

**Table 1. MSA Unemployment Rate, August 2021**

Durham-Chapel Hill	3.7%
Raleigh	3.7%
Asheville	3.8%
Wilmington	3.9%
<b>Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
New Bern	4.2%
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia	4.3%
Winston-Salem	4.3%
Burlington	4.5%
Goldsboro	4.7%
Greenville	4.7%
Jacksonville	4.7%
Greensboro-High Point	5.1%
Fayetteville	6.4%
Rocky Mount	6.4%

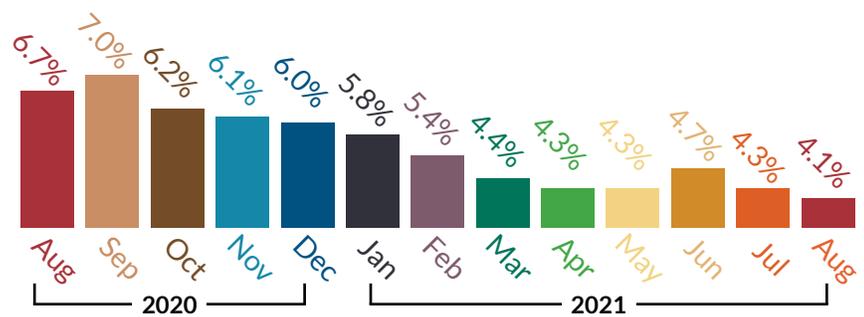
Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2021.

## Civilian Labor Force

In August 2020, the Hickory MSA's unemployment rate equaled 6.7%. As pandemic recovery continues, the region's unemployment rate has dropped to 4.1% as of August 2021 (Figure 1). Between August 2020 and August 2021, the estimated number of employed persons increased from 157,755 to 166,997 (9,242), while the civilian labor force grew from 169,052 to 174,193 (5,141). In August 2021, the Hickory MSA had the fifth-lowest (eleventh highest) unemployment rate among North Carolina MSAs (Table 1). August 2021 unemployment rates by county were Alexander 3.7%, Burke 4.1%, Caldwell 4.4%, and Catawba 4.1%.

**Figure 1. MSA Unemployment, Aug. 2020 - Aug. 2021**

Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2021.

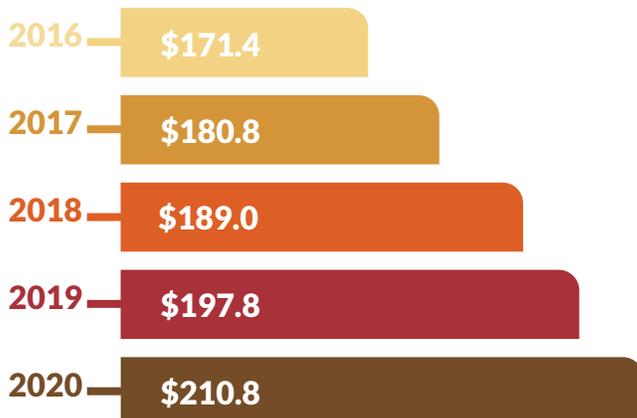


## Gross Collections

North Carolina gross collections include money from registration fees, penalties, interest, and sales and use taxes (county sales taxes are excluded). Hickory MSA State gross tax collections totaled \$171.4 million in 2016 (Figure 2). As economic conditions continued to improve after the 2008 recession, gross collections increased to \$180.8 million in 2017 and \$189.0 million in 2018. In 2019, Hickory MSA gross collections rose another 4.6% to \$197.8 million. As of 2020, Hickory MSA gross collections were more than \$210 million.

**Figure 2. MSA Gross Collections (\$ Millions), 2016-2020**

Source: NC Department of Revenue, 2021.



Gross collections increased in all four Hickory MSA counties between 2018 and 2020. (Table 2). In Catawba County, State gross tax collections exceeded \$122 million in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, gross tax collections grew by more than \$3.1 million in Alexander County, \$5.5 million in Burke County, and \$5.0 million in Caldwell County.

**Table 2. Gross Tax Collections**

Source: NC Department of Revenue, 2021.

County	2018	2019	2020
Alexander	\$9,763,876	\$10,593,673	\$12,800,898
Burke	\$35,231,009	\$37,703,343	\$40,743,824
Caldwell	\$29,276,874	\$28,768,098	\$34,326,616
Catawba	\$114,769,537	\$120,709,646	\$122,957,235

## EIN Spotlight | Hickory MSA Census 2020 Results

After several delays, in August 2021 the US Census Bureau released Census 2020 redistricting data for North Carolina. The redistricting file release provides information about every county and all municipalities in North Carolina. This data set includes information on total population, population over/under 18 years old, population by race, population by Hispanic or not Hispanic origin, total housing units, and the number of occupied and vacant housing units.

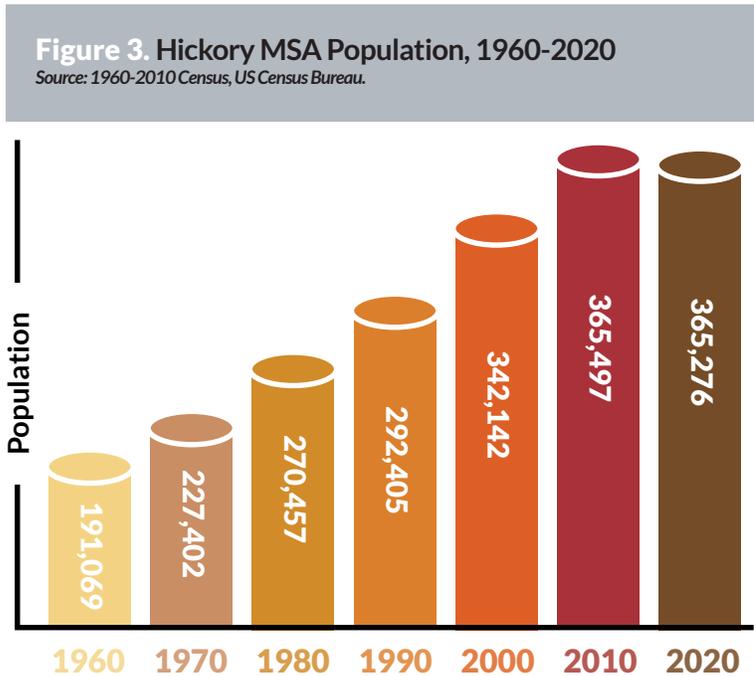
It is important to note that the 2020 Census is the first time the US Census Bureau is using a new privacy protection system, known as “differential privacy,” explicitly designed to combat cyber threats in a digital age. In short, the Census Bureau has taken steps to disguise the original data so that the results are still useful. These steps include using statistical methods such as “data swapping” and “noise injection.” Differential privacy has little impact on the data accuracy of large areas (geographies) but can impact small areas (geographies) of smaller than 500 persons.

