



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Survey Results

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

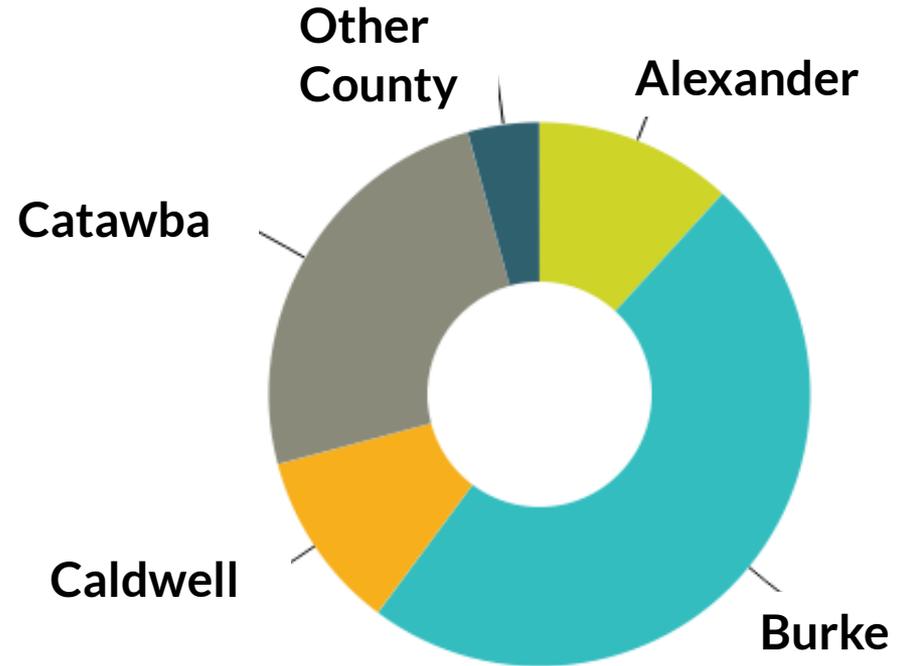
CEDS 2017 Survey Background

- Public input required as part of the CEDS process
- 32 Survey Questions
- Mix of Demographic (9), Multiple Choice/Selection (16) and Open Response (7) Questions
- Date Created: Friday, February 3, 2017
- Date Ended: Friday, March 10, 2017
- Completed Surveys: **982** (CEDS 2012 Completed Surveys: 244)
- Survey Margin of Error: **(+/- 3.1% at the 95% Confidence Interval)**

Q1: What county do you live in?

Answered: 982 Skipped: 1

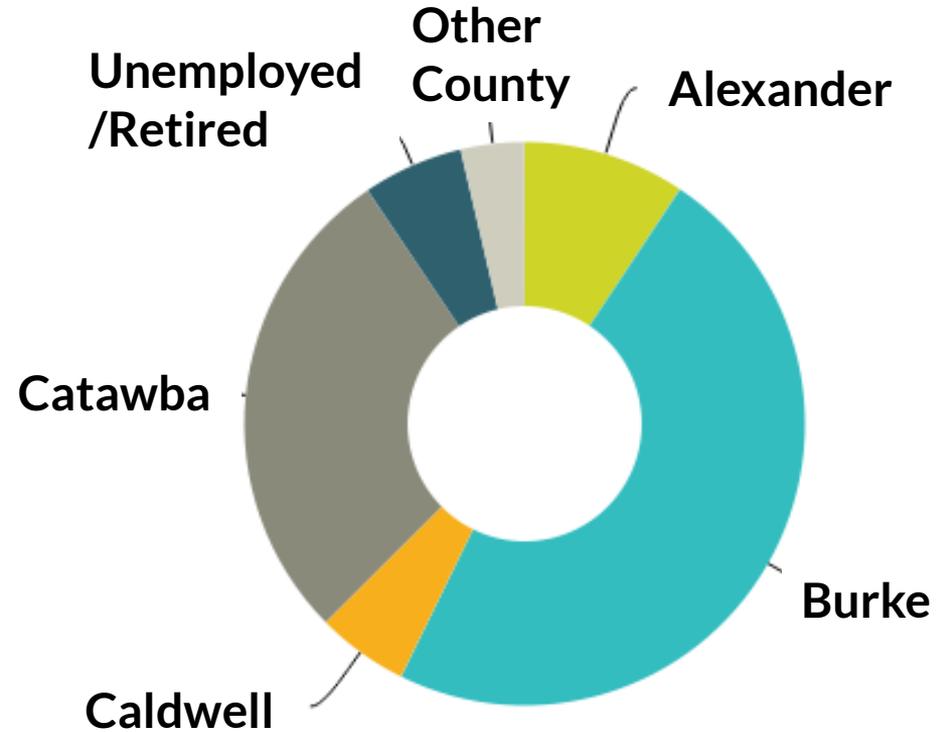
County	Number of Responses	Percentage
Alexander	116	11.8%
Burke	475	48.4%
Caldwell	105	10.7%
Catawba	244	24.9%
Other County	42	4.3%
Total	982	100.0%



Q2: What county do you work in?

Answered: 983 Skipped: 0

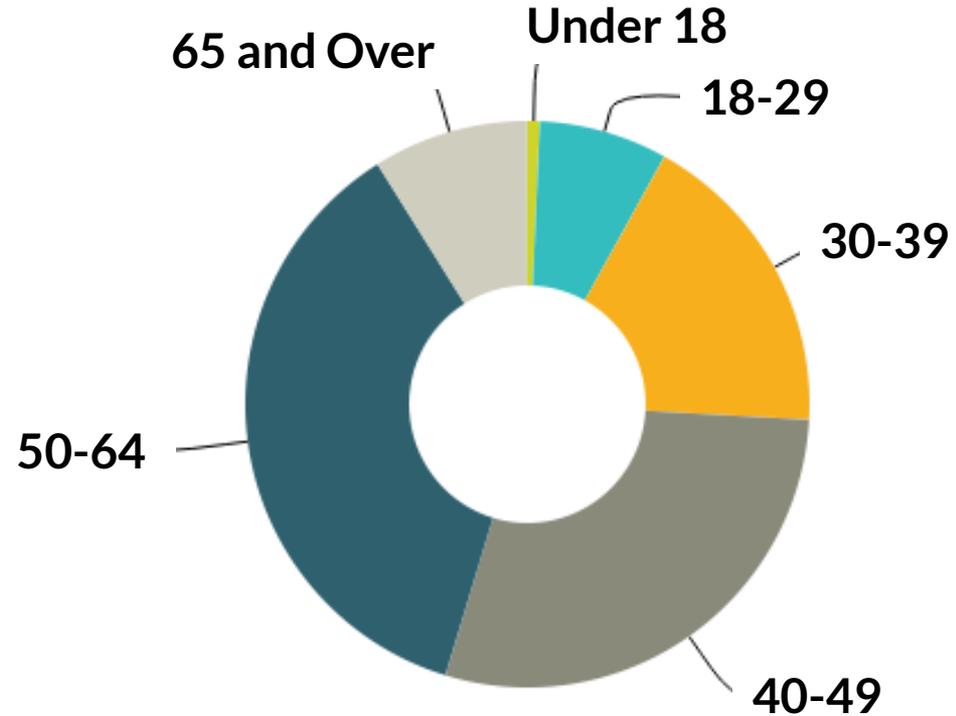
County	Number of Responses	Percentage
Alexander	92	9.4%
Burke	471	47.9%
Caldwell	52	5.3%
Catawba	275	28.0%
Other County	36	3.7%
Unemployed/ Retired	57	5.8%
Total	983	100.0%



Q25: Please select your age range:

Answered: 978 Skipped: 5

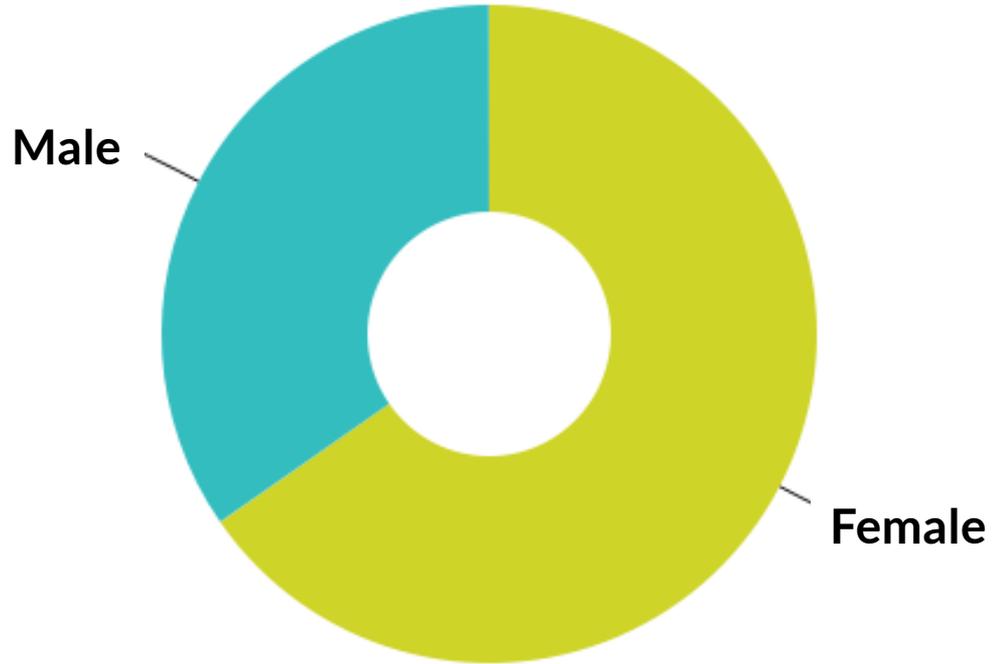
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Under 18	7	0.7%
19-29	72	7.4%
30-39	174	17.8%
40-49	282	28.8%
50-64	356	36.4%
65 and Over	87	8.9%
Total	978	100.0%



Q26: Please specify your gender:

Answered: 969 Skipped: 14

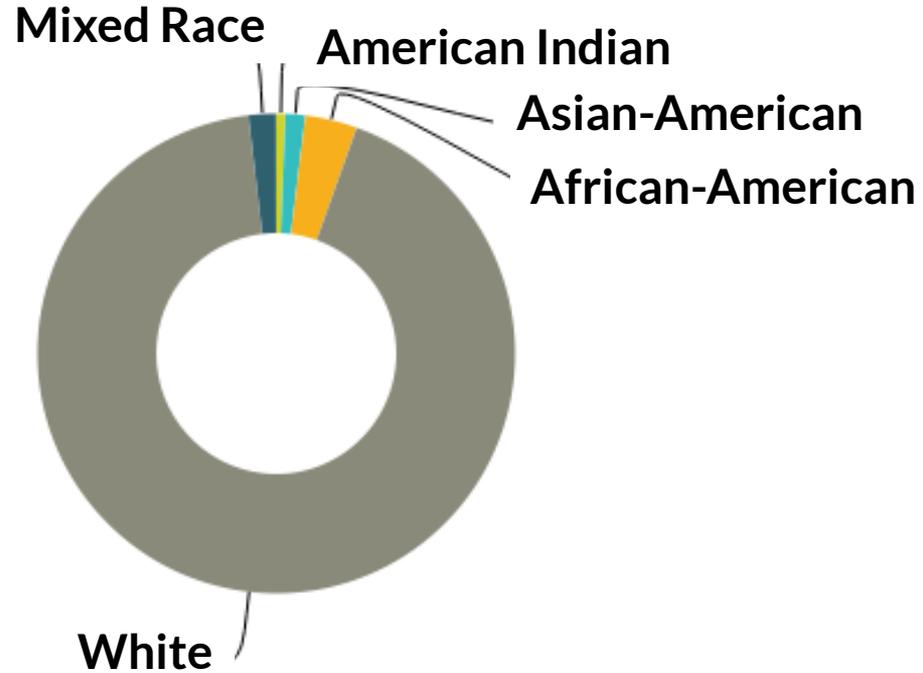
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Female	633	65.3%
Male	336	34.7%
Total	969	100.0%



