Quarterly County Growth Report — Wake County, NC — Q4 2026

Data through Q3 2026 · 12 November 2026

Summary

- Wake County added 126,332 residents since 2020, growing faster than North Carolina (+11.2% vs +7.2%), and more people moved in from other US counties than left (+56,656 over 2021-2025).
- Jobs rose 1.9% in 2025 (North Carolina +0.8%), and the average weekly wage reached $1,560 (+5.6% on the year), 117% of the North Carolina average.
- 3,091 homes were permitted in Q3 2026, 19% fewer than a year earlier.
- No state economic-development announcements named Wake County in Q3 2026.

Among 6 peer counties, Wake County ranks 1st for lowest unemployment.

Where Wake County is winning

- 1st of 100 NC counties for household income ($105,768)
- 3rd of 100 NC counties for average weekly wage ($1,560)
- 3rd of 100 NC counties for lowest unemployment (3.2%)

How Wake County compares

vs the state and rank among its counties

Population growth, 5 yr
+11.2%
NC +7.2%
10th of 100 NC counties

Job growth, 5 yr
+20.9%
NC +12.1%
13th of 100 NC counties

Avg weekly wage
$1,560
NC $1,330
3rd of 100 NC counties

Unemployment
3.2%
NC 3.9%
3rd of 100 NC counties

Median household income
$105,768
NC $72,388
1st of 100 NC counties

Homes permitted per 1k
11.5
NC 7.8
10th of 100 NC counties

This quarter

Q3 2026 is the latest complete quarter; annual series show their latest year

Indicator	Period	Value	vs prior quarter	vs a year ago	NC, year
Homes permitted monthly-reporting places (Census BPS)	Q3 2026	**3,091**	-38.0%	-19.3%	+4.0%
...in 5+ unit buildings	Q3 2026	**922**	-61.5%	-46.8%	–
Jobs announced 1 state announcements	Q3 2026	**0**	+0	+0	–
Investment announced	Q3 2026	**$0**	+$0	+$0	–
Jobs (annual average) BLS QCEW	2025	**665,775**	–	+1.9%	+0.8%
Average weekly wage BLS QCEW, all industries	2025	**$1,560**	–	+5.6%	+4.3%
Unemployment rate BLS LAUS, annual average	2025	**3.2%**	–	+0.0 pts	+0.2 pts
Population Census estimates (July 1)	2025	**1,257,235**	–	+2.3%	+1.3%

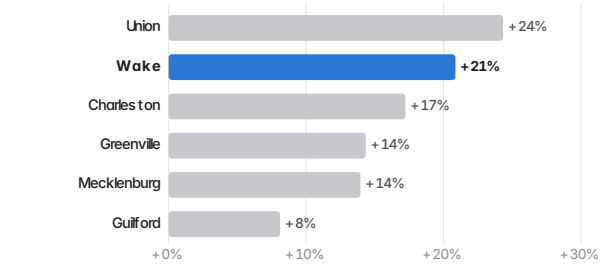
Peer counties

Five similar counties by size and growth (change them in the workspace).

County	Population	Population growth, 5 yr	Job growth, 5 yr	Avg weekly wage	Unemployment	Median household income	Homes permitted per 1k	Announced jobs, 12 mo
Wake County, NC	**1.26M**	**+11.2%**	**+20.9%**	**$1,560**	**3.2%**	**$105,768**	**11.5**	**0**
Mecklenburg County, NC	1.23M	+10.5%	+14.0%	$1,757	3.9%	$87,005	3.5	200
Greenville County, SC	583,125	+10.6%	+14.3%	$1,269	3.9%	$76,932	8.5	151
Charleston County, SC	436,200	+6.4%	+17.2%	$1,388	3.6%	$88,494	7.3	106
Guilford County, NC	562,234	+4.4%	+8.1%	$1,230	4.3%	$68,642	5.8	0
Union County, NC	267,674	+11.7%	+24.3%	$1,259	3.4%	$102,900	10.5	0
North Carolina	*11.20M*	*+7.2%*	*+12.1%*	*$1,330*	*3.9%*	*$72,388*	*7.8*	*1,848*
South Carolina	*5.57M*	*+8.5%*	*+11.6%*	*$1,180*	*4.5%*	*$69,324*	*8.3*	*3,222*