This special edition of the “EIN Spotlight” will analyze the results of the 2020 Census in the Hickory Metro region. In addition, the Spotlight will look at how the region has changed with respect to its total population growth and population by race and Hispanic origin. (An analysis of occupied and vacant housing units will be included in Winter 2021 EIN.) Comparisons will also be made between the Hickory MSA and other Metro areas in North Carolina as well as local government jurisdictions inside the region.

### Hickory MSA Population Trends, 1960–2020

Figure 3 shows Hickory MSA population growth from the 1960 Census to the 2020 Census. Over the past 60 years, the region grew from 191,069 to 365,276 persons with an average yearly growth rate of 1.09% (Figure 3). During the 1960s the Hickory MSA’s population grew 19.0% to 227,402. The Hickory Metro’s growth rate during the 1970s (18.9%) was nearly identical to the 1960s. During the 1980s, however, the Hickory MSA’s total population increased by only 8.1% to 292,405 (Table 3). Population growth during the 1980s was less than half experienced during the 1960s and 1970s due to a reduction in the birth rate as the baby boomer generation began to age out of the “child-birthing” years. During the 1990s additional population growth occurred in the Hickory Metro increased due to job growth in the region. The 17.0% increase in the Hickory MSA’s population was just slightly below the growth rates recorded in the 1960s and 1970s.

Hickory MSA population growth has slowed dramatically since 2000. From 2000 to 2010, the region’s population increased 6.8% from 342,142 to 365,497. The biggest reason for the sharp decline in population growth between 2000 and 2010 is the loss of more than 47,000 jobs in the region since the second quarter of 2000. Since 2010 the region’s population has remained nearly unchanged (-0.1% or 221 population loss). On the one hand, population gains have occurred in the 65 and over age groups. However, population losses have occurred in younger age groups due to a decline in births and fewer younger persons migrating to the Hickory MSA. The 2010s was the first time the region as a whole lost population since World War II.



**Alexander County’s** population has more than doubled from 15,625 in 1960 to 36,444 persons in 2020 (Table 3, page 3). Alexander’s average yearly population growth rate of 1.42% between 1960 and 2020 is the highest among Hickory MSA counties. Alexander added more than 5,500 persons during the 1970s. During the 1990s, Alexander County gained 6,059 persons, the most growth over the past five decades. Alexander County grew more than 10.0% between 2000 and 2010. Since 2010, Alexander County’s population has fallen by 754 persons (2.0%).

The population in **Burke County** increased from 52,701 in 1960 to 87,570 in 2020. A closer look at the data in Table 3 reveals that Burke has experienced a wide range of population growth/decline rates in each of the past six decades. During the 1970s, Burke County’s population rose by more than 20% to 72,504. During the 1980s, however, Burke County grew only 4.3%. In the 1990s, Burke added 13,405 persons to 89,145. From 2010 to 2020, Burke County’s population edged upward only 2% due to job losses. During the 2010s, Burke County suffered the greatest percentage (-3.7%) and

**Table 3. Hickory MSA Population Growth, 1960-2020\***

County	1960	1970	Increase 60-70	% Inc. 60-70	1980	Increase 70-80	% Inc. 70-80	1990	Inc. 80-90	% Inc. 80-90
Alexander	15,625	19,466	3,841	24.6	24,999	5,533	28.4	27,544	2,545	9.2
Burke	52,701	60,364	7,663	14.5	72,504	12,140	20.1	75,740	3,236	4.3
Caldwell	49,552	56,699	7,147	14.4	67,746	11,047	19.5	70,709	2,963	4.2
Catawba	73,191	90,873	17,682	24.2	105,208	14,335	15.8	118,412	13,204	11.2
<b>Hickory MSA</b>	<b>191,069</b>	<b>227,402</b>	<b>36,333</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>270,457</b>	<b>43,055</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>292,405</b>	<b>21,948</b>	<b>8.1</b>

County	1990	2000	Increase 90-00	% Inc. 90-00	2010	Increase 00-10	% Inc. 00-10	2020	Change 10-20	% Chg. 10-20
Alexander	27,544	33,603	6,059	22.0	37,198	3,595	10.7	36,444	-754	-2.0
Burke	75,740	89,145	13,405	17.7	90,912	1,767	2.0	87,570	-3,342	-3.7
Caldwell	70,709	77,708	6,999	9.9	83,029	5,321	6.8	80,652	-2,377	-2.9
Catawba	118,412	141,686	23,274	19.7	154,358	12,672	8.9	160,610	6,252	4.1
<b>Hickory MSA</b>	<b>292,405</b>	<b>342,142</b>	<b>49,737</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>365,497</b>	<b>23,355</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>365,276</b>	<b>-221</b>	<b>-0.1</b>

County	Increase 1960-2020	% Increase 1960-2020	Average % Growth Per Year, 1960-2020	Change 2000-2020	% Change 2000-2020	Average % Change Per Year, 2000-2020
Alexander	20,819	133.24	1.42	2,841	8.45	0.41
Burke	34,869	66.16	0.85	-1,575	-1.77	-0.09
Caldwell	31,100	62.76	0.82	2,944	3.79	0.19
Catawba	87,419	119.44	1.32	18,924	13.36	0.63
<b>Hickory MSA</b>	<b>174,207</b>	<b>91.17</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>23,134</b>	<b>6.76</b>	<b>0.33</b>

Source: 1960-2010 Census, US Census Bureau. \*Data from the 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census are "corrected" total population counts. "Corrected" counts are total population counts (only) that may be adjusted for counties after the conclusion of the Count Question Resolution Program (CQR). Redistricting Data from the 2020 Census have yet to be adjusted by the CQR.

numeric population (-3,342) loss of any of the Hickory MSA counties. The losses are due to an increase in death rates and fewer new residents moving into the County.

