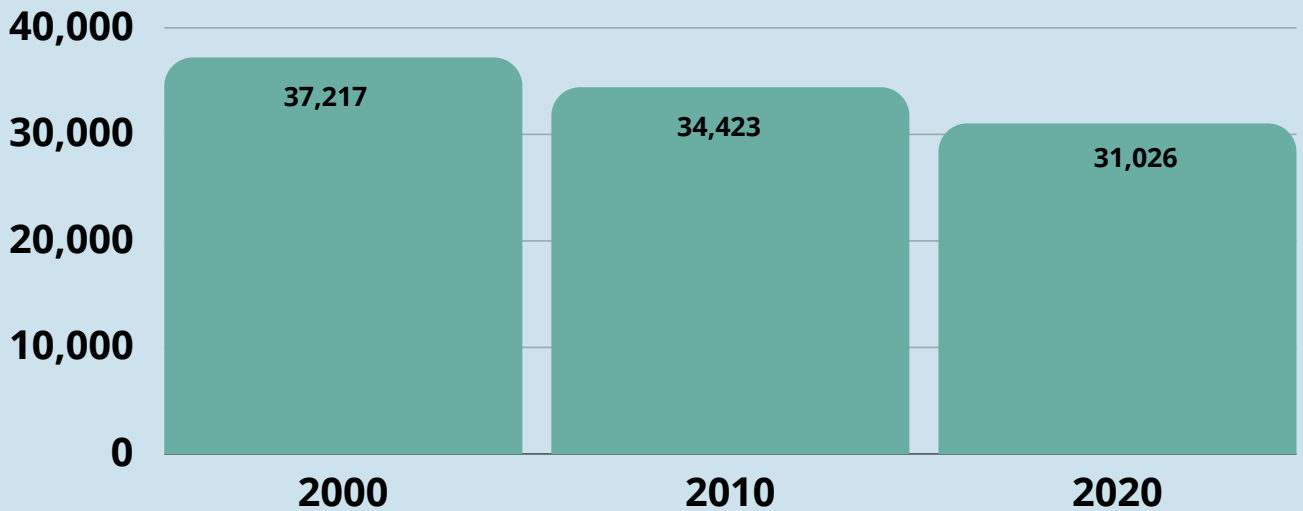
AVX Corporation | 700  
Conbraco Industries, Inc. | 400  
Metglas, Inc. | 200  
New South Lumber | 170  
UFP Mid Atlantic, LLC | 100



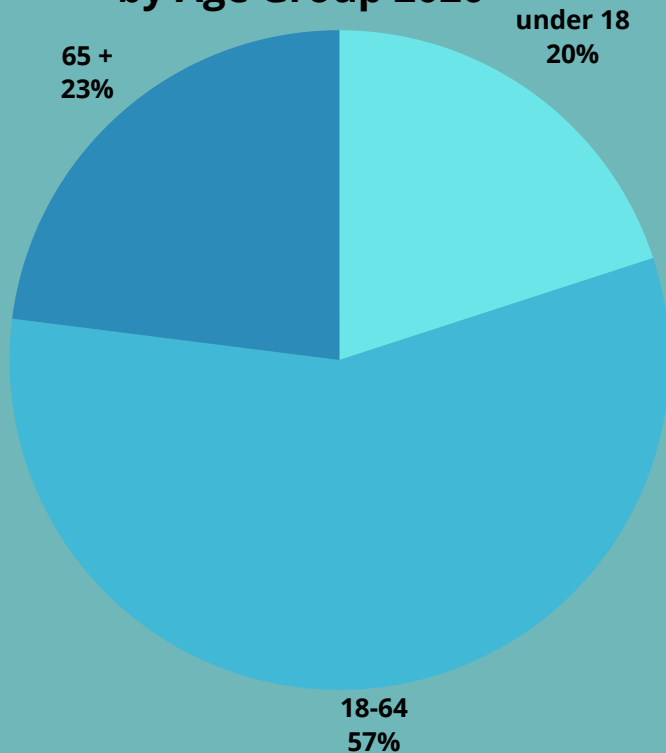
# Williamsburg County

# WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY ECONOMIC PROFILE

## Williamsburg County Population



## Williamsburg County Population by Age Group 2020



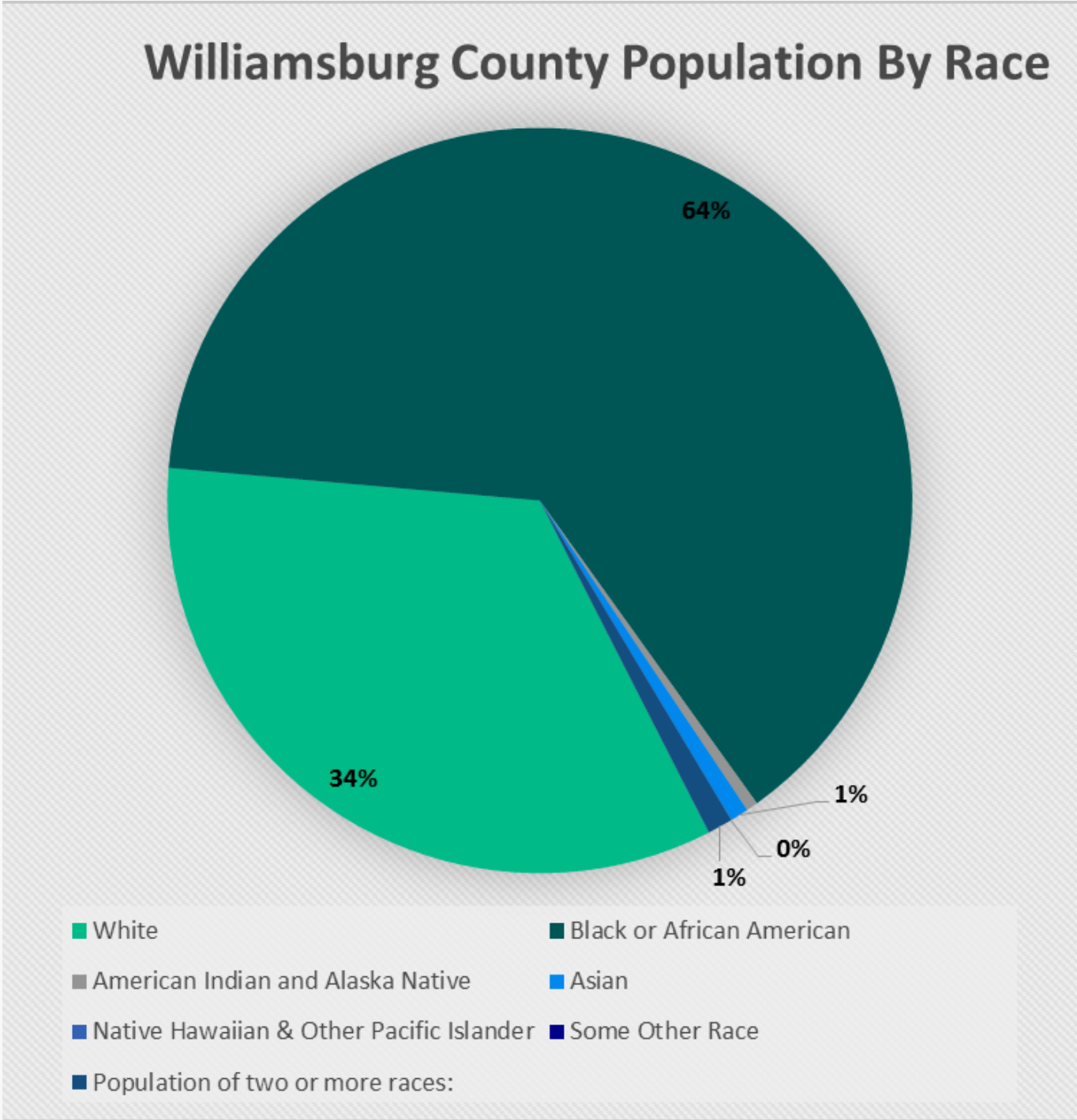
SOURCE:

[HTTPS://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/QUICKFACTS/WILLIAMSBURGCOUNTYSOUTHCAROLINA](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/williamsburgcountysouthcarolina)

Williamsburg County has 934.2 square miles of land area and is the 6th largest county in South Carolina by total area. Williamsburg County is bordered by Marion County, Florence County, Clarendon County, Berkeley County, and Georgetown County.

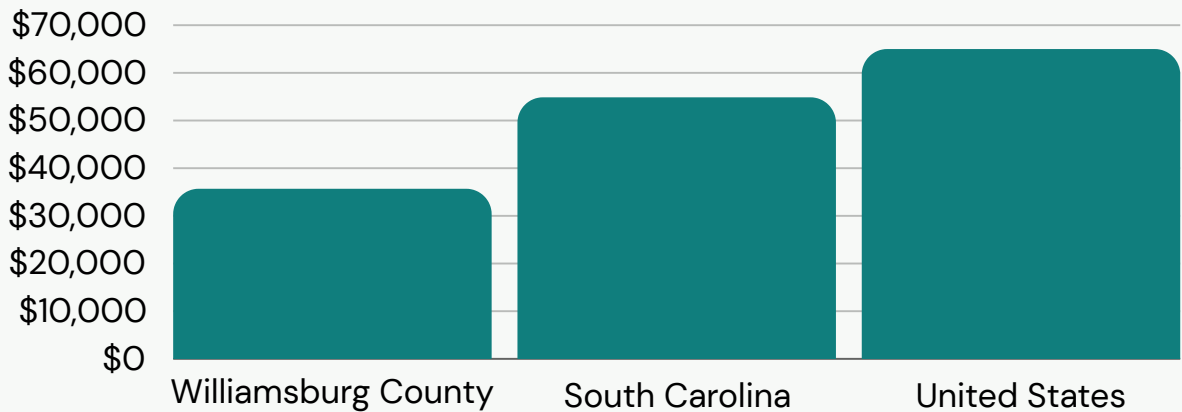
Williamsburg County has the smallest county population in the Waccamaw EDD. Williamsburg County's population was 31,026 per US Census Decennial 2020 data. The US Census Bureau 2021 population estimate is 30,484. The county's population has steadily declined over the last 20 years. The population of each municipality in Williamsburg County has also declined, except the Town of Stuckey. The Town of Stuckey's population 2020 reflects a growth of 32.7% since 2000.

