

Wake County

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Introduction

According to the 2020 Census, Wake County has a population of 1,129,410. This is an increase of 25.4% from 900,993 in 2010. Growth in the Raleigh metropolitan area has extended into the neighboring counties of Durham and Johnston. This population growth has also increased the demand for housing, and led to a significant increase in the cost of housing. Neighborhoods in southwest Raleigh have a higher concentration of BIPOC households. These neighborhoods also have higher rates of poverty and lower median incomes compared to the rest of the county. Higher costs of housing especially impact BIPOC households, who have lower median incomes compared to white households in Wake County. As housing costs increase, BIPOC households will have to spend more of their income on housing or be forced to leave their neighborhoods. Wake County's population growth is largely driven by an influx of young professionals and skilled workers, who tend to have higher incomes and can afford to spend more on housing. This further exacerbates existing disparities in income and poverty rates, and has led to the gentrification of downtown Raleigh. Growth in the medical and tech industries in both Wake and Durham counties, as well as the future construction of Apple's Research Triangle Park campus, is expected to attract more people to the area. The future jobs created by growth in these industries require education beyond high school. Without access to higher education, many members of BIPOC communities will experience more barriers to employment as Wake County continues to grow.

Overview of Barriers Wake County, NC	Black Households	Hispanic/LatinX Households	White Households
2019 Median Household Income	\$53,325	\$52,264	\$91,128
2019 Poverty Rate	14.7%	20.2%	6.7%
% of Population with Bachelor's Degree	33%	23%	58%

Summary

Housing & Gentrification

	Wake County	North Carolina	United States
Median Gross Rent (2019)	\$1,150	\$907	\$1,062

- As the cost of housing increases, households in low-income and high-poverty census tracts have to spend a larger portion of their income on housing and therefore have less to spend on food, healthcare, and other necessities. Increases in the cost of rent disproportionately affect BIPOC households, who have a higher percentage of households that rent their homes.
- Wake County's overall median gross rent increased 13.7% from 2014 to 2019. For census tracts in downtown Raleigh, rent increased 20-50% (see *Neighborhood & Build Environment: Figure 7*).
- 43.5% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities.
- Wake County home values increased 13.9% from 2019 to 2020.

Barriers by Race & Ethnicity

Overview

Figure 1: Median Income by Race

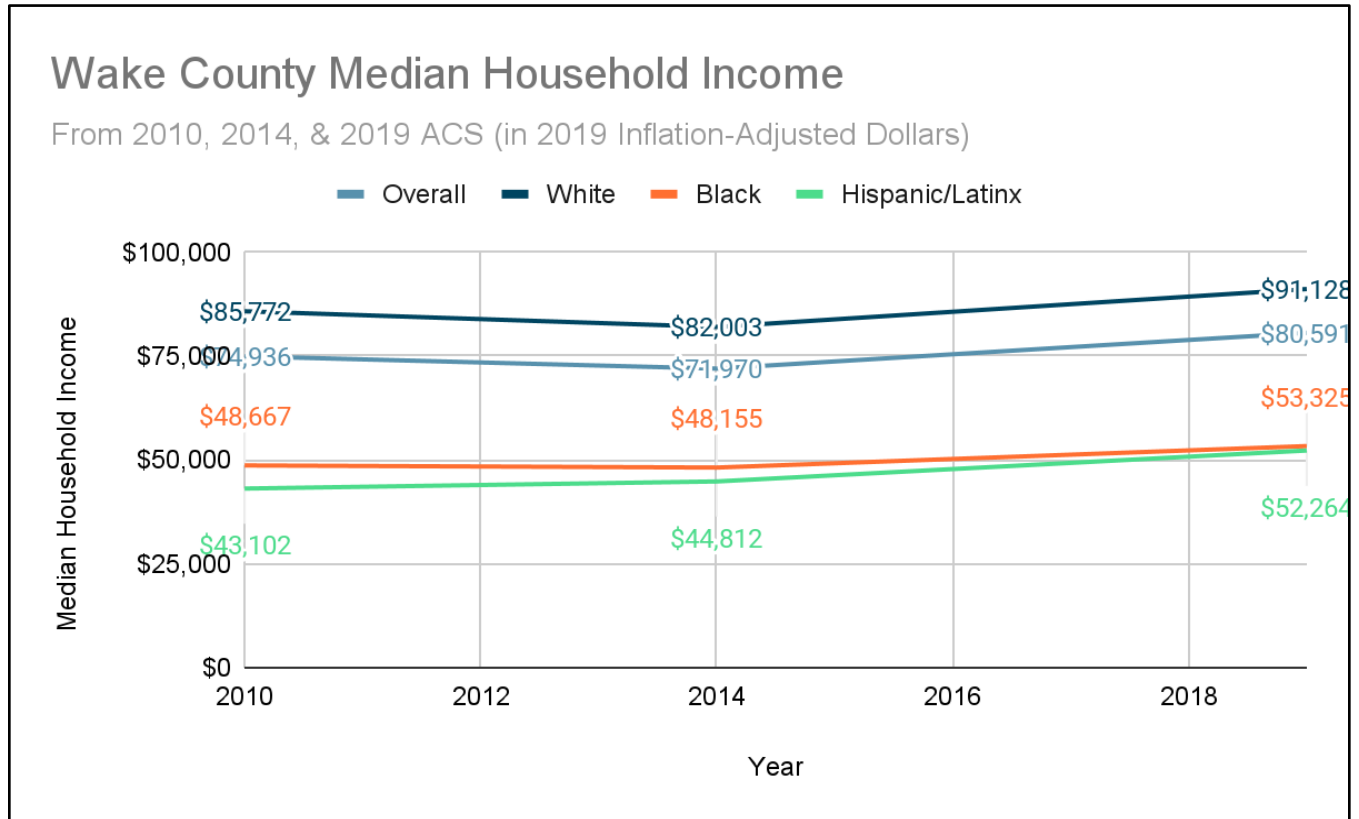


Figure 2: Poverty by Race

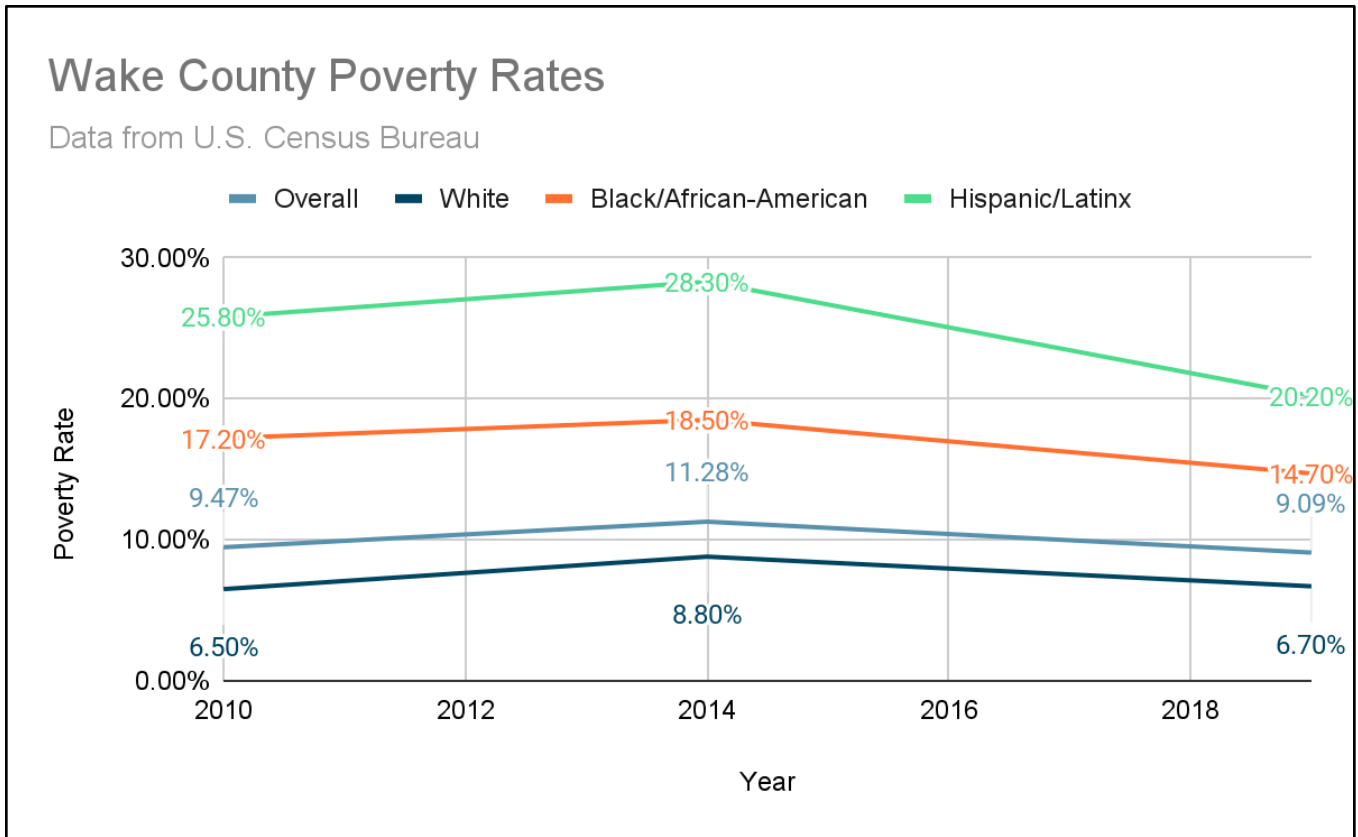
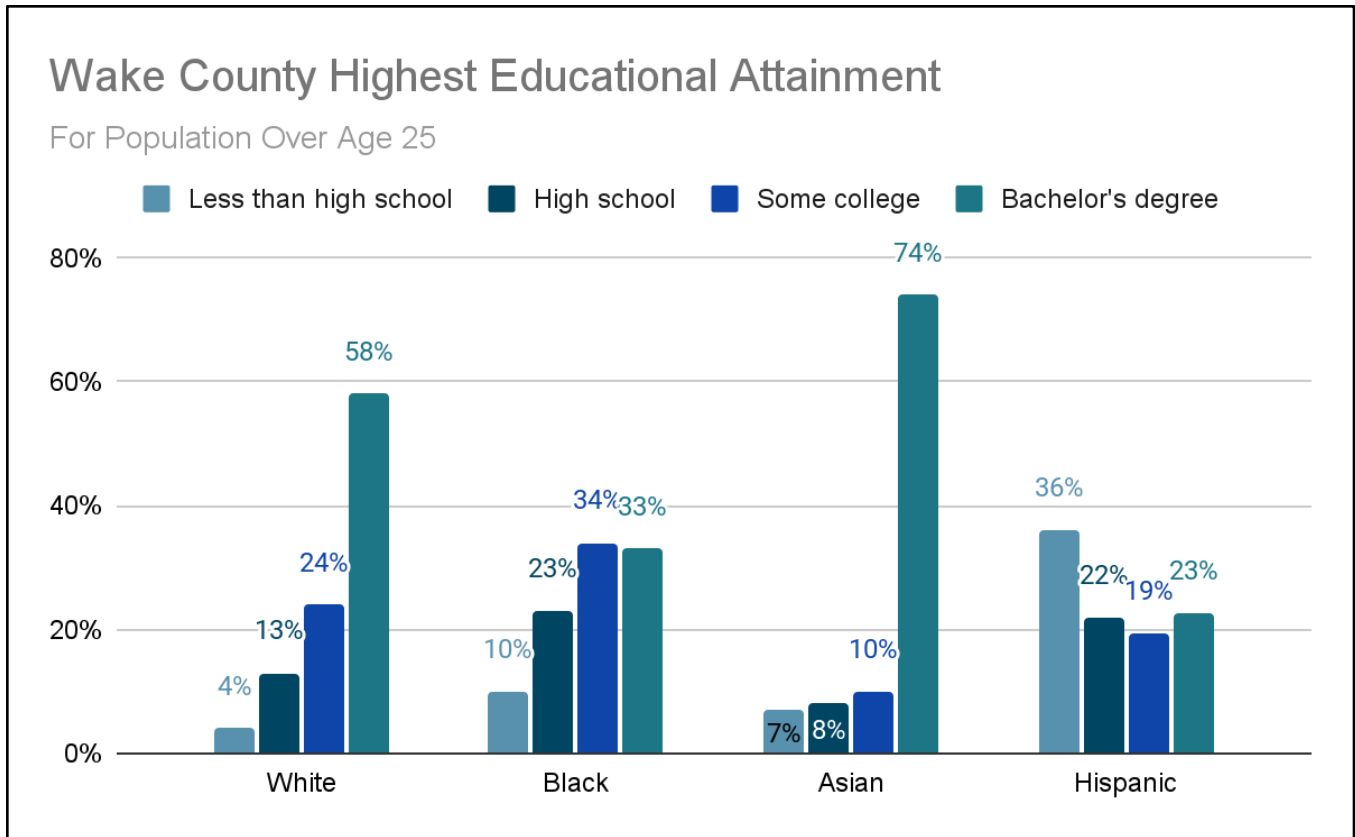


Figure 3: Educational Attainment by Race¹

¹TownCharts. (2021). Wake County, North Carolina Education Data. <https://www.towncharts.com/North-Carolina/Education/Wake-County-NC-Education-data.html>



Black & African American

- The median income for Black households was \$53,325 in 2019, while the overall median income for Wake County was \$80,591.
 - Median income for Black households is consistently \$35-45,000 lower than the median household income for white households (see *Figure 1*).
- 14.7% of Black households lived in poverty in 2019, compared to 9.09% of all Wake County residents.
 - The poverty rate for Black households is consistently 8-12% higher than the poverty rate for white households (see *Figure 2*).
- Black households have lower rates of higher educational attainment.
 - 10% of Black residents over age 25 did not graduate high school.
 - 33% of Black residents over age 25 have a bachelor's degree, which is lower than the rate of bachelor's degree attainment for white and Asian residents.

