



BUNCOMBE COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

DIVERSE COMMUNITY WORKFORCE



PRORITY: Cultivate a robust, inclusive local economy with a diverse workforce and pipelines to jobs and education for all.

BACKGROUND: As of July 2017, the unemployment rate for Buncombe County was 3.4 percent, lower than the state and national averages. Yet per capita income and average annual wage in Buncombe County is lower than the average in North Carolina and United States. While job growth has continued year-over-year, lower wage industries are leading the growth so earnings are lagging or stagnant. The growth of a small high-income group in the County is outpacing the state and nation, while the number of people at the low-end of the income spectrum is also on the rise. Disparities are pronounced in Buncombe County – African-Americans have lower average monthly earnings and household incomes than white counterparts, are disproportionately impacted by poverty and unemployment, and own fewer businesses.

GOALS:

- Leverage economic development policy to broaden and diversify the development of new and expanded businesses and industries.
- Invest in neighborhood- and community-based jobs and education initiatives.
- Engage in partnerships for innovative workforce models such as worker owned co-ops, apprenticeships and job skills training.
- Support small business development with emphasis on historically underserved populations.
- Implement practices for recruiting and maintaining a diverse, qualified workforce of Buncombe County employees.