# Racial Demographics



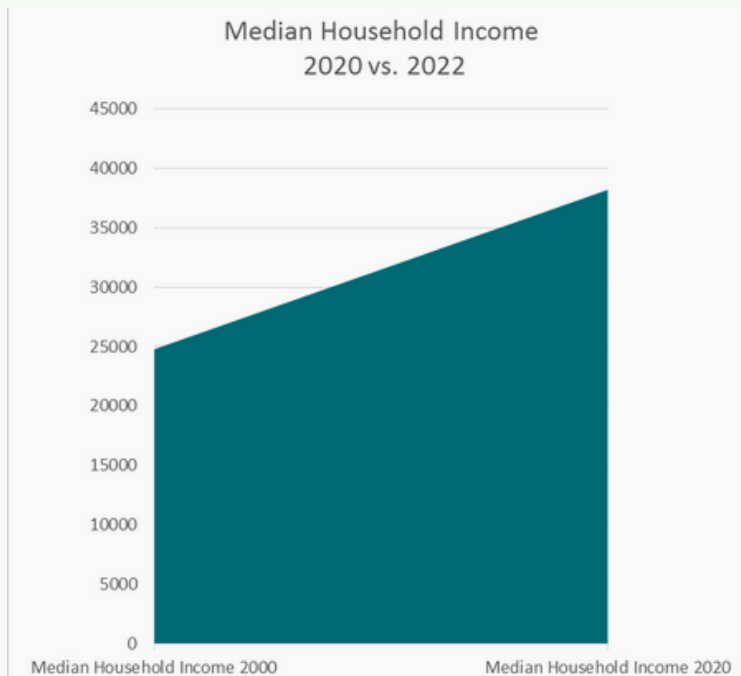
# MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Williamsburg County's median household income is less than the median household income for South Carolina (\$54,864) and is approximately 50% of nation's median household income of \$64,994.



**\$35,681**

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
(WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY)**



There has been a 54.1% increase in Williamsburg County's median household income between 2020 and 2022.

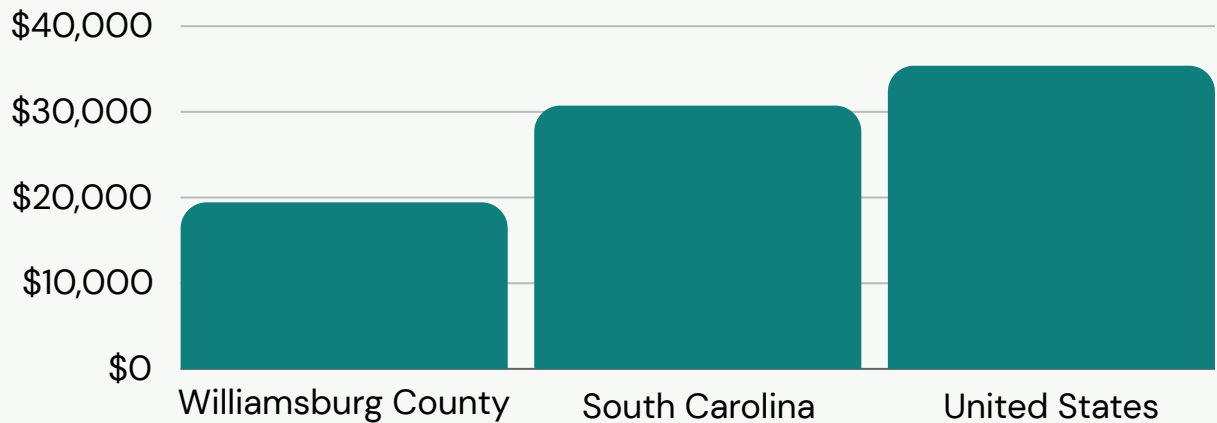


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2020). AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES. RETRIEVED FROM CENSUS REPORTER PROFILE PAGE FOR WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY, SC  
[HTTPS://CENSUSREPORTER.ORG/PROFILES/05000US45089-WILLIAMSBURG-COUNTY-SC/](https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US45089-williamsburg-county-sc/)



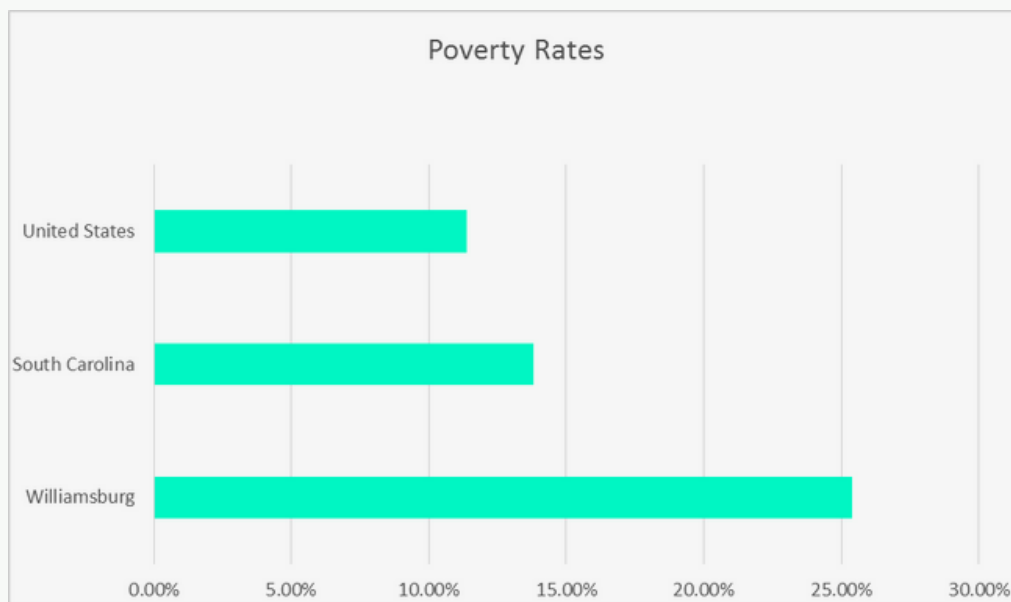
# PER CAPITA INCOME

The per capita income is higher than the per capita income for the state of South Carolina (\$30,727) and is relatively close to the national per capita income of \$35,384



**\$19,438** PER CAPITA INCOME  
(WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY)

Williamsburg County is considered a Persistent Poverty County. The poverty rate in Williamsburg County is higher than the poverty rates in South Carolina and the nation combined.



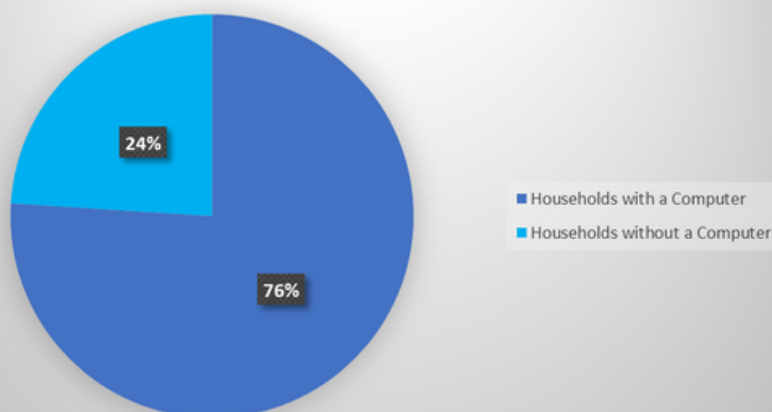
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2020). AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES. RETRIEVED FROM CENSUS REPORTER PROFILE PAGE FOR WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY, SC [HTTPS://CENSUSREPORTER.ORG/PROFILES/05000US45089-WILLIAMSBURG-COUNTY-SC/](https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US45089-williamsburg-county-sc/)

# Computer & Internet Access in Williamsburg County

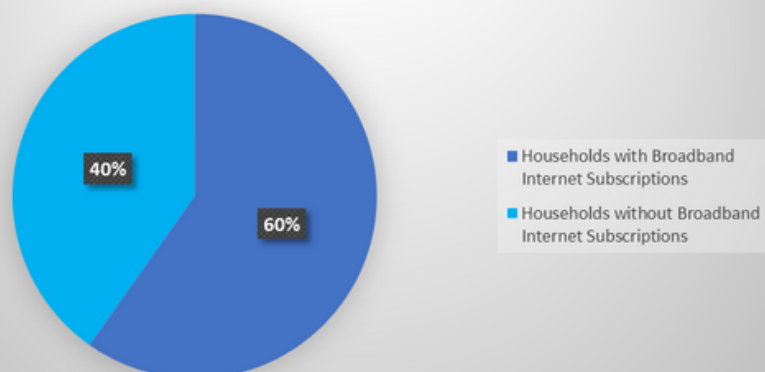
Access to computers and high-speed internet are essential tools for education, work, commerce, healthcare, and access to information. The pandemic demonstrated how powerful and essential access to computers and high-speed internet has become in today's global society. The importance of equity in access to high-speed internet and affordable computer devices was highlighted during the pandemic as schools, businesses, and healthcare providers moved to more online/remote capabilities. Those who did not have access to internet and computers experienced a greater level of difficulty in gaining access to essential information, education, and even healthcare (such as online registration for vaccination).