Hispanic & Latinx

- The median income for Hispanic households was \$52,264 in 2019. The overall median income in Wake County was \$80,591.
 - The median income for Hispanic households is consistently \$35-45,000 lower than the median income for white households (see *Figure 1*)
- Hispanic and Latinx households have the highest poverty rates in Wake County.
 - In 2019, 20.2% of Hispanic households lived in poverty, compared to 9.09% of all residents.
 - The poverty rate for Hispanic households is consistently 10-20% higher than the poverty rate for white residents.
- Hispanic and Latinx households have the lowest rates of higher educational attainment in Wake County.
 - 36% of Hispanic or Latinx residents above age 25 did not complete high school.
 - 23% of Hispanic or Latinx residents over age 25 have a bachelor's degree.

Social & Community Context

Demographics

Population

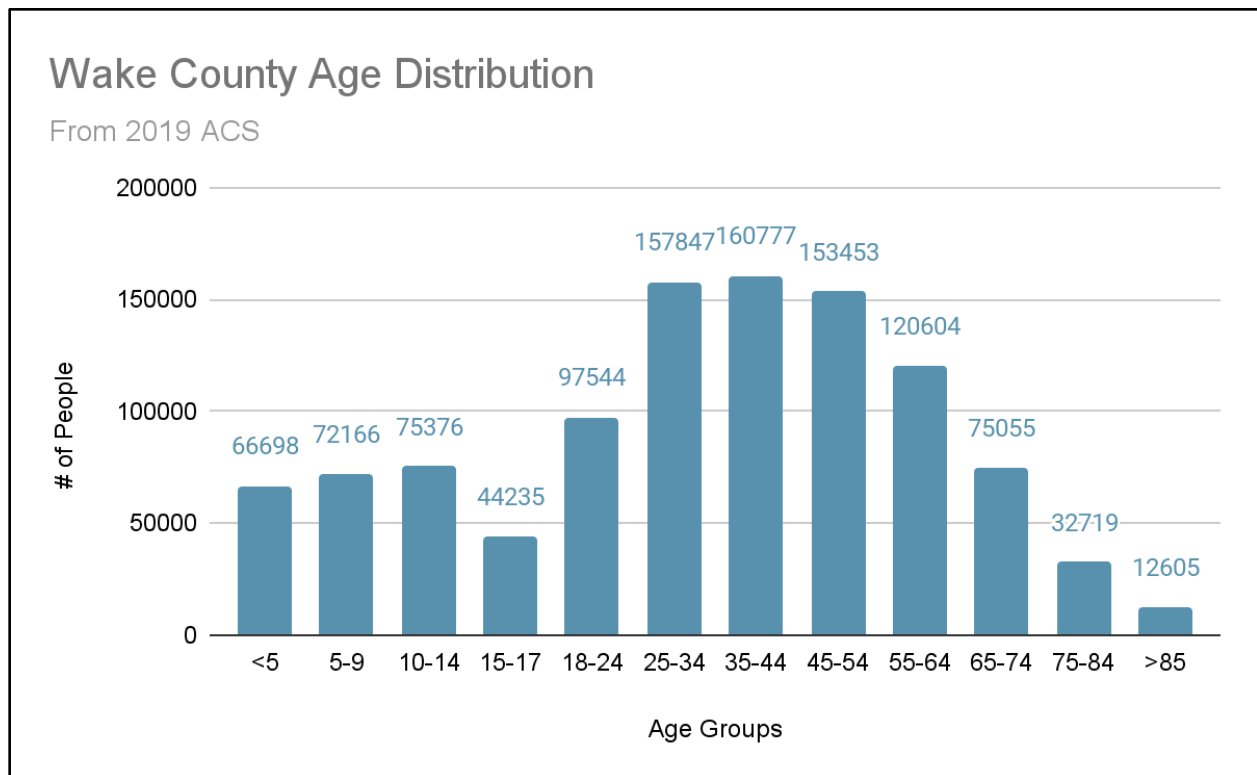
- 1,069,079 people resided in Wake County in 2019. The county covers an area of 834 sq. miles with a population density of 1,280 people per sq. mile.²
- The population is 94% urban and 6% rural.³

²SE:A00002. Population Density (Per Sq. Mile) (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12858933

³AccessNC. (2020). *County Profile Wake County (NC)* [Fact sheet]. North Carolina Department of Commerce, Labor & Economic Analysis Division. <https://accessnc.nccommerce.com/DemoGraphicsReports/pdfs/countyProfile/NC/37183.pdf>

- There are 51,269 veterans living in Wake County. 40.6% of veterans (20,819) are over the age of 65.⁴
 - 27.3% of veterans (13,969) served in the Vietnam War.
 - 18.5% (9,488) served in the Gulf War between 1990 and 2001.
- 5.8% of the population under age 65 has a disability.

Age⁵



Race & Ethnicity

- Wake County is 65% white, 20.4% Black, and 10.1% Hispanic or Latinx.^{6 7}

⁴SE:A16002. Veteran Status for the Civilian Population. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12858933

⁵SE:A01001. Age. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12858933

⁶SE:A03001. Race. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12858933

⁷SE:A04001. Hispanic or Latino by Race. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12858933

- 17.4% of Wake County, NC citizens are speakers of a non-English language, which is lower than the national average of 21.9%. In 2018, the most common non-English language spoken was Spanish.⁸
 - 8.17% of the overall population of Wake County, NC are native Spanish speakers. 1.24% speak Chinese (Incl. Mandarin, Cantonese) and 0.751% speak Spanish, the next two most common languages.

Figure 4: Distribution of Black or African American Population

⁸DataUSA. (2021). *Wake County, NC*. Datawheel. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/wake-county-nc>

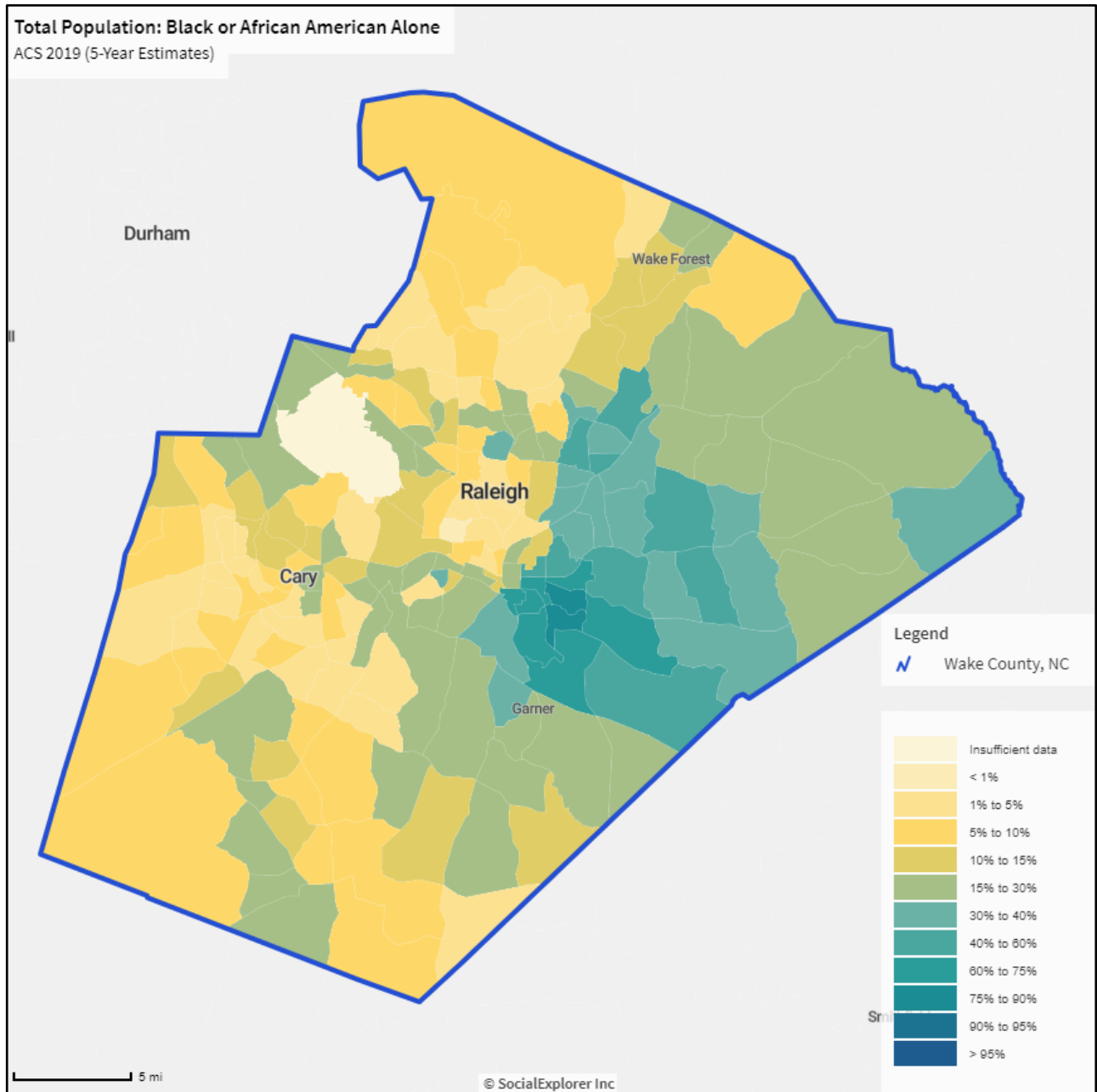
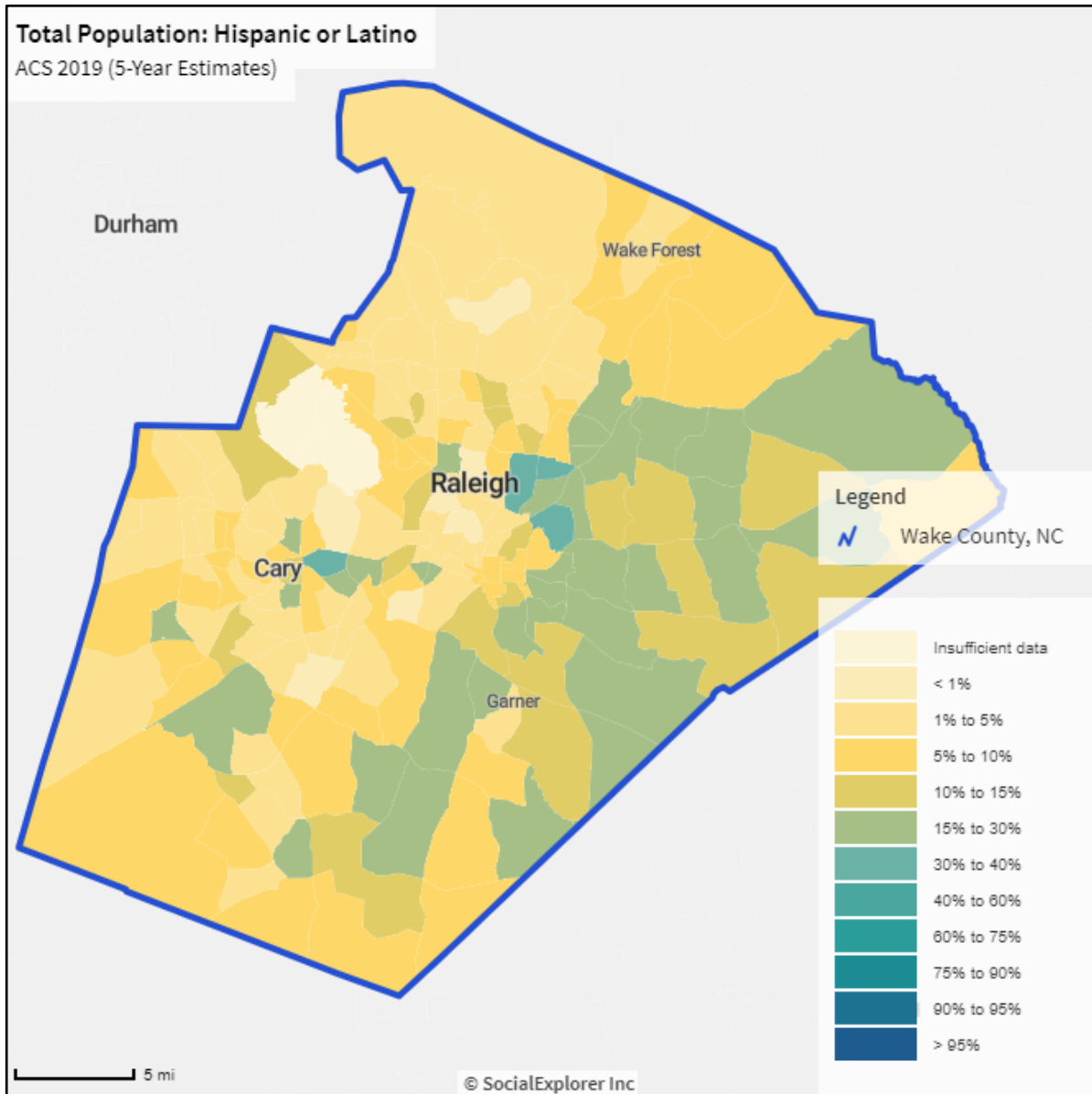


Figure 5: Distribution of Hispanic or Latinx Population



Immigration⁹

- As of 2018, 12.7% of Wake County, NC residents (138k people) were born outside of the United States, which is lower than the national average of 13.7%.
 - In 2017, the percentage of foreign-born citizens in Wake County, NC was 12.7%, meaning that the rate has been decreasing.

⁹DataUSA. (2021). *Wake County, NC*. Datawheel. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/wake-county-nc>

Single-Parent Households¹⁰

- 24.8% of children in Wake County live in a single-parent household.
- 9.4% of households in Wake County are single-parent households.
- 7.4% of households in Wake County are single-mother households.

