# **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

**December 1, 2024** 



Prepared by: Southeastern Economic Development Commission Economic Development District 707 West Broad Street – PO Box 921 Elizabethtown, North Carolina 28337 910.862.6985 www.sedcnc.org

> 2024 CEDS Annual Progress

> > Report

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Southeastern Economic Development Commission (SEDC) is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDD comprises twelve counties in southeastern North Carolina (Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, New Hanover, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, and Scotland counties). The Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS, from December 2022 through November 2027 (five-year strategic economic development plan) was submitted in December 2022. The plan serves as a roadmap for strategic partners to advance programs, policies, and projects that support the economic advancement of the southeast region.

A Board-appointed Strategy Committee developed the CEDS with input from regional strategic economic development meetings held throughout the district, public and private stakeholders and partners, and a staff review of local, regional, and state plans and policies. The Strategy Committee comprises community leaders, public officials, workforce development board representatives, higher education institutions, and private sector representatives who are critical to implementing the CEDS. Participation by the community and collaboration between the public and private sectors are the cornerstone of a successful strategy and implementation. The SEDC staff continues to partner with the district's three Regional Councils of Governments (COG).

Enclosed, you will find the 2024 CEDS Annual Progress Report, which includes an update of the district's implementation of the Action Plan that was established as part of the District's December 2022 CEDS listing specific objectives to be achieved within five years, as well as an Evaluation Framework with strategic partners and estimated timeframe for completion. The goals that the Strategy Committee established include: (1) Support strategic and sustainable growth across the region to attract population to rural communities and manage population growth in urban areas; (2) Build on competitive advantages while supporting a resilient business environment; (3) Investment in the connectivity and infrastructure of the region; (4) Support the vitality of our diverse communities; (5) Develop a sustainable and inclusive workforce for the future; and (6) Encourage collaborative economic partnerships to improve innovation and entrepreneurship to support the growth and expansion of the business community and attract new employers to the region. The plan of action will implement the goals, objectives, and strategies of the CEDS in a manner that: (a) promotes economic development and opportunity; (b) fosters adequate transportation access; (c) enhances and protects the environment; (d) maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable state or local workforce investment strategies; (e) promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications; balances resources through sound management of physical development; and (f) obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

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This annual CEDS update for December 2024 will attempt to quantify our progress, identify any challenges, update demographic and socio-economic data, provide project updates, and outline the district's plan of action to help us meet the goals and objectives for this region. The 2024 Annual Performance Report was created by SEDC staff under the guidance of the CEDS Committee and Economic Development District (EDD) Board of Directors/Executive Committee. The 2024 Annual Performance Report will be posted on the sedcnc.org website to be available to the public and regional stakeholders.

# VISION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Creating and implementing a CEDS for a region as diverse as the district requires an understanding of all the economic drivers of the economy. As a result of the diverse viewpoints of our CEDS Strategy Committee, we gained valuable insight into the region's full range of economic development activities and ideas. We identified eight key economic clusters that honor the region's diversity and offer real job creation opportunities. With community support and continued strategic investments, our economy will grow in Advanced Manufacturing, Food Processing, value-added Agribusiness, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, Healthcare, Defense, Tourism, Transportation and Logistics, and Energy. The economic drivers for our economy range from tourism and residential development along the coastal counties to agriculture and related industries in our more rural counties, to the influence of the military in Cumberland, Hoke, and Harnett Counties, and the commercial and residential development spillover in Harnett County from the Research Triangle. The diversity of our economy allows the region to be less dependent on any one type of industry, as we have been with the textile industry in recent decades.

Through the efforts of the CEDS Strategy Committee, a vision for the future of southeastern North Carolina has been developed, "To increase economic vitality and regional prosperity by being a globally competitive, business-friendly region which includes a diverse workforce, resilient and healthy communities with viable employment opportunities, lifelong education and training opportunities, sustainable natural resources, an integrated infrastructure, smart growth, and coordination among economic development efforts throughout the region that sustains a high quality of life for all citizens."