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/QUICKFACTS/WILLIAMSBURGCOUNTYSOUTHCAROLINA](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/williamsburgcountysouthcarolina)

### Computers in Household



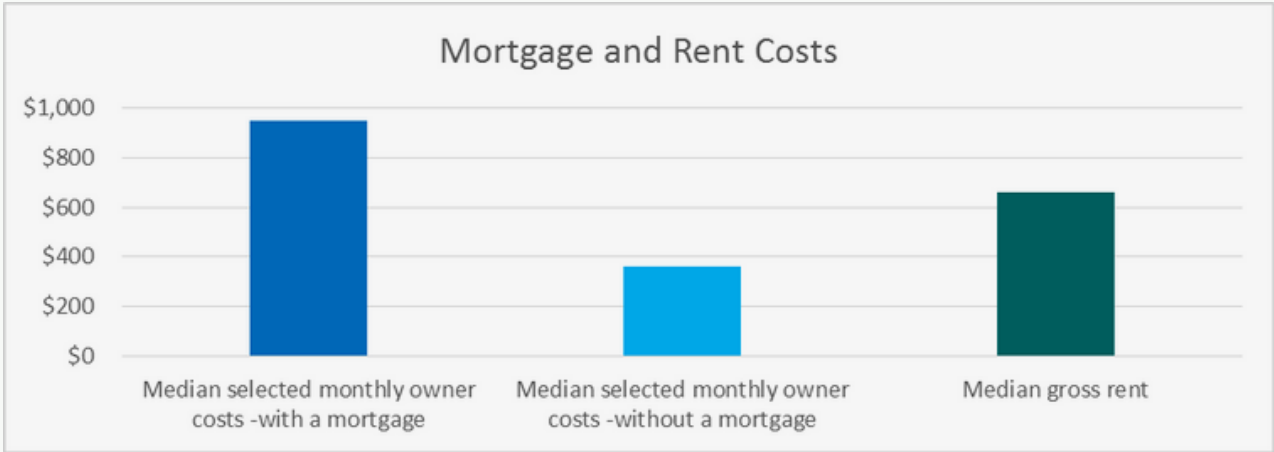
### Households with Broadband Internet Subscriptions



# Housing in Williamsburg County



The owner-occupied housing unit rate in Williamsburg County is 72.3%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$73,900. There are 12,705 households and 2.3 persons per household.



Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/williamsburgcountysouthcarolina>

# Municipalities

The population in each municipality in Williamsburg County, except the Town of Stuckey, has declined over the last two decades. The Town of Stuckey experienced a 32.7% increase. However, during the last decade the Town of Hemingway, Town of Lane have experienced population increases. Those increases were not enough to reach or exceed the 2000 population in those municipalities.

Population Growth Rate for Williamsburg County Municipalities						
City/Town	2000	2020	20-Year Growth Rate %	2010	2020	10- Year Growth Rate %
Greeleyville	452	344	-23.9	438	344	-21.5
Hemingway	573	522	-8.9	459	522	13.7
Kingstree	3,496	3,058	-12.5	3,328	3,058	-8.1
Lane	585	569	-2.7	508	569	12
Stuckey	263	349	32.7	245	349	42.4

# Secondary Education in Williamsburg County

Williamsburg County School District has a long history of effectively educating children to be successful in their future endeavors, with the mission to ensure a world-class education for all students by utilizing a rigorous, innovative curriculum that focuses on creativity, critical thinking and problem solving.

- **Vision**

In partnership with all stakeholders, Williamsburg County School District will ensure a world-class education for all students by utilizing a rigorous, innovative curriculum that focuses on creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving.

- **Mission**

The mission of Williamsburg County School District is to prepare students for college, careers, and citizenship in a global society.

- **Beliefs**

We believe that:

- Knowledge is power.
- Learning occurs in a caring environment.
- All people are worthy of respect.
- The family is the most important influence in the life of an individual.

Student Enrollment: 3000 (approx.)

Superintendent: Dr. Rose Wilder

Total Number of Schools: 12

Primary Schools: 1

Elementary Schools: 3

Middle Schools: 3

High Schools: 3

Career Center: 1

Alternative Placement Program: 1

Adult Education Center: 1

## Alphabetical Listing of Schools in the Georgetown County School District

Adult Education Center

C. E. Murray Middle/Elementary

Greeleyville Primary Hemingway

Hemingway Career and Technology Center

Hemingway Elementary

Hemingway High

HOPE Academy Alternative School

Kenneth Gardner Elementary

Kingstree Middle Magnet School

Kingstree Senior High

M.B. Lee Middle

W. M. Anderson Primary

# Post-Secondary Education

## Williamsburg Technical College

Williamsburg Technical College, located in Kingstree SC, is a public two-year college granting associate degrees, diplomas, certificates and continuing education units, provides quality, affordable, and accessible learning opportunities so students can gain knowledge and skills to achieve their educational goals and provides training opportunities to meet area business and industry needs in a supportive environment that is fiscally, administratively, and academically sound. For more information visit [www.wiltech.edu](http://www.wiltech.edu)

## Programs of Study

AAS – Nursing (ADN) – LPN to RN Transition  
AAS – Nursing (ADN)  
AAS – General Technology  
AAS – Business Admin – Comp Res Mgmt  
AAS – Early Care and Education  
AAS – Business Administration  
Associate in Science Degree  
Associate in Arts Degree  
Diploma – Health Science Practical Nursing  
Cosmetology Certificate  
Phlebotomy Certificate  
Welding Certificate  
Small Business Management Certificate  
Nursing Assistant Certificate  
Nail Technology Certificate  
Microcomputer Business Applications Certificate  
Medical Office Administration Certificate  
Mechatronics Certificate  
Machine Tool Tech. Certificate  
HVAC/R Certificate  
Healthcare Certificate  
General College Studies Certificate  
Infant and Toddler Care Certificate  
Electrical Technology Certificate  
Early Childhood Dev. Certificate  
Drafting and Design Certificate  
Criminal Justice Certificate  
Construction Trades Certificate  
Computer Technology Certificate  
Basic Machine Tool Technology Certificate  
Basic Welding Tech. Certificate  
Basic Patient Care Certificate  
Basic Automotive Repair Certificate  
Automotive Repair Certificate

# Career and Technology Education

At WTC, high school students have the opportunity to take vocational technical courses that offer both high school and college credit. These are called Career and Technology Education courses, or CATE for short. In mutual recognition of the value of training offered at each institution, WTC and the Williamsburg County School District have established an articulation agreement. The agreement establishes those parameters which are necessary for the coordination of educational programs and which will facilitate the orderly progression of students from one to the other without unnecessary duplication of course content. WTC awards appropriate semester-hour credit for articulated occupational program course work satisfactorily completed in the Williamsburg County School District. Williamsburg Technical College will make every attempt to place advanced students into the appropriate level of instruction.



## MISSION

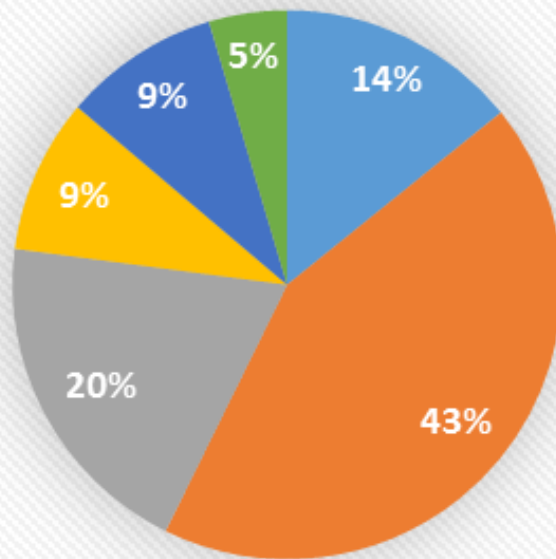
The mission of the Office of Career and Technology Education is to provide leadership and services to schools supporting grade-level, standards-based curricula through the integration of academic and career and technical instruction for students in grades seven through twelve while focusing on the Office's 2020 Vision for Career and Technology Education in South Carolina.

## VISION

To provide Williamsburg County students the opportunity to participate in a rigorous and relevant career and technical program that leads to academic achievement and successful employment in a global economic society.



## Educational Attainment: Age 25-64



- No High School Diploma
- High School Graduate
- Some College, No Degree
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Postgraduate Degree

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/williamsburgcountysouthcarolina>

Eighty-three percent (83%) of Williamsburg County's population has attained at least a high school diploma or equivalency.



# Labor Force Participation

Williamsburg County has a civilian labor force of 12,258 with a participation rate of 48%. Of individuals ages 25 and over in Williamsburg County 14% of them have a bachelor's degree or higher. The annual unemployment rate for Williamsburg County is 6.1% which is above both the nation's rate of 5.3% and the state's rate of 4%.