Child Care

- As of April 2021, 46,525 children under six in Wake County live in a household where the sole parent or both parents in the household are working. This number represents 59% of all children under six.¹¹
 - 6% of children in Wake County participated in the state subsidized child care program in March 2021 to help offset the high cost of child care
- 8,529 children from 0-3 years of age and 12,121 children from 3-5 years of age are currently enrolled in a licensed early care and education center in Wake County.¹²
 - Of these children under three years of age, 76% are in 4- and 5-star centers.
 - Of these children three to five years of age, 76% are in 4 or 5-star centers.
- In February 2021, 5,667 infants and toddlers in Wake County were enrolled in child care centers. This number compares to 9,596 enrolled in child care centers prior to the pandemic.¹³

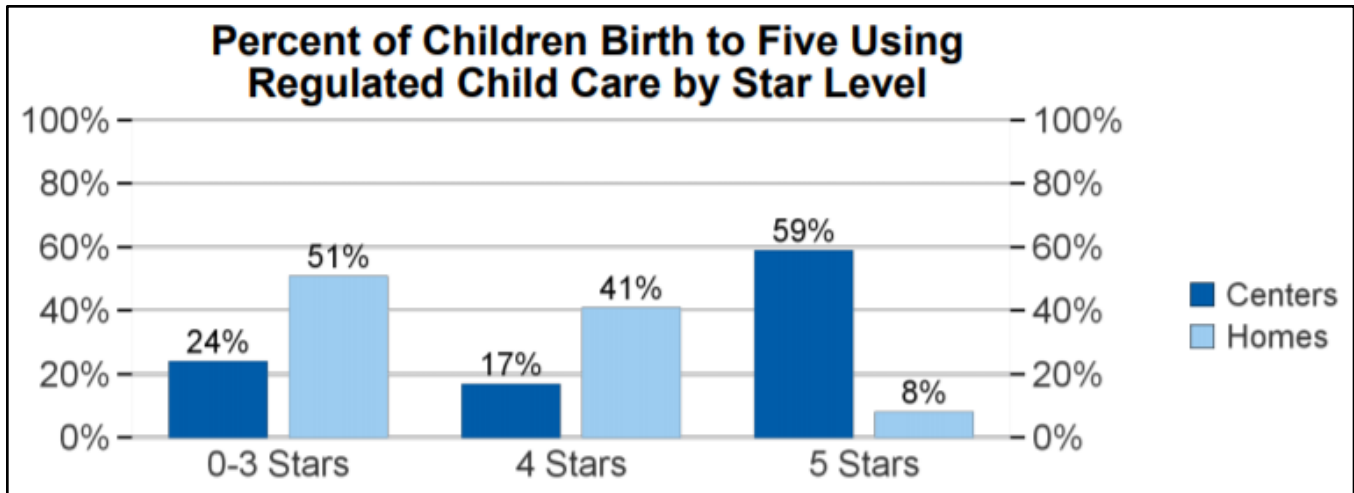
Figure 6: Wake County Child Care

¹⁰SE:A10008. Households by Household Type. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12858933

¹¹Child Care Services Association. (2021). *Young Children and their Families in Wake County* [Fact sheet]. https://www.childcareservices.org/research/nc-ece-data-repo/search/?repoSearch=§ion_id%5B%5D=4&rep_month=5&rep_year=2021&rep_month_end=&rep_year_end=&county_id%5B%5D=92

¹²Child Care Services Association. (2021). *Early Care & Education Use in Wake County* [Fact sheet]. https://www.childcareservices.org/research/nc-ece-data-repo/search/?repoSearch=§ion_id%5B%5D=3&rep_month=5&rep_year=2021&rep_month_end=&rep_year_end=&county_id%5B%5D=92

¹³Child Care Services Association. (2021). *Infant and Toddler Care in Wake County* [Fact sheet]. https://www.childcareservices.org/research/nc-ece-data-repo/search/?repoSearch=§ion_id%5B%5D=7&rep_month=5&rep_year=2021&rep_month_end=&rep_year_end=&county_id%5B%5D=92



© 2021 Child Care Services Association. Figures derived using the most recent available data from Child Care Services Association, NC Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC Child Resource and Referral Council, NC Head Start State Collaboration Office.

Education¹⁴

- 7% of Wake County residents over the age of 25 did not complete high school.
- 15.1% completed high school with no further education.
- 32.9% of residents over age 25 have completed a bachelor's degree.

Neighborhood & Built Environment

Housing

Cost of Housing

- Median gross rent was \$1,150 per month in 2019. This is a 13.7% increase from \$1,011 in 2014.
- Median gross rent is consistent across census tracts in Wake County.
 - As the cost of housing increases, households in low-income and high-poverty census tracts have to spend a larger portion of their income on housing, and therefore have less income to spend on food, healthcare, and other necessities.

¹⁴SE:A12001. Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12858933

Figure 7: Change in Median Gross Rent

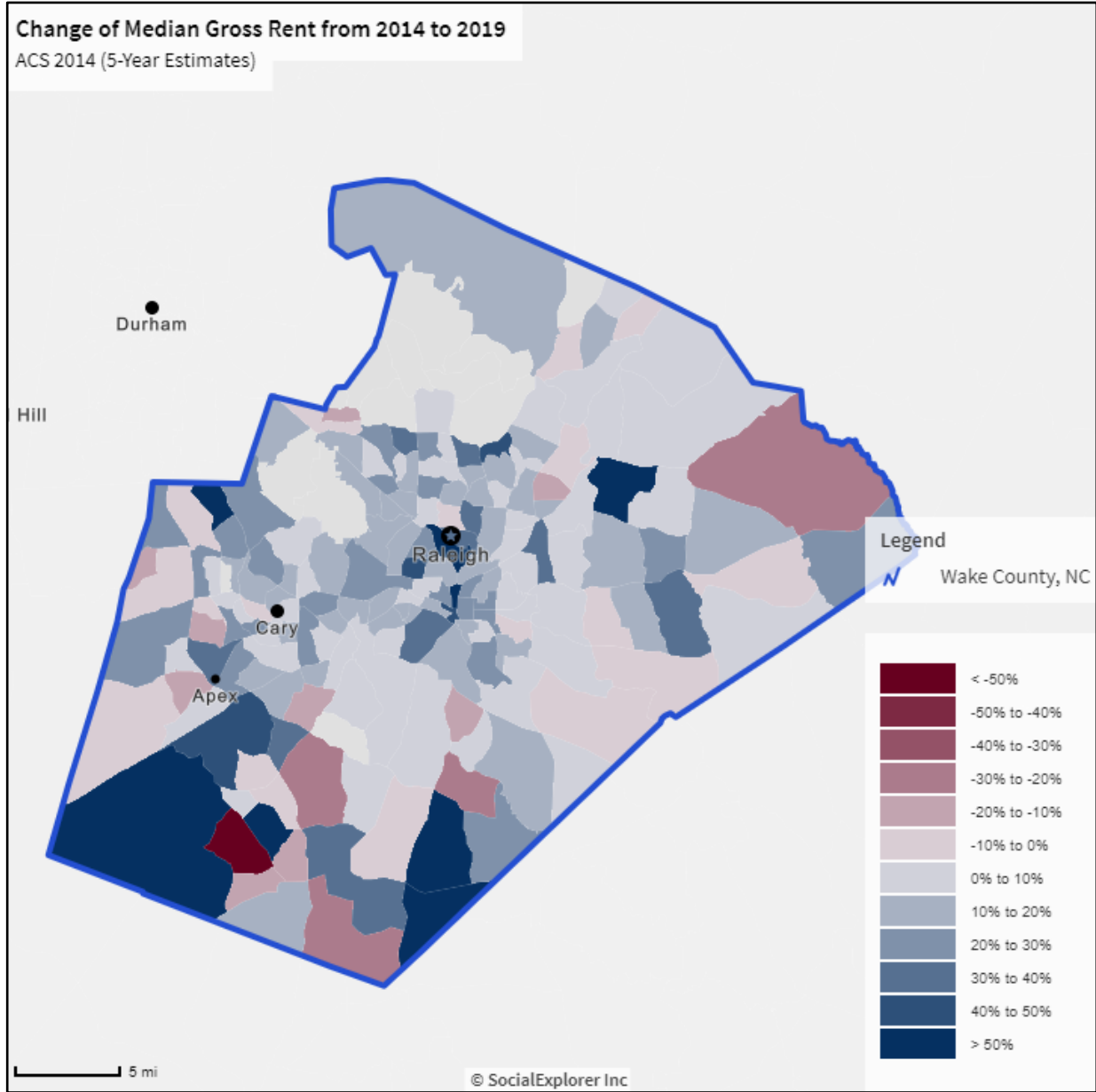
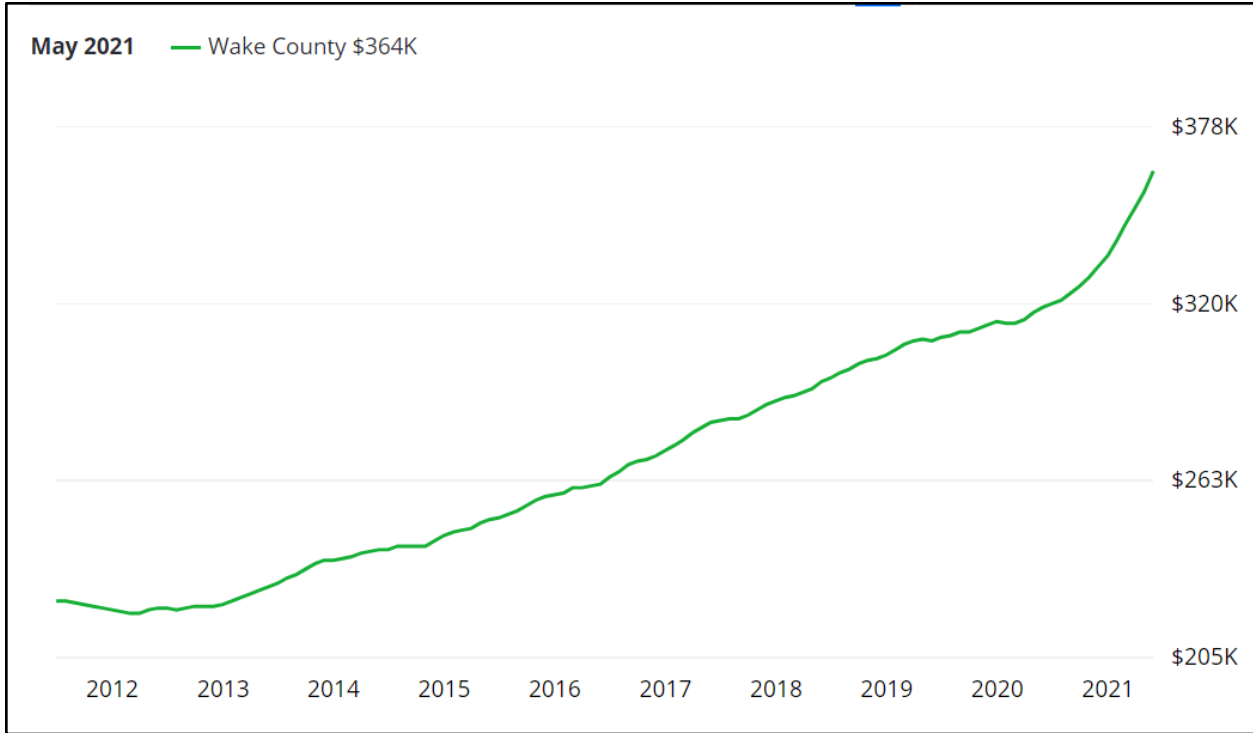


Figure 8: Median Home Value Wake County¹⁵

¹⁵Zillow. (2021, May 31). *Wake County Home Values*. <https://www.zillow.com/wake-county-nc/home-values/>

