

Objectives & Need for Assistance

Community Assessment

The Economic Improvement Council, Inc. is located in Northeastern North Carolina and is adjacent to the Virginia border along the cities of Chesapeake and Suffolk. The agency's central office is located in Chowan County, in the city of Edenton. The agency serves ten counties in an area that is known as "Region R" which includes the mostly rural areas of NC. These counties include Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell and Washington. As of July 2016 there were three additional counties added to the Head Start program only, which were Martin, Pitt, and Beaufort. Our service area now has a population with an approximation of 400,000 persons. Tyrrell County is within the top five poorest counties out of 100 in North Carolina. Head Start serves 850 three, four, and five year old children in the thirteen counties and the enrollment count are as follows:

Camden – 20	Chowan – 53	Currituck – 32	Dare – 34
Gates – 20	Hyde – 16	Pasquotank – 86	Perquimans – 40
Martin - 160	Tyrrell – 15	Washington - 34	Beaufort – 75
	Pitt - 265		

The need to serve children 0-2 year old is a need in all counties.

The region's primary industries are farming and lumber. This accounts for the lack of higher paying jobs. In Hyde County, many families have seasonal jobs such as commercial fishing and crabbing. Economic conditions for the families are poor during the winter months.

All but one of the Region R counties borders the ocean or a sound. Water has historically limited economic development. Tourism and exclusive retirement developments bolster Currituck and Dare counties. However, the other counties in Region R do not grow as rapidly.

The primary agricultural crops throughout the counties are corn, soybean, cotton and peanuts. Many of the families in Camden, Currituck, Gates and Pasquotank hold jobs in the neighboring state of Virginia.

Dare County, famously known as the Outer Banks, is a resort area and one of the main tourist attractions in the state. This county offers seasonal and some year round employment to residents in Currituck, Camden, Hyde, Pasquotank, Tyrrell and Washington. It is the home of the Wright Brothers Monument which commemorates the first airplane flight.

There is an increase of Latino families in Dare County. Over 35% of the population is Latino families and 60%-70% of children enrolled at the Dare Center will be of Latino descent. The Dare Center has a Bilingual Family Services Worker on staff that is the link between the center and the families. The Program contracts with a Bilingual Translator who is responsible for working in the classrooms to ensure children acquire English as a second language and meeting School Readiness Goals before transitioning into Kindergarten. The Translator assists the Family Services Worker with the requirements of the Program and the goals of the families.

There are a high percentage of single parent households. The single parent households establish the need for children to be cared for outside of the home while the parent is at work. Single parent households are one of the reasons that the center-based option continues to be the best option for the families in the ten-county area.

There are significant numbers of child care and state funded pre-kindergarten programs that serve Head Start eligible 4 year old children throughout the ten county area. Economic Improvement Council, Inc. (EIC) continues to serve 3 year olds. State license regulations require that 3 year olds must be three when they enter the center to meet staff/child ratios of two adults in the classroom.

Pitt County, located on the coastal plain, is in the eastern part of North Carolina, approximately 90 miles east of the capital city of Raleigh, 75 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, and 220 miles south of Washington, D. C. The Tar River runs through the center of the County. The land generally slopes toward the east and is level with low rolling hills in the west.

Martin County, NC is the 77th largest county in North Carolina by population and contains 9 census places. The largest places in Martin County, NC by population are Williamston, NC; Robersonville, NC; and Jamesville, NC.

The median household income in Martin County, NC was \$35,080 in 2016, which represents a -2.91% growth from the previous year. Additionally, there were 9,079 residents in Martin County, NC with jobs in 2016, which is a 0.19% growth from the previous year.

Beaufort County is located in eastern North Carolina just east of the City of Greenville. It is comprised of 10 census-designated places: the Town of Aurora, Town of Bath, Bayview CDP, Town of Belhaven, Town of Chocowinity, Town of Pantego, Pineville CDP, River Road CDP, City of Washington, and Town of Washington Park. Its current population is 47,561

The Community Needs Assessment determined that the recruitment areas are determined by the communities with the greatest needs that are in proximity of the centers. The distance to the centers are taken into consideration in order to meet the transportation mandate relative to the amount of time children are on buses. In some instances, the community assessment is not the main factor in determining the location of a center. An important factor that comes into play is the availability of a facility in a given area.

Throughout the counties there are high percentages of families included within the poverty rates. Poverty rates range from 9.7% to 28.3% with the median being around 18.4%. Many families have lost jobs due to the economic downfall. There is a great need for job skills and training in order for the head of households to compete for the limited job opportunities found in the communities. In addition, social programs such as Head Start are essential in order to help sustain families as they work toward self-sufficiency through employment.