## Labor Force Participation Rate: (civilian population 16 years and over)

Source: JobsEq

48%  
(ages 16+)

## Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate: (civilian population 25-54)

Source: JobsEq

67%  
(ages 25-54)

\$45,806

**Average Wage Per Job**

Source: StatsAmerica

6.1%

**Annual Unemployment Rate**

Source: SC DEW

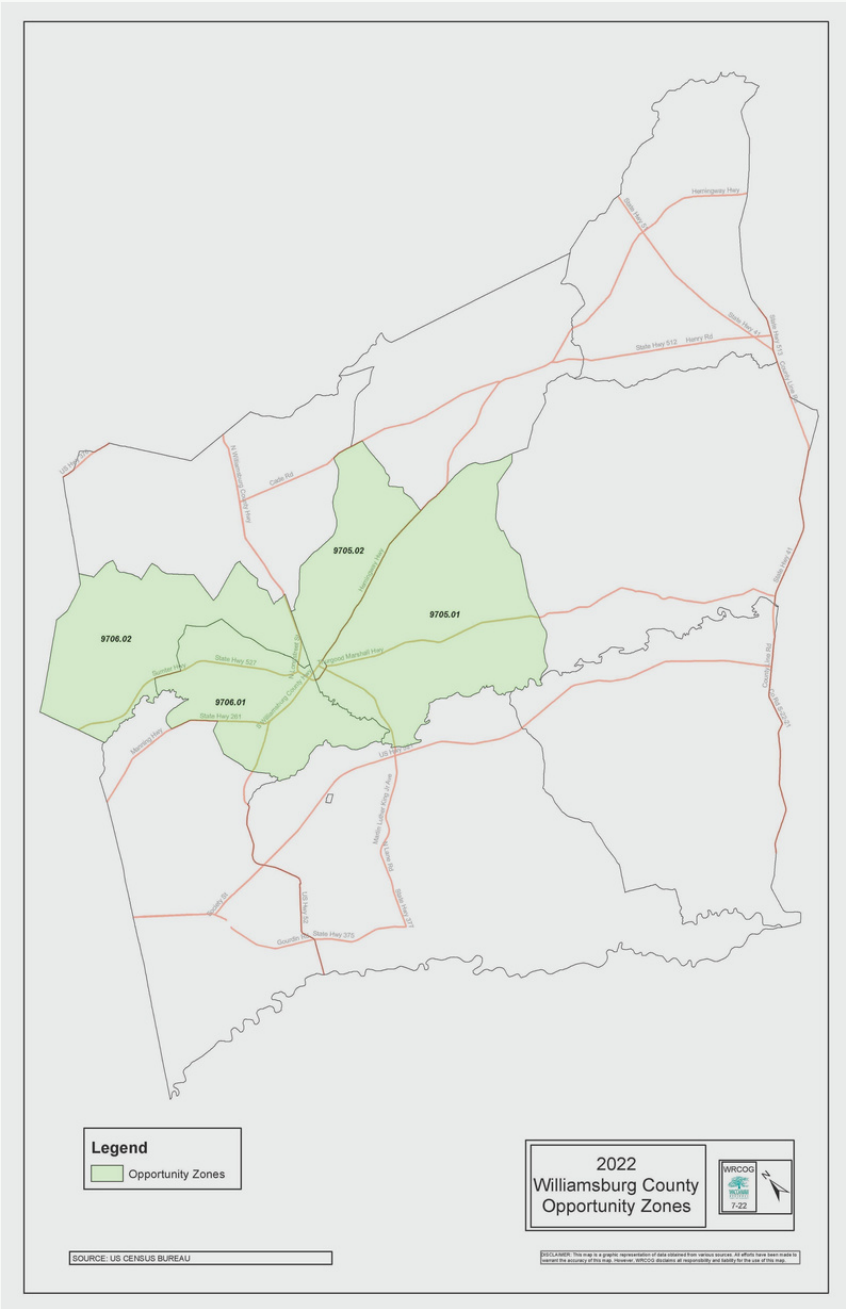
31.7 Minutes

**Mean Travel Time to Work**

Source: StatsAmerica

# Williamsburg County Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones are a federal program created by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage economic development and job creation in low-income urban and rural communities by providing specialized federal tax reductions for eligible investments (SC Commerce). In 2018, South Carolina’s governor designated 135 eligible Opportunity Zones. Williamsburg County has three designated eligible Opportunity Zones.



## Existing Industries in Williamsburg County

Agru America	Andrews	Austria	Manufacturing
Baker Transportation, Inc.	Lake City	USA	Manufacturing
Citadel Brands, LLC	Kingstree	Scotland	Textile (Clothing & Apparel)
DSM Nutritional Products	Kingstree	Netherlands	Manufacturing
Embroidery Solutions, LLC	Kingstree	USA	Manufacturing
Hemingway Refrigeration & Locker Co.	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
Hemingway Sewing Solutions	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
House of Raeford Farms, Inc.	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
ITI Hydraulik USA	Andrews	Canada	Manufacturing
Lane Manufacturing, LLC	Lane	USA	Manufacturing
Micro Fusion Technology	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
Nan Ya Plastics Co., America	Lake City	Taiwan	Manufacturing
Palmetto Paper Tube, Inc.	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
Palmetto Pump Systems, LLC	Kingstree	USA	Manufacturing
Palmetto Synthetics, LLC	Kingstree	USA	Manufacturing
Peddinghaus Co.	Andrews	Germany	Manufacturing
Pierce Machinery	Andrews	USA	Manufacturing
Solmax USA, LLC	Kingstree	USA	Manufacturing
Starcyl Cylinders	Hemingway	Canada	Manufacturing
The Truss Company, Inc.	Salters	USA	Manufacturing
Three-D Metal Works	Andrews	USA	Manufacturing
Tri-County Cotton	Salters	USA	Manufacturing
Tupperware US, Inc.	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
UPL, Inc.	Kingstree	India	Manufacturing
Valley Forge Flag	Kingstree	USA	Manufacturing
Valley Forge Flag	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
WasteZero, Inc.	Hemingway	USA	Manufacturing
Watford Industry, Inc.	Kingstree	USA	Manufacturing
Williamsburg Packing Co.	Kingstree	USA	Manufacturing

Source: <https://www.williamsburgcounty.sc.gov/158/Economic-Development>



## Section 4:

# SWOT Summary

# SWOT ANALYSIS



The primary goal of a SWOT analysis is to increase awareness of the factors that may influence the planning or implementation of strategies for a region or organization.

WRCOG collected data for the SWOT analysis by conducting interviews with county economic development directors. In addition, surveys were conducted with key stakeholders from the government sector, private sector, as well as key staff members of WRCOG.

SWOT data collected through surveys focused on the following key topics for the Waccamaw Region:

- Talent & Education
- Innovation & Economic Development
- Infrastructure, Growth, & Resilience
- Business Climate & Competitiveness
- Civic & Governmental Infrastructure
- Environment & Quality of Life

# TALENT & EDUCATION

## Strengths

- Well-performing public school system
- Strong university and technical college system
- Access to skilled training opportunities
- Well-located educational institutions
- Substantial collaboration between area high schools, technical colleges, and universities
  - Solid tuition assistance programs through technical college system, federal and state workforce programs, and non-profit organizations
  - Schools have well-organized system for providing at-home learning options when unable to meet in person

## Weaknesses

- Pre-existing stigmas surrounding area schools present negative perception
  - Lack of apprenticeship and internship opportunities for high school students
  - Lack of focus on trade-based career planning
  - Low high school graduation rates
  - Parent and student understanding of career/college options after graduation
    - College graduates leave the area for better job opportunities (brain drain)

## Opportunities

- Growing university and technical college systems in the region
  - Apprenticeships for youth and adults by partnering with area employers
    - Early college high school courses providing dual credits for high school and college
    - Create awareness of local jobs and industry to middle and high school students
    - Expose career options to students of all ages through clubs, programs, and hands-on activities
    - Create more awareness of career pathways along with funding opportunities for tuition assistance

## Threats

- Lack of technology related job offerings in the region
  - Rapid growth presents challenges for areas where additional schools are needed along with educators and staff
  - Lack of infrastructure for teachers, students, and graduates
  - Lack of affordable housing for teachers, students, and graduates
  - Lack of childcare facilities and affordable childcare options

# INNOVATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Strengths

- Desirable place to live and work
- Great opportunities for new business and industry
- Low taxes and energy costs
- Access to ports, rail, and within 1-2 hours of interstates
- Affordable cost of living
- Educational institutes adaptable for industry training needs
- Diverse workforce
- Name recognition as large tourist destination
- Natural beauty and unspoiled environment
- Development opportunities in industrial parks

## Weaknesses

- Lack of diverse industry
- Barriers to financial resources for minority populations
- Lack of infrastructure, housing, and skilled workers
- Lack of interstate access within region
- Lack of local programs geared towards small businesses and access to capital
- Lack of interest in diversifying industry
- Active environmental groups opposing growth
- Lack of inventory for industrial buildings

## Opportunities

- I-73 construction can be catalyst for more industrial growth
- Developing entrepreneurship groups through incubators.
- Renewed interests in downtown revitalization efforts
- Growing population throughout region brings additional talent and attracts industry
- Smarter planning for infrastructure
- Additional housing
- Programs to support entrepreneurs through capital venture programs and grants

## Threats

- Lack of inventory of spec buildings and industrial parks for future growth
- Environmental threats from lobbyist
- Natural disasters such as hurricanes, flooding, and ice storms
- Resistance to diverse industries
- Supply chain issues
- Lack of quick access to interstate
- Low wages
- Population loss in rural communities