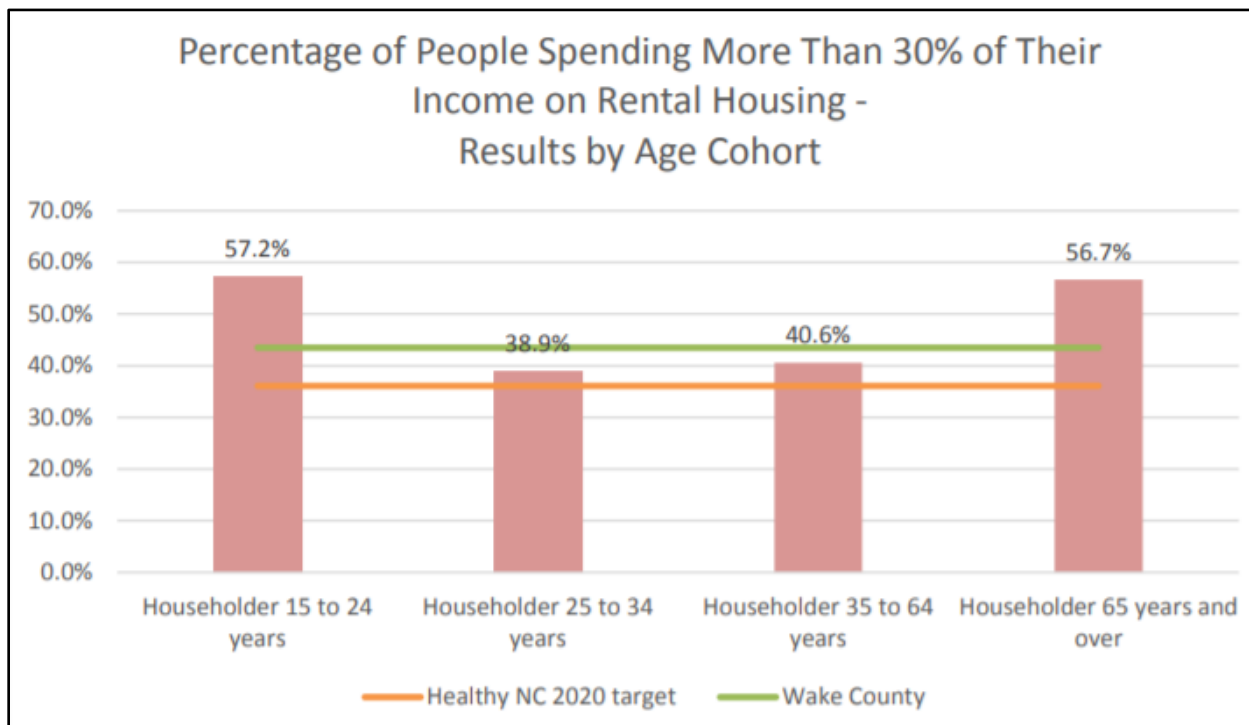
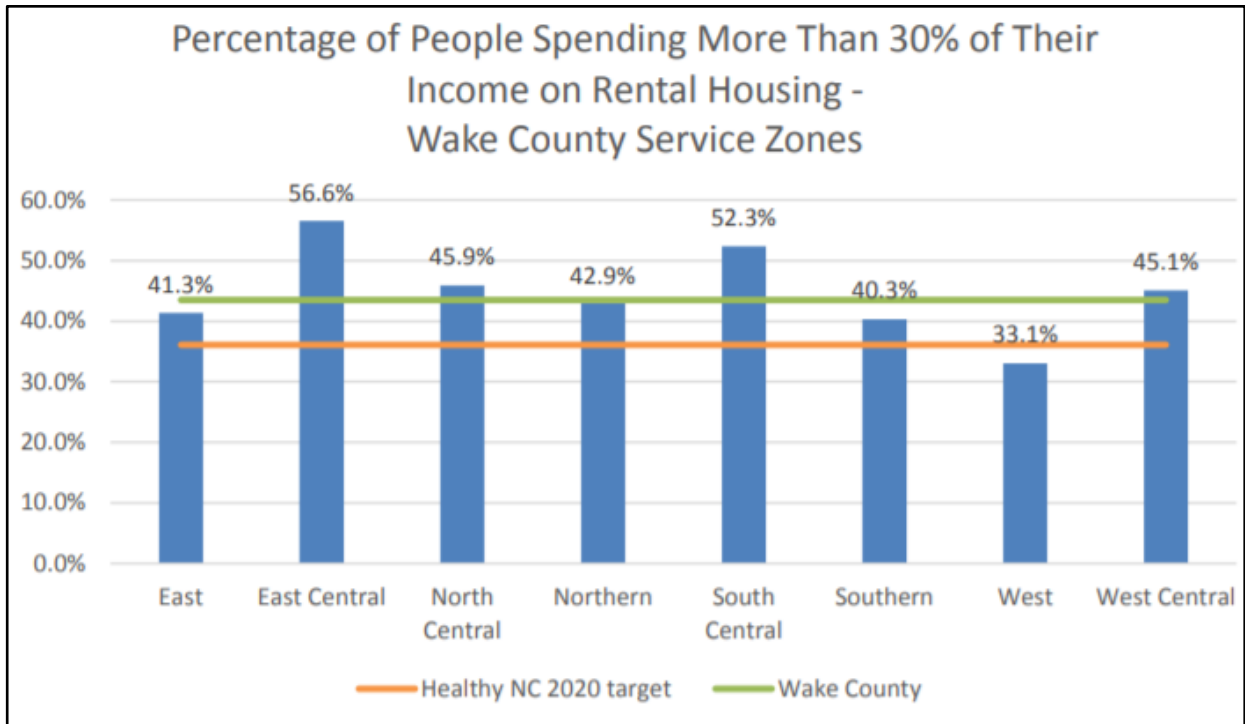


- The typical home value of homes in Wake County is \$364,095. Wake County home values have gone up 13.9% over the past year.¹⁶

Figure 9: Percentage Spending >30% of Income on Housing¹⁷

¹⁶Zillow. (2021, May 31). *Wake County Home Values*. <https://www.zillow.com/wake-county-nc/home-values/>

¹⁷Live Well Wake. (2019). *2019 Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment*. Wake County Board of Commissioners. https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/wakegov.com.if-us-west-2/prod/documents/2021-02/2019_wake_county_chna.pdf

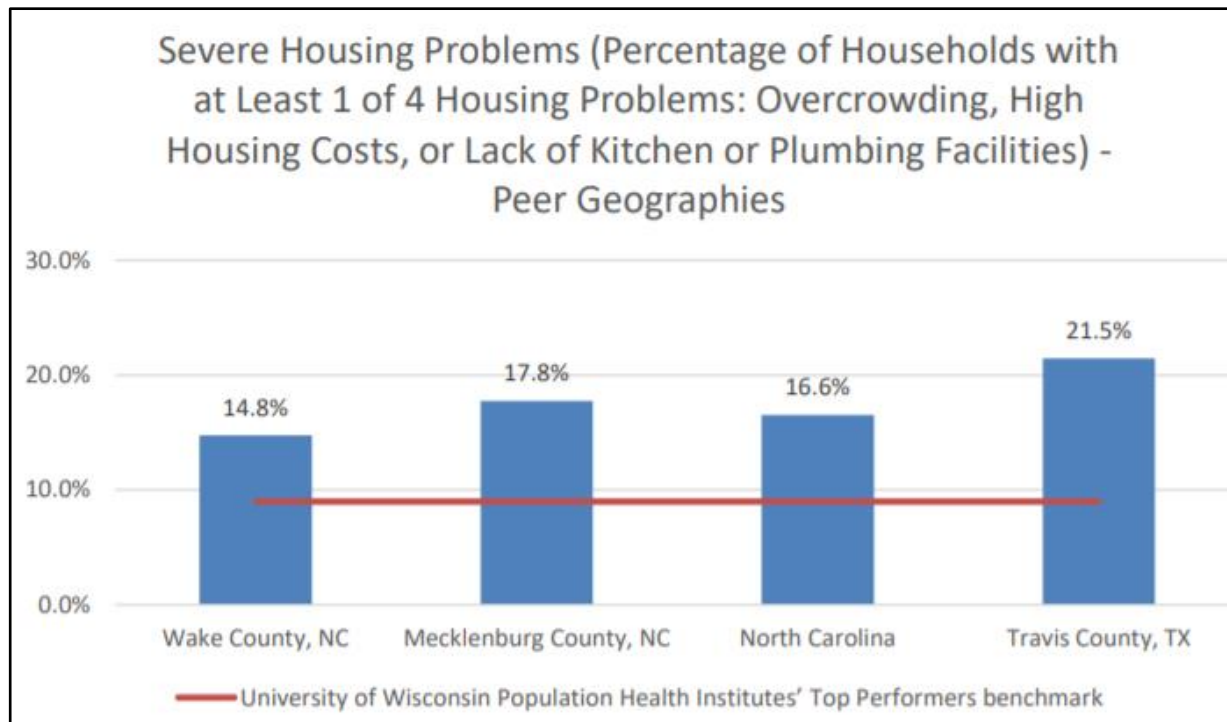


- Individuals who spend more than 30% of their income on housing face increased financial risk.
- 43.5% of Wake County rental households spend more than 30% of their income on rental expenses.

- 23.3% of residents spend 30-49% of their income on rent. 18.3% of residents spend more than 50% of their income on rent.¹⁸
- 16.5% of homeowners spend 30-49% of their income on homeownership expenses. 5.9% of homeowners spend more than 50% of their income on homeownership expenses.¹⁹

Quality of Housing

Figure 10: Households with Severe Housing Problems



Transportation

- 1.6% of households (9,220) do not have access to a vehicle.
 - 46.3% have access to two vehicles.
 - 18.5% have access to one vehicle.

¹⁸SE:B18002. Residents Paying More Than 30% or at least 50% of Income on Rent. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 14, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12861306

¹⁹SE:B10040. Residents Paying More Than 30% or at least 50% of Income on Selected Home Ownership Expenses. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 14, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12861306

- Wake County's 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment identified low walkability and limited transportation options as a barrier to healthcare access for residents.
- Wake County has low walkability for those who wish to travel via walking or biking or for those who do not have a vehicle.

Internet Access²⁰

- 96.1% of households own a computer.
- 91.4% of households have a broadband internet subscription.

Crime²¹

- The crime rate is 30.54 per 1,000 residents in a standard year, which is slightly lower than the national average. Crime is lower in the southwest area of the county, near Apex and Cary.
- Wake County is in the 63rd percentile for safety, meaning 37% of counties are safer and 63% of counties are more dangerous.
- The property crime rate is 22.25 per 1,000 residents, while the violent crime rate is 2.624 per 1,000 residents.

Economic Stability

Income

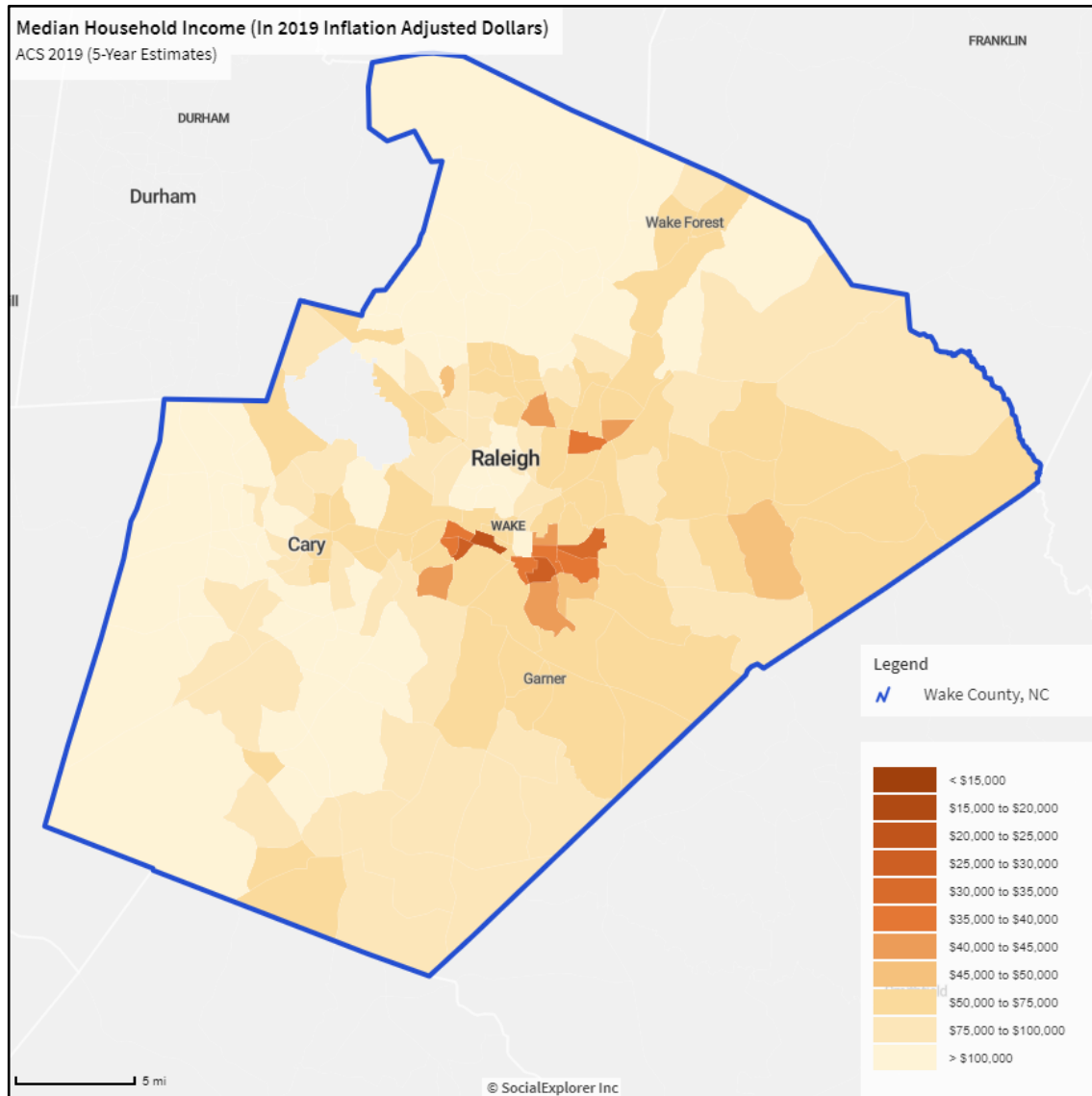
- The median household income in Wake County was \$80,591 in 2019.²²

Figure 11: Distribution of Median Household Income

²⁰U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts. (2019). American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wakecountynorthcarolina/PST045219> (Accessed on July 12, 2021).

²¹CrimeGrade. (2021). *Crime per Capita in Wake County*. <https://crimegrade.org/safest-places-in-wake-county-nc/>

²²SE:A14006. Median Household Income (In 2019 Inflation Adjusted Dollars). (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 19, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12863274



Poverty²³

- 5.9% of families lived in poverty in 2019.
- 2.8% of single-mother households lived in poverty in 2019.
- 12% of children (30,625) lived in poverty in 2019.