# **ECONOMIC RESILIENCE**

Economic Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid a shock altogether. The SEDC CEDS includes a prepared framework for economic resiliency that provides an approach for better preparation for future disasters, including economic, manmade, and natural, recovering from disasters, and transitioning back to a steady state. The economy will measure the region's ability to work toward an agile, steady state, the number of businesses that survive the shock, and the ability to adapt to the new normal following a shock with a rebuilt economy. The more effort put into the steady state, the more resilient the regional economy will likely be.

Various economic shock factors have varying levels of severity and devastation, including natural disasters, significant stock market fluctuations, economic downturns, recessions, government shutdowns, available funds for grants, terrorist attacks, and substantial supply fluctuations. The CEDS outlines pre- and post-shock strategies to develop a more resilient economy that can be used to address various economic shocks.

The 2022 SEDC CEDS plan included strategies related to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 10, 2020, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper declared a State of Emergency to coordinate response and protective actions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. He soon after issued Executive Order 118, which closed restaurants, bars, dine-in service, and other close-contact businesses. On March 26, 2020, the White House granted Governor Cooper's request for a federal disaster declaration for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in North Carolina. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a public health and economic crisis in North Carolina and across the country. The declaration provided Public Assistance to all 100 counties in North Carolina, allowing local governments, state agencies, and eligible non-profits to be reimbursed for costs involved in responding to the outbreak of the Coronavirus.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an exogenous economic shock of unprecedented scale and speed 'like no other.' According to the State of North Carolina's Communities During the COVID-19 Pandemic Report (May 22, 2020), the most significant challenges and needs shared by communities included 1) budget impacts to the local government due to the uncertainty about state sales tax and other expected revenues, pandemic response costs, and more; 2) broadband access due to existing limitations that have been magnified by increase demand for teleworking, virtual classrooms, online government, and business transactions; 3) Small Business Assistance for loans, grants, training, marketing and other support to operation safely and become more resilient; 4) Amplification of Existing Challenges/Needs like broadband, ongoing hurricane recovery, limited rural health services, food insecurity, and other challenges that are more pronounced; and 5) Funding and Technical Assistance for local governments to seek funding and technical assistance for infrastructure projects, equipment, training, and other economic support.

As of Fall 2024, COVID-19 and its variants remain present. However, the overall impact on the economy and daily life is significantly less. Compared to 2022, and according to the October 2024 edition of the NC Economy Watch, "the economy is still expanding, employers are still hiring (albeit at a slower pace), and the much-feared recession has yet to rear its ugly head." The report goes on to say that debates about whether the economy will slide into a recession can seem academic and fundamentally disconnected from the day-to-day realities faced by North Carolinians.

The most recent shock resulted from Tropical Cyclone 8, classified as a Potential Tropical Cyclone, which significantly impacted Brunswick County, NC, causing widespread flooding due to torrential rainfall, leading to major road closures, damage to infrastructure, and significant

disruption to communities in areas like Bolivia, Boiling Spring Lakes, Supply, Southport, and Winnabow; with some regions receiving between 10 and nearly 20 inches of rain within a short period. The storm hit on September 16, 2024, causing widespread damage to roads, homes, and businesses. The federal government granted a disaster declaration for four (4) southeastern NC counties impacted by Potential Tropical Cyclone Eight on Saturday, October 10, 2024, two of which are in the SEDC Region – Brunswick and New Hanover Counties. The disaster declaration (FEMA-4837-DR) means that Public Assistance funding will be available from FEMA. Still, there may also be an opportunity to seek federal funding for recovery and resiliency projects if Congress passes a funding package for federally declared disasters in 2024. The Small Business Administration also granted a request for an SBA disaster declaration for Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender Counties, which means low-interest loans for business owners, homeowners, and renters.

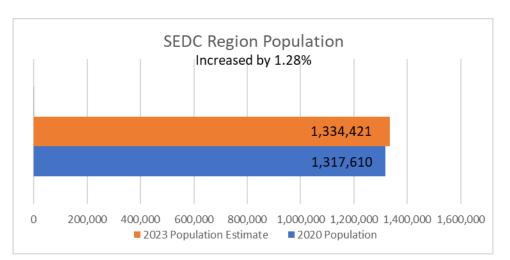
# "This storm brought historic rainfall and severe flooding to several areas of our state causing significant damage. These disaster declarations will help bring needed relief for folks impacted by the storm, including small business owners." – Gov. Roy Cooper

# DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC DATA UPDATE

According to the 2020 Census, the total population of the southeast region is over 1.3 million people. The population of the twelve-county region grew by an estimated 9 percent from 2010 to 2020. The SEDC region experienced a 1.28% increase in population from 2020 to 2023, while the state's population increased by 3.88 percent. The population estimate is 16,811 people more than in 2020. By 2030, the population is expected to expand to over \$1.4 million. Most of this increase is attributable to four counties: Brunswick, Harnett, New Hanover, and Pender. Growth has yet to be consistent across the region.