# INFRASTRUCTURE, GROWTH, & RESILIENCE

## Strengths

- Sufficient network of highways in most parts of the region
- Investment of highway construction by local government
- Increased planning for hazards associated with flooding
- Growing international airport hub and strong network of local air service providers
- Opportunity Zones throughout region offer investment opportunities
- Increased tourism and construction in the region
- Abundant water supply for the region
- All municipalities have public water system

## Weaknesses

- Rural areas lack access to utilities
- Lack of funding for rural regions and underserved populations
- Lack of long-term planning to include infrastructure improvements, especially for electric charging stations
- Transportation accessibility and lack of reliable and timely transport
- Lack of natural gas to industrial park sites
- Insufficient funding to improve infrastructure
- Over development without infrastructure

## Opportunities

- Support development of I-73 and other highways to improve transportation
- Increase access to utilities for industrial parks
- Improve planning efforts for future development
- Provide competitive incentives to attract new industry to the region
- Increase technology training and plan for jobs of the future
- Improve mass transit for the region through promoting and expansion of services
- Build and expand workforce pipelines by leveraging resources

## Threats

- Rapid population threatens infrastructure
- Unplanned growth; lack of understanding vision
- Failure to repair roads and other infrastructure
- Failure to secure funding for road projects
- Inadequate fire and police protection for rural areas
- Funding for new schools or school improvements
- Inadequate training for trade related jobs for the region
- Inclusivity of all populations



# BUSINESS CLIMATE & COMPETITIVENESS

## Strengths

- Very pro-business environment
- Low taxes, great place to work/live
- Business friendly; development friendly
- More industry brings better paying jobs
- Strong budgets and improved relationships between local, state, and federal governments

## Weaknesses

- Lack of competition in markets; few companies typically awarded large contracts
- Low wages; regulations; finding employees
- Lack of diverse industry and businesses
- Lack of comprehensive planning; impact fees
- Opposition to diversifying industry in the region

## Opportunities

- Abundance of employment opportunities exceeds workforce
- Training programs for existing and future economic development and industry
- More support for new industry locating to the region
- Diversifying the workforce and building a network of industry partners who value inclusivity
- Workshops and training for entrepreneurs and existing businesses
- Increased awareness of funding and capital opportunities

## Threats

- Overbuilding in hospitality sector is dictating the market and forcing out affordable housing options
- Higher taxes are a threat as infrastructure demands are increasing due to population growth and inflation
- Natural disasters and pandemic threaten businesses and tourism industry

# CIVIC & GOVERNMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE

## Strengths

- Strong focus on quality of life
- Strong budgets in some areas; strong regional government collaborations
- Transparency
- Focus on downtown development

## Weaknesses

- Seems to focus more on tourism over residents
- Lack of public/private partnerships
- Funding in rural areas decreasing
- Lack of citizen involvement with planning
- Lack of funds for infrastructure projects
- Lack of diversity and inclusion

## Opportunities

- Rapid growth offers ability to grow strategically and positively
- Improve regional relationships and identify ways to collaborate with other municipalities by leveraging resources
- Encouraging citizens to participate on boards and committees
- Public/private partnerships
- Develop a unified legislative agenda

## Threats

- Rapid growth is stretching government resources
- Budget cuts, population growth and decreasing populations in rural areas
- Lack of civic participation
- Loss of confidence in government officials; political differences
- Inflation; rising costs for construction projects and staffing

# ENVIRONMENT & QUALITY OF LIFE

## Strengths

- Beautiful ocean, rivers, and wetlands
- Located near both urban and rural areas which provide resources
- Strong and growing healthcare system
- Great weather
- Improving education and graduation rates
- New and modern schools
- Nice recreational facilities and activities throughout region

## Weaknesses

- Duplication of services for many areas of the region
- Lack of coordination between agencies
- Lack of modern housing that is affordable
- High poverty rate and aging population
- Weather can present setbacks for citizens when faced with flooding, hurricanes, etc.
- Equality issues at all levels
- Health and wellness
- Jobs/wages/transportation

## Opportunities

- Planning for additional recreational amenities, i.e., trails, nature parks, eco-tourism
- Accessible recreation for everyone despite socio-economic differences
- Improve housing in both rural and urban areas
- Develop stronger relationships with the area for collective planning
- Encourage more wellness/health/fitness
- Support a balance of healthy growth and environmental protection

## Threats

- Natural disasters, specifically hurricanes, flooding
- Economic downturns
- Blight properties and lack of adequate and affordable housing
- Short-term planning versus long-term planning



## Section 5:

# Action Plan

An Action Plan is an outline of steps which need to be taken in order to accomplish set goals. In strategic planning, an action plan plays a crucial role in project management and is useful for groups who are coordinating and communicating with each other to effectively complete a task.

- The **vision statement** describes the strategic desires and aspirations of the region over the next ten to twenty years, and depicts a view of what the area will look like in the future while also setting guidance for the planning and execution of these strategies.
- **Goals** are expansive in nature and serve as the fundamental forecasts for local and regional expectations.
- Both specific and measurable, **objectives** set a realistic agenda of what goals can be accomplished over the next ten to twenty years.



The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments' economic development staff, working through the CEDS committee and WRCOG Board of Directors, reviewed the vision statement prior to the 2023 CEDS rewrite, keeping applicable goals and plans while adjusting some strategies.

**VISION:**

**The Waccamaw Region will cultivate a growing, sustainable and thriving community which will focus on providing the highest degree of health, safety, education, infrastructure, transparency, and equality for citizens while delivering a pathway to diversify the economy in a way that will preserve the unique natural environment and historic heritage of the area.**



# Goal 1

## Talent & Education:

Develop, grow, and support a diverse population of skilled workers for current and future industry needs.

### Objective:

- Promote a thriving partnership between all levels of educational institutions, private industry, and economic development with a focus on increasing workforce skills and equitable participation which is aligned with the current and future workforce needs of the region.

### Strategies:

- Continue to foster partnerships with stakeholders through partnership meetings
- Increase awareness of career opportunities, training, and certification programs
- Support the increase of new apprenticeship pipelines for youth and adults
- Support efforts to retain college graduates in the region

### Stakeholders:

- K-12 Education
- Technical Colleges (state and private)
- Coastal Carolina University
- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act
- Economic Developers
- Chambers of Commerce
- Private Industry
- Workforce Development Organizations
- SC Department of Commerce

### Milestones:

- Continue to identify new and existing workforce partnerships
- Increase the number of participating employer apprenticeships
- Continue to identify and plan for new and/or emerging training needs for regional industry
- Develop initiative to attract and retain high school and college graduates in the region

### Time Frame:

- Ongoing
- Mid-term (5-10 years)
- Ongoing
- Mid-term (5-10 years)

## Goal 2

### **Innovation & Economic Development:** Improve coordination of community/economic stakeholders, while creating recruitment and retention strategies for new, existing, and diverse industry sectors.

#### **Objective:**

- Strengthen partnerships between public/private sectors and continue to grow innovative pathways and sectors to attract businesses while serving both traditional and underrepresented entrepreneurs.

#### **Strategies:**

- Recruit diverse mix of industry and businesses with competitive wages
- Develop industrial sites and buildings throughout the region
- Identify venture capital streams for traditional and non-traditional entrepreneurs
- Develop technology-based businesses through support of start-ups, co-work spaces, and incubators

#### **Stakeholders:**

- Small Business
- Entrepreneurs
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic Developers
- Colleges/Universities
- Small Business Administration
- Cities/Towns/Counties

#### **Milestones:**

- Review regional industrial and business park inventory
- Continue working with economic developers and other community stakeholders
- Support efforts for develop start-up/co-work spaces and incubators
- Support the connection of investors and entrepreneurs and business owners
- Support loan programs for new and existing businesses

#### **Time Frame:**

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing



# Goal 3

## Infrastructure, Growth, & Resilience:

Establish infrastructure plans which will enhance economic development while planning for future growth and development throughout the region.

### Objective:

- Develop infrastructure for electric vehicles, broadband, housing, transportation, renewable energy, water, wastewater, and upgrading/ hardening utilities to enhance economic development and resiliency.

### Strategies:

- Seek funding to support infrastructure projects throughout the region
- Continue to foster the coordination of mass transit between counties
- Promote the development of more rail and air service in the region
- Promote the construction of I-73 and other roadways to enhance economic development and evacuation routes
- Seek funding for affordable housing options

### Stakeholders:

- Cities/counties
- Economic Development Directors
- Utility companies
- Community members

### Milestones:

- Continue to provide updates on infrastructure projects including roads, water, sewer, transportation, housing, renewable energy, and electric vehicles
- Maintain partnerships with community stakeholders
- Provide technical assistance to cities/counties/utilities/economic developers for infrastructure planning and projects

### Time Frame:

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing

# Goal 4

## Business Climate & Competitiveness:

Provide a diverse and competitive business climate with equitable financial and educational resources for new and expanding business owners/entrepreneurs.

### Objective:

- Create a diversified business environment which promotes competition for new/existing businesses while also promoting a supportive system for entrepreneurs including equitable programs for minorities and first time business owners.