Figure 12: Distribution of Family Poverty

²³SE:A13002. Poverty Status in Families by Family Type by Presence of Children Under 18 Years. (ACS 2019). In SocialExplorer.com. Retrieved July 19, 2021, from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12863274

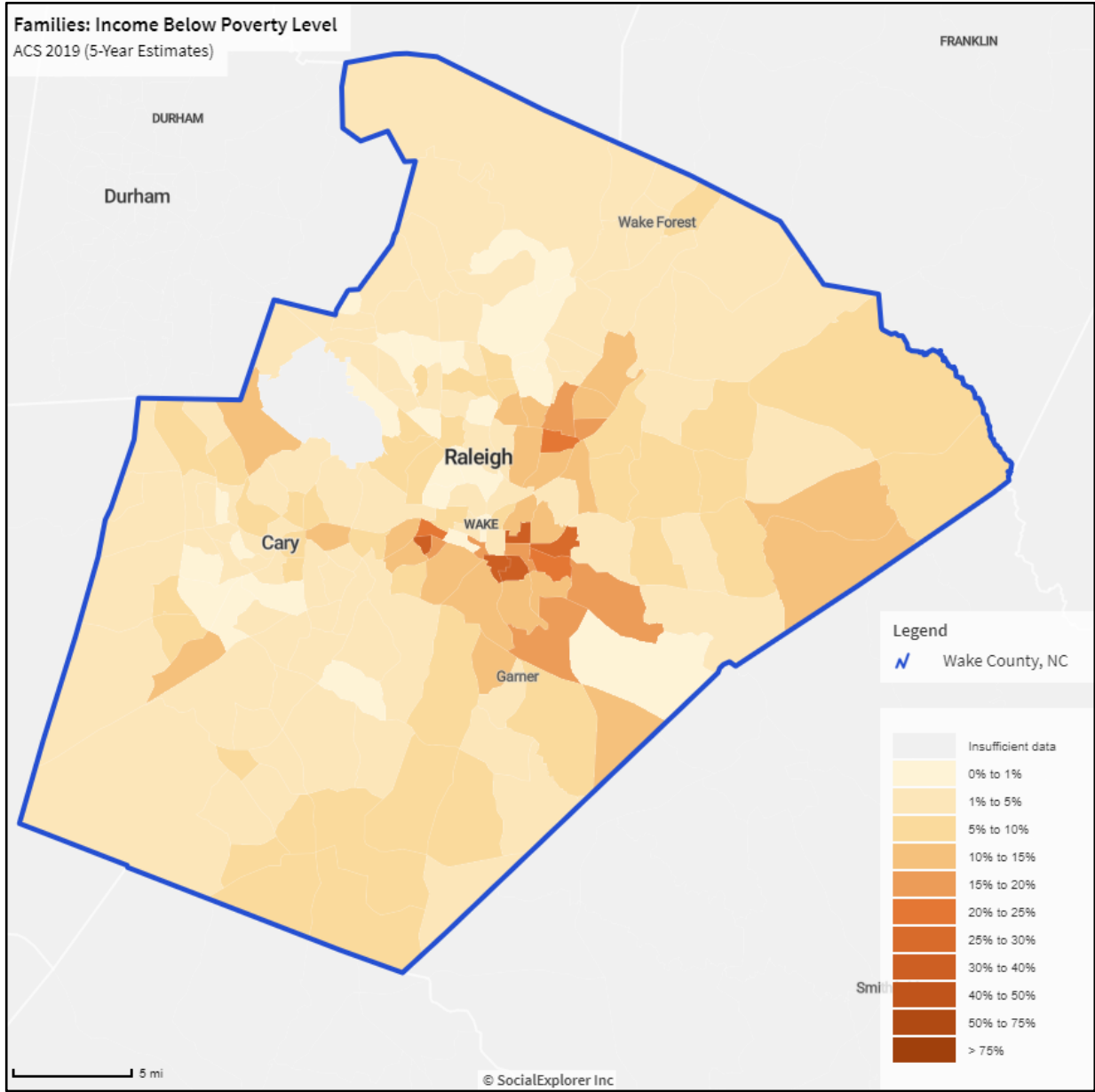
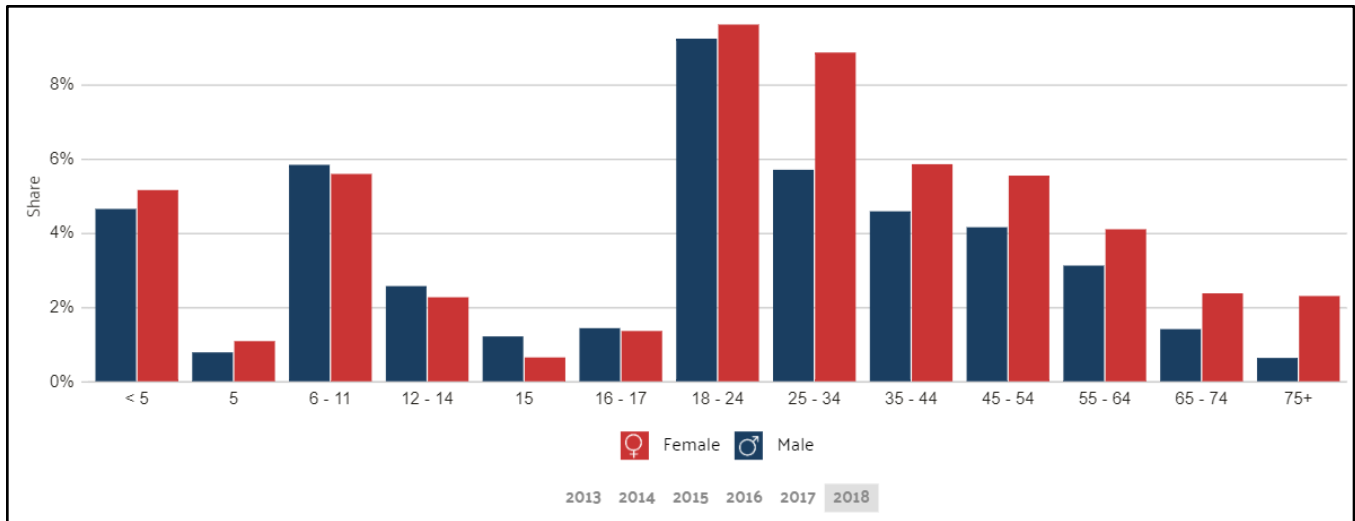


Figure 13: Poverty by Age & Gender



- Women ages 18 to 24 are the largest demographic living in poverty in Wake County, followed by men ages 18 to 24 and then women ages 25 to 34. Women ages 18 to 24 make up 9.61% of the population living in poverty (Data USA, 2021).

Homelessness

- The Wake County Public School System identified 4,527 students experiencing homelessness during the 2019-2020 school year.²⁴
- In July 2020, there were 196 households in homeless shelters across Wake County.
 - 314 households were in need of housing.
 - 249 households were waiting for a shelter bed or Street Outreach.

Employment^{25 26}

- Unemployment in Wake County was 3.6% in April 2021.
- The unemployment rate in Wake County has steadily declined since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unemployment in Wake County reached a high of 12.3% in May 2020.

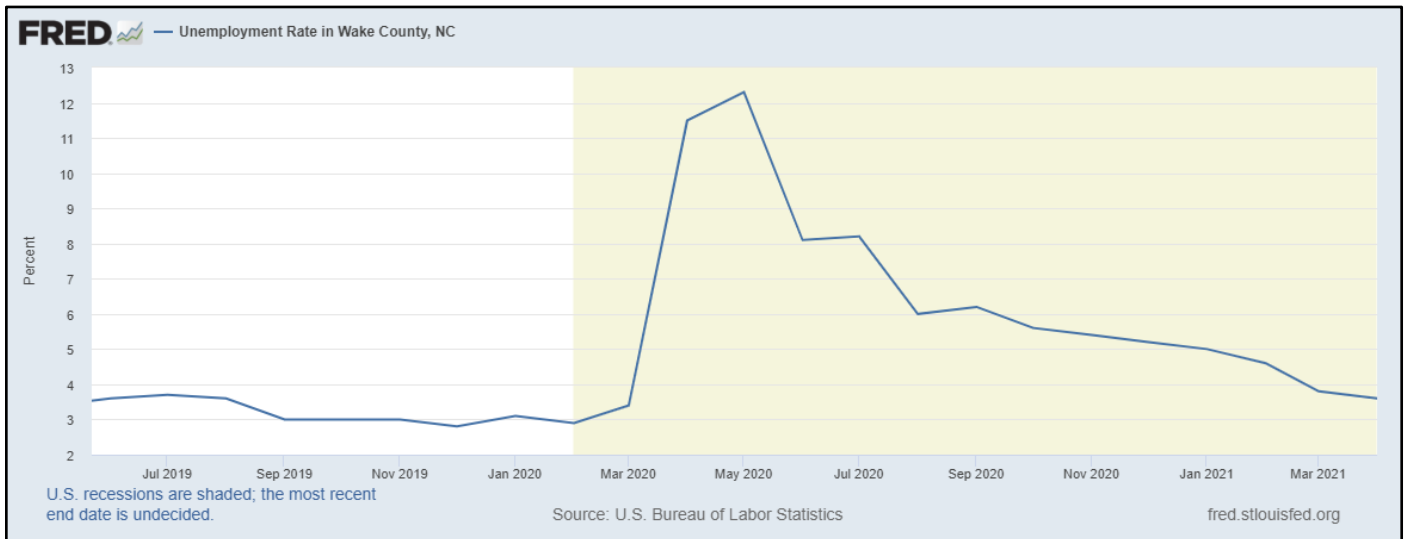
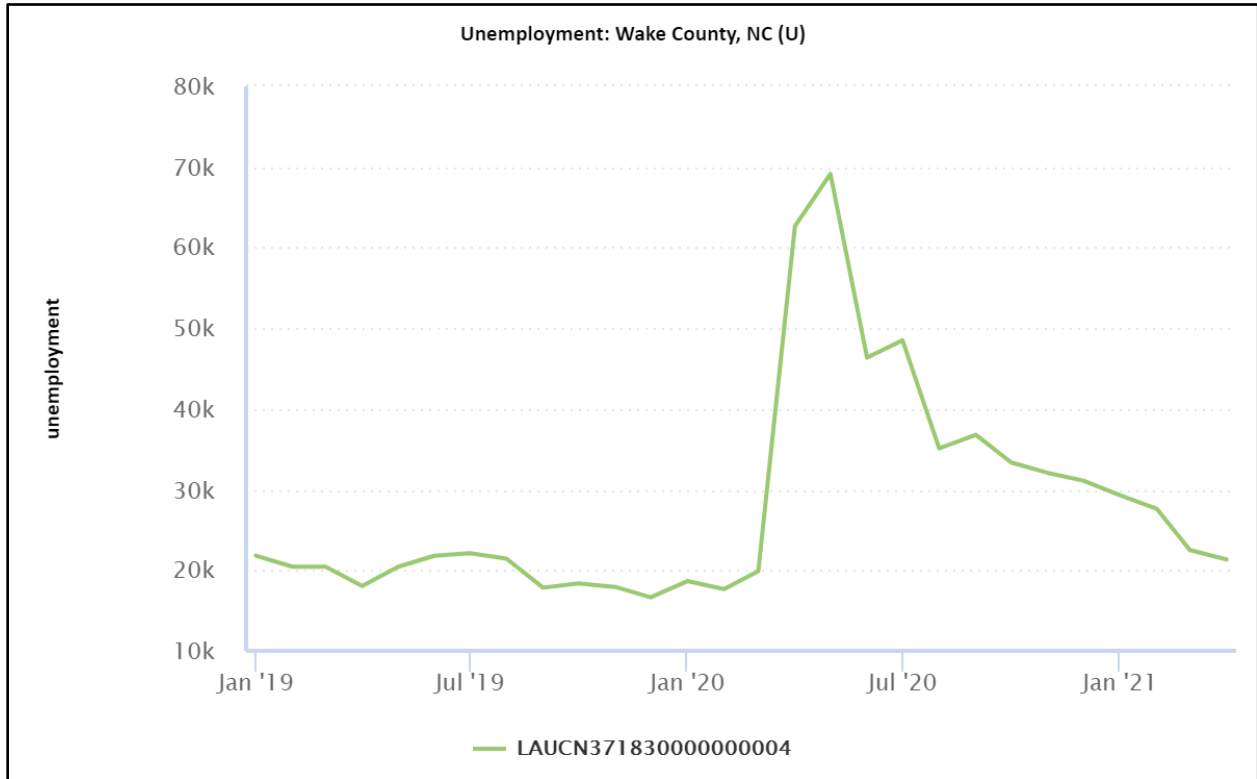
²⁴Wake County Public School System. (2020). *McKinney-Vento Program*. <https://www.wcpss.net/Page/31389>

²⁵U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment Rate in Wake County, NC [NCWAKE3URN], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/NCWAKE3URN>, June 14, 2021.

²⁶BLS Beta Labs. (2021, July). Unemployment: Wake County, NC (U). <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LAUCN371830000000004>

- Before the onset of COVID-19, Wake County's unemployment rate tended to fluctuate between 3 and 4%.

Figure 14: Unemployment in Wake County



Education

Public Schools

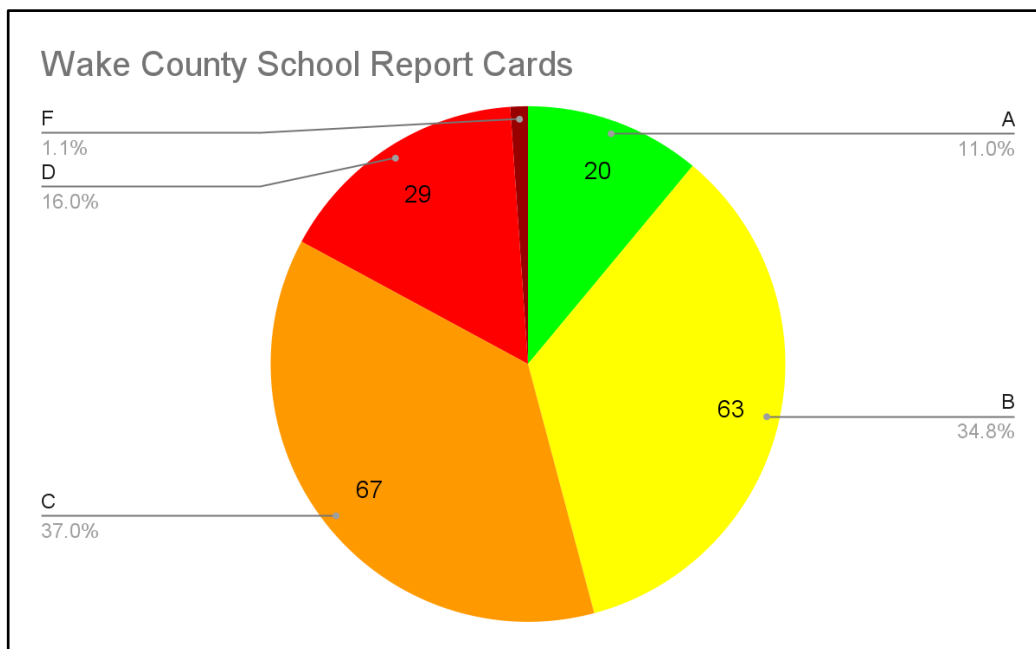
Enrollment²⁷

- During the 2019-2020 school year, there were 160,622 students enrolled across 191 schools in the Wake County Schools district, making it the largest school system in the Food Shuttle service area.
- 45.3% of students are white, 22.3% are Black, 18.4% are Hispanic or Latinx, and 9.8% are Asian.
- Per-pupil funding in 2019 amounted to \$9,670, which is close to the state average of \$9,938.