Section 301(a) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act (PWEDA) of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3161 (a)) describes economic development distress criteria and thresholds that qualify areas for assistance through selected EDA programs and for other purposes. To receive EDA Investment Assistance, the applicant must be eligible and located in a region where the project will be located that meets the economic distress criteria included in the appendix or has "significant direct benefit" to geographic areas within the EDD that meet the distress criteria. EDA evaluates all applications to determine if the project responds to at least one of the current administration's stated investment priorities.





CEDS Annual Progress Report - December 1, 2024

# PLAN OF ACTION

The Southeastern Economic Development Commission created the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document as part of a region-wide effort to assess, define, and accomplish the region's economic development goals. In turn, the CEDS helps to serve as a guide for regional economic development efforts by outlining the overarching goals, objectives, and strategies formulated through the regional visioning meetings, SWOT analyses, previous CEDS plans, one-on-one discussions with stakeholders, and review of other local and regional strategic plans. The Action Plan aligns with the NC Tomorrow statewide plan that identified regional and statewide strategies for resilient economic and community development. NC Tomorrow metrics are marked with an asterisk (\*).

The plan of action will implement the goals, objectives, and strategies of the CEDS in a manner that:

- a. Promotes economic development and opportunity.
- b. fosters effective transportation access.
- c. enhances and protects the environment.
- d. maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable state or local workforce investment strategies.
- e. promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to highspeed telecommunications; balances resources through sound management of physical development; and
- f. obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

The Action Plan will implement the goals, objectives, and strategies formulated through the regional visioning meetings.

The SEDC Economic Development District (EDD) focuses on all goals and strategies identified by the Strategy Committee and other local economic development strategies aimed at sustainable

job creation and private investment. The district works closely with the region's public and private allies and strategic partners to achieve sustainable economic advancement in southeastern North Carolina. The action plan includes a wide range of activity types to fulfill the aspirations of the region's stakeholders.

The evaluation framework outlined a list of performance measures, including milestones and metrics, strategic partners, and timeframes for implementation, in addition to the strategies formulated to achieve the goals and objectives. The success of this plan of action can only be accomplished by the coordinated efforts of all the economic development stakeholders in the region, including the local governments, SEDC, local developers, regional council of governments, public utilities, private sector, The Southeastern Partnership, Inc., EDA University Center at Fayetteville State University, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

# **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES UPDATES**

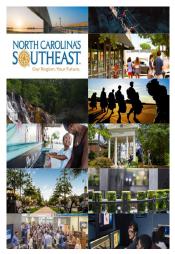
The SEDC CEDS Committee developed the following goals and objectives based on the 2022-2027 CEDS Plan visioning sessions, summary background, and SWOT analysis. The goals and objectives were intended to serve as a strategic framework for public and private decision-making and as a basis for the focus of the action plan.

Goal 1: Support strategic and sustainable growth across the region to attract population to rural communities and manage population growth in urban areas.
Goal 2: Build on competitive advantages while supporting a resilient business environment.
Goal 3: Investment in the connectivity and infrastructure of the region.
Goal 4: Support the vitality of our diverse communities.
Goal 5: Develop a sustainable and inclusive workforce for the future
Goal 6: Encourage collaborative economic partnerships to promote innovation and entrepreneurship to support the growth and expansion of the business community and attract new employers to the region.

Many of the objectives outlined to support the advancement of the goals outlined in the CEDS have been obtained since December 1, 2020. Only some of these objectives are undertaken by SEDC. Many stakeholders take a regional approach to move the needle to advance growth in the region.