### Strategies:

- Increase the awareness of workforce programs along with entrepreneurial services throughout the region
- Continue to offer incentives and support for new and existing businesses
- Continue to create a diverse environment for new or expanding businesses
- Continue to increase the awareness of capital funding opportunities for traditional and non-traditional entrepreneurs

### Stakeholders:

- K-12 Education
- Economic Development Directors
- Council of Governments (grant programs)
- Small Business Association
- SCORE
- SC Department of Commerce
- North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA)
- Chambers of Commerce
- City & County officials

### Milestones:

- Regularly review list of organizations which offer incentives and workshops or education for entrepreneurs
- Maintain relationships with Economic Development Directors, City/County leaders, Chambers of Commerce, and other stakeholders
- Assist businesses and entrepreneurs by connecting them to organizations offering assistance

### Time Frame:

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing

# Goal 5

## Civic & Governmental Infrastructure:

Encourage civic participation and inclusion on local decision-making and planning, creating transparency and trust between government and citizens.

### Objective:

- Promote trust and transparency between the public and local government by increasing engagement and participation of diverse stakeholders.

### Strategies:

- Explore ways to engage and encourage more participation from citizens and stakeholders when making local and regional decisions
- Encourage and promote citizens of diverse backgrounds with participating on boards and committees
- Continue to support public/private partnerships
- Develop ways to increase transparency on decision-making and explore ways to communicate to the public

### Stakeholders:

- City & County Government
- Local & state government agencies
- Citizens
- Private business
- Schools and Colleges

### Milestones:

- Identify ways to communicate decision-making in local government to the public
- Continue to engage with the public and private sectors to help with decision-making
- Support additional measures that create sustainable transparency to the public

### Time Frame:

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing

# Goal 6

## Environment & Quality of Life:

Maintain a region which is attractive to residents and visitors, offering a mix of housing options, healthcare, and additional services which enhance the local environment.

### Objective:

- Increase amenities which can be used by a diverse mix of people and improve downtown and historic areas which attract residents and development; also increase the number of housing units to attract and accommodate renters and buyers at various income levels.

### Strategies:

- Continue to plan for additional recreational amenities which are inclusive
- Improve housing and housing supply in both rural and urban regions
- Continue to develop plans to attract more diverse talent and support healthy growth and environment
- Develop plans to include EV connections for both urban and rural areas
- Continue to develop/redevelop downtowns/historic areas

### Stakeholders:

- Citizens
- Downtown Programs
- Cities and Counties
- Utility partners
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic Development
- Housing Authorities
- Public/Private sectors

### Milestones:

- Provide technical assistance for funding and planning
- Continue to provide data and information regarding workforce and economic development
- Maintain partnerships with cities and counties and provide any technical assistance

### Time Frame:

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing

# EVALUATION & PERFORMANCE

"True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information"

-Winston Churchill

The economic development team, under the guidance of the CEDS Strategy Committee, will be responsible for evaluating this plan on an ongoing basis, while economic activities and accomplishments will be acknowledged and recorded annually.

Economic development representatives from each county will be asked for an assessment of their county's accomplishments in regards to those proposed in the strategies and implementation portions of the CEDS document. WRCOG staff and, most importantly, the CEDS Strategy Committee will annually review the economic development activities of each county in terms of jobs created, unemployment rate, private and public investment, and other relevant factors to determine the level of performance in regards to this plan.

The CEDS Strategy Committee will review goals and objectives of the plan and adjust as needed due to any pertinent economic changes to the regional economy.



# EVALUATION & PERFORMANCE



## S.M.A.R.T. goals =

*specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound*

Standards for evaluating each project will include the Economic Development Administration's investment policy guidelines:

- Can the measures be evaluated in an objective, timely, and cost-effective fashion?
- Are the measures focused on an outcome or result (i.e., data and information on the success of a specific process or engagement) rather than an output or activity (i.e., data or information on activities to help achieve an outcome)?
- Do the measures include a clear statement of the results expected?
- Do the measures support regional goals?
- Do the measures allow for meaningful trend or statistical analysis?
- Are the measures challenging but at the same time attainable?
- Are assumptions and definitions specified for what constitutes satisfactory performance?
- Have those who are responsible for the performance being measured been both identified and fully involved in the development of the measures?
- Are the measures tracking trends that are completely within the region's control or will national or global developments impact performance?



## Section 5:

# Economic Resilience

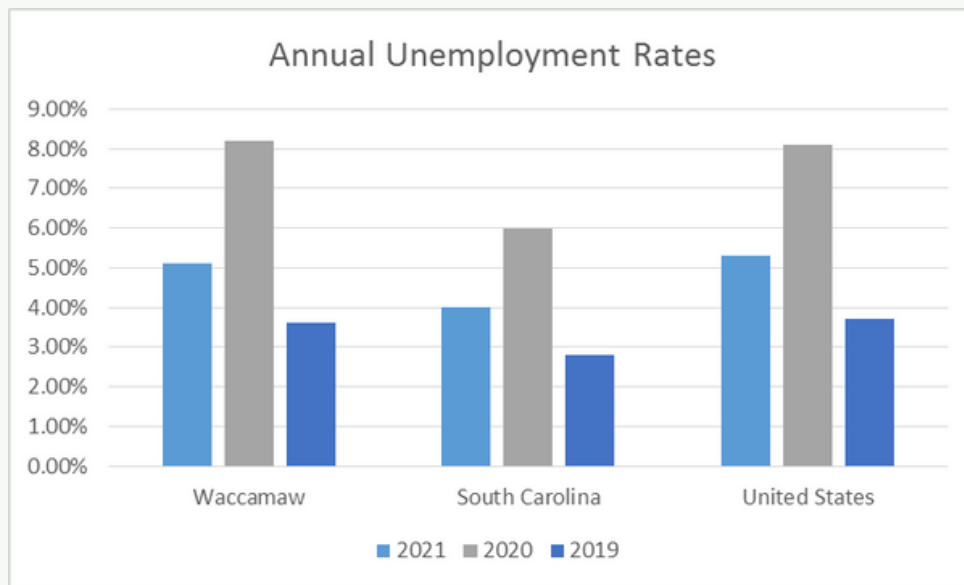
## Economic Resilience in Waccamaw EDD

The Waccamaw Economic Development District, along with most areas of the United States, was directly impacted and continues to feel the economic impacts from the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Executive Orders from the Governor of South Carolina began to affect the Waccamaw Economic Development District on March 16, 2020 when Governor McMaster ordered the closures of all schools including public and private schools, technical schools, colleges and universities. Additional executive orders included the closure of all non-essential businesses, which significantly impacted theaters, concert venues, and festivals. Restaurants were ordered to limit inside dining, and by April 2020, short-term rentals and vacation rentals were ordered by the governor to be stopped. Additional orders limited groups of no more than 3 people and travelling and work at home orders were imposed. The state implemented the Accelerate SC program in April 2020 to assist with reopening businesses after the statewide work-or-home orders slowly began to be lifted. Accelerate SC served as the coordinated COVID-19 advisory team to consider and recommend economic revitalization plans for South Carolina. By June 6, 2021, Governor McMaster allowed the emergency declaration for COVID-19 to expire. By this time, unemployment numbers had greatly improved but were still above pre-pandemic levels.

Horry and Georgetown counties are both tourism-driven economies and most businesses depend on spring and summer tourism to survive. The Executive Orders from the Governor's office greatly impacted businesses in both Horry and Georgetown counties. At its peak in April 2020, Horry County, the largest tourism and hospitality industry within the Waccamaw Region saw unemployment rates escalate to nearly 23% which was nearly double the average unemployment rate for South Carolina. Georgetown and Williamsburg counties also saw significant increases in unemployment peaking in April 2020 (Georgetown County-15.1% and Williamsburg County-12.1%). These spikes in unemployment were significant, as the average unemployment rate pre-COVID (January 2020) for the Waccamaw Region was approximately 4.5%, which was still 1.5% higher than the state average (at 3%). In September 2020, the unemployment rate was down in Horry falling to 6.0% and Georgetown was slightly lower at 5.8%. Williamsburg County had the highest unemployment rate in the region at 6.6%. As most businesses have begun to reopen, the



unemployment rates have improved significantly. The Waccamaw Region's annual unemployment rate for 2021 was 5.1%, which was higher than the state's annual unemployment rate of 4.0%, and slightly lower than the national annual unemployment rate of 5.3%.



SOURCE: SC DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the region's other major economic sectors (Healthcare and Manufacturing) were also impacted. Healthcare facilities saw record levels of patients, with regional hospitals such as Conway Medical Center, Grand Strand Health, McLeod Health, and Tidelands Health reaching or nearing 100% occupancy. The pandemic increased the demand for additional healthcare workers even more than previous years. Many hospitals have had to rely on travelling nurses and lab technicians to assist with the increased volume of patients. The interruption in colleges and technical schools exasperated the problem, as students in healthcare related occupations earned certifications and degrees later than anticipated.

All major industry sectors in the Waccamaw (Healthcare, Hospitality, and Manufacturing) have seen significant workforce issues. While all sectors have experienced issues with finding and retaining talent, Hospitality has seen the most difficulties as this sector experienced higher than normal tourism, while having a lower numbers of

employees. The lack of J-1 student Visas during the 2021 summer season created additional workforce issues. In 2019, the Myrtle Beach area hosted approximately 3,200 international J-1 visa students, however the 2021 summer season saw only 729. The need for more workers in the Hospitality sector has driven up wages. Many fast food and retail workers are seeking \$15 per hour wages, rather than \$9-\$12 per hour pre-Pandemic. In addition, housekeeping positions and maintenance positions were in high demand throughout the 2021 summer season, with many employers offering sign-on bonuses and above average wages.

