

AGENDA



Keith Wood, Vice Chair
Wayne Barneycastle, Chair
Sonya Cox, Commissioner
Brad Chandler, Commissioner
Rick Morris, Commissioner

REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Monday, July 13, 2026
COMMISSIONERS CHAMBERS
6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Invocation**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. Approval of the Agenda**
- V. Public Comments**
- VI. Comments - Managers/Commissioners**
- VII. Conflicts of Interest**
- VIII. Consent Agenda**
 - a. [Minutes](#)
 - b. [Budget Amendments FY 2026-2027](#)
- IX. Information Agenda**
 - a. [2025 Community Health Assessment \(CHA\)](#)
- X. Discussion Agenda**
 - a. [Planning Board Recommendation of a Data Center Moratorium](#)
 - b. [Public Hearing for Amendments to Stokes County Zoning Ordinance](#)
 - c. [FY 2026-2027 Pay & Benefits Policy](#)
 - d. [Updated Personnel Policy Handbook](#)
- XI. Action Agenda**
 - a. [Appointment to Forsyth Technical Community College Board of Trustees](#)

- b. [Tourism Development Authority Appointment](#)
- c. [Voluntary Agriculture Board Appointments](#)

XII. Closed Session

- a. [Rationales](#)

XIII. Adjournment

*Anyone with a disability(is) who needs an accommodation to participate in this meeting is requested to inform us 48 hours prior to the scheduled time of the affected group meeting

*Attachments may be delivered before or at the time of the meeting

*Times may vary due to times preset for agenda items



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: VIII.a

Minutes

Drafter: Olivia Jessup

Summary:

Minutes from the April 27th Regular Meeting, May 11th Regular Meeting, May 21st Budget Work Session, May 26th Regular Meeting, and June 8th Regular Meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

[04.27.26Minutes.docx](#)

[05.11.26Minutes.docx](#)

[05.21.26Minutes.docx](#)

[05.26.26Minutes.docx](#)

[06.08.26Minutes.docx](#)

STATE OF NORTH
CAROLINA

COUNTY OF STOKES

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OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY
GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH
CAROLINA

MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2026

Regular Session of the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Regular Session in the Commissioners Chambers on Monday, April 27, 2026 at 2:00 PM with the following members present:

Board of Commissioners Present: Keith Wood, Wayne Barneycastle, Sonya Cox, Brad Chandler, Rick Morris

County Administration Present: County Manager Jeff Sanborn, Assistant County Manager Bryan Miller, Clerk to the Board Olivia Jessup, Director of Finance Tammy Keaton, and County Attorney Jennifer Michaud.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Barneycastle called the meeting to order.

II. Invocation

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Invocation, if desired.

Commissioner Chandler delivered the Invocation.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to amend or approve tonight's agenda.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

V. Public Comments

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for public comments at 2:02 pm.

The following individuals signed up to speak in public comments:

Sid Wise
2761 Beasley School Road
Sandy Ridge, NC
RE: Parks & Rec

Nancy Pettit
1380 Tom Mix Road
Westfield, NC
RE: Francisco Park/PARTF Grant

Chairman Barneycastle closed the floor for public comments at 2:08pm.

VI. Comments - Managers/Commissioners

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for comments from the manager and commissioners.

Commissioner Chandler commented:

- Welcome everybody. It's nice to see the room filled with our citizens and I want to hear your input. I think it says a lot for all the different areas that come together that have concerns or that have requests. I mean emails are fine too and telephone calls, but I think it's always a little bit better when we can see face to face and talk to one another. Everything may not go one way or everyone's way, but at least, you know, we have that that level of communication and you can hear fully what our thoughts are. It's a great day out today and we've got a lot on the on the plate and I'll leave it at that.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- I'd like to welcome everybody. We got a good agenda today. We have a lot of interesting topics on it. To echo what Brad said in his prayer to keep the military folks that are engaged in Iran and other places in the front of your mind. They're taking extreme risk and I don't think they're quite finished with what's going on over there. So, we really need to be thinking about them. Also I would encourage everybody to keep in your prayers the safety of our president and the senior people in Washington that are running the country up there. We've obviously got some big issues there and I think a lot of concern about the president's personal safety. So again, thanks for being here. I look forward to the meeting today.

Vice-Chair Wood commented:

- I'd like to welcome everybody too. I appreciate you taking time out of your day to come and see how the county's run and your input.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- I thank everybody for being here and your attendance and the ones watching online and it's beautiful day outside, but I appreciate everybody's attendance and coming out to voice their opinions and take part in the meeting. So, thank you.

Chairman Barneycastle commented:

- Well, it's great to see everybody today. We had a great turnout this past weekend for the farmers appreciation meal. It was great to see the fellowship, all the people that come out and support it. It was great to see. Jeff, our County Manager, was there and our Assistant County Manager was there also.

County Manager Jeff Sanborn commented:

- I'd just like to make one clarify clarifying point. There's a question raised before the meeting about our burning ban and whether or not fire pits are covered by that. Within a 100 feet of a residence fire pits are acceptable if it's associated with cooking. I hope that gives you the clarification you're looking for.

Assistant County Manager Bryan Miller commented:

- I'd just like to acknowledge all the hard work that went into the farmers appreciation dinner from Soil and Water, from cooperative extension, farm services agency, and the young people that turned out for the meeting. That's really the future of Stokes County. So, I just like to acknowledge that. And I'd also like to acknowledge the health department on their accreditation. They did a fantastic job and I'm sure you'll hear more about that later.

VII. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were stated by the Board.

VIII. Consent Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Minutes

b. Tax Office Agenda

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the Consent

Agenda. Vice Chair Wood moved to Approve.

Commissioner Morris seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

IX. Information Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Senior Center Expanded Services

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Paula Hall and Reba Dodson to present Senior Center Expanded Services.

Hall and Dodson noted that Stokes County has a rapidly aging population. Some needs that have been identified are affordable senior housing, food access and a potential need for a third congregate meal site (noted interest from Sandy Ridge), transportation barriers (advance notice required, long ride times, mobility issues), and better access to specialist healthcare.

The Board asked about future population increases and discussed potential service expansions.

b. Presentation on Green Box Site Distribution

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Stewart Easter to present Presentation on Green Box Site Distribution.

Easter noted that all residents are within 10 miles of a site; the goal is ideally 7 to 8 miles. The new Germanton Road site will cover nearly all currently underserved addresses. At this time, Pinnacle site currently handles the highest volume at approximately 10+ tons/day. Sticker enforcement is working and reducing misuse.

The Board also discussed recycling costs; glass is costly to process while plastics are not currently a major loss.

c. Results of Accreditation Site Visit

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Tammy Martin to present Results of Accreditation Site Visit.

Martin noted that the Health Department passed 146 out of 147 activities and this was their first time being accredited with honors. They were commended for MAT program, community paramedic education, and mental health work.

The Board congratulated Martin and the entire Health Department on their accreditation and hard work.

X. Discussion Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Distribution Request Public School Building Repair and Renovation Fund

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Dr. Rice to present Distribution Request Public School Building Repair and Renovation Fund.

Dr. Rice requested release of the Public School Building Repair & Renovation Funds. Planned projects include animal science labs at North & South Stokes, renovation of food science labs, and a new CTE building at West Stokes.

The Board was supportive and discussed CTE workforce needs and teacher shortages.

b. Proposed Transfer of Pine Hall and Meadowbrook Academy to Stokes County

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to the Board to discuss Proposed Transfer of Pine Hall and Meadowbrook Academy to Stokes County.

Stokes County Schools proposed transferring the unused properties of Pine Hall and Meadowbrook Academy to the County for disposal. The commissioners chose to decline, citing timing, community sensitivity, and the impending Board transition.

c. Active Stokes 2035 Plan

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Jesse Day to present Active Stokes 2035 Plan.

Day presented Active Stokes 2035, an outdoor recreation master plan which was created with extensive public input and includes upgrades to all county parks. The Board discussed priorities for immediate investment, establishing a Parks & Rec Advisory Board, and future funding and grant opportunities.

The item was moved to the Action agenda for today's meeting.

d. PARTF Grant Opportunity Discussion

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to members of the Francisco Park Project to present PARTF Grant Opportunity Discussion.

The PARTF Grant opportunity would require a 50% match from the County at the time of the application (May 1st). The match would be approximately \$142,000 from the County. The project can be phased over three years, with year 1 being the ADA walking trail, year 2 being field + site prep, and year 3 being the pavilion. The community has already raised \$25,000 toward the project. The project has a good funding likelihood.

The Board discussed fairness since approval may prompt other parks to pursue grants, which is expected and acceptable if aligned with the new 2035 plan. The Francisco community was praised for exceptional volunteerism and initiative. The item was moved to action for today's meeting.

e. Planning Board Appointments

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Olivia Jessup to present Planning Board Appointments.

Jessup noted that the current Planning Board appointments need renewing as all current members wish to keep serving. Additionally, there are vacancies in the Snow Creek and Yadkin townships.

The Board nominated the following list of names:

Tommy White
W. Mark Sizemore
Ronnie Tilley
Jeffrey Whitaker
Ronnie Morris
Shannon Stanley
Patrick Flinchum

The item was moved to action for the next meeting.

XI. Action Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Appointment

Andrew Mathys placed an application for one of the two vacant positions on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. At the last meeting, Mathys was nominated to serve on the Parks and Recreation Committee.

The Board was polled for his appointment. All stated Mathys.

b. Tourism Development Authority Appointments

Jacob Tilley submitted an application to be the Danbury representative for the TDA to fill out the final year of Dave Hoskins three-year term. At the last meeting, he was nominated to serve in this role.

Katie Tedder, and Elizabeth O'Neal submitted applications for the Tourism Development Authority as vacation rental property owners. They are currently serving on the TDA and wish to continue. At the last meeting, Tedder and O'Neal were nominated to serve.

The Board was polled for the three TDA appointments. All stated Tilley, Tedder, and O'Neal.

c. Board of Adjustments Appointments

The terms for the Board of Adjustments members have expired. At the last meeting, the Board nominated all the following names:

Tommy White
W. Mark Sizemore
Ronnie Tilley
Jeffrey Whitaker
Ronnie Morris
Shannon Stanley

Patrick Flinchum

The Board was polled for the five primary members and two alternates. The Board decided for Tilley and Morris to serve as the alternates and the rest of the members would be primaries.

Vice Chair Wood moved to Approve.

Commissioner Chandler seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

d. Resolution Opposing Modifications to County Property Tax Authority

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as presented. Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve.

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XI.e) Distribution Request Public School Building Repair and Renovation Fund

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as presented.

Commissioner Cox moved to Approve.

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XI.f) Proposed Transfer of Pine Hall and Meadowbrook Academy to Stokes County

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to give the schools back to the Stokes County School System.

Vice Chair Wood moved to Approve.

Commissioner Chandler seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XI.g) Active Stokes 2035 Plan

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as presented.

Commissioner Cox moved to Approve .

Commissioner Chandler seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XI.h) Francisco Park 7-Year Master Plan

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as presented.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve.

Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XI.i) PARTF Grant Opportunity Discussion

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as presented.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve.

Commissioner Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XII. Adjournment

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to adjourn.

Vice-Chair Wood moved to adjourn at 4:00 pm.

Commissioner Chandler seconded. The motion Passed.

Olivia Jessup
Clerk to the Board

Wayne Barneycastle
Chair

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STOKES COUNTY
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DANBURY, NORTH
CAROLINA

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026

Regular Session of the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Regular Session in the Commissioners Chambers on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 6:00 PM with the following members present:

Board of Commissioners Present: Keith Wood, Wayne Barneycastle, Sonya Cox, Brad Chandler, Rick Morris.

County Administration Present: County Manager Jeff Sanborn, Assistant County Manager Bryan Miller, Clerk to the Board Olivia Jessup, Director of Finance Tammy Keaton, and County Attorney Jennifer Michaud.

Absent: None

I. Call to Order

Chairman Barneycastle called the meeting to order.

II. Invocation

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Invocation, if desired.

Chairman Barneycastle delivered the Invocation.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to amend or approve tonight's agenda.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

V. Public Comments

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for public comments at 6:03 pm.

The following individuals signed up to speak in public comments:

Katie Tedder

RE: Habitat and TDA

Tim Mabe

RE: Data Center

Chairman Barneycastle closed the floor for public comments at 6:13pm.

VI. Comments - Managers/Commissioners

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for comments from the manager and commissioners.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- I just appreciate everybody that's here in person and um appreciate the ones watching on TV. I appreciate Katie bringing us the updates from the Habitat for Humanity stuff. So, I'll mark that on my calendar. I'm just glad to be here and thank you all for coming.

Vice-Chair Wood commented:

- I'd like to welcome everybody to Katie thanks for your speech because I was at the place on 66 in King delivering a bunch of building supplies to get them out of my shop. And a lot of people don't realize you can take stuff up there and donate it. The gentlemen are there to unload it and if you got surplus stuff, take it up there. They want it.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- I'd like to welcome everybody to the meeting. It's great to have you here, whether online or in person. I guess I would just say we need to really keep President Trump in our prayers as he goes to China this week with his entourage of really credible folks to have discussions over there. Then the aftermath that may follow in Iran when he gets back. So it's an important but kind of tedious time in our country and uh we need all those folks to be in our prayers.

Commissioner Chandler commented:

- First of all, I want to thank everybody for being here today and also for the people that are tuning in streaming or watching at a later date in time. We need to stay involved with local government. I'd also like to recognize, you know, yesterday was Mother's Day, so I do want to give a lot of I want to give a special recognition to all the mothers and the grandmothers. It's very very vital. I think the key cog in any in any family is mom. So I want to recognize them.
- Then the next thing I'm going to recognize, it's National Police Week. Started yesterday, runs through the 16th of May. And then they got one day. It's basically it's called the National Police Officers Memorial Day. It's always a big ceremony in Washington DC. Just a quick thing on the stat for 2025. We lost 111 federal, state, county, and municipal police officers during 2025. It's 111. It's 111 more than really what should be. But if we're looking at anything positive, which I try to do at times, at least it's a 25% reduction

from 2024. So, it's going the right way, but we got to get it down to zero. And then in 2026, as of the end of April, we've lost three just here in North Carolina. Two troopers and of course one that's hit close to home is Forsyth County Sheriff's Deputy Caleb Mitchell, who as we all know was also former King PD. Please keep these folks and their families in your prayers. Like I've said from day one, I've seen it firsthand. When someone dies in a line of duty like that, the family suffers the most. Everything from mental hardship, financial hardship. So, please keep our public safety people in your in your prayers and in your thoughts. Don't let one or two people that that don't do the job right taint your overall perspective of what the profession of law enforcement is. Law enforcement is a very very valued profession. It's got a lot of integrity. So, please keep them in mind if you're ever in the Washington DC area. Of course, they do they have along with their own memorials and everything. Stop by and you'll see all the names of the law enforcement officers that have died.

Chair Barneycastle commented:

- Again, it's great to see everyone tonight. We had a great meeting last week. We met with the City of King, City of Danbury. A lot of building, new stuff coming to Stokes County. So, look forward to that. It was a great meeting. And I'd like to send a special prayer and thought out tonight to Ron Robertson, his dad passed away last week. Buster who served many years as a board of Commissioners here in Stokes County. So send your thoughts and prayers to everybody at that location. And as Rick said that earlier that if any man in this country needs prayers today, it's our president. He carries a lot on his back and the military always too. Anytime I pray, I pray for the military because without them we don't have no protection. People really need to think about that. Our guys are what looks after us and I for one greatly appreciate them.

County Manager Jeff Sanborn commented:

- I'd just like to comment on one thing. Bryan and I had the opportunity to spend some time with the fire commission last Thursday night, and had a very healthy and productive discussion trying to close the gap between their proposed budget for the fire service district and our concerns about the long- term sustainability of what they're asking for. What we expect now is they're going to go back now and relook at things again. Currently, we expect them to resubmit an updated budget request probably in about a week or so. So in my presentation here in a little bit, you're going to see what was my recommended budget for the fire service district. But recognize that that's likely to change to some degree based on what they come back to us with.

Chair Wood commented:

- I apologize. I failed to mention Walnut Cove in that meeting last week. We met with all three cities; Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King. I apologize for that.

VII. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were stated by the Board.

VIII. Consent Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, except the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the

minutes tab.

a. Support Letter for Belews Creek Early Site Permit

b. Minutes

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the Consent

Agenda. Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

IX. Information Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. School Zone Safety Plan

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Katie Tedder and Randy Campbell (Blue Line Solutions, retired Virginia State Police) to present School Zone Safety Plan.

Campbell began discussing automated school-zone speed enforcement after NC passed Senate Bill 391 (2025). The purpose is to improve school-zone safety using automated speed cameras at no cost to the county (fully violator-funded). Data presented included speed studies from four Stokes County schools. The program would have a 30-day warning period with enforcement beginning after warnings. It would be a \$250 civil fine; no license/insurance points with appeals allowed within 30 days. Sheriff's Office must review and approve each citation.

The Board expressed concern with the revenue model and long-term sustainability, court system capacity, signage inconsistencies around county school zones, accuracy, calibration, and officer training, affidavit process for drivers claiming someone else was driving, and DOT involvement for proper school-zone markings.

The Board tabled the discussion to coordinate with school board, sheriff, county attorney, and DOT before considering implementation.

b. EMS Week Proclamation

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Brandon Gentry to present EMS Week Proclamation.

Gentry requested the commissioners to approve a proclamation declaring May 17th - 23rd as EMS Week in Stokes County.

With no discussion, the Board moved the item to the action agenda tonight.

X. Discussion Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. FY 26-27 Budget Presentation

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Jeff Sanborn to present FY 26-27 Budget Presentation.

Sanborn presented an preview of the Budget and Operating Plan, which included the following:

- The General Fund is planned to be \$78.1M with the same tax rate (58.5 cents). Fund balance expected at year-end is 34.1% which includes the completion of the new animal shelter, ambulance replacements, and the Mountainview Road Green Box site, and 6 new FTEs.
- Within the fire districts staffing expansion is recommended and the tax remains unchanged (9 cents).
- In the five-year forecast there is a potential need to raise tax rate to 59 cents in FY28 to maintain 30% fund balance.
- The first new elementary school is planned around 2029, funded by the 4 cent school capital fund.
- Capital improvements include DSS facility expansion (state covering 50%), jail plumbing overhaul, radio system replacement, and new emergency communications building projected for 2030.

The Board gave strong praise for the improved Operating Plan and discussed printing more hard copies for public transparency. There was also interest in incorporating AI initiatives for communication and workflows. The Board also requested to share the Operating Plan with LGC to support financial credibility. Overall, there were no major objections to the proposed FY27 budget.

b. Aging Planning Committee Appointment

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Olivia Jessup to present Aging Planning Committee Appointment.

Jessup noted that Kayla Bohanon submitted an application to become a member of the Stokes Aging Planning Committee.

The Board nominated Bohanon and moved the item to the action agenda for the next meeting.

c. Board of Health Appointment

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Olivia Jessup to present Board of Health Appointment.

Jessup noted that Tim Mabe's term on the Board of Health would expire this month. He resubmitted an application to continue service as the dental seat on the board.

The Board nominated Mabe and moved the item to the action agenda for the next meeting.

d. Tourism Development Authority Appointment

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Olivia Jessup to present Tourism Development Authority Appointment.

Jessup noted that Jack Witner submitted an application for a vacant position on the Tourism Development Authority.

The Board nominated Witner and moved the item to the action agenda for the next meeting.

XI. Action Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Planning Board Appointment

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to renew the terms for the Planning Board members as follows:

Tommy White
W. Mark Sizemore
Ronnie Tilley
Jeffrey Whitaker
Ronnie Morris
Shannon Stanley
Patrick Flinchum

Additionally, Joe Turpin placed an application for the open Planning Board position for the Yadkin Township.

Commissioner Cox moved to Approve .

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

b. EMS Week Proclamation

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as presented.

Commissioner Cox moved to Approve.

Commissioner Chandler seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XII. Closed Session

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to enter closed session at 8:10 pm.

Commissioner Chandler moved to go into closed session for the following rationales:

- To consider the initial employment or appointment of an individual to any office or position other than a vacancy in the Board of County Commissioners or any public body or to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, and fitness of any public officer or employee other than the Board of Commissioners or some other public body pursuant to G.S 143-318.11a(6).

Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered closed session.

XIII. Adjournment

The Board reentered open session.

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to adjourn.

Vice-Chair Wood moved to adjourn at 9:28 pm.

Commissioner Cox seconded. The motion Passed.

Olivia Jessup
Clerk to the Board

Wayne Barneycastle
Chair

STATE OF NORTH
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COUNTY OF STOKES

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OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY
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DANBURY, NORTH
CAROLINA

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026

Regular Session of the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Regular Session in the Commissioners Chambers on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 9:00 AM with the following members present:

Board of Commissioners Present: Keith Wood, Wayne Barneycastle, Sonya Cox, Brad Chandler, Rick Morris

County Administration Present: County Manager Jeff Sanborn, Assistant County Manager Bryan Miller, Clerk to the Board Olivia Jessup, Director of Finance Tammy Keaton, County Attorney Jennifer Michaud, and Department Heads.

Absent: Eddy McGee

I. Call to Order

Chairman Barneycastle called the meeting to order.

II. Invocation

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Invocation, if desired.

Commissioner Morris delivered the Invocation.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to amend or approve tonight's agenda.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

V. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were stated by the Board.

VI. Discussion Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. FY 26-27 Budget and 5-Year SCOP Discussion

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Jeff Sanborn to present FY 26-27 Budget and 5-Year SCOP Discussion.

Sanborn walked the Board and Senior Leaders through the near-final draft of the county's annual operating plan section by section. He noted the following:

- Mission, vision, values, org chart, and senior staff sections remain unchanged. A new "Support to Our Schools" section needs to be added to both the introduction and table of contents.
- Discussion about whether to include staff contact info in future versions—likely too large if done countywide but may be feasible at the department-level.

Within personnel changes, the following was discussed:

- Year-over-year personnel increases are modest across the five-year plan.
- Superior Court position continues to be funded partly through opioid settlement funds, with acknowledgment that future continuation will require new funding once settlement money ends.
- The Recreation Coordinator position remains in the plan, but hiring would require interlocal agreements. Even if included, it cannot proceed without board approval.
- DSS staffing justified based on high case workloads relative to the state.
- IT help desk support highlighted as important to move forward with.

Additionally, it was noted that the Budget Message and the introductory pages are critical for public understanding; the Board felt the current length and clarity are appropriate. Pictures and presentation quality were noted and generally liked.

Discussing the financials and forecasting, the following was noted:

- Five-year plan includes major projects totaling over \$78M, primarily funded through property taxes.
- New "Budget Guide" section will replace the former "Operating Plan Guide," explaining budgeting methods, funds, and processes.
- Some large swings in departmental budgets were caused by insurance changes and building maintenance costs.
- EMS, Sheriff's Office, and other public safety areas noted for significant impacts (radios, vehicles, medical examiner changes, etc.).
- Review of building component replacements, emergency communications facilities, vehicle lease strategies, and major capital projects.

In closing, Sanborn explained the format of the upcoming public hearing for the budget and thanked staff for work and overall budget quality.

VII. Adjournment

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to adjourn.

Vice-Chair Wood moved to adjourn at 11:26 am.

Commissioner Chandler seconded. The motion Passed.

Olivia Jessup
Clerk to the Board

Wayne Barneycastle
Chair

STATE OF NORTH
CAROLINA

COUNTY OF STOKES

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OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY
GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH
CAROLINA

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026

Regular Session of the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Regular Session in the Commissioners Chambers on Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at 5:30 PM with the following members present:

Board of Commissioners Present: Keith Wood, Wayne Barneycastle, Sonya Cox, Brad Chandler, Rick Morris

County Administration Present: County Manager Jeff Sanborn, Assistant County Manager Bryan Miller, Clerk to the Board Olivia Jessup, Director of Finance Tammy Keaton, and County Attorney Jennifer Michaud.

Absent: None

I. Call to Order

Chairman Barneycastle called the meeting to order.

II. Invocation

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Invocation, if desired.

Commissioner Morris delivered the Invocation.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to amend or approve tonight's agenda.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

V. Public Comments

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for public comments at 5:34 pm.

The following individuals signed up to speak in public comments:

Tim Mabe
Walnut Cove, NC
RE: Data Center

Bertrand Bonnick
1218 North Main Street
Walnut Cove, NC
RE: Parliamentary Procedure

Joyce Triche
1070 Wild Wood Road
Walnut Cove, NC
RE: Data Center

Lou Novak
Walnut Cove, NC
RE: Data Center

Sandy Novak
Walnut Cove, NC
RE: Data Center

Chairman Barneycastle closed the floor for public comments at 5:56pm.

VI. Comments - Managers/Commissioners

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for comments from the manager and commissioners.

Commissioner Cox had no comments.

Vice-Chair Wood commented:

- Welcome everybody. Appreciate y'all coming out. We thank God for the rain. Also being Memorial Day, I've said this many times, every day is Memorial Day. We should be thankful for the ones that died and served the country so we can be here, have the freedom, but extend it to the fire departments, the medics, and the health care people.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Welcome everybody. It's good to have you here. We appreciate your comments, taking the time to come out and share your opinions with us. I would ask that you keep in your prayers the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guard and department of war civilians that are deployed in the hot spots around the world and pray that we keep them safe.

Commissioner Chandler commented:

- Welcome everybody. It pulls at your heart, you know, a lot of the comments today and I definitely feel what you're going through. The next thing is that I guess it's

that with Memorial Day, you know, with the sacrifice that, that everybody's made in our military and even with, like what Commissioner Wood mentioned, with the healthcare and the different services that that people go into that are willing to give their lives. It's very difficult when it comes to people who have died for the rights of us to live and have freedom. And you have both sides; you have some people that say, "hey it's my property and I should be able to do pretty much what I want to do with it." And then there's like what we're hearing tonight. There's people that, "hey, I've got concerns and I've moved here and I've done my due diligence and I want to I want I want to stay the same" or "I don't want that that type of thing to come in." I guess what I'm trying to get to is that sometimes it's very easy to make everything so personal and people have different opinion. My opinion is different than what some of the other people's opinions are when it not just comes to the issue that you're talking about today but talking a whole bunch of other issues as well. So, I think that that everybody wants what's best for Stokes County. There's no there's no personal gain up here. There's nobody that I know of that's trying to harm the community. So what I would ask is because I don't share some of the thoughts that are prevalent with either for or against for the data centers. I think there's certain things that are that are pretty common and it's very factual where you can't argue. However, what I'm asking is please don't take it personal. I know it's hard, I guess, not to do that. Trust me, I have a lot of integrity and if I thought that somebody was making money off this on the board, you would hear directly from me. I'm very open about that. I've lived my life serving the community and willing to give my life and so my word was always me. That's all I had. I mean, I didn't make a lot of money being a police officer, and if you don't have integrity, then you don't have nothing. And just because I became a politician, I refuse to give up my integrity. Because we're starting all over again, however it ends up, please keep it civil and understand that it's not there's not a hidden agenda.

Chair Barneycastle commented:

- Again, I'd like to welcome each and every one of you that's here. Thank you for coming out and voicing your opinion, the differences, active or not. But that's what you need to hear. You need to hear from your community. I think input from your community, their feelings about stuff that's going on in our county. And I greatly appreciate that. I would like to give special thanks to all the military guys that served, that are serving. I didn't. I took the fire departments to the military but still I commend those guys. The freedom we have today just by them serving our country. I would like to send a special prayer out to the NASCAR family tonight with the loss of Kyle Busch. That was a big loss to the NASCAR family. So a special prayer to them.

County Manager Sanborn and Assistant County Manager Miller had no comment.

VII. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were stated by the Board.

VIII. Consent Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, except the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the

minutes tab.

VIIIa.. Tax Office Agenda

VIIIb.. Budget Amendment

VIIIc.. Budget Amendment

VIIId.. Resolution Regarding County Facility Security

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

IX. Information Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

IXa.. Vaya Health Update

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Cara Dohner to present Vaya Health Update.

Dohner gave the following quarterly updates from Vaya Health:

- Vaya manages Medicaid services for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and substance use disorders.
- Foster care services transitioned from Vaya to Blue Cross Blue Shield as of December 1st.
- Update on Medicaid deficit fix: General Assembly approved \$319M to support tailored plans, utilization management, and fraud prevention. Stokes
- County service data shared:
 - Highest service volume among adults.
 - Most common services: physician/specialty and outpatient services.
 - Tailored care to 679 individuals; managed care direct to 164; state-funded to 78
- Hosts crisis response and children's collaborative meetings open to the public.
- Shared info on youth leadership referral program.

The Board requested trend comparisons for prior years which Vaya will follow up on. There was discussion about upcoming Novant takeover of medical services and potential impacts, as well as questions raised regarding Medicaid fraud.

X. Public Hearing

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

Xa.. Public Hearing for FY 26-27 Budget

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for the public hearing for the FY 26-27 Budget at 6:20 pm.

The following individuals signed up to speak in the public hearing:

Jeff Whitaker
Danbury Volunteer Fire Department

Whitaker requested that the Danbury Volunteer Fire Department budget to remain as requested in order to get a new station.

Chairman Barneycastle closed the floor for the public hearing at 6:26pm.

XI. Discussion Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

XIa.. Moratock Park Discussion

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor over to present Moratock Park Discussion.

The Board and Administration noted there were significant concerns about overcrowding, unsafe parking, alcohol issues, and upcoming bridge demolition. There have been multiple DUIs and safety incidents reported.

Board discussion on whether to close park fully during demolition or to close only on weekends/holidays was had. The consensus was to develop a plan to close the park on weekends and holidays starting June 13, escalating to full closure once demolition begins. Tubing will be allowed as long as access/parking rules are followed. Sheriff's office and message boards to help with enforcement and public notice. Picnic shelter reservations to be handled case-by-case.

XII. Action Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

XIIa.. Aging Planning Committee Appointment

Kayla Bohanon submitted an application to become a member of the Stokes Aging Planning Committee. At the last meeting, the Board nominated Bohanon. No further applications have been received.

The Board was polled. All stated Bohannon.

XIb.. Board of Health Appointment

Tim Mabe resubmitted an application to continue service as the dental seat on the Board of Health. At the last meeting, the Board nominated Mabe. No further applications have been received.

The Board was polled. All stated Mabe.

XIc.. Tourism Development Authority Appointment

Jack Witner submitted an application for a vacant position on the Tourism Development Authority. At the last meeting, the Board nominated Witner. No further applications have been received.

The Board was polled. All stated Witner.

XId.. Moratock Park Discussion

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as consensus was reached to close the park on weekends and holidays until demolition starts.

Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Commissioner Morris seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XIII. Adjournment

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Chandler moved to adjourn at 6:46 pm.

Vice-Chair Wood seconded. The motion Passed.

Olivia Jessup
Clerk to the Board

Wayne Barneycastle
Chair

STATE OF NORTH
CAROLINA

COUNTY OF STOKES

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OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY
GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH
CAROLINA

MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2026

Regular Session of the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Regular Session in the Commissioners Chambers on Monday, June 8, 2026 at 6:00 PM with the following members present:

Board of Commissioners Present: Keith Wood, Wayne Barneycastle, Sonya Cox, Brad Chandler, Rick Morris

County Administration Present: County Manager Jeff Sanborn, Assistant County Manager Bryan Miller, Clerk to the Board Olivia Jessup, Director of Finance Tammy Keaton, and County Attorney Jennifer Michaud.

Absent: None

I. Call to Order

Chairman Barneycastle called the meeting to order.

II. Invocation

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Invocation, if desired.

Commissioner Chandler delivered the Invocation.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Barneycastle invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to amend or approve tonight's agenda.

V. Public Comments

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for public comments at 6:03pm.

The following individuals signed up to speak in public comments:

Corina Engrissei

1468 N Stokes School Road
RE: Rezoning for Data Centers

Susan
Stokes County, NC
RE: Data Centers

Michael Hartley
Stokes County
RE: Data Centers

Martha Hartley
Stokes County
RE: Data Centers

Bertrand Bonnick
1218 N Main Street
RE: Parlimentary Procedure and Data Centers

Sandy Novak
Walnut Cove, NC
RE: Data Centers

Tim Mabe

Diane Coffel
Walnut Cove
RE: Data Centers

Sheryl Sepessy
2845 Tuttle Road
RE: Data Centers

Joyce Turche
1070 Wildwood
Walnut Cove
RE: Data Center

Chairman Barneycastle closed the floor for public comments at 6:49pm.

VI. Comments - Managers/Commissioners

Chairman Barneycastle opened the floor for comments from the manager and commissioners.

Commissioner Chandler commented:

- First of all, thanks for everybody coming out, everybody that's watching on YouTube and streaming. I think it's very important to be honest with you. I wish that that that we'd have more compassion and more people that come out to all of our issues in Stokes County. I think a lot of times when you when you don't, you're really involved right now

and I wish you'd have been involved in other issues but you listen to other people or you didn't pay it no mind. I get it everyone's got a life. I mean, I've been there. But, thank you very much for coming out. I see the compassion and the gentleman that talked about he didn't have the really the facts and the data, but he's speaking from his heart. I thank everybody for coming out and you're right, it's a very hard decision. It's not easy either way. Moving ahead a little bit is I just want to remember, June 6, 1944, American forces were storming Normandy Beach, 50 miles of coastline. It's easy to forget the ones that died. Of course, they're gone. And there were a lot more that survived and they paid for it a lot of times with physical disability, mental disability, but it's the families that that really suffer. And it's just like the Carol County Sheriff's Deputy that was murdered, ambushed a couple weeks ago, born and raised in Surry County. He had two kids, wife, and it's gone. And again, it's the families that are always going to be impacted. But please I pray daily for our military and I pray daily for our public safety personnel. Please keep the families and please don't forget history. And at times I think history is trying to repeat itself a little bit. The one thing that the one thing you need to remember, our freedom isn't free and it can go away real quick and I would hope that we can all put our differences aside. You're never going to please everybody, and everyone isn't going to have the same opinion. But I think, as Americans, we can all get behind things. Thank God that we have heroes that go serve in the military and serve in public safety and are willing to give their life that we have now and we want to have in a future for our kids.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- I'd like to welcome everybody. Thank the speakers for getting up and sharing your opinions with us. We really appreciate that. Also welcome folks that might be watching online. Hopefully we've got a lot of them tonight as well. That's all I have.

Vice-Chair Wood commented:

- Thank everybody for coming out. It's been a great week with Novant in charge of the hospital.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- I'd just like to thank everybody that's watching online and those who came to talk tonight and we're taking notes and listening to your opinions and your comments, and we will definitely have that under consideration as we move forward when and if Mr. Nations resubmits his request which he has not yet.

Chair Barneycastle commented:

- Again, I thank each and every one of you for being here. Trust me, I can only speak for myself, I listen to what you're saying, and I take all that in consideration. If I don't reply back to your email or your phone call, it's not that I'm ignoring you. None whatsoever. I read them. I listen to them., I'd spend all day trying to reply back to all of them, but I really do appreciate your concerns about this. And I'm like y'all. I'm going to pray about this thing. And the main thing I want you to remember today is what Commissioner Chandler said, pray for our military so we can still have the freedom that we got right here today. Again, thank y'all for being here.

County Manager Jeff Sanborn commented:

- I'd just like to tell a good news story. A couple of years ago, Wieland Copper approached us with an economic development proposal to expand their lines there out at the plant. They went through with that thing, I think work started I think about Christmas time in 2024. And if I recall correctly, at the time they were promising, \$20 million of investment and 50 new jobs, something like that. Bryan and Tori and I had the opportunity to go out there and tour the plant today to see what the result was, and it is just phenomenal. That plant is going like gang busters. If you had the opportunity to go out there and they extended the invitation for you all to come out there and take a look here in the near future as well. And you compare it to what we saw back in the November time frame of 2024, it's night and day in terms of the activity in that plant and the and the copper products are being produced. You know, they've blown through that, roughly \$20 million investment promise that they that they made at the time, and they've doubled the new employee promise that they made at the time. They've hired more than 100 new employees and they're just bursting at the seams. The story they told us today was it's really two factors and really one really big factor and one smaller factor. It's the demand being created by data centers primarily and it's also due to President Trump's tariffs on copper products. It's requiring a lot more domestic production but they're doing great and it was really neat to see.

VII. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were stated by the Board.

VIII. Consent Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Minutes

b. Project Ordinances

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the Consent

Agenda. Commissioner Chandler moved to Approve .

Commissioner Morris seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

IX. Information Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Retirement Recognition

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Jamie Clark to present Retirement Recognition.

HR Director Clark recognized Stephanie Mabe for her 28 years of service with Stokes County DSS. Mabe began 1997 as an Income Maintenance Caseworker, advancing to Caseworker III. She served the last nearly 22 years as a Child Support Agent II. Clark praised her dedication, compassion, professionalism, pride in her work, and even her famously perfect hair and thriving office plants.

The Board congratulated Mabe and thanked her for her service.

X. Discussion Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Annual Budget Ordinance

Chairman Barneycastle turned the floor over to Jeff Sanborn to present Annual Budget Ordinance.

Sanborn presented the final version, noting the early and extensive work involved in preparing the budget meant that the final draft was basically what had last been presented. The operating plan still needed minor adjustments and would be ready for adoption at the next meeting.

With little discussion, the Board moved the item to the Action agenda for tonight's meeting.

XI. Action Agenda

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

a. Annual Budget Ordinance

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to approve the item as presented.

Commissioner Morris moved to Approve .

Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion.

The motion passed (5-0).

XII. Closed Session

Chairman Barneycastle made a motion to enter closed session at 7:03 pm for the following rationales:

To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations, and to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) and (4).

Commissioner Cox seconded the motion.

With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered closed session.

XIII. Adjournment

The Board reentered open session.

Chairman Barneycastle entertained a motion to adjourn.

Vice-Chair Wood moved to adjourn at 7:48 pm.

Commissioner Chandler seconded. The motion Passed.

Olivia Jessup
Clerk to the Board

Wayne Barneycastle
Chair



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: VIII.b

Budget Amendments FY 2026-2027

Drafter: Tammy Keaton, Finance Director

Summary:

Budget Amendment #1 - Budget realignment to integrate revenue, allot for contract employee, and reduce appropriated fund balance.

Budget Amendment #2 - Appropriate Fire District Fund Balance to re-issue payment to Pilot Mt. Rescue for receipt of expired check.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Budget Amendment 1 07132026.pdf](#)

[Budget Amendment 2 07132026.pdf](#)

**STOKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
GENERAL FUND****BOARD MEETING DATE:** July 13, 2026

WHEREAS, the Budget Officer recommends, and the Board now desires to amend the FY2026-2027 **General Fund** as outlined below in "**Exhibit A**" to the budget,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Stokes as follows:

1. That the FY2026-2027 amendment(s) listed in "**Exhibit A**" below be hereby adopted.
2. That this ordinance shall be effective upon adoption.
3. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer, and to the Finance Director.

ADOPTED this 13th day of July 2026

Requesting Department: Finance Department – Tammy Keaton
Budget Amendment Item: 100-3991-3991000 - Fund Balance Appropriated

Description and Justification:

To adjust the budget to reduce the total Appropriated Fund Balance (\$694,160), to include Penalties and Interest Revenue (\$200,000), Salaries & Wages-Contract (\$21,840) for the Tax Admin Department, and to adjust the Equipment line item for the Sheriff's Office (\$516,000).

Funding Source: Appropriated Fund Balance

Exhibit A: Account Description	Increase (Decrease)	
	Revenues	Expenditures
100-3991-3991000 - Fund Balance Appropriated	\$ (694,160.00)	\$ -
100-4140-5000035 - Salaries & Wages - Contract	\$ -	\$ 21,840.00
100-3100-3100170 - Penalties & Interest	\$ 200,000.00	\$ -
100-4310-5000510 - Equipment	\$ -	\$ (516,000.00)
TOTAL	\$ (494,160.00)	\$ (494,160.00)

Verified by the Clerk to the Board:

Clerk to the Board

Tammy E. Keaton
Department Manager

7-6-2026
Date

[Signature]
County Manager

7/7/26
Date

Tammy E. Keaton
Finance Director

7-6-2026
Date

**STOKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
GENERAL FUND**BOARD MEETING DATE: July 13, 2026

WHEREAS, the Budget Officer recommends, and the Board now desires to amend the FY2026-2027 General Fund as outlined below in "**Exhibit A**" to the budget,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Stokes as follows:

1. That the FY2026-2027 amendment(s) listed in "**Exhibit A**" below be hereby adopted.
2. That this ordinance shall be effective upon adoption.
3. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer, and to the Finance Director.

ADOPTED this 13th day of July 2026

Requesting Department: Finance Department – Tammy Keaton
Budget Amendment Item: 209-3991-3991000 - Fund Balance Appropriated

Description and Justification:

To appropriate funds to reissue a payment to Pilot Mt. Rescue due to receiving an expired check (September 2024) in the mail on July 1, 2026.

Funding Source: Appropriated Fund Balance

Exhibit A: Account Description	Increase (Decrease)	
	Revenues	Expenditures
209-3991-3991000 - Fund Balance Appropriated	\$ 14,006.74	\$ -
209-4345-5005013 - Pay to Pilot Mt. Rescue	\$ -	\$ 14,006.74
TOTAL	\$ 14,006.74	\$ 14,006.74

Verified by the Clerk to the Board:

Clerk to the Board

Tammy E. Keaton 7-6-2026
Department Manager Date

[Signature] 7/7/26
County Manager Date

Tammy E. Keaton 7-6-2026
Finance Director Date



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: IX.a

2025 Community Health Assessment (CHA)

Drafter: Tammy Martin

Summary:

Tammy Martin will present the 2025 Community Health Assessment.

ATTACHMENTS:

[STOKES 2025 CHA .docx](#)



STOKES COUNTY



COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

2025



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DEDICATION

THE 2026 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT IS DEDICATED TO

MELINDA SEALEY

FOR OVER THREE DECADES, MELINDA SEALEY HAS BEEN A CORNERSTONE OF CARE, COMPASSION, AND COMMITMENT AT THE STOKES COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT. SERVING AS A LAB AND REFERRAL NURSE, SHE HAS PLAYED AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN CONNECTING PATIENTS TO THE SERVICES THEY NEED, PROVIDING CRITICAL LAB SUPPORT AND SERVING AS A TRUSTED AND STEADY PRESENCE FOR BOTH STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

FROM HER EARLIEST DAYS ON THE JOB TO HER 30TH YEAR, MELINDA HAS CONSISTENTLY GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND, NOT ONLY ENSURING THAT PROCEDURES ARE DONE WITH PRECISION AND CARE, BUT ALSO TAKING THE TIME TO TRULY LISTEN TO PATIENTS, COMFORT FAMILIES, AND SUPPORT HER COLLEAGUES WITH KINDNESS AND PROFESSIONALISM.

HER WORK BEHIND THE SCENES; QUIET, SKILLED, AND DEEPLY DEPENDABLE, HAS IMPACTED COUNTLESS LIVES IN STOKES COUNTY. WHETHER COORDINATING LAB RESULTS, HELPING SOMEONE NAVIGATE A COMPLEX REFERRAL, OR SIMPLY OFFERING A REASSURING WORD, MELINDA HAS BEEN AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO SERVE WITH HEART.

AS WE REFLECT ON HER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE, WE EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST GRATITUDE FOR THE DEDICATION, INTEGRITY, AND HUMANITY SHE HAS BROUGHT TO PUBLIC HEALTH. THE DIFFERENCE SHE HAS MADE CANNOT BE MEASURED, BUT IT WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED.

THANK YOU, MELINDA SEALEY, FOR 30 REMARKABLE YEARS OF SERVICE. YOU HAVE MADE A LASTING IMPACT ON THIS COMMUNITY AND ON ALL OF US WHO HAVE HAD THE HONOR TO WORK WITH YOU.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Community Health Assessment Planning Committee consisted of representatives from sixteen community organizations in Stokes County. The Stokes County Health Department served as the fiscal agent for the partnership and provided facilitation and coordination throughout the assessment process. Additionally, the Community Health Assessment team supported the dissemination of information and the identification of key health priorities. Members of the Community Health Assessment Planning Committee include:

Stokes County Health Department
Insight Human Services – Derrick Vickers
Stokes Partnership for Children – Shanda Cox
Stokes County Collaborative
Stokes Citizens for Safe and Healthy Communities
Stokes County Resiliency Collaborative
Vaya Health
Stokes County EMS
Daymark Recovery Services
Stokes County Schools
Youth Haven Services
Parenting Path
Surry/Stokes Friends of Youth
Stokes County Sheriff's Office / Law Enforcement
Non-Profit Leaders
Community Members

Finally, this assessment process would not have been possible without the active involvement of numerous professionals and community members. We extend our sincere gratitude to all who completed the Community Health Assessment survey, participated in community conversations, and contributed to the Community Health Improvement Plan discussions and prioritization activities.

CHA STEERING COMMITTEE

The Community Health Assessment (CHA), conducted by the Stokes County Health Department, utilizes an inclusive approach to foster community engagement, build trust, and strengthen support for public health initiatives. The CHA Steering Committee and collaborating partners possess a thorough understanding of community dynamics and are committed to dedicating the necessary time and effort to ensure the success of the CHA process.

Name	Title	Organization
Tammy Martin	Health Director	Stokes County Health Department
Hayley Shelton	Assistant Health Director	SCHD
Lisa Cassidy-Vu	Medical Director	SCHD
Joanie Spencer	Clinical Supervisor	SCHD
Savannah Hayes	SCOPE Coordinator	SCHD
Kayla Bohannon	Community Health Worker	SCHD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS-BOARD OF HEALTH

A Board of Health is a local governing or advisory body responsible for protecting and promoting the health of the community. It provides oversight and guidance to the local health department, adopts public health policies and regulations, and ensures compliance with state and federal public health laws. The Board of Health also reviews community health data, supports public health initiatives, and helps set priorities that address the health needs and well-being of the community.

Name	Title	Organization
Tammy Martin	Health Director	Stokes County Health Department
Hayley Shelton	Assistant Health Director	SCHD
Lisa Cassidy-Vu	Medical Director	SCHD
Chad Jarvis	NRP	Public Member
Candice Fix	Optometrist	Magnolia Eye Care
Amber Hairford	MD-Physician	Novant Health
Ashley O'Steen	Duke Clinical Trials	Public Member
Wayne Barneycastle	County Commissioner	Stokes County
Steven Jones	Professional Engineer	Salem Engineering
Tim Mabe	Dentist	Mabe & Mabe Dentistry
Ross Kiser	Pharmacist	Stokes Pharmacy
Beverly Essick	RN, MSN	Retired

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to Kathy, Director of Community Health Assessment and her team at the NCDHHS Division of Public Health, for her guidance and expertise throughout the development of this assessment.

WELCOME

Hi, I'm Tammy Martin.

Dear Residents and Community Partners,

I am pleased to share with you the 2026 Stokes County Community Health Assessment (CHA), a comprehensive look at the health and well-being of our county.

This is the first time the Stokes County Health Department has conducted a Community Health Assessment of this kind. The report brings together local health data, results from a county-wide community survey, and insights from focus groups. Together, these help us better understand the strengths and challenges that affect the health of Stokes County residents. The CHA looks beyond doctors and hospitals; it considers the many factors that influence health in our communities. This includes access to affordable housing, healthy food, transportation, quality education, job opportunities, and more. A key focus of the report is health equity, which means making sure that everyone in Stokes County has a fair opportunity to live a healthy life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

This assessment is the result of a year-long effort that began in the summer of 2024. During this time, we collected data on healthcare access, chronic and infectious diseases, health behaviors, and maternal and child health. The assessment was guided by a team of Stokes County Health Department staff and a steering committee made up of local partners who helped shape the process. These partners were vital in encouraging community participation, identifying priority issues, and helping us understand the data in context.

We are deeply grateful to all who shared their time, input, and perspectives. Your voices helped shape this report, and we hope you see your contributions reflected in its pages.

While the CHA offers important insights, it is just the beginning. We see this as the foundation for future collaboration and action, so that everyone in Stokes County has the opportunity to achieve their best health.

Sincerely,

Tammy Martin, MSHE MPH, Health Director
Stokes County Health Department



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISION STATEMENT

To create a community where all Stokes County residents enjoy optimal health and wellbeing through equity, prevention, and strong community partnerships.

A FOUNDATION FOR ACTION

This 2026 Stokes County CHA offers a comprehensive snapshot of health and wellness in the county. It incorporates both public health data and firsthand feedback from residents.

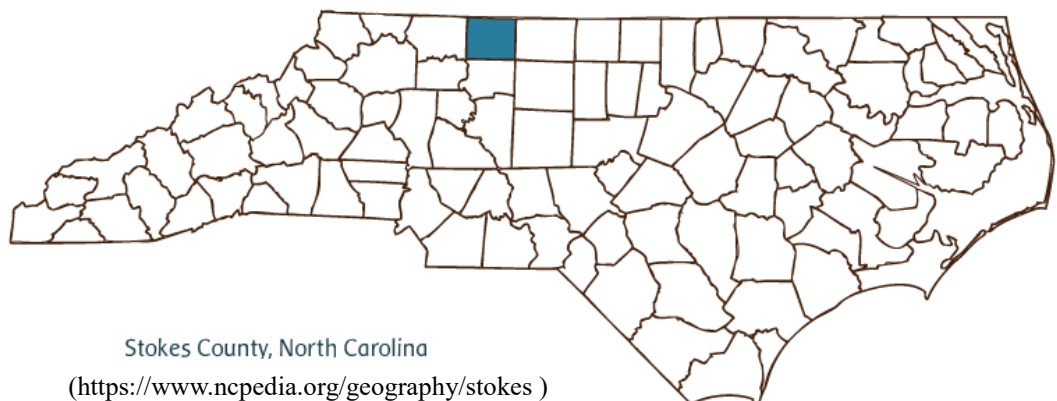
This marks the first time that Stokes County has conducted a CHA using this enhanced, community-centered approach, gathering input across a wide range of health topics, including:

- Access to healthcare
- Nutrition and food security
- Physical activity
- Mental and behavioral health
- Environmental and social determinants of health

Over 700 community members participated through surveys and focus groups. The findings reflect the strengths, challenges, and health disparities present in Stokes County today. The assessment also emphasizes the many non-medical factors that shape health, such as housing, education, income, transportation, and access to healthy food.

This report sheds light on how differences in resources and opportunities contribute to unequal health outcomes among residents. By understanding these root causes, Stokes County is better positioned to take targeted, informed actions that promote health equity and improve quality of life for all.

The ongoing monitoring of population health is a core responsibility of local health departments. As the primary source of local health information, the Stokes County Health Department remains committed to increasing the availability of high-quality, accessible health services, and to working in partnership with the community to ensure everyone has the opportunity to achieve their best possible health.



ABOUT THE 2026 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE & FRAMEWORK

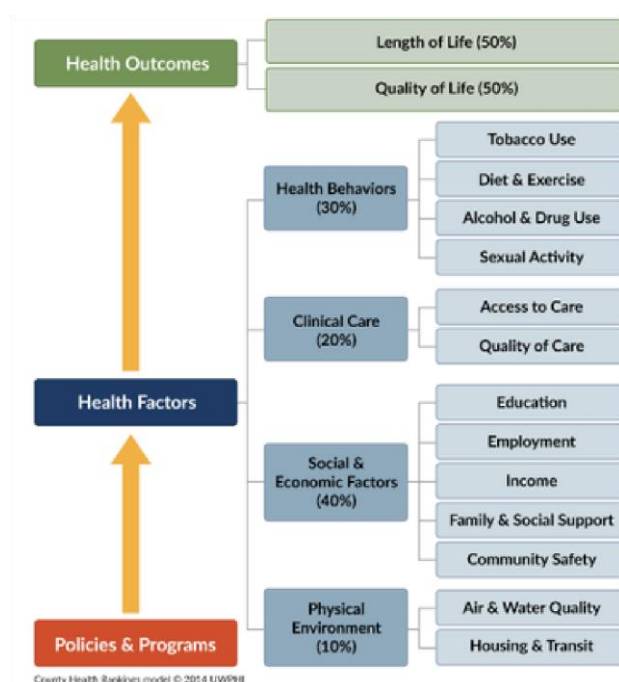
Stokes County's Community Health Assessment (CHA) uses the Population Health Framework and Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) to identify and address health disparities. This approach highlights the role of social determinants of health and promotes cross-sector collaboration to improve community well-being.

The Population Health Framework, used in models like the County Health Rankings, identifies Health Outcomes, length of life and quality of life (50% each) and the factors influencing them:

- Health Behaviors: 30%
- Clinical Care: 20%
- Social & Economic Factors: 40%
- Physical Environment: 10%

RBA guides Stokes County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), helping track indicators, evaluate programs, and focus on results for priorities like mental health, substance use, and chronic illness. It emphasizes measurable outcomes, cross-sector accountability, and continuous improvement using feedback loops like “Is anyone better off?” and “Turn the Curve” thinking.