Education, Health, Nutrition, and Social Services Needs of Eligible Children and their Families

- Higher education for parents
- Finding employment is very difficult due to the economy
- Proper nutrition to combat obesity
- Additional support from Teachers
- Additional support from Service Providers
- Parent Education on how to effectively advocate for children with special needs
- Children with special needs may have learning difficulties or disabilities find it harder to get extra help needed
- Research studies for the National Head Start Association indicates that even though a higher portion of children in Head Start received medical and dental care, there is still a great need because of the availability of the needed services provided in rural areas
- The percent of dollars spent for AFDC children and other children is 1.4 for EPSDT (Health Check) which is low in comparison to the number of children in need of Health Checks
- Increase in migrant population and families need classes to learn the English language
- Social programs such as WIC, food stamps, subsidized child care, health services, food bank, and Medicaid
- Parent involvement in the child's education

The Education, Health, Nutrition and Social Services Needs of Head Start Eligible Children and their families as Defined by the Families

- Challenges of getting the best and affordable help for their children
- A parent accepting the diagnosis when their child has a disability
- Extended day services provided by Head Start
- Support services to help children overcome obstacles and challenges and improve their academic, social and emotional skills
- Ways to lower food costs/prepare healthy meals for less money
- Affordable housing
- Affordable child care for non-Head Start children
- Employment opportunities
- The need for full time employment
- Spending more time with their child(ren)
- Keeping scheduled appointments for scheduled health checks, follow-up medical and dental services
- Dental services in the home community
- Need for more bilingual translators as more migrant populations increase
- New job skills needed for job competition in the community
- Social program in high demand until families find employment
- English as a Second Language Classes (ESL)
- Cost of living increases yearly

Unemployment rates by county as of July 1, 2016 in comparison to the Labor force in each county:

<u>County</u>	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Unemployment</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Camden	4,441	266	6.0%
Chowan	5,649	437	7.7%
Currituck	12,289	746	6.1%
Dare	19,822	1,623	8.2%
Gates	5,188	305	5.9%
Hyde	2,154	192	8.9%
Pasquotank	17,177	1,370	8.0%
Perquimans	5,095	386	7.6%
Tyrrell	1,529	146	9.5%
Washington	5,013	473	9.4%
Martin	8,981	750	7.7%
Beaufort	18,809	1,335	6.6%
Pitt	82,289	5,339	6.1%

Unemployment rates decreased in each county.

- Minimal public transportation

The Education, Health, Nutrition and Social Services Needs of Head Start Eligible Children and their families as Defined by Institutions

- Families to keep medical and dental appointments to assist with preventative health
- Year round Head Start Services
- Communities to invest more in preschool programs qualified to serve all preschool children
- Substance abuse and mental health services
- Transportation
- To take seriously child obesity problems
- Resources to parents become legal residents
- Children with disabilities to have the opportunity to receive free public education in the least restrictive environment (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act –IDEA)
- Comprehensive health services
- Parents to be connected with job training programs for enhancement of skills to acquire better paying jobs
- Medicaid for low income families who don't meet the current qualifying criteria
- Colleges and Universities in the area to enhance skills for greater job opportunities

Information from the Community Assessment was used for the following:

- To help determine our Programs' philosophy, Five Year Project Program Goals and School Readiness Goals. We looked at each community and reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and the needs of our families.
 - To determine the type of services needed by taking into account what the families and service institutions defined as being the education, health, nutrition and social services of eligible children and families.
 - To determine the type of program option. A review of the statistics in the county profiles and taking into consideration the desires of the families that was most compatible for their needs and the program option choice was center based.
 - To determine the appropriate location for the centers. The community assessment aided our program in assessing the appropriate locations for centers. The statistics and demographics of the counties as part of the community assessment was the main determining factor helped to set the criteria.
 - To help determine the recruitment areas that will be served was done by looking at the demographics of the areas.
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- Set criteria that define the types of children and families who will be given priority for recruitment and selection. The statistical part of the Community Assessment was the main determining factor that helped set the criteria.
- To determine the county with the greatest need to serve the two year old population by the end of the Five Year Project Period.
- To determine the greatest need for bus transportation in reference to the demographics and families without means of transportation.

Data Sources

- Albemarle Regional Health Services
- Albemarle Regional Mobile Dental Services Agency
- Community Resource Guide
- County Health Ratings
- DSS Resource Guide
- ECKLC
- Kidshealth.org
- Labor & Economic Division, NC Department of Commerce
- NC Budget and Management
- Quick Facts from the US Census Bureau
- Smart Start
- US Census Bureau – American Fact Finder
- US Department of DHHS – CDC
- US Department of DHHS- NC State Center for Health Statistics
- Access NC