Job growth over five years vs peer counties

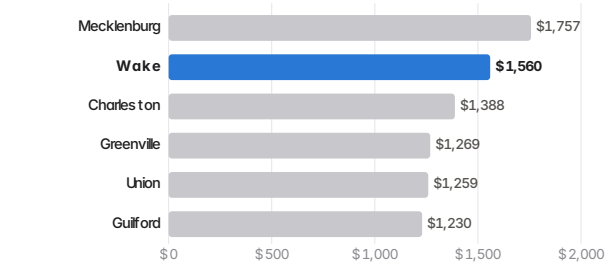
Percent change



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (QCEW)

Average weekly wage vs peer counties

Dollars per week, all industries



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (QCEW)

Rankings

Measure	County	NC	Rank in NC	Rank in NC + SC
Population growth, 5 yr	+11.2%	+7.2%	10th of 100	17th of 146
Job growth, 5 yr	+20.9%	+12.1%	13th of 100	17th of 146
Avg weekly wage	$1,560	$1,330	3rd of 100	3rd of 146
Unemployment	3.2%	3.9%	3rd of 100	3rd of 146
Median household income	$105,768	$72,388	1st of 100	1st of 146
Homes permitted per 1k	11.5	7.8	10th of 100	14th of 146

Growth at a glance

Population
1.26M
+11.2% since 2020
NC +7.2%
Census estimates, 2020–2025

Net domestic migration
+56,656
50 per 1,000 residents over 2021–2025 NC 44.8
Net movers from other US counties, 2021–2025 total

Jobs
666K
+20.9% since 2020
NC +12.1%
BLS QCEW 2020–2025; LODES 2018-2023 +7.8%

Homes permitted, last 12 months
14K
11.5 per 1,000 residents
NC 7.8
Oct 2025–Sep 2026; 5,922 in 5+ unit buildings

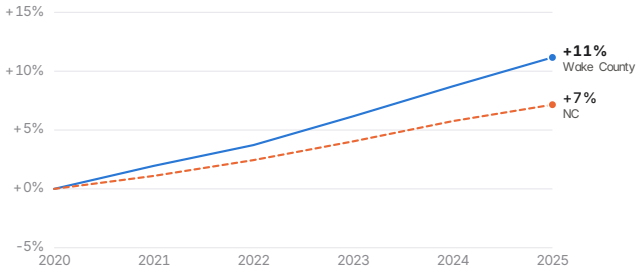
WHAT THIS MEANS

Wake County added 126,332 residents since 2020, growing faster than North Carolina (+11.2% vs +7.2%), and more people moved in from other US counties than left (+56,656 over 2021-2025).

Jobs grew +20.9% (2020-2025) and new housing is being permitted at 1.5x the North Carolina rate per resident: demand for retail, services and industrial space should keep building.

Population outgrew NC

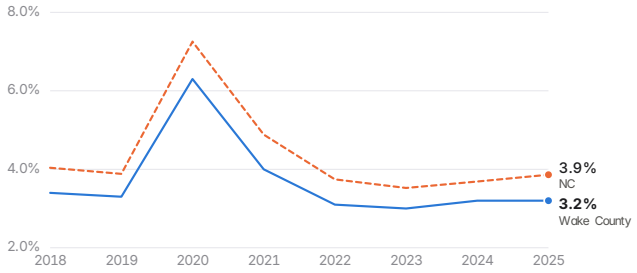
Change since 2020, %



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Unemployment rate

Annual average, % of the labour force



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS

People and households ACS 2020-2024

Median household income	Income growth, 5 years	Median gross rent	Rent growth, 5 years
$105,768	**+26.6%**	**$1,623**	**+34.8%**
NC $72,388	NC +27.8%	NC $1,228	NC +31.8%
Housing vacancy	Unemployment (BLS 2025)	Households	Housing units
7.2%	**3.2%**	**460K**	**496K**
NC 12.5%	NC 3.9%	NC 4.28M	NC 4.90M