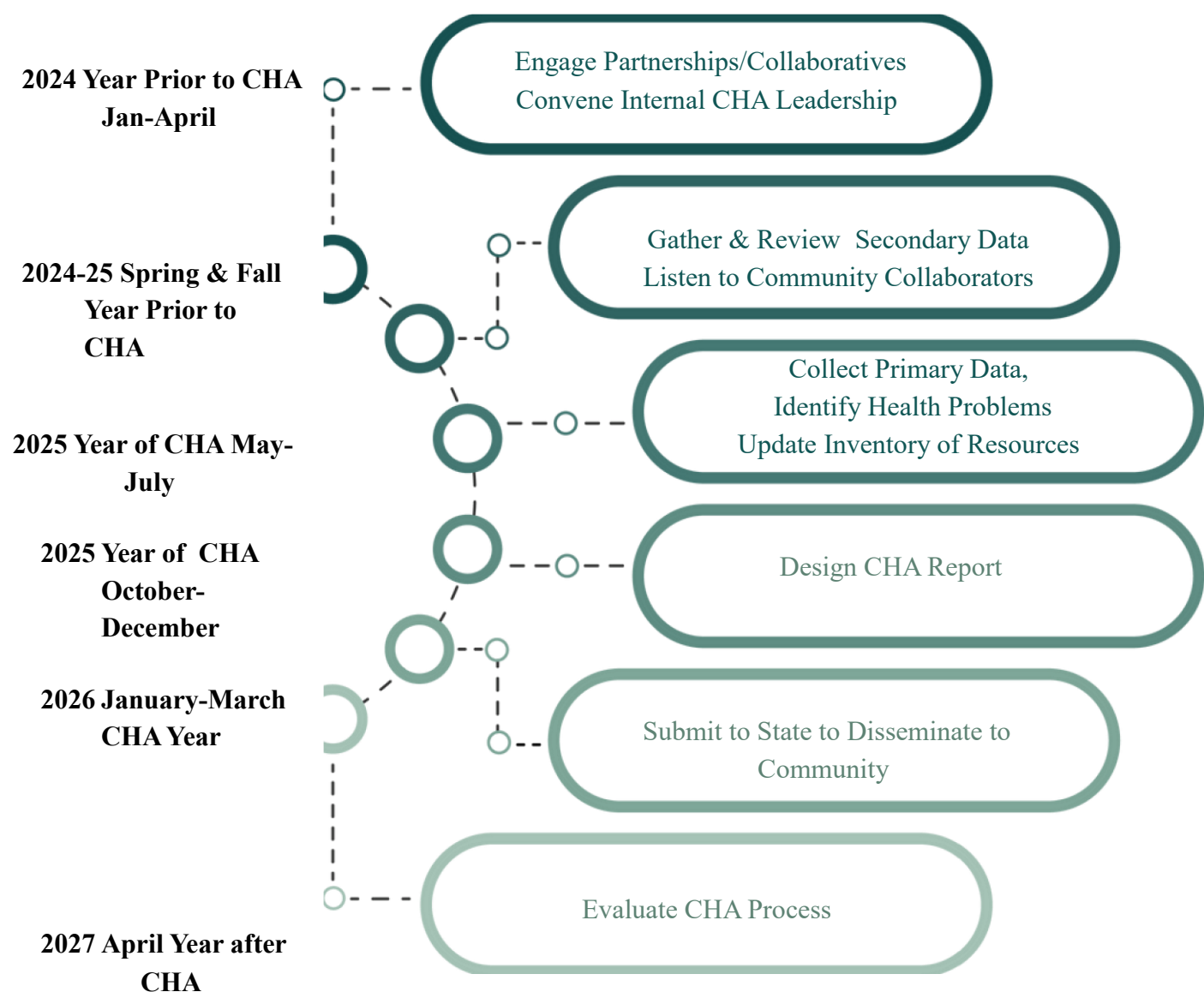
By combining the Population Health Framework with RBA, Stokes County aligns programs, policies, and partnerships to reduce health disparities and build a healthier, more equitable community.



(<https://medium.com/@msiddanati/social-determinants-of-health-the-new-frontier-for-value-based-care-37239bfc350d>)

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

In preparation for the Community Health Assessment (CHA), Stokes County has developed a structured timeline to guide the process. The year prior to the CHA (2024), the county engaged with community partnerships and collaboratives and convened with the internal CHA leadership team. From January to April 2024, secondary data was gathered and reviewed, while input from community collaborators was actively sought. In May 2025, the Community Health Survey was developed and revised, primary data was collected, key health problems were identified, and the inventory of community resources was updated. Between October and December 2025, the design and drafting of the CHA report took place. From January to March 2026, the completed CHA was submitted to the state and disseminated to the community. Finally, in April 2027, one year after the CHA, the county evaluates the assessment process to inform improvements for future cycles.



STOKES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS

According to the 2023 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Stokes County ranks:

- 43rd for Health Outcomes
- 58th for Health Factors

These rankings consider a broad range of indicators including high school graduation rates, access to healthy food, rates of uninsured individuals, and more. While rankings provide a helpful snapshot, they do not fully reflect the lived experiences of residents or the complexity of local health challenges.

In many areas of Stokes County, residents benefit from strong community connections, a supportive faith-based network, and close relationships with local service providers. However, challenges persist, especially in terms of:

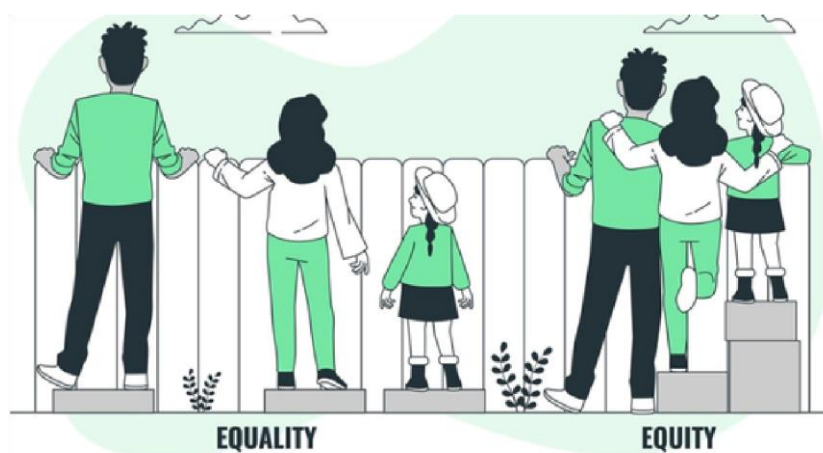
- Limited access to primary care, mental health, and dental services
- Food insecurity and lack of nearby full-service grocery stores
- Transportation barriers for seniors and families without reliable vehicles
- Persistent economic disparities, including high poverty rates in some communities

WHY HEALTH EQUITY MATTERS IN STOKES COUNTY

Even though Stokes County may not face the same urban pressures as larger communities, the gap between those with more and those with less remains significant. Health equity means closing that gap, ensuring every resident, no matter their ZIP code, background, or income, has the opportunity to live a healthy life.

By improving access to healthcare, education, nutritious food, and safe housing, and by listening to the voices of residents, we can build a healthier future for everyone in Stokes County.

HEALTH EQUITY IS NOT JUST A GOAL, IT'S A COMMITMENT TO FAIRNESS, INCLUSION, AND OPPORTUNITY.



(<https://blog-en.learningcycle.co/2025/03/04/equity-vs-equality-why-fairness-isnt-one-size-fits-all/>)

KEY FINDINGS

Stokes County has an estimated population of approximately 46,324 residents, according to the 2025 World Population Review. The racial composition of the county is predominantly White (91.32%), followed by individuals identifying as two or more races (3.88%), Black or African American (3.44%), other races (1.13%), Native American (0.2%), and Asian (0.04%).

Approximately 96.6% of residents speak English. The county has experienced a noticeable increase in its older adult population, rising from 21.8% in 2021 to 23.3% in 2023, reflecting an aging population and an associated rise in chronic health concerns. Adults aged 18–64 make up approximately 55.2% of the population. Females account for 50.9% of residents, while males comprise 48.1%.

According to Census.gov, the median household income in Stokes County was \$60,063 in 2023. The county's poverty rate declined from 12.1% in 2020 to 10.5% in 2023. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show the unemployment rate was 3.6% in September 2025, following a significant spike to 10.9% in May 2020. Additionally, 89.9% of residents aged 25 and older hold a high school diploma or higher.

PEER COUNTY REVIEW

When comparing Stokes County to peer counties Davie, Jackson, and McDowell, Stokes appears to be performing relatively well across several key economic indicators. In 2023, the median household income in Stokes County was \$60,063, higher than McDowell County (\$55,527) and Jackson County (\$53,479), though lower than Davie County (\$73,234). The poverty rate in Stokes County is 10.5%, which is lower than all peer counties except Davie (9.7%); both McDowell and Jackson counties exceed 12%. Unemployment in Stokes County stands at 3.6%, placing it near the middle of the peer range, which spans from approximately 2.9% to 4.5%. Overall, these indicators suggest that Stokes County is faring relatively well compared to counties of similar size and rural context, particularly in terms of income stability and lower poverty levels.

Between 2016 and 2021, Stokes County recorded 87 suicide deaths, while from 2021 to 2025 there were 76 deaths, indicating a slight decline. The county has also experienced fluctuations in substance-related emergencies. The emergency room visit rate for overdose decreased from 103 per 100,000 to 37 per 100,000 in 2025. Alcohol-attributable deaths also declined over this period, with a rate of 78.4 per 100,000 (35 deaths) in 2021 compared to 63.7 per 100,000 (29 deaths) in 2025. However, emergency department visits related to alcohol increased from 194 visits in 2021 to 266 visits in 2025, signaling that alcohol use continues to be a significant public health concern in the county. Overall, while some mortality indicators have improved, the rising emergency department visits highlight ongoing challenges with substance use in Stokes County.

HEALTH PRIORITIES FOR STOKES

The Stokes County CHA Committee, made up of diverse local stakeholders including public health professionals, healthcare providers, educators, non-profit leaders, and community members, reviewed findings from the 2025 Community Health Survey, focus groups, and secondary health data. The committee also reflected on progress and lessons learned from the 2021 CHA. Through this collaborative process, the following top three health priorities in 2026 were identified for Stokes County as:

Mental Health & Substance Use

- Improve access to mental health and substance use treatment
- Reduce stigma around seeking help
- Expand prevention and early intervention services



Chronic Illness

- Enhance chronic disease prevention, education, and management
- Support increased access to healthcare providers and screenings
- Promote community-based wellness programs



Healthy Eating & Exercise

- Improve access to affordable, nutritious food
- Increase opportunities for physical activity
- Support health education initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles



MOVING FORWARD

These health priorities will guide public health planning, community programming, and collaborative initiatives throughout the next four years. The CHA Committee encourages ongoing collaboration among local agencies, organizations, and residents to address these focus areas through targeted strategies, shared resources, and community engagement.

By working together, Stokes County can continue building a healthier, more resilient community where all residents have the opportunity to thrive.

Our Community

GEOGRAPHY & NATURAL FEATURES

Stokes County, located in the northwestern Piedmont region of North Carolina, encompasses a total area of approximately 456 square miles (1,181 km²), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Of this, 452 square miles is land, and approximately 4 square miles (0.89%) is water. The county features gently rolling terrain typical of the Piedmont, but its landscape is notably shaped by the Sauratown Mountains, an isolated range that rises dramatically from the surrounding lowlands. These mountains, which span about 5% of the county's area, are named after the Saura Native American tribe that once inhabited the region. The range is a remnant of the Blue Ridge Mountains and includes Moore's Knob, which stands as the highest peak at 2,579 feet (786 m) above sea level. Most of the county, however, lies below 1,000 feet (300 m) in elevation. The Dan River flows diagonally across the county from northwest to southeast, providing over 56 miles of waterway for recreational use. Prominent natural attractions include:

- Hanging Rock State Park, offering hiking, camping, and scenic vistas
- Most of Belews Lake, which supports boating, fishing, and other outdoor activities



GOVERNMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Stokes County was officially established in 1789 and is a member of the Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments.

The county government includes:

- Five elected County Commissioners
- An appointed County Manager and Tax Administrator
- Other elected officials such as the Sheriff, Clerk of Court, and Register of Deeds

The Stokes County Schools system is governed by a five-member School Board, which appoints a Superintendent and submits the annual school budget to the County Commissioners for approval.

Our Community

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

The Stokes County Health Department, part of the county government, operates from two facilities and provides comprehensive public health services to the community. Comprised of nine key divisions and staffed by 29 full-time employees, the department works collaboratively to implement programs, monitor health trends, deliver clinical care, and address the evolving needs of residents.

1. Executive

- Provides leadership, strategic planning, and oversight for the entire health department.
- Ensures compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and policies.
- Manages budgets, staff, and organizational goals.

2. Clinical Services

- Offers direct medical care and preventive health services to the community.
- Includes immunizations, communicable disease testing and treatment, adult and child health visits, and chronic disease management.

3. Environmental Health

- Monitors and regulates environmental factors that affect public health.
- Handles inspections of restaurants, public facilities, water quality, septic systems, and other sanitation concerns.
- Investigates complaints related to environmental hazards.

4. Health Administration

- Manages operational functions such as budgeting, human resources, program coordination, and record-keeping.
- Supports program planning, quality improvement, and departmental compliance.

5. CMARC (Care Management for At-Risk Children)

- Provides care coordination and support services for children with complex health needs.
- Works with families, schools, and providers

6. CMHRP (Care Management for High-Risk Pregnancies)

- Offers case management and support for pregnant individuals at high risk for complications.
- Provides education, monitoring, and referrals to improve maternal and infant health outcomes.

7. WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)

- Provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and supplemental food assistance to low-income pregnant and postpartum individuals, infants, and children up to age five.
- Connects families to healthcare and community resources.

8. Health Education

- Develops and delivers programs to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent disease.
- Provides community workshops, school programs, and outreach on topics such as nutrition, physical activity, substance abuse prevention, and chronic disease management.

9. Emergency Preparedness

- Plans for and responds to public health emergencies, such as natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or bioterrorism threats.
- Coordinates drills, trains staff and community partners, and ensures resources are ready for rapid response.



(<https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/departments/health-human-services/public-health-services>)

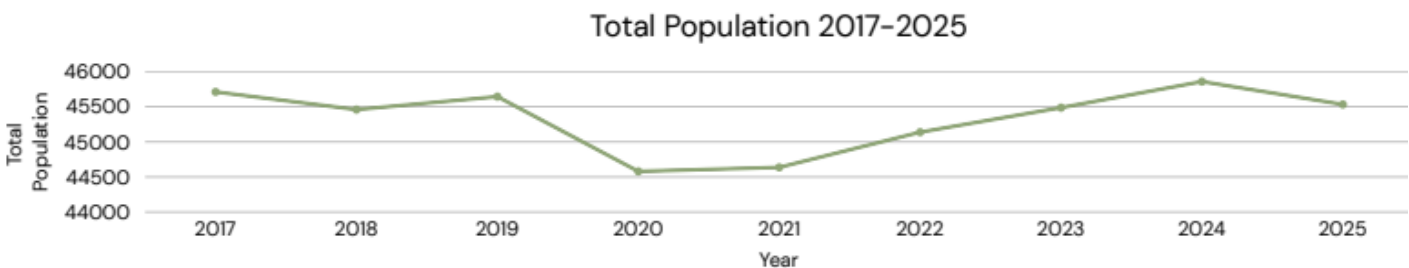
DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

Stokes County includes several incorporated and many unincorporated towns. The three incorporated municipalities are:

- City of King – the largest municipality, with a population of 7,792
- Town of Walnut Cove – population 1,604
- Town of Danbury – the county seat, with a population of 186
- (Source: World Population Review, 2023)

According to the World Population Review, Stokes County had an estimated population of 46,324 as of July 1, 2025, reflecting a 2.3% growth since the 2020 Census. This marks a positive shift from previous declines noted in earlier assessments.



(<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/NCSTOK9POP>)

2025 World Population Review	Total Population
Stokes County	46,324
Davie County	45,383
North Carolina	11,046,024

2025 Total Stokes Population: 46,324

2030 Projected Total Stokes County Population: 56,809

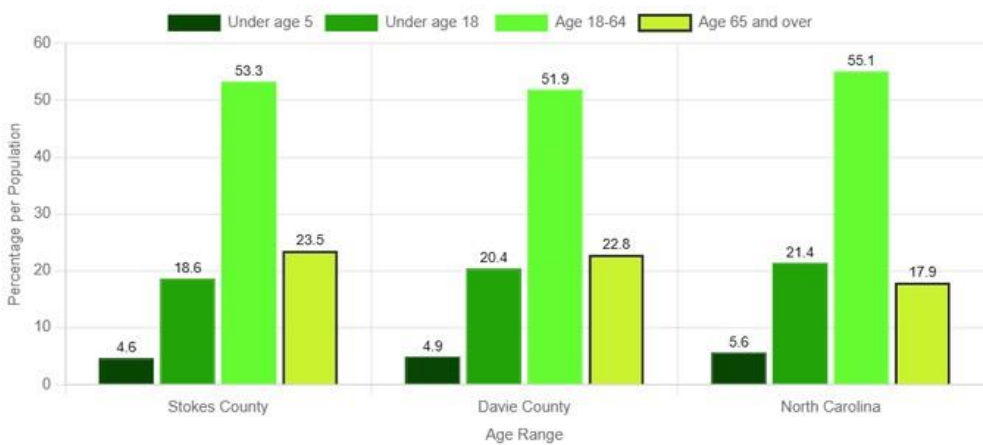


AGE

The share of older adults in Stokes County has increased from 21.8% in 2021 to 23.3% in 2023, reflecting a steadily aging population. Currently, 4.6% of Stokes County residents are under age 5, 18.6% are under age 18, and 23.5% are age 65 and older.

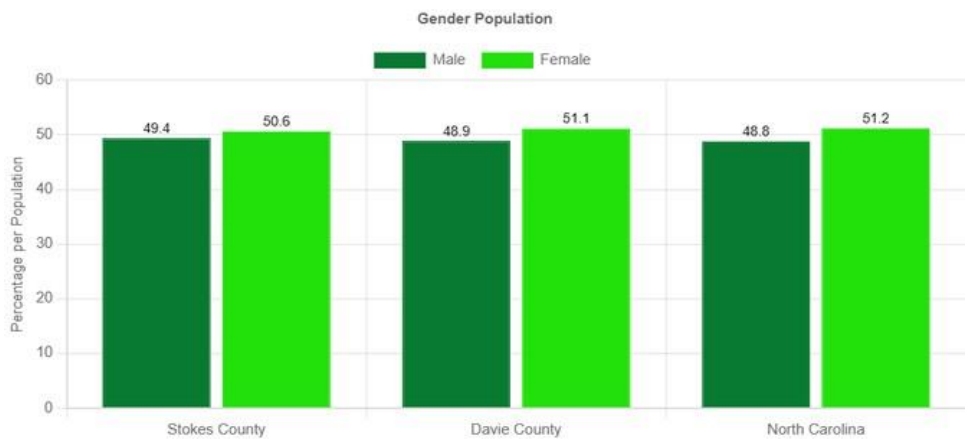
Davie County has a slightly larger proportion of young children, with 4.9% of residents under age 5 and 20.4% under age 18, while its older adult population is somewhat smaller than Stokes County's, at 22.8% age 65 and over. In contrast, North Carolina overall has a younger age profile, with 5.6% of the population under age 5, 21.4% under age 18, and 17.9% age 65 or older.

Overall, these figures highlight that Stokes County has an older population than both Davie County and the state, underscoring the growing importance of services and planning focused on aging adults.



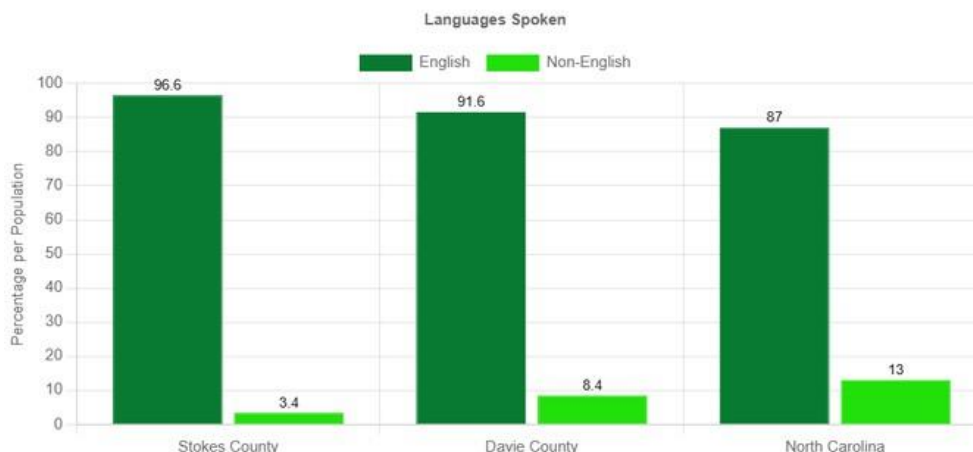
GENDER

Stokes County's population is 50.6% female, which is slightly below the North Carolina statewide average of 51.1%, a difference of just 0.5 percentage points, indicating a very similar gender distribution. Davie County mirrors the state average, with 51.1% female. Overall, the gender distribution in Stokes County, Davie County, and North Carolina remains balanced.



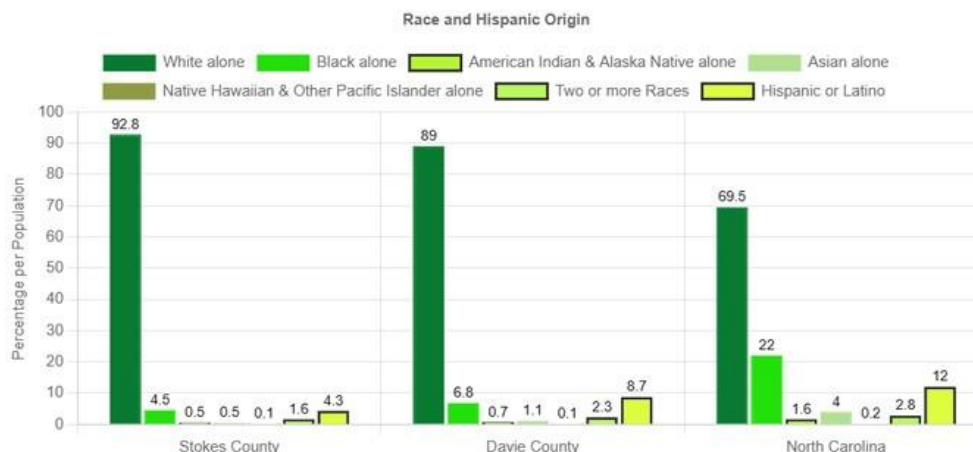
LANGUAGE SPOKEN

English is the primary language spoken among Stokes County residents (96.6%), a higher proportion than Davie County (91.6%) and North Carolina overall (87%). This suggests that Stokes County has a more linguistically homogeneous population compared to both Davie County and the state, where a larger share of residents speak a language other than English at home.



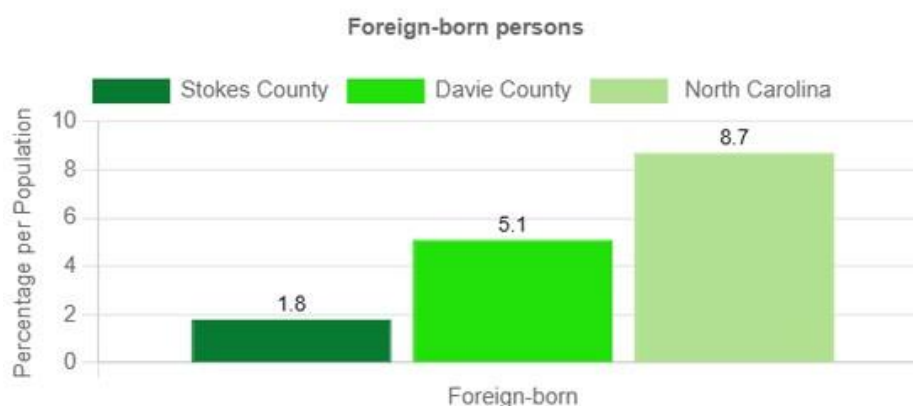
RACE & ETHNICITY

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Stokes County remains a predominantly White community, although there is a gradual trend toward increasing racial and ethnic diversity. White (non-Hispanic) residents comprise 92.8% of the county's population, substantially higher than the North Carolina average of 69.5%. The Black (non-Hispanic) population in Stokes County is 4.5%, well below the state average of 22%, while Asian residents account for just 0.5%, compared to 4% statewide. Individuals identifying as Two or More Races make up 1.6% of the population, slightly below the state average of 2.8%. By comparison, Davie County is somewhat more diverse, with 89% White (non-Hispanic) residents, 6.8% Black (non-Hispanic), 1.1% Asian, and 2.3% identifying as Two or More Races. While Stokes County remains relatively homogeneous, these comparisons suggest a slow but ongoing shift toward greater racial and ethnic diversity, particularly when viewed alongside peer counties and statewide trends.



FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION

As of 2023, approximately 1.82% of Stokes County, North Carolina residents (about 819 individuals) were born outside of the United States. Although this represents a relatively small share of the population, it reflects an increase from 1.46% in 2022, indicating a gradual rise in the county's foreign-born population. By comparison, Davie County has a substantially higher foreign-born population at 5.1%. Despite this growth, Stokes County's foreign-born share remains well below the North Carolina statewide average of 8.7%. Nevertheless, these trends suggest a slow but steady increase in international migration to the area. The chart below illustrates the percentage of foreign-born residents in Stokes County, its peer counties, and North Carolina overall.



NATIONAL ORIGIN

In Stokes County, North Carolina, residents of different national origins, including immigrants and refugees can access a variety of support services through county departments and affiliated organizations.

The Stokes County Health Department provides information on refugee and immigrant health services, while the Department of Social Services offers economic assistance programs such as food and nutrition support, crisis aid, and access to state benefits, which are available to families of all backgrounds. Stokes County Schools also provides student support services that help children and families with academic, social and health needs, including language support for non-English speakers.

Residents seeking support are encouraged to contact the Health Department, Department of Social Services, local schools or statewide immigrant resource organizations to access available programs and language services. This indicator also highlights the top 15 countries of origin for the foreign-born population in Stokes County and compares these findings to state and national trends. The foreign-born population includes individuals who were not U.S. citizens at birth, encompassing both those who have become U.S. citizens through naturalization and those who are not U.S. citizens.

NATIONAL ORIGIN

Country	Area Total	State Total	US Total
Mexico	284	226,263	10,816,311
Philippines	201	21,073	1,998,490
Bosnia and Herzegovina	49	2,178	106,263
England	46	10,482	325,698
Turkey	24	2,796	145,380
Russia	18	8,356	413,574
Guatemala	17	28,252	1,133,460
Serbia	15	348	42,903
Japan	15	5,071	339,075
United Kingdom, excluding England and Scotland	12	9,747	317,703
Ethiopia	12	4,480	276,393
Somalia	11	1,447	96,352
Australia	9	1,488	99,555
Germany	9	15,642	533,419
Panama	8	2,905	104,932

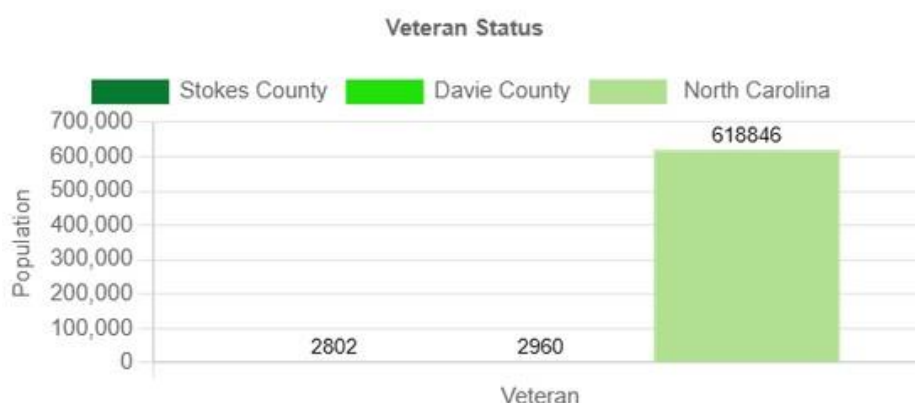
Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2019-23.

VETERAN STATUS

Stokes County is home to approximately 2,802 veterans, representing 7.7% of the county's population. Davie County has an estimated 2,960 veterans, accounting for 7.9% of its population, while North Carolina statewide has roughly 618,846 veterans, or 7.6% of the state's population. Overall, the share of veterans in Stokes County closely mirrors the state average, reflecting a comparable level of military service among residents.

To support this population, Stokes County offers several services:

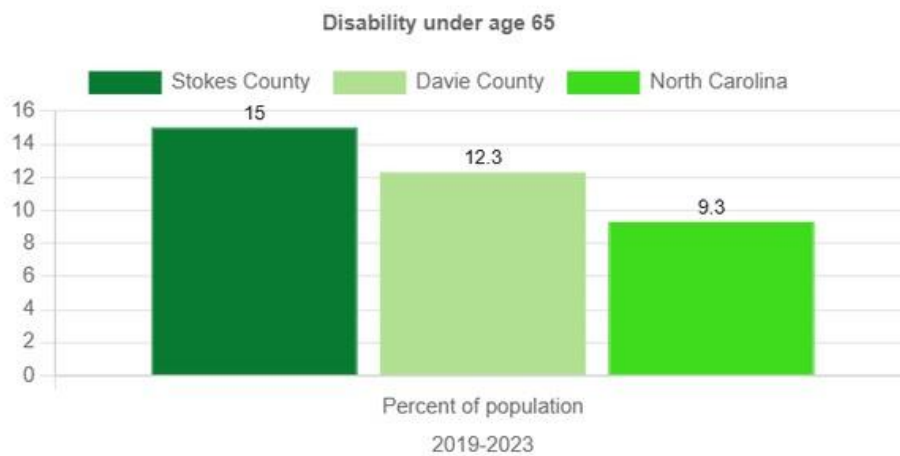
- **Veterans Services Office:** Located in Danbury at the Stokes County Government Center, this office assists veterans and their families in accessing benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **"Thank a Vet" Program:** Administered by the Register of Deeds, this initiative provides eligible veterans with a discount card for use at participating local businesses.
- **American Legion Post 290 (King, NC):** Serves as a community hub for veterans and their families, offering social support and connection.



These programs highlight the county's commitment to addressing the needs of its veteran population. However, ongoing assessment may be needed to ensure adequate access to healthcare, mental health services, transportation, and aging-related care for this group.

DISABILITY STATUS

In Stokes County, approximately 15% of residents under age 65 live with a disability, compared to 12.3% in Davie County and 9.3% statewide. Disability data is critical for guiding equitable planning and service delivery, as individuals with disabilities often require accommodation beyond standard approaches. Effective support depends on customized outreach from healthcare, social service, and community-based providers. The higher prevalence of disability in Stokes County underscores the need for inclusive policies, intentional resource allocation, and flexible service models that address the diverse needs of residents with disabilities.





Socioeconomic factors are the social and economic conditions that shape how people live, work, and stay healthy. They influence the opportunities people have and the challenges they face day-to-day.

Common socioeconomic factors include:

- Income – how much money a person or household earns
- Education level – access to schooling, literacy, and job training
- Employment – job stability, working conditions, and benefits
- Housing – quality, safety, crowding, and affordability of where people live
- Access to healthcare – insurance, transportation, and nearby providers
- Food access – availability of affordable, nutritious food
- Transportation – ability to get to work, school, or medical care
- Social support – family, community, and social networks
- Neighborhood environment – safety, pollution, recreational spaces, and resources

These factors are important because they strongly affect health, education outcomes, and overall quality of life. For example, people with lower income or limited education may have more difficulty accessing healthcare, healthy food, or stable housing, which can lead to worse health outcomes.



Did you know that 80% of a person's overall health is shaped by factors outside of hospitals and clinics? The largest portion of that 80% comes from what are known as the "Social Determinants of Health," things like housing, education, income, transportation, and access to healthy food.

TOP EMPLOYERS IN STOKES COUNTY

Stokes County's economy is shaped by a mix of public-sector, manufacturing, health care, and service-based employment. The largest employer is the Stokes County Board of Education, with local government agencies such as the County of Stokes and the City of King also providing a significant number of jobs. In rural communities like Stokes, these public-sector roles play an important stabilizing function because large private employers are less common. Manufacturing continues to be a major component of the county's economic base as well, with companies like Kobe Wieland Copper Products and Parkdale America offering many middle-income jobs. However, manufacturing employment can fluctuate depending on broader economic conditions.

Health care and social assistance also represent a key employment sector, driven by hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities. This reflects a broader trend seen in many rural areas, where health services have become a major source of stable, long-term jobs. The retail and service sector, made up of grocery stores, restaurants, the postal service, and community organizations, provides additional employment opportunities, especially for entry-level and service-oriented workers.

Overall, Stokes County's industry mix reflects its size and rural character. The county does not host large corporate headquarters or large-scale private-sector employers; instead, most organizations employ between 50 and 250 workers. This structure shapes the local labor market, where education, health care, and government offer the most dependability, manufacturing provides solid but sometimes fluctuating opportunities, and many residents commute to nearby counties such as Forsyth for a wider range of employment options.



TOP EMPLOYERS IN STOKES COUNTY 2024

SOURCE: [HTTPS://D4.NCCOMMERCE.COM/QCEWLARGESTEMPLOYERS.ASPX](https://d4.nccommerce.com/qcewlargestemployers.aspx)

Rank	Company Name	Industry	Employment Range
1	Stokes County Board of Education	Educational Services	500-999
2	County of Stokes	Public Administration	250-499
3	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Retail Trade	250-499
4	Wieland Copper Products Llc	Manufacturing	100-249
5	M-6 Contracting Inc	Construction	100-249
6	LifeBrite Hospital of Stokes	Health Care	100-249
7	Food Lion	Retail Trade	100-249
8	Oasis Ahr Llc	Health Care	100-249
9	YMCA of Northwest NC	Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	100-249
10	Forsyth Technical College	Educational Services	100-249
11	Autumn Corporation	Health Care	100-249
12	City of King	Public Administration	50-99
13	Parkdale Mills Inc	Manufacturing	50-99
14	Insperty Peo Services Lp	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	50-99
15	Izzy & Tucker Investments Llc	Accommodation and Food Services	50-99

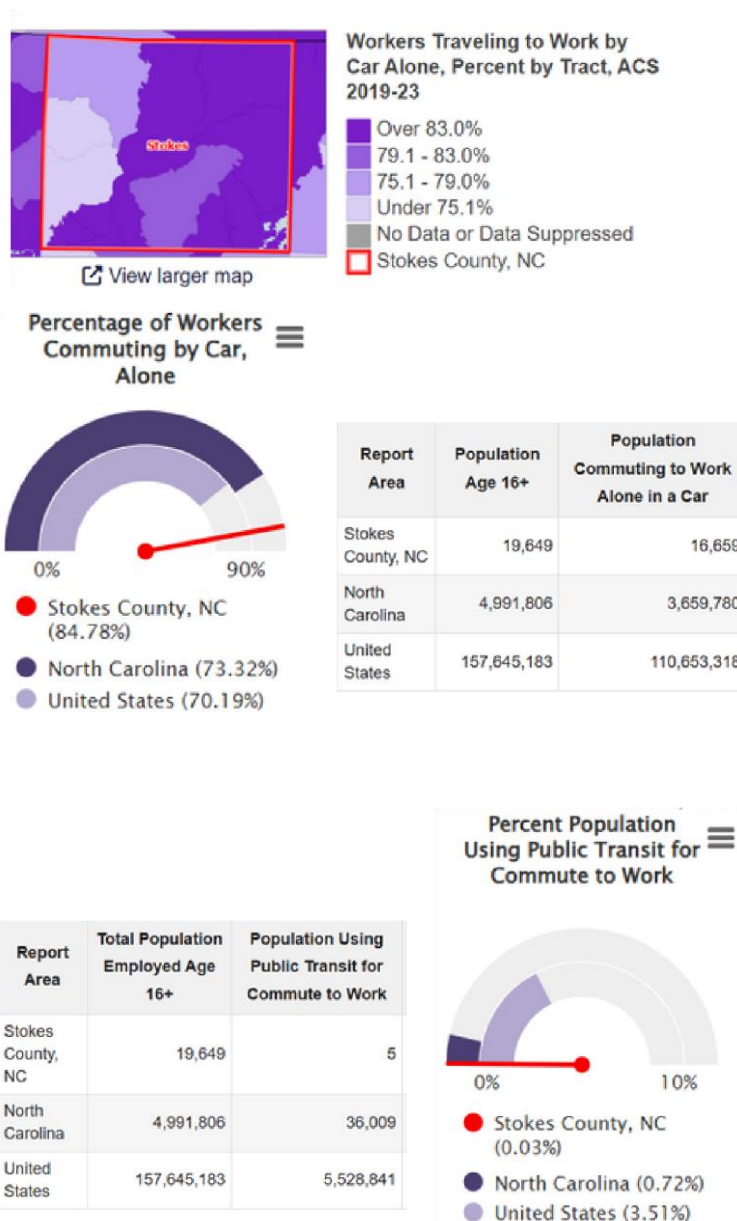
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC FACTORS

COMMUTE TIME

Due to its rural terrain and limited infrastructure, many residents of Stokes County experience longer travel times to work, with a mean commute of approximately 30.5 minutes. Commute time is increasingly recognized as a social determinant of health, as commutes lasting 30 to 60 minutes or more are associated with increased stress and anxiety, higher blood pressure, poorer sleep, reduced time for physical activity and healthy meal preparation, and limited access to healthcare. These extended travel times contribute to time poverty, leaving individuals with less time for selfcare, family interaction, and rest, which increases the risk of chronic disease and lowers overall wellbeing.

In Stokes County, commute time is further influenced by limited public transportation and employment patterns that require many residents to travel outside the county, often to Forsyth County (Winston-Salem) and surrounding areas. Households in northern and western parts of the county face especially long drives due to their distance from major highways and job centers. According to U.S. Census Bureau data (2019– 2023), of the 19,649 employed residents age 16 and older, only five individuals (0.03%) use public transportation, while 85.78% commute alone by car, well above state and national averages.

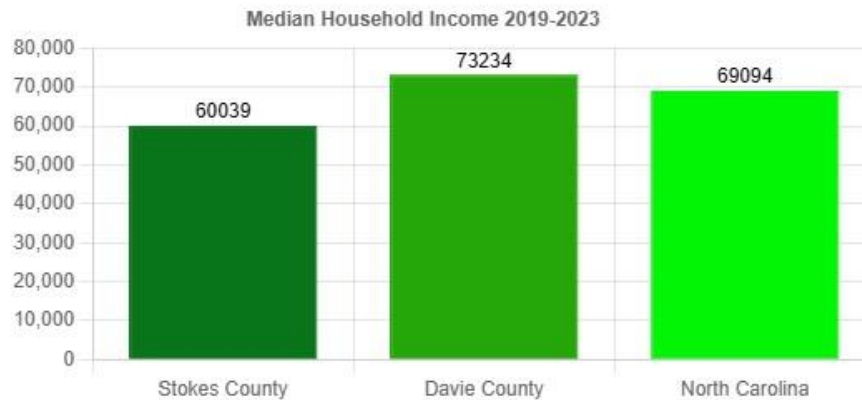
This heavy reliance on personal vehicles increases transportation costs, exposes commuters to air pollution linked to respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, and creates additional barriers to childcare, healthcare, and healthy food access. For lower-income households, fuel costs and unreliable vehicles further compound these challenges, making commute time a critical factor in health, quality of life, and economic stability in Stokes County.



NC Data Portal

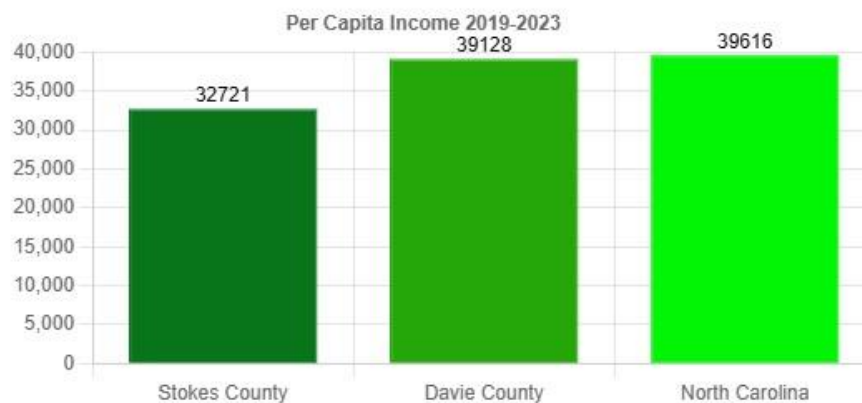
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

From 2019–2023, Stokes County’s median household income was \$60,039, which was notably lower than both its peer county, Davie County, with a median household income of \$73,234, and the North Carolina statewide median of \$69,904. This comparison shows that Stokes County falls behind both the regional peer county and the state overall in terms of household income, highlighting ongoing economic disparities that may contribute to differences in health and wellbeing.



PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME

From 2019–2023, Stokes County’s per capita income was \$32,721, which was significantly lower than both Davie County, at \$39,128, and the North Carolina statewide average of \$39,616. This gap highlights ongoing economic disparities between Stokes County and its peer county and the state overall, which may contribute to differences in access to resources, opportunities, and health outcomes



POVERTY

Poverty is defined as not having enough income to meet basic needs such as food, housing, clothing, healthcare, and transportation. Individuals and families living in poverty often struggle to pay bills, maintain safe and stable housing, and cover everyday living expenses, which can negatively affect overall health and well-being.

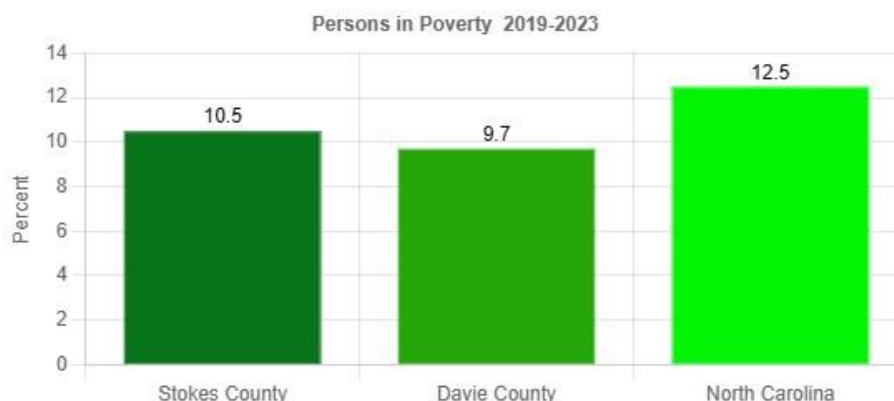
In Stokes County, approximately 5,280 individuals live below the federal poverty line. Among those experiencing poverty, an estimated 4,576 are White, 303 are Black, and 310 are Hispanic. About 1,133 families in the county are living in poverty, including 515 single mothers with children. Poverty impacts residents across all age groups, with 379 children aged six and under and 1,253 children under the age of eighteen living in households below the poverty level. Additionally, approximately 1,177 residents aged 65 and older live in poverty, underscoring the significant economic challenges faced by both young families and older adults in Stokes County.

https://linc.osbm.nc.gov/pages/nc_poverty/?flg=en-us

2023	Stokes County	North Carolina
Total Persons In Poverty	5,280	1,355,827
White Persons in Poverty	4,576	639,224
Black Persons in Poverty	303	427,008
Hispanic Persons of any Race in Poverty	310	235,141
Families in Poverty	1,133	252,513
Single Mother Families with Children in Poverty	515	116,555
Children Under 6 in Poverty	379	138,315
Children Under 18 in Poverty	1,253	406,379
Persons 65+ in Poverty	1,177	177,834

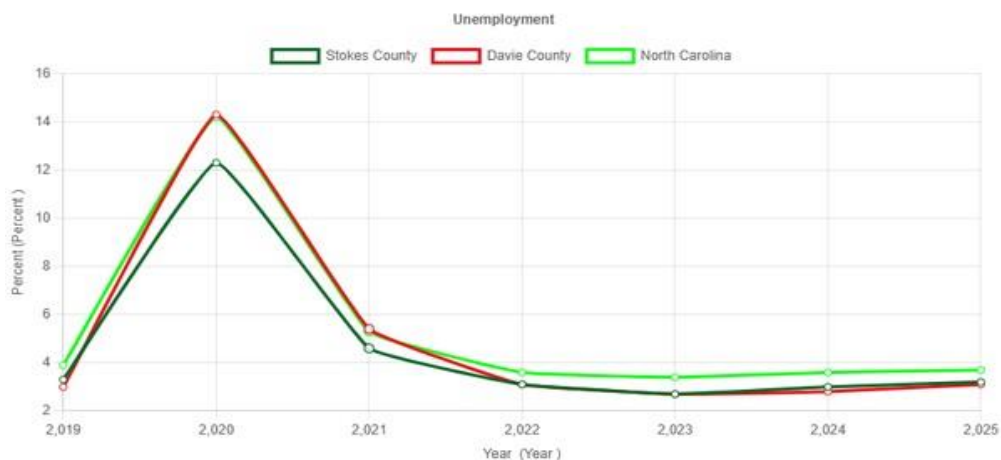
POVERTY

From 2019–2023, approximately 10.5% of Stokes County residents were living in poverty, which was slightly higher than Davie County’s poverty rate of 9.7% but lower than the North Carolina statewide poverty rate of 12.5%. This indicates that while Stokes County fares better than the state overall, it continues to experience greater economic challenges than its peer county, which may influence health and social outcomes.



UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment rates in Stokes County, Davie County, and North Carolina from 2019 to 2025 reflect the significant economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic followed by a steady recovery. In 2019, unemployment was relatively low, with rates of 3.3% in Stokes County, 3.0% in Davie County, and 3.9% statewide. In 2020, unemployment spiked sharply due to the pandemic, rising to 12.3% in Stokes County, 14.3% in Davie County, and 14.2% across North Carolina. By 2021, rates declined considerably as the economy began to recover, falling to 4.6% in Stokes County, 5.4% in Davie County, and 5.3% statewide. This downward trend continued in 2022 and 2023, with unemployment stabilizing around 3.1% in Stokes and Davie counties and 3.6% to 3.4% statewide. In more recent years, rates have remained relatively low and stable, with Stokes County at 3.0% in 2024 and 3.2% in 2025, Davie County at 2.8% in 2024 and 3.1% in 2025, and North Carolina at 3.6% in 2024 and 3.7% in 2025. Overall, these trends show that while both counties experienced sharp increases during the pandemic, unemployment has since returned to near pre-pandemic levels.



HOUSING

Housing insecurity is when individuals or families lack stable, safe, or affordable housing, or live with constant uncertainty about keeping their home. It goes beyond homelessness and includes a range of challenges that make it hard to maintain consistent housing.

Housing insecurity can look like:

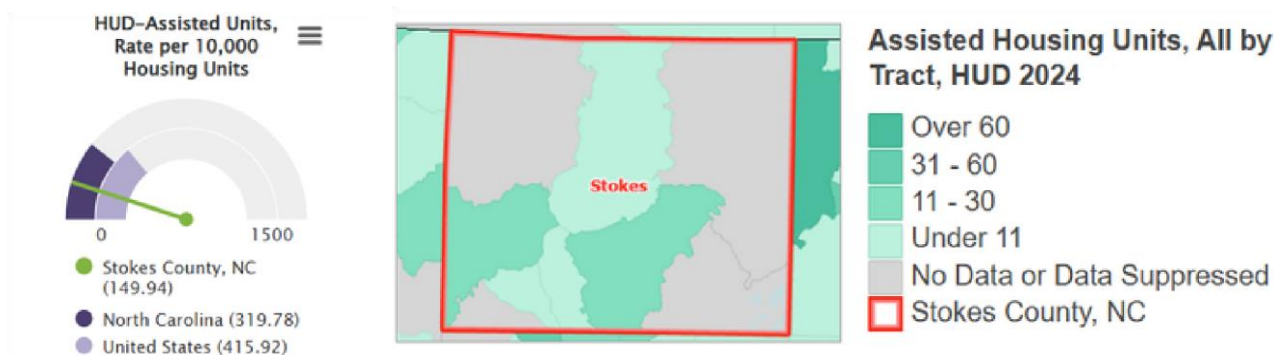
- Spending a large portion of income on rent or mortgage, leaving little for food, healthcare, or transportation
- Frequent moves, overcrowded living conditions, or staying with friends or family because stable housing isn't available
- Living in housing that is unsafe, in poor condition, or lacks basic utilities
- Falling behind on rent or mortgage payments or facing eviction or foreclosure
- Limited housing options due to low income, rural location, or lack of affordable housing stock

Housing insecurity is a key social determinant of health. It is linked to higher stress, worse mental health, delayed medical care, increased risk of chronic disease, and poorer outcomes for children, including disruptions to education and development.

HUD- ASSISTED

HUD, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is a federal agency dedicated to ensuring access to safe, affordable housing and strong, supportive communities. Its primary roles include expanding affordable housing opportunities for low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities; overseeing housing assistance programs such as Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) and public housing; enforcing fair housing laws; supporting community development through grants; and addressing homelessness prevention and housing stability.

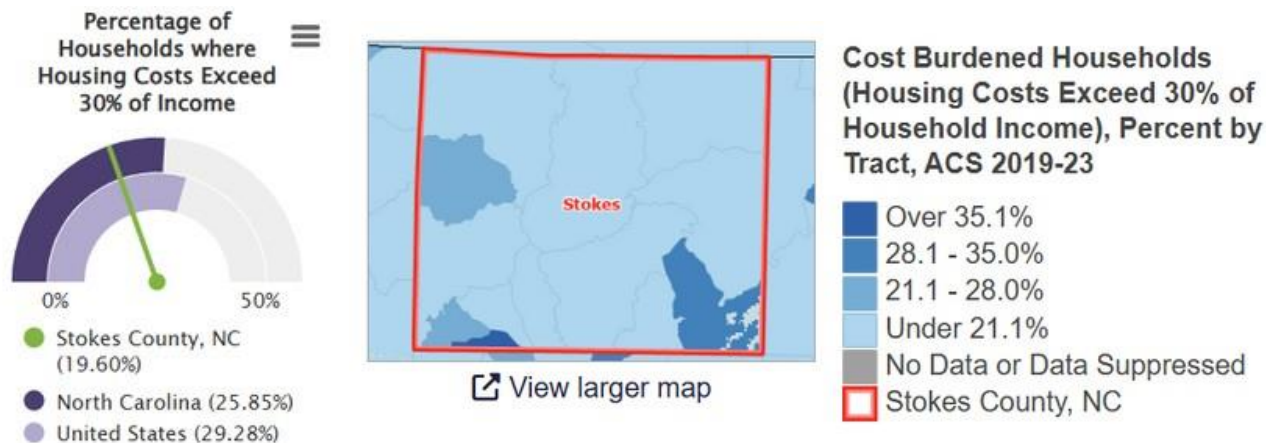
The map below illustrates the locations of HUD-assisted housing units in Stokes County and reveals significant gaps in coverage, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the county. Stokes County has a total of 294 HUD-assisted housing units, resulting in a rate per 10,000 residents that is substantially lower than the North Carolina state rate of 319.78 per 10,000. This limited availability and uneven geographic distribution underscore ongoing challenges in accessing affordable housing across the county.



NC Data Portal

COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS 30%

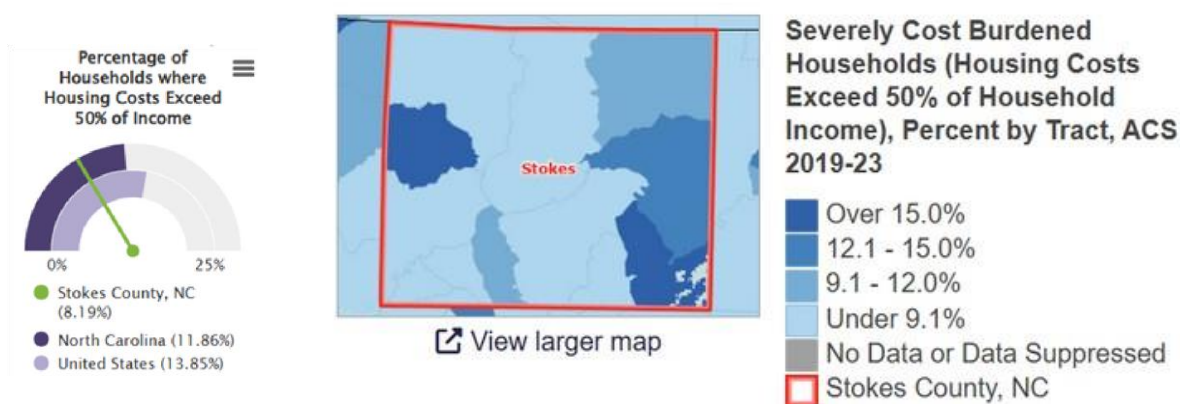
According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2019–2023, Stokes County has 19,374 households, of which 3,797 are considered cost-burdened. Cost-burdened households are those that spend 30% of their total household income on housing costs. The map below illustrates areas where housing costs exceed 30% of household income, highlighting the geographic distribution of housing cost burden across the county.



NC Data Portal

COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS 50%

The map below shows that out of 19,374 households in Stokes County, North Carolina, 1,586 are considered severely cost-burdened, meaning housing costs exceed 50% of household income. This highlights the significant housing affordability challenges faced by many residents across the county.



NC Data Portal

SUBSTANDARD HOUSING, SEVERE

In Stokes County, there are 18,775 occupied households, and about 11.6% (roughly 2,185 households) experience one or more severe housing problems, classifying them as substandard. These issues include lacking complete plumbing or kitchen facilities, overcrowding (more than 1.5 occupants per room), or spending over 50% of household income on housing costs, whether for rent or mortgage. This highlights both physical deficiencies and extreme affordability challenges in the county's housing.

Report Area	Occupied Households	Percentage of Households with One or More Severe Problems
Stokes County, NC	18,775	11.64%
North Carolina	4,034,685	12.60%
United States	125,207,785	13.07%

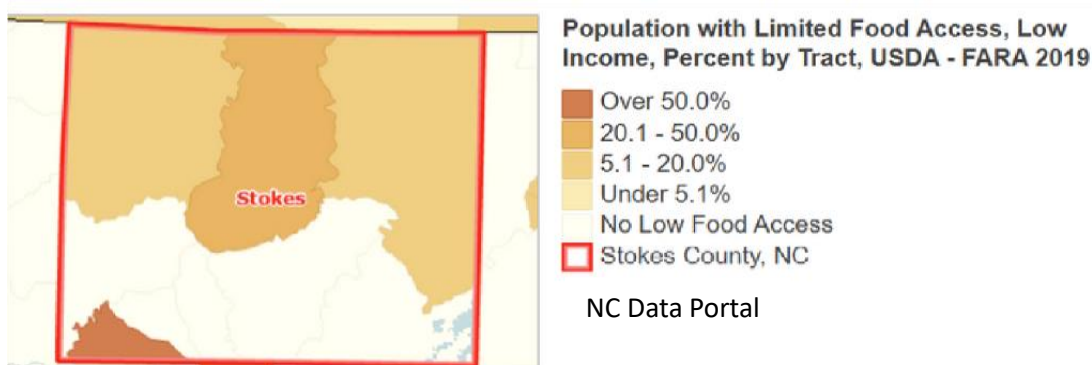
NC Data Portal

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity, defined as the lack of consistent access to enough nutritious, affordable food for a healthy life, remains a significant concern in Stokes County in 2026. With a population of 44,188, approximately 7,070 residents (16%) experience food insecurity, which is higher than both the North Carolina rate (14.91%) and the national rate (14.11%).