Fewer than 50,000 people resided in Caldwell County in 1960. By 2020 more than 80,600 residents lived in Caldwell County. Looking back six decades, Caldwell's population increased the most during the 1970s. The County grew by 11,047 (or 19.5%) between 1970 and 1980 to 67,746 persons. Results in Table 3 indicate that the County added 5,321 people between Census 2000 and Census 2010. Since 2010, Caldwell County population has fallen 2.9% to 80,652.

Like Alexander County's, Catawba County's total population has more than doubled since 1960, thanks to an average yearly growth rate of 1.32%. Over the past 60 years, the number of Catawba County residents has grown by 87,419, or close to the 2020 population of Burke County. During the 1960s, Catawba's population increased 24.2% to 90,873. Catawba County easily crossed over the 100,000-population mark during the 1970s. After only gaining 13,204 persons in the 1980s, Catawba County added more than 23,000 residents during the 1990s. Catawba's population exceeded 150,000 people by the 2010 Census. Catawba County was the only Hickory MSA to gain population during the 2010s.

## Hickory MSA Population Growth Compared to Other NC Metros

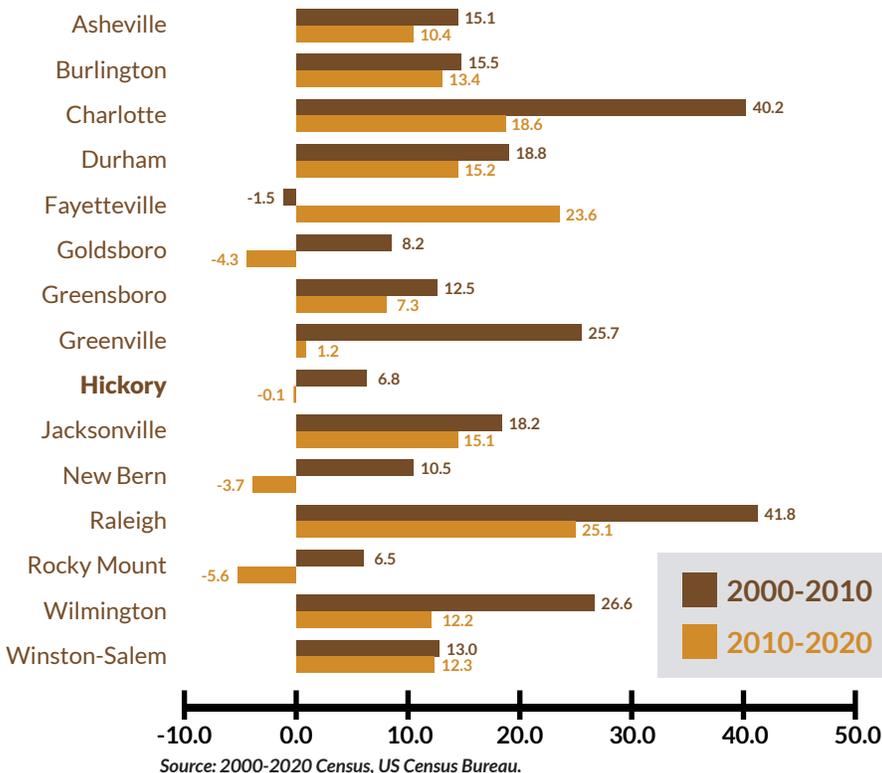
Population growth rates have varied tremendously among the North Carolina Metro areas over the past 20 years (Table 4, page 4). For example, a population loss occurred in the Fayetteville MSA during the 2000s (-1.5%), while the population in the Raleigh-Cary MSA increased 41.8%. The Hickory MSA's 6.8% population increase between 2000 and 2010 was the third slowest NC MSAs.

**Table 4. NC MSA Population Growth, 2000 Census to 2020 Census\***

MSA**	2000 Population	2010 Population	Increase 00-10	% Inc. 00-10	2020 Population	Change 10-20	% Change 10-20
Asheville	369,171	424,858	55,687	15.1	469,015	44,157	10.4
Burlington	130,800	151,131	20,331	15.5	171,415	20,284	13.4
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill	1,742,647	2,243,960	701,313	40.2	2,660,329	416,369	18.6
Durham-Chapel Hill	474,991	564,273	89,282	18.8	649,903	85,630	15.2
Fayetteville	427,634	421,074	-6,560	-1.5	520,378	99,304	23.6
Goldsboro	113,329	122,623	9,294	8.2	117,333	-5,290	-4.3
Greensboro-High Point	643,430	723,801	80,371	12.5	776,566	52,765	7.3
Greenville	133,798	168,148	34,350	25.7	170,243	2,095	1.2
Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton	342,142	365,497	23,355	6.8	365,276	-221	-0.1
Jacksonville	150,355	177,772	27,417	18.2	204,576	26,804	15.1
New Bern	114,751	126,802	12,051	10.5	122,168	-4,634	-3.7
Raleigh-Cary	797,071	1,130,490	333,419	41.8	1,413,982	283,492	25.1
Rocky Mount	143,026	152,392	9,366	6.5	143,870	-8,522	-5.6
Wilmington	201,389	254,884	53,495	26.6	285,905	31,021	12.2
Winston-Salem	532,859	602,189	69,330	13.0	675,966	73,777	12.3

Source: 1960-2010 Census, US Census Bureau. \*Data from the 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census are "corrected" total population counts. "Corrected" counts are total population counts (only) that may be adjusted for counties after the conclusion of the Count Question Resolution Program (CQR). Redistricting Data from the 2020 Census have yet to be adjusted by the CQR.

**Figure 4. NC MSA Percentage Population Growth by Decade, 2000-2020**



The Charlotte and Raleigh MSAs grew by more than 40% between 2000 to 2010 (Table 4). More than 50% of NC MSAs saw between 10% and 20% population growth during the 2010s. Three North Carolina MSAs saw population gains of less than 10% between 2000 and 2010 (Goldsboro, Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, and Rocky Mount). The Hickory MSA grew by 6.8% between 2000 and 2010 (Figure 4). The Fayetteville MSA was the only NC MSA to lose population (-1.5% or -6,560) from 2000 to 2010.