Two of three milestones were reached under Goal 2, Objective 4, which includes the completion of regional comprehensive marketing plans and the inventory of vacant and industrial buildings by The Southeastern Partnership, also known as North Carolina's Southeast (NCSE). The Southeastern Partnership serves eleven of twelve counties located in the EDD. The NCSE maintains an interactive database of vacant and industrial buildings for potential reuse on its website at <u>www.ncse.org</u>. A 2024-2027 Strategic Plan includes strategies to market the NCSE region and deploy a vibrant regional brand. The EDD collaborates with the NCSE to foster sustainable growth and prosperity for the region. The Executive Director of the EDD is an active board member of the NCSE. The NCSE recognizes that the region's challenges and



opportunities require a unified approach. "By working together, sharing ideas, and leveraging collective strengths, the region can amplify its impact and create a more resilient and competitive economy." (NCSE 2024-2027 Strategic Plan) Their strategy plan is not merely a roadmap but a commitment to collaborative action. This is an approach that the EDD has undertaken with many partners across the region.

Providing infrastructure services to meet the needs of businesses, households, and other users is one of the significant challenges of economic development. The region has completed several regionally and locally significant high-priority infrastructure projects as outlined in the objectives in Goal 3: Investment in the connectivity and infrastructure of the region. Three projects have been completed in the past year that received funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).



Tabor City Bus. Incubator Complete December 2023

Bladenboro Town Square

Fair Bluff Uptown

Completed March 2024

Completed June 2024

Two EDA investments were made after Hurricanes Matthew and Florence pummeled Bladen and Columbus County. The Towns of Bladenboro and Fair Bluff rebuilt downtown districts on higher ground above the floodplain using federal, state, and local funding. The 13,000-squarefoot business center opened off Main Street in Bladenboro earlier this year and has enhanced

the town's aesthetics and fostered economic growth and community engagement. Seven businesses currently occupy the complex. The Town of Fair Bluff's new 25,000-square-foot-Uptown business center has space for sixteen businesses and was completed this year. The first nine tenants were presented with a symbolic key to their commercial rental units at the ribbon cutting in June 2024. Both downtown districts were devastated by flood waters during Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricane Florence in 2018. In August 2024, widespread heavy rain fell across southeastern NC as Tropical Storm Debby moved across the region, with totals ranging from 10-15 inches between 1-95 and the coast of North Carolina. Tropical Storm Debby was a slow and relentless test for both investments. Both towns experienced flooding during the storm, but Tropical Storm Debby showed that investing in building on higher ground was worth it. Bladenboro Town Square stayed completely dry, even as other businesses flooded a few steps away. The new Uptown Fair Bluff in Columbus County, just 25 miles southwest of Bladenboro, also stayed dry. Developing new downtown districts in more flood-resistant areas is a considerable investment and undertaking. Still, for hurricane-battered towns in this region, local officials say it's necessary for the long-term success of business districts that often serve as the heart of the community.

The Town of Tabor City renovated a historic building to use as a business incubator to support business growth in the region. EDA invested \$800,000 in the project to help the region recover from damage caused by Hurricanes Matthew and Florence, which caused significant business disruption and loss. There is no available space left in Tabor City for new business opportunities. The remedy was to convert the long-vacant building into a business incubator, where business and industry can take root and grow. The new incubator will support local disaster resiliency efforts by helping new companies to develop and provide them with the tools they need to grow and thrive. The first phase of the long-term project was completed in December 2023. In July 2024, the Town was awarded \$496,000 for the Tabor City Business Incubator project to complete the second phase of the project. Last month, Preservation North Carolina awarded Tabor City the Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit for its work to preserve the historic architecture of the Heilig-Meyers building while renovating it to become the business incubator.

These investments are examples of strategic investments in community infrastructure and economic development that can lead to widespread community benefits.

# **EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

It is of utmost importance that the SEDC EDD be able to measure performance to evaluate the successful implementation and development of the CEDS in the region. The quantitative and qualitative measures were established to objectively measure the progress toward achieving the goals identified for the area by the CEDS Committee. The following measures are reviewed on an annual basis with a CEDS Update.

# **Specific Measurable Targets**

The measurable outcomes below will be the direct and indirect results of implementing the overall CEDS.