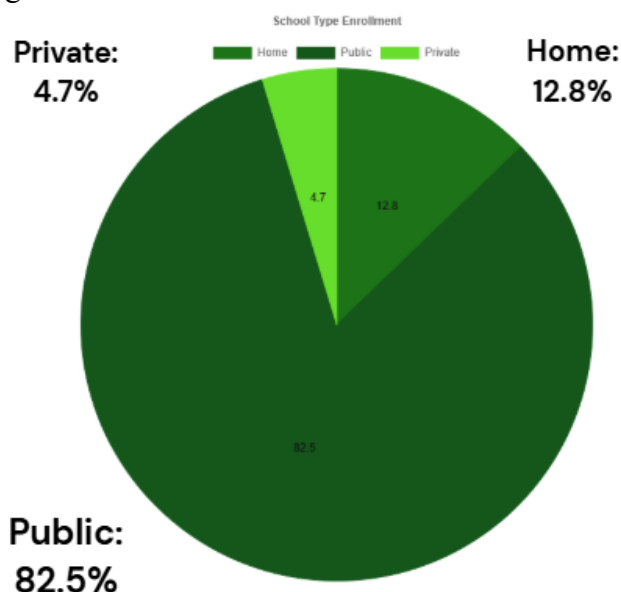
Report Area	Total Population	Food Insecure Population, Total	Food Insecurity Rate
Stokes County, NC	44,188	7,070	16%
North Carolina	10,582,034	1,577,850	14.91%
United States	331,287,882	46,753,190	14.11%

Contributing factors include rising food and living costs, limited incomes, and barriers related to rural access. Many families rely on school meal programs, food pantries, or church-based assistance and often face difficult choices between food and other essential needs. The map below shows Stokes County tracts with limited food access and low-income populations based on 2019 data. In the northern part of the county, the percentage of residents with limited food access and low-income ranges from 5.1% to 50%, while a small area in the southwest has over 50% of residents affected.

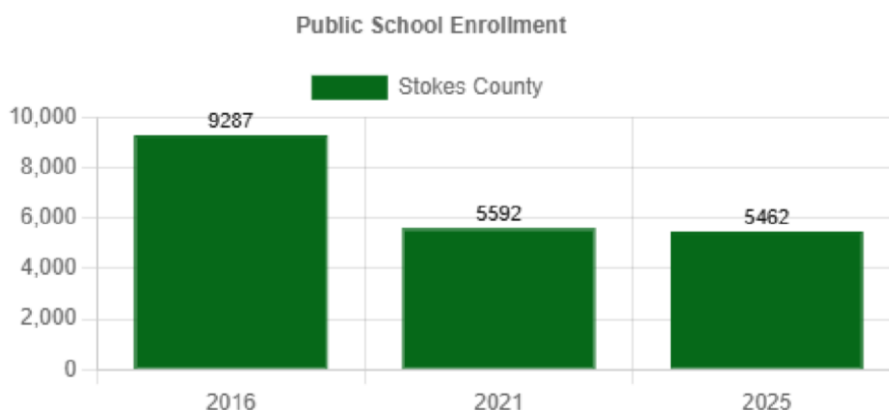


EDUCATION- ENROLLMENT & TRENDS

The Stokes County school district consists of one traditional public school district serving 17 schools, with no charter schools, three private schools, and approximately 490 homeschooled students. Total K–12 enrollment across all educational settings is estimated at 6,596 students. For the 2025 academic year, Stokes County Schools enrolled 5,462 students, reflecting a continued decline from 5,592 students in 2021 and a substantial decrease from 9,287 students in 2016. This long-term reduction highlights a clear downward trend in student enrollment.



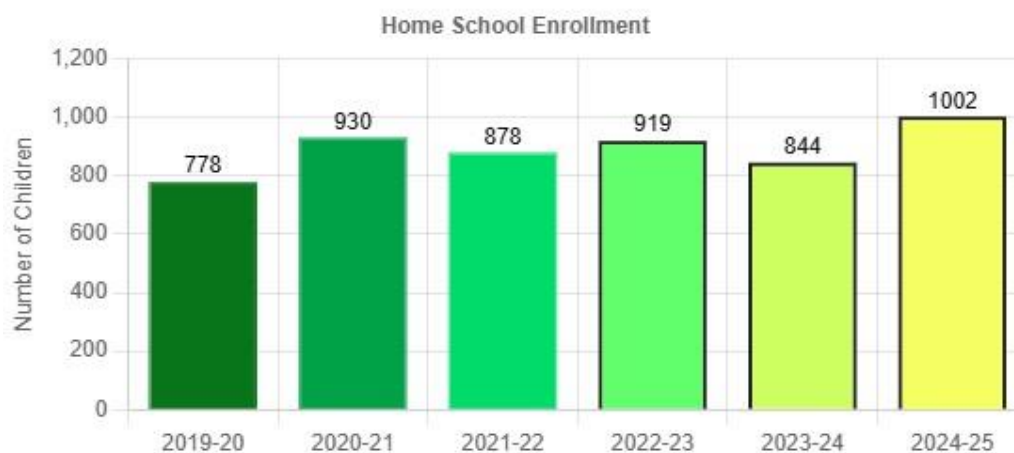
More recently, enrollment has remained relatively stable but continues to show slight declines. During the 2023–2024 school year, total enrollment was 5,441 students, representing a decrease of approximately 0.2% from the prior year. In response to these shifting enrollment patterns and related budget considerations, the district has begun discussing strategies such as school consolidations and closures. At the end of the 2023–2024 academic year, Lawsonville Elementary and Pine Hall Elementary were closed. Meadowbrook Academy will remain open but will be rebranded as Stokes County Academy and relocated to the former Lawsonville Elementary building in January 2025. Community members have expressed concern about the potential loss of small local schools, emphasizing their role in strengthening community ties and minimizing student travel times.



HOMESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

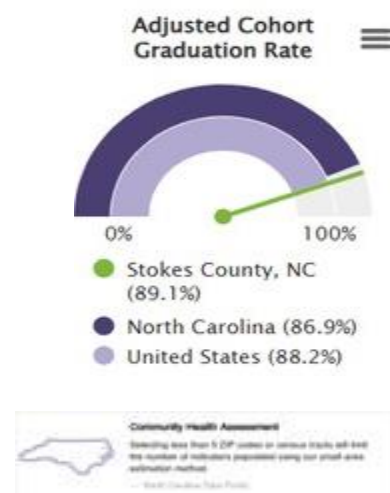
According to the graph, in the 2019–2020 school year, homeschool enrollment was 778 students, this coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the following year, 2020–2021, enrollment increased to 930 students, which is an approximate 19.54% increase. The most logical explanation for this surge is the impact of COVID-19, as many families were understandably hesitant to send their children to public schools due to health and safety concerns.

However, in the 2023–2024 school year, enrollment was 844 students, and it rose to 1002 students in 2024–2025, an approximately 18.72% increase. Unlike the earlier spike, there is no immediately clear reason for this recent rise in homeschooling, suggesting other factors may now be influencing families' decisions to opt for home-based education.



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

According to the U.S. Department of Education, during the 2022–2023 school year, the adjusted cohort size in Stokes County was 458 students. Of those students, 408 diplomas were issued. From 2018–2019, the graduation success rate in Stokes County was 82.9%. By 2020–2021, the rate increased to 87.9% and continued to rise in 2022–2023 to 89.1%. This most recent rate exceeds both the North Carolina state average of 86.9% and the national average of 88.2%, reflecting steady improvement in educational outcomes across the county. According to the U.S. Department of Education, during the 2022–2023 school year, the adjusted cohort size in Stokes County was 458 students. Of those students, 408 diplomas were issued.

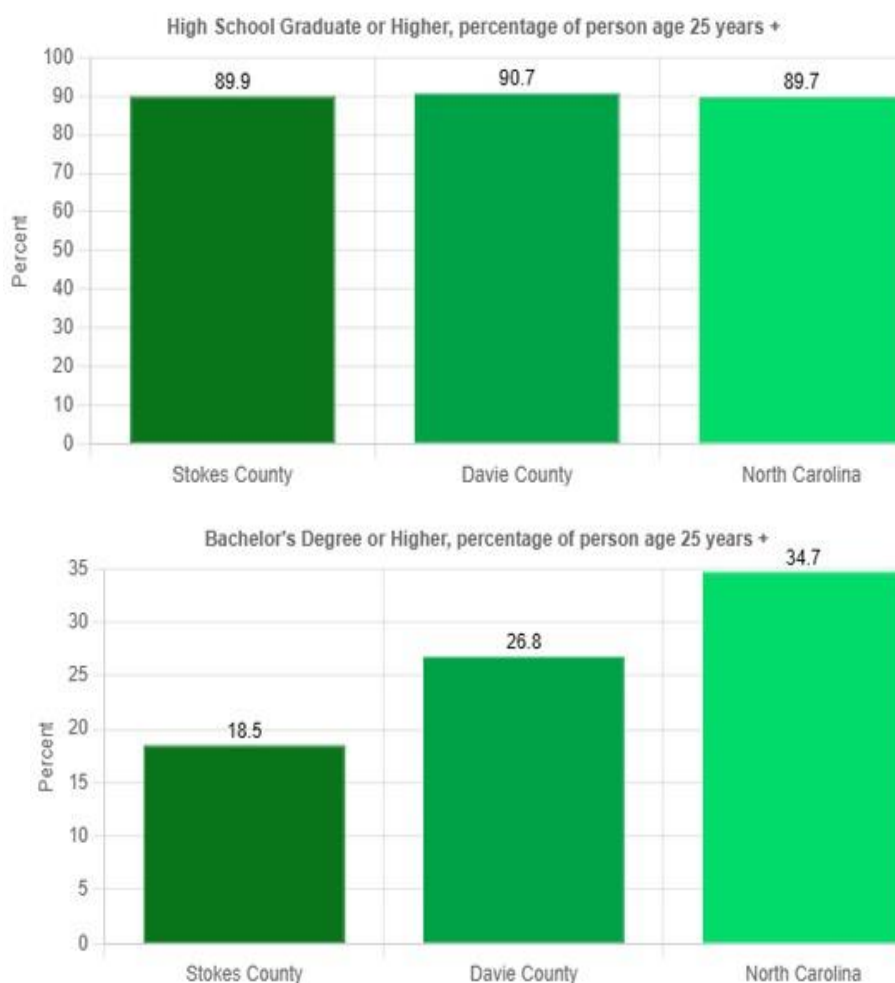


Report Area	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Stokes County, NC	82.9%	87.1%	87.9%	88.0%	89.1%
North Carolina	87.0%	88.2%	87.6%	86.8%	86.9%
United States	87.7%	87.9%	88.0%	88.0%	88.2%

NC Data Portal

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

From 2019–2023, 89.9% of Stokes County residents aged 25 and older had attained a high school diploma or higher. This rate was slightly lower than Davie County’s 90.7% but comparable to the North Carolina statewide rate of 89.7%. While high school completion in Stokes County is similar to regional and state levels, educational attainment at higher levels shows a larger gap. During the same period, only 18.5% of adults in Stokes County earned a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 26.8% in Davie County and 34.7% statewide. These differences highlight disparities in higher education attainment that may influence employment opportunities, income levels, and long-term health outcomes in Stokes County



STANDARDIZED TESTING FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

In 2021, SAT scores played an important role in shaping educational and economic opportunities for students in Stokes County, North Carolina. That year, the national average SAT score was 1038, while North Carolina’s average was higher at 1147. Stokes County Schools posted a strong district average of 1112, exceeding the national benchmark. In 2022, scores declined across all levels, with the national average dropping to 1028, the state average to 1130, and Stokes County to 1090. By 2023, however, Stokes County Schools rebounded, rising to an average score of 1130, the highest in the three-year period. These trends mirror broader state and national patterns while demonstrating the district’s resilience and capacity for improvement. In a rural county where, educational resources may be more limited, sustained SAT performance above the national average is critical for expanding college access, securing scholarships, and supporting long-term economic mobility. Continued investment in academic support and test preparation will be key to maintaining this positive trajectory.

BULLYING

Bullying in Stokes County can be understood as a social determinant of health (SDOH) because it affects the social and community context, which is a key domain of SDOH. The conditions in which people live, learn, and interact, including school and peer environments, significantly influence mental and physical health. Bullying, whether physical, verbal, relational, or cyber, creates chronic social stress and disrupts a person's sense of safety, belonging, and self-esteem. For children and adolescents, being bullied increases the risk of anxiety, depression, poor self-esteem, behavioral issues, and even suicidal thoughts, all of which have long-term health implications. In rural or semi-rural areas like Stokes County, these effects may be amplified due to limited access to mental health resources, smaller social support networks, and economic vulnerabilities. Additionally, youth from marginalized or lower-income households may be more susceptible to bullying, further compounding health inequities. Recognizing bullying as a social determinant of health shifts the focus from solely individual behavioral issues to broader community and public health interventions, emphasizing the need for supportive school environments, anti-bullying programs, and accessible mental health services to mitigate long-term negative outcomes.

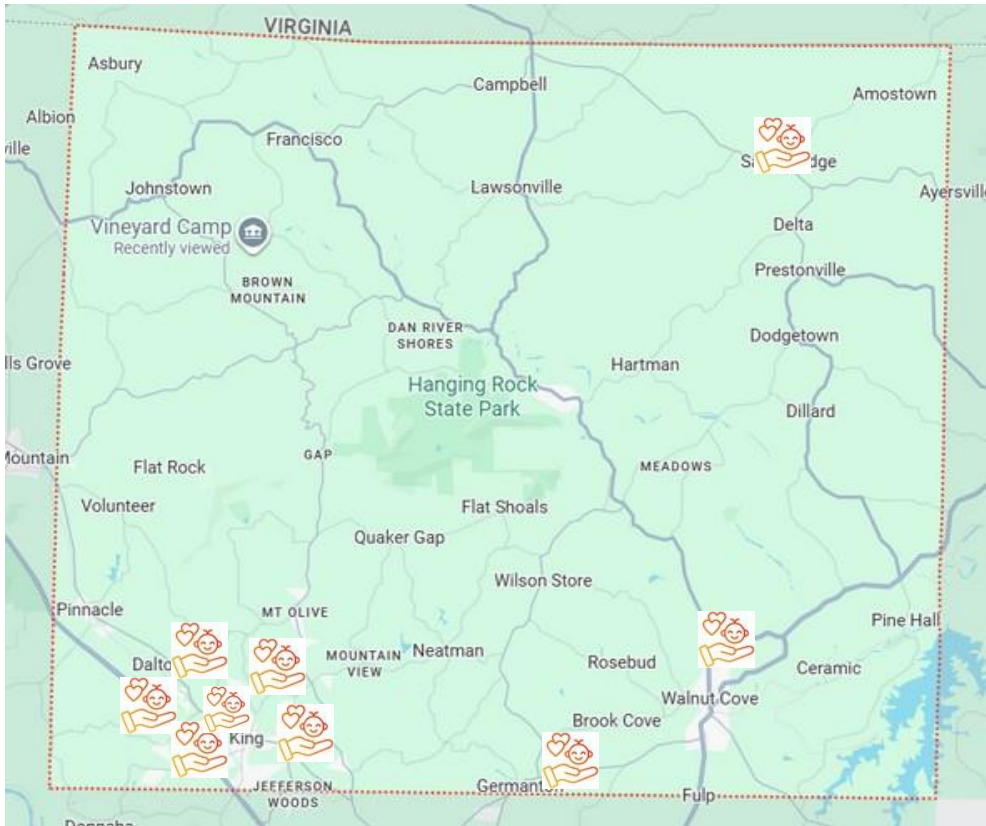


Rates of Criminal Acts, Bullying, Law Enforcement Referrals, and Arrests (per 1000 Students)	Criminal Acts	Bullying & Harrassment	Referral to Law Enforcement	Arrest
West Stokes High School	12.03	22.73	8.02	0
North Stokes High School	0	14.13	14.13	0
South Stokes High School	9.51	24.71	3.80	0
Stokes County Academy	66.67	400.00	293.33	0
Stokes Early College High School	0	0	0	0

<https://ncreports.ondemand.sas.com/src/school?school=850358&year=2021&lng=en>

LACK OF CHILDCARE

A lack of childcare locations in northern Stokes County presents a significant challenge for families and the local workforce. Limited access to affordable, nearby childcare makes it difficult for parents, especially those with young children, to maintain consistent employment, pursue education or job training, and attend medical appointments. This gap can disproportionately affect low-income families and contribute to workforce shortages, increased financial strain, and stress. Expanding childcare options in northern Stokes County would support working families, improve economic stability, and promote healthier outcomes for children and caregivers alike.



CHILDCARE COST BURDEN

According to the 2025 County Health Rankings, the median household income in Stokes County, North Carolina was \$61,374 in 2023–2024, based on a household with two children. Within the report area, households spend an average of \$14,589 annually on childcare, which represents 23.77% of total household income. This percentage is slightly lower than the state average of 25.14% but still reflects a significant financial burden for families with young children.

Report Area	Median Household Income	Childcare Cost	Childcare Costs, Percentage of Median Household Income
Stokes County, NC	\$61,374	\$14,589	23.77%
North Carolina	\$70,838	\$17,808	25.14%

NC Data Portal

UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITY

MORTALITY

Stokes County, NC

- Diseases of the heart: 621 deaths
- Cancer: 606 deaths
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 232 deaths

North Carolina (statewide)

- Diseases of the heart: 104,456 deaths
- Cancer: 101,532 deaths
- Other unintentional injuries: 31,373 deaths

Major Takeaways

- Heart disease and cancer are the top causes of death both locally and statewide.
- In Stokes County, chronic lower respiratory diseases rank third, whereas statewide, other unintentional injuries occupy this position.
- These patterns reflect the county's older, more rural population, where chronic diseases play a larger role, while statewide data include higher numbers of injury-related deaths in more urbanized areas.

Top 10 leading cause of death of all ages, 2019-2023 Stokes County

AGE GROUP:	RANK	CAUSE OF DEATH:	# OF DEATHS	DEATH RATE
TOTAL - ALL AGES	0	TOTAL DEATHS --- ALL CAUSES	3,289	1458.8
	1	Diseases of the heart	621	275.4
	2	Cancer - All Sites	606	268.8
	3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	232	102.9
	4	Other Unintentional injuries	216	95.8
	5	COVID-19	183	81.2
	6	Cerebrovascular disease	139	61.7
	7	Alzheimer's disease	129	57.2
	8	Diabetes mellitus	112	49.7
	9	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, & nephrosis	58	25.7
		Motor vehicle injuries	58	25.7

Top 10 leading cause of death of all ages, 2019-2023 North Carolina

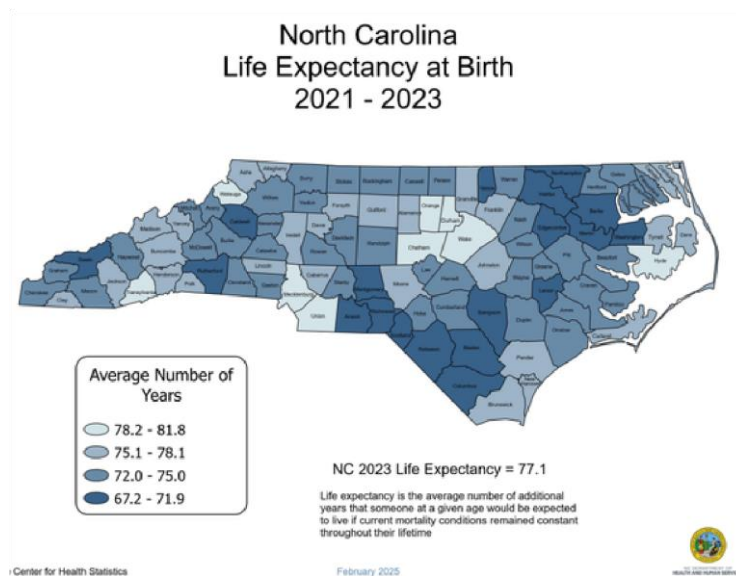
AGE GROUP:	RANK	CAUSE OF DEATH:	# OF DEATHS	DEATH RATE
TOTAL - ALL AGES	0	TOTAL DEATHS --- ALL CAUSES	544,394	1026.4
	1	Diseases of the heart	104,465	197.0
	2	Cancer - All Sites	101,532	191.4
	3	Other Unintentional injuries	31,373	59.1
	4	COVID-19	29,543	55.7
	5	Cerebrovascular disease	28,977	54.6
	6	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	25,866	48.8
	7	Alzheimer's disease	21,807	41.1
	8	Diabetes mellitus	17,908	33.8
	9	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, & nephrosis	10,718	20.2
	10	Motor vehicle injuries	8,971	16.9

<https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/interactive/query/lcd/getleadcauses.cfm>

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy is a statistical measure that estimates the average number of years a person can expect to live based on current death rates in a population. It reflects overall health and living conditions, including factors like access to healthcare, nutrition, lifestyle, and safety. For example, if a county has a life expectancy of 78 years, it means that, on average, a newborn in that county is expected to live about 78 years if current mortality patterns remain the same.

It's important to note that life expectancy is average, so some people will live longer and some shorter than that number. It is often used to compare health outcomes across regions, populations, or over time. In Stokes County, the average life expectancy is 73.3 years, which is lower than the state average of 77.1 years and the national average of 78.4 years. However, these averages can hide significant disparities that exist across racial, ethnic, and geographic lines, as well as other social determinants of health.



<https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/hsa/pdfs/lifeexpectancy/LifeExpectancyB>

CHRONIC DISEASE

Chronic diseases are long-lasting conditions, typically lasting one year or more, that require ongoing medical attention and may limit daily activities. They are the leading causes of illness, disability, and death in the United States.

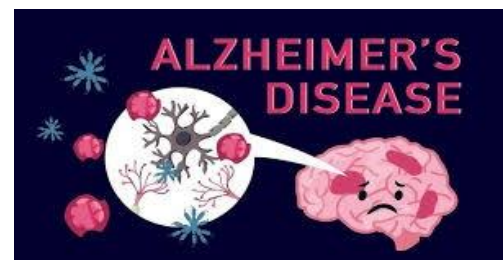
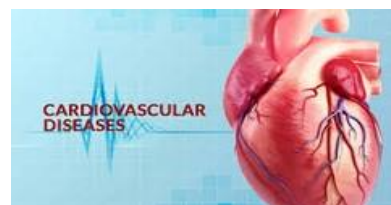
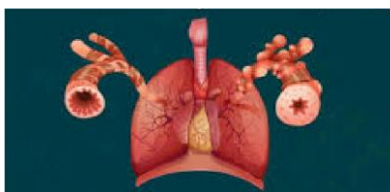
While many chronic diseases are linked to modifiable risk factors such as:

- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol use
- Poor nutrition
- Physical inactivity

Some populations experience higher rates of these diseases due to social and economic barriers that make it harder to manage these risk factors. These disparities may stem from factors such as limited access to healthy food, safe places for physical activity, or quality healthcare. In Stokes County, NC, chronic diseases remain a major health burden. These are conditions that last a year or more, require ongoing medical attention, and may limit daily activity. In Stokes County, many residents are affected by risk factors such as smoking (nearly 1 in 5 adults), obesity 36%, and limited access to consistent health coverage (nearly 20% uninsured).

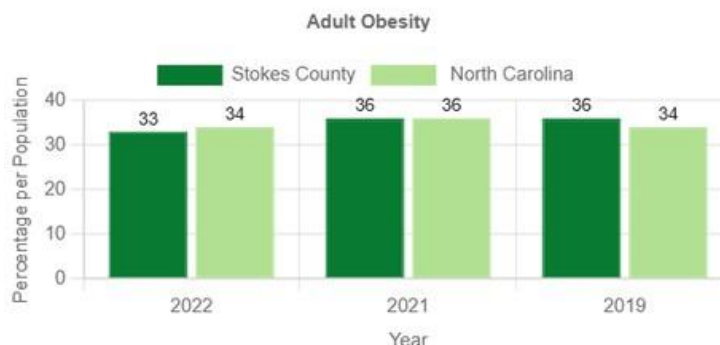
The county faces additional barriers: fewer primary care providers per capita, moderate food insecurity and limited access to large grocery stores, and elevated rates of mental distress and “deaths of despair.” These social and economic conditions disproportionately affect certain populations and make prevention, management, and equitable care more difficult.

As a result, Stokes County residents experience higher rates of cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, preventable hospitalizations, and other chronic conditions, trends that reflect the national challenges, but are intensified by local disparities in access, resources, and environment.



ADULT OBESITY

According to County Health Rankings, Stokes County's obesity rate in 2022 was 33%, slightly below the North Carolina statewide rate of 34%. In 2019, both Stokes County and the state had an obesity rate of 34%, indicating a modest decline in the county over recent years. While obesity remains a significant public health concern, Stokes County's prevalence continues to be comparable to the state average.



Residents seeking help with adult obesity have several local resources available. The Stokes County Health Department provides general health services and can refer individuals to programs focused on nutrition and physical activity. The Stokes County Cooperative Extension, affiliated with NC State University, offers education on healthy eating, lifestyle changes, and community classes. Nutrition education programs, such as Recipe for Success from UNC–Greensboro, provide guidance on physical activity, healthy eating, and obesity prevention.

Adult obesity is defined as having an excessive amount of body fat that negatively impacts health. It is typically measured using Body Mass Index (BMI), with a BMI of 30 or higher classified as obese and 25–29.9 classified as overweight. Obesity increases the risk of numerous health problems, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, certain cancers, stroke, sleep apnea, and osteoarthritis. It is influenced by a combination of factors, including diet, physical activity, genetics, environment, and social determinants of health such as access to healthy food and safe spaces for exercise. Monitoring adult obesity helps public health officials identify population health risks and develop programs to promote healthier lifestyles.



Additionally, Stokes County residents can access food assistance and outreach programs to support access to fresh produce and nutrition education. The Health Department can provide referrals to registered dietitians or nutritionists for personalized counseling, and residents can participate in lifestyle-change programs, support groups, local walking groups, and exercise opportunities to manage weight and improve overall health.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder that gradually impairs memory, thinking, and daily functioning. It is the most common cause of dementia and typically affects adults age 65 and older, though early-onset cases can occur. While there is no cure, medications, therapies, and supportive care can help manage symptoms, and healthy lifestyle habits, like physical activity, nutritious eating, and mental engagement, can improve quality of life.

Alzheimer's also carries high costs, including long-term care and unpaid caregiving. In 2023, Stokes County recorded 28 Alzheimer's-related deaths, compared to 4,042 statewide, with 129 deaths in the county between 2019 and 2023.

Stokes County has opportunities to address this growing burden through community education, caregiver support, and improved access to care. Partnerships with the Alzheimer's Association and local providers could expand awareness campaigns, memory screenings, and support groups. Enhancing transportation, in-home care, and telehealth services, along with implementing a Dementia-Friendly Community initiative, could create a safer, more supportive environment for residents with Alzheimer's and their caregivers.

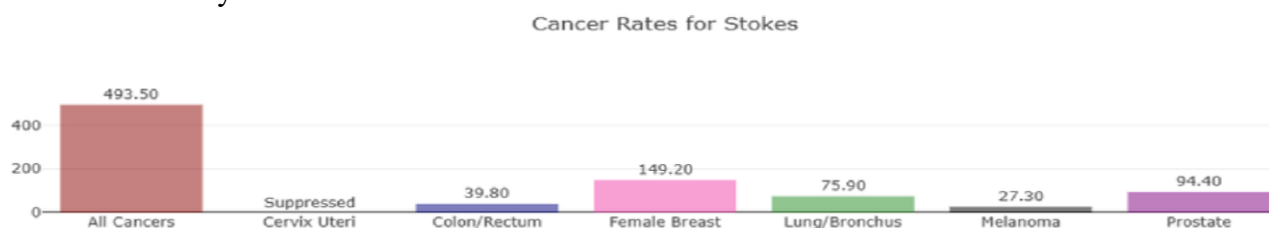
CANCER

Cancer is a disease that occurs when cells in the body grow out of control. Under normal conditions, cells grow, divide, and die in an orderly process. With cancer, some cells do not stop growing when they should. These abnormal cells can form tumors, damage surrounding healthy tissue, and, in some cases, spread to other parts of the body.

There are many types of cancer that can affect different parts of the body. Some cancers grow slowly, while others progress more rapidly. Treatment options vary and may include surgery, medication, radiation, or therapies that help the body's immune system fight the disease. Many cancers can be treated successfully, especially when they are detected early.

Cancer was the second leading cause of death in Stokes County between 2019 and 2023. During this period, there were 606 cancer-related deaths in Stokes County, compared to 101,532 statewide in North Carolina. According to the North Carolina Central Cancer Registry, 34.3% of all deaths in Stokes County were due to cancer, compared to 19.3% statewide.

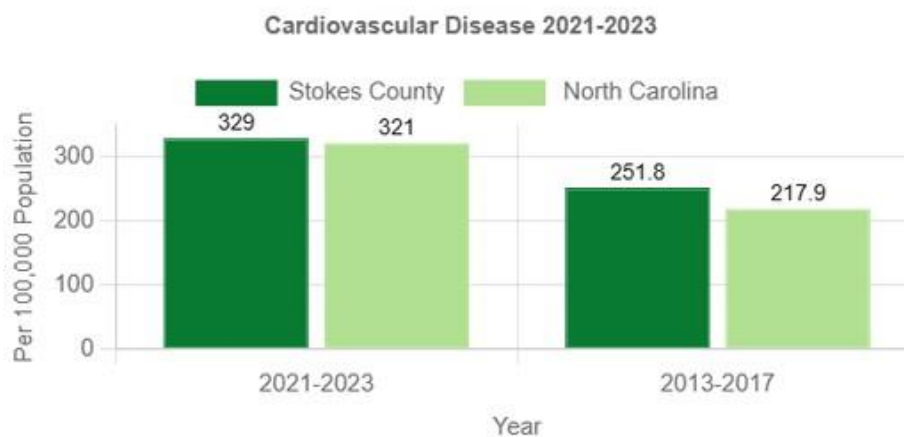
This disparity indicates that cancer accounts for a significantly larger share of deaths in Stokes County than in North Carolina overall, reflecting a higher local burden of disease. These findings highlight the importance of cancer prevention efforts, early detection, and improved access to care within the county.



CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

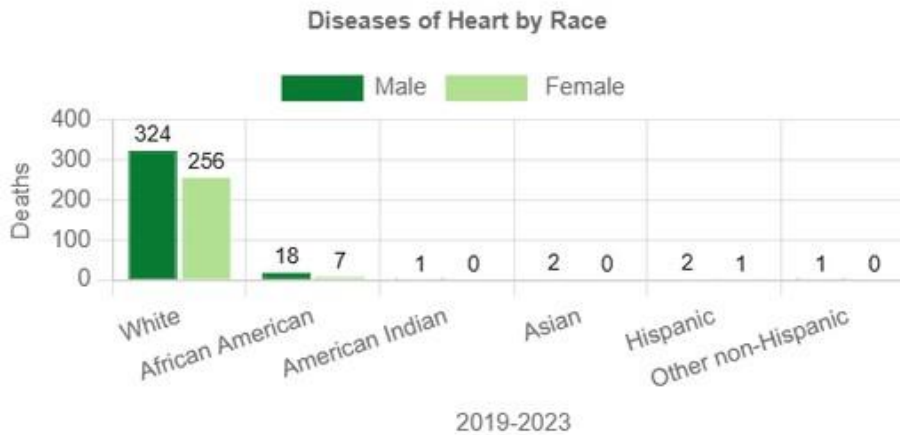
Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a broad term used to describe conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels, including coronary artery disease (which can lead to heart attacks), stroke, heart failure, irregular heart rhythms, and high blood pressure–related heart damage. These conditions often develop when fatty deposits, known as plaque, build up inside the arteries; a process called atherosclerosis, which restricts or blocks blood flow.

Major risk factors for cardiovascular disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, obesity, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and chronic stress. Although cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and worldwide, it is often preventable. Healthy lifestyle choices, such as regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding tobacco, and effectively managing conditions like hypertension and diabetes, can significantly reduce risk. Early detection through routine health screenings and timely treatment are also critical for preventing serious outcomes such as heart attack and stroke.



According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), the cardiovascular disease death rate in Stokes County is 329 per 100,000 population, slightly higher than the North Carolina statewide average of 321 per 100,000. When examined by race and gender, disparities are evident. Among White residents, the rate is 324 deaths per 100,000 for males and 256 per 100,000 for females. Among Black residents, the rate is 18 for males and 7 for females, while Hispanic residents have much lower reported numbers, with 2 male deaths and 1 female death. These differences suggest that social, economic, and access-to-care factors may contribute to varying cardiovascular health outcomes across racial and ethnic groups within the county.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE



Stokes County is addressing cardiovascular disease through efforts focused on prevention, early detection, and improved access to care. Community programs that promote physical activity, healthy eating, and smoking cessation, such as walking trials, fitness classes, and nutrition education initiatives, help residents reduce cardiovascular risk factors. Regular screenings for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes, along with partnerships with primary care providers and expanded telehealth services, support early intervention and effective chronic disease management.

Public education campaigns increase awareness of heart attack and stroke warning signs and promote heart-healthy behaviors, particularly in communities experiencing higher rates of disease. These efforts are supported through the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which prioritizes chronic disease prevention, and participation in the North Carolina Healthy Communities Program, which funds initiatives focused on nutrition and physical activity.

Additionally, the Active Stokes Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan is enhancing local parks and recreational amenities to encourage physical activity, while local clinics and the Health Department provide essential primary care and chronic disease management, especially in rural areas with limited access. Together, these coordinated efforts aim to reduce cardiovascular disease risk, address health disparities, and improve overall community health in Stokes County.

CHRONIC LOWER RESPIRATORY DISEASE

Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (CLRD) is a group of long-term lung conditions that affect the lower airways and make it difficult to breathe. The most common types include Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, asthma, and bronchiectasis. These conditions are often progressive, meaning symptoms can worsen over time, and they can significantly impact quality of life. Risk factors include smoking, long-term exposure to air pollution or occupational chemicals, and certain genetic conditions. Management focuses on medications, pulmonary rehabilitation, lifestyle changes, and avoiding triggers to improve breathing and reduce complications.

ASTHMA

Annual Asthma ED Visit Trends for Stokes

County	2021
Stokes	ED Visit Count
	157
	Crude Rate
	35.0
	ED Visit Percentage
	0.9%

This table shows asthma-related emergency department (ED) visits by ZIP code. It compares each area's population with total ED visits, the asthma ED visit rate, the number of asthma related visits, and the percentage of all ED visits that were due to asthma. ZIP codes with higher crude rates and percentages indicate communities where asthma is sending more people to the emergency room, suggesting a greater burden of asthma or possible gaps in asthma management, prevention, or access to routine care.

Annual Asthma ED Visit Trends for Stokes

County	2024
Stokes	ED Visit Count
	248
	Crude Rate
	54.2
	ED Visit Percentage
	1.4%

	Pop	Total ED Visits	Crude Rate	Count	% of ED Visits
27053	2,883	1,359	124.87	36	2.65%
27042	664	312	120.48	8	2.56%
27046	1,977	962	91.05	18	1.87%
27043	6,322	2,425	79.09	50	2.06%
27021	17,345	7,083	65.72	114	1.61%
27019	3,768	1,472	42.46	16	1.09%
27052	9,861	4,968	41.58	41	0.83%
27016	1,693	717	35.44	6	0.84%
27022	1,399	673		3	0.45%

COPD

Annual COPD ED Visit Trends for Stokes

County	2021
Stokes	ED Visit Count
	589
	Crude Rate
	131.2
	ED Visit Percentage
	3.4%

This table shows emergency department (ED) visit patterns by ZIP code. It compares each area's population to the total number of ED visits, the crude visit rate (visits per population), the count of visits for the condition being measured, and the percentage those visits make up of all ED visits. Overall, it highlights which ZIP codes have higher ED use and higher rates relative to their population, helping communities with greater healthcare needs or heavier reliance on emergency services.

Annual COPD ED Visit Trends for Stokes

County	2024
Stokes	ED Visit Count
	883
	Crude Rate
	193.0
	ED Visit Percentage
	4.8%

	Pop	Total ED Visits	Crude Rate	Count	% of ED Visits
27053	2,883	1,359	329.52	95	6.99%
27052	9,861	4,968	253.52	250	5.03%
27021	17,345	7,083	216.20	375	5.29%
27043	6,322	2,425	210.38	133	5.48%
27046	1,977	962	182.09	36	3.74%
27019	3,768	1,472	140.66	53	3.60%
27042	664	312	135.54	9	2.88%
27016	1,693	717	124.04	21	2.93%
27022	1,399	673	121.52	17	2.53%

<https://ncdetect.org/asthma-copd-dashboard/>

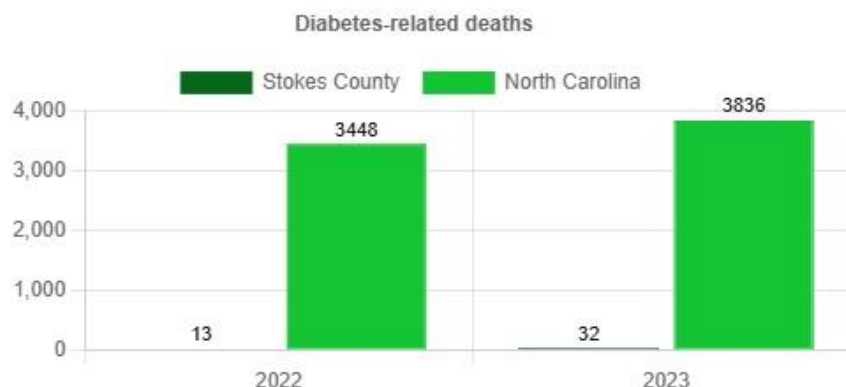
DIABETES

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which the body has difficulty regulating blood sugar (glucose) levels, which are essential for providing energy to the body's cells. The condition occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin; known as Type 1 diabetes, or cannot effectively use insulin, often combined with reduced insulin production, known as Type 2 diabetes. Gestational diabetes can also develop during pregnancy and typically resolves after childbirth, though it increases the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes later in life.



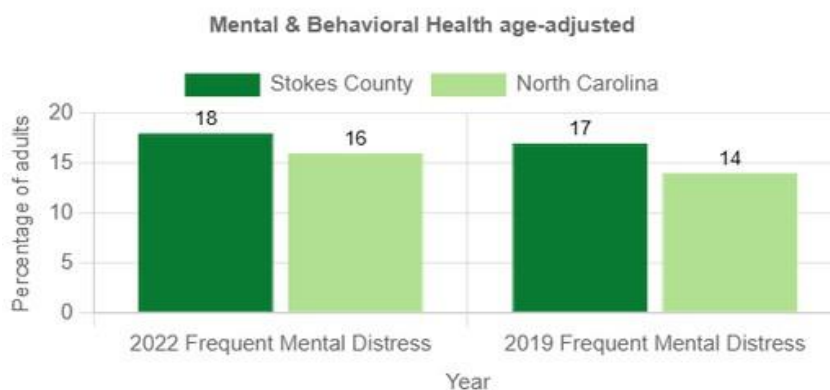
When blood sugar levels remain elevated over time, diabetes can cause serious complications, including damage to the heart, blood vessels, kidneys, eyes, and nerves. Common symptoms include increased thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, blurred vision, and slow-healing wounds or infections. Diabetes can be managed through healthy lifestyle changes, such as balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, and maintaining a healthy weight, along with medications or insulin therapy when needed.

According to the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, in 2023, Stokes County recorded 13 deaths related to diabetes, compared to 3,448 deaths statewide. In 2022, Stokes County experienced 32 diabetes-related deaths, while North Carolina reported 3,836 deaths. Although diabetes-related mortality in Stokes County fluctuates year to year, the county's diabetes death rate remains below the North Carolina statewide average.



MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns are significant issues in Stokes County, North Carolina. Community health assessments have consistently shown that mental health ranks among the top health concerns for residents. In one local assessment, more than 40 percent of respondents identified mental health problems, including depression, as a major issue affecting the county. Measures of frequent mental distress, defined as multiple days of poor mental health within a month, are also higher in Stokes County than the North Carolina average, reflecting the ongoing emotional and psychological strain experienced by many residents. The graph represents the percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month.



Access to mental health care in Stokes County presents notable challenges, largely due to its rural nature. There are limited numbers of local mental health providers, which can result in long wait times or reliance on emergency departments and social services rather than consistent outpatient care. Transportation barriers, lack of insurance, and stigma surrounding mental health treatment in small communities further contribute to unmet needs for people experiencing depression. Statewide trends in North Carolina help provide additional context. Across the state, a substantial portion of adults report symptoms of anxiety or depression, and rates of depression among youth have increased in recent years. These trends suggest that the experiences of Stokes County residents reflect broader patterns, particularly in rural areas where mental health resources are more limited.

Despite these challenges, Stokes County does have local and regional resources available. Behavioral health organizations such as Monarch, Daymark Recovery Services, and outpatient programs in communities like King and Walnut Cove provide therapy, medication management, crisis services, and support for individuals with depression and related conditions. The Stokes County Health Department also provides on-site mental health services, offering assessments, counseling, and referrals to appropriate levels of care. Private therapists are available through regional directories, and public agencies such as the Stokes County Department of Social Services and the Health Department can help connect residents to state-funded or Medicaid-supported mental health services.

For individuals experiencing a mental health crisis or thoughts of self-harm, immediate help is available through the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, which offers free, confidential support 24 hours a day.

SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use in Stokes County, North Carolina from 2021–2025 has followed patterns seen across rural North Carolina, with the most serious impacts tied to opioids, particularly synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. After the peak disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county continued to experience elevated overdose risk through the early 2020s. Fentanyl increasingly appeared in the local drug supply during this period, often mixed with heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, or counterfeit pills, raising the likelihood of fatal overdoses even among people who did not intend to use opioids.

Alcohol use remained a significant and persistent concern between 2021 and 2025. Increased stress, economic uncertainty, and lingering effects of the pandemic contributed to higher levels of alcohol misuse for some adults, with associated impacts on physical health, family conflict, and impaired driving. Alcohol use frequently overlaps with mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety, compounding risk in a county with limited behavioral health resources.

Methamphetamine and other stimulants continued to affect Stokes County during this period, sometimes used alongside opioids. This combination increased health risks, including overdose and long-term physical and mental health consequences. Among youth and young adults, substance use concerns included vaping nicotine and THC, marijuana use, and occasional misuse of prescription medications, often linked to mental health stress, school pressures, and social influences.

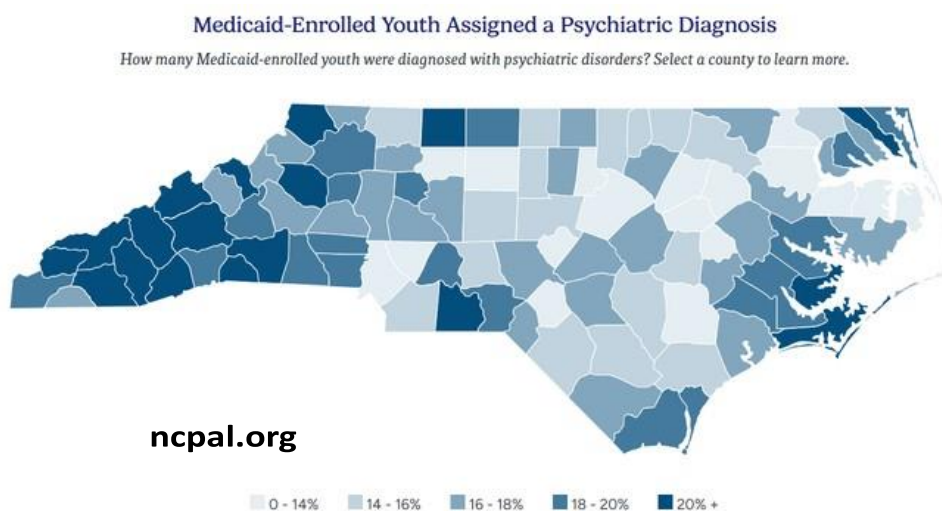
From 2021 to 2025, local and state responses emphasized harm reduction and treatment access, including wider distribution of naloxone (Narcan), expanded medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder, and greater reliance on telehealth for counseling and recovery services. Despite these efforts, ongoing challenges included transportation barriers, workforce shortages, stigma around substance use treatment, and limited availability of specialized services within the county.



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Youth mental health in Stokes County, North Carolina reflects patterns seen in many rural communities, combining strong family and community ties with notable gaps in access to care. Many children and adolescents experience stress related to academic pressure, family financial strain, social isolation, and limited recreational or social outlets, particularly in more remote areas of the county. Rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral health concerns among youth have increased in recent years, mirroring statewide and national trends. Schools often serve as the primary point of identification and support, but counseling staff and specialized mental health resources are limited, which can delay evaluation and treatment.

Access to care is a significant challenge for youth in Stokes County. Families may face long waiting times for child and adolescent mental health services, transportation barriers, or difficulty finding providers who accept Medicaid or have experience with youth. Stigma around mental health in rural areas can also discourage young people from seeking help. These barriers can contribute to higher risks of untreated depression, substance use, and, in severe cases, self-harm. Prevention efforts focus on strengthening school-based mental health support, expanding telehealth services, promoting family and community awareness, and connecting youth to crisis resources such as the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Continued investment in early intervention, school partnerships, and accessible mental health care is key to improving outcomes for young people in Stokes County.

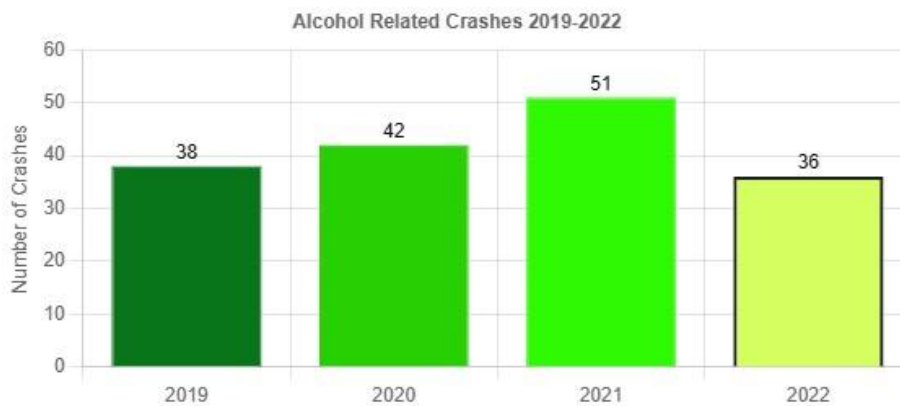


<https://ncpal.org/nc-youth-mental-health-care-data#fullview-stokes>

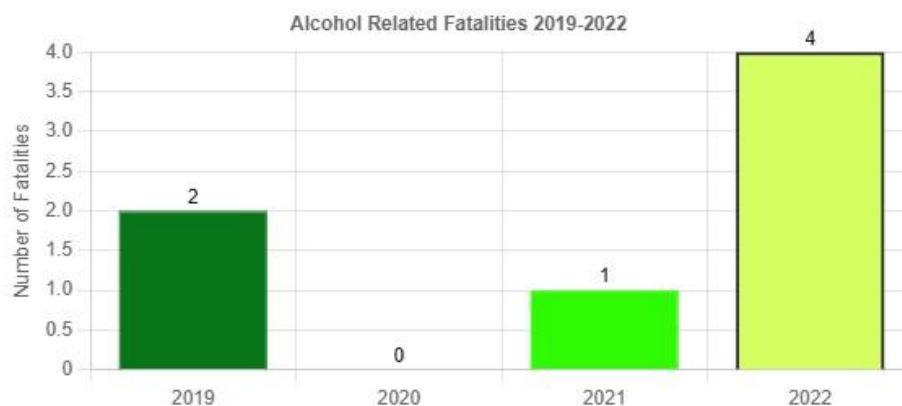
ALCOHOL

Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes in Stokes County fluctuated between 2019 and 2022. In 2019, there were 38 alcohol-related crashes, increasing to 42 in 2020 and peaking at 51 in 2021 before declining to 36 in 2022. Alcohol-related fatalities also varied during this period. Stokes County recorded two alcohol-related deaths in 2019, no fatalities in 2020, one fatality in 2021, and a sharp increase to four fatalities in 2022. These trends highlight the ongoing impact of impaired driving on community safety and underscore the importance of continued prevention, education, and enforcement efforts in Stokes County.

ALCOHOL RELATED CRASHES



ALCOHOL RELATED FATALITIES



<https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/safety/Documents/Crash%20Data%20and%20Information/2022%20Alcohol%20Crash%20Data.pdf>

UNINTENTIONAL DEATHS

From 2019 to 2023, unintentional injuries were the leading causes of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations in Stokes County. The leading cause of injury death during this period was unintentional poisoning, with 115 deaths, followed by unintentional falls (65 deaths) and unintentional motor vehicle traffic (MVT) injuries (56 deaths). Firearm related injuries also contributed to mortality, with 29 deaths from self-inflicted firearm injuries and 11 deaths from firearm assaults.

Leading Causes of Injury Death 2019-2023	Stokes County
Cause	#
1-Poisoning-Unintentional	115
2-Fall-Unintentional	65
3-MVT-Unintentional	56
4-Firearm-Self-inflicted	29
5-Firearm-Assault	11
Total	334

INJURY HOSPITALIZATION

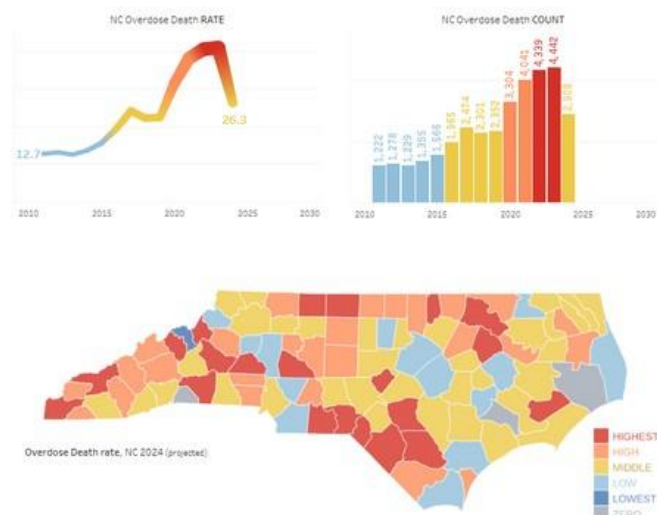
Injury-related hospitalizations during the same period totaled 1,523. Unintentional falls were the leading cause of hospitalization, accounting for 814 cases, followed by unintentional motor vehicle traffic injuries (193), unintentional poisoning (173), self-inflicted poisoning (95), and unspecified unintentional injuries (74). These data highlight the significant impact of preventable injuries on both mortality and healthcare utilization in Stokes County and emphasize the importance of targeted injury prevention strategies.

Leading Causes of Injury Hospitalization 2019-2023	Stokes County
Cause	#
1-Fall-Unintentional	814
2-MVT-Unintentional	193
3-Poisoning-Unintentional	173
4-Poisoning-Self-Inflicted	95
5-Unspecified-Unintentional	74
Total	1,523

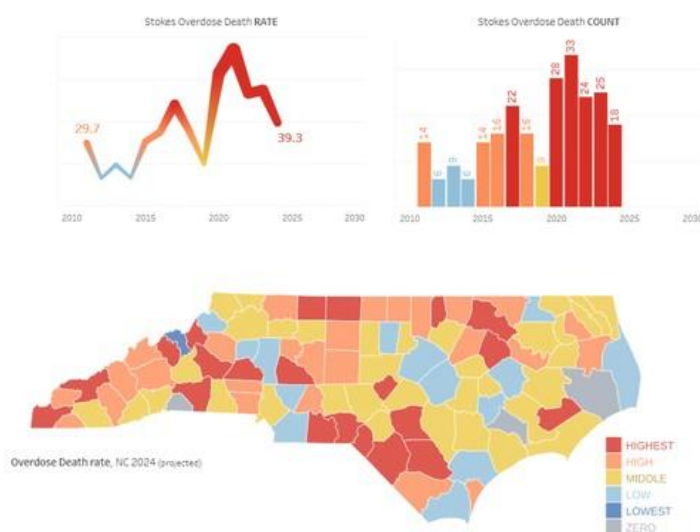
<https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/pdf/Top5TablesByCounty2019-2023.pdf>

OVERDOSE

North Carolina's overdose death rate increased sharply in the early 2020s before declining in 2024. In 2019, the statewide overdose rate was 22.4 deaths per 100,000 residents. This rate rose significantly to 38.2 in 2021 and continued to increase to 41.0 in 2023. By 2024, North Carolina experienced a notable improvement, with the overdose rate declining to 26.3 per 100,000 residents.



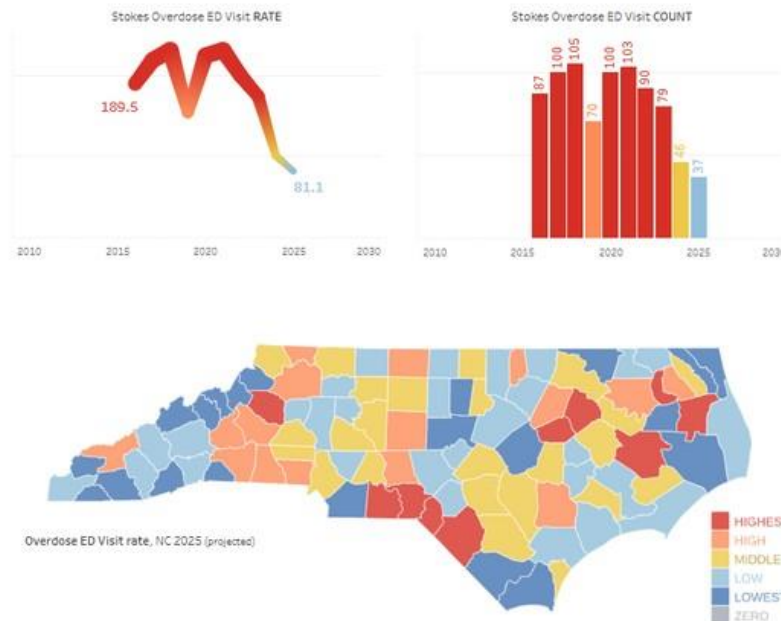
Stokes County followed a similar but more extreme pattern. In 2019, the county's overdose death rate was 19.7 per 100,000 residents, representing nine overdose deaths. In 2021, the rate surged dramatically to 73.9 per 100,000 residents, with 33 overdose-related deaths. Although rates remained elevated, there was a decline by 2023, when the overdose rate dropped to 54.9 per 100,000 residents, representing 25 deaths. The downward trend continued in 2024, with the rate decreasing further to 39.3 per 100,000 residents and 18 deaths overdose. While these reductions are encouraging, overdose mortality in Stokes County remains a significant public health concern.