Q27: Please specify your race:

Answered: 970 Skipped: 13

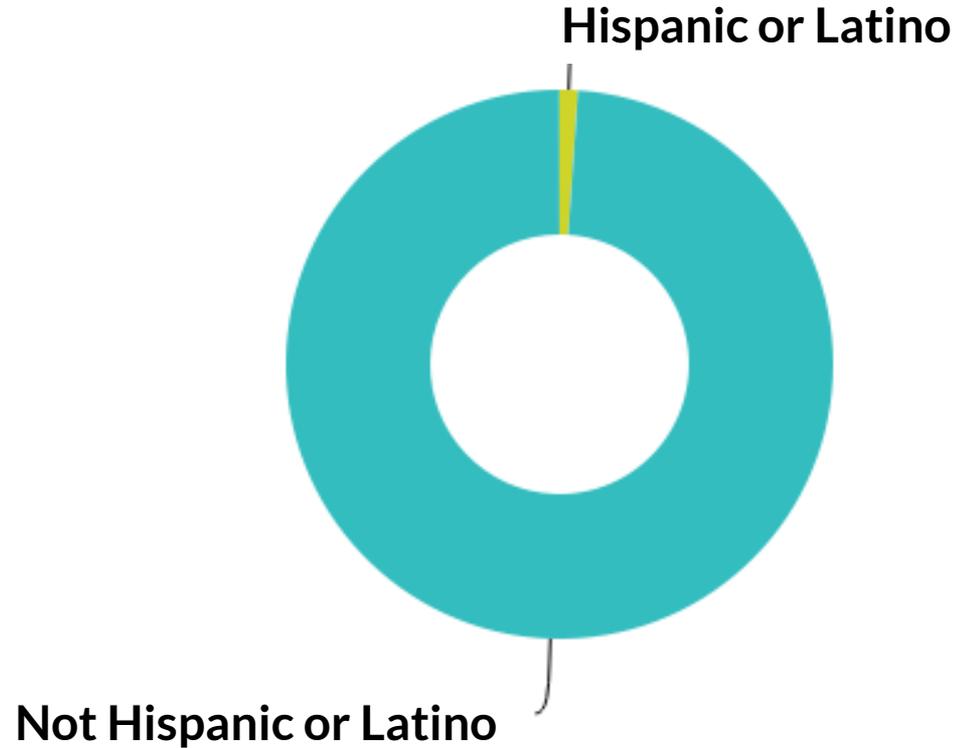
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	0.6%
Asian-American	13	1.3%
African-American	34	3.5%
White	899	92.7%
Mixed Race	18	1.9%
Total	970	100.0%



Q28: Please specify your ethnicity:

Answered: 931 Skipped: 52

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Hispanic or Latino	10	1.1%
Not Hispanic or Latino	921	98.9%
Total	931	100.0%



Q29: What is your employment status?

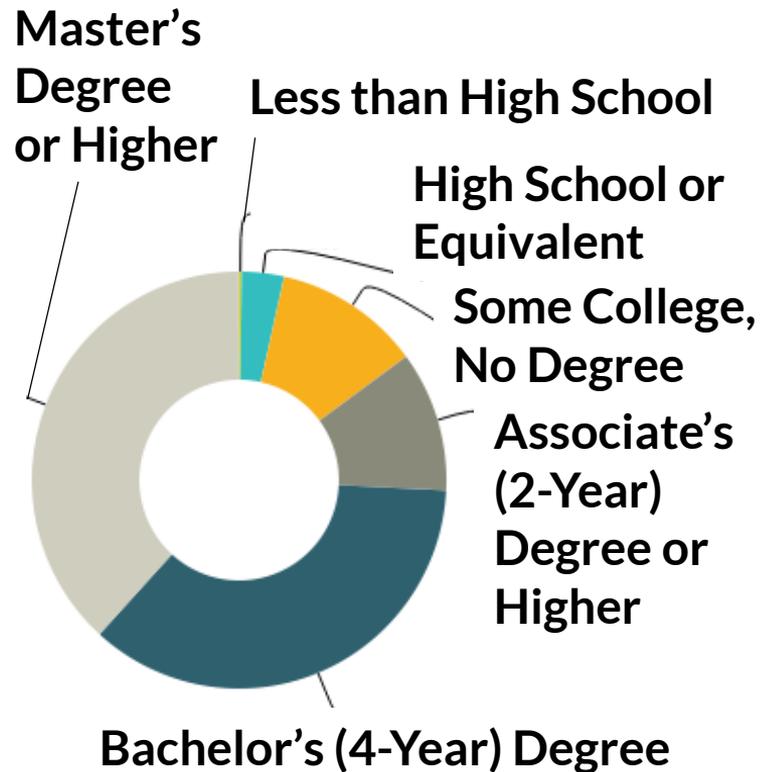
Answered: 965 Skipped: 18

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Work for Public School System/Community College/University	408	42.3%
Work in Government Sector	193	20.0%
Work in Private Industry/Business Sector	187	19.4%
Work for Non-Profit	109	11.3%
Retired	51	5.3%
Student	9	0.9%
Unemployed/Seeking Employment	8	0.8%
Total	965	100.0%

Q30: Please indicate your educational attainment level:

Answered: 973 Skipped: 10

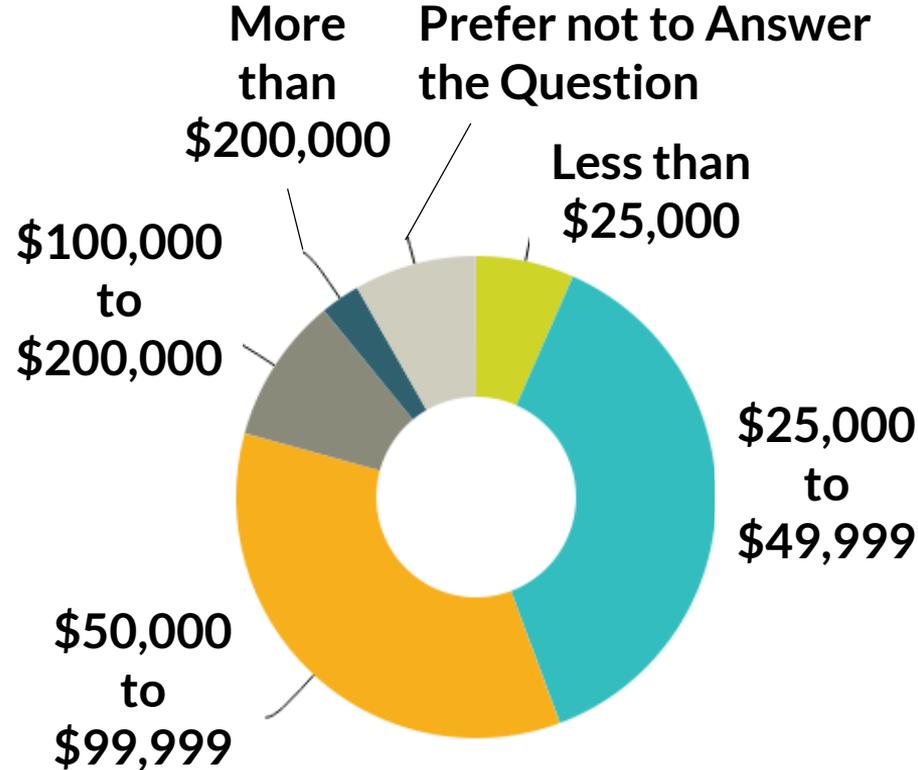
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Less than High School	2	0.2%
High School or Equivalent	32	3.3%
Some College, No Degree	111	11.4%
Associate's (2-Year) Degree	106	10.9%
Bachelor's (4-Year) Degree	350	36.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	372	38.2%
Total	973	100.0%



Q31: What were your individual (not household) earnings in 2016?

Answered: 970 Skipped: 13

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Less than \$25,000	64	6.6%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	366	37.7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	339	35.0%
\$100,000 to \$200,000	95	9.8%
More than \$200,000	26	2.7%
Prefer Not to Answer the Question	80	8.3%
Total	970	100.0%



Q3: What economic opportunities exist or are developing in your county?

Answered: 963 Skipped: 20

Top Five Assets:

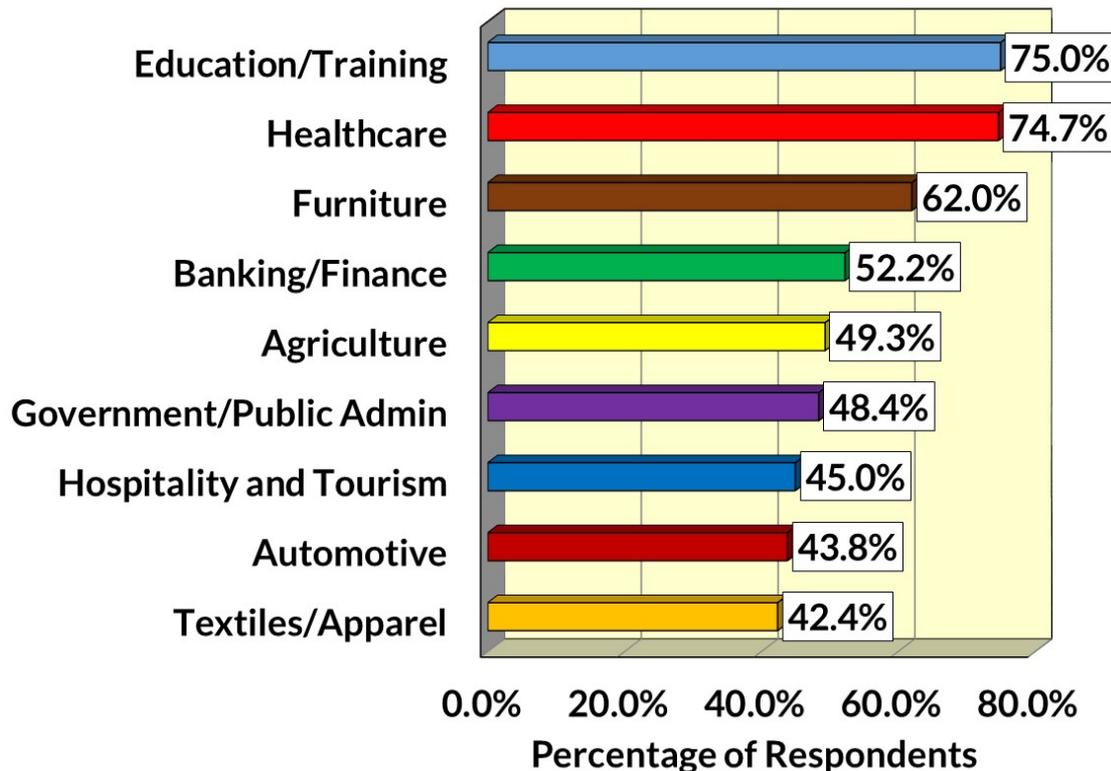
Education Training: 722 Respondents

Healthcare: 719 Respondents

Furniture: 597 Respondents

Banking/Finance: 503 Respondents

Agriculture: 475 Respondents



Q4: How can your county use its best resources to boost the economy? (Open Responses)