- 1. New Jobs. 2,750 New jobs created in the region by November 2027
  - Since December 1, 2022, <u>fifteen (13) companies have expanded or located in the region</u>, creating over <u>2250 new jobs</u> and leveraging <u>over \$2.4 billion</u> in total capital private investment. This was achieved through the cooperation of the NC Department of Commerce (NCDOC), The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), SEDC, The Southeastern Partnership Inc., local developers, municipal and county governments, and various other allies.
- 2. Number and types of investments undertaken in the region by November 2027. 30 Infrastructure investments, 10 Facility investments, and 6 Technical Assistance investments.
  - Since December 1, 2022, there have been <u>three (3) investments</u> undertaken in the region – <u>Two (2) Infrastructure investments and one (1) Technical Assistance.</u> These numbers only include the EDA investments in the area. Many other infrastructure investments were made in the region by the USDA Rural Development, CDBG-Infrastructure, Golden LEAF Foundation Disaster Recovery, NC Division of Water Infrastructure, and NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency.

# 3. Retained Jobs. 1,000 jobs were retained in the region by November 2027.

- Since December 1, 2022, the Region has seen the retention of <u>0 jobs</u>.
- 4. Private Sector Investment. \$275,000,000 in private sector investment in the region by November 2027.
  - Over \$2,455,800,000 billion in total capital private investment has been announced by companies in the region since December 1, 2022. This was achieved through the cooperation of the NC Department of Commerce (NCDOC), the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), SEDC, The Southeastern Partnership Inc., local developers, municipal and county governments, and various other allies.

# 5. Changes in the economic environment of the region.

 Changes in the economic environment of the region is an ongoing process. Changes can only be achieved by implementing the goal and objectives of the CEDS as a result of the EDD, local governments, local developers, private sector, State Commerce, EDPNC, and the Southeastern Partnership working together to create jobs and investment. Industry clusters have been identified that best fit the worker training and resources of the region. Target marketing to companies

within those industry clusters will result in new, better-paying jobs and private investment.

Jobs and private investment will remain critical evaluation factors for the CEDS implementation. Nonetheless, jobs and private investment only tell part of the story about the impact of the EDD and implementation of CEDS. The process is ongoing and accumulative. The district has strived to implement CEDS successfully as a working document.

# **SUMMARY**

The Southeastern Economic Development Commission Economic Development District will continue to focus on all goals and objectives identified by the Strategy Committee and other local economic development strategies aimed at sustainable job creation and private investment. The district continues to work closely with public and private allies and partners in the region to bring sustainable economic advancement to southeastern North Carolina.

Our region faces many challenges – we are a large geographic region with unique cultural and racial diversity and significant financial well-being diversity. Our region contains some of the State's poorest counties and some of the wealthiest counties. Education attainment levels vary, and we have been a region that has historically relied on significant manufacturing investments to provide our jobs and income. The manufacturing sector of our local economy has suffered a severe downturn in the past. However, this sector remains a large part of our economic base. Several smaller manufacturers have grown and maintained themselves through innovation, technology, intelligent business planning, and implementation, providing quality jobs and employment opportunities. Business retention continues to be a high priority. Our region has seen increased company announcements in the past two years, creating higher-wage jobs and leveraging \$2.4 billion in investment.

Much progress has been made in the past year, which has been made possible by the cooperation of many regional stakeholders seeking the common good. The Southeastern Economic Development Commission EDD and CEDS strategy committee will continue working with communities and local governments to continue this positive trend within our district and adjacent counties that impact our regional workforce and economy. The Southeastern Economic Development Commission's economic development planning process continually seeks to attract and maximize private sector investments that have the potential to boost the economy and create or retain jobs for area residents. Through consistent and focused planning, the SEDC will try to get local government units, educators, economic development practitioners, and private sector investors to think and look to the future. We must strive to make southeastern North Carolina a better place for all citizens to live, work, play, and do business.