<https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/chronic-disease-and-injury/injury-and-violenceprevention-branch/north-carolina-overdose-epidemic-data>

OVERDOSE

Emergency department (ED) visits for overdose in Stokes County have shown a substantial decline over time. In 2018, the overdose ED visit rate was 230.7 per 100,000 residents, representing 105 overdose-related ED visits. By 2020, the rate had slightly decreased to 224.3 per 100,000 residents, with 100 ED visits. In 2022, the rate continued to decline to 199.4 per 100,000 residents, accounting for 90 overdose-related ED visits. By 2025, overdose ED visit rates dropped significantly to 81.1 per 100,000 residents, representing just 37 ED visits. This downward trend suggests meaningful progress in overdose prevention and response efforts in Stokes County, though continued monitoring and intervention remain important.

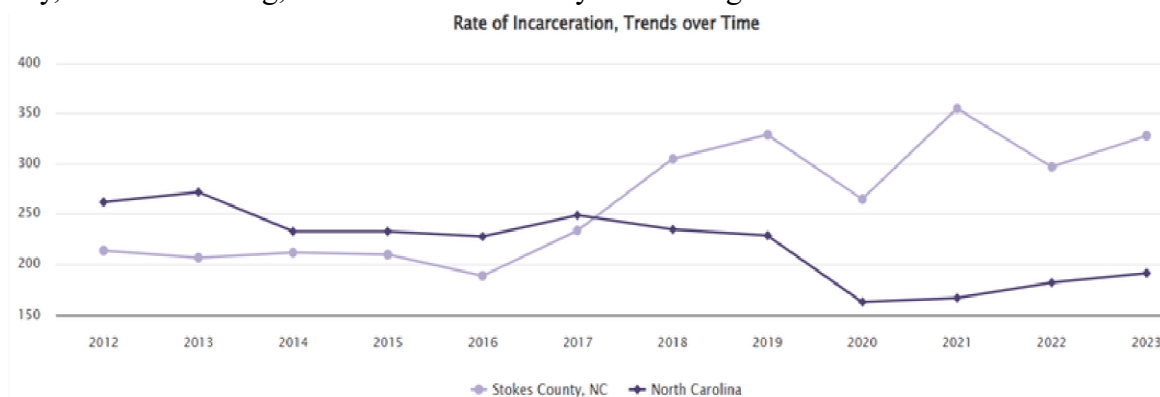


<https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/chronic-disease-and-injury/injury-and-violenceprevention-branch/north-carolina-overdose-epidemic-data>

INCARCERATION RATE

The incarceration rate is a measure of how many people are held in jail or prison within a specific population. It is typically expressed as the number of incarcerated individuals per 100,000 residents. In plain terms, it reflects how common incarceration is within a community. For example, an incarceration rate of 400 per 100,000 means that 400 out of every 100,000 residents are incarcerated at a given point in time.

In community health and planning, incarceration rates are important because higher rates are often associated with broader social and economic challenges, including poverty, limited access to education and employment opportunities, substance use, and mental health conditions. High incarceration rates can also have lasting effects on families and communities, influencing economic stability, child well-being, and overall community health long after individuals are released.



According to data from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction, Stokes County's incarceration rate in 2023 was 327.9 per 100,000 residents, substantially higher than the state average of 182.2 per 100,000. This indicates a disproportionately high level of incarceration in Stokes County compared to North Carolina overall. An examination of incarceration trends over time shows a significant increase in Stokes County. In 2017, the incarceration rate was 234 per 100,000. By 2019, the rate rose sharply to 329, followed by another increase in 2021 to 355 per 100,000. Although the rate declined slightly by 2023, it remained elevated at 328 per 100,000, well above both earlier levels and the state average. When incarceration rates are examined by race and ethnicity in Stokes County, disparities are evident. In 2023, the incarceration rate among White residents was 345.58 per 100,000, while the rate among Black residents was 321.72 per 100,000. Both rates exceed the state average, underscoring the widespread and persistent impact of incarceration across racial groups within the county.



MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH

Maternal and infant health in Stokes County is influenced by rural living, limited access to health care, and social and economic factors. Many pregnant women must travel long distances for prenatal care, which can delay early and consistent checkups that are critical for identifying complications and supporting healthy pregnancies.

Maternal health outcomes are also affected by chronic conditions, limited health education, and barriers such as lack of transportation, insurance, or broadband access. These challenges can limit access to timely care and important health information. Infant health is closely tied to prenatal care and maternal well-being, and rural geography can make it harder for families to access pediatric care, immunizations, and other essential services.

Improving maternal and infant health in Stokes County requires expanded access to prenatal and postnatal care, increased health education, and support services such as transportation, nutrition, and social resources to promote healthier outcomes for mothers and babies.

BIRTH RATES

Births in Stokes County showed an overall increase between 2020 and 2024. In 2020, the county recorded 384 births, which rose to 423 births in 2022 and increased further to 446 births in 2024. Across the five-year period from 2020 to 2024, Stokes County had a total of 2,060 births.

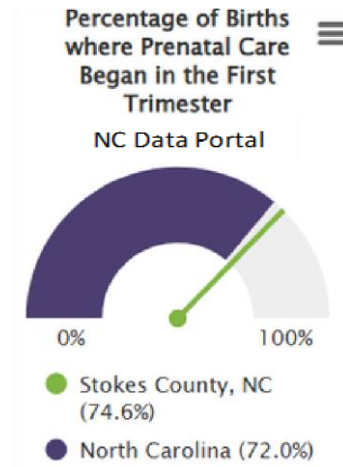
At the state level, North Carolina recorded 116,755 births in 2021, with the total increasing to 121,013 births by 2024. These trends indicate modest growth in births both locally and statewide, with Stokes County experiencing a gradual rise in annual births during this period.

Live Births NC Health Statistics	Stokes County	North Carolina
2024	446	121,013
2023	424	120,501
2022	423	121,557
2021	383	120,501
2020	384	116,755

FIRST TRIMESTER PRENATAL CARE

First trimester prenatal care is important because it helps protect the health of both the mother and the baby from the very beginning of pregnancy. Early prenatal visits allow healthcare providers to confirm the pregnancy, identify health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or infections, and address risk factors that could affect fetal development. Prenatal care in the first trimester also supports healthy behaviors, such as proper nutrition, prenatal vitamin use, and avoiding harmful substances and allows providers to establish accurate due dates and monitor early fetal growth. Early care is linked to lower risks of pregnancy complications, preterm birth, and low birth weight.

According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Maternal and Infant Health Data Dashboard, there were 355 total residents live births. Of those, 265 individuals began prenatal care in the first trimester, resulting in a rate of 74.6%, which is higher than the statewide rate of 72%.



GESTATIONAL DIABETES

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that develops during pregnancy in someone who did not previously have diabetes. It happens when the body cannot make enough insulin to manage the increased blood sugar levels that occur during pregnancy.

Gestational diabetes usually develops in the second or third trimester and often has no noticeable symptoms. If not managed, it can increase the risk of complications such as high birth weight, preterm birth, cesarean delivery, and future Type 2 diabetes for both the mother and child. It is typically managed through healthy eating, physical activity, blood sugar monitoring, and sometimes medication, and it usually goes away after the baby is born.

Report Area	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Stokes County, NC	3.2%	4.4%	2.6%	3.2%	6.8%	4.3%	3.7%	3.8%	5.9%	7.0%
North Carolina	5.3%	5.3%	5.7%	6.4%	6.6%	6.3%	7.4%	8.2%	8.6%	8.8%

NC Data Portal

According to NCDHHS, in Stokes County during 2023, 7% of births were to mothers with gestational diabetes among 355 total births, which is lower than the state average of 8.8%. However, the rate has more than doubled since 2014, when it was 3.2%, indicating that gestational diabetes has become more common among pregnant women in the county. This increase may reflect factors such as rising rates of obesity or overweight, changes in screening practices, older maternal age, and lifestyle factors including diet and physical activity. While still below the state average, this upward trend highlights the need for enhanced prenatal care, nutrition counseling, and diabetes prevention programs to support maternal and infant health.

MATERNAL HYPERTENSION

Maternal hypertension refers to high blood pressure that occurs during pregnancy. It can be chronic (existing before pregnancy or diagnosed before 20 weeks) or gestational (developing after 20 weeks of pregnancy in women who previously had normal blood pressure).

Maternal hypertension is important because it can increase the risk of complications for both the mother and baby, including preterm birth, low birth weight, placental abruption, pre-eclampsia, and future cardiovascular disease. It is usually managed through regular prenatal care, monitoring blood pressure, lifestyle changes, and sometimes medication to help reduce risks and support a healthy pregnancy.

Report Area	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Stokes County, NC	6.5%	6.1%	6.1%	8.7%	12.9%	10.5%	15.7%	10.0%	15.7%	16.6%
North Carolina	7.6%	8.1%	9.3%	10.1%	11.0%	11.1%	12.6%	13.9%	14.6%	15.4%

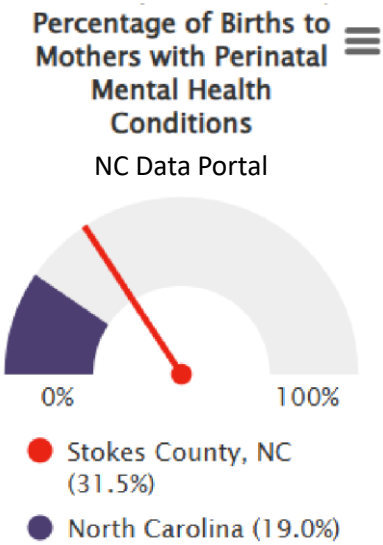
NC Data Portal

The increase in maternal hypertension from 6.5% in 2014 to 16.6% in 2023 shows that high blood pressure during pregnancy has become significantly more common in Stokes County, and the current rate is higher than the state average of 15.4%. This suggests growing health risks for pregnant women in the county, which could lead to higher rates of complications such as preterm birth, low birth weight, preeclampsia, and other maternal or infant health issues. It highlights a need for increased prenatal care, early screening, lifestyle support, and chronic disease prevention programs to address maternal health locally.

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Perinatal mental health conditions are mental health disorders that occur during pregnancy or within the first year after childbirth. They include conditions such as depression, anxiety, postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety, and postpartum psychosis. These conditions are important because they can affect both the mother’s well-being and the baby’s development, including emotional bonding, feeding, and growth. Early recognition, support, and treatment, such as counseling, therapy, and sometimes medication, can help improve outcomes for both mother and child.

According to NCDHHS, in 2024, Stokes County had 444 total deliveries, and 140 of these (31.5%) involved a perinatal mental health condition, which is higher than the state rate of 19.0%. This means that nearly one-third of birthing individuals in Stokes County experienced mental health challenges during pregnancy or within the first year postpartum, indicating a significant need for mental health support, screening, and treatment services for mothers in the county.



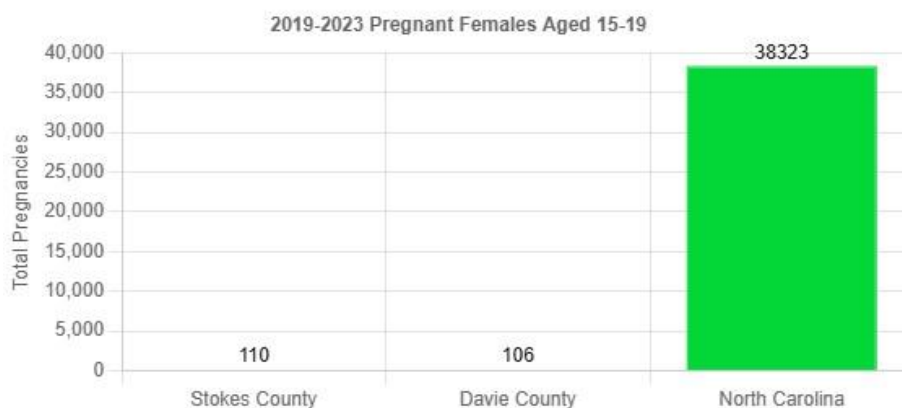
LOW BIRTH RATE

From 2019 to 2023, Stokes County recorded a total of 174 low birth weight births. Of these, 157 occurred among White mothers, seven among Black mothers, and eight among Hispanic mothers. These data highlight racial and ethnic differences in low-birth-weight births within Stokes County and underscore the importance of targeted maternal and child health interventions to promote healthy pregnancies and improved birth outcomes.



TEEN PREGNANCIES

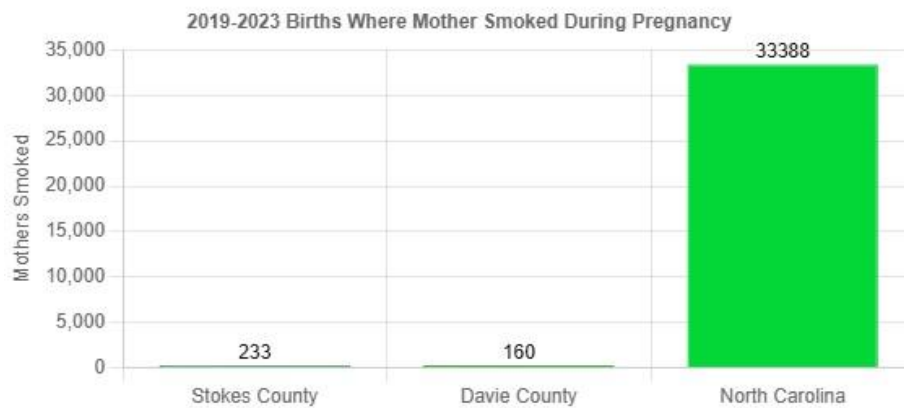
From 2019 to 2023, Stokes County recorded 110 pregnancies among females ages 15–19. During the same period, Davie County reported 106 teen pregnancies, while North Carolina recorded 38,323 pregnancies in this age group. These figures highlight that teen pregnancy remains a concern in Stokes County and emphasize the continued need for education, prevention efforts, and access to reproductive health services for adolescents.



<https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/databook/>

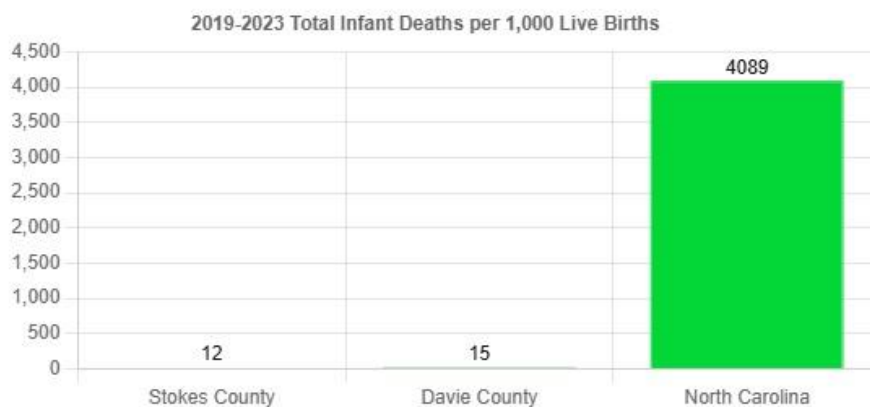
SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY

Smoking during pregnancy has declined in both Stokes County and Davie County over time, though it remains a concern. From 2016 to 2020, Stokes County recorded 317 births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy. From 2019 to 2023, this number had decreased to 233 births, reflecting a notable reduction. Davie County showed a similar trend, with 206 such births reported from 2016 to 2020 and 160 births from 2019 to 2023. During the 2019–2023 period, North Carolina recorded a total of 33,388 births in which mothers smoked during pregnancy. While these declines are encouraging, continued prevention and smoking cessation efforts remain important to support healthy pregnancies and improve birth outcomes.



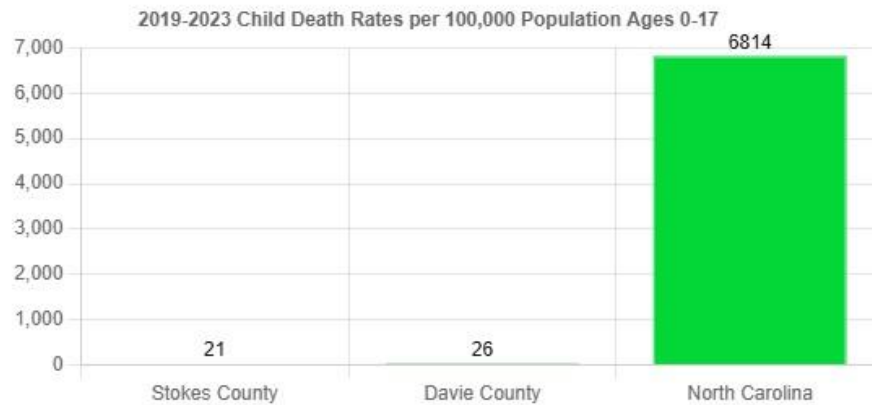
INFANT DEATHS

From 2016 to 2020, Stokes County’s infant death rate was 6.2 deaths per 1,000 live births. For the 2019–2023 period, Stokes County recorded a total of 12 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to 15 in Davie County. During the same timeframe, the statewide total for North Carolina was 4,089 infant deaths. These data indicate continued concerns related to infant mortality and highlight the importance of ongoing efforts to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in Stokes County.



CHILD DEATHS

From 2016 to 2020, Stokes County's child death rate among ages 0–17 was 41.9 per 100,000 children. During the 2019–2023 period, Stokes County recorded 21 child deaths among ages 0–17, while Davie County recorded 26 child deaths in this age group. Statewide, North Carolina reported a total of 6,814 child deaths during the same period. These figures suggest changes in child mortality over time and highlight the importance of continued child health and safety initiatives in Stokes County.



An infectious disease is an illness caused by germs such as bacteria, viruses, parasites, or fungi. These diseases can spread from person to person, through contaminated food or water, by insect or animal bites, or by contact with infected surfaces, blood, or bodily fluids. Common examples include the flu, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections, hepatitis, and foodborne illnesses like salmonella. Preventing infectious diseases involves practices such as vaccination, handwashing, safe food handling, using protection during sex, and staying home when sick.



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

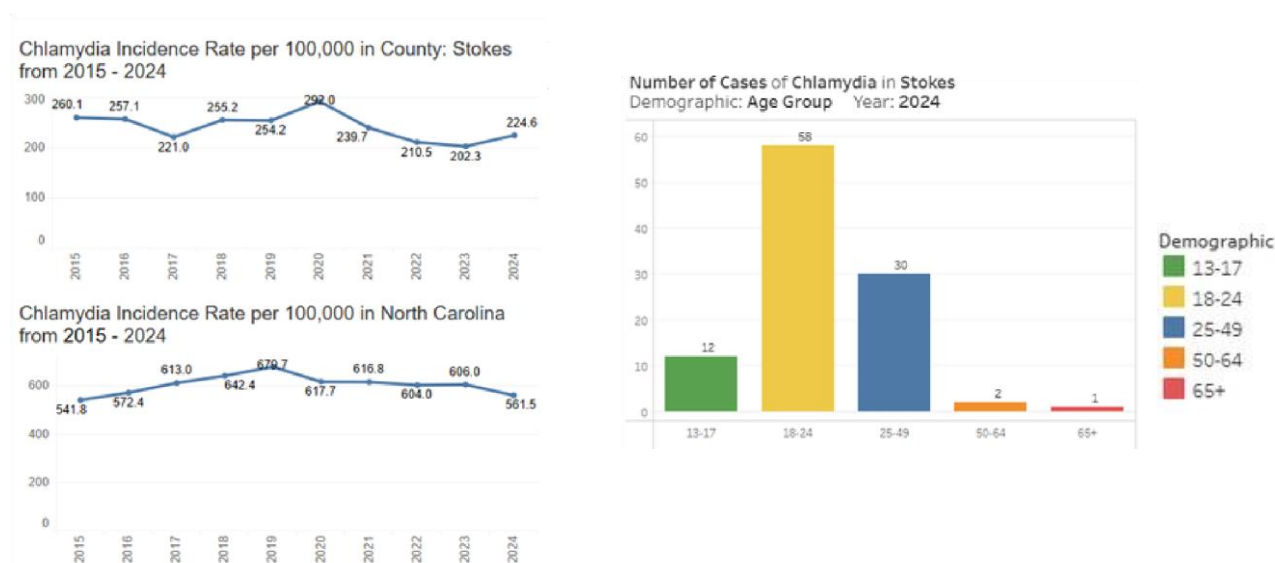
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are primarily spread through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal, or oral sex. They can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Common examples include chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV, human papillomavirus (HPV), and herpes simplex virus (HSV). STIs can cause a range of symptoms, such as painful urination, unusual discharge, sores, or sometimes no symptoms at all, which is why regular testing is important. In Stokes County in 2024, the top three STIs were Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and HIV. Prevention focuses on condom use, reducing the number of sexual partners, regular testing, and vaccination for preventable infections like HPV and hepatitis B.

County	Disease	2021		2022		2023		2024	
		County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence
Stokes	Chlamydia	107.0	239.7	95.0	210.5	92.0	202.3	103.0	224.6
	Gonorrhea	44.0	98.6	40.0	88.6	31.0	68.2	28.0	61.1
	HIV	3.0	7.7	1.0	2.5	3.0	7.6	3.0	7.5
	Syphilis - Early, Non-Primary, Non-S...	0.0	0	1.0	2.2	3.0	6.6	1.0	2.2
	Syphilis - Primary Syphilis	1.0	2.2	1.0	2.2	0.0	0	1.0	2.2
	Syphilis - Secondary Syphilis	4.0	9	1.0	2.2	1.0	2.2	2.0	4.4

CHLAMYDIA

Chlamydia cases in Stokes County remained relatively stable between 2021 and 2024. In 2021, the county reported 107 cases, compared to 103 cases in 2024. The age distribution of cases shows that young adults were the most affected, with 58 cases occurring among individuals ages 18–24. Additional cases included 12 among ages 13–17, 30 among ages 25–49, two among ages 50–64, and one case among individuals age 65 and older.

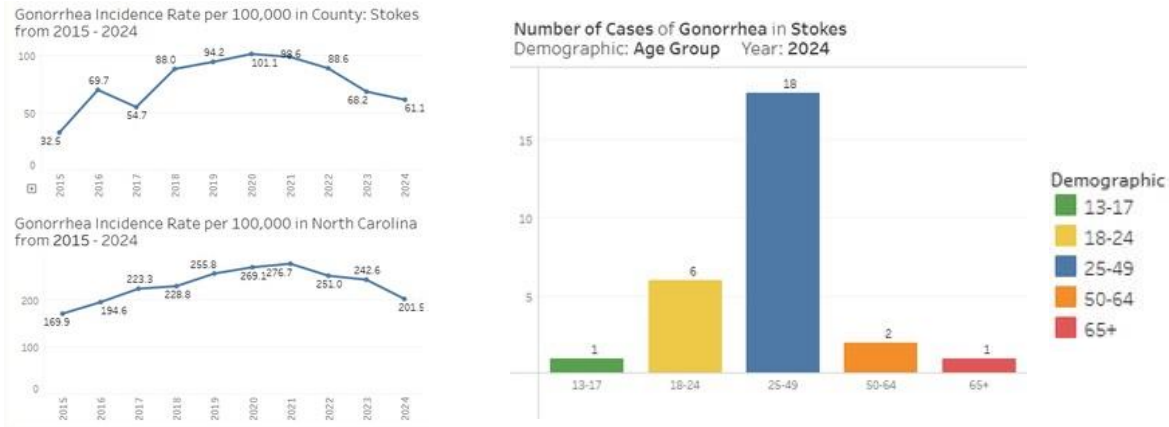
Incidence rates in Stokes County were consistently lower than the state average during this period. In 2021, the chlamydia incidence rate in Stokes County was 239.7 per 100,000 residents, compared to 616.8 per 100,000 statewide. By 2024, the county's rate declined to 224.6 per 100,000 residents, while the statewide rate also decreased to 561.5 per 100,000. Although rates in Stokes County remain below the state average, the concentration of cases among adolescents and young adults highlights the continued need for targeted prevention, education, and screening efforts.



<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

GONORRHEA

Gonorrhea cases in Stokes County declined between 2021 and 2024. In 2021, the county reported 44 cases, which decreased to 28 cases by 2024. In 2024, the highest number of cases occurred among adults ages 25–49, accounting for 18 cases. This was followed by six cases among individuals ages 18–24, two cases among those ages 50–64, and one case each in the 13–17 and 65 and older age groups.

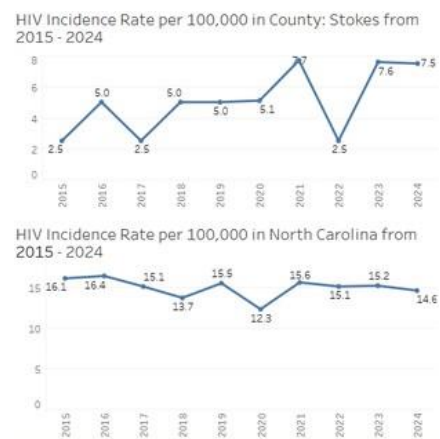


Incidence rates also decreased during this period. In 2021, Stokes County’s gonorrhea incidence rate was 98.6 per 100,000 residents, compared to a much higher statewide rate of 276.7. By 2024, the county’s rate had declined to 61.1 per 100,000 residents, while the North Carolina statewide rate decreased to 201.5. Although Stokes County’s rates remain well below the state average, these data underscore the importance of continued screening, education, and prevention efforts, particularly among young and middle-aged adults.

HIV (HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS)

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the body’s immune system, specifically the CD4 cells (T cells), which help the body fight off infections. Over time, if untreated, HIV can weaken the immune system, making it harder to fight infections and diseases. HIV is primarily spread through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, rectal fluids, and breast milk—commonly via unprotected sex, sharing needles, or from mother to child during childbirth or breastfeeding. While there is no cure, HIV can be managed effectively with antiretroviral therapy (ART), which allows people to live long, healthy lives and reduces the risk of transmitting the virus to others.

In Stokes County, NC, the incidence rate of HIV per 100,000 residents was 5.1 in 2020, decreased to 2.5 in 2022, and then increased to 7.5 in 2024. Statewide rates were higher, at 12.3 in 2020, 15.1 in 2022, and 14.6 in 2024. The number of cases and demographic details within the county are suppressed to protect privacy. These trends underscore the ongoing need for HIV education, testing, prevention strategies, and access to treatment to reduce new infections in the community.



<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

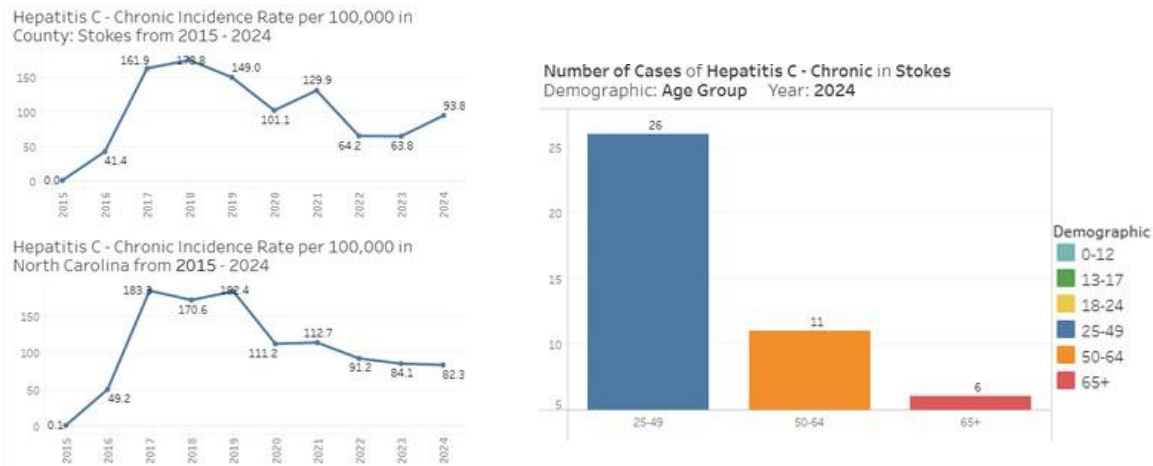
HEPATITIS

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver, usually caused by viruses, and can be acute or chronic. Chronic hepatitis B occurs when the hepatitis B virus remains in the body long-term; people may have no symptoms but can still spread the virus, and a vaccine is available. Chronic hepatitis C is caused by the hepatitis C virus, is often silent for years, and spreads mainly through blood; there is no vaccine, but it can often be cured with antiviral treatment. Both types can lead to serious liver damage if untreated. In 2024, the top two hepatitis infections in Stokes County were chronic hepatitis C and chronic hepatitis B (carrier).

County	Disease	2021		2022		2023		2024	
		County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence
Stokes	Hepatitis A	1.0	2.2	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
	Hepatitis B - Acute	3.0	6.7	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
	Hepatitis B - Chronic Carrier	4.0	9	2.0	4.4	2.0	4.4	6.0	13.1
	Hepatitis B - Perinatally Acquired	0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0	
	Hepatitis C - Acute	1.0	2.2	1.0	2.2	0.0	0	0.0	0
	Hepatitis C - Chronic	58.0	129.9	29.0	64.2	29.0	63.8	43.0	93.8

HEPATITIS C

Hepatitis C cases in Stokes County fluctuated between 2021 and 2024. In 2021, the county reported a caseload of 58 cases. This number declined substantially to 29 cases during 2022–2023, before increasing again to 43 cases in 2024. In 2024, the largest proportion of Hepatitis C cases occurred among adults ages 25–49, accounting for 26 cases, followed by 11 cases among those ages 50–64 and six cases among residents age 65 and older.



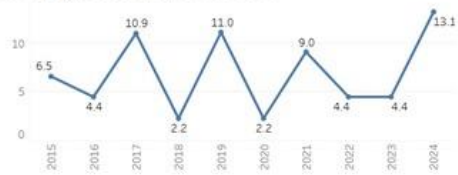
Incidence rates in Stokes County decreased overall during this period. In 2021, the Hepatitis C incidence rate was 129.9 per 100,000 population, which was higher than the statewide rate of 112.7. By 2024, the county’s rate had declined to 93.8 per 100,000 population, while the North Carolina statewide rate also decreased to 82.3. Although incidence rates have improved, the rise in cases in 2024 highlights the need for continued prevention, testing, and treatment efforts, particularly among working-age adults.

<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

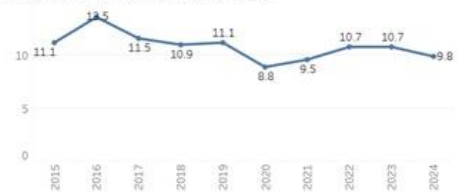
HEPATITIS B

In Stokes County, the incidence rate of chronic hepatitis B (carrier) per 100,000 residents was 2.2 in 2020, spiked to 9.0 in 2021, decreased to 4.4 in 2022 and 2023, and rose to 13.1 in 2024. In comparison, the statewide rates were higher overall, at 8.8 in 2020, 9.5 in 2021, 10.7 in 2022 and 2023, and 9.8 in 2024. In 2024, there were 4 cases in the 50–64 age group and 2 cases in those 65 and older. These trends emphasize the importance of vaccination, testing, and education to prevent hepatitis B transmission in the community.

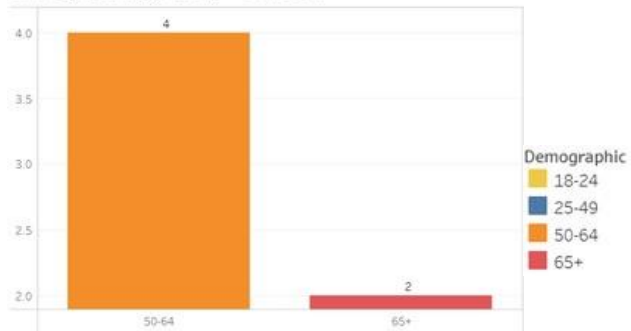
Hepatitis B - Chronic Carrier Incidence Rate per 100,000 in County; Stokes from 2015 - 2024



Hepatitis B - Chronic Carrier Incidence Rate per 100,000 in North Carolina from 2015 - 2024



Number of Cases of Hepatitis B - Chronic Carrier in Stokes
Demographic: Age Group Year: 2024



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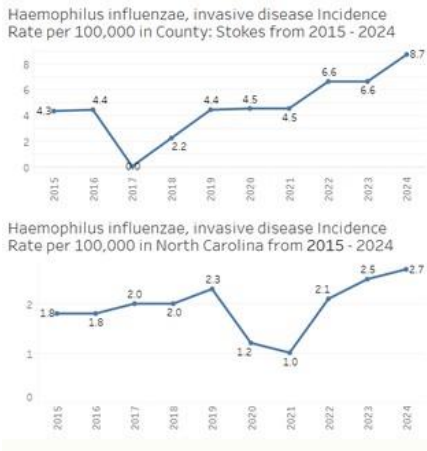
VACCINE PREVENTABLE

Vaccine-preventable diseases are illnesses caused by viruses or bacteria that can be prevented through vaccination. Vaccines help the body build immunity, reducing the risk of infection, severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Examples of vaccine-preventable diseases include measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis (whooping cough), influenza, Haemophiles influenzae type b (Hib), hepatitis A and B, polio, tetanus, diphtheria, and chickenpox. Widespread vaccination protects not only individuals but also communities by limiting the spread of disease, especially to infants, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

County	Disease	2021		2022		2023		2024	
		County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence
Stokes	Acute flaccid myelitis	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
	Haemophilus influenzae, invasive dL	2.000	4.5	3.000	6.6	3.000	6.6	4.000	8.7
	Measles	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
	Meningitis, pneumococcal	0.000	0	1.000	2.2	0.000	0	0.000	0
	Meningococcal invasive disease	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
	Mpox	0.000	0	1.000	2.2	0.000	0	0.000	0
	Mumps	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
	Pertussis	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	2.000	4.4
	Tetanus	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
	Varicella	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	1.000	2.2

HAEMOPHILES INFLUENZAE

Haemophiles influenzae is a type of bacteria that can cause illnesses ranging from mild ear and sinus infections to serious diseases such as pneumonia and meningitis. It spreads through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing and most commonly affects young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems. The most severe form, type b (Hib), is preventable with routine childhood vaccination, and infections are treatable with antibiotics when identified early.



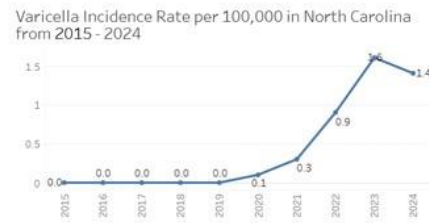
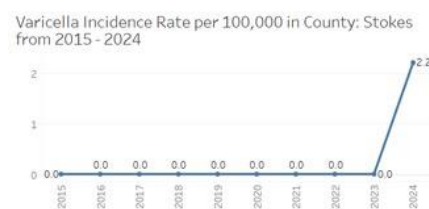
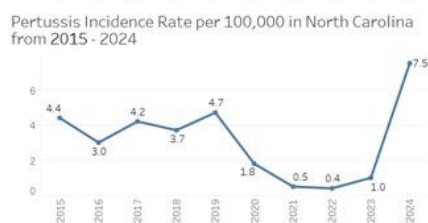
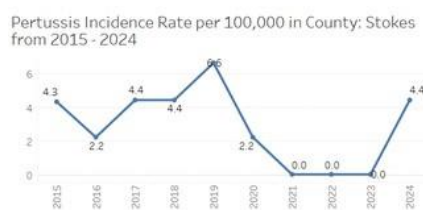
In Stokes County, the incidence rate of Haemophiles influenzae infections has steadily increased in recent years, rising from 4.5 per 100,000 residents in 2020 to 6.6 in 2022 and 8.7 in 2024. In comparison, the statewide rate remained much lower, increasing from 1.2 per 100,000 in 2020 to 2.1 in 2022 and 2.7 in 2024. The number of cases in the county by age has been suppressed to protect privacy. This widening gap highlights a concerning local trend and underscores the need for enhanced community education on the importance of vaccinations to prevent serious Haemophiles influenzae infections.

<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

PERTUSSIS

Pertussis, also known as Whooping Cough, is a highly contagious bacterial infection of the respiratory system caused by *Bordetella pertussis*. It spreads easily through coughing and sneezing and starts with cold-like symptoms but can progress to severe coughing fits that make it hard to breathe. Pertussis is especially dangerous for infants and young children, sometimes leading to pneumonia, seizures, or hospitalization. Vaccination (DTaP for children and Tdap for adolescents and adults) is the best way to prevent pertussis.

In Stokes County, pertussis rates have fluctuated in recent years, with an incidence rate of 2.2 per 100,000 residents in 2020, dropping to zero in 2022, and then increasing to 4.4 per 100,000 in 2024. During the same period, the statewide rate declined from 1.8 per 100,000 in 2020 to 0.4 in 2022, before rising sharply to 7.5 per 100,000 in 2024. These changes highlight the reemergence of pertussis and reinforce the importance of ongoing vaccination and public health education efforts.



VARICELLA

Varicella, commonly known as chickenpox, is a highly contagious viral infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus. It spreads easily through coughing, sneezing, or direct contact with the rash. Varicella causes itchy, blister-like rash, fever, and fatigue, and while it is often mild in children, it can be severe in infants, adults, pregnant people, and those with weakened immune systems. Varicella is preventable with vaccination, which is highly effective at reducing illness, complications, and outbreaks.

In Stokes County, the incidence rate of varicella remained at zero in both 2020 and 2022, before increasing to 2.2 cases per 100,000 residents in 2024. In comparison, the statewide incidence rate was 0.1 per 100,000 in 2020 and rose to 1.4 per 100,000 in 2024. This increase in local cases highlights a concerning upward trend and emphasizes the importance of continued vaccination efforts and public education to prevent varicella outbreaks.

<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

VECTOR-BORNE

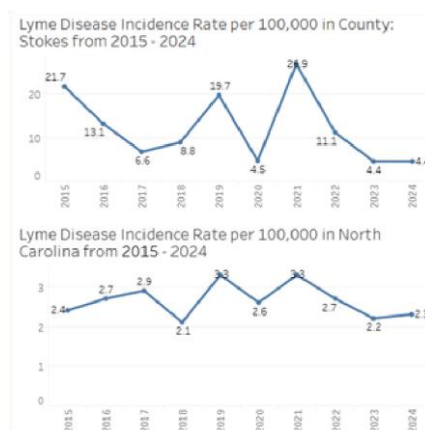
A vector-borne disease is an illness transmitted to humans or animals through a living organism, called a vector, such as a mosquito, tick, or flea. These vectors carry pathogens from one host to another, causing diseases like malaria, Lyme disease, West Nile virus, and dengue fever. Unlike infections that spread directly between people, vector-borne diseases depend on these organisms to transmit the infection. In 2024, Stokes County reported 2 cases of vector-borne disease, both of which were Lyme disease.

County	Disease	2021		2022		2023		2024	
		County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence
Stokes	Anaplasmosis	1.00	2.2	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
	Ehrlichiosis	2.00	4.5	0.00	0	1.00	2.2	0.00	0
	Lyme Disease	12.00	26.9	5.00	11.1	2.00	4.4	2.00	4.4
	Spotted Fever Rickettsiosis	2.00	4.5	1.00	2.2	0.00	0	0.00	0

LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected black-legged tick (deer tick). Early symptoms often include fever, headache, fatigue, and a distinctive “bull’s-eye” rash at the bite site. If left untreated, the infection can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system, causing more serious complications. Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics, and prevention focuses on avoiding tick bites through protective clothing, insect repellent, and checking for ticks after spending time outdoors.

In Stokes County, NC, the incidence rate of Lyme disease per 100,000 residents fluctuated over recent years, rising from 4.5 in 2020 to a peak of 26.9 in 2021, before decreasing to 11.1 in 2022 and 4.4 in 2024. In comparison, the statewide incidence rate remained much lower, increasing slightly from 2.6 per 100,000 in 2020 to 3.3 in 2021, then gradually declining to 2.7 in 2022 and 2.3 in 2024. These trends highlight the significant local variation in Lyme disease cases and underscore the importance of tick prevention and public education in high-risk areas.



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ENTERIC DISEASE

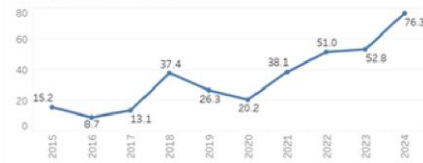
Enteric diseases are illnesses that affect the intestinal (digestive) system, usually caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites, and often spread through contaminated food, water, or hands. They can lead to symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fever. In Stokes County in 2024, the top three enteric diseases were Campylobacteriosis, Salmonellosis, and Cryptosporidiosis, while other cases include E. coli (Shiga toxin-producing), Vibrio infections, Listeriosis, and Shigellosis. These infections highlight the ongoing need for public education on safe food handling, clean water, hand hygiene, and proper sanitation to prevent illness.

County	Disease	2021		2022		2023		2024	
		County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence
Stokes	Campylobacteriosis	17.00	38.1	23.00	51	24.00	52.8	35.00	76.3
	Cryptosporidiosis	3.00	6.7	3.00	6.6	1.00	2.2	5.00	10.9
	Cyclosporiasis	2.00	4.5	2.00	4.4	0.00	0	0.00	0
	E. coli - shiga toxin producing	3.00	6.7	4.00	8.9	4.00	8.8	2.00	4.4
	Listeriosis	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	1.00	2.2
	Salmonellosis	7.00	15.7	5.00	11.1	10.00	22	14.00	30.5
	Shigellosis	0.00	0	1.00	2.2	2.00	4.4	1.00	2.2
	Vibrio infection (other than cholera a...	1.00	2.2	0.00	0	0.00	0	2.00	4.4

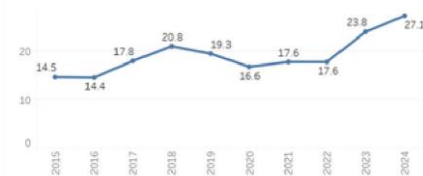
CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS

In 2024, Campylobacteriosis was the leading enteric disease in Stokes County, NC, with an incidence rate of 76.3 per 100,000, compared to the statewide rate of 27.1 per 100,000. The highest number of cases occurred in adults aged 65 and older (14 cases), followed by ages 25–49 and 50–64 (8 cases each), 0–12 years (3 cases), and 18–24 years (2 cases). This data highlights the critical importance of safe food handling, clean water, hand hygiene, and proper sanitation to prevent enteric illnesses in the community.

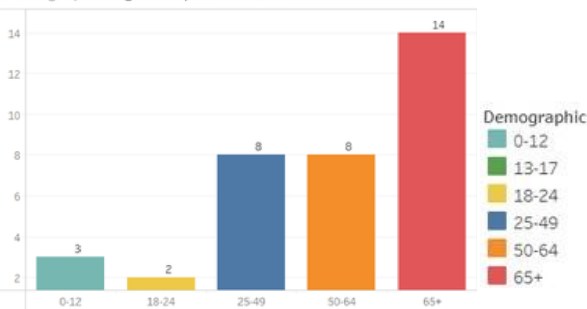
Campylobacteriosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in County: Stokes from 2015 - 2024



Campylobacteriosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in North Carolina from 2015 - 2024



Number of Cases of Campylobacteriosis in Stokes Demographic: Age Group Year: 2024



SALMONELLOSIS

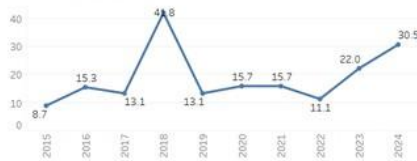
Salmonellosis is an infection caused by Salmonella bacteria, which usually affects the intestinal (digestive) system. People typically get infected by eating contaminated food or water, especially undercooked meat, eggs, or raw produce, or by touching contaminated surfaces. Symptoms often include diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, and vomiting, and while most people recover without treatment, severe cases may require hospitalization. Prevention focuses on safe food handling, cooking food thoroughly, washing hands, and practicing good sanitation.

<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

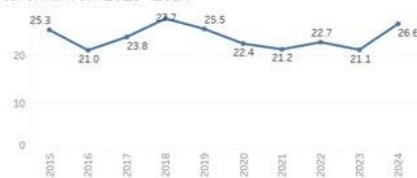
SALMONELLOSIS

In Stokes County, NC, the incidence rate of Salmonellosis per 100,000 residents was 15.7 in 2020, decreased to 11.1 in 2022, and then rose sharply to 30.5 in 2024. In comparison, the statewide rates were 22.4 in 2020, 22.7 in 2022, and 26.6 in 2024. In 2024, the highest number of cases occurred in adults aged 65 and older (6 cases), followed by ages 25–49 and 50–64 (3 cases each), and 0–12 years (2 cases). This data emphasizes the ongoing need for safe food handling, clean water, hand hygiene, and proper sanitation to prevent Salmonellosis in the community.

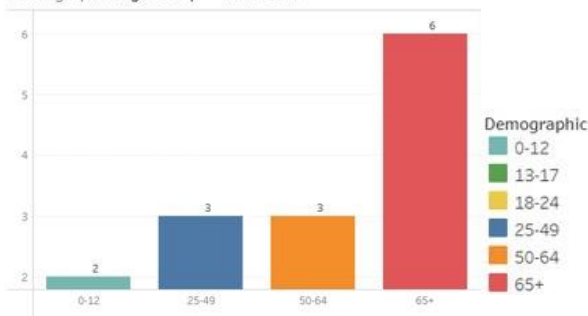
Salmonellosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in County: Stokes from 2015 - 2024



Salmonellosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in North Carolina from 2015 - 2024



Number of Cases of Salmonellosis in Stokes
Demographic: Age Group Year: 2024

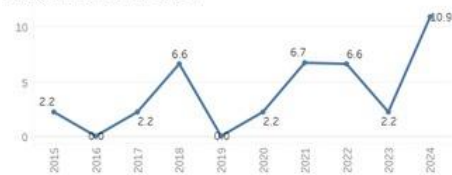


CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS

Cryptosporidiosis is an intestinal infection caused by the parasite *Cryptosporidium*, usually spread through contaminated water, food, or contact with infected people. It can cause watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea, fever, and fatigue, and can be more severe in people with weakened immune systems. There is no vaccine, so prevention relies on safe water, good hand hygiene, and proper sanitation, while most healthy people recover without treatment.

In Stokes County, the incidence rate of cryptosporidiosis per 100,000 residents increased from 2.2 in 2020 to 6.6 in 2022 and 10.9 in 2024. The total number of cases by age has been suppressed to protect privacy. In comparison, the statewide incidence rate was lower, at 2.0 in 2020, 3.5 in 2022, and 4.0 in 2024. This rising trend in the county highlights the importance of safe water, proper sanitation, and hand hygiene to prevent cryptosporidiosis infections.

Cryptosporidiosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in County: Stokes from 2015 - 2024



Cryptosporidiosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in North Carolina from 2015 - 2024



<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

RESPIRATORY DISEASE

Respiratory diseases are illnesses that affect the lungs and airways, making it hard to breathe. They can be caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, or environmental factors like pollution or smoking. Common examples include influenza, legionellosis, and tuberculosis. Symptoms may include coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest pain, and fever, and prevention often involves vaccination, good hand hygiene, avoiding sick individuals, and reducing environmental triggers.

County	Disease	2021		2022		2023		2024	
		County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence
Stokes	Influenza, adult death	0.000	0	0.000	0	2.000	5.4	0.000	0
	Legionellosis	1.000	2.2	1.000	2.2	3.000	6.6	1.000	2.2
	TB	0.000	0	1.000	2.2	0.000	0	1.000	2.2

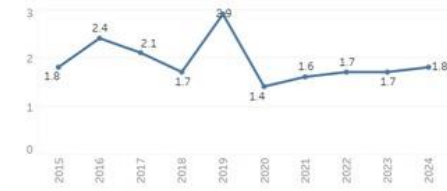
LEGIONELLOSIS

Legionellosis is a respiratory illness caused by Legionella bacteria, most commonly leading to Legionnaires’ disease, a severe form of pneumonia, or Pontiac fever, a milder flu-like illness. People usually become infected by breathing in tiny droplets of contaminated water from sources like showers, hot tubs, or cooling systems. It is not spread between people, and prevention focuses on proper water system maintenance. Early antibiotic treatment is important, especially for older adults or those with weakened immune systems. In Stokes County, the incidence rate of legionellosis per 100,000 residents was 4.5 in 2020, decreased to 2.2 in 2022, rose to 6.6 in 2023, and fell back to 2.2 in 2024. In comparison, the statewide incidence rate was lower and relatively stable, at 1.4 in 2020, 1.7 in 2022 and 2023, and 1.8 in 2024. These trends highlight the importance of proper maintenance of water systems and monitoring to prevent Legionella infections in the community.

Legionellosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in County: Stokes from 2015 - 2024



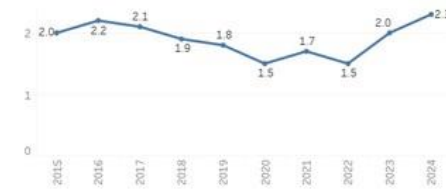
Legionellosis Incidence Rate per 100,000 in North Carolina from 2015 - 2024



TB Incidence Rate per 100,000 in County: Stokes from 2015 - 2024



TB Incidence Rate per 100,000 in North Carolina from 2015 - 2024



TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, usually affecting the lungs. It spreads through airborne droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. TB can be latent, with no symptoms and not contagious, or active, causing cough, fever, night sweats, weight loss, and fatigue, and can spread to others. TB is treatable with antibiotics, and prevention includes vaccination, testing, and proper infection control.

In Stokes County, the incidence rate of tuberculosis (TB) per 100,000 residents was 0 in 2020, increased to 2.2 in 2022, and remained 2.2 in 2024. In comparison, the statewide incidence rate was 1.5 in 2020 and 2022, rising to 2.3 in 2024. These trends highlight the importance of TB testing, early detection, and treatment to prevent the spread of tuberculosis in the community.

HEALTHCARE ACQUIRED

A healthcare-acquired infection (HAI) is an infection a patient develops while receiving medical care in a hospital, clinic, or other healthcare setting. In 2024, the top HAI in Stokes County was invasive Group A streptococcal infection, followed by carbapenems-producing infections and toxic shock syndrome streptococcal infections. HAIs are caused by bacteria, viruses, or fungi, and prevention relies on hand hygiene, proper sterilization, infection control practices, and careful use of antibiotics.

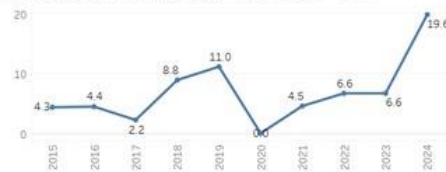
County	Disease	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
		County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence	County Cases	County Incidence
Stokes	Candida auris	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	5.00	11	0.00	0
	Carbapenemase-Producing Organism	1.00	2.2	2.00	4.5	0.00	0	2.00	4.4	1.00	2.2
	Staph aureus, reduced suscept. to v..	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
	Streptococcal invasive infection, Gro..	0.00	0	2.00	4.5	3.00	6.6	3.00	6.6	9.00	19.6
	Toxic Shock Syndrome, non-strepto..	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
	Toxic Shock Syndrome, streptococcal	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	1.00	2.2

<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html>

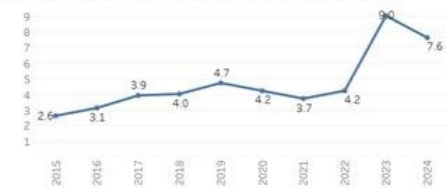
STREPTOCOCCAL INVASIVE INFECTION, GROUP A

Invasive Group A Streptococcal (iGAS) infection is a serious infection caused by Group A Streptococcus bacterium that enter normally sterile parts of the body, such as the blood, muscles, or lungs. It can lead to severe illnesses like sepsis, necrotizing fasciitis, toxic shock syndrome, and pneumonia. iGAS is spread through close contact or contaminated surfaces, and early antibiotic treatment is critical. Prevention focuses on good hygiene, prompt treatment of strep infections, and proper wound care.

Streptococcal invasive infection, Group A Incidence Rate per 100,000 in County: Stokes from 2015 - 2024



Streptococcal invasive infection, Group A Incidence Rate per 100,000 in North Carolina from 2015 - 2024



In Stokes County, the incidence rate of invasive Group A Streptococcal (iGAS) infection per 100,000 residents was 0 in 2020, increased to 6.6 in 2022, and rose sharply to 19.6 in 2024. In comparison, the statewide incidence rate was lower, at 4.2 in 2020 and 2022, and 7.6 in 2024. This significant local increase highlights the importance of early recognition, prompt treatment, and infection prevention measures such as good hygiene and proper wound care.

PHYSICAL & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment and the built environment describe different but related factors that influence where and how people live.

The physical environment refers to the natural surroundings, including air, water, land, climate, weather, and natural resources. It affects health through factors such as air and water quality, exposure to pollution, extreme heat or cold, and natural hazards.

The built environment includes the human-made surroundings people interact with every day, such as homes, schools, workplaces, roads, sidewalks, parks, public buildings, transportation systems, and broadband infrastructure. It influences health by shaping physical activity, safety, access to food, healthcare, education, and social connection.

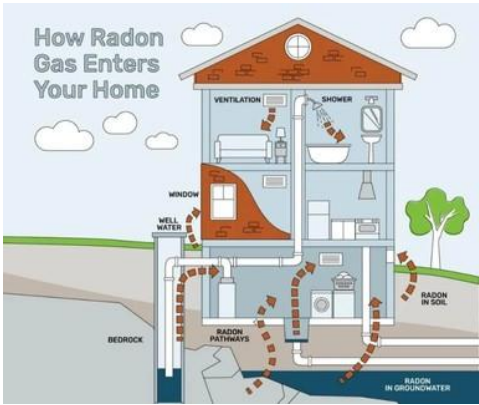
Together, the physical and built environments play a major role in health outcomes, quality of life, and community well-being.



RADON

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that forms from the breakdown of uranium in soil and rock. Because it is colorless, odorless, and tasteless, people can be exposed without realizing it. Radon can enter homes and buildings through cracks in foundations, walls, and floors, as well as through gaps around pipes, and it can accumulate to unsafe levels, particularly in basements and lower levels.

Testing for radon is essential because long-term exposure to elevated radon levels increases the risk of lung cancer. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer overall and the leading cause among nonsmokers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends acting when radon levels are at or above 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). Since radon cannot be detected without testing and levels can vary widely between buildings, regular testing is the only way to identify and address potential risks.



Radon testing activity in Stokes County shows both increased testing and higher maximum exposure levels over time. In 2020, 29 radon tests were conducted in residential and commercial buildings, with levels ranging from 0.30 pCi/L to 8.60 pCi/L. By 2024, testing increased to 43 buildings, with radon levels ranging from 0.60 pCi/L to a significantly higher maximum of 23.30 pCi/L. These findings underscore the importance of continued radon testing and mitigation efforts in Stokes County to reduce long-term health risks and protect residents from lung cancer.