Between 2010 and 2020, the population of Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill MSA increased by 416,369 persons to 2,660,329. The Raleigh MSA grew at a faster percentage (25.1%) than any other MSA during the 2010s. After losing population from 2010 to 2020, the population of the Fayetteville MSA, due to military-related population growth, increased 23.6%. Seven of the 15 North Carolina metro areas (Asheville, Burlington, Charlotte, Durham, Jacksonville, Wilmington, and Winston Salem) experienced population growth between 10% and 20% between 2010 and 2020.

## Hickory MSA Population Changes by Race and Hispanic Origin and Over/Under 18

Data seen in Table 5 is quite useful in determining how the Hickory MSA is growing with respect to changes in race, Hispanic origin, and population older and younger than 18 years of age. For example, the number of African Americans in the region fell from 25,182 in 2010 to 23,535 in 2020. African Americans, which was the largest minority group in the region in 2010 (6.9% of all residents), totaled just 6.4% of the total Hickory MSA population in 2020.

**Table 5. Hickory MSA Population Change by Race and Hispanic Origin and Over/Under 18, 2010-2020**

(Source: 2010-2020 Census, US Census Bureau.)

Population Group	2010 Population	% of Population	2020 Population	% of Population	Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020
Total Population	365,497	100.0	365,276	100.0	-221	-0.1
One Race	359,242	98.3	343,298	94.0	-15,944	-4.4
White	311,116	85.1	288,760	79.1	-22,356	-7.2
Black or African American	25,182	6.9	23,535	6.4	-1,647	-6.5
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,169	0.3	2,844	0.8	1,675	143.3
Asian, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	9,720	2.7	11,312	3.1	1,592	16.4
Some Other Race	12,055	3.3	16,847	4.6	4,792	39.8
Two or More Races	6,255	1.7	20,932	5.7	14,677	234.6
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	23,063	6.3	31,320	8.6	8,257	35.8
Not Hispanic or Latino	342,434	93.7	333,956	91.4	-8,478	-2.5
White, Not Hispanic	302,096	82.7	283,545	77.6	-18,551	-6.1
Population Over 18	281,275	77.0	290,293	79.5	9,018	3.2
Population Under 18	84,222	23.0	74,983	20.5	-9,239	-11.0

The Hickory MSA's Asian American (also includes native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander) population continued to grow during the past decade. The Asian population in the Hickory Metro grew from 9,720 in 2010 to 11,312 in 2020. The 16.4% growth rate between 2010 and 2020 was similar to the 17.6% growth rate in the Hickory MSA's between 2000 and 2010.

Following a national trend, the fastest growth race/ethnic group in Hickory MSA during the 2010s was the "two or more races" group. The population of the two more races group increased 234.6%, from 6,255 in 2010 to 14,677 in 2020. As of 2020, the two or more races group was the third largest minority in the region (5.7%). Based on current trends, it is possible that two or more races will become the second or largest minority group in the region by the 2030 Census.

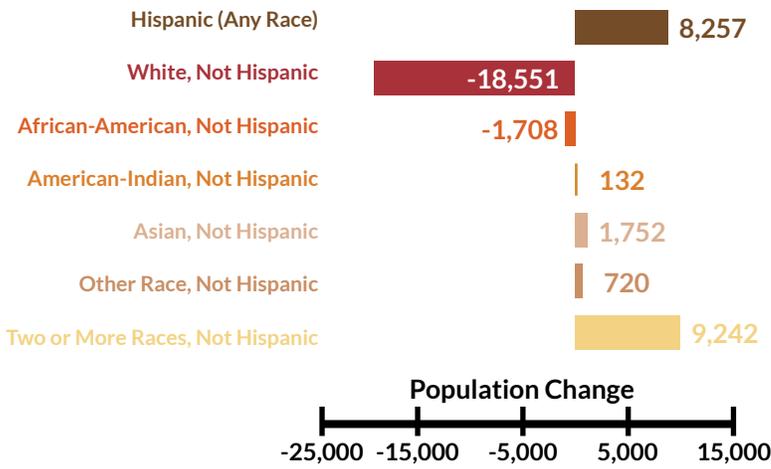
Only limited age group data (under/over age 18) is available in the Census 2020 redistricting data set. However, census 2020 results show the over age 18 population group grew by 9,018 persons while the population of the under age 18 group fell by 9,239. This result is due to fewer births than the previous decade and net in-migration of near retirement and retirees into the region.

The Hickory Metro's White, not Hispanic population declined by 18,551 residents between 2010 and 2020 (Figure 5, page 6). The Hickory MSAs African-American, not Hispanic population fell by 1,708 from 2010 to 2020. Meanwhile, the region's Hispanic or Latino population grew by 8,257 or 35.8% to 31,320 persons. Hispanics (any race) are now the largest minority group in the Hickory MSA (8.6% of all Hickory MSA residents).

An analysis of all North Carolina Metros in Table 6 reveals that Hispanics comprised less than 10% of the total population in 10 of 15 North Carolina MSAs in 2010. However, as of 2020, Hispanics equaled 10% or more of the population in nine of the State's 15 Metro areas. The Burlington MSA had the highest concentration of Hispanics (14.0%) in 2020, followed by the Durham-Chapel Hill MSA (13.0%). In 2020, the New Bern MSA had the lowest percentage Hispanic population (6.6%), followed by the Rocky Mount MSA (7.0%).

While the Hispanic population growth rate in the Hickory MSA since 2010 has been impressive, most other metro areas in North Carolina experienced even faster increases in the Hispanic population between the 2010 Census and 2020 Census due to job

**Figure 5. Population Growth in the Hickory MSA by Race and Hispanic Groups, 2010-2020**



growth and higher birth rates (Figure 6, page 7). Over the past decade, the Hispanic population has increased by at least 50% in three of North Carolina’s 15 Metro areas (Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, Jacksonville, and Wilmington). A 40% to 50% population increase between 2010 and 2020 was observed in Asheville, Burlington, Greensboro-High Point, Greenville, and Raleigh MSAs (Table 6). The Hispanic population increased by more than 100,000 in the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill MSA between 2010 and 2020, while Hispanic population growth of more than 50,000 occurred in the Raleigh-Cary MSA.

