



# Sources of Data for Community Profiles: A Resource Guide for Community Health Assessment in North Carolina

State Center for Health Statistics and Office of Healthy Carolinians

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## Purpose

For years the State Center for Health Statistics has prepared the County Health Data Books associated with Community Assessment. The required public health community assessment and the resulting required Community Assessment Document are now on a 4-year cycle, replacing the 2-year cycle that was in place for the past 28 years. Each local health department is now assigned to a specific 4-year cycle. Every year a group of counties/local health departments engage in community assessment. The process involves community members surveying available data and determining their priority health problems, programs to improve these problems, and areas for legislative action each year. The main purpose of these County Health Data Books in the past has been to provide local public health departments with quantitative health-related data about their county as a basis for making decisions about public health programs.

In recent years, the community diagnosis or community health assessment process has expanded beyond the activities of local public health departments to encompass hospitals, voluntary health agencies, and many other community organizations. A major impetus behind this expanded community health assessment has been the development and activities of Healthy Carolinians Task Forces across the state. In addition, North Carolina has received funding from the Centers for Disease Control for the North Carolina Community Health Assessment Initiative. A major goal of this Initiative has been

to strengthen and build on this collaborative approach to community health assessment, including combining the Community Diagnosis and Healthy Carolinians efforts.

As the focus of community health assessment has been broadened, there is a need for a wider range of data about communities. Through the County Health Data Books and other publications, the State Center for Health Statistics has provided county-level health data on topics such as mortality, live births, fetal deaths, abortions, cancer morbidity, communicable diseases, hospital discharges, birth defects, behavioral risk factors, and public health programs. The purpose of this document is to provide the reader with access to other data about communities that have not traditionally been included in publications of the State Center for Health Statistics. Examples would include data on housing, economic status, the environment, education, crime, mental health, child abuse, and social services. Factors such as these are often important determinants of physical health and set the context for public health problems and interventions. A broad approach to community health is also consistent with the spirit of the state Department of Health and Human Services, which was established to integrate the provision of health and human services programs in North Carolina.

Following are some sources of data about communities in North Carolina. In most cases, the source contains information for counties or other geographic sub-areas of the state, with statewide data for comparison where available. Sources of

data that provide information only for the state as a whole are generally not included. This listing of data sources is divided into two categories: data available on the Internet and contacts to organizations with data.

## County-Level Data Available on the Internet

Most North Carolina county/district health departments now have web sites. A list of health departments, as well as their contact information and web site addresses are available on the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors web site: <http://www.ncalhd.org/county.htm>

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<http://www.state.nc.us>

This is the **State of North Carolina** web site. Some of the state department web sites described below can be accessed through this main state home page. In addition, there are links to many other state agencies from this North Carolina home page, and many of these state agency web sites have links to other web sites related to their topic area. Click on “NC Agencies” from the main state home page.

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<http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/>

The **State Center for Health Statistics** (919-733-4728) has maintained a web site for over a decade. This site describes the programs and services of the State Center, and offers a plethora of county-level data that can assist communities in performing their assessment. Most useful in this regard is the County Health Data Book which is now published annually. The latest edition of the Data Book can be found at: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/databook/>. The State Center also offers additional information by county such as the recent addition of our biannual Trends in Key Health Indicators report, which

presents graphs depicting county and statewide trends for select health measures: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/trends/pdf/> Other county-level information, such as the North Carolina Health Statistics Pocket Guide and Leading Causes of Death, can also be accessed on the SCHS web site from this page: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/county.cfm>

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<http://sdc.state.nc.us/>

The **North Carolina State Data Center** (SDC) maintains a comprehensive web site with a great deal of data available by county. Most useful is LINC (Log Into North Carolina) which provides web access to over 1,300 data items from state and federal agencies. The site includes the ability to query Census data, including information on housing and on the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the population. These data are available for very small geographic areas. In addition, via their LINC query system, they provide data on vital statistics and health, social and human services, education, law enforcement, and a variety of other topic areas.

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<http://www.unc.edu/depts/irss/>

The **Odum Institute for Research in Social Science** (919-962-3061) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provides a variety of public opinion poll and other data through their web site. See especially the Data Archive section where under Data Holdings you will find North Carolina data. Also accessible from the Data Archives section are NC Vital Statistics data, where complete public use data files for births, deaths, and other vital events can be downloaded for further analysis. Full documentation of these files is provided. Also, much of the other data through this site can be downloaded into a variety of file formats. Though the data from this site are primarily for the state and the nation as a whole, some county-level information is available.