<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oeo/programs/EnvPubHealthTracking.html>

BROADBAND & TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Access to broadband and technology is a critical component of the built environment in Stokes County and plays an important role in promoting health equity. Many households lack reliable, high-speed internet, creating barriers that affect daily life and limit access to essential services. Students are particularly impacted, as limited broadband can make it difficult to complete homework, participate in virtual learning, or access educational resources, potentially widening learning gaps and placing some students at a disadvantage. Health care access is also affected, since telehealth services rely on stable internet connections. In a rural county like Stokes, limited connectivity can prevent residents from using virtual medical visits and lead to delayed care when travel to providers is challenging.

Limited broadband access also affects employment and access to services. Many jobs now require internet access for applications, training, or remote work, and social services and government programs are increasingly accessed online. Without reliable connectivity, residents may struggle to find employment, apply for assistance, or stay connected to community resources. According to the North Carolina Data Portal (June 2025), Stokes County had 22,989 broadband-serviceable locations, compared to 20,384 in Davie County. While 97.31% of locations in Stokes County had access to download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps, similar to the statewide average of 97.01%, this rate lags behind Davie County’s 99.77%. The gap is more pronounced for higher-speed service, with only 88.26% of Stokes County locations having access to download speeds of at least 100 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 20 Mbps, compared to 99.69% in Davie County and 94.48% statewide. Overall, these data show that although basic broadband access is widespread, high-speed connectivity in Stokes County continues to lag behind both its peer county and the state, contributing to disparities in education, health care, and economic opportunity.

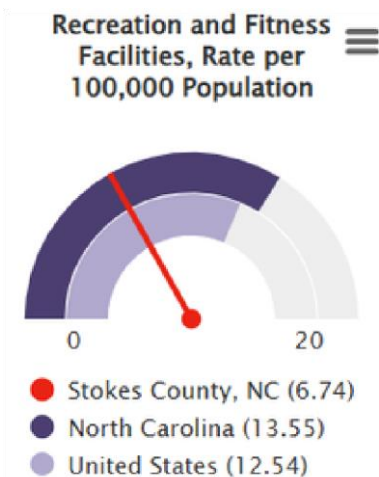
Report Area	Total Number of Broadband Serviceable Locations	Access to DL Speeds >= 25MBPS and UL Speeds >= 3 MBPS	Access to DL Speeds >= 100MBPS and UL Speeds >= 20 MBPS
Davie County, NC	20,384	99.77%	99.69%
Stokes County, NC	22,989	97.31%	88.26%
North Carolina	4,377,551	97.01%	94.48%

ACCESS TO EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES

Stokes County, North Carolina has limited pedestrian and recreation infrastructure, making it difficult for residents to safely walk, bike, or exercise outdoors. Many communities lack sidewalks, walking paths, and bike trails, and roads are often designed for vehicles rather than pedestrians, with narrow shoulders and higher speed limits. As a result, residents frequently travel outside the county to access safe, paved trails for everyday physical activity. While natural areas like Hanging Rock State Park offer hiking opportunities, they do not meet the need for accessible, paved paths close to home, limiting regular physical activity and impacting overall health and quality of life.

Using a population of 44,520 from 2020, 29,383 Stokes County residents had access to exercise opportunities, representing 66% of the population. This is lower than the North Carolina statewide average of 78%, indicating reduced access to safe and convenient places for physical activity in the county.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2023) reports that there are three establishments in Stokes County primarily engaged in operating fitness and recreational sports. This equals an establishment rate of 6.74 per 100,000 population.



NC Data Portal

ACCESS TO CARE

Access to health care in Stokes County, North Carolina can be challenging for many residents, especially because the county is largely rural. While some medical services are available locally, people often need to travel outside the county to receive specialized care or certain treatments. This can create barriers for residents who have limited transportation, tight work schedules, or health conditions that make travel difficult.

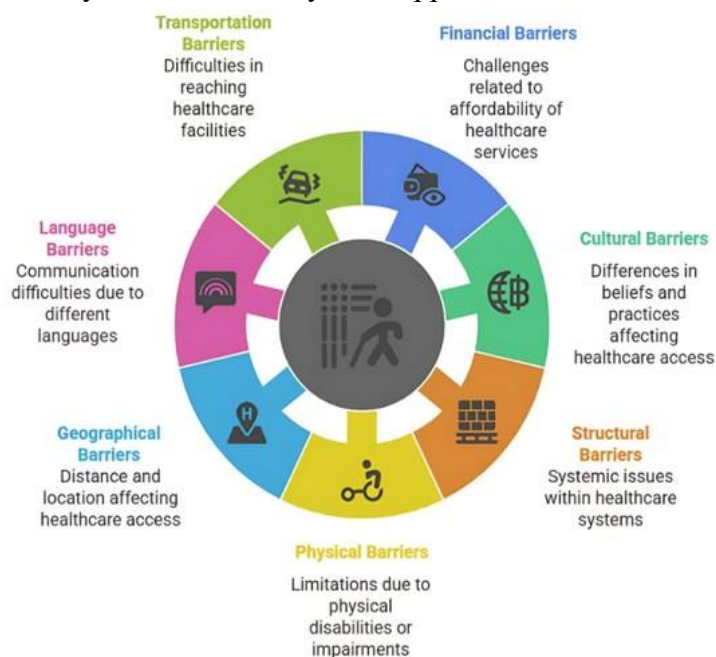
Primary care services, such as family doctors and clinics, are available but may be limited in number. This can lead to longer wait times for appointments. Access to specialists, mental health providers, and dental care is even more limited, often requiring trips to nearby counties. These extra travel needs can discourage people from seeking care until a problem becomes serious.

Cost is another barrier to care. Some residents do not have health insurance or have plans with high deductibles, making it harder to afford doctor visits, medications, or preventive care. Even those with insurance may delay care because of out-of-pocket costs.

Transportation also plays a major role in access to care. With little or no public transportation in many parts of the county, residents without reliable vehicles may struggle to get to appointments. Long distances between homes and health care facilities add to this challenge, especially for older adults and people with disabilities.

Limited internet access affects health care as well. Telehealth services can help reduce travel, but they require reliable broadband, which is not available to all households. This limits the use of online appointments, patient portals, and health information.

Overall, access to care in Stokes County is affected by distance, cost, transportation, and technology. Improving local health services, transportation options, and internet access could help residents get the care they need more easily and support better health across the county.



2020-2025 Health Workforce Changes

Physicians	2020	2024
Primary Care Physicians	17	18
Family Practice	4	7
Pediatrics	3	2
Primary Care Physicians per 10,000 Population	3.66	2.9
Nurses		
Registered Nurses	194	209
Nurse Practitioners	22	28
Certified Nurse Midwives	0	0
Licensed Practical Nurses	91	90
Other Health Professionals	2020	2024
Chiropractors	3	1
Occupational Therapists	11	12
Occupational Therapy Assistants	6	9
Optometrists	8	7
Pharmacists	32	35
Physical Therapists	17	14
Physical Therapist Assistants	13	18
Podiatrists	0	1
Psychological Associates	0	1
Respiratory Therapists	6	9

Dentists and Dental Hygienists		
Dentists	5	6
Dental Hygienists	24	30

MEDICAID ENROLLEES

Between 2021 and 2025, Medicaid enrollment trends in Stokes County closely mirrored those of North Carolina overall, both in percentage growth and timing of major shifts. In 2021, Stokes County had 10,645 enrollees, representing approximately 0.40% of the state’s total Medicaid population of 2.65 million. This proportion remained remarkably stable over the five-year period, consistently hovering around 0.40-0.41%, indicating that Stokes County's Medicaid enrollment followed state-level trends in direct proportion to its population.

From 2021 to 2022, both Stokes County and North Carolina experienced significant enrollment growth, likely due to continued COVID-19 relief policies that paused disenrollments. Stokes saw a 10.6% increase during this period, while the state’s enrollment grew by 7.9%. However, in 2023, enrollment growth plateaued statewide and even slightly declined in Stokes County, which experienced a 0.9% drop. This was likely a result of the end of continuous Medicaid coverage protections put in place during the pandemic, as states resumed eligibility redeterminations and removed ineligible recipients.

Enrollment began to rise again in 2024 and 2025 following North Carolina’s Medicaid expansion, which took effect in December 2023. Stokes County’s enrollment increased by 4.1% in 2024 and 4.5% in 2025, while the state grew by 5.3% and 3.1%, respectively, during the same years. These increases reflect the expansion’s impact, as more low-income adults became eligible for coverage. Overall, the data shows a strong correlation between Medicaid enrollment trends in Stokes County and the state of North Carolina, with local changes closely aligning with broader statewide shifts in policy and economic conditions.

Medicaid Enrolled NCDHHS	Stokes County	North Carolina
October 2021	10,645	2,650,610
October 2022	11,771	2,859,796
October 2023	11,663	2,860,844
October 2024	12,141	3,011,206
October 2025	12,684	3,104,834

UNINSURED

In 2020, Stokes County, like much of the nation, experienced a higher uninsured rate due to the widespread disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Job losses during this period reduced access to employer-sponsored health insurance, an impact that was especially pronounced in rural counties such as Stokes, where the local economy relies heavily on sectors vulnerable to economic downturns. Additionally, North Carolina had not yet expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, leaving many low-income adults in a coverage gap, unable to afford private insurance and ineligible for Medicaid.

By 2024, conditions had improved significantly. The labor market had largely recovered, allowing more residents to regain employment and employer-based coverage. The implementation of Medicaid expansion in December 2023 further increased access to health insurance, particularly for low-income adults, while accompanying outreach and enrollment efforts helped connect eligible residents to coverage. It is also important to note data limitations: 2020 reflects a period of extreme instability during a public health emergency, whereas 2024 represents a more stable, post recovery period. Together, these factors help explain why the uninsured rate in Stokes County was likely higher in 2020 than in 2024.

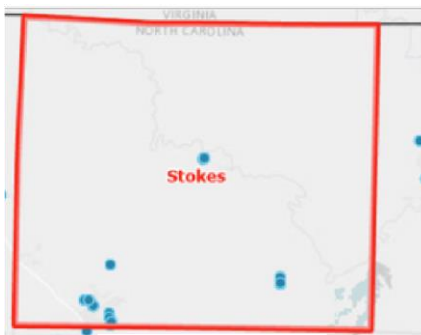
In Stokes County, the percentage of uninsured residents declined between 2020 and 2024 across age groups. Among children and youth under age 19, the uninsured rate decreased from 5.5% in 2020 to 5.0% in 2024. A more substantial improvement was seen among adults ages 18–64, where the uninsured rate fell from 16.3% in 2020 to 12.8% in 2024. These declines likely reflect improvements in employment, expanded access to coverage, and increased enrollment opportunities over this period.

Location	Category	Data Type	2020	2021	2022	2024
Stokes	Under 19	Number	477	508	433	440
	Under 19	%	5.5%	6%	5%	5.0%
	18-64	Number	4,376	3,947	3,210	3,383
	18-64	%	16.3%	15%	12.2%	12.8%
N.C.	Under 19	Number	125,097	129,994	118,435	127,763
	Under 19	%	5.3%	5.5%	5%	5.3%
	18-64	Number	964,697	938,950	853,517	841,663
	18-64	%	15.5%	15.1%	13.5%	13.2%

PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

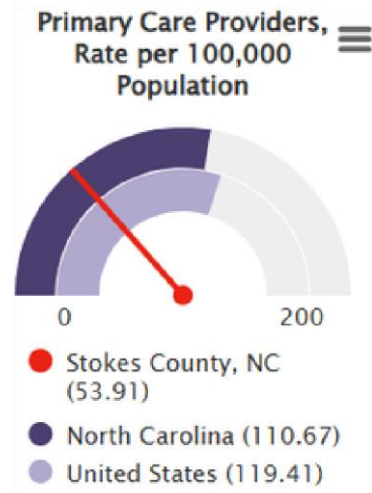
According to 2026 data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Stokes County has 11 health care facilities and 24 primary care providers. Despite this increase in providers, access to care remains insufficient to meet community needs. Stokes County's primary care provider rate is 53.91 per 100,000 residents, which is less than half of the statewide rate of 110.67 per 100,000.

The map below highlights the geographic distribution of primary care physicians and shows that residents in the northern portion of Stokes County must travel long distances to access primary care services. This limited geographic access can create barriers to timely preventive care, chronic disease management, and routine health services.

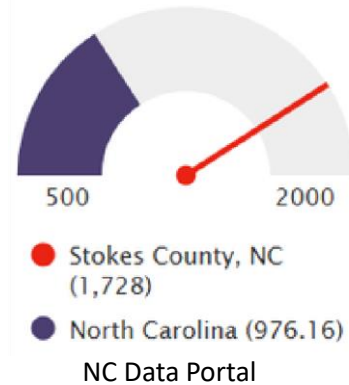


NC Data Portal

Primary Care Physicians, All, CMS NPPES January 2026

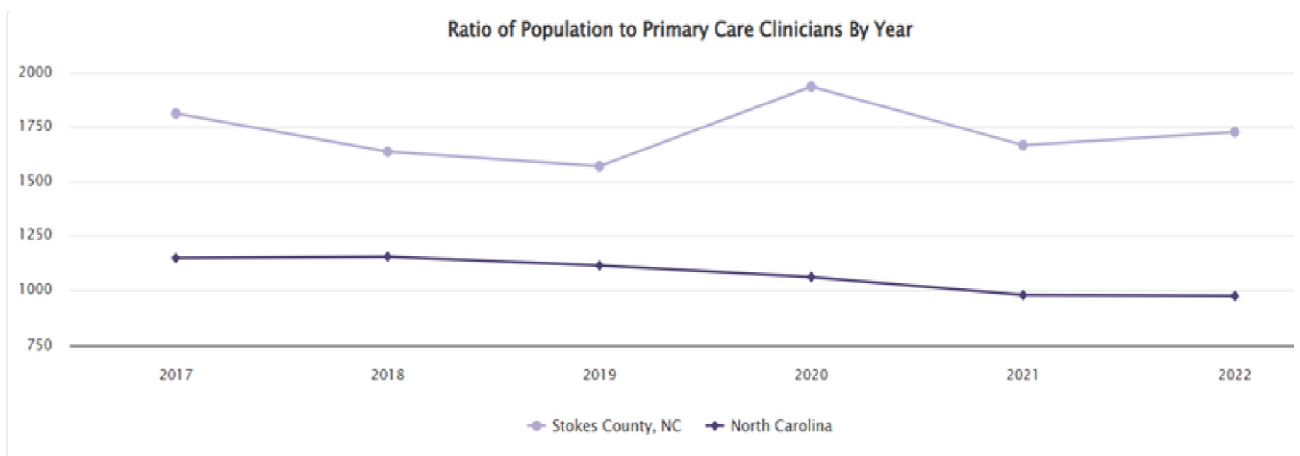


Ratio of Population to Primary Care Clinicians



NC Data Portal

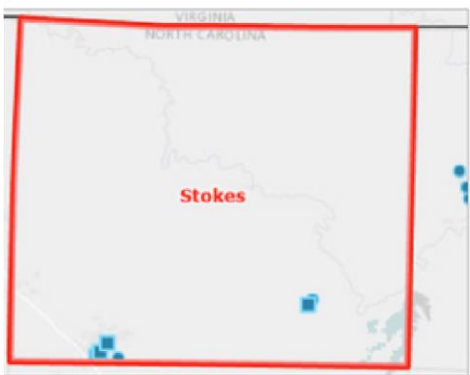
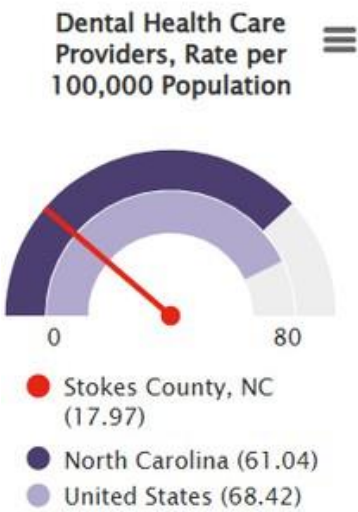
Additionally, the provider-to-population indicator reports a population-to-primary-care-clinician ratio of 1,728:1 in Stokes County, compared to 976.16:1 statewide. Higher ratios indicate fewer providers available per resident, further underscoring the challenges Stokes County faces in ensuring adequate access to primary care.



DENTAL PROVIDERS

According to 2024 data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), there were seven facilities in Stokes County that specialize in oral health care, served by eight dental providers. This results in a provider rate of 17.97 dental providers per 100,000 residents, which is substantially lower than the statewide rate of 61.04 per 100,000.

The map below illustrates the distribution of dental health care providers, including both individual practitioners and organizational facilities. Provider locations are concentrated in certain areas of the county, leaving the northern portion of Stokes County with limited to no access to oral health services, effectively creating a dental care desert. This uneven distribution may contribute to delayed preventive care, higher rates of untreated dental disease, and increased reliance on emergency services for oral health needs among residents in underserved areas.



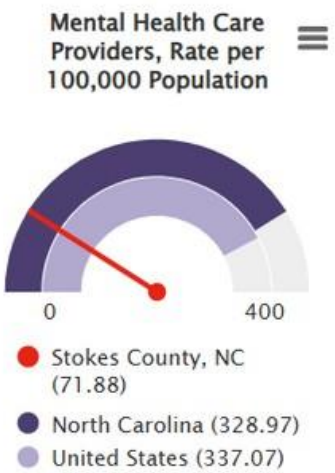
Dental Health Care Providers, CMS NPES January 2026

- Individual
- Organization
- Stokes County, NC

NC Data Portal

MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

Mental health providers include licensed clinical social workers and other credentialed professionals specializing in psychiatry, psychology, counseling, or child, adolescent, and adult mental health. Within Stokes County, there are 32 mental health providers, representing 71.88 providers per 100,000 population. The county also has 10 facilities that offer mental health services.



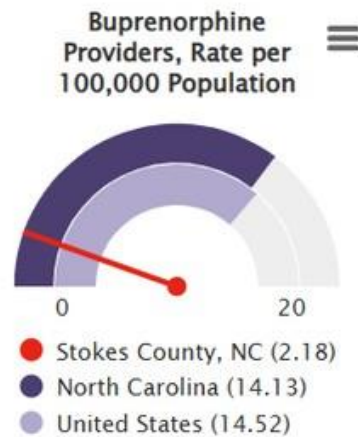
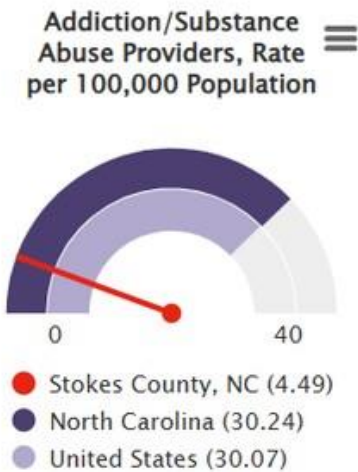
NC Data Portal

ADDICTION/ SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROVIDERS

Within Stokes County, NC, there are only two providers, which equals a rate of 4.49 providers per 100,000 population. In comparison, the statewide provider rate is 30.24 providers per 100,000 population, highlighting a significant gap in access to care.

Buprenorphine is a medication used to treat opioid use disorder by helping reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms without producing the same high as other opioids. It works by partially activating opioid receptors in the brain, which helps stabilize people and lowers the risk of misuse and overdose. Buprenorphine is commonly prescribed as part of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and is most effective when combined with counseling and support services.

According to the 2024 Buprenorphine Practitioner Locator, Stokes County, NC, had only one buprenorphine provider, which equals 2.18 providers per 100,000 population. In comparison, North Carolina had 1,561 providers, or 14.13 providers per 100,000 population, highlighting a significant gap in access to treatment for opioid use disorder in Stokes County.



NC Data Portal

INITIATIVES

Stokes County offers a variety of mental health, substance use, chronic illness, and healthy eating and exercise initiatives. This is just a small sample of the resources available in the county, and they should be utilized by those who need them. Many residents are still unaware of these services, so our goal is to spread the word and connect people with the support they need.

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

SCOPE

The Stokes County Opioid Prevention Effort is a community-driven initiative aimed at reducing opioid misuse, preventing overdoses, and supporting recovery. Led by the Stokes County Health Department in partnership with EMS, law enforcement, schools, and local treatment providers, the effort includes public education, prescription drug take-back events, naloxone distribution, and referrals to medication-assisted treatment and counseling. By combining prevention, treatment, and community collaboration, the program works to protect residents and provide resources for those affected by opioid use.

D.A.R.E

The Stokes County Sheriff's Office partners with Stokes County Schools to present the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program to students across the county. The program is delivered to all 5th grade students in elementary schools and to 8th grade students at the three middle schools.

The D.A.R.E. program teaches students to recognize the dangers of drug use and builds skills to support safe, responsible decision-making. Instruction focuses on the D.A.R.E. decision-making model, understanding peer pressure, and strategies to resist it, while educating students on the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

All D.A.R.E. instructors complete a two-week training course and are certified through D.A.R.E. America, ensuring consistent and evidence-based instruction throughout Stokes County schools.

Community Paramedics

The Stokes County Community Paramedics initiative is a community-based healthcare and prevention initiative focused on improving access to care and reducing unnecessary emergency department visits and hospital readmissions. The program emphasizes preventive care, chronic disease management, post-hospital follow-up, health education, and connecting residents to medical and social support services, particularly for underserved or rural populations.

Insight Human Services

Insight Human Services provides a mental health and substance use treatment initiative in Stokes County focused on assessment, treatment, and recovery support. The organization delivers outpatient therapy, substance use counseling, and evidence-based treatment services for individuals and families.

The initiative aims to improve access to behavioral health care, support recovery from substance use disorders, and promote long-term mental wellness by offering coordinated, community-based services in Stokes County.

Accountability and Recovery Court

The ARK Initiative in Stokes County (Accountability, Recovery, and Knowledge) is a criminal justice and substance use recovery initiative designed to reduce repeat offenses and support individuals with substance use disorders.

The program brings together the court system, probation, law enforcement, treatment providers, and community partners to connect eligible individuals with treatment, recovery support, and accountability measures instead of relying solely on incarceration. The goal of the ARK Initiative is to promote long-term recovery, improve public safety, and reduce recidivism by addressing the underlying causes of substance use.

Vaya Health Youth Programs

Vaya Health supports Stokes County through several initiatives focused on mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability services. As the regional managed care organization (MCO), Vaya Health coordinates care for Medicaid and state-funded members by connecting residents to local providers, crisis services, and community-based supports.

In Stokes County, Vaya Health initiatives include crisis response services, care management, support for substance use treatment and recovery, and programs that help individuals access outpatient therapy, inpatient care when needed, and community resources. These initiatives aim to improve access to care, reduce crises and hospitalizations, and support long-term stability for individuals and families.

Faith Based Community

In Stokes County, faith-based recovery resources are local churches and faith organizations that provide support, guidance, and programs for individuals recovering from substance use disorders. These resources often complement medical and counseling services by offering spiritual support, mentorship, and a community environment that encourages accountability and long-term recovery. Their initiative focuses on faith-centered recovery and holistic support, which includes:

- Recovery ministries or support groups (similar to 12-step programs with a faith component)
- Mentorship and peer support for individuals in recovery
- Life skills and educational programs to aid reintegration into family, work, and community
- Life Collaboration with local treatment providers and community organizations to connect participants with additional health and social services

The goal of the initiative is to promote sustained recovery, strengthen community ties, and address substance use from both spiritual and practical perspectives.

Stop Overdose Stokes (S.O.S.) Resource Guide

Stop Overdose Stokes is a community resource guide that provides information on overdose prevention, substance use treatment, and recovery supports in Stokes County. It connects individuals, families, and community partners to local services such as naloxone access, medication-assisted treatment, counseling, and harm reduction resources, with the goal of reducing overdose deaths and supporting long-term recovery.

Catch My Breath

Catch My Breath is an evidence-based, school-based vaping prevention program designed for middle and high school students. It aims to prevent the initiation of e-cigarette use by educating youth on the risks of vaping and nicotine addiction.

The program teaches students about the health effects of vaping, how tobacco and vaping products are marketed to young people, and strategies to resist peer pressure. It is typically delivered through structured lessons by teachers, school nurses, or health educators.

Catch My Breath is commonly categorized as a youth substance use prevention or tobacco prevention initiative and is widely used by schools and community health organizations.

Pyramid Health

Pyramid Health in Stokes County, NC, is a behavioral health and substance use treatment provider that offers a range of services to support individuals with mental health and addiction needs. Their programs typically include outpatient therapy, substance use counseling, medication-assisted treatment, and case management.

The initiative focuses on improving access to care, supporting recovery, and promoting mental wellness by providing community-based, evidence-informed services for individuals and families in Stokes County.

INITIATIVES

CHRONIC ILLNESS

Chronic illness initiatives in Stokes County focus on helping residents prevent, manage, and cope with long-term health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. Through health education, disease management programs, preventive screenings, and community support, these initiatives empower individuals to make healthy choices, follow treatment plans, and improve their overall quality of life.

Preventive Screenings

A Preventive Screening Program is a health initiative designed to detect diseases or risk factors early, before symptoms appear, allowing timely interventions to prevent serious health problems. These programs typically focus on chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol issues, cancer, and heart disease, as well as general health indicators like vision, hearing, and body mass index. Preventive screenings often include regular health assessments, education on healthy lifestyle choices such as nutrition, exercise, and stress management, and referrals to healthcare providers for follow-up care if risk factors or conditions are identified. The goal of these programs is to improve health outcomes, reduce complications, and lower healthcare costs by identifying risks early and empowering individuals to take proactive steps toward better health.

Blood Pressure Monitoring and Screening

The Blood Pressure Program in Stokes County, NC is a community health initiative aimed at preventing and managing hypertension among residents. The program provides blood pressure screenings, monitoring, and education on lifestyle changes such as healthy eating, physical activity, stress management, and medication adherence.

The initiative helps participants identify high blood pressure early, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, and maintain overall cardiovascular health. It is often offered through the Stokes County Health Department, local clinics, and community organizations, and may be paired with workshops or counseling to support long-term health and wellness.

Catch My Breath

Catch My Breath is an evidence-based, school-based vaping prevention program designed for middle and high school students. It aims to prevent the initiation of e-cigarette use by educating youth on the risks of vaping and nicotine addiction.

The program teaches students about the health effects of vaping, how tobacco and vaping products are marketed to young people, and strategies to resist peer pressure. It is typically delivered through structured lessons by teachers, school nurses, or health educators.

Catch My Breath is commonly categorized as a youth substance use prevention or tobacco prevention initiative and is widely used by schools and community health organizations.

Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs

Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs (CDSMP) are community-based initiatives designed to help residents manage long-term health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, and heart disease.

These programs teach participants skills to handle symptoms, cope with stress, maintain a healthy lifestyle, set goals, and communicate effectively with healthcare providers. Workshops are typically peer-led and evidence-based, providing education, support, and practical strategies to improve quality of life.

The Stokes County Health Department and partnering organizations offer these programs to help residents reduce complications, improve self-care, and maintain independence while managing chronic illnesses.

INITIATIVES

HEALTHY EATING & EXERCISE

Air Fryer Class

The Air Fryer Class in Walnut Cove, NC is a cooking and nutrition program designed for seniors that teaches participants how to prepare healthy, easy, and tasty meals using an air fryer. The class focuses on reducing fat and calories while maintaining flavor, helping seniors make healthier food choices at home.

Participants also learn meal planning, portion control, and nutrition tips, with an emphasis on foods that support heart health, weight management, and overall wellness. The program encourages hands-on cooking, skill-building, and social interaction, promoting both physical health and community engagement among older adults.

NC State University Snap-Ed

The SNAP-Ed initiative in Stokes County, NC is a nutrition education program led by NC State University that helps individuals and families with limited resources make healthier food and lifestyle choices. The initiative provides hands-on lessons, cooking demonstrations, and educational activities focused on healthy eating, meal planning, food safety, and physical activity. Its goal is to improve nutrition, prevent diet-related chronic diseases, and empower community members to make sustainable, healthy choices.

Lunch and Learn

In Stokes County, the Lunch and Learn initiatives with the Cooperative Extension are educational programs designed to provide residents with practical information on nutrition, health, agriculture, and wellness in an informal, accessible setting. These sessions are often held during lunch hours, making it easy for community members, employees, or local groups to attend.

Topics may include healthy eating, chronic disease prevention, gardening, food safety, and lifestyle management, giving participants the tools and knowledge to make healthier choices and improve overall well-being. The initiative aims to educate, engage, and empower the community through interactive presentations and discussions led by Cooperative Extension specialists.

Dining with Diabetes

Dining with Diabetes is a Lunch and Learn program offered through the Stokes County Cooperative Extension that helps residents manage diabetes through healthy eating and lifestyle choices.

The program provides interactive lessons on nutrition, portion control, meal planning, and cooking techniques, combined with tastings of healthy recipes. Participants learn practical strategies to

control blood sugar, prevent complications, and improve overall health, all in an engaging, community-based setting.

WIC

The WIC Program (Women, Infants, and Children) in Stokes County, NC is a federally funded nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and social services for pregnant women, new mothers, and children up to age five who meet income and nutritional risk guidelines.

The program's initiative focuses on promoting healthy pregnancies, supporting infant and child growth, and preventing nutrition-related health issues. WIC helps families access nutritious foods, learn healthy eating habits, and connect with healthcare providers, aiming to improve long-term health outcomes for both mothers and children in the community.

Breastfeeding Program

The Stokes County Breastfeeding Program is a community health initiative that supports new and expecting mothers in establishing and maintaining successful breastfeeding practices. The program provides education, counseling, and resources to promote breastfeeding as a healthy start for infants. Its initiatives include prenatal and postnatal education, lactation consultations, peer support, and community outreach to raise awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding. By collaborating with healthcare providers and WIC, the program connects families with additional resources, aiming to increase breastfeeding rates, improve infant nutrition and health, and empower mothers with the knowledge and support they need. The program also supports healthy eating and exercise by educating mothers on proper nutrition for themselves and their infants, offering guidance on balanced diets, meal planning, and nutrient-rich foods to support lactation and maternal health. Additionally, it provides information on safe postpartum physical activity to help mothers regain strength, manage weight, and promote overall well-being, fostering long-term healthy habits for both mother and baby.

Sit and Fit

The Sit & Fit program in Stokes County, NC is a low-impact exercise program designed for seniors to improve strength, flexibility, balance, and overall mobility through chair-based or supported exercises. It is ideal for adults 55+ with limited mobility or those looking for a gentler approach to staying active.

The program's initiatives focus on:

- Low-impact exercises to enhance strength, flexibility, and balance.
- Fall prevention by teaching safe movements and improving mobility.
- Chronic disease is supported by encouraging physical activity that helps manage or prevent conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis.
- Social engagement by providing a community setting for seniors to interact and stay connected.
- Healthy lifestyle education through guidance on posture, stretching, and safe exercise habits.

Together, these initiatives aim to help seniors stay active, maintain independence, and improve overall physical and mental well-being.

SURVEY & METHODOLOGY PRIMARY DATA

As part of the Stokes County Community Health Assessment (CHA), primary data was collected directly from residents and community stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of local health needs and priorities. The primary data collection methods included a comprehensive community health survey, which was available in both English and Spanish and distributed in both paper and digital formats to reach a broad audience. The survey covered a wide range of topics such as physical and mental health, substance use, access to care, nutrition, physical activity, and key social determinants of health like housing, education, and safety. In addition to the survey, key informant interviews were conducted with local leaders, healthcare providers, educators, and representatives from faith-based and nonprofit organizations to gather expert insights on community challenges and resources. Focus groups were also held with specific population groups—including seniors, youth, rural residents, and Spanish-speaking individuals—to better understand their lived experiences and barriers to health. In some cases, community listening sessions and observational field data, such as asset mapping and accessibility assessments, were also used to provide context and highlight disparities. Together, this primary data provided a rich, community-informed perspective that complemented secondary data sources and helped shape health priorities for the 2024–2027 Community Health Improvement Plan.

SECONDARY DATA

In addition to primary data collection, the Stokes County Community Health Assessment (CHA) relied on a broad range of secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive picture of the county's health status. Secondary data included publicly available statistics and health indicators from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, County Health Rankings, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and Healthy NC 2030 benchmarks. These data sources provided critical insights into population demographics, leading causes of death, chronic disease prevalence, maternal and child health indicators, mental health trends, healthcare access, and environmental health factors. Additionally, data on health disparities, insurance coverage, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment helped identify social determinants of health affecting the community. By integrating these data sets, the CHA was able to track trends over time, compare Stokes County's performance to state and national averages, and identify key areas of need that align with broader public health goals.

SURVEY LIMITATIONS

The Stokes County 2026 Community Health Assessment (CHA) provides valuable insight into local health needs, but like most community surveys, it has several important limitations.

First, the survey likely used convenience or voluntary sampling, which means the results may not fully represent the entire county population. Certain groups, such as racial and ethnic minorities, non-English speakers, residents without reliable internet access, and lower-income households, may have been underrepresented, limiting how generalizable the findings are. Because much of the CHA data is self-reported, responses may be affected by recall errors, misinterpretation of questions, or social bias, where participants give answers, they think are more acceptable.

Additionally, some data sources used in the report were secondary (such as state or federal datasets), which may not provide detailed or current information for small rural areas like Stokes County. The CHA also represents a single point in time and may not reflect more recent changes in community health conditions or service availability, especially given the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, while the assessment is effective at identifying broad health priorities, it is not designed to establish cause-and-effect relationships or measure every health need in depth. Taking together, these limitations suggest that while the CHA offers a useful snapshot of community health in Stokes County, its findings should be interpreted with caution and supplemented with additional data when possible.

SURVEY SUMMARY

To better understand the health needs and priorities of Stokes County residents, the Stokes County Health Department (SCHD) conducted a Community Health Assessment (CHA) using a mixed methods approach that combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

At the core of the effort was a structured survey tool, developed in alignment with Healthy NC 2030 priorities. The survey was available in both English and Spanish and was offered in both digital and paper formats to maximize accessibility. Paper copies were distributed at public locations such as senior centers, health clinics, libraries, and government offices, while QR codes and links linking to the online survey were promoted widely through social media, community events, and partner networks.

To ensure an inclusive snapshot of the county's health landscape, SCHD worked with a broad network of collaborative partners and conducted targeted outreach to underrepresented populations, including seniors, low-income households, rural residents, and individuals across a range of ZIP codes, races/ethnicities, genders, and age groups.

The survey gathered data on a wide range of health-related topics, including:

- Physical and mental health
- Substance use
- Access to healthcare
- Nutrition and physical activity
- Social determinants of health (e.g., housing, safety, poverty, education)

In total, 503 surveys were completed between May-October. All responses were anonymized, aggregated, and analyzed to identify major health concerns, gaps in services, and areas of opportunity. These findings will inform Stokes County's health improvement planning for 2024–2027.

Although participation levels were lower than anticipated, the CHA survey remains a critical tool for gathering community-informed insights, tracking health trends over time, and guiding data driven decision-making.

Importantly, the CHA takes a holistic view of health, going beyond individual behaviors to examine social and environmental influences that shape outcomes and contribute to health disparities. This approach supports the county's mission to achieve greater health equity and improve overall well-being for all residents.

NEXT STEPS

Upon completion, the 2025 CHA will be disseminated to the community. The finalization of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is scheduled for September 2026 and will outline our strategic approach to addressing our key health priorities, mental health and substance use, healthy eating and exercise and chronic illness. It promotes collaboration among local organizations, aligns resources effectively, supports the implementation of initiatives aimed at achieving measurable improvements in health outcomes.

Key Actions Outlined in the CHIP Will Focus On:

1.Improving Access to Healthcare Services

- Expand access to primary care, mental health, and substance use services
- Increase availability of transportation to healthcare facilities
- Promote use of telehealth in rural areas

2.Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

- Implement nutrition and physical activity programs in schools and communities
- Support tobacco cessation efforts
- Promote chronic disease prevention and self-management programs

3.Addressing Behavioral Health Needs

- Expand mental health education and stigma reduction campaigns
- Increase availability of counseling and crisis intervention services
- Strengthening school-based mental health services

4.Enhancing Health Equity and Reducing Disparities

- Focus on underserved and vulnerable populations
- Increase culturally competent care and community engagement
- Partner with local organizations to address social determinants of health

5.Strengthening Community Partnerships

- Collaborate with local agencies, nonprofits, schools, and faith-based groups
- Share resources and align efforts across sectors
- Engage residents in health planning and decision-making

6.Monitoring and Evaluating Progress

- Use data to track progress toward goals
- Adjust strategies based on community feedback and new health trends
- Report results transparently to the community

APPENDIX A- COMMUNITY SURVEY ENGLISH

Stokes County Community Health Assessment Survey 2025

Please take a minute to complete the survey below. The purpose of this survey is to get your opinions about community health problems in Stokes County. The Stokes County Community Health Committee will use the results of this survey and other information to identify the most pressing problems which can be addressed through community action. **ONLY FOR STOKES COUNTY RESIDENTS** . If you have previously completed a survey, please ignore this. Remember... your opinion is important! Thank you and if you have any questions, please contact us (see contact information on the back).



1.) In the following list, what do you think are the three most important factors for a **“Healthy Community?”**

(Those factors which most improve the quality of life in a community.) Check only three:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Good place to raise children | ☐ Excellent race relations |
| ☐ Low crime / safe neighborhoods | ☐ Good jobs and healthy economy |
| ☐ Low level of child abuse | ☐ Strong family life |
| ☐ Good Schools | ☐ Healthy behaviors and lifestyles |
| ☐ Access to health care (e.g., family doctor) | ☐ Low adult death and disease rates |
| ☐ Parks and recreation | ☐ Low infant deaths |
| ☐ Clean environment | ☐ Religious or spiritual values |
| ☐ Affordable housing | ☐ Other _____ |

2.) In the following list, what do you think are the three most important **“risky behaviors”** in our community?

(Those behaviors which have the greatest impact on overall community health.) Check only three:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☐ Alcohol abuse | ☐ Being overweight | ☐ Racism |
| ☐ Dropping out of school | ☐ Tobacco use | ☐ Drug abuse |
| ☐ Not using birth control | ☐ Lack of exercise | ☐ Poor eating habits |
| ☐ Unsafe sex | ☐ Not using seatbelts /child safety seats | |
| ☐ Not getting “shots” to prevent disease | ☐ Other _____ | |

3.) In the following list, what do you think are the three most important **“health problems”** in our community?
(Those problems which have the greatest impact on overall community health.) Check only three:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Aging problems (e.g., arthritis, hearing/vision loss, etc.) | ☐ Heart disease and stroke |
| ☐ Cancer | ☐ High blood pressure |
| ☐ Child abuse / neglect | ☐ HIV /AIDS |
| ☐ Dental problems | ☐ Homicide |
| ☐ Diabetes | ☐ Infant Death |
| ☐ Domestic violence | ☐ Infectious Disease (e.g., hepatitis, TB,) |
| ☐ Firearm-related injuries | ☐ Motor vehicle crash injuries |
| ☐ Mental health problems | ☐ Sexually transmitted diseases |
| ☐ Respiratory / Lung disease | ☐ Teenage pregnancy |
| ☐ Suicide | |
| ☐ Other _____ | |

4.) What health services do you feel are not available for Stokes County residents?

- ☐ Mental Health
☐ Prenatal
☐ Substance misuse
☐ Alcohol misuse
☐ Child Health

5.) Where do you get most of your health-related information?

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Friends and family | ☐ Hospital | ☐ Health Department |
| ☐ Doctor / Nurse | ☐ Pharmacist | ☐ Books / Magazines |
| ☐ My child's school | ☐ Internet | ☐ Other _____ |

6.) How would you rate your own personal health?

- ☐ very unhealthy ☐ unhealthy ☐ somewhat healthy ☐ healthy ☐ very healthy

7.) Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that you may have any of the following health conditions?

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Asthma | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| Depression or anxiety | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| High blood pressure | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| High cholesterol | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| Diabetes (not during pregnancy) | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| Osteoporosis | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| Overweight / Obesity | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| Angina / Heart disease | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |
| Cancer | ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Don't know |

- 8.) Which of the following health topics do you think your child/children need more information about.

Please check your top 3.

☐ None of these topics	☐ Tobacco cessation	☐ Abstinence/Safe sex
☐ Dental hygiene	☐ Nutrition	☐ Asthma management
☐ Reckless driving/speeding	☐ Diabetes management	☐ Depression/anxiety
☐ Drug prevention	☐ Suicide prevention	☐ Alcohol
☐ Anger management	☐ Bullying	☐ Other _____

- 9.) What are the top 3 biggest substance abuse problems in this county? (**Rank 1 to 3 with 1 being biggest problem**)

☐ Marijuana	☐ Methamphetamine (meth)
☐ Alcohol abuse	☐ Street drugs(cocaine, crack, heroin)
☐ Drinking and driving	☐ Abuse of prescription drugs/pills
☐ Huffing (inhaling glue, dust-off, whiteout)	☐ I really do not know.
☐ Other _____	

- 10.) To prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, which of the following should be taught in our local schools? (**check one**)

☐ abstinence until marriage
☐ comprehensive sex education (including abstinence and other birth control methods)
☐ None of the above

- 11.) Recommendation for physical activity is 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week (2 ½ hours a week). Please choose the main reason for keeping you from getting this much physical activity. **Check one.**

☐ Nothing. I feel like I get this much physical activity	☐ Expensive
☐ I feel like I get this at my work	☐ I don't like to exercise
☐ I am physically disabled	☐ Other _____
☐ There is no safe place to exercise	
☐ I don't have time to exercise	

- 12.) Where do you go to exercise or engage in physical activity? (Check all that apply) ☐ Parks or trails

☐ Home/neighborhood ☐ Work
☐ Public recreation center ☐ Private gym or pool ☐ Other _____

- 13.) Do you currently smoke or vape?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- 14.) Where would you go if you wanted to quit?

☐ Quit Line NC	☐ Health Department	☐ Doctor
☐ Church	☐ Pharmacy	☐ I don't know
☐ Private counselor/therapist	☐ Other _____	

- 15.) Do you and your family recycle? ☐ Yes ☐ No

16.) Which of the following Stokes County Environmental Health concerns do you believe most affects your health?

(Check one)

- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Drinking water | ☐ Fluoride-enriched water | ☐ Ozone |
| ☐ Mold | ☐ Radon | ☐ recycling |
| ☐ lead expose | ☐ Drought | ☐ Meth Labs |
| ☐ Food safety | ☐ Air quality | ☐ Rabies |
| ☐ septic system failure | ☐ second-hand smoke | |
| ☐ None of the above | ☐ Other _____ | |

17.) Where do you go when you need your yearly check-up or physical?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ Private doctors' office | ☐ Urgent care | ☐ Hospital |
| ☐ Free Clinic | ☐ Health Department | ☐ Walk-in Clinic |
| ☐ OB/GYN | ☐ I don't go anywhere for check-ups | |
| ☐ Other _____ | | |

18.) How prepared do you feel your household is to handle a large-scale disaster or emergency?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Well prepared | ☐ Not prepared at all |
| ☐ Somewhat prepared | ☐ Not sure |

19.) Where do you buy most of your food? Choose one

- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Grocery store | ☐ Farmer's Market | ☐ Fast Food |
| ☐ Gas station | ☐ Drug store | |
| ☐ Other _____ | | |

20.) How often do you eat fresh fruit and vegetables? Choose one

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Everyday | ☐ Once per month | ☐ Never |
| ☐ A few times per week | ☐ I don't know | |
| ☐ A couple times per month | | |

21.) One recommendation for healthy eating is to eat at least **5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day**. Please choose what keeps you from eating this way. Choose one

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Nothing I eat 5+ more servings a day | ☐ They are too expensive |
| ☐ I or my family won't eat them | ☐ I don't know how to prepare them |
| ☐ They go bad before we eat them | ☐ I don't think about it |
| ☐ I don't have time to prepare them | ☐ Other _____ |

22.) Which of the following makes it hard for you to buy food? Select all that apply

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Transportation | ☐ Cost of food | ☐ Unemployment |
| ☐ Distance to grocery store | ☐ Other _____ | |

Please answer questions so we can see how different types of people feel about local health issues.

1. Zip Code of where you live: _____

2. Age: _____

3. What is your current gender identity?

- | |
|--|
| ☐ Male |
| ☐ Female |
| ☐ Transgender Male |
| ☐ Transgender Female |
| ☐ Nonbinary |
| ☐ Another identity: _____ |
| ☐ Prefer not to say |

3.) Ethnic group you most identify with:

____ African American/Black ____ Asian/Pacific Islander
____ Hispanic/Latino ____ Native American
____ White/Caucasian ____ Other _____

5.) Marital Status: ____ Married/ Co-habituating ____ Not Married/ Single

6.) Education:

____ Less than high school ____ High School Diploma or GED
____ College degree or higher ____ Other _____

7.) Household income:

____ Less than \$20,000 ____ \$20,000 to \$29,000
____ \$30,000 to \$49,000 ____ \$50,000 to \$74,000 ____ Over \$75,000

8.) How do you pay for your health care? **Check all that apply**

____ Pay cash (no insurance) ____ Medicaid
____ Health insurance (private insurance, HMO, Blue shield)
____ Veterans' Administration ____ Medicare
____ Indian Health Services ____ Other _____

9.) Where / how did you get this survey:

____ Church ____ Community Meeting ____ Grocery Store
____ Mail ____ Newspaper ____ Newsletter
____ Workplace ____ Personal Contact ____ Other _____

If you wish to submit your response via QR code, please find it below.



Please return the completed survey to the address below. If you would like more information about this community project, please contact us at the number below.

Kayla Bohannon
Stokes County Health Department
1009 Main St, Danbury, NC 27016
336-593-2400

APPENDIX B- COMMUNITY SURVEY SPANISH

Evaluación de Salud Comunitaria del Condado de Stokes 2025

Por favor, dedique un minuto a completar la encuesta a continuación. El objetivo de esta encuesta es conocer su opinión sobre los problemas de salud comunitaria en el Condado de Stokes. El Comité de Salud Comunitaria del Condado de Stokes utilizará los resultados de esta encuesta y otra información para identificar los problemas más urgentes que pueden abordarse mediante la acción comunitaria. **Si ya ha completado una encuesta, ignórela.** Recuerde: ¡su opinión es importante! Gracias y, si tiene alguna pregunta, contáctenos (vea la información de contacto al dorso).



1.) De la siguiente lista, ¿cuáles considera que son **los tres factores más importantes para una "Comunidad Saludable"**? (Factores que más mejoran la calidad de vida en una comunidad).

Marque solo tres:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Buen lugar para criar hijos | ☐ Excelentes relaciones raciales |
| ☐ Baja delincuencia / barrios seguros | ☐ Buenos empleos y economía sana |
| ☐ Bajo nivel de maltrato infantil | ☐ Una vida familiar sólida |
| ☐ Buenas escuelas | |
| ☐ Comportamientos y estilos de vida saludables | |
| ☐ Acceso a atención médica (p. ej., médico de cabecera) | |
| ☐ Bajas tasas de mortalidad y enfermedades en adultos | |
| ☐ Parques y recreación | ☐ Baja tasa de mortalidad infantil |
| ☐ Ambiente limpio | ☐ Valores religiosos o espirituales |
| ☐ Vivienda asequible | ☐ Otros _____ |

2.) En la siguiente lista, ¿cuáles considera que son **los tres comportamientos de riesgo más importantes en nuestra comunidad**? (Comportamientos que tienen el mayor impacto en la salud general de la comunidad).

Marque solo tres:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Abuso de alcohol | ☐ Sobrepeso | ☐ Racismo |
| ☐ Abandono escolar | ☐ Consumo de tabaco | ☐ Abuso de drogas |
| ☐ No usar anticonceptivos | ☐ Falta de ejercicio | ☐ Malos hábitos alimenticios |
| ☐ Sexo sin protección | ☐ No usar cinturones de seguridad/sillas de seguridad para niños | |
| ☐ No vacunarse para prevenir enfermedades | ☐ Otros _____ | |

3.) En la siguiente lista, ¿cuáles cree que son **los tres problemas de salud más importantes en nuestra comunidad**? (Aquellos problemas que tienen el mayor impacto en la salud general de la comunidad).

Marque solo tres:

- | |
|--|
| ☐ Problemas de envejecimiento (p. ej., artritis, pérdida de audición/visión, etc.) |
| ☐ Cáncer ☐ Enfermedades cardíacas y accidentes cerebrovasculares |
| ☐ Abuso/negligencia infantil ☐ Hipertensión arterial |
| ☐ Problemas dentales ☐ VIH/SIDA |
| ☐ Diabetes ☐ Homicidio |
| ☐ Violencia doméstica ☐ Muerte infantil |

☐ Lesiones por arma de fuego ☐ Enfermedades infecciosas (p. ej., hepatitis, tuberculosis)
☐ Problemas de salud mental ☐ Lesiones por accidentes automovilísticos
☐ Enfermedades respiratorias/pulmonares ☐ Enfermedades de transmisión sexual
☐ Suicidio ☐ Embarazo adolescente ☐ Otros _____

4.) ¿Qué servicios de salud considera que no están disponibles para los residentes del condado de Stokes?

☐ Salud mental
☐ Prenatal
☐ Abuso de sustancias
☐ Abuso de alcohol
☐ Salud infantil

5.) ¿Dónde obtiene la mayor parte de su información relacionada con la salud?

☐ Amigos y familiares ☐ Hospital ☐ Departamento de Salud
☐ Médico/Enfermera ☐ Farmacéutico ☐ Libros/Revistas
☐ La escuela de mi hijo/a ☐ Internet ☐ Otro _____

6.) ¿Cómo calificaría su salud personal?

☐ Muy insalubre ☐ Insalubre ☐ Algo saludable ☐ Saludable ☐ Muy saludable

7.) ¿Alguna vez un médico, enfermera u otro profesional de la salud le ha dicho que podría tener alguna de las siguientes afecciones?

Asma	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
Depresión o ansiedad	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
Hipertensión	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
alto	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
Diabetes (excepto durante el embarazo)	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
Osteoporosis	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
Sobrepeso/Obesidad	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
Angina/Enfermedad cardíaca	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé
Cáncer	☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No sé

8.) ¿Sobre cuáles de los siguientes temas de salud cree que su(s) hijo(s) necesita(n) más información? **Marque sus 3 principales.**

☐ Ninguno de estos temas	☐ Dejar de fumar	☐ Abstinencia/Sexo seguro
☐ Higiene dental	☐ Nutrición	☐ Control del asma
☐ Conducción imprudente/exceso de velocidad		☐ Control de la diabetes
☐ Depresión/ansiedad		
☐ Prevención de drogas	☐ Prevención del suicidio	☐ Alcohol
☐ Control de la ira	☐ Acoso escolar	☐ Otros _____

9.) ¿Cuáles son los 3 problemas de abuso de sustancias más importantes en este condado? **(Califique del 1 al 3, siendo 1 el mayor problema)**

☐ Marihuana	☐ Metanfetamina (metanfetamina)
☐ Abuso de alcohol	☐ Drogas callejeras (cocaína, crack, heroína)
☐ Conducir bajo los efectos del alcohol	
☐ Abuso de medicamentos/pastillas recetadas	
☐ Inhalar pegamento, corrector líquido, corrector líquido)	
☐ Realmente no lo sé.	☐ Otro _____

10.) Para prevenir el embarazo adolescente y las enfermedades de transmisión sexual, ¿cuáles de las siguientes recomendaciones deberían enseñarse en nuestras escuelas locales? **(marque una)**

☐ Abstinencia hasta el matrimonio
☐ Educación sexual integral (incluyendo abstinencia y otros métodos anticonceptivos) ☐ Ninguna de las anteriores

11.) Se recomienda realizar actividad física durante 30 minutos al día, 5 días a la semana (2 horas y media a la semana). Por favor, indique la razón principal que le impide realizar esta cantidad de actividad física. **Marque una.**

☐ Nada. Siento que hago esta cantidad de actividad física ☐ Caro
☐ Siento que hago esto en el trabajo ☐ No me gusta hacer ejercicio
☐ Tengo una discapacidad física ☐ Otro _____
☐ No hay un lugar seguro para hacer ejercicio
☐ No tengo tiempo para hacer ejercicio

12.) ¿Adónde va a hacer ejercicio o a realizar actividad física? (**Marque todas las opciones que correspondan**)

☐ Parques o senderos ☐ Casa/vecindario ☐ Trabajo
☐ Centro recreativo público ☐ Gimnasio o piscina privados ☐ Otro _____

13.) ¿Actualmente fuma o vapea? ☐ Sí ☐ No

14.) ¿Adónde iría si quisiera dejar de fumar?

☐ Línea de ayuda NC ☐ Departamento de Salud ☐ Médico
☐ Iglesia ☐ Farmacia ☐ No sé
☐ Terapeuta/consejero privado ☐ Otro _____

15.) ¿Usted y su familia reciclan?

☐ Sí ☐ No

16.) ¿Cuál de los siguientes problemas de salud ambiental del condado de Stokes cree que afecta más su salud? (Marquee una)

☐ Agua potable ☐ Agua enriquecida con flúor
☐ Moho ☐ Radón ☐ Reciclaje
☐ Exposición al plomo ☐ Sequía ☐ Laboratorios de metanfetamina
☐ Seguridad alimentaria ☐ Calidad del aire ☐ Rabia
☐ Fallo del sistema séptico ☐ Tabaquismo pasivo ☐ Ozono
☐ Ninguno de los anteriores ☐ Otro _____

17.) ¿Adónde acude cuando necesita su chequeo médico anual? ☐ Consultorio médico privado ☐ Atención de urgencias ☐ Hospital

☐ Clínica gratuita ☐ Departamento de Salud ☐ Clínica sin cita previa ☐ Ginecología
☐ No voy a ningún sitio para chequeos
☐ Otro _____

18.) ¿Qué tan preparado cree que está su hogar para afrontar un desastre o emergencia a gran escala?

☐ Bien preparado ☐ Nada preparado
☐ Algo preparado ☐ No estoy seguro

19.) ¿Dónde compra la mayoría de sus alimentos? Elija una opción

☐ Tienda de comestibles ☐ Mercado de agricultores ☐ Comida rápida
☐ Gasolinera ☐ Farmacia ☐ Otro _____

20.) ¿Con qué frecuencia come frutas y verduras frescas? Elija una opción

☐ Todos los días ☐ Una vez al mes ☐ Nunca
☐ Algunas veces a la semana ☐ No sé

___ Un par de veces al mes

21.) Una recomendación para una alimentación saludable es comer al menos 5 porciones de frutas y verduras al día.