## Summary

Decennial Census results reveal that the Hickory Metro area grew from fewer than 200,000 residents in 1960 to more than 365,000 in 2010. However, between 2010 and 2020, the Hickory MSA’s population remained nearly unchanged, with a net loss of 221 persons (-0.1%)

**Table 6. NC MSA Hispanic Population Growth, 2010 Census to 2020 Census**

(Source: 2014-2018 (5-year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau, 2021.)

MSA	2010 Hispanic Population	% of Total Population	2020 Hispanic Population	% of Total Population	Increase 2010-20	% Increase 2010-20
Asheville	27,100	6.4	40,498	8.6	13,398	49.4%
Burlington	16,639	11.0	24,703	14.4	8,064	48.5%
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill	203,355	9.1	312,184	11.7	108,829	53.5%
Durham-Chapel Hill	61,397	10.9	84,694	13.0	23,297	37.9%
Fayetteville	48,372	11.5	66,084	12.7	17,712	36.6%
Goldsboro	12,162	9.9	14,927	12.7	2,765	22.7%
Greensboro-High Point	54,683	7.6	77,289	10.0	22,606	41.3%
Greenville	9,202	5.5	12,968	7.6	3,766	40.9%
<b>Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton</b>	<b>23,063</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>31,320</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8,257</b>	<b>35.8%</b>
Jacksonville	17,896	10.1	27,641	13.5	9,745	54.5%
New Bern	7,082	5.6	8,085	6.6	1,003	14.2%
Raleigh-Cary	114,512	10.1	169,603	12.0	55,091	48.1%
Rocky Mount	8,119	5.3	10,028	7.0	1,909	23.5%
Wilmington	13,910	5.5	22,282	7.8	8,372	60.2%
Winston-Salem	55,933	9.3	77,803	11.5	21,870	39.1%

to 365,276. In contrast, during the 1990s, the region’s population increased 17.0%, and between 2000 and 2010, the region’s population increased 17.0%. The more recent lack of population growth is due to an increase in deaths with a decrease in births and a lack of substantial net in-migration into the region. The Hickory MSA was one of four North Carolina MSAs (Goldsboro, New Bern, and Rocky Mount MSAs) that experienced a net decline in resident population between the 2010 and 2020 Census. The Raleigh MSA had the fastest growth rate (25.1%) between the 2010 and 2020 Census, followed by the Fayetteville (23.6%) and Charlotte (18.6%) MSAs. Catawba County’s population increased 4.1% from 2010 to 2020. All other Hickory MSA counties suffered population losses between 2010 and 2020.

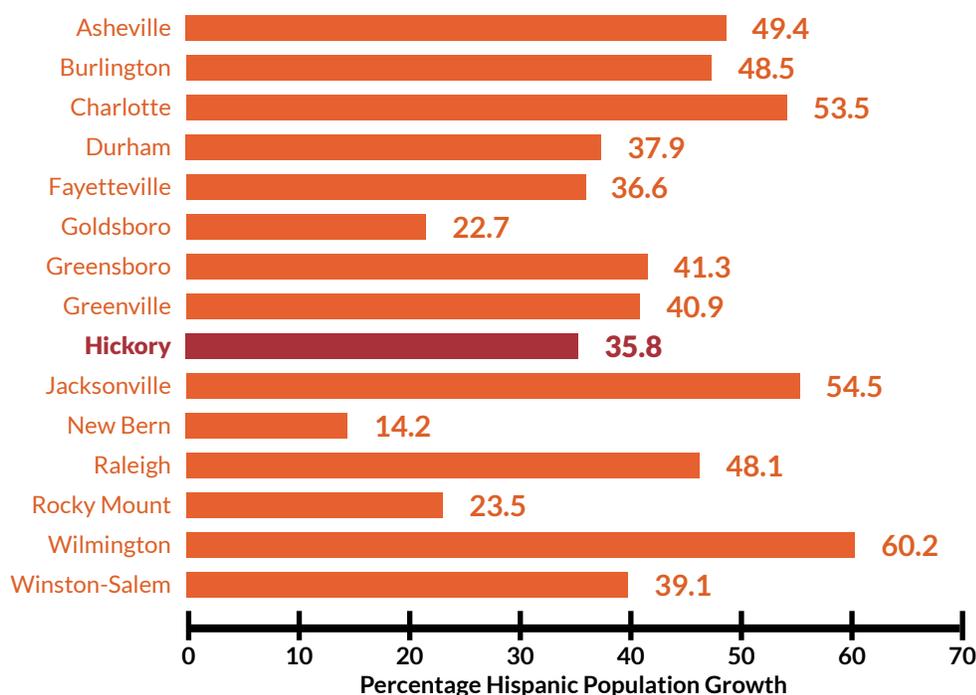
The Hickory MSA’s population under 18 fell by 9,239 persons while the population over 18 grew by 9,018. For the first time, Hispanics (or Latinos-any Race) became the largest minority group in the region in 2020 (8.6%). The region’s Hispanic population

grew 35.8% between 2010 and 2020 to 31,320.

Two ethnic/race groups in the Hickory MSA experienced significant population declines between the 2010 and 2020 Census. The population of the White, not Hispanic or Latino group fell by 18,551 between 2010 and 2020 to 283,545. The Hickory MSA's African American population also decreased between the 2010 and 2020 Census (net loss of 1,647 persons). Following national trends, the fastest-growing ethnic population in the region between 2010 and 2020 was the "two or more races" group. The number of persons in the two or more races group grew by more than 200% to 20,932. The two or more races group is currently the third-largest minority group in the region, with 5.7% of the MSA's total population. Based on recent growth trends, it is possible that the two or more races group will become the second-largest minority group in the region by the 2030 Census.

**Figure 6. NCMSEA Percentage Hispanic Population Growth, 2010-2020**

Source: 2010-2020 Census, US Census Bureau.