The Manufacturing sector has seen the least amount of impact from COVID-19, as many manufacturers in the Waccamaw Region have continued operating with little disruption. Some manufacturers such as Laudisi, Embroidery Solutions, and Hemingway Apparel saw increased demand for their products, while others such as Sykes in Williamsburg County were forced to permanently close.

Regardless of the industry, all closures have impacted small businesses, especially retail and restaurants. Many business have permanently closed which has been devastating to smaller communities such as Kingstree, in Williamsburg County. This county, one of the poorest in the state, saw the loss of Sykes, a call center (categorized under Manufacturing sector), and also the loss of a chain restaurant and chain clothing store. Although the area lost a major grocer, it was later replaced with a comparable store just months later. Food and supplies are essential for the residents of Williamsburg County, and any loss can create shortages in the area. Horry and Georgetown counties also saw significant numbers of restaurants and retail stores, mostly small businesses close.

In October of 2015 South Carolina experienced a historic rainfall and flooding event that stemmed from a low-pressure system that funneled tropical moisture from Hurricane Joaquin. As a result, an estimated 52 dams statewide were impacted and over 541 roads were closed. Some of these roads even collapsed due to the massive amount of flowing water.

The Waccamaw Region was among the most severely impacted, with some areas receiving almost 2 feet of rain in a week. What made this

event even more severe was its impact on our most vulnerable populations. Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties were the places in most need of aid after looking at the amount of damage along with their social vulnerabilities. Williamsburg County is a designated Persistent Poverty County and also has over 41% of its population living in mobile homes. These mobile homes are prone to more damage and also much harder to repair than single family homes. When the impacts of poverty and race, a lack of wealth, and the percent of age dependent population (children under the age of 5 and adults over the age of 65) are also added to the equation, Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties were the most vulnerable and devastated areas in the state.

In total, this disaster disrupted business up to 6 weeks in some areas. In response to this event, local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) (Winyah Bay VOAD – Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties, Waccamaw VOAD – Horry County) developed Long Term Recovery Groups to guide the process of rebuilding as well as setting up a framework to aid in recovering in a faster manner in the future.

Before this flooding event, the last major disaster to affect the Waccamaw Region was Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Damage from Hurricane Hugo in South Carolina was estimated at \$5.9 billion, which ranks as the strongest and costliest hurricane in the history of the state. There were also 35 related deaths. More recently, in 2014 there was a significant ice storm that affected the area. South Carolina was declared a disaster area and 11% of the state's timber was lost. \$360 million in damages made it the worst storm since Hurricane Hugo. Foresters were able to salvage 15% of the timber and 10% of the value.

As the region continues to recover from the October 2015 flood event and hurricane Matthew on October 08, 2016 the region experienced an unusual snow and ice storm in January 2017. The region continued to experience unusual weather conditions with hurricane Florence on September 14, 2018 which resulted in major flooding in some parts of Horry County. Horry County (Conway, Longs, Bucksport, and Socastee) reached \$40 million in damage to homes and businesses due to the Waccamaw and Little Pee Dee rivers flooding from intense rainfall during the hurricane. Most recently, the region experienced hurricane

Dorian on September 5, 2019. The region was impacted by wind, flooding, isolated tornados, and beach erosion. Businesses, government, and schools were also closed due to the hurricane. It is estimated that hurricane Dorian impacted SC's tourism industry by about \$117 million in visitor spending. According to an article in the Post and Courier, the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism's reported that South Carolina has lost \$438 million in tourism due to hurricanes and flooding over the last 5 years. Although the Waccamaw Region avoided catastrophic hurricanes in 2020, flooding continued to be an issue for the region, especially along the Waccamaw River in Horry and Georgetown counties. The Socastee area saw homes along the river flood again in February of 2020—making this the fifth time some area homes have been flooded over the past 6 years.

### ***Climate Change and Economic Resiliency***

The National Climate Assessment predicts average temperatures to increase by 4 to 8 degrees by 2100. This climate change will bring sea level rises and increased vulnerability to flooding, especially our low-lying coastal areas. Issues such as storm surge, beach erosion, and reduction of wetlands will have a significant impact on not only the tourism industry but also our agricultural industry due to salt-water intrusion. The increase of temperature by a few degrees will also increase the number of algae blooms, increase the number of bacteria that could infect humans via shellfish, and decrease yield on crops such as dairy, corn, cotton, soybeans and rice. Economic resiliency will become more important in the coming years as our economy and climate change over time. The Waccamaw Region continues to implement new mitigation plans and other emergency management strategies to recover from, withstand, or avoid shocks to the environment and economy.

### ***Mitigating the Impacts of Future Storm Events on the Waccamaw Region's Economy***

According to the National Weather Service National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Georgetown County, Horry County, and Williamsburg County are StormReady. Georgetown County and Horry County are TsunamiReady. The National Weather Service manages both of these programs. The StormReady program helps arm America's communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property during severe weather events. The TsunamiReady program, which was modeled after the StormReady program, helps communities minimize the risk posed by tsunamis through better risk assessment, planning, education and warning communications.

Based upon information obtained from the South Carolina Forestry Commission, Waccamaw leads the state in fire safety as 16 of the 32 Firewise Communities in South Carolina are located in Horry (13) and Georgetown (3) Counties. The Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire.

## Nationally recognized Firewise USA® Communities in Waccamaw EDD

Community	County	Year
Briarcliffe Acres	Horry County	2010
Camden Creek at Allston Plantation	Georgetown County	2013
Captain's Harbour	Horry County	2020
DeBordieu Colony	Georgetown County	2012
Harbour Towne	Horry County	2017
Heather Lakes	Horry County	2013
Hidden Harbor POA	Horry County	2015
Long Bay Club	Horry County	2012
Myrtle Trace Grande	Horry County	2017
Myrtle Trace South	Horry County	2015
Prince George	Georgetown County	2012
Sawgrass East	Horry County	2016
The Farm at Carolina Forest	Horry County	2010
Walkers Woods	Horry County	2010
Waterford Plantation	Horry County	2013
Windsor Green	Horry County	2014

Georgetown County has multiple hazard mitigation plans in place including: expanding current Geographic Information Systems, encouraging wind-resistant design techniques in new residential construction, new dunes program that will reduce flooding and storm impact, and continued efforts to educate the public with educational materials, advertising and promoting the availability of flood insurance, and coordinating Emergency Operations Center activities/drills that encourage citizens to become more prepared. Georgetown County Emergency Management also trains volunteers through their CERT Program and coordinates evacuation drills.

Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg counties have a very detailed comprehensive emergency management plan. Their comprehensive plan breaks down into six sections. The first is preparedness which discusses required training, exercises, and public information, including an outreach plan. The second section is response which involves emergency operations plan and the logistics plan.

Recovery is the next section and this is where their short-term recovery plan is laid out. The fourth section is mitigation. In this section they discuss mitigation strategies for anything ranging from storm surge to cyberterrorism. After that is the continuity of operations plan and the final section includes hazard or function specific plans. Horry County Emergency Management runs a very active Facebook page in coordination with their plans to engage with the local community. Horry County also has a VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters) organization and has designed plans for readily accessible facilities and Disaster Recovery Centers where citizens may go for information on assistance programs run by FEMA or the SBA.

Williamsburg County has a very detailed and goal-oriented hazard mitigation plan to become a more resilient community as well. The four major goals of their mitigation plan are:

- Williamsburg County has no significant disruption in the functioning of the County's infrastructure and the continuity of local government operations in the face of a disaster.

- Williamsburg County is capable of initiating and sustaining emergency response operations during and after a disaster.
- Williamsburg County and incorporated towns are capable of developing, implementing, and maintaining effective mitigation programs.
- All sectors of community work together to create a disaster resistant County.

This plan includes a long list of action items such as: strengthening utility poles/conductor fixtures, establish procedures for construction or provision of “storm shelters”, installing a flash flood warning system, conducting an engineering study on wind vulnerability of critical facilities, and researching the feasibility of tax relief/financial incentive program to encourage neighborhood residents or property owners to retrofit buildings. Williamsburg County received a grant in April 2015 from FEMA to update their hazard mitigation plan. To aid in making the Socastee area of Horry County more resilient to flooding events which have plagued the area over the past 6 years, the county announced in June 2020 the intention to use HUD funding to help relocate residences in the flood prone area.

The region has taken steps to improve/upgrade the infrastructure in some areas that have experienced flooding during past weather events. The City of Georgetown received an EDA disaster grant to make stormwater improvements in its Historic District which is also the City’s economic hub or central business district. Georgetown County received an EDA disaster grant to make drainage improvements in East Andrews. Georgetown County also received a CDBG grant to upgrade the drainage system in the Lincolnshire Drive community which has suffered from residential flooding even when rain events are not named storms. The Town of Kingstree, county seat of Williamsburg’s county, has received CDBG funding to make drainage improvements to the Upper Kingstree Branch which is a canal that runs throughout the town and has caused significant disruption and damage due to flooding. The City of Conway received an EDA disaster grant to make wastewater system infrastructure upgrades to protect local businesses and allow for new developments in the area by eliminating overflow during flood events. The City of Conway received Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation funding from the



South Carolina Office of Resilience for a Stormwater Master Plan. Horry County received funds from South Carolina Disaster Recovery Office launched a recovery and flood home buyout program in the Socastee Community (located near the Waccamaw River) for areas that have suffered from repeated flooding. The City of Conway has installed permeable pavement (porous solution that allows water to drain through it) on Laurel Street (located in the downtown area) as a way to test out innovative strategies for flood mitigation in the downtown area. The City is testing the pavement as it actively researches and proactively takes steps to mitigate flooding and flood damage in the future.