Porfavor, indique qué le impide comer de esta manera. Elige una

___ Nada. Como 5 o más porciones al día.

___ Son demasiado caras.

___ Ni yo ni mi familia las comemos.

___ No sé cómo prepararlas.

___ Se echan a perder antes de que las comamos.

___ No pienso en ello.

___ No tengo tiempo para prepararlas.

___ Otro. _____

22.) ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones te dificulta comprar comida? Selecciona todas las que correspondan. ___ Transporte

___ Costo de la comida ___ Desempleo ___ Distancia al supermercado ___ Otro.

Responde las preguntas para que podamos ver cómo se sienten los diferentes tipos de personas sobre los problemas de salud locales.

1.) Código postal donde vives: _____

2.) Edad: _____

3.) ¿Cuál es tu identidad de género actual?

___ Hombre

___ Mujer

___ Hombre transgénero

___ Mujer transgénero

___ No binario

___ Otra identidad: _____ ___ Prefiero no decirlo

4.) Grupo étnico con el que más se identifica:

___ Afroamericano/Negro

___ Asiático/Isleño del Pacífico

___ Hispano/Latino

___ Nativo Americano

___ Blanco/Caucásico

___ Otro _____

5.) Estado civil: ___ Casado/Conviviendo ___ Soltero/a

6.) Educación:

___ Menor que la preparatoria ___ Diploma de preparatoria o GED ___ Título

universitario o superior ___ Otro _____

7.) Ingresos familiares:

___ Menos de \$20,000 ___ \$20,000 a \$29,000

___ \$30,000 a \$49,000 ___ \$50,000 a \$74,000 ___ Más de \$75,000

8.) ¿Cómo paga su atención médica? Marque todas las opciones que correspondan

___ Pago en efectivo (sin seguro)

___ Medicaid

___ Seguro médico (seguro privado, HMO, Blue Shield)

___ Administración de Veteranos

___ Medicare

___ Servicios de Salud para Indígenas

___ Otro _____

9.) ¿Dónde/cómo obtuvo esta encuesta?

___ Iglesia

___ Reunión comunitaria

___ Supermercado

___ Correo postal

___ Periódico

___ Boletín informativo ___ Lugar de trabajo

___ Contacto personal

___ Otro _____

Por favor, devuelva la encuesta completada a la dirección que figura a continuación. Si desea obtener más información sobre este proyecto comunitario, contáctenos al número que figura a continuación.



Kayla Bohannon
Departamento de Salud del Condado de Stokes
1009 Main St, Danbury, NC 27016
336-593-2400

SURVEY CONTENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Participants were asked to provide demographic information, including:

- Age
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Education level
- Household income

This information helps ensure that the survey sample reflects the diversity of the county's population. In addition to demographics, the survey asked about:

- Perceived community health problems
- Health behaviors
- Access to services
- Personal health status and habits

All responses were confidential and not linked to individual identities, allowing residents to share honest feedback without concern for privacy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The CHA survey aimed to capture a representative cross-section of the Stokes County population. Respondents reflected a diverse range of backgrounds. Key characteristics include:

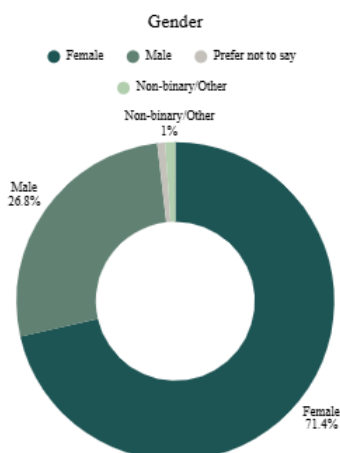
1. Gender

Female: 355

Male: 133

Non-binary/Other: 5

Prefer not to say: 4



2. Age Distribution

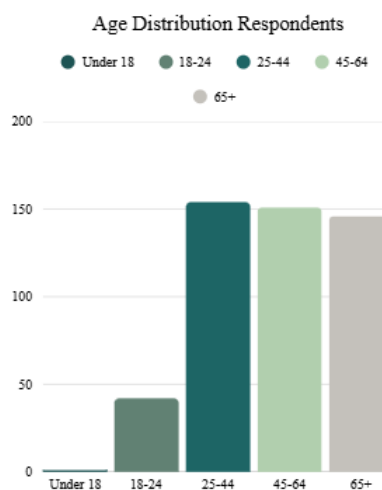
Under 18: 1

18–24: 42

25–44: 154

45–64: 151

65 and older: 146



3. Race and Ethnicity

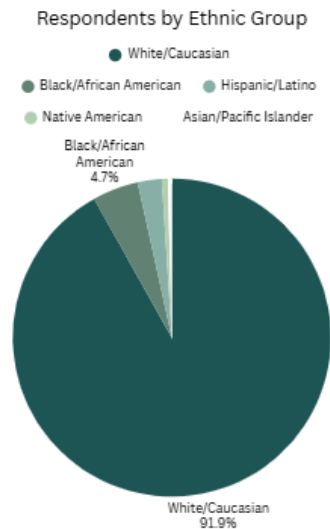
White: 91.9%

Black or African American: 4.7%

Hispanic/Latino: 2.4%

Native American/Alaska Native: 0.6%

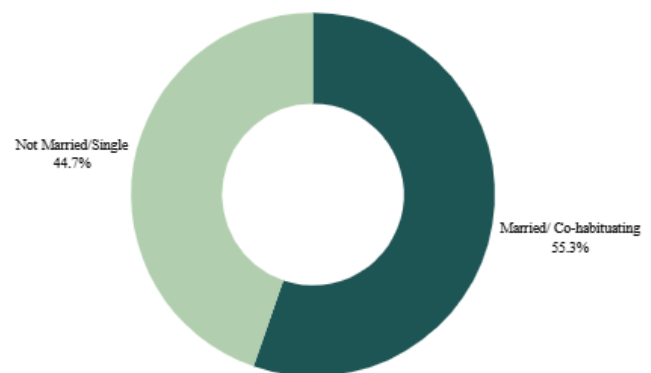
Asian: 0.4%



4. Marital Status

Married/Co-habituating

Not Married/Single

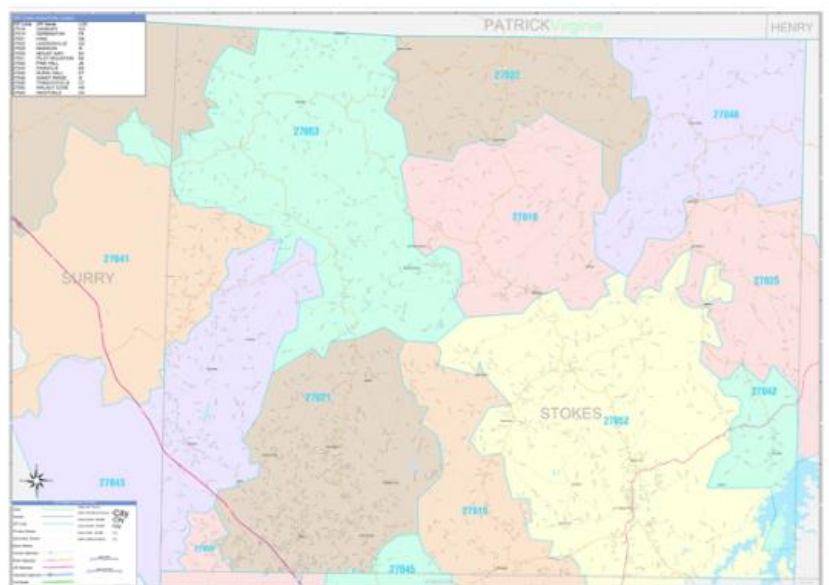
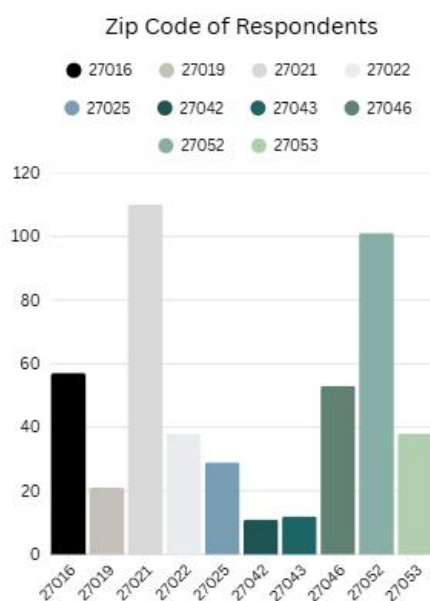


5. ZIP Code Representation

Respondents were distributed across multiple ZIP codes in Stokes County. The highest response rates came from:

ZIP Code 27021 – 110-22.3%

ZIP Code 27052 – 101-20.2%



6. Socioeconomic Status

Annual household income:

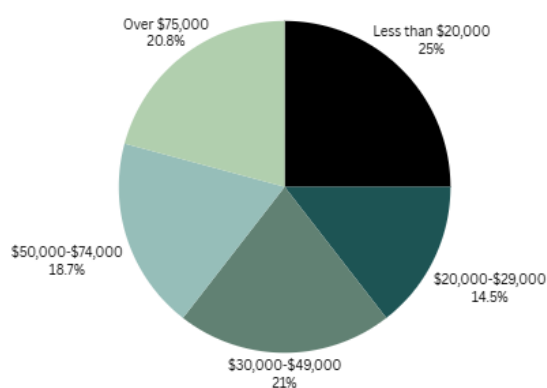
Less than \$20,000: 25%

\$20,000–\$29,000: 14.5%

\$30,000–\$49,000: 21%

\$50,000–\$74,000: 18.7%

Over \$75,000: 20.8%



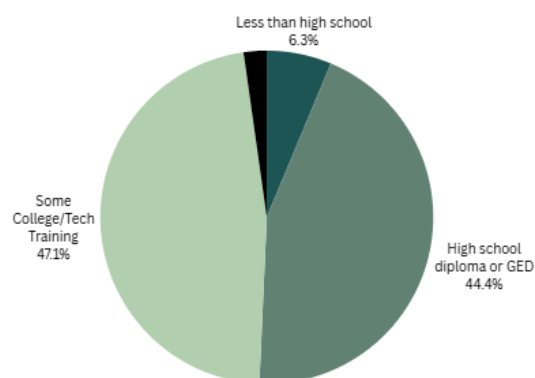
7. Education Level:

Less than high school: 6.3%

High school diploma or GED: 44.4%

Some college or technical training: 47.1%

Bachelor's degree or higher: 2.2%



8. Health Insurance Coverage

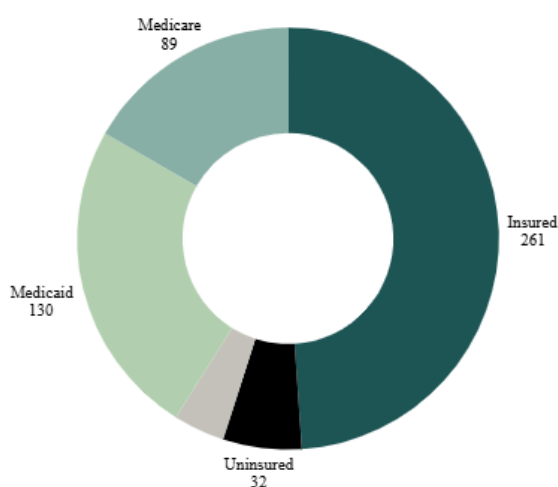
Insured: 52.7%

Uninsured/Pay Cash: 6.5%

Veterans Administration: 4.2%

Medicaid: 26.3%

Medicare: 10.3%



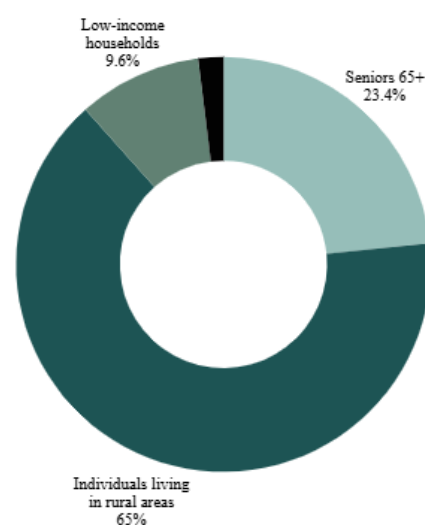
9. Special Populations Reached

Seniors (65+): 29.14%

Individuals living in rural areas: 81%

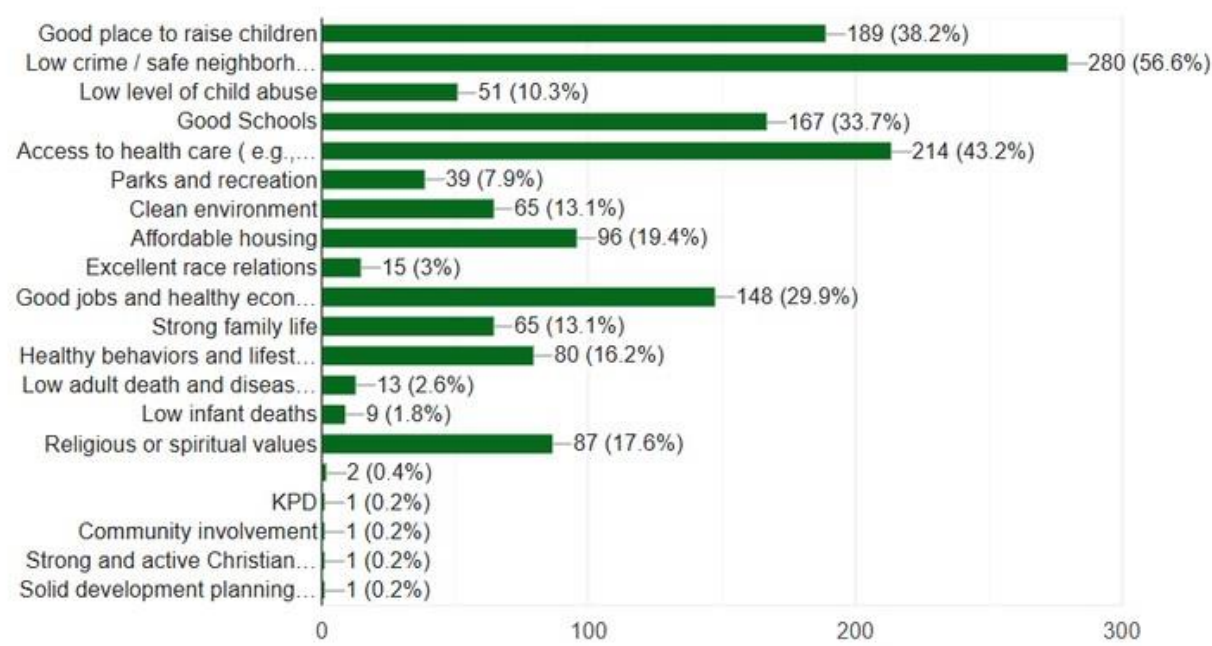
Low-income households: 12%

Non-English speakers or bilingual respondents: 2.44%

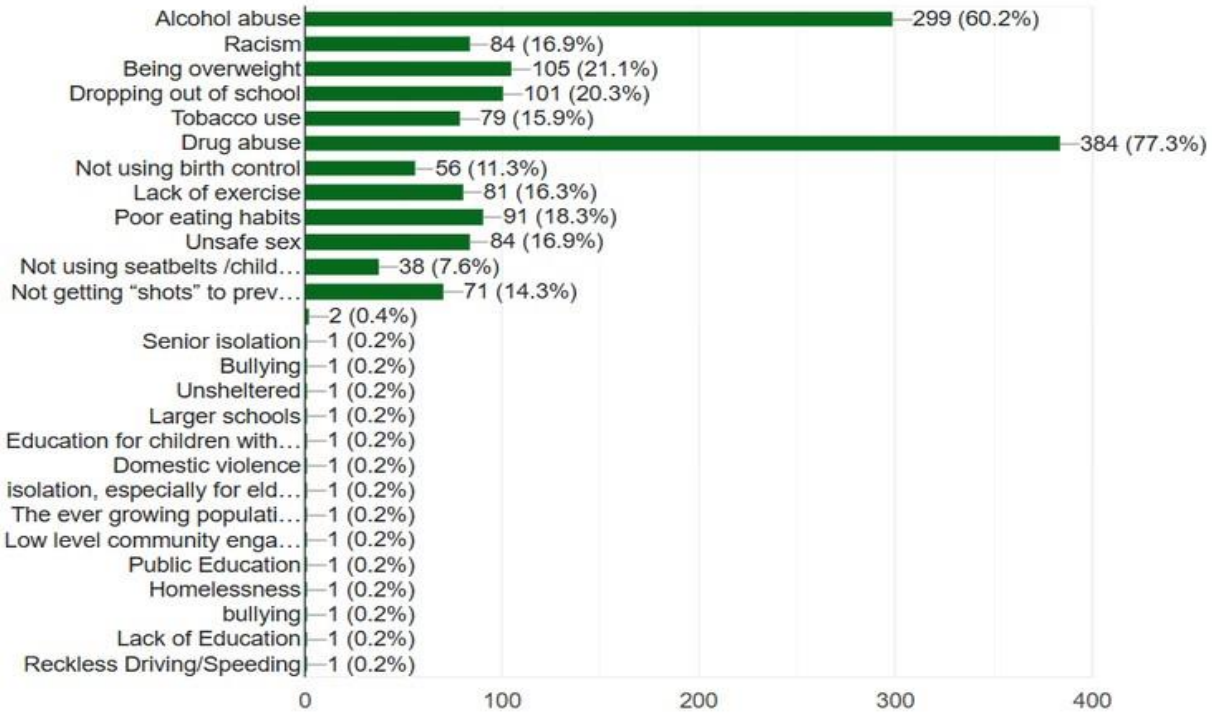


SURVEY RESULTS

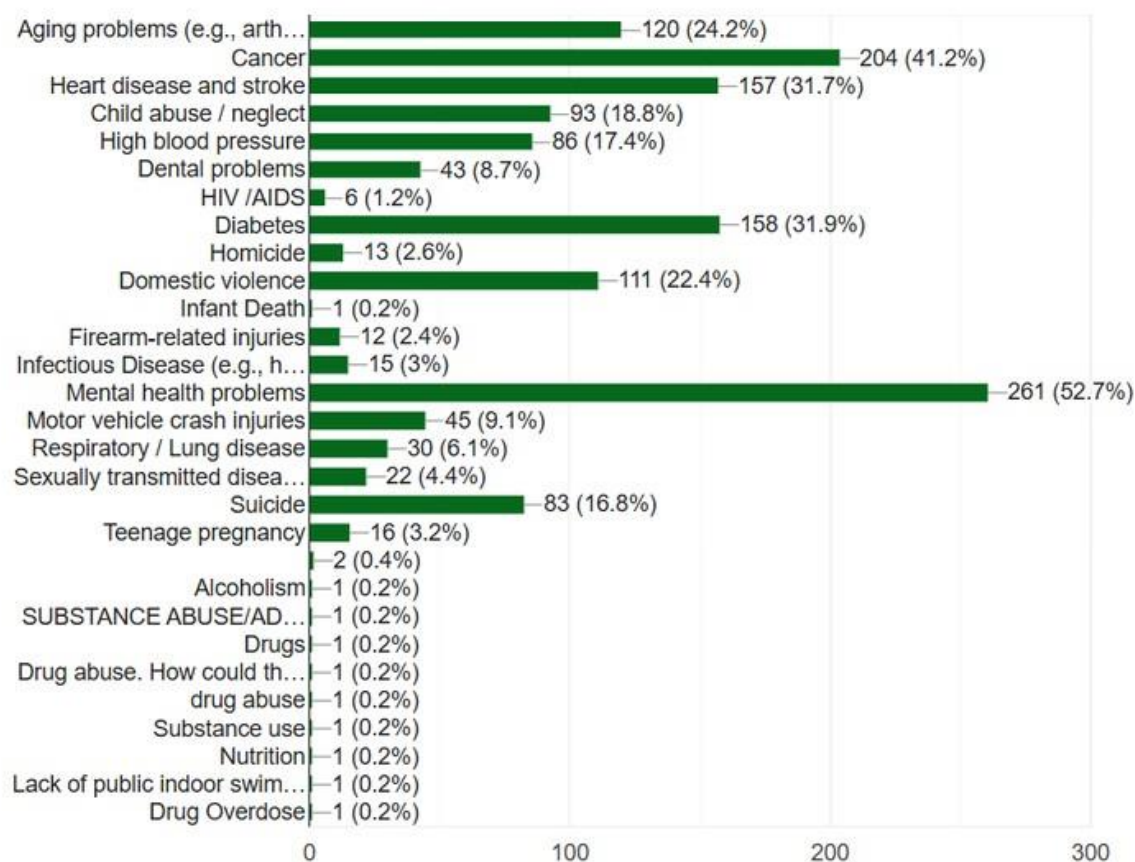
1.In the following list, what do you think are the three most important factors for a “Healthy Community?” (Those factors which are most improve the quality of life in a community.)



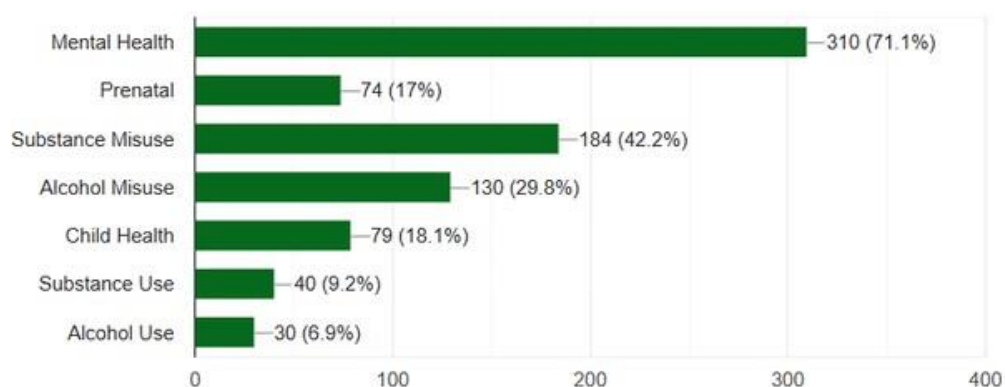
2. In the following list, what do you think are the three most important “risky behaviors” in our community? (Those behaviors which have the greatest impact on overall community health.)



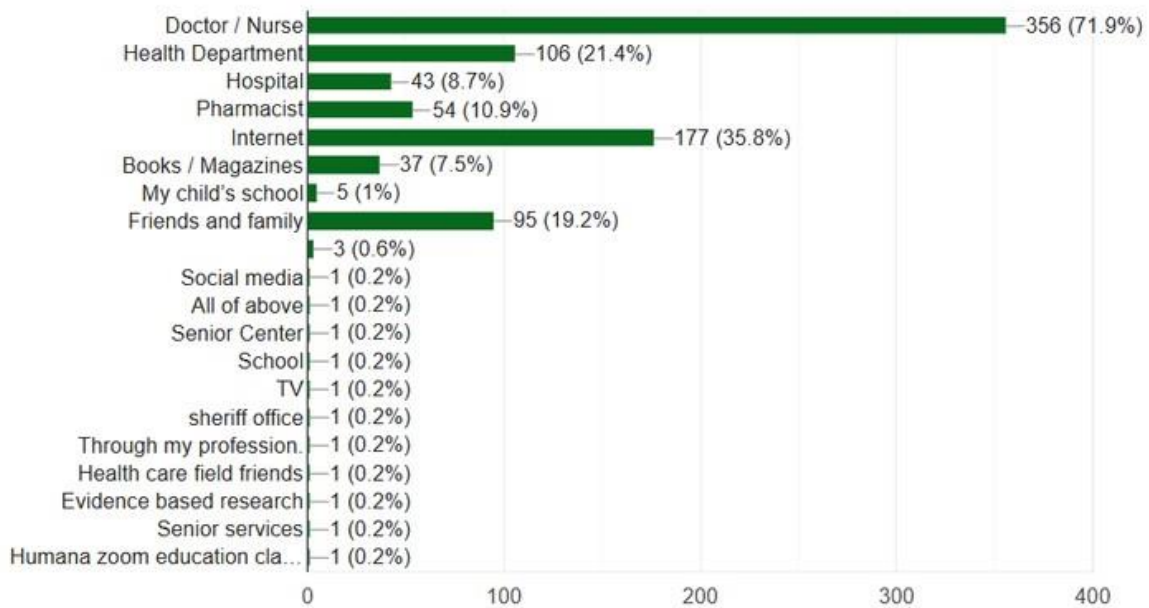
3. In the following list, what do you think are the three most important “health problems” in our community? (Those problems which have the greatest impact on overall community health.)



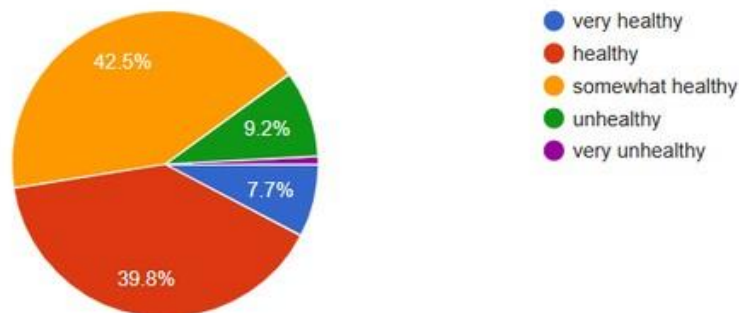
4. What health services do you feel are not available for Stokes County residents?



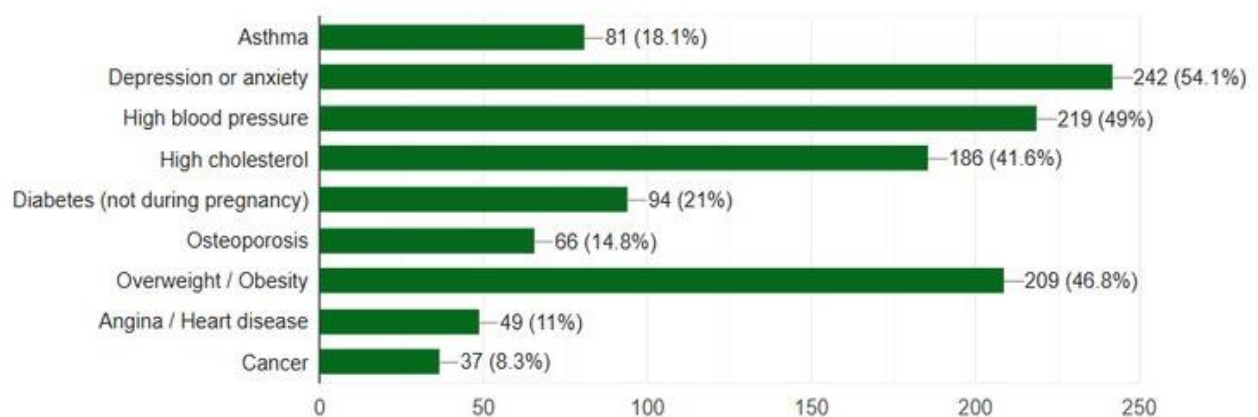
5. Where do you get most of your health-related information?



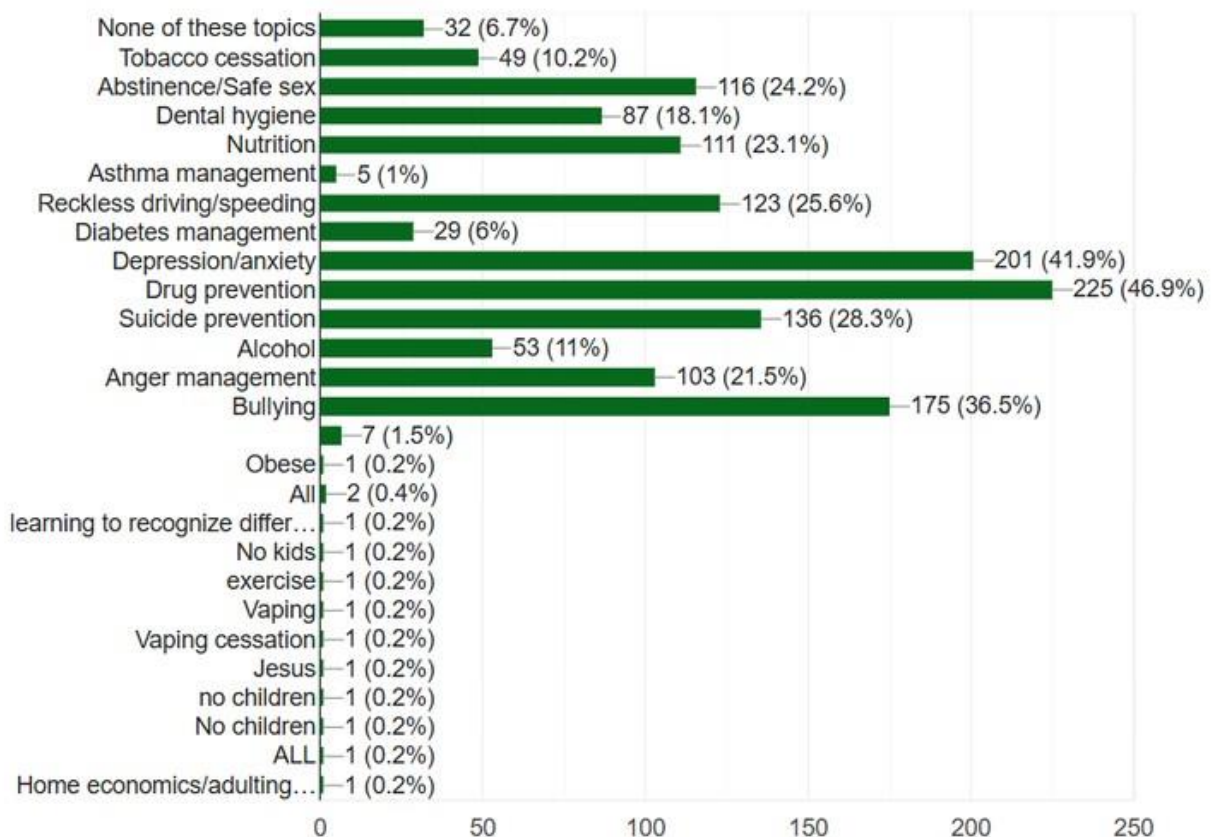
6. How would you rate your own personal health?



7. Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse or other health professional that you may have any of the following health conditions?

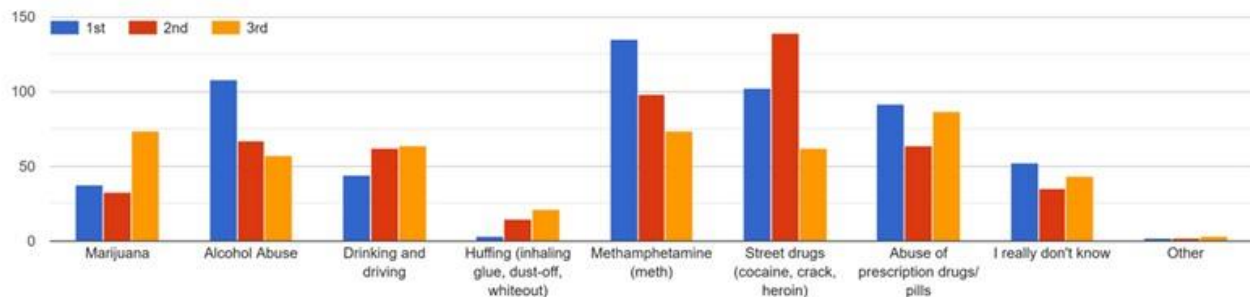


8. Which of the following health topics do you think your child/children need more information about?

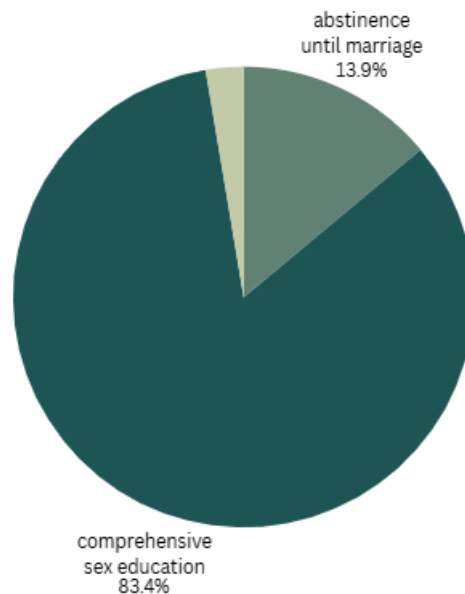


9. What are the top 3 biggest substance abuse problems in this county? (Rank 1 to 3, with 1 being the biggest problem.)

What are the top 3 biggest substance abuse problems in this county? (Rank 1 to 3 with 1 being biggest problem)

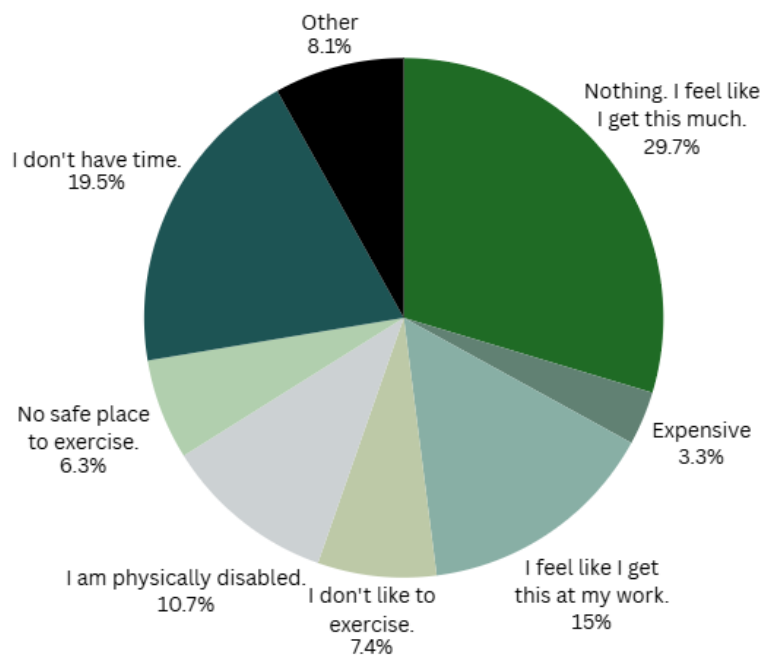


10.To prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, which of the following should be taught in our local schools? (check one)



Other suggestions: schools should be allowed to provide non-judgmental information about how and where to access sexual health resources and services, parenting programs that follow teens from conception to 2 years old.

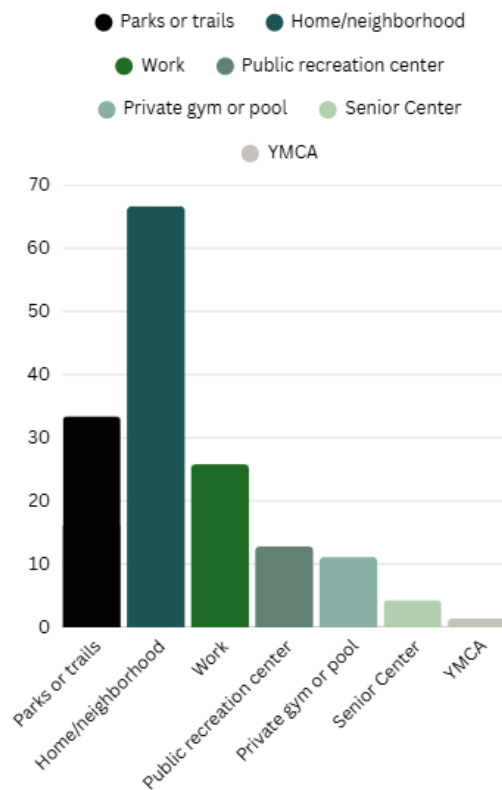
11. Recommendation for physical activity is 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week (2 ½ hours a week). Please choose the main reason that keeps you from getting this much physical activity. (Check



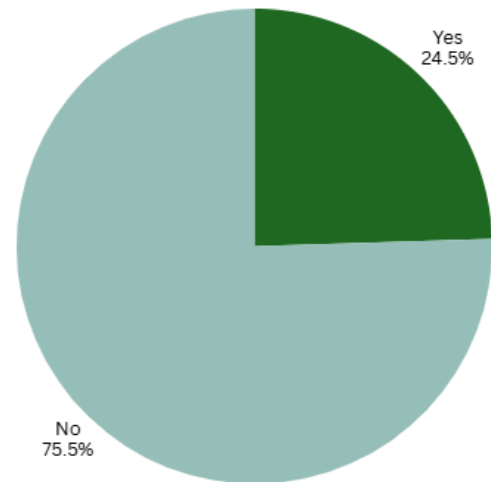
one)

Other suggestions were, no sidewalks or indoor pool with all day access for elderly, live to far from YMCA, only public pool within county is in King, not many gyms in northern Stokes, or lack of transportation.

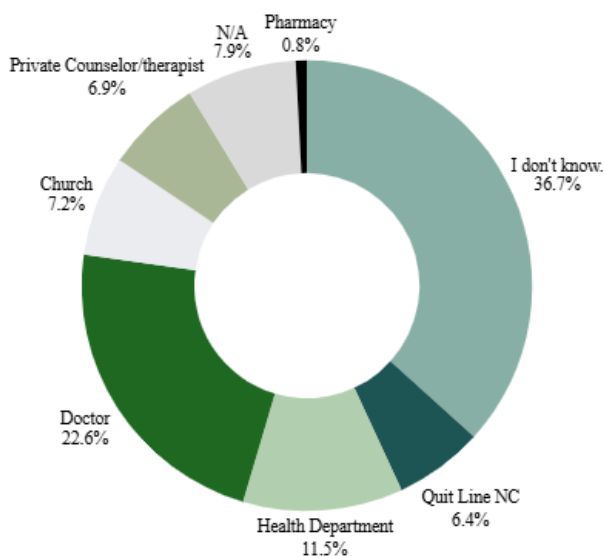
12. Where do you go to exercise or engage in physical activity? (Check all that apply)



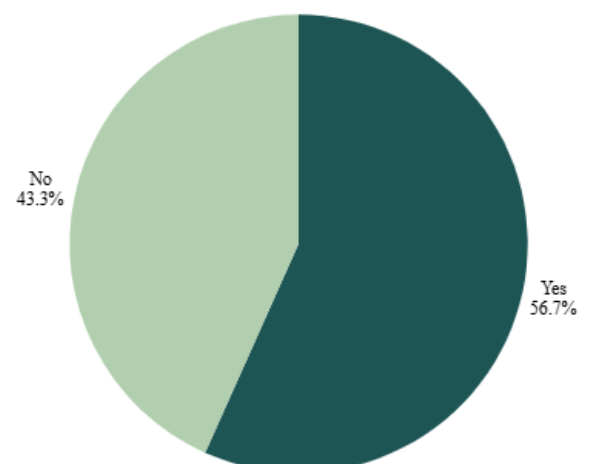
13. Do you currently smoke or vape?



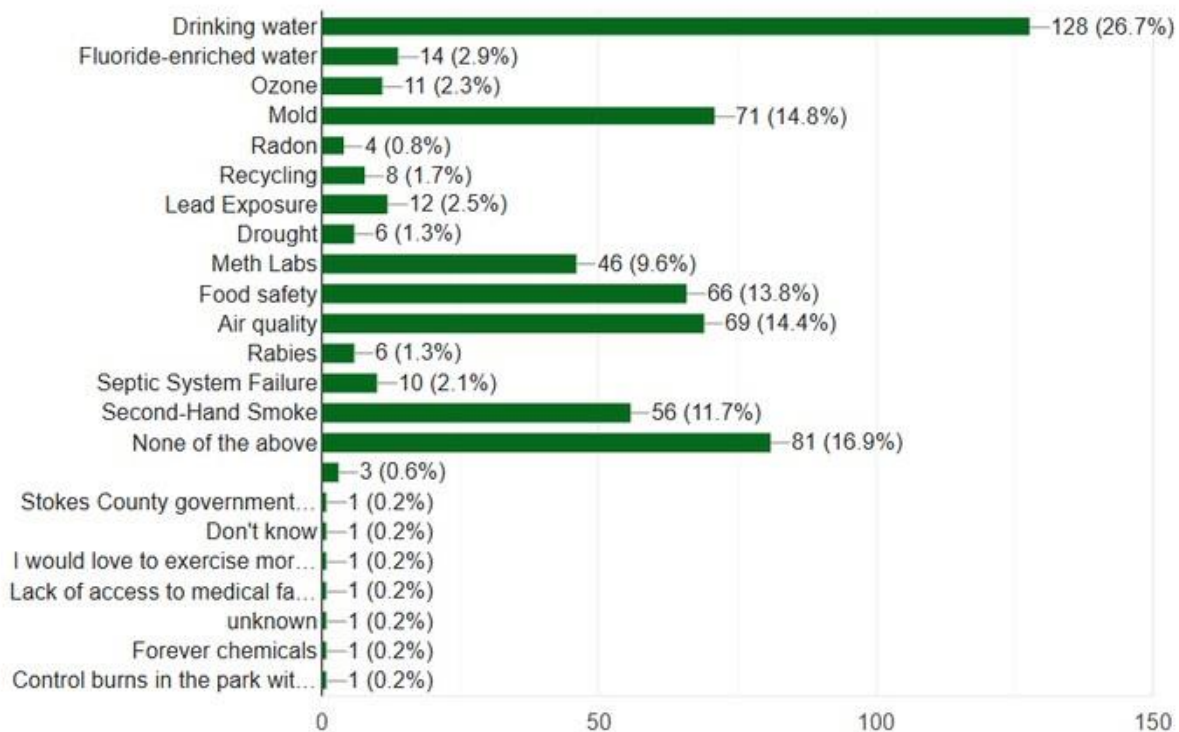
14. Where would you go if you wanted to quit smoking/vaping?



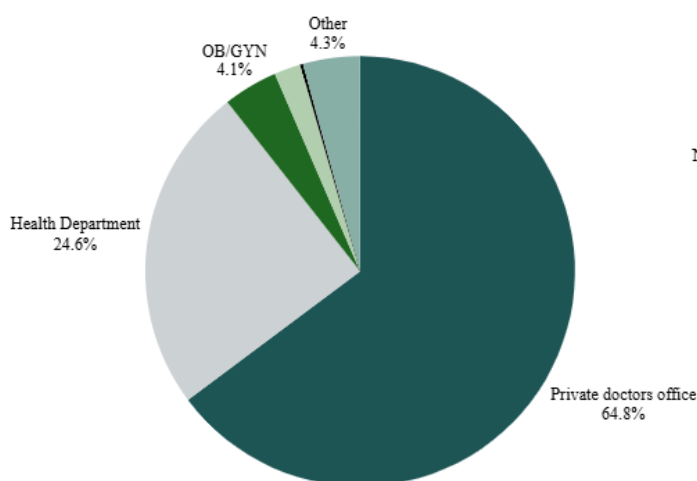
15. Do you and your family recycle?



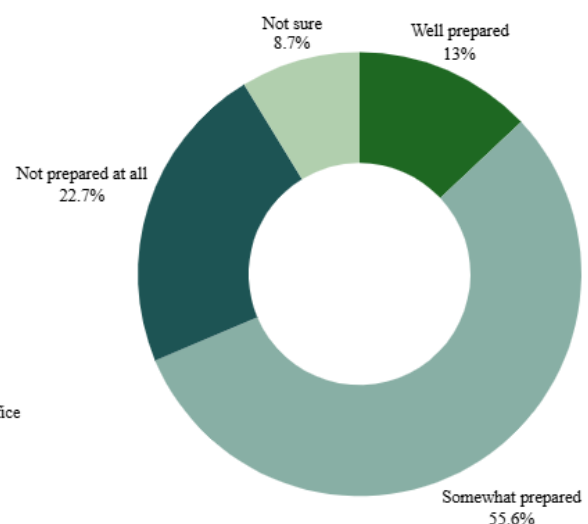
16. Which of the following Stokes County Environmental Health concerns do you believe most affects your health? (Check one)



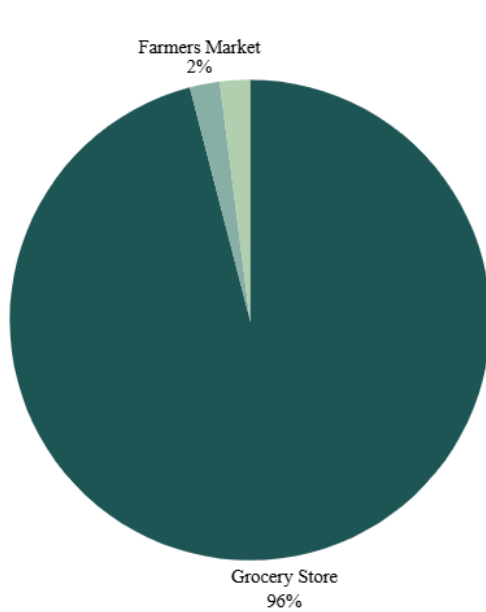
17. Where do you go when you need your yearly check-up or physical?



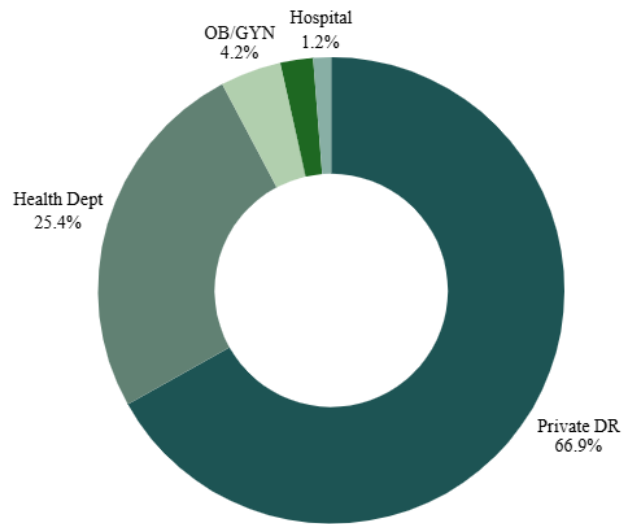
18. How prepared do you feel your household is to handle a large-scale disaster or emergency?



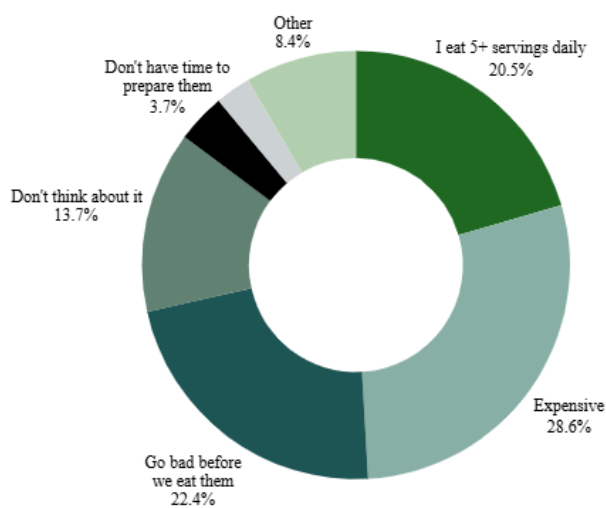
19. Where do you buy most of your food?
(Choose one.)



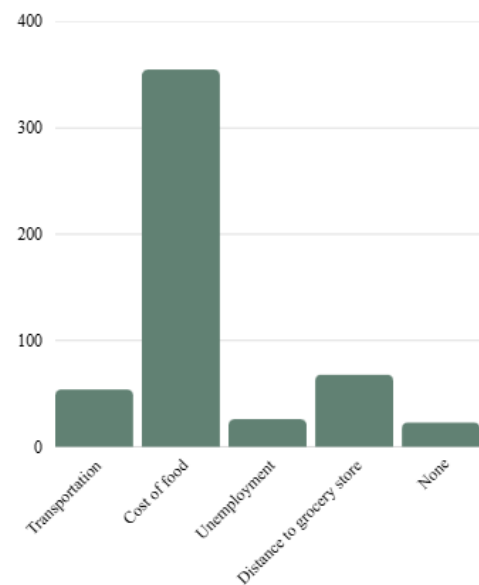
20. Where do you go when you need your yearly check-up or physical?



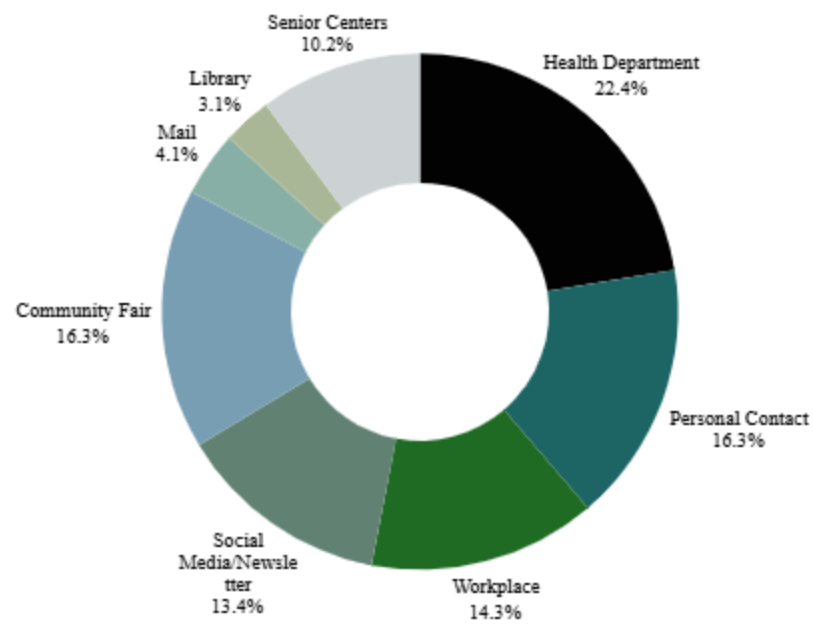
21. One recommendation for healthy eating is to eat at least 5 servings of fruits/vegetables per day. What keeps you from eating this way? (Choose one)



22. Which of the following makes it hard for you to buy food? Select all that apply.



23. Where did you get this survey:



RESOURCES

Adoption & Pregnancy Services

- Bennett and West, Attorneys at Law – (336) 983-3177
- Hope Pregnancy Care Center – (336) 983-3990
- R. Michael Bruce, Attorney at Law – (336) 593-9240
- Stokes County DSS – (336) 593-2861

Childcare & Education

- Calvary Baptist Preschool – (336) 983-4481
- Calvary Christian Church Childcare – (336) 983-3728
- First Steps Child Care – (336) 591-9151
- Germanton Elementary School
- Head Start – Danbury – (336) 593-8113
- Head Start – London – (336) 591-7204
- Head Start – Main Office – (336) 367-4993
- Head Start – Mount Olive – (336) 985-5260
- Head Start – Sandy Ridge – (336) 871-2551
- King Elementary School – (336) 983-5824
- King Moravian Preschool – (336) 983-4003
- Kindercare – (336) 983-2024
- Kidz Community Child Care – (336) 983-8393
- Little Bear's – (336) 407-0751
- London Elementary School
- Meadowbrook Academy
- Mount Olive Elementary School
- Nancy Reynolds Elementary School
- North Stokes High School
- Pinnacle Elementary School – (336) 368-2990
- Piney Grove Middle School
- Popular Springs Elementary School – (336) 985-0234
- Sandy Ridge Elementary School
- South Stokes High School
- Stokes Early College
- Stokes County Schools – (336) 593-8146
- Tonya's Tots – (336) 983-8970
- Walnut Cove Elementary School – (336) 591-4408
- West Stokes High School
- Calvary Christian Church Childcare – (336) 983-3728
- Stokes Family YMCA Pea Pods – (336) 985-9622

Child Partnership Programs

- Nurturing Parenting Program – (336) 983-4026
- Surry/Stokes Friends of Youth – (336) 983-0350
- Stokes Partnership for Children – (336) 985-2676
- The Parenting Path – (336) 748-9028

Chiropractic

- Crown Chiropractic of King – (336) 985-3500
- Massey Family Chiropractic – (336) 897-2026

Dental Health Providers

- Bisig + Chermak + Rudnicke Orthodontics – (336) 983-4551
- Dr. Edward Bell – (336) 983-2176
- Mabe & Mabe – (336) 591-4303
- Saura Town Dental – (336) 983-5095
- Stokes Dentistry – (336) 983-4565

Emergency Services

- Cardinal Urgent Care – (336) 983-9111
- LifeBrite Community Hospital of Stokes – (336) 593-2831

Family Medical Providers

- LifeBrite Family Medical – (336) 593-8281
- Novant Family Medical – (336) 983-4346
- Stokes County Health Department – (336) 593-2400

Food Distribution

- East Stokes Outreach Ministry – (336) 591-3227
- Forsyth Tech Connect Pantry – (336) 734-7195
- King Outreach Ministry – (336) 983-HELP
- Northern Stokes Food Pantry – (336) 351-0900
- The Rock Church – (336) 983-0550

Help & Hotlines

- 211 Help Line – 211 or (888) 892-1162
- American Cancer Society – (800) 227-2345
- Americans with Disabilities Act – (800) 514-0301
- Daymark Mobile Crisis Engagement – (866) 275-9552
- NC Poison Control – (800) 222-1222
- Quitline NC – (800) 784-8669
- Suicide & Life Crisis Hotline – 988

Homelessness Resources

- American Red Cross – (336) 333-2111
- Bethesda Center – (336) 722-9951
- Habitat for Humanity – (336) 985-3211
- King Outreach Ministry – (336) 983-HELP
- The Sheppard’s House – (336) 786-1420

Mental Health & Substance Use Services

- Adolescent Outpatient Treatment – (336) 725-8389
- Community Paramedic – (336) 593-5409
- Daymark Recovery Services – (336) 983-0941
- Insight Human Services – (336) 593-2660
- Monarch – (336) 591-5446
- October Road – (866) 735-7622
- Sid Lee Memorial Mental Health – (336) 536-1027
- Stokes County DSS Mental Health/Substance Abuse Liaison – (336) 593-2861 ext. 1155
- Vaya Health – (800) 849-6127
- SCOPE – contact info not listed

Medicaid

- Department of Social Services – (336) 593-2861

Palliative & Hospice Care

- Mountain Valley Hospice and Palliative Care – (888) 789-2922
- Trellis Supportive Care – (336) 591-1124

Parks & Recreation

- King Parks and Recreation Department – (336) 985-1115
- Stokes Family YMCA – (336) 985-962

Senior Citizen Services

- King Senior Center – (336) 983-0751
- Walnut Cove Senior Center – (336) 591-5442
- Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation
- Stokes County Nursing Home – (336) 593-2831
- Universal Healthcare – (336) 983-6505
- Village Care – (336) 983-4900
- Walnut Cove Health & Rehabilitation – (336) 591-4353

Social Services

- Department of Social Services – (336) 593-2861

Transportation

- YVEDDI – (336) 679-2071

Veterans Services

- Stokes County Veterans Services – (336) 593-2468

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[en.learningcycle.co/2025/03/04/equity-vs-equality-why-fairness-isnt-one-size-fits-all/](https://blog-en.learningcycle.co/2025/03/04/equity-vs-equality-why-fairness-isnt-one-size-fits-all/) (blog-en.learningcycle.co in Bing)

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<https://worldpopulationreview.com/>

Thank you for your interest in the Stokes County Health Department's Community Health Assessment (CHA).