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<http://www.ncchild.org>

**North Carolina Action for Children** (formerly the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute) has a web site that provides county-level information on child health and well-being. Areas covered include demographics, physical well-being, intellectual well-being, social well-being, and economic well-being. Extensive county-level data are available in their North Carolina Children's Index County Data Cards which include more than 75 indicators of child and youth well-being. They also provide links to CLIKS (Community-Level Information on Kids) which allows users to access maps and tables containing data at both state and county levels.

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<http://www.commerce.state.nc.us>

The **North Carolina Department of Commerce** (919-733-4151) has a web site that contains a variety of useful data for each county in the state. From the main page select "NC Statistics" and click on "County Profiles" to access economic data from the Economic Development Information System (EDIS). Data can be downloaded into Excel.

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<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us>

The **North Carolina Department of Public Instruction** (919-807-3300) collects a variety of information related to education in North Carolina, much of which is available through their web site. From the top of the main page, select "Data & Statistics" and then the *NC Statistical Profile*. This report contains detailed educational data at the county level. This page also has a link to Education Statistics Access System (ESAS) – a web-based interactive data extraction and distribution tool designed to enable anyone with access to the Internet to extract the basic data for the North Carolina school systems, create custom reports, and then download these to your computer.

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<http://www.ncsbi.gov/>

The **State Bureau of Investigation** collects detailed information on crimes that occur in North Carolina, and has a variety of county data available on their web site. See particularly the "Crime Statistics" section with links to Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data by county for several years. Some crime indicators are also included in the LINC data system, described in the State Data Center section above. For questions about the crime data or to make special requests, contact: stats@ncdoj.gov or 1-888-498-9429.

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<http://www.ncdot.org/transit/transitnet/>

The **North Carolina Department of Transportation** (919-733-2520) has a web site with information on public transit services for counties and cities across North Carolina. A scroll-down list is provided to choose the geographic area you are interested in. This is a sub-page of the general North Carolina DOT web site (<http://www.dot.state.nc.us>).

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<http://www.agr.state.nc.us/stats/>

The **North Carolina Department of Agriculture** (919-856-4394) web site has county-level statistics related to agriculture, including crop and farm income and other agricultural economic data.

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<http://www.ncesc.com/>

The **Employment Security Commission of North Carolina** collects a variety of information related to employment, occupations, industries, wages, and unemployment in North Carolina. On their "Labor Market Information" page, they have links to labor force statistics, occupational information such as employment and wages, industry information, as well as information access tools and links

to statistical sources. In their “Information Access Tools” section, they have several web query systems, such as WebSARAS, NC Profile, Workforce-in-Depth, and County Profile, which provide labor and employment information for counties and other geographic areas of the state. For further information or for special requests, contact the Labor Market Information Division at (919) 733-2936.

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<http://www.hsrc.unc.edu>

The **University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center** collects data on motor vehicle crashes, including alcohol involvement and seat belt use, as well as other information related to highway safety. They have a NC Crash Data Query web site which enables users to create tables reflecting crash, vehicle, and person/driver information for crashes occurring in North Carolina. All of the data are available by county, city, Highway Patrol area, or NCDOT division. HSRC also maintains the North Carolina Alcohol Facts (NCAF) web site, a separate query system specific to alcohol-related crashes and injuries. In addition, special research publications prepared by the HSRC are available for download from their Research Library.

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<http://www.scorecard.org/>

This site is maintained by the **Environmental Defense Fund**. It allows one to search by zip code and provides information by county on what chemicals are being released into the neighborhood environment by manufacturing plants, which of these chemicals are potentially the most harmful, and what companies are responsible. The site also provides maps of locations of pollution sources.

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[http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/ehs/Children\\_Health/Lead/lead.html](http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/ehs/Children_Health/Lead/lead.html)

The **Childhood Lead Surveillance** data are maintained in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Environmental Health Services Section. North Carolina state law requires all laboratories doing business in North Carolina to report all positive blood lead test results for children less than six years of age. The database includes blood lead screening and follow-up information as well as environmental follow-up information. From the Child Lead Poisoning web page, go to Surveillance Tables for access to lead screening data.

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<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/>

The **Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (MHDDSAS)** in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services collects statistics from state-operated mental health facilities across the state. Annual reports, containing facility and county-level information, are available on community mental health centers, state psychiatric hospitals, alcohol and drug treatment centers, mental retardation centers, and other mental health facilities. To view their reports, from the main page, go to Statistics and Publications.

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<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma/>

The **Division of Medical Assistance** in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is the state Medicaid agency in North Carolina. They produce an annual report with some county-level data called *Medicaid in North Carolina Annual Report*. Many of their reports are now available on their web site. From their main page, go to Publications to view their annual report, as well as additional Medicaid data and information.

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[www.ncdhhs.gov/dss](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss)

The **Division of Social Services** in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services collects information in a number of human services areas, including child abuse and child protective services, Food Stamps, and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. To view their statistical reports, from their main page, click on "Statistics and Reviews." You can then choose to select data regarding Child Welfare, Child Support, Food Stamp Program, or Work First.