School Performance

- Each academic year, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) releases school report cards, which assign each public school a letter grade based on school performance and academic growth metrics.

Figure 15: Wake County School Report Cards



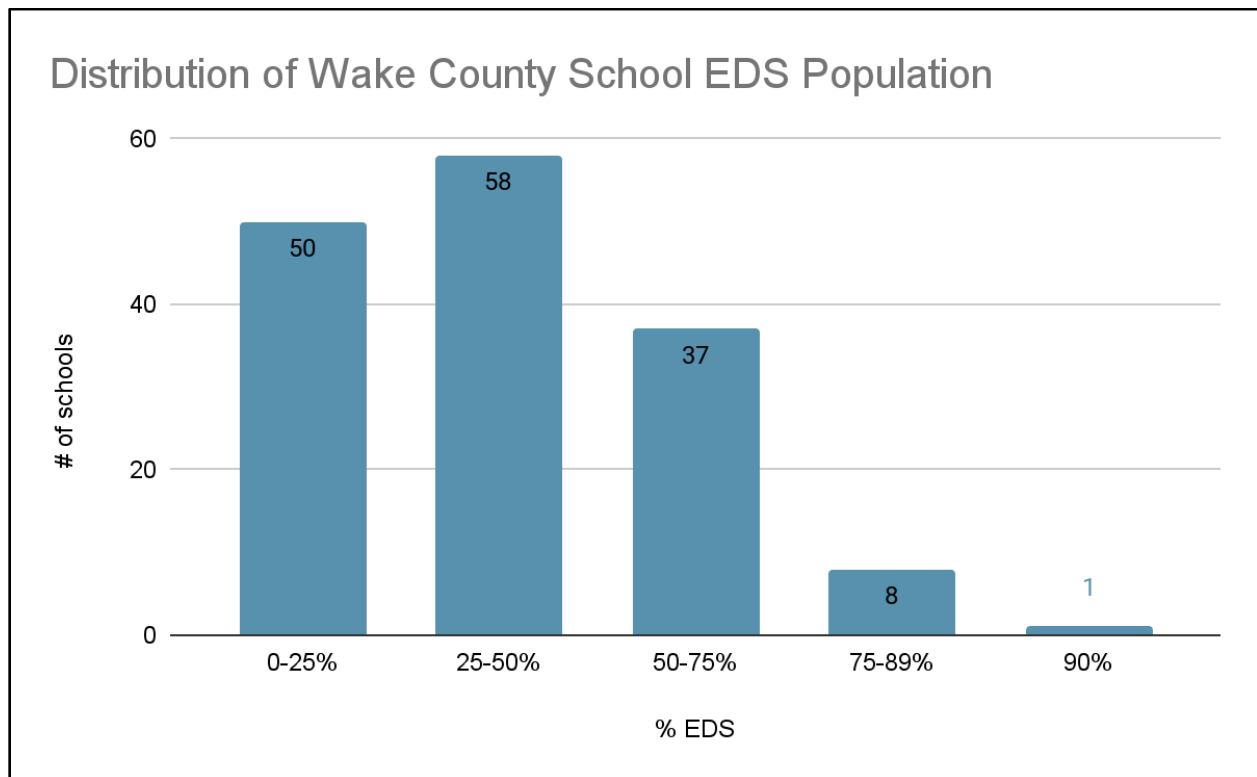
²⁷Wake County Public School System. (2020). *District facts*. <https://www.wcpss.net/domain/100>

- During the 2018-2019 school year, 20 schools in Wake County received an 'A' ranking, 63 received a 'B', 67 received a 'C', 29 received a 'D', and 2 schools received an 'F'.²⁸
- 41 Wake County schools exceeded their growth targets during the 2019-2020 school year. 74 schools met but did not exceed their growth targets, while 66 schools did not meet their growth targets.
- 30 Wake County schools were classified as 'low-performing' following the 2019-2020 school year.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

- During the 2019-2020 school year, 45,576 students relied on free lunch services and 8,495 students relied on reduced lunch services.
- A total of 32.62% of students in the Wake County Public School System were identified as economically disadvantaged.

Figure 16: Wake County EDS Distribution



²⁸North Carolina School Report Cards. (2020). *Wake County Schools*. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. <https://ncreports.ondemand.sas.com/src/district?district=920LEA&year=2019&lng=en>

Community Health

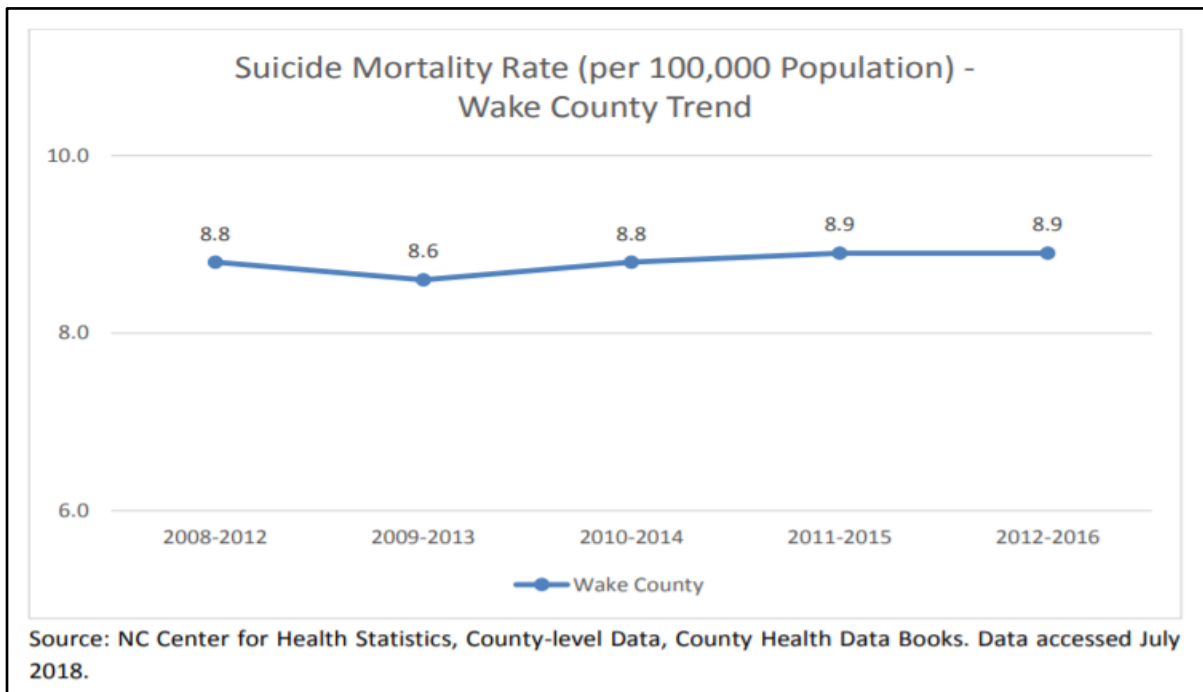
Key Points

- The diabetes prevalence rate in Wake County was 8.6% in 2021 (DataUSA, 2021).
- The adult obesity prevalence rate was 27.6% in 2021 (DataUSA, 2021).

Mental Health

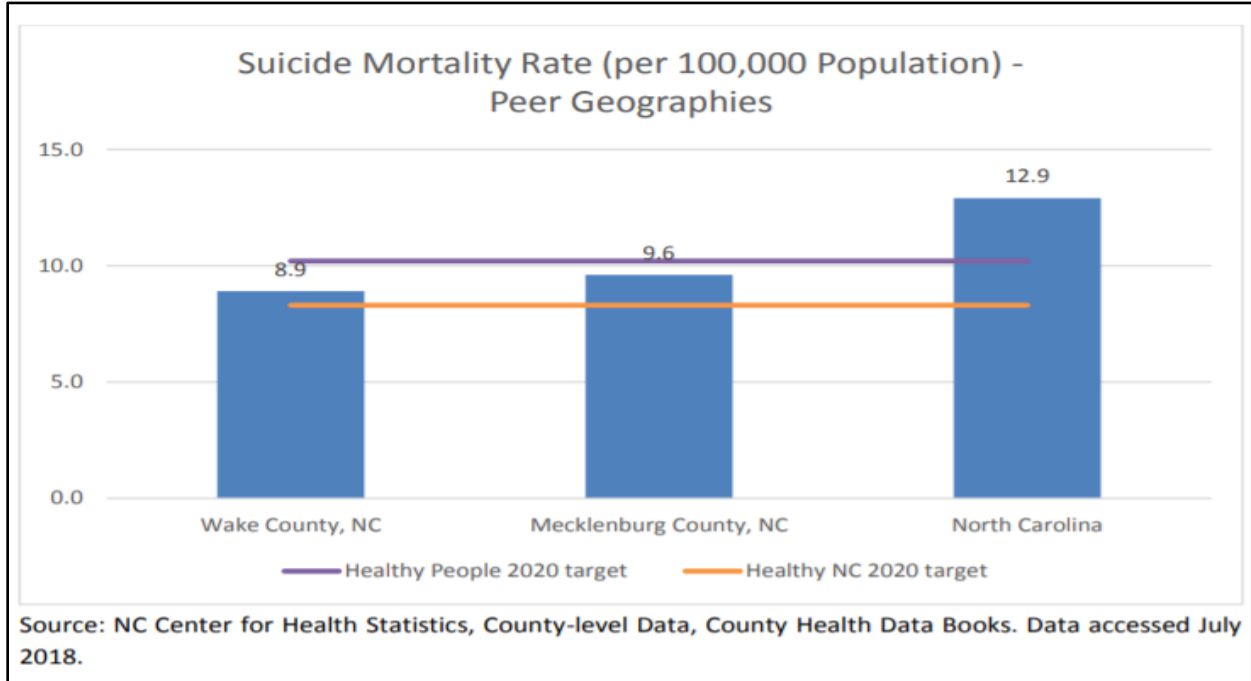
Wake County has experienced an increase in the prevalence and severity of mental health and substance use disorders over recent years. At the same time, the availability of resources and access to services for people suffering with these problems has declined.

Figure 17: Suicide Mortality Rate (per 100,000)



- Suicide mortality in Wake County is trending in the wrong direction, with a compound annual growth rate of 0.3 percent over the most recent five years of data periods available.

Figure 18: Suicide Mortality Rate (Peer Geographies)



- Existing data show that Wake County has a lower suicide mortality rate than both Mecklenburg County, NC and the state overall; however, Wake County's rate is higher than the Healthy NC 2020 target (8.3).

Figure 19: Suicide Mortality by Gender

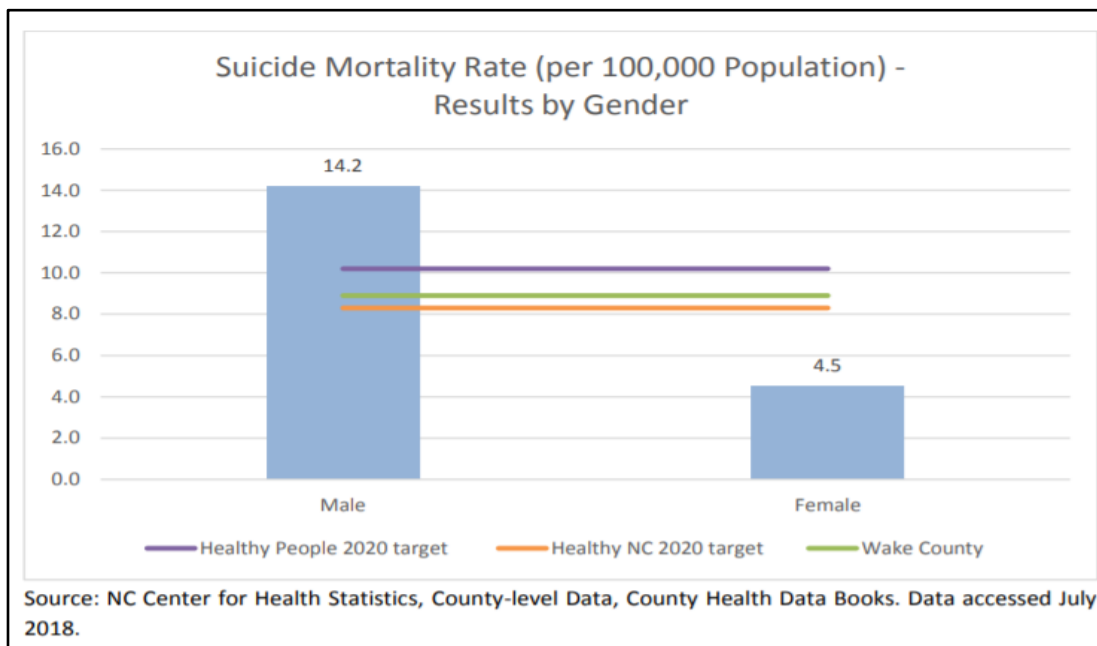
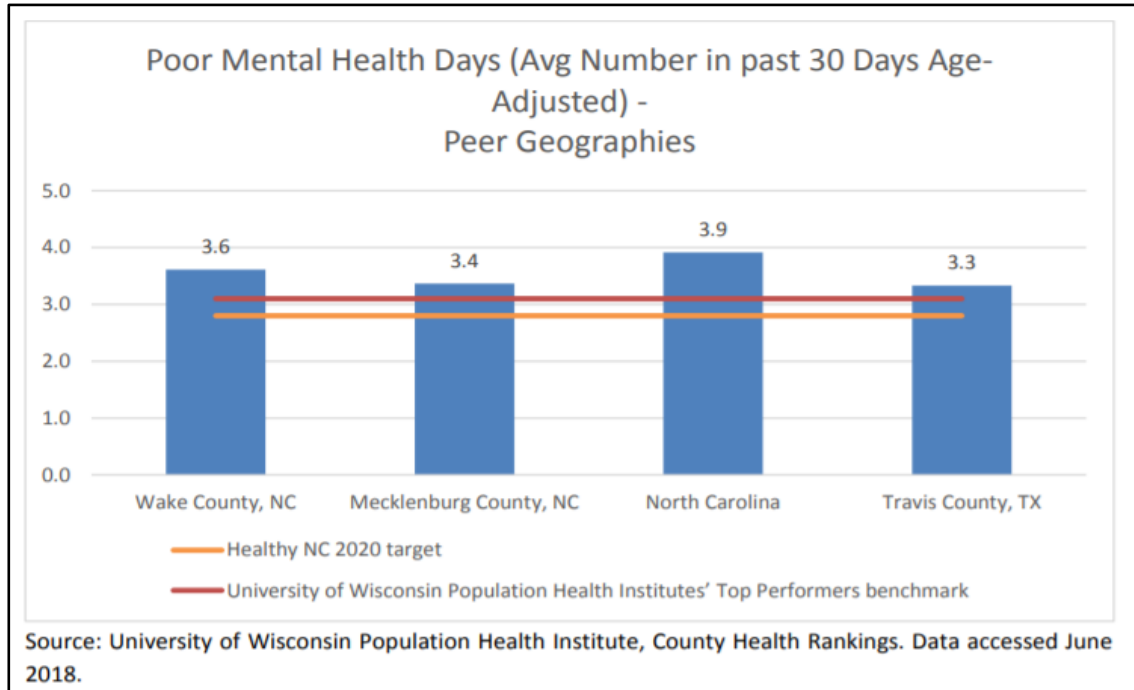