## Hickory MSA County Level Census 2010 Results

Alexander County's total population decreased from 37,198 in 2010 to 36,444 in 2020 (Table 7). Alexander's population under 18 years of age fell 15.2%, while the County's population over 18 grew 1.8%. A total of 84.8% of Alexander County residents marked White, not Hispanic, on the 2020 Census form. The population of Alexander's White, not Hispanic group declined from 32,671 in 2010 to 30,893 in 2020.

**Table 7. Alexander Co. Population Change by Race and Hispanic Origin and Over/Under 18, 2010-2020**

Source: 2010-2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

Population Group	2010 Population	% of Population	2020 Population	% of Population	Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020
Total Population	37,198	100.0	36,444	100.0	-754	-2.0%
One Race	36,675	98.6	34,766	95.4	-1,909	-5.2%
White	33,324	89.6	31,284	85.8	-2,040	-6.1%
Black or African American	2,043	5.5	1,932	5.3	-111	-5.4%
American Indian & Alaska Native	98	0.3	144	0.4	46	46.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	372	1.0	397	1.1	25	6.7%
Some Other Race	838	2.3	1,009	2.8	171	20.4%
Two or More Races	523	1.4	1,678	4.6	1,155	220.8%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,601	4.3	1,836	5.0	235	14.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino	35,597	95.7	34,608	95.0	-989	-2.8%
White, Not Hispanic	32,671	87.8	30,893	84.8	-1,778	-5.4%
Population Over 18	28,745	77.3	29,273	80.3	528	1.8%
Population Under 18	8,453	22.7	7,171	19.7	-1,282	-15.2%

The number of African Americans in Alexander County decreased between 2010 and 2020 to 1,932. As of 2020, African American's comprised 5.3% of the County's population. The fastest-growing minority group in Alexander County is two or more races group. The number of persons in the two or more races group in Alexander has more than tripled over the past ten years to 1,678.

Hispanics are the second-largest minority group in Alexander County. Over the last ten years, the number of Hispanics in the County increased 14.7%, from 1,601 in 2010 to 1,836 in 2020. Hispanics in 2020 totaled 5.0% of Alexander County's population. About 4% of Alexander's County's population in 2020 was made up of other minority groups (American Indian-0.4%, Asian-1.1%, and Other Race-2.8%).

**Burke County's** population lost a net of 3,342 persons between 2010 and 2020, the most of any Hickory MSA count. An examination of Census results in Table 8 shows several minority/ethnic groups in Burke County lost population over the past decade. For example, the County's white population fell by more than 7,000 persons (9.2% loss) from 2010 to 2020. Most white population losses occurred in the White, not Hispanic subset, which lost 6,808 persons since 2020. The White, not Hispanic group comprises only 70.4% of the County's population in 2020 compared to 83% of Burke's population in 2010.

**Table 8. Burke Co. Population Change by Race and Hispanic Origin and Over/Under 18, 2010-2020**

Source: 2010-2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

Population Group	2010 Population	% of Population	2020 Population	% of Population	Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020
Total Population	90,912	100.0	87,570	100.0	-3,342	-3.7%
One Race	89,315	98.2	82,929	94.7	-6,386	-7.1%
White	76,716	84.4	69,671	79.6	-7,045	-9.2%
Black or African American	6,012	6.6	4,854	5.5	-1,158	-19.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native	325	0.4	1,337	1.5	1,012	311.4%
Asian, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	3,488	3.8	3,238	3.7	-250	-7.2%
Some Other Race	2,774	3.1	3,829	4.4	1,055	38.0%
Two or More Races	1,597	1.8	4,641	5.3	3,044	190.6%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4,634	5.1	7,184	8.2	2,550	55.0%
Not Hispanic or Latino	86,278	94.9	80,386	91.8	-5,892	-6.8%
White, Not Hispanic	75,472	83.0	68,664	70.4	-6,808	-9.0%
Population Over 18	70,724	77.8	70,018	80.0	-706	-1.0%
Population Under 18	20,188	22.2	17,552	20.0	-2,636	-13.1%

African Americans were the largest minority group in Burke County in 2010 (6,012 persons). Due to a net population decrease of 1,158 persons between 2010 and 2020, African Americans are now the second-largest minority group behind Hispanics. In 2020 Hispanics were 8.2% of Burke County's population compared to 5.1% in 2010. Burke County's Hispanic population increased from 4,634 in 2010 to 7,184 persons in 2020. The two race categories with the largest population increases in Burke County since the 2010 Census were the "two or more races" and American Indian and Alaska Native groups. "Two or more races" grew by 3,044 persons to 3,044 while the American Indian group gained 1,012 to 1,337.

Another dramatic population trend is occurring in Burke County. While the number of persons in the County over 18 decreased by only 1.0% since 2010, Burke's under 18 years old population fell by 13.1%. Census results show that 2,636 fewer persons under 18 reside in Burke County in 2020 compared to 2010. The data seen in Table 8 suggests that a combination of lower birth rates and a lack of in-migration of younger families have occurred in Burke County over the past ten years.

**Caldwell County's** total population lost 2.9% between 2010 and 2020 to 80,652 (Table 9, page 9). Like the other counties in the region, Caldwell County's population 18 years old and over cohort gained population, while a large population decline occurred in the under age 18 group. Caldwell's population 18 years old and over increased 0.3% from 64,243 in 2010 to 64,436 in 2010. Caldwell's population under age 18 decreased 13.7% from 18,786 in 2010 to 16,216 in 2020. Totalling 6.1% of the population, Hispanics are currently the largest minority group in Caldwell County. Caldwell's Hispanic population increased 29.7% over the past ten years, from 3,796 in 2010 to 4,923 in 2020. While the Hispanic population grew by 1,127 persons between 2010 and 2020, the not Hispanic or Latino population in Caldwell County decreased by 3,504 since 2010. In fact, the White population, not-Hispanic group fell by 5,697 persons from 2010 to 2020.

The second-largest minority group in Caldwell County in 2020 is the two or more races group, with 5.5% of the County's total population. In 2010, the two or more races group comprised only 1.5% of Caldwell County's population. However, since 2010, the population of the two or more races group has grown by 3,200 persons to 4,458.