- **(Education)** We need more internships for our High School students. Let them train and work at the industries in our county. If they are given the opportunity and training, we may be able to retrain them once they graduate.
- **(Education)** Invest in STEM education; especially in alternative schools.
- **(Education)** Focus our limited resources on areas to help our economy grow, such as giving more options for secondary education; we need another 4-year college option other than LR, because the cost there is too high. Otherwise, I see my friends leaving for lower cost colleges in other parts of NC and not returning.
- **(Local Economy)** By making use of the diversity of its people, and their abilities and expertise. Our people are our best resources.
- **(Local Economy)** Start with closing the gap in information/perception of what this county has and does not have.
- **(Location)** Beautiful land, great restaurants boasting farm-to-table and local breweries and wineries.
- **(Location)** Utilize the lakes and location. Market that we're a small town, but with big cities close by and about an hour from anywhere.

Q4: How can your county use its best resources to boost the economy? (Open Responses)

- **(Advertising)** More tourism advertising for environmental treasures, like Table Rock, Lake James, South Mountains State Park.
- **(Advertising)** Market the low tax rates and close proximity to several state parks and easy access to I-40.
- **(Local Businesses)** Start an incubator and/or accelerator for entrepreneurial start-ups. Start and support a venture/angel capital group to help put equity funding into these more promising start-ups.
- **(Local Businesses)** Encourage support of local businesses by arranging deals between manufacturing and agricultural sources and partners that use the manufactured or agricultural goods. For example, encourage local restaurants to use locally sourced food items.
- **(Internet/Digital Engagement)** We currently have the two largest internet based companies in our area (Google, Apple) yet we do not offer free Wi-Fi or an ultra high-speed access. The 321 corridor is a fast growing area and should be pushed for growth and the attraction of millennials.
- **(Internet/Digital Engagement)** Better digital engagement. Our municipalities, organizations and businesses are still way behind. Many don't even have websites or use social media.

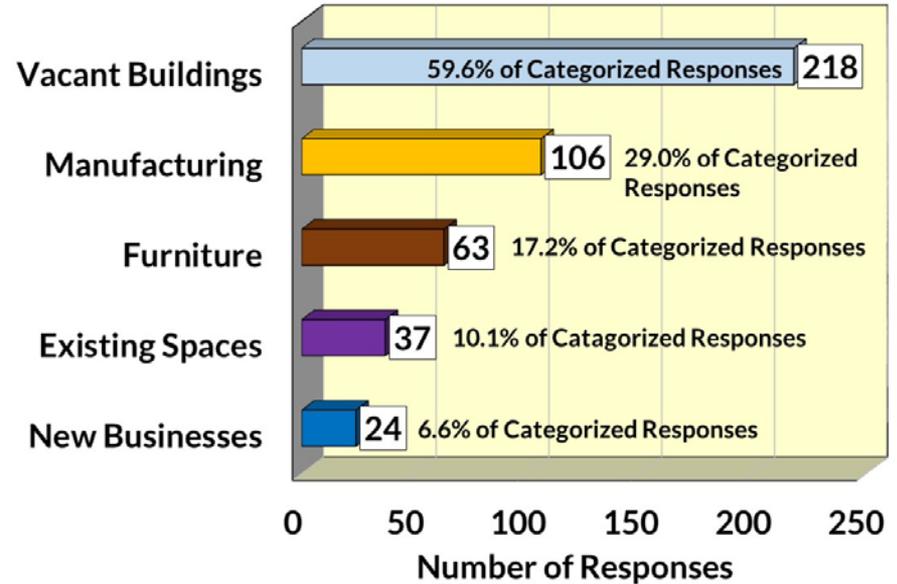
Q5: What adaptive capabilities do you see for the county's economy? (Open Response Analysis)

Answered: 600 Skipped: 383

Word Cloud View

Downtown Business Park Education Warehouses
Burke County Water New Businesses
Programs Work Force Small Business
Furniture High School
Manufacturing Companies
Vacant Buildings Shopping Center
Vacant Plants Old Factories
Empty Buildings Alexander County
Spaces Money Opportunities Reuse
Development Young People Local

Top 5 Response Categories



Note: 234 Responses were uncategorized

Q5: What adaptive capabilities do you see for the county's economy? (Open Responses)

- **(Education)** We have a trainable workforce. Technical and skilled programs should return to the high school in addition to internship opportunities for high school students.
- **(Education)** The schools MUST take the initiative to bring back vocational skills. Computers are great, but they cannot come to your home and repair plumbing or electrical issues.
- **(Education)** Look to Mooresville for a premier example. Within the last 7-10 years, they implemented a one-to-one initiative in their public schools - student achievement increased along with the housing market and local economic development. The formula for successful economic development is clear - invest in a comprehensive effort through local public schools.
- **(Housing)** Purchase an area of run-down houses, raze them, build new affordable houses (available to even high income people) sell the houses at a slight profit. The area will be revitalized, making it more attractive to future businesses and workers, and the tax revenue will be higher than it is from run-down properties.
- **(Natural Resources)** The lake can and is being adapted to be an indirect economic driver.
- **(Downtown)** More mixed use (walkable) communities. Improve downtown areas which already have the structure in place.

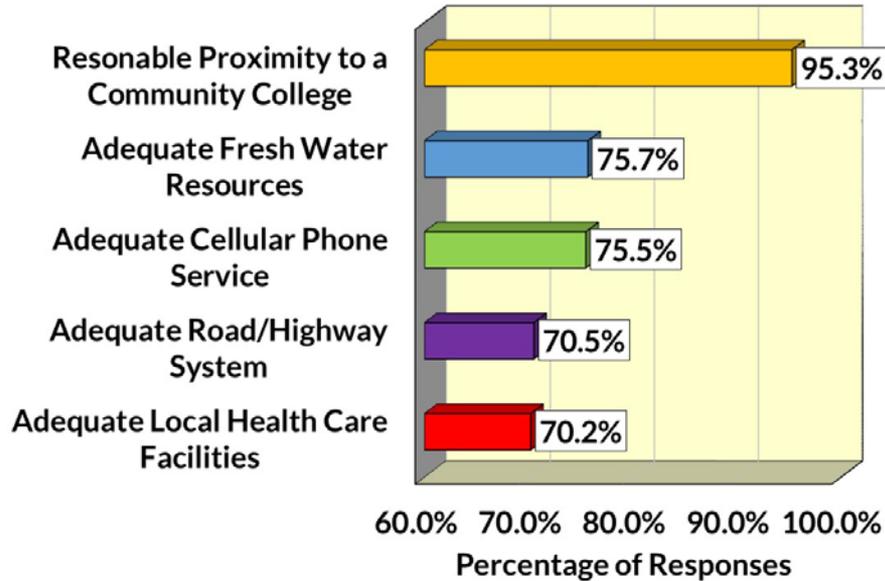
Q5: What adaptive capabilities do you see for the county's economy? (Open Responses)

- **(Manufacturing/Industries)** We need more businesses to come that employ college educated workers. Engineers, technology, etc.
- **(Manufacturing/Industries)** It's difficult to re-tool an existing manufacturing building to meet specifications necessary for new manufacturing or IT needs. Often cheaper to tear them down and rebuild. Local governments should encourage repurpose such facilities/land to improve quality of life, such as museums/open space/restaurants/parks/mass transit centers, etc. to help the area become more attractive for existing and prospective large employers.
- **(Manufacturing/Industries)** The lack of shell buildings has cost the county thousands of jobs in the last 10 years.
- **(Repurposing Old Buildings)** Hollar Mill, Moretz Mill, Transportation Insights...keep re-purposing mill-type buildings to enhance the area's character and functionality.
- **(Repurposing Old Buildings)** Use those vacant buildings to develop lofts and apartments like downtown Winston-Salem is doing.
- **(Repurposing Old Buildings)** We need uptown restaurants and shops. There is plenty of room and vacant buildings. Need an entertainment venue and schedule (also after work social activities). All in an effort to keep local citizens in the county rather than taking this business to other counties.

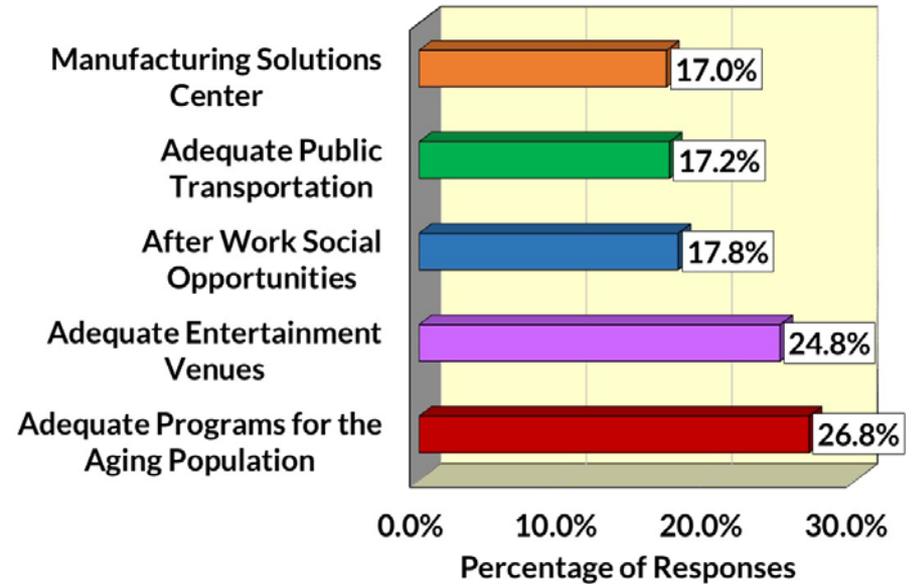
Q6: Identify the existing county assets from the list below.