You can find our contact information below:

****Stokes County Health Department****

Address: 1009 Main Street, Danbury, NC 27016

Phone Number: (336) 593-2400

Website: <https://www.co.stokes.nc.us/departments/health.php>

For any inquiries regarding the Community Health Assessment, please reach out to:

****Contact Person:** Kayla Bohannon**

Phone Number: (336) 593-2400 Ext. 1229

Email: kbohannon@co.stokes.nc.us

Hard copies of the CHA are available upon request. If you'd like to request a hard copy, please feel free to contact us in person at the Stokes County Health Department. When doing so, kindly provide the following information:

- Full Name**
- Mailing Address**
- Phone Number**
- Reason for Request**

Please be advised that a small fee may apply to help cover printing and mailing costs.

Additionally, the Community Health Assessment can be viewed online at the following link:

<https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/units/ldas/cha2021/Stokes2021-CHA.pdf>

We greatly appreciate your interest and welcome any feedback you may have.



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: X.a

Planning Board Recommendation of a Data Center Moratorium

Drafter: Olivia Jessup

Summary:

Bryan Miller will present the Planning Board recommendation of a data center moratorium.

ATTACHMENTS:

[GS_160D-107 Moratoria.pdf](#)

§ 160D-107. Moratoria.

(a) Authority. – As provided in this section, local governments may adopt temporary moratoria on any development approval required by law, except for the purpose of developing and adopting new or amended plans or development regulations governing residential uses. The duration of any moratorium shall be reasonable in light of the specific conditions that warrant imposition of the moratorium and may not exceed the period of time necessary to correct, modify, or resolve such conditions.

(b) Hearing Required. – Except in cases of imminent and substantial threat to public health or safety, before adopting a development regulation imposing a development moratorium with a duration of 60 days or any shorter period, the governing board shall hold a legislative hearing and shall publish a notice of the hearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the area not less than seven days before the date set for the hearing. A development moratorium with a duration of 61 days or longer, and any extension of a moratorium so that the total duration is 61 days or longer, is subject to the notice and hearing requirements of G.S. 160D-601.

(c) Exempt Projects. – Absent an imminent threat to public health or safety, a development moratorium adopted pursuant to this section does not apply to any project for which a valid building permit issued pursuant to G.S. 160D-1108 is outstanding, to any project for which a special use permit application has been accepted as complete, to development set forth in a site-specific vesting plan approved pursuant to G.S. 160D-108.1, to development for which substantial expenditures have already been made in good-faith reliance on a prior valid development approval, or to preliminary or final subdivision plats that have been accepted for review by the local government prior to the call for a hearing to adopt the moratorium. Any preliminary subdivision plat accepted for review by the local government prior to the call for a hearing, if subsequently approved, shall be allowed to proceed to final plat approval without being subject to the moratorium. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a complete application for a development approval has been submitted prior to the effective date of a moratorium, G.S. 160D-108(b) applies when permit processing resumes.

(d) Required Statements. – Any development regulation establishing a development moratorium must include, at the time of adoption, each of the following:

- (1) A statement of the problems or conditions necessitating the moratorium and what courses of action, alternative to a moratorium, were considered by the local government and why those alternative courses of action were not deemed adequate.
- (2) A statement of the development approvals subject to the moratorium and how a moratorium on those approvals will address the problems or conditions leading to imposition of the moratorium.
- (3) A date for termination of the moratorium and a statement setting forth why that duration is reasonably necessary to address the problems or conditions leading to imposition of the moratorium.
- (4) A statement of the actions, and the schedule for those actions, proposed to be taken by the local government during the duration of the moratorium to address the problems or conditions leading to imposition of the moratorium.

(e) Limit on Renewal or Extension. – No moratorium may be subsequently renewed or extended for any additional period unless the local government has taken all reasonable and feasible steps proposed to be taken in its ordinance establishing the moratorium to address the problems or conditions leading to imposition of the moratorium and unless new facts and conditions warrant an extension. Any ordinance renewing or extending a development moratorium must include, at the time of adoption, the findings set forth in subdivisions (1) through (4) of subsection (d) of this section, including what new facts or conditions warrant the extension.

(f) Expedited Judicial Review. – Any person aggrieved by the imposition of a moratorium on development approvals required by law may apply to the General Court of Justice for an order enjoining the enforcement of the moratorium. Actions brought pursuant to this section shall be scheduled for expedited hearing, and subsequent proceedings in those actions shall be accorded priority by the trial and appellate courts. In such actions, the local government has the burden of showing compliance with the procedural requirements of this subsection. (2019-111, s. 2.4; 2020-3, s. 4.33(a); 2020-25, ss. 4, 51(a), (b), (d).)



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: X.b

Public Hearing for Amendments to Stokes County Zoning Ordinance

Drafter: Olivia Jessup

Summary:

A public hearing will be held for citizens of Stokes County to discuss the following proposed text amendments to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance:

- Amendment A — §132.3 (Hearing Timeline): Proposed reduction of the Planning Board hearing window for conditional zoning applications from 60 days to 30 days, consistent with the state default under N.C. Gen. Stat. §160D-604(b).
- Amendment D — §132.5 (Plan Consistency Statement — Two-Step Process): Proposed amendment to replace the current single-finding requirement with the two-step plan-consistency and reasonableness framework required by N.C. Gen. Stat. §§160D-604(d) and 160D-605. Staff made additional changes to the amendment following the June 15 Planning Board vote and resubmitted the revised amendment for Board review.
- Amendment N — §92.2, Condition 5 (Mining/Quarrying Special Conditions): Proposed replacement of standardless 'as deemed necessary' delegation language with specific, objective, and measurable criteria governing conditions applicable to mining and quarrying operations in the M-2 district.
- Amendment P — §92 (M-2 Performance Standards Package): Proposed deletion of legally unenforceable aspirational and catch-all provisions in the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and concurrent adoption of replacement objective performance standards, including quantitative thresholds for noise, emissions, setbacks, and screening. All three components must be adopted together.
- Amendment R — Definitions + §92 Use Table (Data Center): Proposed addition of a formal definition of 'Data Center' to Article IV, §41 and a corresponding use table entry in the M-2 CZ (Conditional Zoning) district use table. Both parts must be adopted concurrently.

Additional documents may be discussed including but not limited to Planning Board recommendations. These documents can be found at [Planning & Inspections](#) on 7/10/2026 after the Planning Board meeting on 7/09/2026.

The following procedure will be in place for the Public Hearing:

Each speaker shall be allowed 4 minutes for public comments with the option to yield time to another speaker or add an optional minute depending on the number of speakers that have signed up while abiding by the 30-minute total time limit. All speakers shall maintain good decorum and show respect and good manners. Vulgar language, profanity, inappropriate gestures, insults, personal attacks, accusations, and inflammatory language is prohibited. The Chairman of the Board shall enforce these rules, and anyone not complying with these rules shall not be allowed to continue.

Following the Public Hearing, the Board will discuss the Zoning Ordinance Amendments.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Stokes_County_M2_Performance_Standards_Final \(4\).pdf](#)
[Adoption_Ordinance_Reasonableness_A_D_N_P_R_UPDATED.docx](#)
[BOC_Motion_Adopt_A_D_N_P_R_CORRECTED.pdf](#)
[BOC_Motion_Deny_A_D_CORRECTED.pdf](#)
[BOC_Motion_Not_Adopt_N_P_R \(1\).pdf](#)
[BOC_Staff_Report_July13_2026_UPDATED.docx](#)
[Mining_Quarrying_PB_Report_July9_2026 \(2\).pdf](#)

STOKES COUNTY PLANNING & INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT

M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District

Proposed Operational Performance Standards

Proposed §92.5 — Replacement for Deleted Aspirational and Catch-All Language in §92 and §92.2. Applies to the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and the M-2-CZ Conditional Zoning District, set at minimum baseline thresholds; the Conditional Zoning process addresses more intense or noxious uses through additional site-specific conditions.

Prepared by: Planning & Inspections Department Staff

Presented to: Stokes County Planning Board

Article VIII, §92 | Stokes County Zoning Ordinance

For Official Use

I. BACKGROUND — WHAT IS BEING REPLACED

Amendment P of the staff-initiated zoning text amendments proposes deletion of two provisions in Article VIII of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance: the aspirational emission language in §92 (Purpose) and the catch-all prohibition in §92.2 (Conditional Zoning). Both provisions use undefined, subjective standards that are not enforceable as written and are inconsistent with the objective-standards requirements of N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 160D.

Deleted Provision 1 — §92 Purpose (Aspirational Language)

The following sentence from the §92 Purpose clause is proposed for deletion:

Current text proposed for deletion: "However, it is expected that industries permitted here by right, as well as those permitted conditionally, will minimize their emission of smoke, dust, fumes, glare, noise and vibrations."

Why it must be replaced: The word 'expected' and the phrase 'minimize their emission' are aspirational and precatory — they express a hope rather than a legally enforceable requirement. Under long-settled North Carolina zoning doctrine (see, e.g., *Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock*, 286 N.C. App. 570, 882 S.E.2d 91 (2022), a nonconforming-use case applying the general rule that ambiguous or vague zoning language is construed in favor of the free use of property), a court or Board of Adjustment would have no objective standard against which to measure compliance or non-compliance. This language cannot be used to deny a use or require mitigation.

Deleted Provision 2 — §92.2 Catch-All Prohibition

The following catch-all use prohibition from §92.2 (Conditional Zoning) is proposed for deletion:

Current text proposed for deletion: "Manufacturing uses not otherwise named herein, provided no use shall be permitted in this district which is likely to be dangerous or detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, or general character of this zoning district or of the community."

Why it must be replaced: Zoning and conditional zoning decisions under N.C. Gen. Stat. §160D-703 should be based on objective, definite standards that allow a reviewing body to evaluate compliance from the evidence presented. A catch-all standard — 'dangerous or detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, or general character' — is inherently a subjective, open-ended judgment that cannot be applied consistently and is not verifiable from competent, material, and substantial evidence. Such provisions are vulnerable to challenge as unconstitutional delegations of unlimited discretion. Cf. *Chrismon v. Guilford County*, 322 N.C. 611, 370 S.E.2d 579 (1988) (upholding conditional use rezoning against spot-zoning and contract-zoning challenges where the zoning authority's action was reasonable, neither arbitrary nor unduly discriminatory, and in the public interest — underscoring that reasoned, evidence-based standards, not open-ended discretion, support valid conditional zoning decisions).

The Solution: Both deleted provisions identify the right categories of concern — smoke, dust, fumes, glare, noise, vibration, and general community welfare. The proposed §92.5 Operational Performance Standards below retain those same categories but replace the aspirational and catch-all language with specific, measurable minimum thresholds tied to recognized instruments, measurement methods, and NC regulatory authority. These standards apply to both the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and the M-2-CZ Conditional Zoning District, consistent with the ordinance principle that conditions applicable to a base district also apply to its CZ counterpart. Because uses intense or noxious enough to require conditional zoning will receive additional, stricter, site-specific conditions through the CZ approval process, §92.5 is calibrated as an objectively verifiable and fully enforceable floor — not a ceiling.

II. PROPOSED §92.5 — OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

All uses in the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and M-2-CZ Heavy Manufacturing Conditional Zoning District shall comply with the following operational performance standards. Compliance shall be measured at the boundary of the zoning lot on which the use is located, or at any point on or beyond a property line abutting a non-industrial district, as specified below for each standard.

Minimum baseline standard; conditional zoning layers on additional conditions: The thresholds in §92.5.1 through §92.5.7 below are set as a minimum baseline applicable to all M-2 and M-2-CZ uses, consistent with the ordinance principle that conditions applicable to the M-2 District also apply to the M-2-CZ District. Uses that are sufficiently noxious or intense to warrant conditional zoning are reviewed individually by the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners under N.C. Gen. Stat. §160D-703, which authorizes the Board to impose additional, more restrictive, site-specific conditions — for example tighter noise limits, enhanced buffering, additional odor or dust controls, or operational hour restrictions — tailored to the specific use and its surroundings. §92.5 therefore establishes the floor below which no M-2 or M-2-CZ use may fall; it does not limit the Board's authority to require stricter conditions in an individual M-2-CZ case.

§92.5.1 — Noise

(a) No use shall produce a continuous sound level exceeding 75 dB, measured at any point on or beyond the boundary of the zoning lot on which the use is located, applicable at all times regardless of the zoning classification of the adjacent property. This single baseline threshold applies uniformly rather than varying by adjacent district type.

(b) No use shall create a sound level exceeding this threshold for more than 10% of any measurement period, which shall not be less than ten minutes. The maximum intermittent sound level shall not exceed the permissible sound level above by more than 15 dB(A).

(c) These standards do not apply to: temporary construction activity; emergency response equipment; or the operation of motor vehicles and transportation facilities on public rights-of-way.

Reference: Harnett County, NC Code of Ordinances §92.29 (Permissible Noise Level Limits), which sets a 75 dB maximum permitted sound level for manufacturing, industrial, or agricultural uses at all times (day and night), and 75 dB / 70 dB (day/night) for commercial or business uses, used here as the county-wide minimum baseline; consistent with Fayetteville, NC's noise ordinance, which sets a flat 75 dB limit for manufacturing, industrial, or agricultural uses at all times.

§92.5.2 — Vibration

(a) No use shall produce ground-transmitted vibration exceeding a maximum peak particle velocity (PPV) of 1.0 inches per second, steady-state, as measured at the boundary of the zoning lot on which the use is located. Impact vibrations — discrete impulses not exceeding 60 per minute — are limited to 2.0 inches per second PPV. This threshold applies as a minimum baseline.

(b) The maximum particle velocity shall be the product of two times the frequency in cycles per second times the sum of three mutually perpendicular displacement components recorded simultaneously. Steady-state vibrations are those which are continuous, or in discrete impulses more frequent than 60 per minute; discrete impulses not exceeding 60 per minute shall be considered impact vibrations. Where more than one vibration standard could apply, the more stringent standard shall govern.

(c) These standards shall not apply to: vibration resulting from the operation of on-road vehicles; temporary construction activity and equipment; or roadway maintenance and repair equipment.

Reference: Johnston County, NC Unified Development Code §14-257(c) (extraction and mining special-use performance standards), which sets a maximum peak particle velocity of 1.0 inches per second steady-state and 2.0 inches per second impact, measured at the boundary of the extraction site — used here as the county-wide minimum baseline for M-2 heavy industrial vibration; consistent with the same 1.0/2.0 inches-per-second standard applied to fill sites under Johnston County §14-257(h)(4)(b)(3), and to extraction site vibration under the Davidson County, NC Zoning Ordinance.

§92.5.3 — Smoke and Visible Emissions

(a) No use shall emit smoke or visible emissions with an opacity exceeding 40 percent, as determined by EPA Reference Method 9 (40 CFR Part 60, Appendix A) or its designated successor method. This baseline threshold is a floor.

(b) During equipment start-up, cleaning of fireboxes, or a documented breakdown of emission control equipment, emissions not exceeding 60 percent opacity are permitted for a cumulative period not to exceed 6 minutes in any 60-minute period, provided that the operator takes prompt corrective action.

(c) All uses shall comply with the visible emissions standards established under 15A NCAC 02D .0521 (NC Division of Air Quality — Control of Visible Emissions), as amended, which are hereby incorporated by reference. Where state standards are more restrictive than subsection (a) above, the state standard shall control — this state floor cannot be relaxed by local ordinance regardless of the §92.5 baseline set above.

Reference: NC DEQ 15A NCAC 02D .0521; EPA Method 9 / 40 CFR Part 60 Appendix A. Note: 20% opacity is the commonly cited NC comparative threshold for industrial visible emissions; the 40% baseline above reflects a minimum local standard, subject always to the state's more restrictive floor where applicable.

§92.5.4 — Dust, Particulate Matter, and Fugitive Emissions

(a) No use shall discharge fugitive dust, fly ash, cinders, or other particulate matter in quantities that are plainly and substantially visible beyond the property line of the lot on which the use is located.

Occasional or de minimis visible dust that does not accumulate on adjacent property does not, by itself, constitute a violation of this baseline standard.

(b) Unpaved internal access roads, material storage areas, and stockpiles associated with uses generating substantial fugitive emissions shall be maintained using reasonable dust-control methods to limit migration onto adjacent properties or public rights-of-way. Acceptable methods include, but are not limited to: paving or gravel surfacing of access roads; application of approved dust suppressants; or water application at appropriate intervals.

(c) All uses shall comply with applicable NC DEQ particulate matter standards, including 15A NCAC 02D .0515 (particulates from combustion sources) and 15A NCAC 02D .0540 (control of fugitive dust emissions), as amended, both incorporated herein by reference. Where state standards are more restrictive, the state standard shall control — this state floor cannot be relaxed by the local baseline set above.

Reference: Iredell County zoning standards for asphalt plants and quarries; an APA PAS report on performance standards in industrial zoning (see Citation 12; exact report number subject to verification); NC DEQ 15A NCAC 02D .0515 and .0540. Note: the strict no-visible-discharge standard is loosened here to a substantial-visibility threshold to reflect a minimum baseline.

§92.5.5 — Odor

(a) No use shall emit odorous gases or other odor-causing substances in concentrations that are strongly and persistently detectable at the property line by a person of normal sensitivities. Brief or intermittent detection at low intensity does not, by itself, constitute a violation of this baseline standard.

(b) Any process that involves the creation or emission of odors shall be equipped with a primary odor-control system. A secondary safeguard system is not required as a baseline matter.

(c) An odor emission lasting no more than 15 continuous minutes in any one day, and no more than two days out of any calendar month, shall not by itself constitute a violation of this section.

Reference: Wake County, NC Unified Development Ordinance §17-11-4 (Odor), which permits an odor emission of no more than 15 minutes in any one day, nor more than two days out of the calendar month, without the emission being deemed continuous, frequent, or repetitive; Wake County's ordinance does not require a secondary safeguard system; an APA PAS report on performance standards in industrial zoning (see Citation 12).

§92.5.6 — Glare and Heat

(a) No use shall produce a direct glare source from any light source, floodlight, welding or cutting operation, furnace, or molten material that is directly visible beyond the property line of the lot on which the use is located. Incidental sky-reflected glow that does not present a direct glare source does not, by itself, constitute a violation of this baseline standard.

(b) All exterior lighting fixtures shall be directed downward and oriented inward toward the site. No exterior lighting shall be directed so as to shine directly into any abutting residential, agricultural, or commercial district.

(c) No use shall emit heat sufficient to raise the ambient air temperature at any adjacent property line by more than 1.8°F (1°C) above ambient measured at the same location and time.

Reference: Wake County, NC Unified Development Ordinance §17-11-5 (Glare) and §17-11-6 (Heat), which prohibit direct or reflected glare visible beyond the lot line and prohibit a continuous, frequent, or repetitive heat discharge that raises the general temperature by 1°C (1.8°F) or more at or beyond the lot line, used here as the county-wide minimum baseline.

§92.5.7 — Electromagnetic Interference

No use shall produce electromagnetic interference that adversely affects the operation of equipment on adjacent or nearby properties, or that fails to conform to applicable regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Uses that generate significant electromagnetic fields shall comply with all applicable FCC Part 15 and Part 18 rules governing unintentional and industrial radiators. Because this standard tracks a federal compliance floor rather than a locally set numeric threshold, it is not further reduced here.

Reference: Wake County, NC Unified Development Ordinance §17-11-14 (Electrical Radiation), which prohibits electrical radiation that adversely affects the operation of equipment other than that of the creator of the radiation; FCC Parts 15 and 18.

§92.5.8 — Compliance with State and Federal Standards

Nothing in this Section shall be construed to exempt any use from compliance with all applicable state and federal environmental, air quality, water quality, or public health standards, including but not limited to: rules of the NC Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality (15A NCAC 02D); NC Division of Water Resources standards; the federal Clean Air Act and EPA implementing regulations; and all applicable permit conditions. Where state or federal standards impose requirements more restrictive than those set forth in §92.5.1 through §92.5.7, the more restrictive standard shall control.

Note: This provision directly replaces the deleted catch-all prohibition in §92.2 ('dangerous or detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, or general character of this zoning district or of the community') as applied to both the M-2 and M-2-CZ Districts. Rather than an undefined and unenforceable general welfare standard, §92.5.8 defers to objective, enforceable state and federal regulatory authority — which already establishes the health and safety floor for industrial uses in North Carolina, and which cannot be lowered by the minimum-baseline approach taken in §92.5.1 through §92.5.7. For M-2-CZ uses, this state/federal floor applies in addition to — not in place of — whatever further site-specific conditions the Board imposes in the individual conditional zoning approval.

III. CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY — PROPOSED §92.5 STANDARDS

The following table summarizes all proposed performance standards, the measurable threshold for each, the measurement instrument or method, and the primary reference authority. These standards apply to both the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and the M-2-CZ Conditional Zoning District as a minimum baseline; the Planning Board may impose additional, stricter conditions for an individual M-2-CZ use.

Section	Standard	Measurable Threshold (Minimum Baseline)	Measurement Method	Authority/Reference
§92.5.1	Noise	75 dB flat threshold, day and night, regardless of adjacent district	Sound level meter; exceedance not to surpass 10% of measurement period	Harnett County, NC Code of Ordinances §92.29; Fayetteville, NC noise ordinance
§92.5.2	Vibration	1.0 in/sec PPV steady-state; 2.0 in/sec PPV impact	Seismograph, 3-axis particle velocity	Johnston County, NC UDC §14-257(c) & (h)(4)(b)(3); Davidson County, NC Zoning Ordinance
§92.5.3	Smoke / Visible Emissions	40% opacity (60% during startup, max 6 min/hr); state floor still controls if stricter	EPA Method 9 / 40 CFR Part 60 App. A	NC DEQ 15A NCAC 02D .0521
§92.5.4	Dust / Particulate / Fugitive Emissions	No plainly and substantially visible discharge beyond property line; reasonable dust control for unpaved areas	Visual observation; NC DEQ permit compliance	NC DEQ 15A NCAC 02D .0515 & .0540
§92.5.5	Odor	Not strongly/persistently detectable at property line; primary control system required; 15-min/day (max 2 days/month) allowance	Sensory detection by person of normal sensitivities	Wake County, NC UDO §17-11-4; APA PAS (see Citation 12)
§92.5.6	Glare and Heat	No direct glare source beyond property line; no heat exceeding +1.8°F (1°C) above ambient at adjacent line	Visual observation; thermometer	Wake County, NC UDO §17-11-5 & §17-11-6
§92.5.7	EMI	No interference with adjacent equipment; full FCC compliance (federal floor, not reduced)	FCC Parts 15 and 18	Wake County, NC UDO §17-11-14; FCC regulations

Section	Standard	Measurable Threshold (Minimum Baseline)	Measurement Method	Authority/Reference
§92.5.8	State/Federal Compliance	Full compliance with NC DEQ, EPA, and all applicable state and federal standards (legal floor, not reduced)	Agency permits and inspection records	NC DEQ 15A NCAC 02D; Clean Air Act; replaces deleted §92.2 catch-all

STAFF RECOMMEN- DATION

Planning Board Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners: Adopt Amendment P — delete the aspirational emission language from §92 and the catch-all prohibition from §92.2 — concurrently with adoption of the proposed §92.5 Operational Performance Standards above, applicable as a minimum baseline to both the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and the M-2-CZ Conditional Zoning District. Consistent with the ordinance principle that conditions applicable to the M-2 District also apply to the M-2-CZ District, §92.5 sets a floor below which no use may fall, while preserving the Board's authority under N.C. Gen. Stat. §160D-703 to impose additional, stricter, site-specific conditions on individual M-2-CZ uses that are sufficiently noxious or intense to warrant conditional zoning. The Planning Board finds that §92.5 replaces subjective and unenforceable language with objective, measurable standards consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 160D and aligned with practice in Wake, Harnett, Johnston, and other surrounding North Carolina jurisdictions.

IV. CITATIONS AND LEGAL AUTHORITIES

North Carolina General Statutes and Administrative Code

1. N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 160D — Local Government Land Use and Development Regulation. Primary enabling statute for county zoning authority. §160D-702 (Grant of power — authorizes counties to adopt zoning regulations); §160D-703 (Zoning districts, including conditional districts under subsection (b), which limits conditions to those that address conformance of the development with local ordinances and plans or the reasonably foreseeable impacts of the proposed development); §160D-109(b) (conflict of interest; 'readily identifiable' standard).

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByChapter/Chapter_160D.html

2. 15A NCAC 02D .0521 — NC Division of Air Quality: Control of Visible Emissions. Establishes visible-emissions opacity limits for industrial sources in North Carolina: 40% opacity (6-minute average) for sources manufactured before July 1, 1971, and 20% opacity (6-minute average) for sources manufactured on or after that date, each with allowances for periodic short-duration exceedances. Readopted effective November 1, 2020.

<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/air-quality/air-quality-rules/air-quality-rules-regulations>

3. 15A NCAC 02D .0515 — NC DEQ: Particulates from Combustion Sources. Sets emission limits for particulate matter from combustion processes at industrial facilities.

<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/air-quality/air-quality-rules/air-quality-rules-regulations>

4. 15A NCAC 02D .0540 — NC DEQ: Control of Fugitive Dust Emissions. Regulates fugitive particulate matter from industrial operations, storage areas, and unpaved surfaces.

<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/air-quality/air-quality-rules/air-quality-rules-regulations>

Federal Standards

5. EPA Method 9 — Visual Determination of the Opacity of Emissions from Stationary Sources. 40 CFR Part 60, Appendix A. Standard method for determining visible emission opacity used in conjunction with state visible emissions rules. <https://www.epa.gov/emc/method-9-visual-determination-opacity-emissions-stationary-sources>

6. FCC Part 15 — Radio Frequency Devices (Unintentional Radiators). FCC Part 18 — Industrial, Scientific, and Medical Equipment. Applicable to electromagnetic interference control for industrial uses.

<https://www.fcc.gov/oet/ea/rfdevice>

7. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) S1.4 — Specification for Sound Level Meters. Standard referenced for noise measurement instrumentation requirements. <https://www.ansi.org>

Case Law

8. *Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock*, 286 N.C. App. 570, 882 S.E.2d 91, 96-97 (2022) (COA21-388; 2022-NCCOA-782, filed Dec. 6, 2022). A nonconforming-use/short-term-rental case cited here solely for its general statement that ambiguous zoning ordinance language is construed in favor of the free use of property. Basis for replacing aspirational 'minimize' language with objective thresholds — not cited for any industrial-performance-standard holding.

9. *Chrismon v. Guilford County*, 322 N.C. 611, 370 S.E.2d 579 (1988). Upheld conditional use (conditional zoning) rezoning against spot-zoning and contract-zoning challenges, holding such zoning valid where the local authority's action is reasonable, neither arbitrary nor unduly discriminatory, and in the public interest. Cited here for the general principle that reasoned, evidence-based zoning standards — not open-ended, undefined catch-alls such as 'dangerous or detrimental' — support valid, defensible zoning and conditional zoning decisions.

Comparative County Ordinances and Planning References

10. Wake County, North Carolina — Unified Development Ordinance, Article 17 (General Site Design and Performance Standards), §17-11 (Operational Performance Standards). Comparative reference for odor (§17-11-4), glare and heat (§17-11-5 & §17-11-6), and electrical radiation/EMI (§17-11-14) standards.

<https://mcclibraryfunctions.azurewebsites.us/api/ordinanceDownload/15764/1126473/pdf>

10a. Harnett County, North Carolina — Code of Ordinances, §92.29 (Permissible Noise Level Limits). Comparative reference for the §92.5.1 noise standard: a flat 75 dB maximum permitted sound level for manufacturing, industrial, or agricultural uses at all times (day and night).

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/harnettcounty/latest/harnettcounty_nc/0-0-0-2758; consistent with the City of Fayetteville, North Carolina noise ordinance, which sets the same flat 75 dB limit for manufacturing, industrial, or agricultural uses at all times. <https://www.nonoise.org/regulation/ordinance/Fayetteville,%20North%20Carolina.pdf>

10b. Johnston County, North Carolina — Unified Development Code, §14-257(c) and §14-257(h)(4)(b)(3) (Extraction/Mining and Fill Site Performance Standards). Comparative reference for the §92.5.2 vibration standard: a maximum peak particle velocity of 1.0 inches per second steady-state and 2.0 inches per second impact, measured at the site boundary. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/johnstoncounty/latest/johnstoncounty_nc/0-0-0-2841; consistent with the same 1.0/2.0 inches-per-second standard applied to extraction site vibration under the Davidson County, North Carolina Zoning Ordinance.

<https://www.co.davidson.nc.us/DocumentCenter/View/4386/Davidson-County-Zoning-Ordinance-PDF>

11. Iredell County, NC — Zoning Ordinance: Standards for Asphalt Plants, Rock Quarries, and Mining Operations. Reference for setback and dust-control standards applicable to high-impact industrial uses.

<https://www.iredellcountync.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/252?fileID=6014>

12. American Planning Association (APA) — Planning Advisory Service (PAS) report on performance standards in industrial zoning. Foundational planning-literature reference for the concept and methodology of replacing aspirational industrial zoning language with objective, measurable standards. Exact report number should be verified directly with APA/PAS prior to public distribution. <https://www.planning.org/pas/reports/>

13. Stokes County Zoning Ordinance (as amended through June 1, 2021) — Article VIII, §92 (M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District; Purpose and Conditional Zoning). Provisions proposed for amendment. Maintained by the Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department. <https://www.co.stokes.nc.us/planning>

STOKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE STOKES COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE

Amendments A, D, N, P, and R — Conditional Zoning Timeline, Plan Consistency Procedure, Mining & Quarrying, M-2 Performance Standards, and Data Center Use Classification

ORDINANCE NO.

DATE ADOPTED

July 13, 2026

RECITALS

WHEREAS, [AUTHORITY] — The Stokes County Board of Commissioners (“Board”) is the governing board of Stokes County, North Carolina, and is authorized under N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 160D to adopt, amend, and repeal zoning ordinances and development regulations for the unincorporated areas of Stokes County; and

WHEREAS, [ZONING ORDINANCE] — Stokes County has adopted the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance (“Ordinance”), which governs land use and development in the unincorporated areas of Stokes County; and

WHEREAS, [INITIATION OF AMENDMENTS] — The Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department prepared proposed Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance, addressing the conditional zoning review timeline (§132.3), the plan consistency finding procedure (§132.5), mining and quarrying screening standards (§92.2, Condition 5), M-2 district performance standards (§92), and the definition and use classification of “data center” facilities, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-601; and

WHEREAS, [ORIGINAL REFERRAL — JUNE 8, 2026] — The original set of nineteen proposed text amendments (Amendments A through S), of which Amendments A, D, N, P, and R are a part, was first referred to the Stokes County Planning Board for review and recommendation on June 8, 2026, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(b) and Stokes County Zoning Ordinance §122; and

WHEREAS, [PLANNING BOARD REFERRAL] — Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(b), proposed Amendments A, D, N, P, and R were referred to the Stokes County Planning Board for review and recommendation prior to action by the Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, [PLANNING BOARD ACTION — JULY 9, 2026] — The Stokes County Planning Board convened a duly noticed meeting on July 9, 2026, with Chairman Ronnie Tilley and members Tommy White, Mark Sizemore, Joe Turpin, Jeff Whitaker, Ronnie Morris, and Shannon Stanley present (Patrick Flinchum absent). Following consideration, the Planning Board voted 4–3 to recommend approval of Amendment A; voted 5–2 to recommend denial of Amendment D, with an advisory inconsistency finding; and took no separate action on Amendments N, P, and R, instead voting 6–1 (Turpin opposed) to recommend that the Board of Commissioners adopt a countywide temporary six-month moratorium on data center development and other uses subject to heavy-industrial or heavy-manufacturing performance standards, in lieu of individual action on those three amendments; and

WHEREAS, [ADVISORY EFFECT OF PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION] — Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(d), the Planning Board’s plan-consistency comment and recommendation on any proposed amendment is

advisory only and does not bind the Board of Commissioners, which retains full authority to adopt, reject, or modify any proposed amendment regardless of the Planning Board's recommendation; and

WHEREAS, [PUBLISHED NOTICE — BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HEARING] — Notice of this public hearing before the Board of Commissioners was published in a newspaper of general circulation in Stokes County, with a first run on July 2, 2026 and a second run on July 9, 2026, satisfying the requirement of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-601(a) and Stokes County Zoning Ordinance §120; and

WHEREAS, [PUBLIC HEARING] — The Board of Commissioners held a duly noticed public hearing on July 13, 2026, at which all parties in interest and citizens were afforded an opportunity to be heard regarding proposed Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R; and

WHEREAS, [WRITTEN CITIZEN COMMENTS] — Any written statements submitted by residents or property owners within the zoning jurisdiction to the Clerk to the Board at least two business days prior to this vote have been delivered to and considered by the Board, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-603; and

WHEREAS, [LEGISLATIVE ACTION] — Text amendments to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance are legislative decisions. The Board acts in its legislative capacity and applies a broad public interest standard. Board members are not required to recuse under the quasi-judicial conflict-of-interest test; however, the Board remains subject to the financial conflict-of-interest standard under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-109(a) — direct, substantial, and readily identifiable financial impact — for legislative decisions; and

WHEREAS, [PLAN CONSISTENCY — N.C. GEN. STAT. § 160D-605(a)] — The Board of Commissioners has considered the Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2035), the Planning Board's recommendation of July 9, 2026 (including its advisory inconsistency finding as to Amendment D), and the staff analysis presented in the accompanying staff report, and finds and determines that Amendments A, D, N, P, and R are each CONSISTENT with the Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, for the specific reasons set out in the Plan Consistency Statement below. The Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is advisory in nature and has no independent regulatory effect (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-501); a finding of inconsistency would not preclude adoption of any amendment; and

WHEREAS, [REASONABLENESS — N.C. GEN. STAT. § 160D-605(b) (VOLUNTARY SUPPLEMENTAL FINDING)] — A reasonableness statement pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b) is required only for zoning map amendments and is not statutorily required for the text amendments considered at this hearing; the Board nonetheless elects to adopt one voluntarily, as a supplemental finding, for the specific reasons set out in the Reasonableness Statement below; and

WHEREAS, [PLANNING BOARD'S ALTERNATIVE MORATORIUM RECOMMENDATION] — The Board has considered the Planning Board's alternative recommendation that a countywide temporary six-month moratorium be adopted in lieu of individual action on Amendments N, P, and R. The Board finds that such a moratorium is not properly before it for adoption at this hearing, because it was not the subject of the notice published for this hearing, and that any such moratorium must separately satisfy N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107, including its own duly noticed public hearing and findings of necessity, before it may be adopted; and

WHEREAS, [ORDINANCE ADOPTION — N.C. GEN. STAT. § 160D-601(c)] — Chapter 160D requires that all development regulations, including amendments thereto, be adopted by ordinance. The Board adopts these amendments by this Ordinance consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-601(c) and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 153A-45; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners, in regular session duly assembled on July 13, 2026, as follows:

ENACTING PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Amendment A — §132.3 Planning Board Hearing Window

Article XIII, §132.3 of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended to reduce the time within which the Planning Board must hold its hearing and report its recommendation on a conditional zoning application, following referral, from sixty (60) days to thirty (30) days, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(b). This amendment is adopted consistent with the Planning Board's recommendation of approval (4–3) on July 9, 2026.

The Planning Department shall schedule a public hearing on the application for a conditional district rezoning to be held within ~~sixty (60)~~thirty (30) days after the application is filed. Public notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the community at least once each week for two (2) successive weeks prior to the public hearing. The Planning Department shall also post notice on the property involved for a period of one (1) week prior to the hearing and adjoining property owners shall be notified by registered mail.

SECTION 2. Amendment D — §132.5 Plan Consistency Finding Procedure

Article XIII, §132.5 of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended to replace the existing single consistency finding — which currently operates as a mandatory precondition to approval of a conditional zoning application — with a two-step framework consisting of (1) the Planning Board's advisory comment on plan consistency pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(d), and (2) the Board of Commissioners' own statement of plan consistency and, where applicable, reasonableness, which the Board may combine pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(c). This amendment is adopted notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of denial (5–2) on July 9, 2026, for the reasons set out in the accompanying staff report and in the Plan Consistency Statement below.

Amend §132.5 as follows: **§ 160D-605. Governing board statement.**

Once the Public Hearing is closed by the Board of Commissioners, the Board of Commissioners shall review the application. The Board of Commissioners shall not consider the application until after the Planning Board makes a recommendation, or fails to make a recommendation within the time allowed. A member of the Board of Commissioners shall not vote on any application where the outcome of the matter being considered is reasonably likely to have a direct, substantial, identifiable financial impact on the member. Prior to approving or denying any application for conditional rezoning, **the Board shall comply with NCGS 160D-605 (a) Plan Consistency. - When adopting or rejecting any zoning text or map amendment, the governing board shall approve a brief statement describing whether its action is consistent or inconsistent with an adopted comprehensive or land-use plan. The requirement for a plan consistency statement may also be met by a clear indication in the minutes of the governing board that at the time of action on the amendment the governing board was aware of and considered the planning board's recommendations and any relevant portions of an adopted comprehensive or land-use plan. If a zoning map amendment is adopted and the action was deemed inconsistent with the adopted plan, the zoning amendment has the effect of also amending any future land-use map in the approved plan, and no additional request or application for a plan amendment is required. A plan amendment and a zoning amendment may be considered concurrently. The**

plan consistency statement is not subject to judicial review. If a zoning map amendment qualifies as a "large-scale rezoning" under G.S. 160D-602(b), the governing board statement describing plan consistency may address the overall rezoning and describe how the analysis and policies in the relevant adopted plans were considered in the action taken.

(b) Additional Reasonableness Statement for Rezoning. - When adopting or rejecting any petition for a zoning map amendment, a statement analyzing the reasonableness of the proposed rezoning shall be approved by the governing board. This statement of reasonableness may consider, among other factors, (i) the size, physical conditions, and other attributes of the area proposed to be rezoned, (ii) the benefits and detriments to the landowners, the neighbors, and the surrounding community, (iii) the relationship between the current actual and permissible development on the tract and adjoining areas and the development that would be permissible under the proposed amendment; (iv) why the action taken is in the public interest; and (v) any changed conditions warranting the amendment. If a zoning map amendment qualifies as a "large-scale rezoning" under G.S. 160D-602(b), the governing board statement on reasonableness may address the overall rezoning.

(c) Single Statement Permissible. - The statement of reasonableness and the plan consistency statement required by this section may be approved as a single statement.

~~..the Board of Commissioners shall adopt a statement that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the county's comprehensive plan as set forth in the zoning ordinance, and that the proposed rezoning is reasonable and in the public interest~~

SECTION 3. Amendment N — §92.2, Condition 5 Mining & Quarrying Screening Standard

Article VIII, §92.2, Condition 5 of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended to replace the existing standardless requirement that mining and quarrying operations be screened "as deemed necessary" with objective, measurable standards addressing setbacks, hours of operation, blasting notification, dust and noise control, a reclamation plan, and access-road standards. This amendment is adopted notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action, for the reasons set out in the accompanying staff report, and does not preclude the Board from separately pursuing a properly noticed moratorium ordinance under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107.

5) Replace with standards set forth in Mining_Quarrying_PB_Report_July9_2026 (2) ~~The use and all its buildings, pits, and processing equipment shall be provided with an opaque screen to shield the view from the public street and from all abutting properties as deemed necessary by the Boards.~~

Section 92.2, Condition 5 is replaced in full with the following Mining and Quarrying Special Use Conditions, along with the following definitions of "Mining and Quarrying" and "Area of Operations" (Article IV, §41), consistent with the Stokes County Planning Board's July 9, 2026 staff report:

Definitions.

"Mining and Quarrying" includes the breaking of the surface soil in order to facilitate or accomplish the extraction or removal of minerals, ores, or other solid matter; any activity or process constituting all or part of a process for the extraction or removal of minerals, ores, sand, soils, and other solid matter from their original location; and the preparation, washing, cleaning, or other treatment of minerals, ores, or other solid matter so as to make them suitable for commercial, industrial, or construction use. This definition does not include: excavation or grading conducted solely in aid of on-site farming or on-site construction; removal of overburden to the extent necessary to determine the location, quantity, or quality of any natural deposit (provided no ores are sold and affected land does not exceed one acre); or excavation where: (a) material is used without further processing for a single off-site construction project with an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan; (b) affected land does not exceed five acres; (c) the work is completed within one year; and (d) no blasting, stream removal, off-site waste disposal, or off-site groundwater surface disposal is involved. Consistent with G.S. § 74-49(7) (NC Mining Act).

“Area of Operations” means the land area on a tract from which minerals, ores, sand, soils, or other solid matter are or will be directly or indirectly extracted by any mining or quarrying activity, together with any land within the same tract on which processing, stockpiling, equipment storage, access roads serving extraction, dewatering facilities, or other activities directly incidental to extraction are conducted. The area of operations shall be delineated on the required site plan submitted with any permit application and shall represent the maximum extent of active disturbance at any point during the life of the operation. Land within the required operations setback area (Condition 3) is not part of the area of operations and shall remain undisturbed except as needed for perimeter fencing, vegetative screening, and ingress/egress access roads.

Special Use Conditions — Mining and Quarrying Operations.

1. Minimum Lot Size: 100 acres minimum. Ensures the site is large enough to accommodate all required setbacks and buffers.
2. Spacing from Protected Facilities: 1,500 feet from schools, dwellings, churches, and medical facilities. Protects sensitive uses from noise, vibration, dust, and traffic impacts.
3. Operations Setback from Property Line: 500 feet from the property line; no operations within the setback. Keeps all active disturbance well within the interior of the site.
4. Stream Setback: 150 feet from any perennial or intermittent stream. Protects Dan and Yadkin watershed streams from sedimentation and contamination.
5. Landscaping and Vegetative Screening: 200 feet minimum; 3 staggered rows of native plantings. Provides a continuous visual and noise barrier along all property lines.
6. Perimeter Fencing and Gate: 6-foot minimum fence with a self-locking gate. Prevents unauthorized access to active excavation areas.
7. Noise Limits and Blasting Hours: 70 dB(A) day / 65 dB(A) night; blasting limited to 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., weekdays only. Limits noise impacts on neighboring properties and restricts blasting to business hours.
8. Exterior Lighting — No Light Trespass: No light trespass onto neighboring parcels. Protects rural dark-sky character and residential neighbors.
9. Traffic Impact and Road Access: Direct access from a state-maintained road; a traffic impact analysis (TIA) is required if projected trips exceed capacity. Protects the rural road network from heavy truck overload.
10. Prohibited Operations Areas: No operations within SFHA floodplains, USACE wetlands, or SGCN habitat. Ensures compliance with state/federal environmental protections.
11. Groundwater and Well Study: Required if triggered by a state or federal permit. Protects private well-dependent residents from groundwater impacts.
12. Decommissioning and Reclamation Plan: Required at permit application; completion within 5 years of cessation. Ensures the site is restored and does not become an abandoned hazard.
13. State and Federal Permit Compliance: Proof of all NC DEQ, USACE, NCDOT, and other required permits before issuance of the operations permit. Creates sequenced review — the county permit cannot precede required state/federal permits.

These conditions apply to all mining and quarrying operations requiring a special use permit in Stokes County, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 160D-703 & 160D-705(c).

SECTION 4. Amendment P — §92 M-2 District Performance Standards

Article VIII, §92 of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended to delete the existing unenforceable, aspirational standard requiring that impacts be “minimized” and the subjective catch-all standard permitting denial of uses “likely to be dangerous or detrimental,” and to replace both with objective, measurable performance standards addressing noise, emissions, setbacks, and screening. This amendment is adopted notwithstanding the Planning

Board's recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action, for the reasons set out in the accompanying staff report, and does not preclude the Board from separately pursuing a properly noticed moratorium ordinance under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107.

Section 92 Heavy Manufacturing District and Heavy Manufacturing Conditional Zoning District

Replace with standards set forth in Stokes_County_M2_Performance_Standards_Final (4) ~~However, it is expected that industries permitted here by right, as well as those permitted conditionally, will minimize their emission of smoke, dust, fumes, glare, noise and vibrations.~~

§92.5 — Operational Performance Standards. §92 of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance is amended by adding the following §92.5, applicable to the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and the M-2-CZ Conditional Zoning District as a minimum baseline, consistent with the Stokes County Planning Board's July 9, 2026 presentation:

All uses in the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District and M-2-CZ Heavy Manufacturing Conditional Zoning District shall comply with the following operational performance standards. Compliance shall be measured at the boundary of the zoning lot on which the use is located, or at any point on or beyond a property line abutting a non-industrial district, as specified below for each standard. The thresholds in §92.5.1 through §92.5.8 below are set as a minimum baseline applicable to all M-2 and M-2-CZ uses; the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners retain authority under N.C. Gen. Stat. §160D-703 to impose additional, stricter, site-specific conditions on individual M-2-CZ uses.

§92.5.1 — Noise.

(a) No use shall produce a continuous sound level exceeding 75 dB(A), measured at any point on or beyond the boundary of the zoning lot on which the use is located, applicable at all times regardless of the zoning classification of the adjacent property. (b) No use shall create a sound level exceeding this threshold for more than 10% of any measurement period, which shall not be less than ten minutes; the maximum intermittent sound level shall not exceed the permissible sound level above by more than 15 dB(A). (c) These standards do not apply to temporary construction activity, emergency response equipment, or the operation of motor vehicles and transportation facilities on public rights-of-way.

§92.5.2 — Vibration.

(a) No use shall produce ground-transmitted vibration exceeding a maximum peak particle velocity (PPV) of 1.0 inches per second, steady-state, measured at the boundary of the zoning lot on which the use is located. Impact vibrations — discrete impulses not exceeding 60 per minute — are limited to 2.0 inches per second PPV. (b) The maximum particle velocity shall be the product of two times the frequency in cycles per second times the sum of three mutually perpendicular displacement components recorded simultaneously. Where more than one vibration standard could apply, the more stringent standard shall govern. (c) These standards shall not apply to vibration resulting from the operation of on-road vehicles, temporary construction activity and equipment, or roadway maintenance and repair equipment.

§92.5.3 — Smoke and Visible Emissions.

(a) No use shall emit smoke or visible emissions with an opacity exceeding 40 percent, as determined by EPA Reference Method 9 (40 CFR Part 60, Appendix A) or its designated successor method. (b) During equipment start-up, cleaning of fireboxes, or a documented breakdown of emission control equipment, emissions not exceeding 60 percent opacity are permitted for a cumulative period not to exceed 6 minutes in any 60-minute period, provided the operator takes prompt corrective action. (c) All uses shall comply with the visible emissions standards established under 15A NCAC 02D .0521, as amended, which are hereby incorporated by reference. Where state standards are more restrictive, the state standard shall control.

§92.5.4 — Dust, Particulate Matter, and Fugitive Emissions.

(a) No use shall discharge fugitive dust, fly ash, cinders, or other particulate matter in quantities that are plainly and substantially visible beyond the property line of the lot on which the use is located. Occasional or de minimis visible dust that does not accumulate on adjacent property does not, by itself, constitute a violation. (b) Unpaved internal access roads, material storage areas, and stockpiles associated with uses generating substantial fugitive emissions

shall be maintained using reasonable dust-control methods, including paving or gravel surfacing, approved dust suppressants, or water application at appropriate intervals. (c) All uses shall comply with applicable NC DEQ particulate matter standards, including 15A NCAC 02D .0515 and 15A NCAC 02D .0540, as amended, both incorporated herein by reference. Where state standards are more restrictive, the state standard shall control.

§92.5.5 — Odor.

(a) No use shall emit odorous gases or other odor-causing substances in concentrations that are strongly and persistently detectable at the property line by a person of normal sensitivities. Brief or intermittent detection at low intensity does not, by itself, constitute a violation. (b) Any process that involves the creation or emission of odors shall be equipped with a primary odor-control system. (c) An odor emission lasting no more than 15 continuous minutes in any one day, and no more than two days out of any calendar month, shall not by itself constitute a violation of this section.

§92.5.6 — Glare and Heat.

(a) No use shall produce a direct glare source from any light source, floodlight, welding or cutting operation, furnace, or molten material that is directly visible beyond the property line of the lot on which the use is located. Incidental sky-reflected glow does not, by itself, constitute a violation. (b) All exterior lighting fixtures shall be directed downward and oriented inward toward the site; no exterior lighting shall be directed so as to shine directly into any abutting residential, agricultural, or commercial district. (c) No use shall emit heat sufficient to raise the ambient air temperature at any adjacent property line by more than 1.8°F (1°C) above ambient measured at the same location and time.

§92.5.7 — Electromagnetic Interference.

No use shall produce electromagnetic interference that adversely affects the operation of equipment on adjacent or nearby properties, or that fails to conform to applicable regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Uses that generate significant electromagnetic fields shall comply with all applicable FCC Part 15 and Part 18 rules governing unintentional and industrial radiators.

§92.5.8 — Compliance with State and Federal Standards.

Nothing in this Section shall be construed to exempt any use from compliance with all applicable state and federal environmental, air quality, water quality, or public health standards, including but not limited to rules of the NC Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality (15A NCAC 02D); NC Division of Water Resources standards; the federal Clean Air Act and EPA implementing regulations; and all applicable permit conditions. Where state or federal standards impose requirements more restrictive than those set forth in §92.5.1 through §92.5.7, the more restrictive standard shall control. This provision directly replaces the deleted catch-all prohibition in §92.2 as applied to both the M-2 and M-2-CZ Districts.

~~Manufacturing uses not otherwise named herein, provided no use shall be permitted in this district which is likely to be dangerous or detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, or general character of this zoning district or of the community.~~

SECTION 5. Amendment R — Definitions; §92.2 Data Center Definition and Use Classification

Article IV, §41 of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended by adding the following definition: “DATA CENTER — A facility, campus of facilities, or array of interconnected facilities used for the primary purpose of storing, retrieving, managing, and/or processing digital data, including associated infrastructure such as servers, data storage equipment, network equipment, power supply systems, backup generators, cooling systems, and related accessory structures. A data center does not include electronic equipment that is incidental to and used in support of a business whose primary business activity is other than the storing, retrieving, managing, and processing of digital data (e.g., a retail store, office building, or school).” Article VIII, §92.2 is further amended by adding “Data Center” to the M-2 CZ

(conditional zoning) use table as a conditional use; the use is not added to the M-2 by-right use table in §92.1. This amendment is adopted notwithstanding the Planning Board’s recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action, for the reasons set out in the accompanying staff report, and does not preclude the Board from separately pursuing a properly noticed moratorium ordinance under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107.

DATA CENTER — A facility, campus of facilities, or array of interconnected facilities used for the primary purpose of storing, retrieving, managing, and/or processing digital data, including associated infrastructure such as servers, data storage equipment, network equipment, power supply systems, backup generators, cooling systems, and related accessory structures. A data center does not include electronic equipment that is incidental to and used in support of a business whose primary business activity is other than the storing, retrieving, managing, and processing of digital data (e.g., a retail store, office building, or school).

Article VIII, §92.2 is further amended by adding “Data Center” to the M-2 CZ (conditional zoning) use table as a conditional use.

SECTION 15. Statement of Plan Consistency and Reasonableness — N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a)–(c)

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a)–(c), the Board of Commissioners adopts the following combined statement of plan consistency and reasonableness with respect to Amendments A, D, N, P, and R:

Amendment	Finding	Basis
Amendment A (§132.3)	CONSISTENT	A procedural, administrative change to the conditional-zoning hearing timeline that does not alter any land use classification, density, or Comprehensive Plan policy, and advances the Plan’s goal of efficient, predictable development review.
Amendment D (§132.5)	CONSISTENT	The Board respectfully disagrees with the Planning Board’s advisory inconsistency finding. Amendment D changes only the procedural consequence of a plan-inconsistency finding and does not repeal, weaken, or supersede any Comprehensive Plan goal or policy; the Plan’s substantive protections for rural character, agricultural land, and infrastructure alignment remain fully applicable and remain factors the Board must consider and disclose.
Amendment N (§92.2, Cond. 5)	CONSISTENT	Replacing a standardless screening condition with objective, measurable standards is consistent with the Plan’s goals of protecting residential and agricultural areas from incompatible industrial uses and preserving rural character.
Amendment P (§92)	CONSISTENT	Replacing aspirational and subjective catch-all language with objective performance standards is consistent with the Plan’s goals of protecting public health, safety, and surrounding district character from incompatible heavy-industrial impacts.
Amendment R (Definitions; §92)	CONSISTENT	Establishing a data center definition and classifying the use exclusively as a conditional use in the M-2 CZ district is consistent with the Plan’s goals of directing heavy-industrial-scale uses to appropriately conditioned locations while preserving the Board’s case-by-case discretion.

Reasonableness (voluntary supplemental finding). Although N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b) requires a reasonableness statement only for zoning map amendments, the Board voluntarily finds that adoption of Amendments A, D, N, P, and R is reasonable and in the public interest because: (i) the affected areas are limited to the County’s existing M-2 and M-2 CZ heavy-industrial districts and the conditional-zoning process generally; (ii) landowners, neighbors, and the surrounding community benefit from clear, objective, and enforceable standards that replace vague or nonexistent ones, with no identified detriment; (iii) the amendments do not expand the geographic footprint of any district or add any new by-right use; (iv) each amendment increases the clarity, enforceability, and legal defensibility of the Ordinance and serves the public interest in sound, individualized review of future development; and (v) changed conditions — including the growth of data center development interest, the absence of any current data center definition, and *Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock*, 286 N.C. App. 570 (2022) — warrant these amendments at this time.

SECTION 16. Codification

The Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department is directed to codify Amendments A, D, N, P, and R into the official text of the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance and to make conforming cross-reference updates as necessary.

SECTION 17. Severability

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance, each of which shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 18. Repeal of Conflicting Provisions

All ordinances, resolutions, and portions thereof in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 19. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTION AND ATTESTATION

Adopted this ____ day of July, 2026, upon motion by Commissioner _____, seconded by Commissioner _____, by the following vote:

Ayes: _____

Nays: _____

Abstentions: _____

Chairman, Stokes County Board of Commissioners

Date: _____

Clerk to the Board

Date: _____

FILING NOTICE

This Ordinance shall be filed in the office of the Clerk to the Board and shall be maintained as part of the permanent records of Stokes County, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-601(c).