**Table 9. Caldwell Co. Population Change by Race and Hispanic Origin and Over/Under 18, 2010-2020**

Source: 2010-2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

Population Group	2010 Population	% of Population	2020 Population	% of Population	Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020
Total Population	83,029	100.0	80,652	100.0	-2,377	-2.9%
One Race	81,771	98.5	76,194	94.5	-5,577	-6.8%
White	74,925	90.2	68,859	85.4	-6,066	-8.1%
Black or African American	4,086	4.9	3,914	4.9	-172	-4.2%
American Indian & Alaska Native	257	0.3	340	0.4	83	32.3%
Asian, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	455	0.5	560	0.7	105	23.1%
Some Other Race	2,048	2.5	2,521	3.1	473	23.1%
Two or More Races	1,258	1.5	4,458	5.5	3,200	254.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	3,796	4.6	4,923	6.1	1,127	29.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino	79,233	95.4	75,729	93.9	-3,504	-4.4%
White, Not Hispanic	73,565	88.6	67,868	84.1	-5,697	-7.7%
Population 18 and Over	64,243	77.4	64,436	79.9	193	0.3%
Population Under 18	18,786	22.6	16,216	20.1	-2,570	-13.7%

The third-largest minority group in Caldwell County, African Americans, lost population over the past decade. A look at results from the 2010 and 2020 Census shows that Caldwell's County's African American population fell 4.2% to 3,914. The decrease is most likely due to a reduction in the County's African American birth rate over the past ten years.

**Catawba County's** population grew by 6,252 persons to 160,610 in 2020. Catawba County's age 18 and over population increased 7.7% from 117,563 in 2010 to 126,566 in 2020 (Table 10). Like the other Hickory MSA counties, Catawba also suffered a population loss in the under-age 18 cohort over the past decade. Catawba County's population under age 18 fell 7.5% from 36,795 in 2010 to 34,044 in 2020. For the first time in 2020, Catawba Hispanic or Latino population exceeds 10% of the County's total population.

**Table 10. Catawba Co. Population Change by Race and Hispanic Origin and Over/Under 18, 2010-2020**

Population Group	2010 Population	% of Population	2020 Population	% of Population	Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020
Total Population	154,358	100.0	160,610	100.0	6,252	4.1%
One Race	151,481	98.1	149,409	93.0	-2,072	-1.4%
White	126,151	81.7	118,946	74.1	-7,205	-5.7%
Black or African American	13,041	8.4	12,835	8.0	-206	-1.6%
American Indian & Alaska Native	489	0.3	1,023	0.6	534	109.2%
Asian, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	5,405	3.5	7,117	4.4	1,712	31.7%
Some Other Race	6,395	4.1	9,488	5.9	3,093	48.4%
Two or More Races	2,877	1.9	11,201	7.0	8,324	289.3%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	13,032	8.4	17,377	10.8	4,345	33.3%
Not Hispanic or Latino	141,326	91.6	143,233	91.8	1,907	1.3%
White, Not Hispanic	120,388	78.0	116,120	72.3	-4,268	-3.5%
Population Over 18	117,563	76.2	126,566	78.8	9,003	7.7%
Population Under 18	36,795	23.8	34,044	21.2	-2,751	-7.5%

Catawba's Hispanic population grew 33.3% from 13,032 in 2010 to 17,377 in 2020. Catawba County's White population fell by nearly the same number of people (4,268) as Catawba County's Hispanic population gained (4,345) over the past decade.

Catawba County's African American population declined 1.6% between 2000 and 2010. In 2010, African Americans were the largest minority group in the County. In 2020, African-Americans are the second-largest minority group in the County. The county's third-largest minority group, two or more races, has grown significantly over the past ten years. The number of persons in the two or more races group increased by nearly 300%, from 2,877 in 2010 to 11,201 in 2020. The two or more races cohort will likely become the largest or second-largest race/ethnic group in Catawba County by 2030.

Growth in Catawba County's Asian American population was also observed between the 2010 and 2020 Census. In 2010, the number of persons in Catawba County's Asian American group equaled 5,405. By 2020, the Asian American group population total 7,117, a 31.7% increase compared to 2010. In 2020, Catawba's Asian American community comprised 4.4% of the County's total population.

## Hickory MSA Municipal Census 2020 Results

Data in Table 11 shows population counts for Taylorsville and the non-municipal portion of Alexander County from 2000 to 2020. Taylorsville grew from a town of 1,813 persons in 2000 to 2,320 in 2020. The Town grew 15.7% between 2000 and 2010 and 10.6% between 2010 and 2020. The non-municipal portion added 3,310 persons from 2000 to 2010 but lost 976 between 2010 and 2020.

**Table 11. Alexander County Municipal Population Growth, 2000 Census to 2020 Census\***

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	Increase 00-10	% Inc. 00-10	2020 Population	Change 10-20	% Inc. 10-20
Taylorsville	1,813	2,098	285	15.7	2,320	222	10.6
Alexander Co. Non-municipal	31,790	35,100	3,310	10.4	34,124	-976	-2.8
Alexander County Total	33,603	37,198	3,595	10.7	36,444	-754	2.0

Source: 2000-2010 Census, US Census Bureau. \*Data from 2000 Census are "corrected" total population counts. "Corrected" counts are total population counts (only) that may be adjusted for counties and municipalities after the conclusion of the Count Question Resolution Program (CQR). Redistricting data from the 2010 Census have yet to be adjusted by the CQR.

Three Burke County municipalities lost population between the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census (Table 12). Five Burke County municipalities (including the Long View portion) lost population from 2010 to 2020. Morganton had the largest population gain (556 persons), while Hildebran had the largest population loss (344 persons). Burke County's nonmunicipal population fell by 2,247 persons to 57,331 in 2020. Thus, more than two-thirds of Burke County's population loss between 2010 and 2020 occurred in nonmunicipal areas.