Answered: 959 Skipped: 24

Highest Scoring Assets



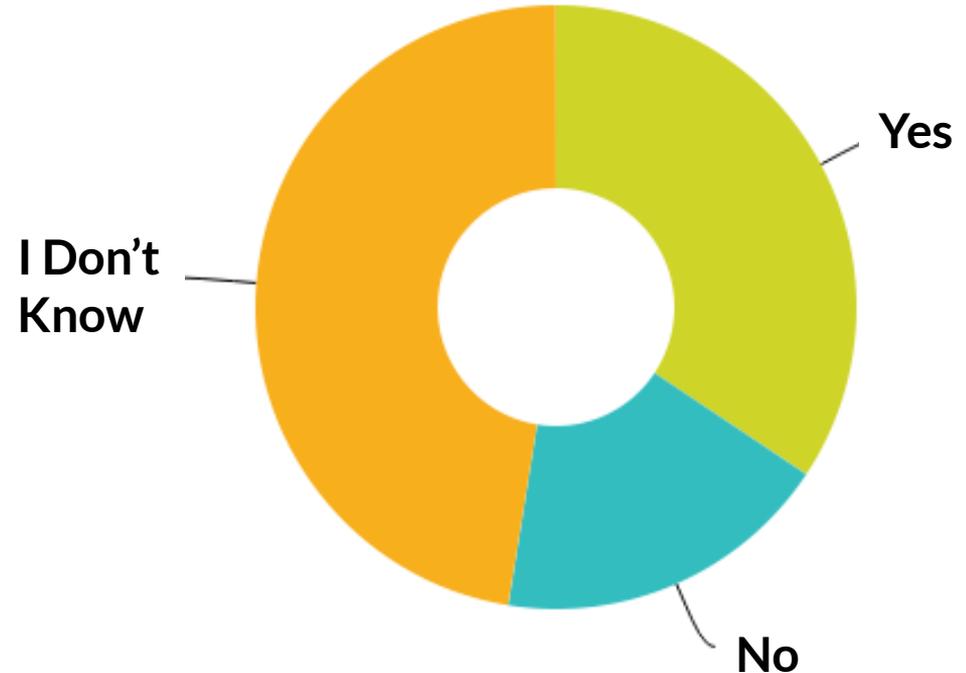
Lowest Scoring Assets



Q7: Does your county currently market its assets?

Answered: 961 Skipped: 22

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	330	34.3%
No	175	18.2%
I Don't Know	456	47.5%
Total	961	100.0%



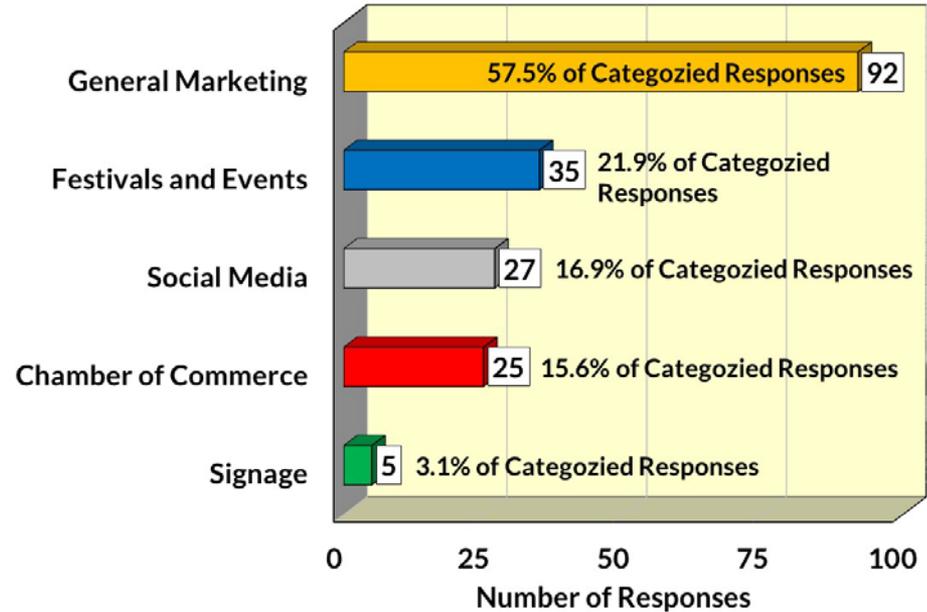
Q8: If you answered yes, to the previous question, please give us some examples of county marketing efforts? (Open Response Analysis)

Answered: 300 Skipped: 683

Word Cloud View

Signage Outdoor Activities Local TV Reach Festivals
Burke Tourism Events Rocky Face Park
Chamber of Commerce Interstate
Advertising Crafted Marketing
Morganton and Valdese Bill Boards
Blue Ridge County School System
Social Media Local EDC News Paper
Small Business Economic Development
Development Association Lake James Print Publications Fairs

Top 5 Response Categories



Note: 140 Responses were uncategorized

Q8: If you answered yes, to the previous question, please give us some examples of county marketing efforts? (Open Responses)

- **(Social Media)** Our Chamber of Commerce is undergoing a renaissance with additional staffing especially emphasizing media know-how and tourism. Emphasis is growing on connecting with Millennials through a broad spectrum of social media, most of which I haven't a clue about.
- **(Wayfinding)** Wayfinding systems, #myhky, #hickorywellcrafted.
- **(General Marketing)** I think our EDC works great attracting new industry. But it would be great to have a cohesive marketing plan for existing businesses and organizations to utilize or benefit from.
- **(Signage)** Billboards on the highway, marketing in magazines such as Our State, commercials on local TV and advertising on radio stations in surrounding areas such as Charlotte.
- **(General Marketing)** Morganton has a brand that focuses on a small town type of feel that showcases the mountains, greenway, Catawba River, etc. This is great. Families look for these types of assets when moving to an area.
- **(General Marketing)** Local support for the arts and marketing our natural scenic and cultural opportunities has resulted in an obvious change in the area's appearance and feel.
- **(General Marketing)** I know the City of Lenoir's Downtown association works hard to promote downtown businesses through beautification, events, etc.

Q8: If you answered yes, to the previous question, please give us some examples of county marketing efforts? (Open Responses)

- **(General Marketing)** They market things and embellish the results. We are attracting people here but grossly underprepared to live up to our marketing efforts.
- **(General Marketing)** My yes is only partial. I believe the county does an adequate job advertising the outdoors/nature side, but does not focus on the other aspects.
- **(General Marketing)** I would like to see a campaign around our diverse work force. I think our residents could use some positive reinforcement that they are skilled and their work is important to the sustainability of our country.
- **(General Marketing)** Yes, within the county. But I think more efforts could be made to reach outside the county. For example what you could do if you would spend a day in Alexander County. Kind of like what Southern Living does for Small Towns. The What's What to visit.
- **(Breweries)** One thing that Burke County, specifically Morganton, has done as of late is to introduce several breweries downtown. These breweries are marketed locally as well as regionally in efforts to attract consumers.
- **(General Marketing)** We need to market to residents and small business (livability!) – don't be afraid to say "Hickory" or "Newton" – Towns have more appeal and personality than a county.

Q9: Does the community you live in have a specific brand it uses for promotion of the area?

Answered: 959 Skipped: 24

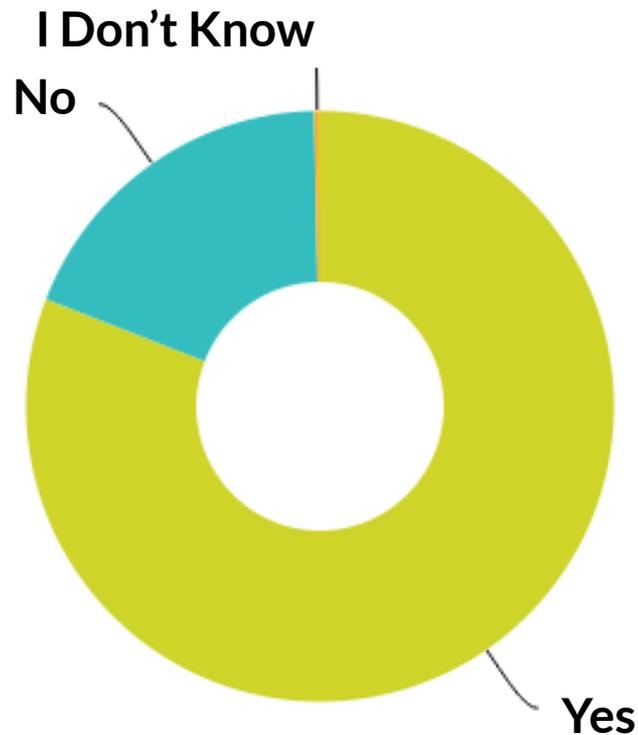
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	239	24.9%
No	243	25.3%
I Don't Know	477	49.7%
Total	959	100.0%



Q10: Do you have adequate high-speed internet access at home?

Answered: 964 Skipped: 19

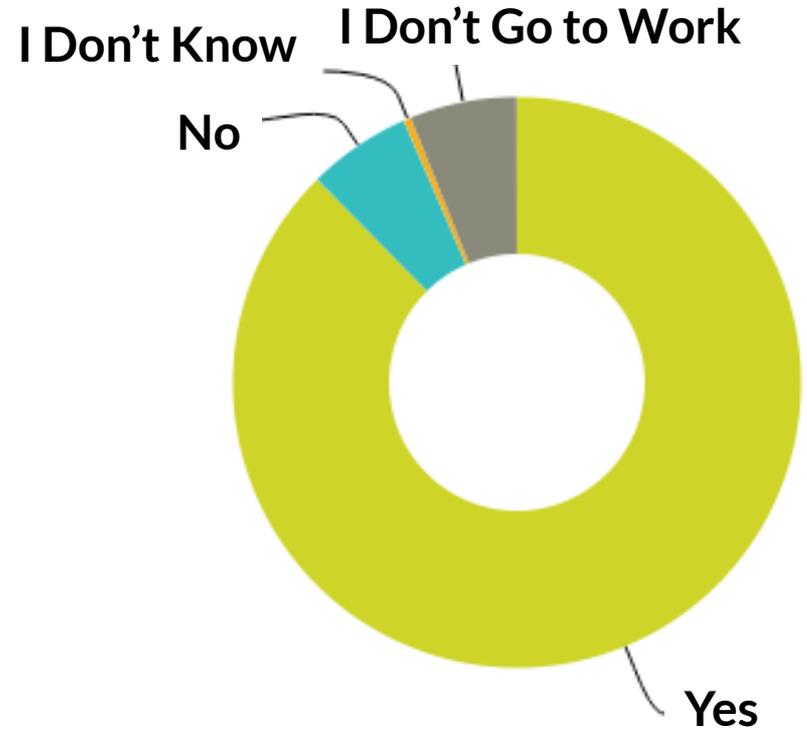
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	780	80.9%
No	181	18.8%
I Don't Know	3	0.3%
Total	964	100.0%



Q11: Do you have adequate high-speed internet access at work?