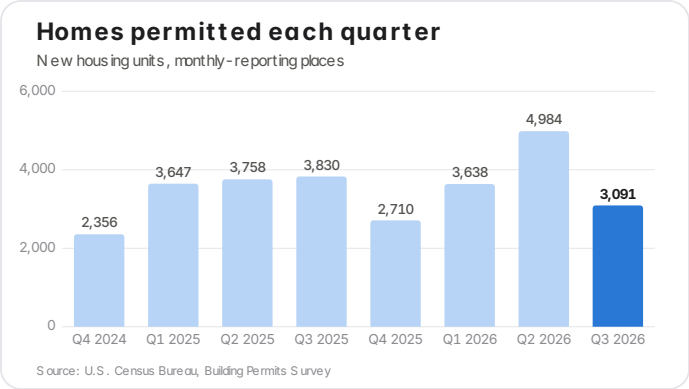
WHAT THIS MEANS

Household incomes are about 146% of the North Carolina level and rose +26.6% in five years; spending power for retail and services follows.

Economic-development announcements

last four quarters, state releases

Date	Company / project	Jobs	Investment
Sep 2026	Silentium North Carolina's defense boom draws Silentium to Apex	–	–



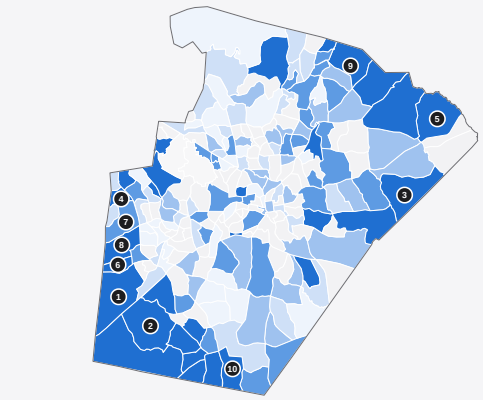
Commercial sales

last 12 months, licensed county records only

No county in this area publishes sale records under terms that allow commercial reuse yet. Beacon shows property-level sales only where county licences allow it, and adds counties as terms are confirmed.

Where the growth is

Top 10 tracts by residents added, ACS 2016–20 to 2020–24



	Tract	Residents	Added	Growth	Jobs	Income
1	Apex area Tract 534.28	16,415	+6,455	+65%	+138%	$173,215
2	Holly Springs area Tract 532.08	16,027	+5,322	+50%	+76%	$152,957
3	Wendell area Tract 544.02	11,458	+4,787	+72%	+87%	$101,094
4	Cary Tract 536.17	12,674	+3,373	+36%	+158%	$154,463
5	Tract 543.04 Wake County	7,110	+3,317	+87%	+0%	$125,362
6	Apex Tract 534.27	7,011	+2,956	+73%	+221%	$146,932
7	Cary Tract 534.11	15,850	+2,829	+22%	+36%	$189,721
8	Apex area Tract 534.26	8,568	+2,541	+42%	+94%	$174,149
9	Wake Forest area Tract 542.21	8,475	+2,454	+41%	+81%	$158,722
10	Fuquay-Varina area Tract 531.14	8,961	+2,313	+35%	+34%	$107,065

WHAT THIS MEANS

Growth is concentrated: the top 10 tracts added 36,347 residents, led by Tract 534.28 in Wake County (+6,455).

Incentive zones and flood

Opportunity Zone tracts of 230 tracts; 7% of residents	**15**
HUD Qualified Census Tracts 6 are also OZs	**26**
Tracts with 10%+ of land in the 1% flood zone of 230 mapped (FEMA NFHL via NC FRIS)	**59**

WHAT THIS MEANS

15 of 230 census tracts are Opportunity Zones and 26 are HUD Qualified Census Tracts: tax-advantaged equity and affordable-housing credits are available for projects there.