### ***Mitigating the Impacts of Future Pandemic Events on the Waccamaw Region's Economy***

The 2020 pandemic has compounded economic injury to the Waccamaw Region which had already experienced several years (2015–2019) of consecutive natural disasters ranging from flooding events, winter weather events, and hurricanes. Each year the region's businesses and industries experienced damages and loss due to the disasters. The workforce has also been impacted as well through loss of pay from job closures (temporary and permanent) and the toll of their personal loss of income, damaged/destroyed homes and other property. The local governments also experienced loss of various streams of tax revenue as a result of the weather disasters and the pandemic.

The regional economy has endured and is now in the recovery and resiliency phase which will take a collaborative approach. In order for the region to become more resilient, it is imperative that increased regional communication, regional strategic planning and development occur. To aid in the regional approach to recovery and resiliency, In July 2020, the Waccamaw Region received a CARES Act Supplemental EDA Award for EDD Partnership Planning which help strengthen its ability to help the region's local governments, businesses, and other stakeholders prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic. The grant funded the development of a regional disaster

recovery and economic resiliency plan with a focus on pandemic recovery and resiliency. The regional disaster recovery and economic resiliency plan was completed in June 2022 and is available on the Waccamaw Regional Council of Government's website (<https://wrcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Disaster-Recovery-and-Economic-Resiliency-Plan-for-the-Waccamaw-Region.pdf>). In addition, Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments partnered with 29 other counties in South Carolina to offer \$8.2 million in low-interest loans through the SC Business Loan Fund (SCBLF), available to businesses and agribusinesses affected by COVID-19 (Catawba Regional Development Corporation is administering the SCBLF on behalf of the partnering counties, including the Waccamaw Region). Funding was provided from the U.S. Economic Development Administration as part of the CARES Act. Approximately \$1.5 million was approved for area businesses in Waccamaw.

The region is currently experiencing an unusual shift. Although the unemployment rate has decreased significantly since the height of the pandemic (September 2021 regional unemployment rate 4.0%), there is now a labor shortage. Employers in traditionally low skill low wage industries such as hospitality and retail have struggled to find employees. Those with the most success have increased their wages. However, there is uncertainty in regards to the exact cause of the post-pandemic labor shortage or how long it will last. Other possible factors include: (1) decrease in workers age 55 and over returning to workforce; (2) decrease in women with children returning to workforce due to childcare and remote learning; (3) workers have shifted to other fields. Although there are labor shortages, in 2021 the hospitality industry experienced its greatest seasons on record (avg. 92% occupancy rates) and the Myrtle Beach International Airport was the busiest airport in South Carolina. Additionally, Myrtle Beach was rated the 3rd most popular summer 2021 destination by the Tripadvisor's 2021 Summer Travel Index.

Although there has been some recovery, there is a need for continuous focus on economic resiliency. The region continues to see the need to diversify its economy to lessen the impact of future economic downturns and to meet the needs of a growing population (particularly in Horry County) and aging population. The region understands that a

diversified economy will strengthen its resiliency. An improved infrastructure and willing, available, and skilled workforce are also needed. Horry Georgetown Technical College, Williamsburg Technical College, and Coastal Carolina University are key partners in the preparation of a skilled workforce. Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments continues working throughout the region to build the required communication, collaboration, and planning needed to assist the local governments, economic developers, and other strategic partners with economic development activities which promote the development of new high-paying jobs. The region's CEDS is used to identify development needs and to prioritize development activities.

In an effort to mitigate economic impacts related to the healthcare and emergency sectors, Waccamaw Regional has been developing plans for a First Responders Pipeline for Georgetown County, where there is a great need for additional Firefighters and EMT's, who are often at the forefront of emergencies, including pandemics. According to SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), Horry County alone needs an additional 155 hospital beds by 2024 to keep up with the increasing population. Grand Strand Health, McLeod Health, Tideland Health, and Conway Medical Center have all made proposals to construct new hospitals in Horry County to help mitigate the need for more hospital beds. In addition, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) began the construction of Black River Medical Center in Williamsburg County. Black River Medical will replace Williamsburg Regional Hospital in Williamsburg County as well as Lake City Community Hospital in neighboring Florence County. The hospital will have 25 licensed beds, full operating and diagnostic services, a 16-bay emergency department and telehealth capabilities.

The pandemic shined a light on the region's insufficient broadband infrastructure. The demand for remote work and education highlighted areas within the region which lack broadband. The broadband infrastructure is reflective of Waccamaw's "two economies". It is imperative that steps are taken to close digital divide within the region as those most vulnerable, lowest income, rural areas are most often the areas within the region with the greatest lack of broadband infrastructure. In an effort to mitigate the economic, educational, and social impacts related to lack of access to broadband the region has

sought funding opportunities to assist with extending broadband to hard to reach rural areas of the region. Williamsburg county (along with 21 other rural counties and 16 different internet providers in the state) received grant funding from the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff to expand broadband internet connection with an anticipated project completion date of October 2022. Horry Telephone Cooperative (HTC) received a grant from the South Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Program to support its expansion high-speed broadband internet connection to a rural part of Georgetown County (North Santee Community and South Island Community). The region will continue working to secure additional funding from state and federal sources to expand broadband access throughout Waccamaw.

Although the hospitality industry is experiencing a grand recovery, the region experienced the economic setback due to its reliance on hospitality and tourism. In order to become more resilient, the region must continue to take efforts to diversify its economy. The Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation is continuing to build the economy through the following key industries: aerospace, manufacturing, technology, marine, and healthcare.

Georgetown County and Williamsburg County continues to help diversify the regional economy by bring diversified manufacturing to the region. The Georgetown County Economic Development has identified key cluster industries as well: manufacturing, timber, paper, chemical operations, metal fabrication, and machinery. The Williamsburg County Economic Development Board has identified key industry clusters (manufacturing and textile) but is actively working towards target industries to add diversification and resilience to county's economy as well. Williamsburg County's target industries include: aerospace/aviation, automotive suppliers, agribusiness, chemical manufacturing, and fabricated metal products manufacturing.

Additional mitigation efforts that will be needed to help make the region more resilient, include an improved infrastructure. Water and Sewer expansions are still needed in some rural areas of the region. In order to recruit businesses and employees, critical infrastructure is needed. Work has begun on upgrading the stormwater systems and drainage in various parts of the region. Broadband infrastructure needs to be expanded in some areas and upgraded in other parts of the region.

More roads, specifically interstate access is needed in the region. The pandemic highlighted the need for interstate access as the Waccamaw region was at the end of the supply chain due to lack of easy access via interstate. The region is quickly growing, as a result, more healthcare facilities are needed.

The Waccamaw Region experienced a disaster each year since 2015. The counties in the region have updated plans such as mitigation plans, resiliency plans, and emergency response plans. However, although the plans have been developed, the region has learned over the years, that regional communication, cooperation, and collaboration are key to economic resiliency. Each county and municipality within the region gathers strength from each other; none can bounce back better on their own. Currently Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is writing the regional disaster and economic resiliency plan and the data collection has clearly shown that building relationships during “blue sky days” will make the “black cloud days” much easier and the road to recovery and resiliency won’t be traveled alone, because the relationships will have been made to help each other along the way.

## RESOURCES:

American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (ACS)  
Coastal Carolina University  
Galen College of Nursing  
Georgetown County  
Georgetown County Comprehensive Plan  
Georgetown County School District  
Georgetown County Economic Development  
Horry County  
Horry County Comprehensive plan  
Horry County School District  
Horry Georgetown Technical College  
Horry Independent  
JobsEq  
Miller-Motte Technical College  
Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation  
National Weather Service  
North Eastern Strategic Alliance: South Carolina's Business Corner  
Pittsburg Institute of Aeronautics  
Post and Courier  
Regional Economic Outlook  
South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics  
South Carolina Department of Commerce  
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control  
South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce  
South Carolina Forestry Commission  
South Strand News  
StatsAmerica  
The Sun News  
U.S. Census Bureau  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
U.S. Department of Labor  
U.S. Global Change Research Program  
Waccamaw Economic Outlook  
Webster University  
Williamsburg county  
Williamsburg County Economic Development Board  
Williamsburg County School District  
Williamsburg Technical College  
WMBF News  
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# Appendix

# Waccamaw Regional Board of Directors:

Representative Carl L. Anderson  
Mr. Brendon Barber, Sr.  
Ms. Lillie Jean Johnson  
Honorable Frank McClary  
Mr. Jerry Oakley, Vice-Chairman  
Ms. Peggy Wayne  
Honorable Alma White  
Honorable Barbara Blain-Bellamy, Chairman  
Representative Heather Crawford  
Mr. Cam Crawford  
Mr. Robert F. Childs, Treasurer  
Ms. Jean Powell Dozier  
Honorable John K. Gardner  
Representative Jeff Johnson  
Mr. Leslie McIver, Sr.  
Mr. Tyler Servant  
Mr. Gregg Smith  
Ms. Jean Timbes  
Mr. Randal Wallace  
Honorable Charlie Fulton  
Mr. Harry Huggins, Secretary  
Mr. J. Yancey McGill  
Mr. Andy McKnight  
Senator Ronnie A. Sabb  
Honorable Darren Tisdale





**WACCAMAW**  
REGIONAL  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments**  
**1230 Highmarket Street**  
**Georgetown, SC 29440**  
**[www.wrcog.org](http://www.wrcog.org)**