Answered: 967 Skipped: 16

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	847	87.6%
No	57	5.9%
I Don't Know	4	0.4%
I Don't Go to Work	59	6.1%
Total	967	100.0%

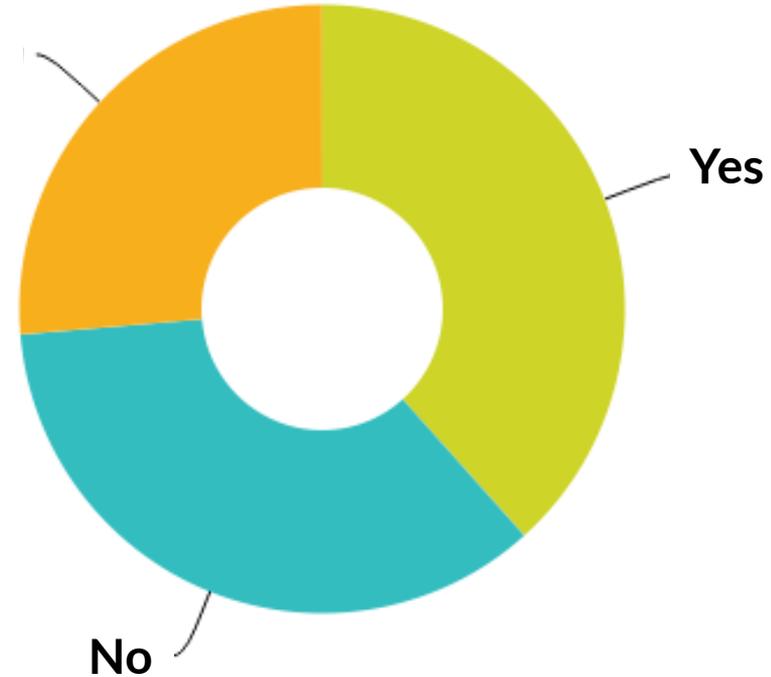


Q12: Do you have adequate high-speed internet access at public spaces?

Answered: 972 Skipped: 11

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	373	38.4%
No	343	35.3%
I Don't Know	256	26.3%
Total	972	100.0%

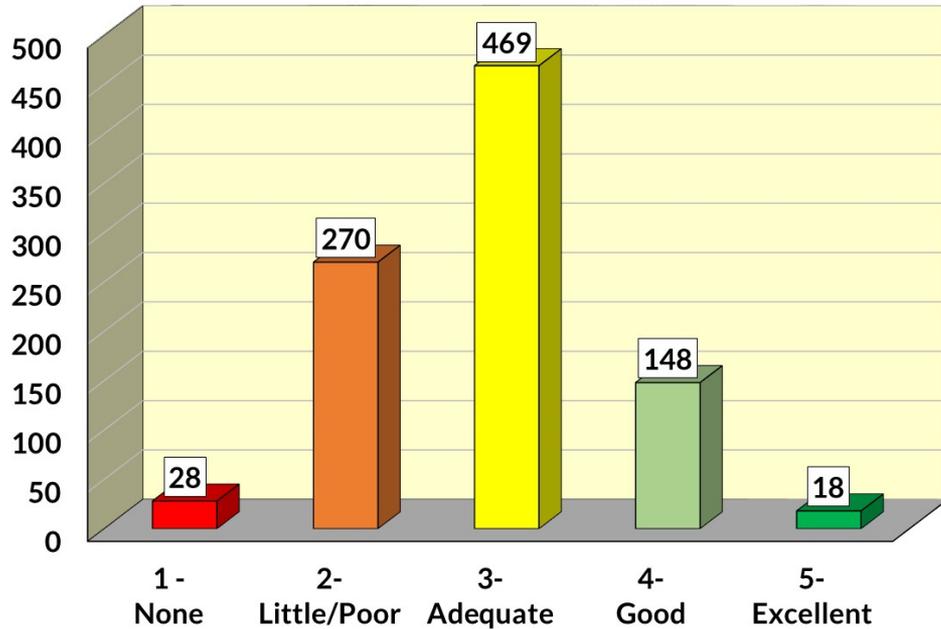
I Don't Know



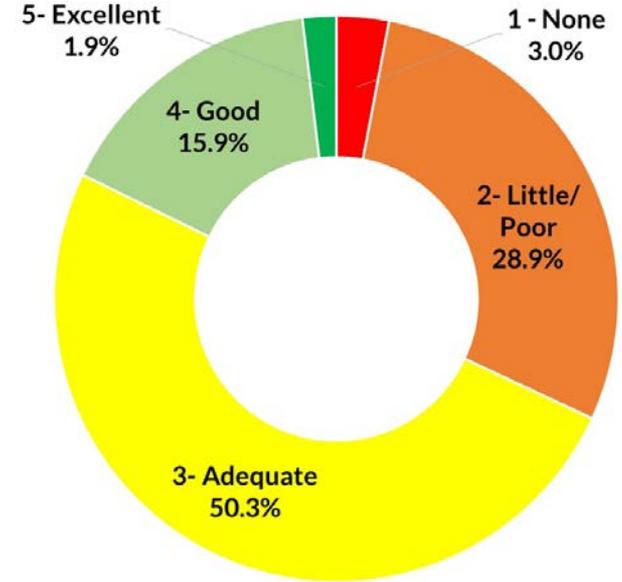
Q13: How well does your community support affordable housing choices? (On a Scale from 1 to 5)

Answered: 933 Skipped: 50

Distribution of Responses



Percentage Distribution of Responses

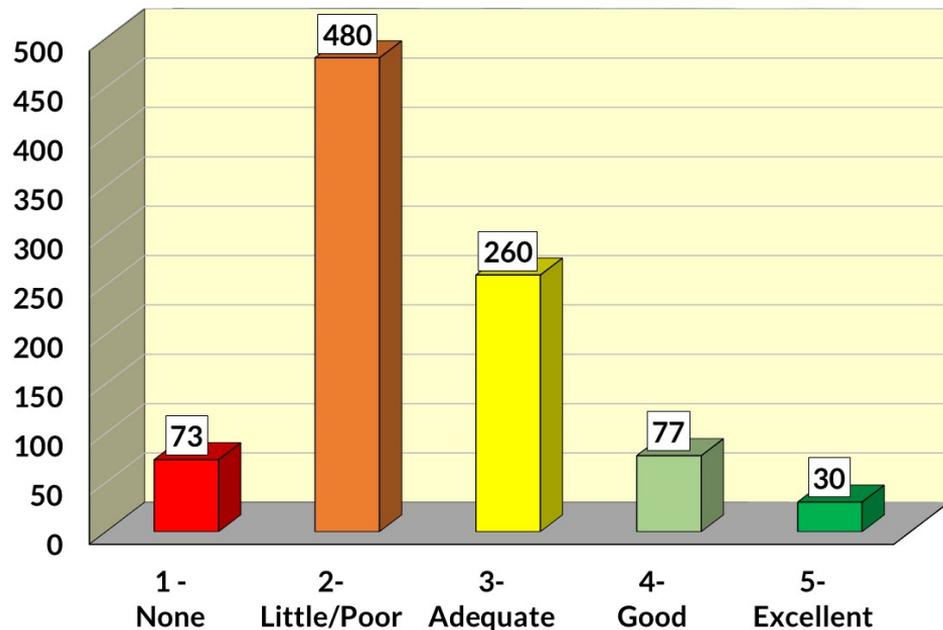


Weighted Average = 2.85

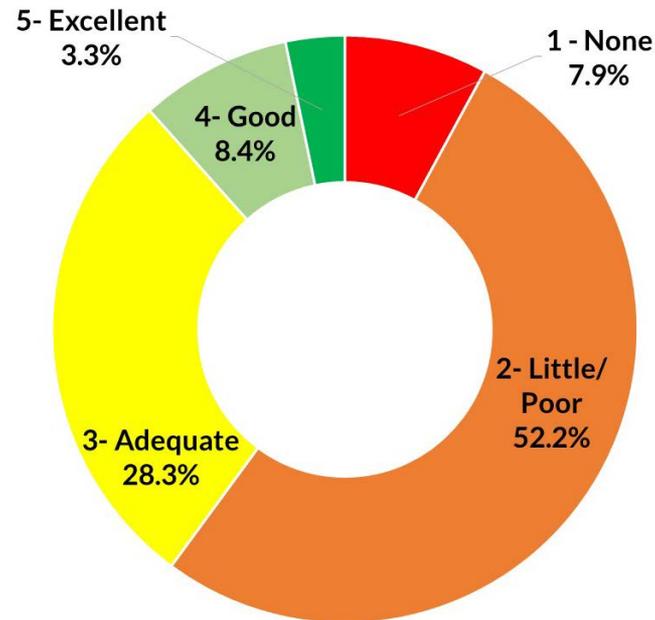
Q14: Are there opportunities for minorities and low wealth individuals to engage in community planning? (On a Scale from 1 to 5)

Answered: 920 Skipped: 63

Distribution of Responses



Percentage Distribution of Responses

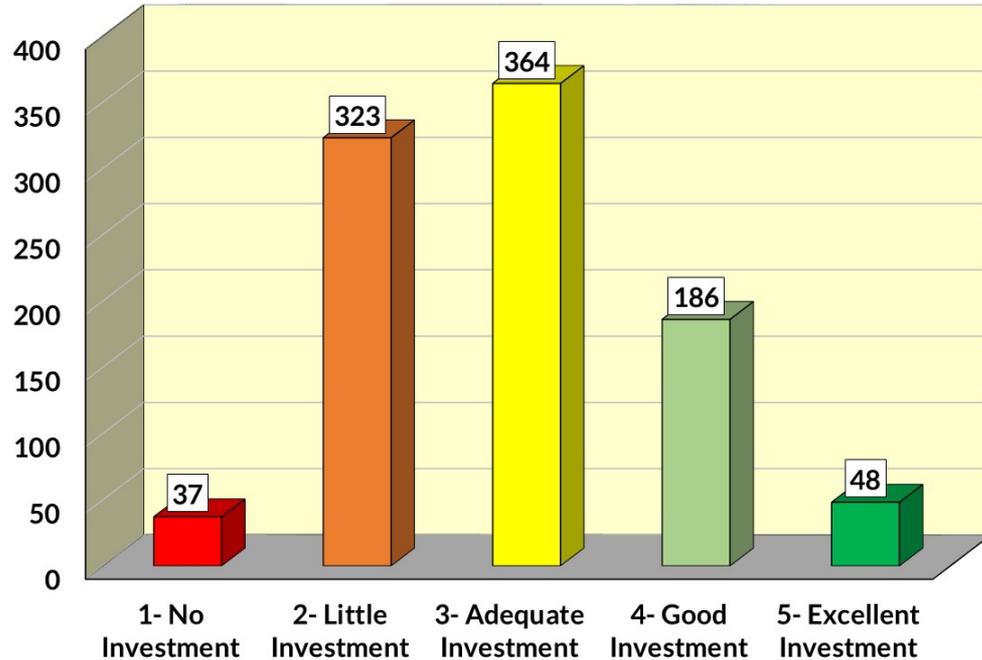


Weighted Average = 2.47

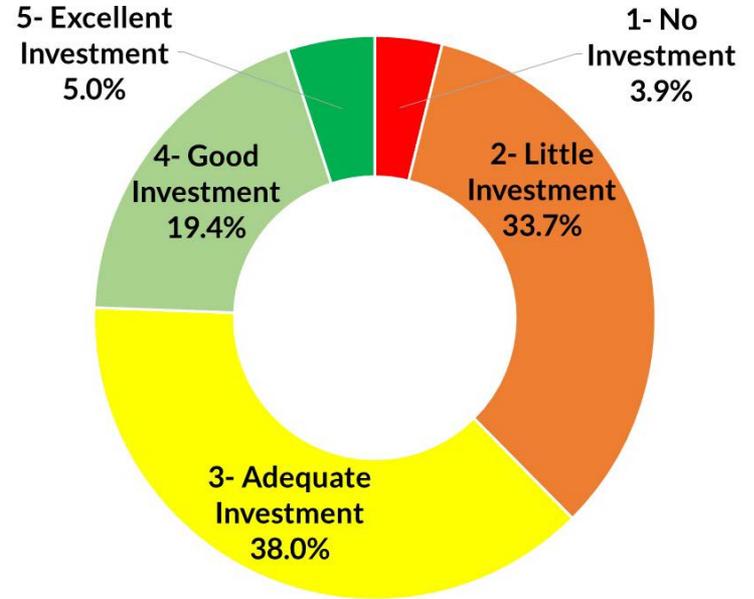
Q15: How well does your community invest in healthy, safe and walkable communities? (On a Scale from 1 to 5)