Figure 20: Poor Mental Health Days



- Wake County has experienced a compound annual growth rate of 4.6 percent over the most recent three years of data periods available.

Figure 21: Persons Served by Area Mental Health Programs Over Time

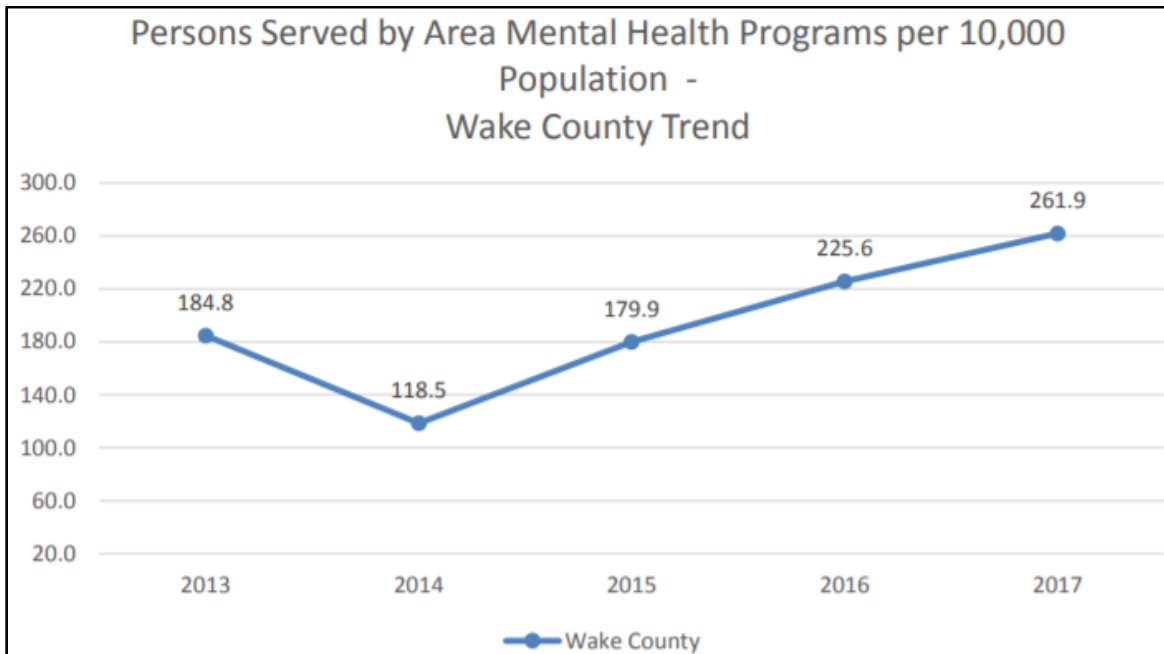


Figure 22: Persons Served by Area Mental Health Programs (Peer Geographies)

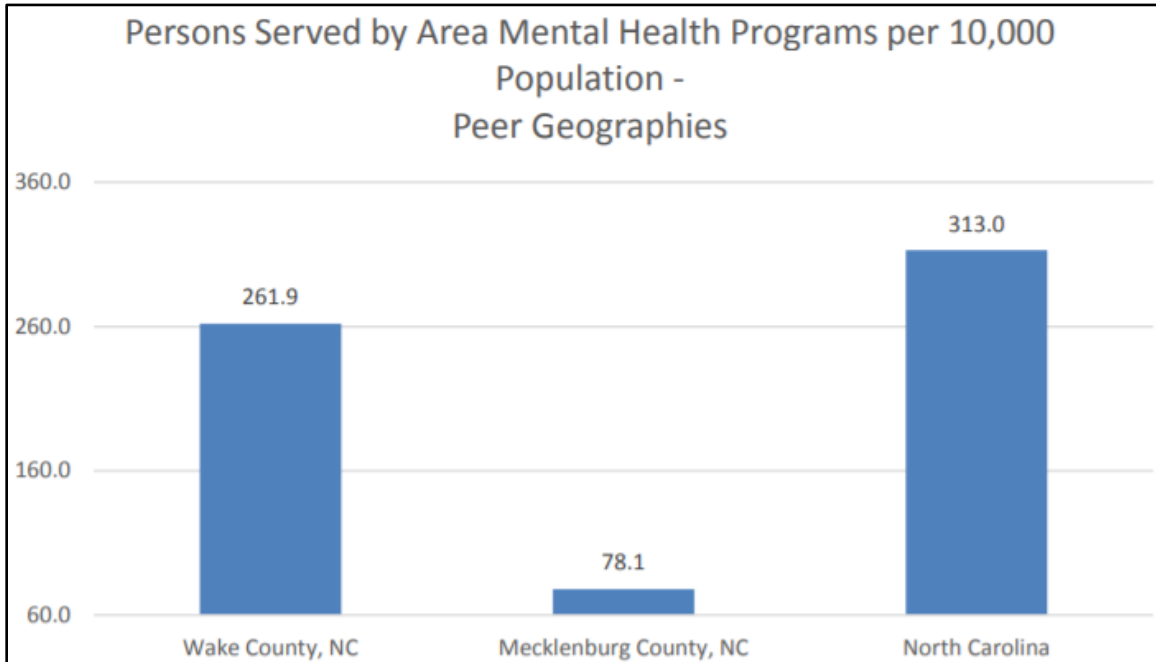
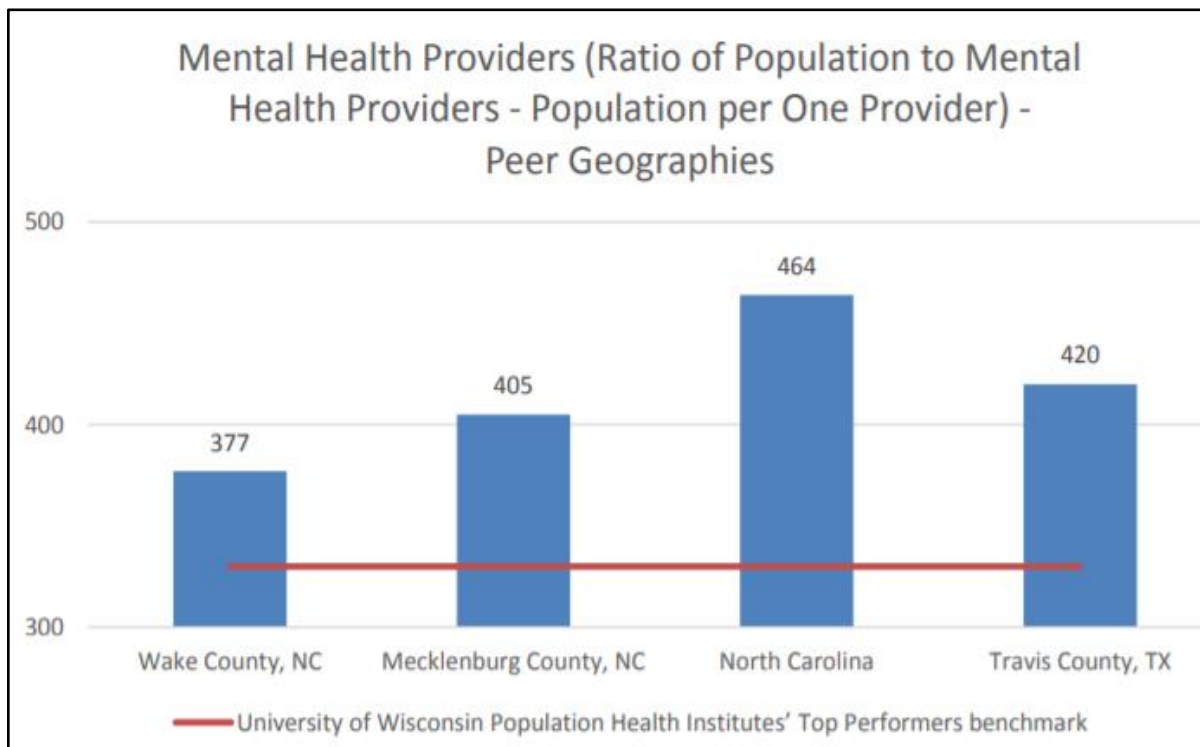


Figure 23: Mental Health Providers

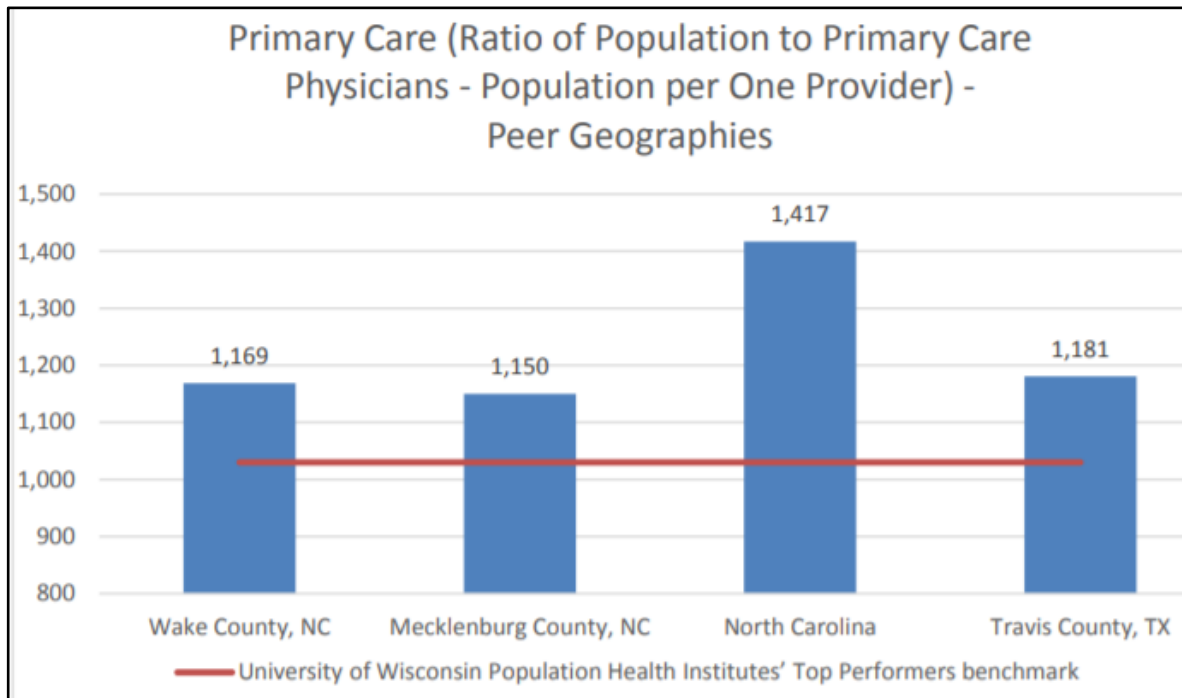


- Existing data show that while Wake County has a lower ratio of population to mental health providers than its peer geographies, it remains higher than University of Wisconsin Population Health Institutes' Top Performers benchmark (330:1).
- Lower ratios are desired to ensure adequate access to mental health care.

Healthcare Access

- 90.9% of the population has health coverage.
 - 58.4% are on employee plans.
 - 10.3% are on Medicaid.
 - 8.15% are on Medicare.
 - 13.1% are on non-group plans.
 - 1.01% are on military or VA plans.

Figure 24: Ratio of Primary Care Physicians



- Wake County has one primary care provider for every 1,169 residents.