**Table 12. Burke County Municipal Population Growth, 2000 Census to 2020 Census\***

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	Change 00-10	% Change 00-10	2020 Population	Change 10-20	% Change 10-20
Connelly Springs	1,814	1,669	-145	-8.0	1,529	-140	-8.4
Drexel	1,938	1,858	-80	-4.1	1,760	-98	-5.3
Glen Alpine	1,090	1,517	427	39.2	1,529	12	0.8
Hickory (Part)	63	66	3	4.8	79	13	19.7
Hildebran	1,472	2,023	551	37.4	1,679	-344	-17.0
Long View (Part)	709	752	43	6.1	735	-17	-2.3
Morganton	17,310	16,918	-392	-2.3	17,474	556	3.3
Rhodhiss (Part)	312	700	388	124.4	639	-61	-8.7
Rutherford College	1,303	1,341	38	2.9	1,226	-115	-8.6
Valdese	4,485	4,490	5	0.1	4,689	199	4.4
Burke Co. Non-municipal	58,649	59,578	929	1.6	57,331	-2,247	-3.8
Burke County Total	89,145	90,912	1,767	2.0	87,570	-3,342	-3.7

Source: 2000-2020 Census, US Census Bureau. \*Data from the 2000 Census are "corrected" total population counts (see Table 11 for further explanation).

Lenoir is the second largest municipality in the region as of Census 2020 with a population of 18,352 (Table 13, page 11). Lenoir’s population grew by 124 persons, or 0.7% from 2010 to 2020. Granite Falls gained the most population between 2010 and 2020 (243 persons). As of 2020, Granite Falls population was just under 5,000 persons. Four municipalities (including Rhodhiss part in Caldwell County) lost population between the 2010 and 2020 Census. The largest population losses occurred in Gamewell (349 population decrease) and Sawmills (220 population decrease).

**Table 13. Caldwell County Municipal Population Growth, 2000 Census to 2020 Census\***

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	Change 00-10	% Increase 00-10	2020 Population	Change 10-20	% Change 10-20
Blowing Rock (Part)	53	35	-18	-34.0	91	56	160.0
Cajah’s Mountain	2,694	2,823	129	4.8	2,722	-101	-3.6
Cedar Rock	315	300	-15	-4.8	301	1	0.3
Gamewell	3,721	4,051	330	8.9	3,702	-349	-8.6
Granite Falls	4,611	4,722	111	2.4	4,965	243	5.1
Hickory (Part)	14	18	4	28.6	32	14	77.8
Hudson	3,078	3,776	698	22.7	3,780	4	0.1
Lenoir	16,774	18,228	1,454	8.7	18,352	124	0.7
Rhodhiss (Part)	394	370	-24	-6.1	358	-12	-3.2
Sawmills	4,921	5,240	319	6.5	5,020	-220	-4.2
Caldwell Co. Non-municipal	41,133	43,466	2,333	5.7	41,329	-2,137	-4.9
Caldwell County Total	77,708	83,029	5,321	6.8	80,652	-2,377	-2.9

Source: 2000-2020 Census, US Census Bureau. \*Data from the 2000 Census are “corrected” total population counts (see Table 11 for further explanation).

After gaining 2,333 persons from 2000 to 2000, Caldwell County’s non-municipal population declined by 2,137 people from 43,466 in 2010 to 41,329 in 2020. The non-municipal population decrease was responsible for 90% of Caldwell’s total population change between the 2010 and 2020 Census.

All municipalities in Catawba County gained population between the 2010 and 2020 Census (Table 14). The population in Hickory (Catawba County portion) increased from 39,926 in 2010 to 43,379 in 2020. Hickory’s population growth (3,453) attributed to 55.2% of Catawba County’s total population growth between 2010 and 2020. Four Catawba County municipalities (Brookford, Catawba, Claremont, and Maiden) experienced population growth of greater than 10% from 2010 to 2020. Catawba County’s non-municipal population grew by 1,204 persons from 2010 to 2020, mainly in Sherrill’s Ford area.

Population data for multi-county municipalities in the region from the 2000, 2010, and 2020 Census can be found in Table 15, page 12. The City of Hickory’s grew 7.5% between 2000 and 2010 to 40,010. Hickory’s population exceeded 40,000 persons in the 2010 Census. Hickory’s population has grown to 43,490 as of the 2020 Census. Long View’s population increased 4.5% between 2010 and 2020 to 5,088. The total population for Rhodhiss fell 6.8% to 997 since 2010.

**Table 14. Catawba County Municipal Population Growth, 2000 Census to 2020 Census\***

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	Change 00-10	% Change 00-10	2020 Population	Change 10-20	% Change 10-20
Brookford	434	382	-52	-12.0	442	60	15.7
Catawba	698	603	-95	-13.6	702	99	16.4
Claremont	1,060	1,352	292	27.5	1,692	340	25.1
Conover	6,667	8,165	1,498	22.5	8,421	256	3.1
Hickory (Part)	37,145	39,926	2,781	7.5	43,379	3,453	8.6
Long View (Part)	4,013	4,119	106	2.6	4,353	234	5.7
Maiden	3,177	3,310	133	4.2	3,736	426	12.9
Newton	12,659	12,968	309	2.4	13,148	180	1.4
Catawba Co. Non-municipal	75,833	83,533	7,700	10.2	84,737	1,204	1.4
Catawba County Total	141,686	154,358	12,672	8.9	160,610	6,252	4.1

Source: 2000-2020 Census, US Census Bureau. \*Data from the 2000 Census are “corrected” total population counts (see Table 11 for further explanation).

**Table 15. Hickory MSA Multi-County Municipalities Population Growth, 1990 to 2010 Census\***

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	Increase 00-10	% Increase 00-10	2020 Population	Change 10-20	% Change 10-20
Hickory	37,222	40,010	2,788	7.5	43,490	3,480	8.7
Long View	4,722	4,871	149	3.2	5,088	217	4.5
Rhodhiss	706	1,070	364	51.6	997	-73	-6.8

Source: 2000-2020 Census, US Census Bureau. \*Data from the 2000 Census are "corrected" total population counts (see Table 11 for further explanation).

## Economic Indicators Newsletter

P.O. BOX 9026 | Hickory, NC 28603  
www.westernpiedmontworks.org

### Writer

Taylor Dellinger, GISP, Data Analyst  
taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org

### Design & Layout

Jason Toney, Communications Specialist

### Contributing Editors

Jason Toney, Communications Specialist  
Anthony Starr, AICP, Executive Director

## Future EIN Topics

- Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA Employment Trends
- Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA Aging Group Projections
- Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA Census 2020 Results

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