Answered: 958 Skipped: 25

Distribution of Responses



Percentage Distribution of Responses

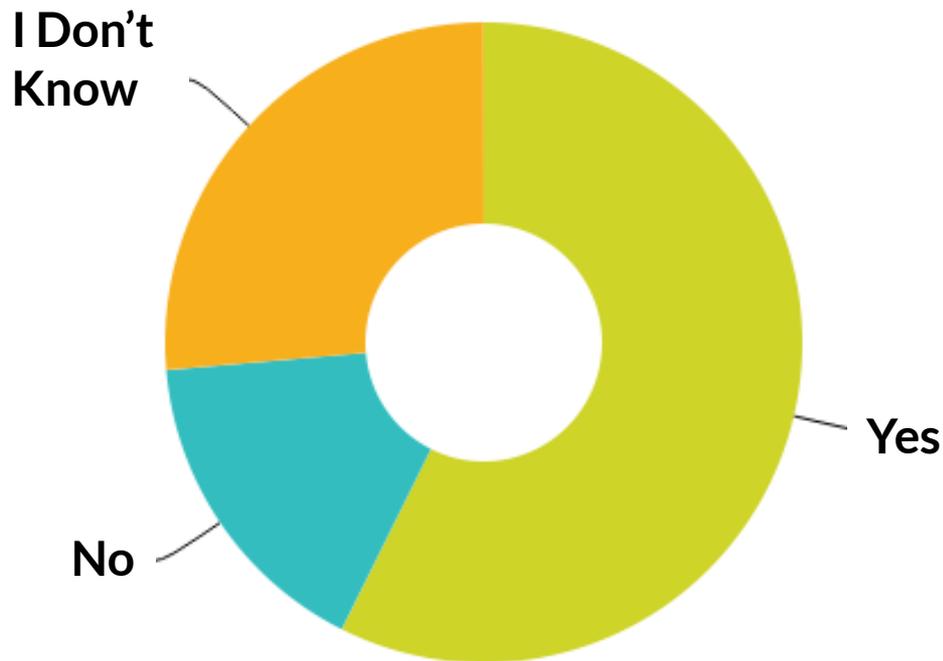


Weighted Average = 2.88

Q16: Do the municipalities within your county promote the restoration of their downtown areas?

Answered: 971 Skipped: 12

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	557	57.4%
No	158	16.3%
I Don't Know	256	26.4%
Total	971	100.0%



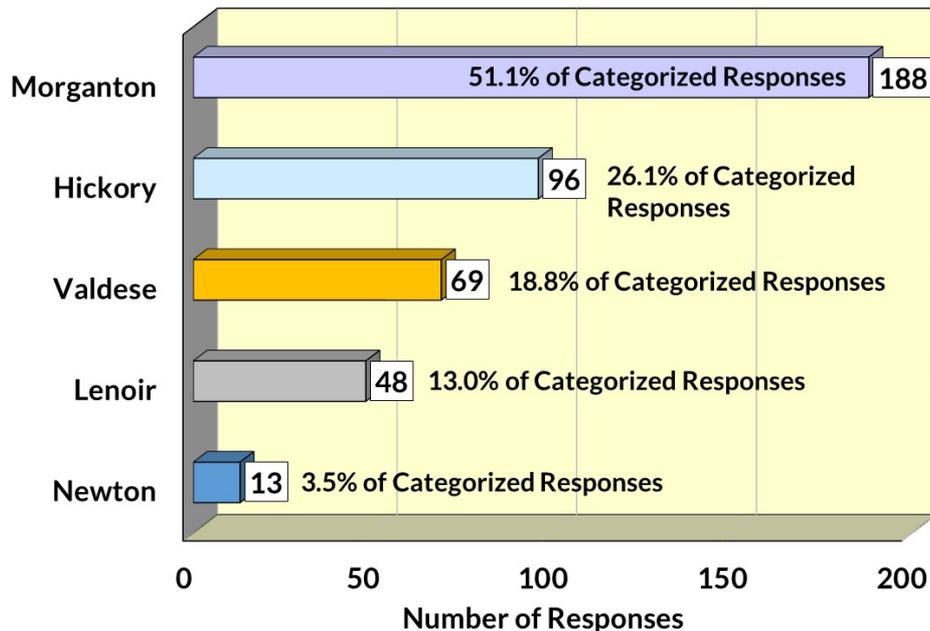
Q17: If you answered yes to the previous question, please list the town and give examples. (Open Response Analysis)

Answered: 496 Skipped: 487

Word Cloud View

Taylorsville Past Couple Years Spaces Excellent
Development Going Restaurants
Conover Station Town Bike
Downtown Area Newton is Planning
Hickory Older Buildings Businesses
Old Mill Valdese Hildebran Lenoir
City of Newton Restoration Marketing
Main Street Burke County
Downtown Revitalization Signs

Top 5 Response Categories



Note: 119 Responses were uncategorized

Q17: If you answered yes to the previous question, please list the town and give examples. (Open Responses)

- **(Taylorsville)** Alexander County Government Center going in old bank and Merchants on Main in old YMCA.
- **(Morganton)** Downtown Morganton program and its employees deal in events to raise money and create a community of people while planning with business owners, architects and artists on how to best preserve the historical value of downtown buildings while catering to a growing millennial population via venues and events.
- **(Morganton)** The City of Morganton has long been a leader in downtown revitalization through participation in the Main Street Program. The City of Morganton has worked hard to recruit a variety of businesses such as breweries and retailers that carry current products without forgetting the long-time merchants.
- **(Morganton)** They have, in the last 20 year plan, restored the trading area and the apartments and stores across the street. They have revitalized the vacant stores in some areas such as Rural King. One area that really needs to be looked at is the Carbon City Road. It is an eyesore. The buildings are run down and the sidewalk leading to the Greenway is dangerous.
- **(Rutherford College)** We do not have a defined downtown area but we're dedicated to preserving our history through the RC Historical Society and the many artifacts kept in our history display.

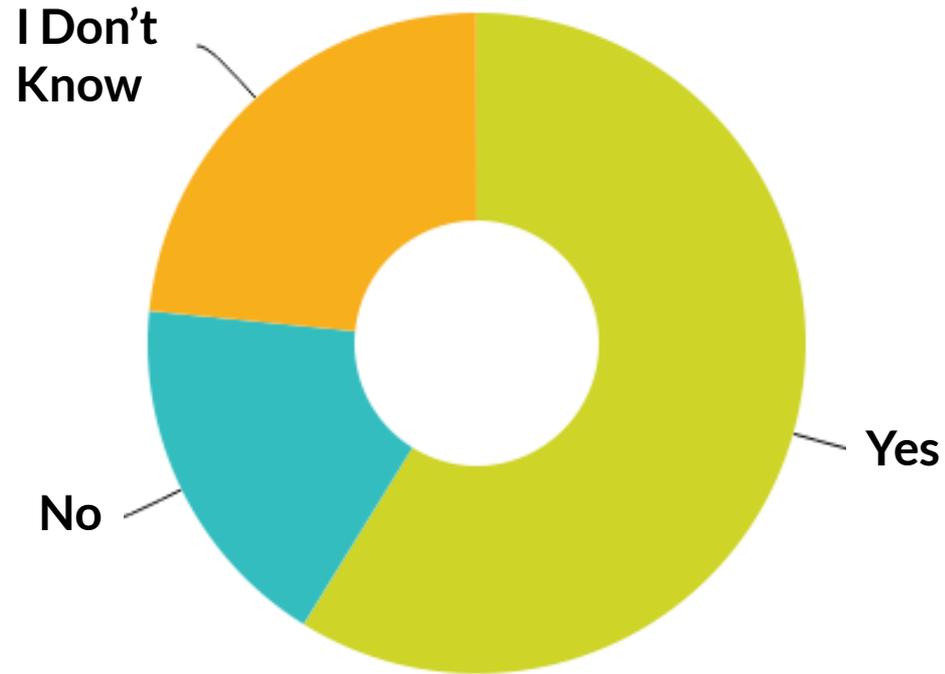
Q17: If you answered yes to the previous question, please list the town and give examples. (Open Responses)

- **(Lenoir)** Sidewalks, street lights, stage in the downtown area for gathering and concerts, music is played in the open areas that can be heard as someone is walking, strong effort is made to invite new business to the downtown area.
- **(Caldwell County)** Lenoir and other municipalities with Caldwell County are trying, with limited resources, to restore their downtown areas, but it is very difficult without retail establishments and entertainment venues to draw families there.
- **(Hickory)** Hickory's plan is great if they will get on the stick. Has taken too long and the momentum seems lost.
- **(Hickory)** Hickory has invested in under the sails and the farmers market. But it seems that it's up to individuals to make downtown better. That isn't how it should be. The county needs to incentivize downtown development, and work on getting all of the ownership out of the hands of certain individuals who could care less about Hickory's economic growth.
- **(Claremont)** Town leaders are encouraging to small business owners to utilize Main Street buildings.
- **(Conover)** Free Wi-Fi downtown, greenway walking paths, new sidewalks, downtown buildings cleaned up and repainted, old manufacturing plant repurposed, new development downtown, promotion of small businesses.

Q18: Does your community have the resources to develop a skilled workforce?