Site readiness

Site readiness 78/100 (highway, airport, rail, broadband, water, sewer): 48 interstate interchanges; airport RDU; 172 mi of active rail; 99% of locations on 100/20 broadband; 62% of land in a public water area. Power: Duke Energy Progress, Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC, North Carolina Eastern M P A.

Largest state transportation projects (279 programmed)

New Route (Future NC 540)	Under construction 2025	$559M
US 1	Buying right of way 2031	$481M
US 70 (Glenwood Avenue)	In design 2030	$472M

Busiest corridors (DOT traffic counts)

I-40	Wake County	169,000/day
I-440	Wake County	153,000/day
US 1	Wake County	148,000/day
I-87	Wake County	125,000/day
I-540	Wake County	108,000/day

Public surplus property for sale (1)

State surplus: +/- 40,000 GSF building (Wake County)

Large-parcel screening (25+ acres near highways and utilities) needs county parcel data licensed for commercial use; it is not available for these counties yet. The pilot builds it from your own site inventory.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Site readiness 78/100 with 48 interstate interchanges; 279 state road and rail projects ($8.2B) are programmed, 151 under way.

Outlook forecast from 2025, 80% ranges

	5 years (to 2030)
Population	**+10%** (-1% to +15%) tested: off by 2.7% on avg., 13 past years

Change from the latest actual year. Each method was backtested on past years and shown only if it beat a simple trend. Ten-year ranges are wide on purpose: read the range, not the single number.

Only measures whose method passed a backtest are shown. How each outlook is checked: beaconcarolinas.com/growth/methods#h-outlook

How to read this report

- Quarter-on-quarter compares the last complete calendar quarter with the one before; year-on-year compares it with the same quarter a year earlier. Annual series (jobs, wages, unemployment, population) compare the latest year with the year before.
- Homes permitted by quarter sum the Census Building Permits Survey monthly county files, which cover places that report monthly; annual totals (with imputation) are higher.
- Peer counties are the five NC and SC counties most like this one by population (weighted double), five-year population growth and five-year job growth, unless you picked your own in the workspace.
- State values for unemployment and announcements are population-weighted means (or sums) of their counties, because LAUS publishes no state row in our feed.
- Ranks put 1st as best: highest growth, wages and income, lowest unemployment.
- Tract job growth comes from LODES small-area counts, which swing widely where one large employer moves; treat changes above 100% as directional.
- Commercial sales come only from counties whose records allow commercial reuse; counts and median $/SF include display-only counties as aggregates, dollar volume does not.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates (census.gov); U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey (census.gov); U.S. Census Bureau, TIGER/Line cartographic boundaries (census.gov); U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (Vintage 2025) (census.gov); FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, via NC Emergency Management FRIS (fris.nc.gov); Beacon CRE backtested forecasts on U.S. Census Bureau, BLS and HUD data (methodology: docs/forecasting.md); HUD Qualified Census Tracts (2026) (huduser.gov); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (bls.gov); U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES8) (lehd.ces.census.gov); NCDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic (connect.ncdot.gov); CDFI Fund, U.S. Treasury: Opportunity Zones (cdfifund.gov); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (bls.gov); Beacon site-readiness model: BTS NTAD (FAA, FRA), NCDOT/SCDOT interchanges, FCC BDC via NC OneMap, EPA water systems, HIFLD electric territories (geodata.bts.gov); NCDOT 2026-2035 STIP (ncdot.gov); Wake County GIS, licensed CC BY 4.0; modified by Beacon CRE (derived fields and scores) (maps.wake.gov); Federal and state surplus property listings (GSA, NC DOA, SC Admin, SCDOT).

Disclaimer: Informational only; not investment, legal or appraisal advice. Figures come from public sources as published and may be revised. Region values sum county counts and weight county medians and rates (households, housing units or population), so they approximate true regional medians. Tract growth compares ACS 5-year estimates, which carry sampling error. Not a flood determination.