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<http://facility-services.state.nc.us/>

The **Division of Facility Services** of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services collects data for each hospital and nursing home in the state through the annual re-licensure process. Directories listing all regulated facilities by service type are available for download.

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<http://www.comp.state.nc.us/>

The **North Carolina Industrial Commission** in the Department of Commerce collects data on work-related injuries closed under the Workers' Compensation Act. Data are collected on the worker, the injury, and the employer, and are available at the county level. In addition, they have searchable databases which enable users to query their data.

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<http://www.ncruralcenter.org/databank/index.html>

The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center serves as a resource for rural people and communities. The center serves the state's 85 rural counties, with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources. Their web site hosts a "Rural Data Bank" which includes County Profiles as well as the ability to perform custom data searches.

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<http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cfw/cfw.htm>

The **North Carolina Council for Women/Domestic Violence Commission** compiles information on domestic violence, sexual assault, and rape prevention programs. Their web site provides a variety of county-level data on domestic violence, including the number of calls, the number of clients served, education/training, and shelter services use.

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<http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/>

The **Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research** has county-level data on their web site, especially in relation to health manpower. From the main page, click on "Data Available" and then "North Carolina Health Professions Data System." Then click on "Download Data" and there are county-level tables for different categories of health manpower. Especially useful are the "State and County Profiles," which can be accessed on the left-hand side of this page.

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## Contacts to Other Organizations with Data

A good place to start in collecting community data is in your own community. The following local organizations often have useful information for developing a community profile.

- County Planning Department
- Chamber of Commerce
- County Department of Social Services

In addition, there are 17 **Councils of Government** (or Lead Regional Organizations) across the state, many of which collect pertinent data for the counties in their region. Following is a list of these “COG” agencies with a phone number and the counties they cover.

### **Region A:**

Southwestern North Carolina Planning and Economic Development Commission – Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties  
(828) 586-1962

<http://www.regiona.org/>

### **Region B:**

Land of the Sky Regional Council – Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties  
(828) 251-6622

<http://www.landofsky.org/>

### **Region C:**

Isothermal Planning and Development Commission – Cleveland, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford counties  
(828) 287-2281

<http://www.regionc.org/>

### **Region D:**

High Country Council of Governments – Ashe, Alleghany, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties  
(828) 265-5434

<http://www.regiond.org/>

### **Region E:**

Western Piedmont Council of Governments – Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties  
(828) 322-9191

<http://www.wpcog.org/>

### **Region F:**

Centralina Council of Governments – Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties  
(704) 372-2416

<http://www.centralina.org/>

### **Region G:**

Piedmont Triad COG – Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph, and Rockingham counties  
(336) 294-4950

<http://www.ptcog.org/>

### **Region H:**

\*\* This region was dissolved in 2001. Member counties and municipalities were reassigned to adjacent council of governments.

### **Region I:**

Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments – Davie, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin counties  
(336) 761-2111

<http://www.nwpcog.dst.nc.us/>

### **Region J:**

Triangle J Council of Governments – Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange, and Wake counties  
(919) 549-0551

<http://www.tjcog.dst.nc.us/>

### **Region K:**

Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments – Franklin, Granville, Person, Vance, and Warren counties  
(252) 436-2040

<http://www.kerrtarcog.org/>

**Region L:**

Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments –  
Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and  
Wilson counties  
(252) 446-0411

<http://www.ucpcog.org/index.php?page=231>

**Region M:**

Mid-Carolina Council of Governments –  
Cumberland, Harnett, and Sampson counties  
(910) 323-4191

<http://mccog.org/>

**Region N:**

Lumber River Council of Governments – Bladen,  
Hoke, Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland counties  
(910) 618-5533

<http://www.lrcog.dst.nc.us/>

**Region O:**

Cape Fear Council of Governments – Brunswick,  
Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender counties  
(910) 395-4553

[http://capefearcog.org/default\\_main.htm](http://capefearcog.org/default_main.htm)

**Region P:**

Eastern Carolina Council of Governments –  
Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir,  
Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne counties  
(252) 638-3185

<http://www.eccog.org/>

**Region Q:**

Mid-East Commission Council of Governments –  
Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt coun-  
ties

1-800-735-8262

<http://www.mideastcom.org/>

**Region R:**

Albemarle Commission – Camden, Chowan,  
Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Pasquotank,  
Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington counties  
(252) 426-5753

**(web site not available at this time)**



North Carolina  
Department of Health and Human Services  
State Center for Health Statistics  
1908 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27626-0538  
(919) 733-4728 • FAX: 733-8485  
[www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS](http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS)



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