Answered: 969 Skipped: 14

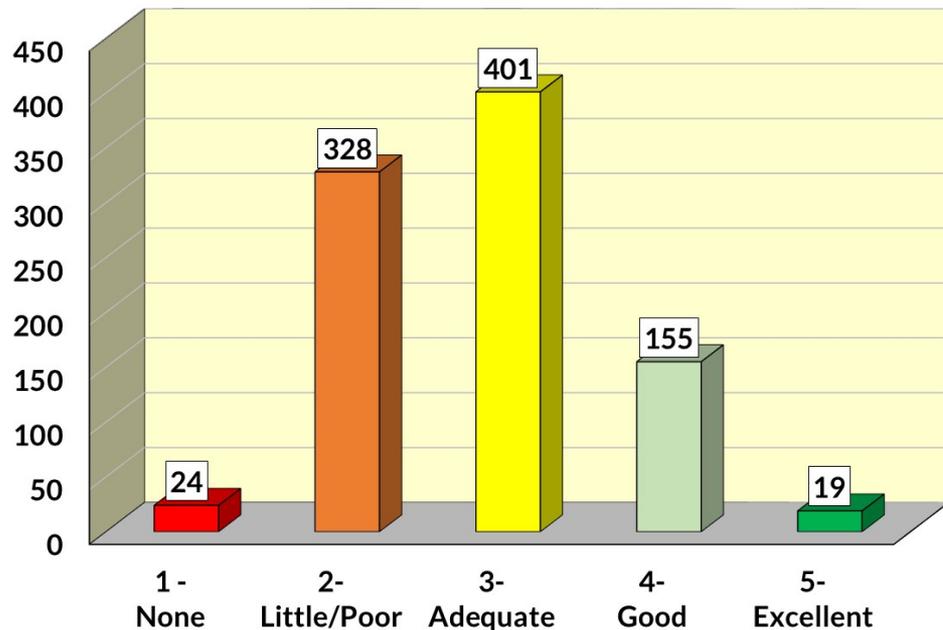
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	570	58.8%
No	172	17.8%
I Don't Know	227	23.4%
Total	969	100.0%



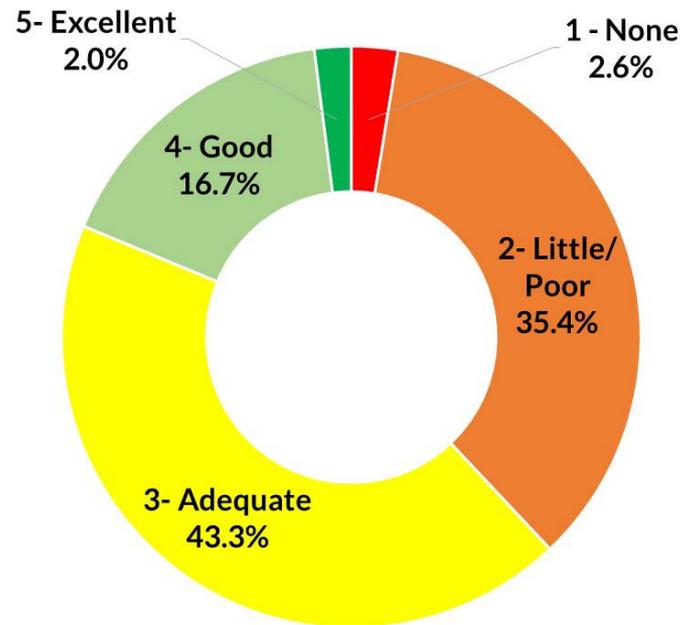
Q19: How well does your community work to maintain a skilled workforce? (On a Scale from 1 to 5)

Answered: 927 Skipped: 56

Distribution of Responses



Percentage Distribution of Responses

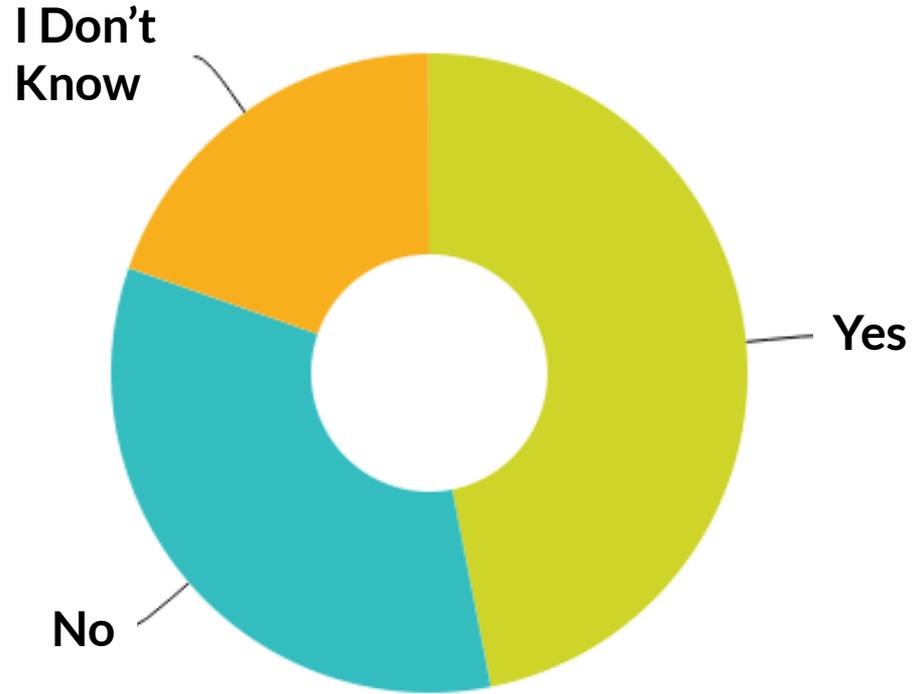


Weighted Average = 2.80

Q20: Do you believe there are gaps in educational resources?

Answered: 966 Skipped: 17

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	453	46.9%
No	323	33.4%
I Don't Know	190	19.7%
Total	966	100.0%



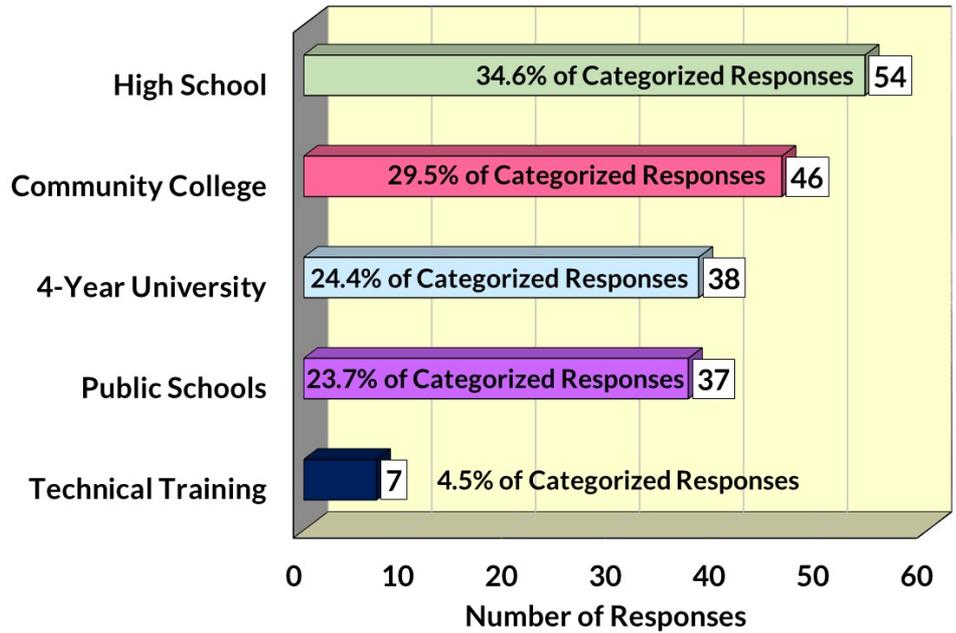
Q21: If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify. (Open Response Analysis)

Answered: 927 Skipped: 56

Word Cloud View

Four Year Large Percentage Work Force 4-year University
Children Starting Public Schools Distance
Community College Closest University
Funding Vocational Training Education
Charter School Students Special Needs
High School Amount K-12 Furniture
Resources Common Core Curriculum
School System Career Planning Year University
Full Potential Lenoir Rhyne Technical Training

Top 5 Response Categories



Note: 224 Responses were uncategorized

Q21: If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify. (Open Responses)

- **(Vocational Training)** No apprentice programs, very little focus on skilled trades.
- **(Entrepreneurs)** More entrepreneurial career paths should be encouraged and backed up with a solid incubator program for small businesses.
- **(Public Schools)** We need to think of innovative ways to attract and retain quality educators.
- **(Workforce)** There needs to be more dialogue between industry, schools, and colleges to determine what industry needs are—educational centers can then adapt to those needs.
- **(4-Year University)** Although we have a distance learning center from ASU, we need more university opportunities here.
- **(Public Schools)** Need reduced class sizes. Need more choices for struggling students. Need more choices literature for E C students. Need more assistants.
- **(4-Year University)** Need a 4 year University. Not just the offering of a few classes from distant Universities.
- **(High School)** More career planning and guidance for graduates entering workforce directly from high school. Apprenticeships?

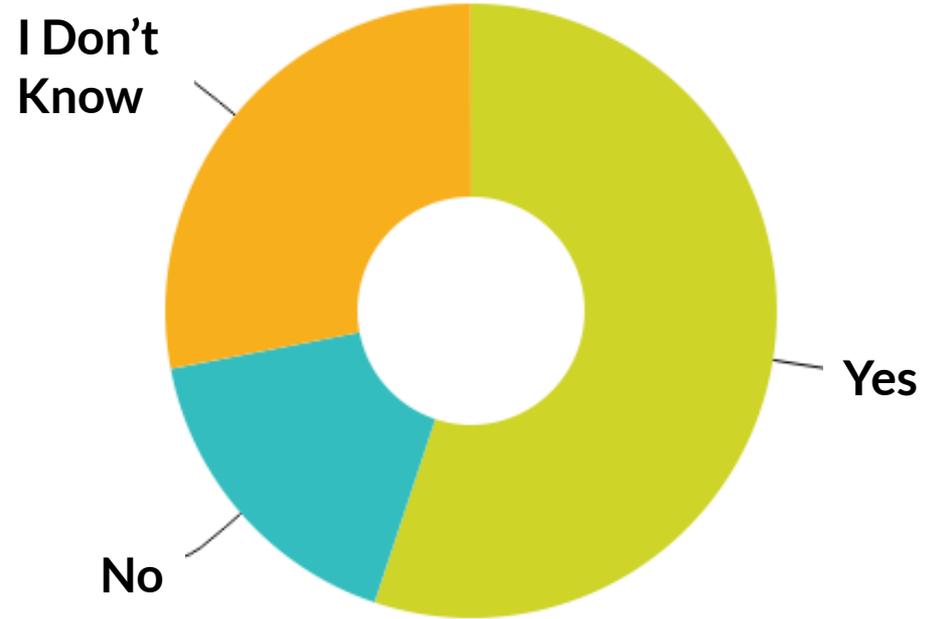
Q21: If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify. (Open Responses)

- **(Public Schools)** There are resources, I think there is a gap in connecting people with those, and with engaging students in putting them on the right path to take advantage of those resources.
- **(Vocational Training)** There is a disconnect between the skills needed in our existing industries and the skills developed in the students. Although some pathways exist to local, skilled, well-paying jobs, those pathways are not adequately marketed to the high school students and the underemployed.
- **(Technical Training)** Mostly in communicating the availability of manufacturing academy, furniture academy, etc.
- **(4-Year University)** Need a four-year college. It's good that App has a center here, but it's not a place that college kids can go to live. I think industry looks more favorably at being around a research university where students come to live and study full-time, rather than commute from home.
- **(Community College)** Community college is marketing to high school age kids instead of the people who need to go back to school to learn a trade.
- **(Workforce)** I don't think there is enough incentive to pursue secondary education when there are no local jobs available for them.

Q22: Does your local government encourage small businesses to locate and grow in your community?