# **APPENDIX**

- Distress Criteria: Per Capita Income
- Distress Criteria: Unemployment Rates
- Distress Criteria: Population Change



#### **Distress Criteria: Per Capita Income**

Since authorizing the agency in 1965, Congress has directed EDA to address long-term economic development distress and economic adjustment concerns resulting from short-term disruptions in various ways. One of EDA's criteria for measuring economic distress is whether the funding shall serve areas with a per capita income of 80% or less of the national average. As of November 2024, 80% of the US. Per Capita Income is \$55,848 (BEA PCPI) and \$33,009 (ACS 5-year PCMI).

			Above or			Above
		Threshold	Below	ACS 5-	Threshold	or Below
Geography	<b>BEA PCPI</b>	Calculation	80%	Year PCMI	Calculation	80%
Region	\$52,194	74.8	Below	\$32,249	78.2	Below
U.S.	\$69,810	100		\$41,261	100	
Bladen County, NC	\$50,481	72.3	Below	\$26,544	64.3	Below
Brunswick County, NC	\$62,104	89	Above	\$42,263	102.4	Above
Columbus County, NC	\$45,922	65.8	Below	\$24,236	58.7	Below
Cumberland County, NC	\$48,345	69.2	Below	\$29,681	71.9	Below
Harnett County, NC	\$47,518	68.1	Below	\$29,678	71.9	Below
Hoke County, NC	\$43,213	61.9	Below	\$27,991	67.8	Below
New Hanover County, NC	\$64,831	92.9	Above	\$43,378	105.1	Above
Pender County, NC	\$53,382	76.5	Below	\$36,352	88.1	Above
Richmond County, NC	\$47,384	67.9	Below	\$24,416	59.2	Below
Robeson County, NC	\$43,550	62.4	Below	\$21,998	53.3	Below
Sampson County, NC	\$46,676	66.9	Below	\$25,969	62.9	Below
Scotland County, NC	\$42,838	61.4	Below	\$24,464	59.3	Below

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) and 2023 Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)* 



### **Distress Criteria: Unemployment Rates**

Another one of EDA's criteria for measuring economic distress is whether the area has an unemployment rate that is at least 1% greater than the national average for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available. As of November 2024, 1% above the U.S. rate of 4.76%.

	24-Month	Threshold	Above or Below
Geography	Unemployment Rate	Calculation	+1% US Rate
Region	4.19	0.43	Below
U.S.	3.76	0	
Bladen County, NC	4.33	0.57	Below
Brunswick County, NC	4.33	0.57	Below
Columbus County, NC	4.17	0.41	Below
Cumberland County, NC	4.85	1.09	Above
Harnett County, NC	4.04	0.28	Below
Hoke County, NC	4.58	0.82	Below
New Hanover County, NC	3.19	-0.57	Below
Pender County, NC	3.28	-0.48	Below
Richmond County, NC	4.73	0.97	Below
Robeson County, NC	5.14	1.38	Above
Sampson County, NC	3.65	-0.11	Below
Scotland County, NC	6.37	2.61	Above

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) and 2023 Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)* 

Southeastern Economic Development Commission 707 West Broad Street • PO Box 921 • Elizabethtown, North Carolina 28337

# **Distress Criteria: Population Change**

Another measurement of distress by the EDA is an area that "has experienced or is about to experience a special need arising from actual or threatened severe unemployment or economic adjustment problems resulting from severe short-term or long-term changes in economic conditions (42 U.S.C. §3161(a)(3))." Special needs can also include substantial out-migration or population loss, military base closures, and adverse effects of changing trade patterns.

		2023 Population	
Geography	2020 Population	Estimate	% Change
Region	1,317,610	1,334,421	1.28
Bladen County, NC	33,209	29,484	-11.22
Brunswick County, NC	137,303	159,964	16.50
Columbus County, NC	55,659	50,121	-9.95
Cumberland County, NC	334,562	337,890	0.99
Harnett County, NC	134,328	141,477	5.32
Hoke County, NC	54,590	54,446	-0.26
New Hanover County, NC	231,448	238,852	3.20
Pender County, NC	61,891	68,521	10.71
Richmond County, NC	44,759	42,324	-5.44
Robeson County, NC	131,656	117,365	-10.85
Sampson County, NC	63,284	59,601	-5.82
Scotland County, NC	34,921	34,376	-1.56

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Census Demographic Profile, and U.S. Census 2020-2023 Population Estimates and Components of Change.*