Figure 25: Percent of Uninsured Individuals (Peer Geographies)

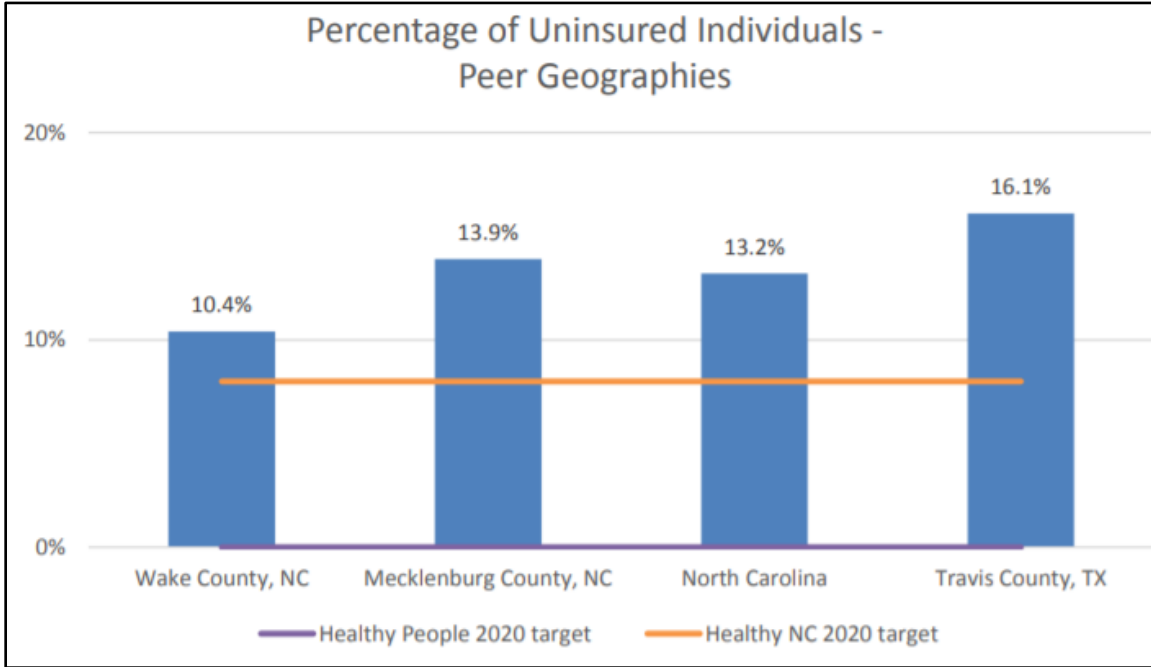


Figure 26: Percent of Uninsured Individuals Over Time

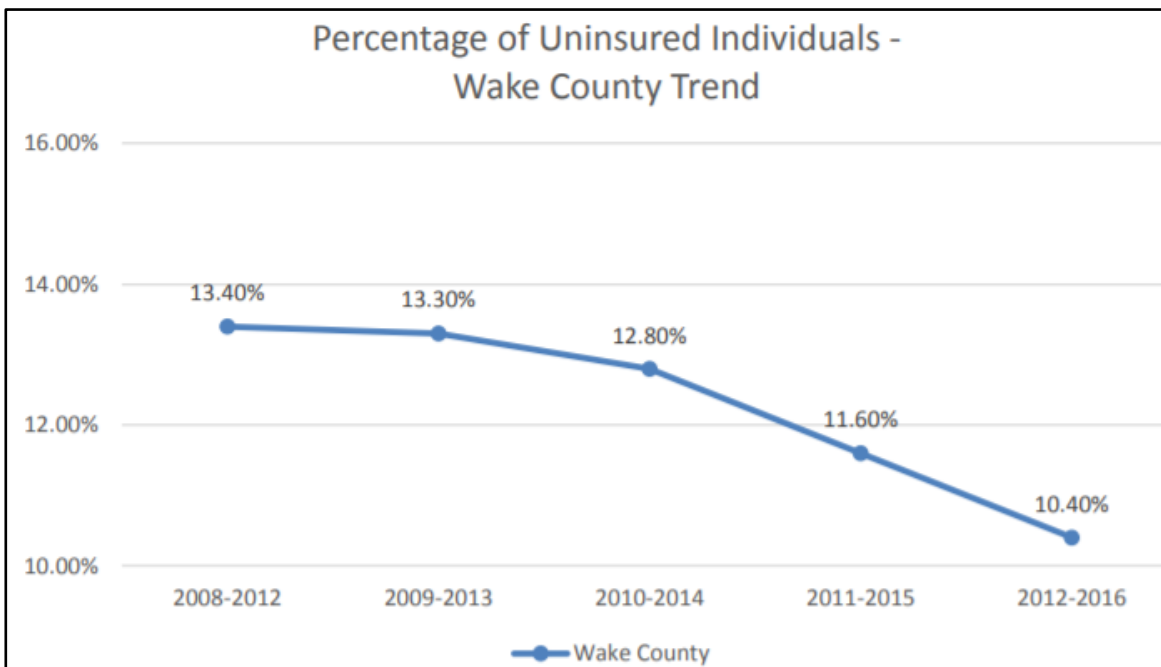


Figure 27: Uninsured Individuals by Service Zone

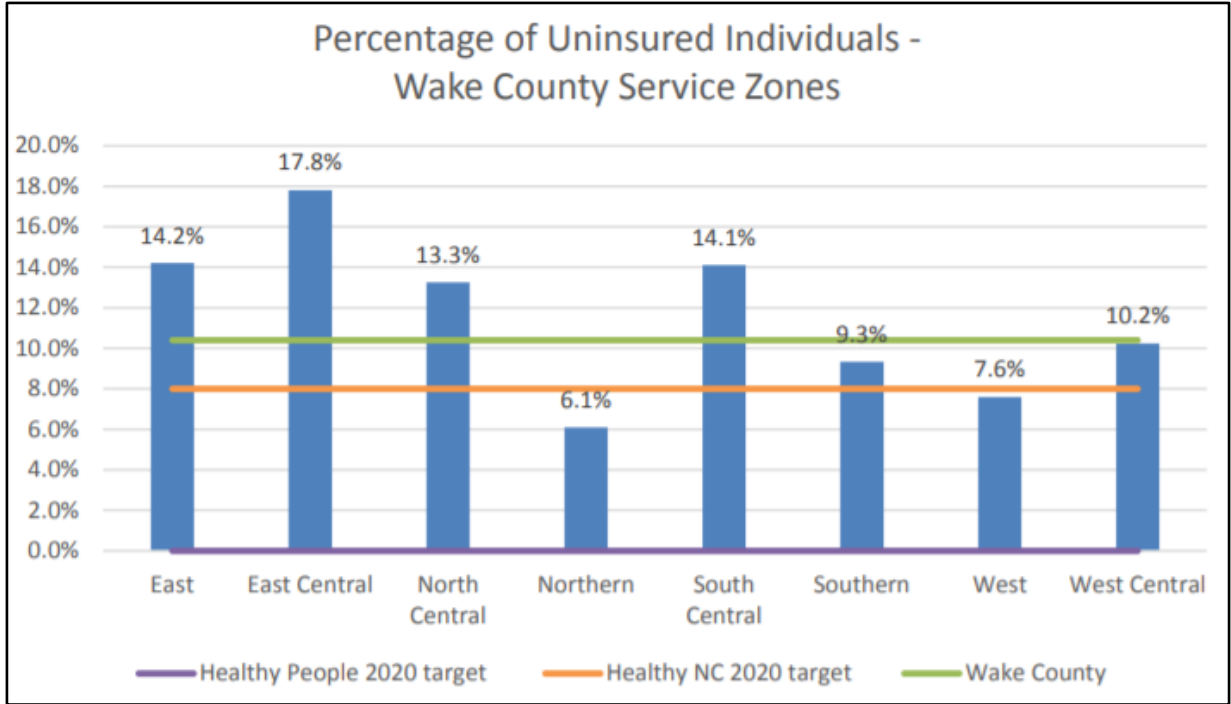


Figure 28: Uninsured Individuals by Age & Gender

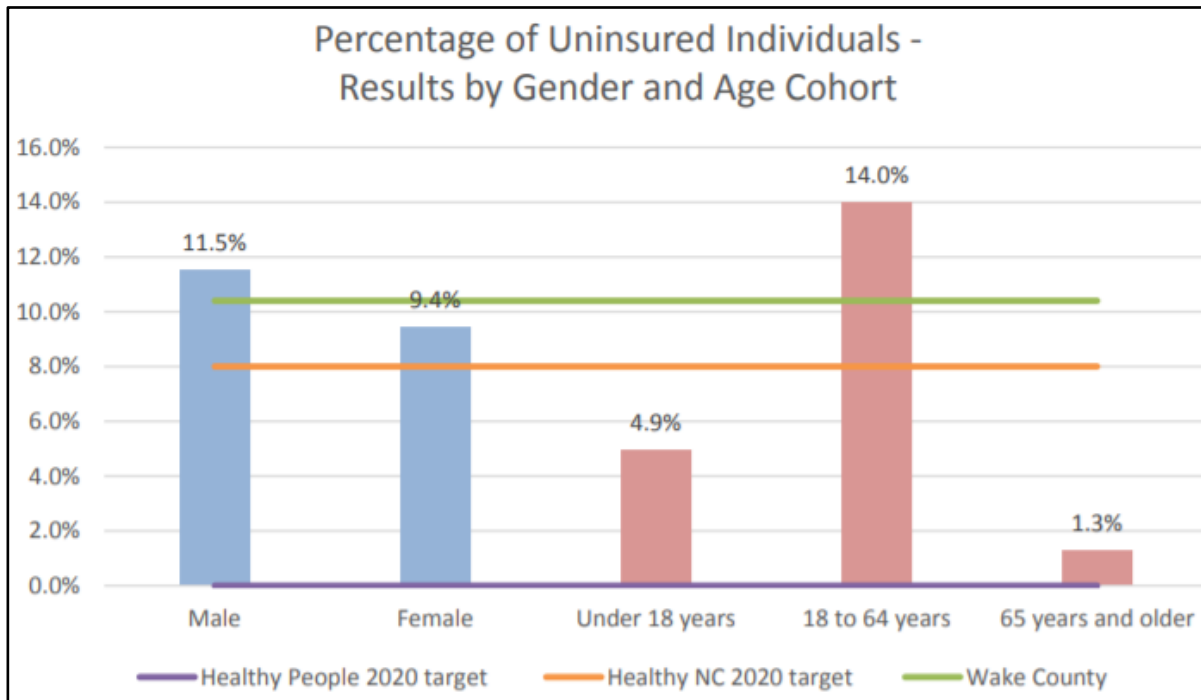
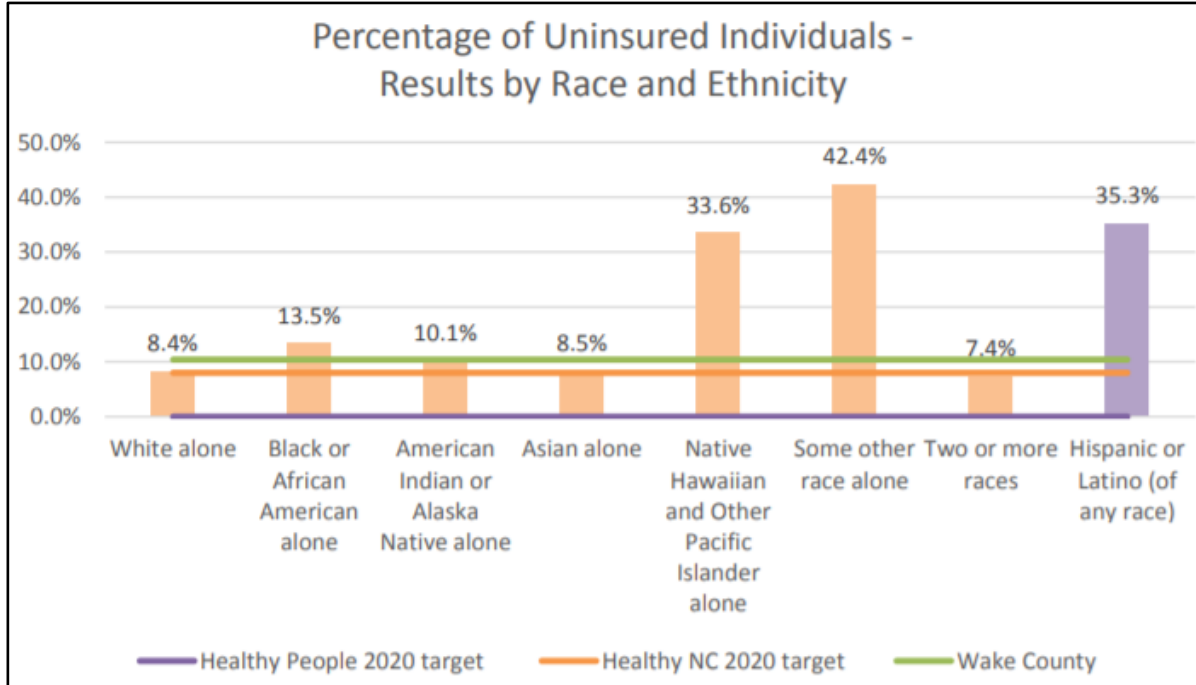


Figure 29: Uninsured Individuals by Race & Ethnicity



Impact of COVID-19^{29 30}

- As of August 2021:
 - There have been 93,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Wake County since the beginning of the pandemic.
 - The average age of those who got COVID-19 is 36.
 - There have been 749 deaths attributed to COVID-19.
 - 58% of the population of Wake County is fully vaccinated.
- Wake County's white population makes up 44% of confirmed cases, 49% of COVID-19 deaths, and 62% of vaccinations, while comprising 69% of the total population.
- African Americans make up 20% of confirmed cases, 29% of COVID-19 deaths, and 15% of vaccinations while comprising 22% of the total population.

²⁹Wake County. (2021, July). *COVID-19 Cases in Wake County*. <https://www.wakegov.com/departments-government/covid-19-information>

³⁰North Carolina Department of Health & Human Safety. (2021). *Vaccinations*. <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/vaccinations>

- The Hispanic/Latinx population makes up 15% of confirmed cases, 9% of COVID-19 deaths, and 8% of vaccinations while comprising 10% of the total population.

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