Answered: 967 Skipped: 16

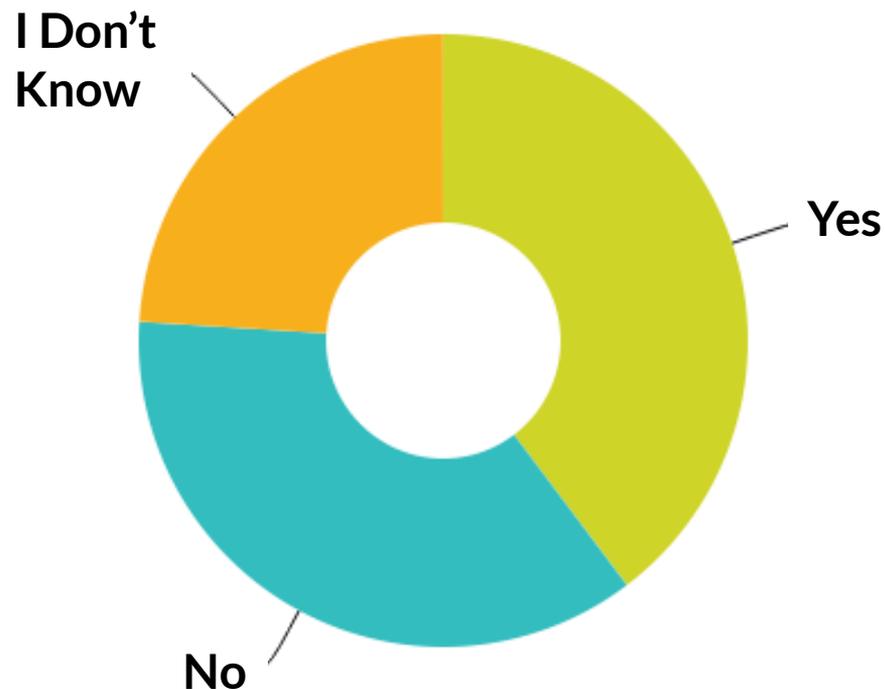
Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	533	55.1%
No	163	16.9%
I Don't Know	271	28.0%
Total	967	100.0%



Q23: Do you believe your community has gaps in its healthcare services?

Answered: 962 Skipped: 21

Answer Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	382	39.7%
No	349	36.3%
I Don't Know	231	24.0%
Total	962	100.0%



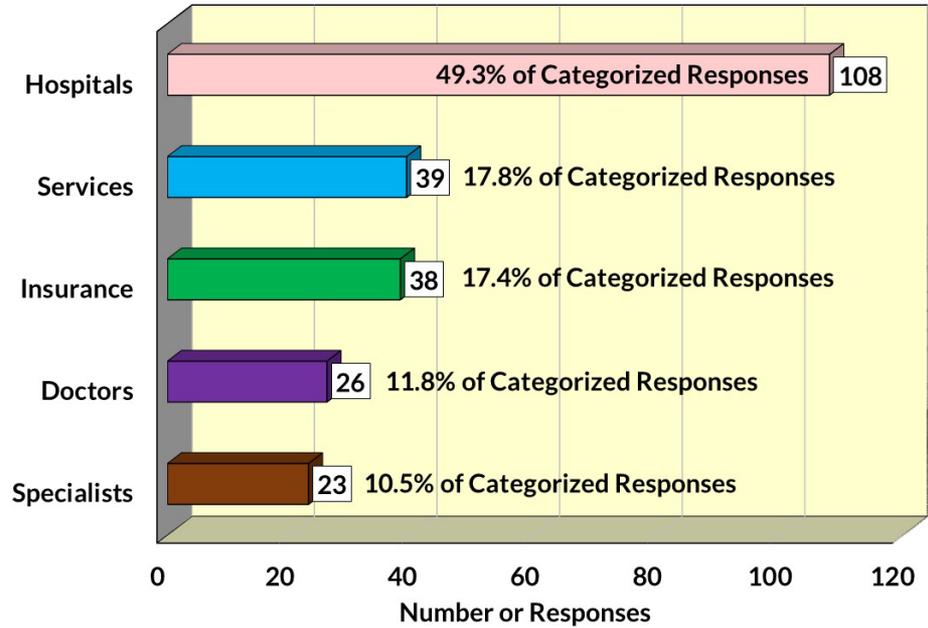
Q24: If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify. (Open Response Analysis)

Answered: 313 Skipped: 670

Word Cloud View

Specialty Primary Health Gaps Dentists Medical Level
Doctors Trauma Center Services Uninsured
Hospital Pay Care Medicare County
Poor Emergency Insurance Caldwell Memorial
Specialists Valdese Mental Health
Not Affordable

Top 5 Response Categories



Note: 94 Responses were uncategorized

Q24: If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify. (Open Response Analysis)

- **(Services)** You can be diagnosed at our local hospital but you cannot be treated. You have to be sent to other hospitals for actual surgeries or treatments.
- **(Drug Treatment) (Not Affordable)** There is a HUGE NEED for drug treatment programs. [Also], older adults who are NOT Medicaid-eligible struggle to pay bills and live month to month.
- **(Specialists)** Access to specialized care for an aging population is limited.
- **(Hospital Access)** No hospital in Alexander County.
- **(Hospital Access)** Having an Urgent Care is an improvement, but the lack of a hospital handicaps this county. [I'm] unsure of the feasibility of one operating here due to the close proximity of so many other neighboring hospitals.
- **(Services)** I believe that we have not promoted the health care options in our community in an effective manner.
- **(Specialists)** Lack of specialists.
- **(Not Affordable)** Healthcare is all we work for to pay. It is so expensive there is no money left for anything.

Q24: If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify. (Open Response Analysis)

- **(Quality of Care)** I am not aware of any gaps, only the perception of poor quality.
- **(Medical Access)** There are more hair salons and used car lots than there are doctors or medical facilities available in the county.
- **(Workforce)** Can't keep good medics, dispatchers, or other emergency personnel because of pay.
- **(Medical Access) (Not Affordable)** Inadequate transportation and challenges for those people who do not receive an insurance supplement, but receive no health benefits from work.
- **(Medical Access) (Not Affordable)** People who don't qualify for Medicaid and do not have insurance or are under-insured still lack access to medical care.
- **(Not Affordable) (Specialists)** Affordable health care is non existent, no psychiatric care available, very limited OB/GYN care.
- **(Workforce)** I know the nurses are overworked at the local hospital, resulting in less than stellar care of patients.
- **(Services)** Free clinics and other alternatives need to supported and explored to help the hundreds living at or below the poverty level in this area.

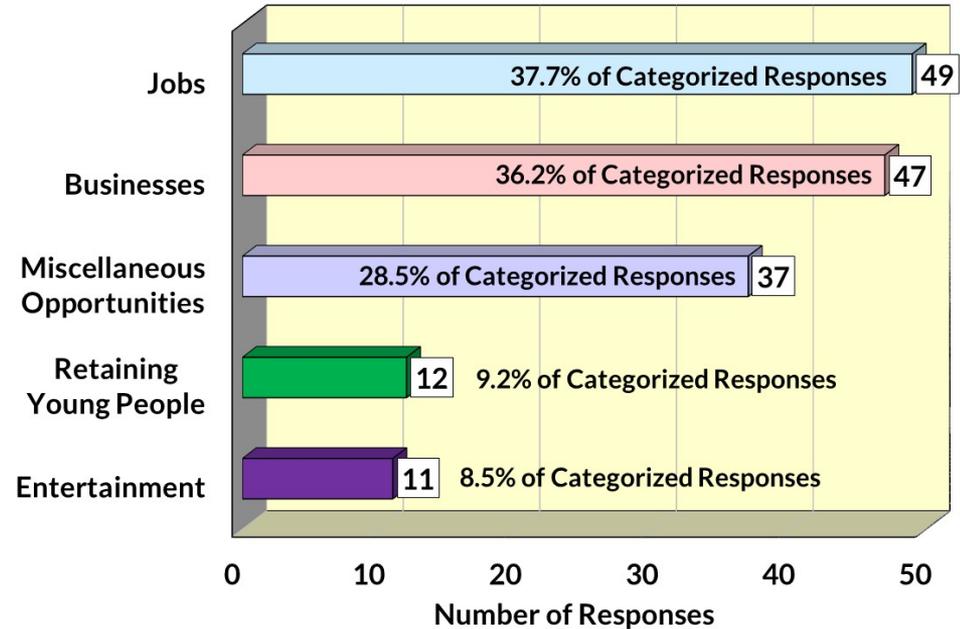
Q32: Do you have any other thoughts about the region's economic competitiveness that you would like to share with us? (Open Response Analysis)

Answered: 341 Skipped: 642

Word Cloud View

Compete Hope New Industries Activities Bike Options
Energy Young People Race Public Assets
Community EDC Jobs Ready
County Wish Businesses Benefits
Opportunities Approach Town Senior
Support Education System Access Alcohol Referendum
High School

Top 5 Response Categories



Note: 211 Responses were uncategorized

Q32: Do you have any other thoughts about the region's economic competitiveness that you would like to share with us? (Open Response)

- **(Businesses)** There needs to be a regional approach to economic development. Monthly meetings between Unifour counties EDC directors as well as quarterly meetings between EDC boards to identify all Unifour strengths and weaknesses and develop a plan and IMPLEMENT (all caps because implementation rarely happens.) Plan would identify sectors of industry and business that could thrive here and the factors that would go into getting those businesses to locate to this area.
- **(Retaining Young People) (Entertainment)** if the focus is on keeping younger individuals in this area, then there must be emphasis on building and maintaining sports, entertainment, dining and nightlife options that can compete with the draw of the Charlotte area. Consider taking a closer look at the Asheville area and the offerings available there.
- **(Jobs) (Retaining Young People)** The region is clearly losing the battle in attracting persons age 20 to 35 to come the region. If you talk to high school students, most of them want to leave the area as soon as possible and never comeback. The region should learn about what other areas are doing to be successful in bringing in those groups. Local governments and EDCs should also only focus on bringing in high paying jobs (at least \$40,000 or more) into the region.
- **(Jobs) (Retaining Young People)** We have been slow to develop, and now playing catch up to Charlotte. As a result, we are losing young people to them for jobs and quality of life decisions.

Q32: Do you have any other thoughts about the region's economic competitiveness that you would like to share with us? (Open Response)

- **(Entertainment)** We need more family friendly activities, both indoor and outdoor.
- **(Jobs) (Retaining Young People)** I am currently searching for apartments in the Catawba county area, and it's extremely frustrating. There are tons of places for income restricted housing, and a tiny few in Hickory well beyond my budget, but it's next to impossible to find a 1- 2 bedroom apartment/house/duplex for less than \$700 that isn't a dump. I'm a single young woman with a steady job, and I'd like to stay in this county, there's just nowhere to live (that makes economic sense). Please build more small apartments for regular people with a single income budget (\$400-\$600 monthly).
- **(Entertainment)** Activity will cause activity. Celebrate small victories and look for the larger ones.
- **(Businesses) (Miscellaneous Opportunities)** It could be beneficial to have a "Made in Alexander" festival to promote and showcase textiles, plastics, furniture, machined metal, and other products made here and invite the public but also industry professionals.
- **(Retaining Young People)** Things are looking up in Burke County. We need state of the art broadband, a modern employer that will hire our youth and young professionals. We've got to attract and keep 25 - 55 age group. One good 21st century employer would ignite everything else.