Governing Authority

- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-109(a), (b) — Conflict-of-interest standards for governing board and appointed board members
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-501 — Comprehensive plans are advisory and have no independent regulatory effect
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-601(a), (c), (e) — Legislative hearing, notice, and adoption-by-ordinance requirements
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-603 — Written citizen comment procedures
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(b), (d) — Planning board referral; advisory, non-binding plan-consistency comment
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a)–(c) — Required consistency statement; voluntary reasonableness statement; combined statements
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107 — Temporary development moratoria: required noticed hearing and necessity findings
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-701, § 160D-702 — Zoning in accordance with a comprehensive plan; general grant of zoning authority
- N.C. Gen. Stat. § 153A-45 — Ordinance adoption procedure for counties
- *Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock*, 286 N.C. App. 570 (2022) — Standardless conditions construed against enforceability
- *Chrismon v. Guilford County*, 322 N.C. 611 (1988) — Conditional (special) use zoning is valid where objective standards guide discretion

Motion to Adopt

Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance

For use at the July 13, 2026 Board of Commissioners public hearing

Meeting Body: Stokes County Board of Commissioners

Meeting Date: July 13, 2026

Action Type: Adoption of Text Amendments (Zoning Ordinance)

Amendments: A (§132.3), D (§132.5), N (§92.2, Cond. 5), P (§92), R (Definitions; §92.2)

Staff Recommendation: ADOPT ALL FIVE AMENDMENTS — A, D, N, P, and R

Authority: N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 160D-601, 160D-604, 160D-605

WHEREAS CLAUSES

WHEREAS, the Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department prepared proposed Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance, and the Stokes County Planning Board reviewed each amendment at its July 9, 2026 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board voted 4–3 to recommend approval of Amendment A, voted 5–2 to recommend denial of Amendment D with an advisory inconsistency finding, and took no separate action on Amendments N, P, and R, instead recommending (6–1, Turpin opposed) a countywide temporary moratorium in lieu of individual action on those three amendments; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board's recommendation on any amendment, including its advisory consistency finding, is not binding on the Board of Commissioners pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(d), which retains full authority to adopt, reject, or modify each amendment on its own independent judgment; and

WHEREAS, the Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department's staff report, dated July 10, 2026, recommends that the Board adopt all five amendments — A, D, N, P, and R — for the reasons set out in that report, including that current ordinance language in each affected section is standardless, subjective, aspirational, or otherwise creates legal exposure under *Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock*, 286 N.C. App. 570 (2022); and

WHEREAS, notice of this public hearing was published in a newspaper of general circulation in Stokes County, with a first run on July 2, 2026 and a second run on July 9, 2026, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. §

160D-601(a); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners held a duly noticed public hearing on July 13, 2026, at which all parties in interest and citizens were afforded an opportunity to be heard on Amendments A, D, N, P, and R; and

PLAN CONSISTENCY STATEMENT

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a), the Board has considered the Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2035), the Planning Board's July 9, 2026 recommendation (including its advisory inconsistency finding as to Amendment D), and the staff report, and finds that Amendments A, D, N, P, and R are each CONSISTENT with the Comprehensive Plan. As to Amendment D specifically, the Board respectfully disagrees with the Planning Board's advisory inconsistency finding: Amendment D changes only the procedural consequence of a plan-inconsistency finding and does not repeal, weaken, or supersede any Comprehensive Plan goal or policy.

REASONABLENESS STATEMENT

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b), and in the exercise of the Board's discretion to adopt this statement for text amendments though not statutorily required to do so, the Board finds that adoption of Amendments A, D, N, P, and R is reasonable and in the public interest, considering the size and character of the affected M-2 and M-2 CZ districts, the benefits to landowners, neighbors, and the surrounding community from clear and enforceable standards, the absence of any expansion of permitted development, the public interest in a legally defensible ordinance, and the changed conditions — including growing data center development interest and the Frazier decision — that warrant these amendments at this time.

Note: A reasonableness statement is not statutorily required for text amendments under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b), which applies by its terms to zoning map amendments. The Board adopts this statement voluntarily to create a more complete record.

MOTION LANGUAGE

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt the statement of plan consistency required by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a) and the statement of reasonableness set out above, applicable to proposed Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R, as presented or as amended by the Board."

"I further move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment A, revising Zoning Ordinance §132.3 to reduce the Planning Board hearing window from sixty to thirty days, consistent with the Planning Board's recommendation of approval."

"I further move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment D, revising Zoning Ordinance §132.5 to implement the two-step plan consistency and reasonableness framework required by N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 160D-604(d) and 160D-605, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of denial, for the reasons set out in the staff report and the consistency statement adopted above."

"I further move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment N, revising Zoning Ordinance §92.2, Condition 5, to replace the current standardless screening requirement with objective mining and quarrying standards as presented, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action."

"I further move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment P, revising Zoning Ordinance §92 to replace aspirational and subjective catch-all language with objective M-2 performance standards as presented, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action."

"I further move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment R, adding a definition of 'Data Center' and classifying the use as a conditional use in the M-2 CZ use table under §92.2, as presented, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action."

BOARD ACTION

Upon adoption of this motion, the Board of Commissioners (1) adopts the statement of plan consistency and reasonableness set out above for all five amendments; and (2) adopts Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R, effective immediately, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of denial as to Amendment D and its recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action as to Amendments N, P, and R. Adoption of Amendments N, P, and R does not preclude the Board from separately directing the County Attorney to prepare a moratorium ordinance under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107 for consideration at a future, properly noticed hearing.

Vote: _____ Aye _____ Nay _____ Abstain

Chairman, Stokes County Board of
Commissioners

Clerk to the Board

Date: _____

Date: _____

Motion to Deny

Alternative Motion for Text Amendments A and D to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance

For use at the July 13, 2026 Board of Commissioners public hearing, if the Board does not wish to follow staff's recommendation to adopt A and D

Meeting Body: Stokes County Board of Commissioners

Meeting Date: July 13, 2026

Action Type: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment — Alternative Motion (Denial)

Amendments: A (§132.3), D (§132.5)

Planning Board Recommendation: Amendment A — APPROVAL (4–3); Amendment D — DENIAL with advisory inconsistency finding (5–2)

Staff Recommendation: ADOPT BOTH A AND D (see separate Motion to Adopt); this alternative motion is provided only in case the Board elects not to follow that recommendation

Board Posture: **DENYING TEXT AMENDMENTS A AND D**

Authority: N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 160D-601, 160D-604, 160D-605

NOTE RE: SCOPE OF THIS ALTERNATIVE MOTION

This motion addresses only Amendments A and D. It does not affect Amendments N, P, or R, which are addressed by separate motions. Staff recommends that the Board adopt both A and D, for the reasons set out in the July 10, 2026 staff report; this alternative motion is provided solely for the Board's use if it elects, in its legislative discretion, not to adopt one or both amendments. As to Amendment A, denial would go against the Planning Board's July 9, 2026 recommendation of approval (4–3). As to Amendment D, denial would be consistent with the Planning Board's July 9, 2026 recommendation of denial (5–2, with an advisory inconsistency finding).

WHEREAS CLAUSES

WHEREAS, the Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department prepared proposed Text Amendments A and D to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance, addressing the Planning Department's public hearing

scheduling window under §132.3 and the two-step plan consistency and reasonableness framework under §132.5, respectively, and the Stokes County Planning Board reviewed each amendment at its July 9, 2026 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board voted 4–3 to recommend approval of Amendment A and voted 5–2 to recommend denial of Amendment D, the latter accompanied by an advisory finding that Amendment D is inconsistent with the Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2035); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board's recommendation on any amendment, including its advisory consistency finding as to Amendment D, is not binding on the Board of Commissioners pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-604(d), which retains full authority to adopt, reject, or modify each amendment on its own independent judgment, regardless of the Planning Board's recommendation in either direction; and

WHEREAS, the Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department's staff report, dated July 10, 2026, recommends that the Board adopt both Amendment A and Amendment D, but the Board of Commissioners may in its legislative discretion decline to do so; and

WHEREAS, notice of this public hearing was published in a newspaper of general circulation in Stokes County, with a first run on July 2, 2026 and a second run on July 9, 2026, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-601(a); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners held a duly noticed public hearing on July 13, 2026, at which all parties in interest and citizens were afforded an opportunity to be heard on Amendments A and D; and

PLAN CONSISTENCY STATEMENT

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a), the Board has considered the Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2035), the Planning Board's July 9, 2026 recommendation (including its advisory inconsistency finding as to Amendment D), and the staff report, and finds that a decision not to adopt Amendments A and D at this time is **CONSISTENT** with the Comprehensive Plan. As to Amendment D specifically, this finding is also consistent with the Planning Board's own advisory inconsistency finding.

REASONABLENESS STATEMENT

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b), and in the exercise of the Board's discretion to adopt this statement for text amendments though not statutorily required to do so, the Board finds that declining to adopt Amendments A and D at this time is reasonable and in the public interest because it preserves the current §132.3 hearing window and §132.5 consistency-finding procedure without prejudice to the Board's ability to revisit either provision at a subsequent, properly noticed hearing.

Note: A reasonableness statement is not statutorily required for text amendments under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b), which applies by its terms to zoning map amendments. The Board adopts this statement voluntarily to create a more complete record.

MOTION LANGUAGE

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt the statement of plan consistency required by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a) and the statement of reasonableness set out above, applicable to proposed Text Amendments A and D."

"I further move that the Board of Commissioners deny Text Amendment A, which would have revised Zoning Ordinance §132.3 to reduce the Planning Department's public hearing scheduling window from sixty to thirty days, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of approval, for the reasons set out in the record and the findings adopted above."

"I further move that the Board of Commissioners deny Text Amendment D, which would have revised Zoning Ordinance §132.5 to implement the two-step plan consistency and reasonableness framework under N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 160D-604(d) and 160D-605, consistent with the Planning Board's recommendation of denial and advisory inconsistency finding."

BOARD ACTION

Upon adoption of this motion, the Board of Commissioners (1) adopts the statement of plan consistency and reasonableness set out above; and (2) denies Text Amendments A and D. Zoning Ordinance §132.3 and §132.5 remain unchanged in their current form. This denial does not affect Amendments N, P, or R, which are addressed by separate motions, and does not preclude the Board from reconsidering Amendment A, Amendment D, or both at a subsequent, properly noticed public hearing.

Vote: _____ Aye _____ Nay _____ Abstain

Chairman, Stokes County Board of
Commissioners

Clerk to the Board

Date: _____

Date: _____

Motion Not to Adopt at This Time

Alternative Motion for Text Amendments N, P, and R — Moratorium Path

For use at the July 13, 2026 Board of Commissioners public hearing, if the Board does not wish to follow staff's recommendation to adopt N, P, and R individually

Meeting Body:	Stokes County Board of Commissioners
Meeting Date:	July 13, 2026
Action Type:	Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment — Alternative Motion
Amendments:	N (§92.2, Cond. 5), P (§92), R (Definitions; §92.2)
Staff Recommendation:	ADOPT N, P, AND R INDIVIDUALLY (moratorium is not mutually exclusive and is not properly before the Board on July 13)
Board Posture:	NOT ADOPTING N, P, OR R AT THIS TIME (Procedural — Moratorium Alternative)
Authority:	N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 160D-107, 160D-601, 160D-605

NOTE RE: SCOPE OF THIS ALTERNATIVE MOTION

This motion addresses only Amendments N, P, and R, consistent with the Planning Board's July 9, 2026 recommendation (6–1, Turpin opposed) of a countywide temporary development moratorium in lieu of individual action on those three amendments. It does not affect Amendments A or D, which are addressed by separate motions and which staff recommends the Board adopt at this hearing regardless of the Board's decision on this alternative. A moratorium ordinance itself requires its own findings of necessity and a separate, properly noticed public hearing under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107, and is not adopted by this motion — this motion only directs staff to begin that separate process.

WHEREAS CLAUSES

WHEREAS, the Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department prepared proposed Text Amendments N, P, and R to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance, addressing mining and quarrying screening standards, M-2 performance standards, and a data center use definition and classification, respectively, and the Stokes County Planning Board reviewed each amendment at its July 9, 2026 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board took no individual action to approve or deny Amendments N, P, or R, and instead voted 6–1 (Commissioner Turpin dissenting) to recommend that the Board of Commissioners direct preparation of a countywide temporary development moratorium addressing data center development and other heavy-industrial uses, in lieu of individual action on those three amendments at this time; and

WHEREAS, the Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department's staff report, dated July 10, 2026, advises that a moratorium is not mutually exclusive with adoption of Amendments N, P, and R, that adopting the amendments now does not foreclose a subsequent moratorium, and that any moratorium ordinance must itself proceed through a separate, properly noticed public hearing under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107 and is not properly before the Board for adoption at this July 13, 2026 hearing; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding staff's recommendation to adopt Amendments N, P, and R individually at this hearing, the Board of Commissioners may in its legislative discretion decline to do so and instead pursue the Planning Board's recommended moratorium path; and

WHEREAS, notice of this public hearing was published in a newspaper of general circulation in Stokes County, with a first run on July 2, 2026 and a second run on July 9, 2026, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-601(a); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners held a duly noticed public hearing on July 13, 2026, at which all parties in interest and citizens were afforded an opportunity to be heard on Amendments N, P, and R; and

PLAN CONSISTENCY STATEMENT

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a), the Board has considered the Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2035), the Planning Board's July 9, 2026 recommendation of a countywide moratorium in lieu of individual action, and the staff report, and finds that a decision to defer action on Amendments N, P, and R at this time, in favor of pursuing a moratorium ordinance, is CONSISTENT with the Comprehensive Plan. This finding reflects the Board's procedural posture of deferring individual action pending a separate moratorium process, and is not a finding on the substantive merits of Amendments N, P, or R, which the Board may adopt at a subsequent hearing regardless of the outcome of any moratorium.

REASONABLENESS STATEMENT

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b), and in the exercise of the Board's discretion to adopt this statement for text amendments though not statutorily required to do so, the Board finds that deferring action on Amendments N, P, and R in favor of the moratorium path is reasonable and in the public interest because it affords the Board, staff, the Planning Board, and the public additional time to develop moratorium-related standards through the monthly work sessions recommended by the Planning Board, without foreclosing later adoption of Amendments N, P, and R or any moratorium ordinance developed through a separate, properly noticed hearing under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107.

Note: A reasonableness statement is not statutorily required for text amendments under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b), which applies by its terms to zoning map amendments. The Board adopts this statement voluntarily to create a more complete record.

MOTION LANGUAGE

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED that the Stokes County Board of Commissioners does not adopt Text Amendments N, P, and R at this time, and hereby defers individual action on those three amendments."

"BE IT FURTHER MOVED that the Board of Commissioners directs the County Attorney to prepare a temporary development moratorium ordinance, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107, addressing data center development and other uses subject to heavy-industrial or heavy-manufacturing performance standards, for consideration at a subsequent, properly noticed public hearing."

"BE IT FURTHER MOVED that the Board of Commissioners directs the Planning Board to convene monthly work sessions, as recommended in its July 9, 2026 meeting, to develop the standards described in that recommendation, including potential future refinement of Amendments N, P, and R."

"BE IT FURTHER MOVED that the Plan Consistency Statement and Reasonableness Statement set forth above are hereby approved as the Board's written findings pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a)."

"BE IT FURTHER MOVED that nothing in this motion affects Amendments A or D, which are addressed by separate motions."

BOARD ACTION

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners DOES NOT ADOPT Text Amendments N, P, or R as individual measures at this time, and instead directs the County Attorney to prepare a temporary development moratorium ordinance under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107 for consideration at a subsequent, properly noticed public hearing, and directs the Planning Board to convene monthly work sessions to develop related standards. This non-adoption is procedural only and is not based on any substantive objection to Amendments N, P, or R as presented; the Board retains full legislative discretion to adopt, modify, or reject these amendments at a subsequent meeting, independent of the outcome of any moratorium process. This action does not affect Amendments A or D, addressed separately.

Vote: ____ Aye ____ Nay ____ Abstain

Chairman, Stokes County Board of Commissioners

Date: _____

Clerk to the Board

Date: _____

STOKES COUNTY PLANNING & INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

Board of Commissioners Public Hearing

Chapter 160D Conformance Amendments A, D, N, P, and R to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance, Including the Mining & Quarrying Special Conditions and M-2 Performance Standards Initiatives

Public Hearing	Monday, July 13, 2026 — Stokes County Board of Commissioners
Prepared By	Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department
Report Date	July 10, 2026
Matters Before the Board	Amendments A, D, N, P, and R to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance, with the Planning Board recommending a countywide temporary moratorium on data center development and other heavy-industrial-standard uses as an alternative (applicable to N, P, and R), while staff recommends adoption of all five amendments; the Mining & Quarrying special use conditions concept; and the M-2 performance standards package concept
Statutory Authority	N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 160D, including §§ 160D-109, 160D-501, 160D-601, 160D-602, 160D-604, 160D-605, 160D-701, 160D-702, 160D-703, and 160D-705
Planning Board Action	July 9, 2026 recessed special meeting (a continuation of the June 15, 2026 special meeting) — see Section II

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I. Purpose and Scope of This Report

This report is submitted to the Stokes County Board of Commissioners ("Board") in advance of the Board's July 13, 2026 public hearing on five proposed text amendments to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance — Amendments A, D, N, P, and R — arising from the County's initiative to bring its zoning ordinance into conformance with North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 160D. It consolidates and supersedes prior staff reports on these amendments, including the Mining and Quarrying Special Conditions report and the M-2 performance standards concept, and presents staff's recommendations alongside the Planning Board's July 9, 2026 recommendations, which differ from staff's position on Amendment D and on Amendments N, P, and R. The Board is not bound by the Planning Board's recommendation under G.S. § 160D-604(b) and must independently weigh both positions before acting.

Amendments Before the Board

Amdt.	Section	Subject	Staff Rec.	Planning Board Action (7/9/26)
A	§132.3	Reduce Planning Board conditional-zoning hearing window from 60 to 30 days, matching the state default	ADOPT	Recommend approval (4–3)
D	§132.5	Replace the current single plan-consistency finding with the separate G.S. §160D-605(a) consistency statement and §160D-605(b) reasonableness statement required by state law	ADOPT	Recommend denial (5–2), with inconsistency finding
N	§92.2, Cond. 5	Replace "as deemed necessary" mining/quarrying condition language with objective standards	ADOPT	No action; moratorium recommended instead (6–1)
P	§92	Replace aspirational/catch-all M-2 language with objective performance standards	ADOPT	No action; moratorium recommended instead (6–1)
R	Definitions; §92	Add a "Data Center" definition and M-2 CZ use table entry	ADOPT	No action; moratorium recommended instead (6–1)

This is a text amendment hearing only. No zoning map amendment, conditional rezoning petition, or specific development proposal is before the Board. No data center application is currently pending before the County.

II. Procedural History

The Planning & Inspections Department initiated nineteen text amendments (Amendments A through S) as part of the County's Chapter 160D conformance initiative.

June 15, 2026 — Planning Board Special Meeting

The Planning Board favorably recommended fifteen amendments and tabled four (A, N, P, and R) for further review. Amendment D received a favorable recommendation that evening, but staff identified refinements needed to fully align it with G.S. §§ 160D-604(d) and 160D-605 and resubmitted the revised amendment to the Planning Board. The meeting was recessed — not adjourned — to July 9, 2026 to take up Amendments A, D, N, P, and R.

July 9, 2026 — Planning Board Recessed Special Meeting

Seven of eight Planning Board members were present (Chairman Ronnie Tilley; members Tommy White, Mark Sizemore, Joe Turpin, Jeff Whitaker, Ronnie Morris, and Shannon Stanley; Patrick Flinchum absent). The Chairman permitted public comment under stated time limits and confirmed for the record that no data center development application is currently pending before the County. The Planning Board took the following actions:

- **Amendment A:** Adopted a plan-consistency finding and voted 4–3 (Sizemore, White, and Morris opposed) to recommend approval. Staff concurs.
- **Amendment D:** An initial motion to approve Amendment D failed 3–4 (Sizemore, Tilley, White, and Morris opposed). A substitute motion to deny Amendment D, on the basis that the amendment and its consistency statement would be inconsistent with the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, then carried 5–2. The Planning Board's recommendation is therefore denial with a finding of inconsistency. Staff and the County Attorney recommended approval at the meeting and continue to recommend adoption for the reasons set out in Section V.
- **Amendments N, P, and R:** By a vote of 6–1 (Turpin opposed), the Planning Board recommended a countywide temporary moratorium on data center development and other heavy-industrial-standard uses in lieu of acting on N, P, or R directly. Staff's recommendation, in Section VI, is that the Board adopt N, P, and R now rather than pursue a moratorium.

Staff Recommendation on Amendment D

Staff and the County Attorney recommended approval of Amendment D at the July 9, 2026 meeting and continue to recommend adoption. Conforming § 132.5 to G.S. § 160D-605(a)–(c) reduces — rather than increases — the County's legal exposure, because the current ordinance treats plan consistency as a mandatory precondition that exceeds what state law requires. The Planning Board's denial and inconsistency finding are advisory only under G.S. §§ 160D-604(b) and (d); they do not bind the Board of Commissioners, which must adopt its own consistency statement under G.S. § 160D-605(a) reflecting its own independent judgment. Sections V and IX set out staff's full analysis and a draft consistency statement supporting adoption.

A substantial public comment record was created on Amendment D, including both statements opposing the amendment and statements supporting a plan-consistency framework aligned with state law. The full record is contained in the draft Planning Board minutes of July 9, 2026, which remain subject to correction under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.10(e).

III. Summary of Recommended Board Action

Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners take the following actions at the July 13, 2026 public hearing:

1. Open the public hearing on proposed Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R, receive public comment, and close the public hearing.
2. Adopt the plan consistency statement in Section IX, addressing each of the five amendments, pursuant to G.S. § 160D-605(a).
3. Adopt the reasonableness statement in Section X pursuant to G.S. § 160D-605(b) and, in the alternative, as a matter of sound administrative practice (see Section X's note on applicability).
4. Adopt Amendment A (§132.3), consistent with the Planning Board's 4–3 recommendation of approval.
5. Adopt Amendment D (§132.5), notwithstanding the Planning Board's 5–2 recommendation of denial and inconsistency finding, for the reasons set out in Section V.
6. Adopt Amendments N, P, and R, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of a moratorium in lieu of action, for the reasons set out in Section VI.

Why Staff Recommends Adoption Rather Than a Moratorium

Amendments N, P, and R already supply the objective standards a moratorium process would eventually produce. Adopting them now closes the County's current exposure — standardless mining/quarrying and M-2 catch-all language, and the absence of any data center definition — sooner than a six-month moratorium would. The Board may reasonably adopt the moratorium instead of, or alongside, N, P, and R; Section VI presents that alternative.

IV. Amendment A — Planning Board Hearing Timeline (§132.3)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: ADOPT | PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE (4–3)

Current Language and Proposed Change

Zoning Ordinance § 132.3 currently requires the Planning Department schedule a hearing on a conditional zoning application to be held within sixty days of filing. Amendment A reduces this to thirty days, matching the state default under G.S. § 160D-604(b) for governing-board action following referral to a planning board. It does not shorten public notice or the two-successive-week publication requirement under G.S. § 160D-601(a) and Ordinance § 120 — only the internal window for scheduling the Public hearing.

Planning Board Consideration and Staff Recommendation

The Planning Board adopted a plan-consistency finding under G.S. § 160D-604(d) and voted 4–3 (Sizemore, White, and Morris opposed) to recommend approval on July 9, 2026. Public comment raised timeline and fairness concerns, including whether a 30-day Planning Board review window is too short

for complex applications; staff confirmed that only Planning & Inspections staff, not an applicant, controls when the statutory clock begins to run, and that tabling an item does not extend the Board of Commissioners' independent 30-day authority to act. Staff recommends the Board adopt Amendment A: it aligns local procedure with the state default and reduces unnecessary delay while preserving all required notice and hearing-adequacy protections.

V. Amendment D — Plan Consistency and Reasonableness Framework (§132.5)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: ADOPT | PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION: DENY (5–2), WITH FINDING OF INCONSISTENCY

Current Language and Proposed Change

Zoning Ordinance § 132.5 currently requires the Board to find a rezoning "consistent with the county's comprehensive plan and reasonable and in the public interest" as a mandatory precondition to approval — an inconsistency finding operates as an automatic bar. Amendment D replaces this with the two-step statutory framework: (1) the Planning Board provides an advisory consistency comment under G.S. § 160D-604(d) that does not bind the governing board, and (2) the Board of Commissioners separately adopts its own consistency statement under G.S. § 160D-605(a) and, for map amendments, a reasonableness statement under G.S. § 160D-605(b). G.S. § 160D-604(d) expressly provides that an inconsistency comment "shall not preclude a governing board from adopting the amendment," and § 160D-605(a) requires only a brief consistency statement — it does not permit a local ordinance to treat consistency as a mandatory precondition. Amendment D removes that local requirement, which exceeds the state statutory ceiling, while preserving the Board's obligation to prepare and adopt a consistency statement for every rezoning and text amendment going forward.

Planning Board Consideration

A first motion to approve Amendment D and its consistency statement failed 3–4 (Sizemore, Tilley, White, and Morris opposed). A substitute motion to deny Amendment D — on the basis that the amendment and its accompanying consistency statement would themselves be inconsistent with the plan — then carried 5–2. The County Attorney recommended approval at the meeting and, for the record, disagreed with a public commenter's opinion that the County may lawfully impose a stricter consistency standard than state law allows. Staff's assessment, below, is that the Board's inconsistency finding rests on a premise the report respectfully disagrees with: that conforming § 132.5 to G.S. § 160D-604(d) and 605 is a substantive weakening of the plan's policies, rather than a procedural correction to how consistency is documented.

Staff Analysis

- Amendment D does not repeal, amend, or diminish any goal, policy, or land use classification in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. Every substantive policy referenced by commenters — rural character, agricultural land, infrastructure alignment — remains fully in force and remains a mandatory factor in the Board's consistency analysis.
- It changes only the legal consequence of an inconsistency finding — from an automatic bar to a documented, disclosed factor — the same framework the General Assembly applies statewide. The County retains full authority to deny any rezoning or text amendment it finds inconsistent; nothing in Amendment D encourages approval of plan-inconsistent proposals.

- Retaining the current mandatory-precondition language creates the exposure member Turpin identified: because the ordinance text is more restrictive than G.S. § 160D-604(d)/605 permits, a rezoning approved notwithstanding an inconsistency finding could be challenged as ultra vires under the County's own ordinance, independent of any state-law claim.
- This amendment does not affect the County's independent authority to adopt stricter standards elsewhere (e.g., Amendments N, P, R, and the mining/quarrying and M-2 initiatives). It is limited to the mechanics of the plan-consistency finding itself.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board adopt Amendment D. Doing so brings § 132.5 into conformance with G.S. §§ 160D-604(d) and 160D-605, and preserves the Board's full discretion to deny plan-inconsistent proposals while eliminating the ordinance's conflation of an advisory Planning Board comment with a mandatory precondition to approval. Section IX includes a draft consistency statement for Amendment D reflecting adoption.

VI. Amendments N, P, and R — Staff Recommends Adoption

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: ADOPT N, P, AND R | PLANNING BOARD: NO ACTION — RECOMMENDED A 6-MONTH MORATORIUM INSTEAD (6–1)

Unlike Amendments A and D, the Planning Board did not vote to approve or deny Amendments N, P, or R. Instead, it voted 6–1 to recommend the Board consider a countywide temporary moratorium as an alternative path. Staff presents both positions below.

A. Amendment N — Mining and Quarrying Special Conditions (§92.2, Condition 5)

Current § 92.2, Condition 5 requires an opaque screen "as deemed necessary by the Boards" — a standard with no objective criteria for what triggers it or how compliance is measured. Amendment N replaces this with objective, measurable criteria: defined setbacks, hours-of-operation limits, blasting notification requirements, dust and noise control measures, a reclamation plan, and access-road standards. In *Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock*, 286 N.C. App. 570 (2022), the North Carolina Court of Appeals construed vague, standardless conditions of this type against enforceability — the defect Amendment N corrects, while also making the condition easier for staff to administer without a case-by-case discretionary call.

B. Amendment P — M-2 General Provisions (§92)

Current § 92 contains unenforceable aspirational language directing that impacts be "minimized" without a measurable standard, and a catch-all barring unlisted uses "likely to be dangerous or detrimental" — a subjective finding that functions as a quasi-judicial determination embedded in what should be a legislative zoning classification. Amendment P deletes both provisions and replaces them with objective performance standards (noise limits, emissions thresholds, setbacks, and screening), adopted as a single package so the County is not left without any protective standard. This removes the same fair-notice and standardless-discretion problems addressed in *Frazier*, and keeps M-2 classification decisions legislative in character, consistent with G.S. § 160D-102(28) and § 160D-701.

C. Amendment R — Data Center Definition and M-2 CZ Use Table Entry

The ordinance currently contains no definition of "Data Center" and no use-table entry for the use in any district. Amendment R adds the following definition and classifies the use exclusively in the M-2 Conditional Zoning (M-2 CZ) use table under § 92.2 — not the M-2 by-right table under § 92.1:

DATA CENTER

A facility, campus of facilities, or array of interconnected facilities used for the primary purpose of storing, retrieving, managing, and/or processing digital data, including associated infrastructure such as servers, data storage equipment, network equipment, power supply systems, backup generators, cooling systems, and related accessory structures. A data center does not include electronic equipment incidental to a business whose primary activity is other than storing, retrieving, managing, and processing digital data (e.g., a retail store, office building, or school).

Classifying data centers as a conditional — not by-right — use ensures every proposal receives individualized review, site-specific conditions, and a Board decision on the record. The amendment is drafted for internal consistency between § 92.1 (M-2, by-right) and § 92.2 (M-2 CZ, conditional): "Data Center" appears only in the § 92.2 table, with no cross-reference to § 92.1, and staff cross-checked all defined-term usage before this hearing to confirm no ambiguity remains. Staff also notes pending state legislation (S.B. 730, proposing G.S. § 160D-974(d)) establishing a statewide data center siting framework; Amendment R is drafted to be compatible with it without depending on it.

D. The Planning Board's Alternative Recommendation: A Countywide Temporary Moratorium

In lieu of acting on N, P, and R, the Planning Board voted 6–1 to recommend a countywide six-month moratorium on data center development and other heavy-industrial-standard uses, coupled with monthly work sessions to develop comprehensive standards (noise, vibration, fuel storage, water use, fire protection, rural character, testing protocols, setbacks, and an annual compliance audit). Any such moratorium must independently satisfy G.S. § 160D-107, which requires its own noticed public hearing and findings of necessity; it is not properly before the Board for adoption at this hearing.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends adopting Amendments N, P, and R now, replacing the County's standardless mining/quarrying and M-2 provisions with objective standards and establishing the County's first data center definition and conditional-use pathway. If the Board prefers the moratorium path instead, staff recommends directing the County Attorney to prepare a compliant § 160D-107 ordinance for a future hearing while adopting N, P, and R regardless, since doing so does not foreclose additional standards later.

VII. Mining & Quarrying Special Use Conditions — Adopted in Full via Amendment N

STATUS: PRESENTED FOR ADOPTION AT THIS HEARING — ADOPTED IN FULL AS AMENDMENT N

Staff's July 1, 2026 Mining and Quarrying report developed the full special use permit framework adopted in this hearing as Amendment N, going beyond the single-condition fix originally contemplated for Amendment N. The Board of Commissioners has determined to adopt the full thirteen-condition framework now, rather than the narrower single-condition fix; it was reviewed by the Planning Board on July 9, 2026 and is adopted in full at this hearing as Amendment N, effective July 13, 2026, whether or not the Board adopts a moratorium.

Summary of the Concept

The concept proposes thirteen conditions for new mining and quarrying operations, benchmarked against eleven North Carolina peer counties (Alamance, Cabarrus, Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Johnston, Moore, Rowan, Surry, Vance, and Wilkes):

Condition	Standard
Minimum lot size	100 acres
Spacing from protected facilities	1,500 feet
Operations / stream setback	500 feet / 150 feet
Vegetative buffer	200 feet / 3-row planting
Perimeter fencing	6-foot fence, self-locking gate
Noise limits	70 dB(A) day / 65 dB(A) night
Blasting hours	8 a.m.–5 p.m., weekdays only
Light trespass	Prohibited beyond property line
Access	State-maintained road with traffic impact analysis
Prohibited locations	Floodplains, wetlands, SGCN habitat
Groundwater protection	Well study if triggering thresholds are met
Reclamation	Decommissioning plan, 5-year completion

The concept also proposes definitions for "Mining and Quarrying" (tracking G.S. § 74-49(7)) and "Area of Operations," and a two-permit review process modeled on the Johnston, Cabarrus, and Alamance County frameworks. Amendment N addresses the single most legally exposed piece of this framework — the standardless Condition 5 screening requirement — immediately; the full thirteen-condition package requires its own Planning Board and Board of Commissioners hearings under G.S. §§ 160D-604 and 160D-601 before adoption on a stand-alone basis; however, the Board of Commissioners has determined that the fair-notice and standardless-discretion concerns identified in *Frazier v. Town of*

Blowing Rock warrant immediate adoption of the full thirteen-condition framework as Amendment N, effective July 13, 2026, without further delay. Staff recommends the Board's adoption of Amendment N in full, as reflected in the accompanying Adoption Ordinance, whether or not the Board adopts a moratorium.

VIII. M-2 Performance Standards Package — Adopted in Full via Amendment P

STATUS: PRESENTED FOR ADOPTION AT THIS HEARING — ADOPTED IN FULL AS AMENDMENT P

The Stokes County M-2 Performance Standards concept develops the full set of objective, measurable thresholds adopted in this hearing as Amendment P, fully replacing the aspirational and catch-all language previously addressed only narrowly. Like the mining and quarrying framework above, it was reviewed by the Planning Board on July 9, 2026 as background material, and the Board of Commissioners has determined to adopt the full framework now rather than deferring it; it was not the subject of a separate Planning Board recommendation on July 9, 2026 and is adopted in full at this hearing as Amendment P, effective July 13, 2026.

Summary of the Concept

The concept sets quantified thresholds for noise (measured at the property line, day/night), air emissions and dust, vibration, exterior lighting and glare, and setback/buffering requirements calibrated to adjacent zoning. The goal is a single, objective, pre-published standard against which any M-2 use can be evaluated, eliminating the case-by-case "likely to be dangerous or detrimental" determination Amendment P removes. Staff recommends the Board's adoption of Amendment P in full, as reflected in the accompanying Adoption Ordinance.

IX. Required Statement of Plan Consistency — G.S. § 160D-605(a)

G.S. § 160D-605(a) requires that, prior to adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment, the governing board approve a brief statement describing whether its action is consistent or inconsistent with the adopted comprehensive plan. This applies to text and map amendments alike, may be satisfied by minutes reflecting the Board’s awareness and consideration of the Planning Board recommendation and relevant plan provisions, and is not subject to judicial review. Staff recommends the Board adopt the following statement as part of its motion to approve each amendment.

Draft Consistency Statement

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a), the Stokes County Board of Commissioners has considered the Stokes County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2035), the recommendation of the Stokes County Planning Board adopted July 9, 2026, and the staff analysis presented in this report, and adopts the following statement with respect to each proposed text amendment considered at the July 13, 2026 public hearing:

Amendment A (§132.3): CONSISTENT. Reducing the Planning Board conditional-zoning hearing window from sixty to thirty days is a procedural, administrative change that does not alter any land use classification, density, or policy addressed by the Comprehensive Plan, and is consistent with the Plan’s general goal of efficient, predictable administration of the development review process. This finding is consistent with the Planning Board’s own consistency finding adopted July 9, 2026.

Amendment D (§132.5): CONSISTENT. The Board has considered the Planning Board’s July 9, 2026 recommendation, which found Amendment D inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and the extensive public comment on this question. The Board respectfully disagrees with that finding for the reasons set out in Section V of the accompanying staff report: Amendment D alters only the procedural consequence of a plan-inconsistency finding — from an automatic bar to a documented, disclosed factor in the Board’s decision — and does not repeal, weaken, or supersede any goal, policy, or land use classification in the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan’s substantive policies protecting rural character, agricultural land, and infrastructure alignment remain fully applicable and remain factors the Board must consider and disclose under this amendment exactly as they are today. The Board further finds that conforming § 132.5 to G.S. §§ 160D-604(d) and 160D-605 is itself consistent with the Plan’s implementation chapter, which calls for the zoning ordinance to be maintained in conformance with applicable state law.

Amendment N (§92.2, Condition 5): CONSISTENT. Replacing a standardless screening condition with objective, measurable mining and quarrying standards is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals of protecting residential and agricultural areas from incompatible industrial land uses and preserving rural character, and provides a clearer and more enforceable mechanism for achieving those goals than current ordinance language.

Amendment P (§92): CONSISTENT. Replacing aspirational and subjective catch-all language with objective M-2 performance standards is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals of protecting public health, safety, and the character of surrounding districts from incompatible heavy-industrial impacts, and improves the enforceability of standards that are already part of the Plan’s underlying policy framework.

Amendment R (Definitions; §92): CONSISTENT. Establishing a data center definition and classifying the use exclusively as a conditional use in the M-2 CZ district is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals of directing heavy-industrial-scale uses to appropriately zoned, conditioned locations and preserving the Board’s case-by-case discretion and rural-character protections for large-scale industrial development, and is consistent with the Plan’s economic development goals to the extent any future data center proposal is found, on its own individualized merits, to meet the conditions the Board imposes.

Staff recommends the Board adopt this statement, or a substantially similar statement in the Board’s own words reflecting the same findings, by motion prior to voting on the individual amendments, consistent with G.S. § 160D-605(a) and Ordinance § 132.5 as amended.

X. Required Statement of Reasonableness — G.S. § 160D-605(b)

Applicability Note

G.S. § 160D-605(b) requires a reasonableness statement only for zoning map amendments — rezonings of specific property. Amendments A, D, N, P, and R are text amendments; none reclassifies a parcel, so a reasonableness statement is not statutorily required here. Staff recommends the Board adopt one regardless, both at the Board’s request and to create a more complete, defensible record. The analysis below applies each statutory factor to the amendments as a package.

Draft Reasonableness Statement

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(b), and in the exercise of the Board’s discretion to adopt this statement for text amendments though not statutorily required to do so, the Board considers the following factors:

Statutory Factor	Board’s Finding
(i) Size, physical conditions, and other attributes of the area affected by the amendment	The amendments apply countywide to all land classified M-2 (heavy manufacturing) and, for Amendment A, to the conditional zoning application process generally. The affected areas include the County’s existing heavy-industrial and heavy-manufacturing districts, which are limited in number and location under the current zoning map and are already separated from residential and agricultural areas by the district classification system itself.
(ii) Benefits and detriments to the landowners, neighbors, and surrounding community	Landowners within M-2 and M-2 CZ districts benefit from clear, objective, and predictable standards that reduce uncertainty and case-by-case discretion in the permitting process (Amendments N, P, R) and from a more efficient conditional-zoning review timeline (Amendment A). Neighbors and the surrounding community benefit from enforceable, measurable noise, screening, setback, and use-classification standards that replace vague or nonexistent standards, and from the conditional-use (rather than by-right) treatment of data centers, which preserves case-by-case Board review and site-specific conditions for any future proposal. No detriment to any identified landowner, neighbor, or community group has been identified; to the contrary, the amendments are designed to reduce the risk of harm from inadequately regulated heavy-industrial uses.
(iii) Relationship between current and permissible development and the development that would be permissible under the amendment	Current M-2 by-right and M-2 CZ development is already permissible for a broad range of heavy-manufacturing uses; the amendments do not expand the geographic footprint of M-2 or M-2 CZ zoning, and do not add any new by-right use. Amendment R adds data centers only as a conditional use, which is more restrictive than an unregulated or by-right classification would be. Amendments N and P replace standardless conditions with objective standards for uses already permissible in the district, without expanding what may be built.
(iv) Whether the amendment is for the public good and consistent with the public interest	Each amendment serves the public interest by increasing the clarity, enforceability, and legal defensibility of the County’s zoning ordinance; reducing the risk of arbitrary or standardless permitting decisions; and ensuring any future data center proposal receives individualized, conditioned review. Amendment A serves the public interest in efficient government administration without compromising notice or review quality.

Statutory Factor	Board's Finding
(v) Any changed conditions warranting the amendments	The proliferation of data center development interest nationally and regionally, the absence of any current data center definition or use classification in the ordinance, the Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock, 286 N.C. App. 570 (2022) decision construing standardless conditions against enforceability, and the County's Chapter 160D conformance obligations following the July 1, 2021 effective date of the Chapter 160D framework collectively constitute changed conditions warranting these amendments at this time.

Staff recommends the Board adopt this statement, or a substantially similar statement in the Board's own words reflecting the same findings, by motion prior to voting on the individual amendments.

XI. Suggested Motions

The following motions are offered for the Board's convenience. Staff recommends adopting each amendment separately, given that the Planning Board's recommendations differ across amendments.

Motion 1 — Consistency and Reasonableness Statements

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt the statement of plan consistency required by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-605(a) and the statement of reasonableness set out in Sections IX and X of the staff report, as presented, or as amended by the Board, applicable to proposed Text Amendments A, D, N, P, and R."

Motion 2 — Amendment A

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment A, revising Zoning Ordinance § 132.3 to reduce the Planning Board hearing window from sixty to thirty days, consistent with the Planning Board's recommendation and the consistency statement previously adopted."

Motion 3 — Amendment D

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment D, revising Zoning Ordinance § 132.5 to implement the two-step plan consistency and reasonableness framework required by N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 160D-604(d) and 160D-605, notwithstanding the Planning Board's recommendation of denial, for the reasons set out in the staff report and the consistency statement previously adopted."

Motions 4–6 — Amendments N, P, and R

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment N, revising Zoning Ordinance § 92.2, Condition 5, to replace the current standardless screening requirement with objective mining and quarrying standards as presented."

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment P, revising Zoning Ordinance § 92 to replace aspirational and subjective catch-all language with objective M-2 performance standards as presented."

"I move that the Board of Commissioners adopt Text Amendment R, adding a definition of 'Data Center' and classifying the use as a conditional use in the M-2 CZ use table under § 92.2, as presented."

Alternative Motion — Moratorium (If the Board Prefers This Path for N, P, and/or R)

"I move that the Board of Commissioners direct the County Attorney to prepare a temporary development moratorium ordinance, consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-107, addressing data center development and other uses subject to heavy-industrial or heavy-manufacturing performance standards, for consideration at a subsequent properly noticed public hearing, and direct the Planning Board to convene monthly work sessions as recommended in its July 9, 2026 meeting to develop the standards described in that recommendation."

Appendix A — Statutory Reference Table

Citation	Subject	Relevance to This Hearing
G.S. § 160D-109(b)	Board member conflict-of-interest standard	Governs Board participation; mirrored in Ordinance § 132.4
G.S. § 160D-601(a)	Legislative hearing and notice requirements	Governs notice/hearing for all five amendments; mirrored in Ordinance § 120
G.S. § 160D-604(b)	30-day planning board report window; governing board not bound	Basis for Amendment A; governs departure from Planning Board recommendations on D, N, P, R
G.S. § 160D-604(d)	Inconsistency comment does not preclude approval	Central to Amendment D and adoption of N, P, R despite Planning Board inaction
G.S. § 160D-605(a)	Required consistency statement	Fulfilled by Section IX
G.S. § 160D-605(b)	Reasonableness statement for map amendments	Not required for this text-amendment hearing; fulfilled voluntarily by Section X
G.S. § 160D-107	Temporary development moratoria — hearing and findings required	Governs any future moratorium ordinance per Section VI
G.S. § 160D-701	Zoning consistent with a comprehensive plan	Framework for Sections IX and X
G.S. § 74-49(7) (NC Mining Act)	Statutory definition of "mining"	Basis for the Mining and Quarrying definition in Section VII
Frazier v. Town of Blowing Rock, 286 N.C. App. 570 (2022)	Standardless conditions construed against enforceability	Legal basis for Amendments N and P
Chrismon v. Guilford County, 322 N.C. 611 (1988)	Conditional zoning valid if objective standards guide discretion	Supports Amendment R's conditional-use structure

Respectfully submitted,

Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department

July 10, 2026

STAFF REPORT — PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Mining and Quarrying Special Conditions

Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment — Stokes County

Special Meeting (Recessed from June 15, 2026): Thursday, July 9, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

Stokes County Planning Board

MEETING BODY	Stokes County Planning Board
MEETING DATE	Thursday, July 9, 2026
MEETING TIME	6:00 p.m.
MEETING TYPE	Special Meeting — Recessed from June 15, 2026
PREPARED BY	Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department
DATE OF REPORT	July 1, 2026
SUBJECT	Proposed text amendment to the Stokes County Zoning Ordinance to establish special use conditions and performance standards for Mining and Quarrying operations. The Planning Board's role is to review the proposed conditions and forward a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners, which will hold a public hearing on this item on July 13, 2026.
AUTHORITY	G.S. §§ 160D-703 & 160D-705(c) (Zoning Districts / Special Use Permits), 160D-702 (Grant of Power), 160D-601 (Text Amendments), 160D-604 (Planning Board Duties), 153A-121(a), and Chapter 160D (Unified Development Ordinance Authority)
PLAN CONSISTENCY	Staff finds the proposed amendment consistent with the Stokes County Land Use Plan goal of protecting residential and agricultural areas from incompatible industrial land uses and preserving rural character, natural resources, and quality of life for county residents. Per G.S. § 160D-604(d), the Planning Board should adopt a statement addressing plan consistency as part of its recommendation to the BOC.
STAFF RECOMMENDATION	RECOMMEND ADOPTION of the proposed special use conditions and forward to the Board of Commissioners for public hearing on July 13, 2026.

I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Mining and quarrying operations involve the extraction of minerals, ores, sand, soils, and stone from the ground. By their nature, these operations generate significant off-site impacts — noise, vibration, blasting, heavy truck traffic, dust, and potential effects on groundwater and surface water — that can substantially affect neighboring properties and the rural character of the surrounding community when not properly regulated.

Stokes County's Zoning Ordinance currently does not include performance standards or special use conditions specifically tailored to mining and quarrying operations. As the County continues its Chapter 160D conformance initiative, staff has identified this gap and undertaken a review of adopted ordinance provisions from eleven North Carolina counties that currently regulate mining and quarrying at the local level.

This report presents thirteen proposed special use conditions for the Planning Board's review. If the Planning Board recommends adoption, the proposed conditions would advance to the Board of Commissioners for a public hearing on July 13, 2026, after which they would be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and apply to all new mining and quarrying operations requiring a special use permit in Stokes County. The conditions are designed to protect adjacent landowners and the broader community while preserving a reasonable pathway for legitimate extraction operations.

II. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The following North Carolina statutes provide the legal basis for the proposed ordinance text amendment:

Statute	Subject	Relevance to This Amendment
G.S. § 160D-702	Grant of Power	Grants counties general authority to adopt zoning regulations regulating land use, density, height, and building design elements within zoning districts.
G.S. § 160D-705(c)	Special Use Permits (within Quasi-Judicial Zoning Decisions)	Authorizes local governments to require special use permits with binding conditions to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.
G.S. § 160D-703	Zoning Districts	Authorizes creation of zoning districts, including conditional districts with use-specific conditions, as the vehicle for applying special use standards.
G.S. § 160D-601	Text Amendments	Establishes procedure for amending text of a zoning ordinance, including public hearing requirements.
G.S. § 160D-605(a)	Plan Consistency Statement	Requires the BOC to approve or deny the amendment with a written consistency statement referencing the County Land Use Plan; under G.S. § 160D-604(d), the Planning Board must also address plan consistency in its recommendation.
G.S. §§ 74-46 et seq.	NC Mining Act of 1971	State-level mining permit framework administered by NC DEQ. County conditions supplement — and do not replace — state requirements.
G.S. § 153A-121(a)	County Police Power	Broad county ordinance authority to regulate conditions detrimental to health, safety, or welfare.

Note: The Authority line and statutory table above have been corrected to reflect the actual statutory titles and scope. G.S. § 160D-702 (“Grant of Power”) establishes general zoning authority and does not itself reference special use permits; that authority derives from G.S. § 160D-705(c). G.S. § 160D-705 is titled “Quasi-judicial zoning decisions,” of which special use permits are one category (subsection (c)).

III. PROPOSED DEFINITIONS

Two definitions are proposed for inclusion in the Zoning Ordinance to provide clear, enforceable boundaries for when the special use conditions apply.

Mining and Quarrying

Mining/quarrying includes the breaking of the surface soil in order to facilitate or accomplish the extraction or removal of minerals, ores, or other solid matter; any activity or process constituting all or part of a process for the extraction or removal of minerals, ores, sand, soils, and other solid matter from their original location; and the preparation, washing, cleaning, or other treatment of minerals, ores, or other solid matter so as to make them suitable for commercial, industrial, or construction use.

This definition does not include: excavation or grading conducted solely in aid of on-site farming or on-site construction; removal of overburden to the extent necessary to determine the location, quantity, or quality of any natural deposit (provided no ores are sold and affected land does not exceed one acre); or excavation where: (a) material is used without further processing for a single off-site construction project with an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan; (b) affected land does not exceed five acres; (c) the work is completed within one year; and (d) no blasting, stream removal, off-site waste disposal, or off-site groundwater surface disposal is involved.

Consistent with G.S. § 74-49(7) (NC Mining Act). Note: G.S. § 74-49(7)(g) also includes a separate agricultural exemption for farming-related grading activities exempt from the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act. The Board may wish to incorporate that exclusion expressly.

Area of Operations

“Area of operations” means the land area on a tract from which minerals, ores, sand, soils, or other solid matter are or will be directly or indirectly extracted by any mining or quarrying activity, together with any land within the same tract on which processing, stockpiling, equipment storage, access roads serving extraction, dewatering facilities, or other activities directly incidental to extraction are conducted. The area of operations shall be delineated on the required site plan submitted with any permit application and shall represent the maximum extent of active disturbance at any point during the life of the operation. Land within the required operations setback area (Condition 3) is not part of the area of operations and shall remain undisturbed except as needed for perimeter fencing, vegetative screening, and ingress/egress access roads.

IV. PEER COUNTY CONTEXT

Staff reviewed adopted zoning and unified development ordinance provisions from eleven North Carolina counties that currently regulate mining and quarrying at the local level: Alamance, Cabarrus, Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Johnston, Moore, Rowan, Surry, Vance, and Wilkes Counties. The following table summarizes the range of key standards found across those ordinances. The proposed Stokes County standards are shown in the final column.

Standard	Peer County Range	Representative Examples	Stokes (Proposed)
Extraction Setback	50 ft – 500 ft	Iredell: 500 ft (blasting/processing, R56); Vance: 200 ft (quarry); Johnston: 250 ft	500 ft
Spacing from Protected Facilities	500 ft – 1,500 ft	Alamance: 1,750 ft (Class III); Surry: 500 ft from residences, schools, churches	1,500 ft
Stream Setback	50 ft – 150 ft	Iredell: 100 ft; Davie: 50 ft (sand/dredging)	150 ft
Vegetative Buffer	50 ft – 250 ft	Johnston: 250 ft; Alamance: 100 ft (3 rows); Surry: 50 ft	200 ft, 3 rows
Fencing	6 ft – 8 ft	Johnston/Cabarrus: 6 ft (within 300 ft of sensitive uses); Wilkes: 8 ft cyclone	6 ft min. (full perimeter)
Daytime Noise Limit	60 – 68 dB(A)	Cabarrus/Forsyth: 60 dB(A); Johnston: 68 dB(A)	70 dB(A)
Blasting Hours	Daylight – 8am/6pm	Vance: 8am–5pm Mon–Fri; Iredell: 7am–6pm; Wilkes: 8am–6pm	8am–5pm, Weekdays only
Minimum Lot Size	10 – 50 acres	Forsyth: 50 acres (blasting/crushing); Alamance: 40 acres (Class III)	100 acres

Sources: Alamance County UDO §6.5 (Dec. 2024); Cabarrus County Development Ordinance Ch. 8 §12; Davie County Zoning Code §155.034; Forsyth County UDC Ch. 14 Table 14.2; Iredell County LDC R56; Johnston County Zoning Ord. §14–257(c); Moore County UDO §8.75 (June 2026); Rowan County Zoning Ord. §21–59; Surry County Code §154.008(C)(46); Vance County Zoning Ord. §156.032(P); Wilkes County Zoning Ord. §88.

V. PROPOSED SPECIAL CONDITIONS — SUMMARY

The following thirteen conditions are proposed as special use conditions applicable to all mining and quarrying operations requiring a special use permit in Stokes County. Each condition is presented with the proposed standard and a brief statement of purpose.

#	Condition	Proposed Standard	Purpose
1	Minimum Lot Size	100 acres minimum	Ensures site is large enough to accommodate all required setbacks and buffers
2	Spacing from Protected Facilities	1,500 ft from schools, dwellings, churches, medical facilities	Protects sensitive uses from noise, vibration, dust, and traffic impacts
3	Operations Setback from Property Line	500 ft from property line; no operations within setback	Keeps all active disturbance well within the interior of the site
4	Stream Setback	150 ft from any perennial or intermittent stream	Protects Dan and Yadkin watershed streams from sedimentation and contamination
5	Landscaping and Vegetative Screening	200 ft minimum; 3 staggered rows of native plantings	Provides continuous visual and noise barrier along all property lines
6	Perimeter Fencing and Gate	6-ft minimum fence; self-locking gate	Safety — prevents unauthorized access to active excavation areas
7	Noise Limits and Blasting Hours	70 dB(A) day / 65 dB(A) night; blasting 8am–5pm weekdays only	Limits noise impacts on neighboring properties; restricts blasting to business hours
8	Exterior Lighting — No Light Trespass	No light trespass onto neighboring parcels	Protects rural dark-sky character and residential neighbors
9	Traffic Impact and Road Access	Direct access from state-maintained road; TIA if projected trips exceed capacity	Protects rural road network from heavy truck overload
10	Prohibited Operations Areas	No operations in SFHA floodplains, USACE wetlands, or SGCN habitat	Ensures compliance with state/federal environmental protections
11	Groundwater and Well Study	Required if triggered by state or federal permit	Protects private well-dependent residents from groundwater impacts
12	Decommissioning and Reclamation Plan	Required at permit application; completion within 5 years of cessation	Ensures site is restored and does not become an abandoned hazard

#	Condition	Proposed Standard	Purpose
13	State and Federal Permit Compliance	Proof of all NC DEQ, USACE, NCDOT, and other permits before operations permit	Creates sequenced review; county permit cannot precede required state/federal permits

VI. SUGGESTED PERMIT PROCESS FRAMEWORK

Staff recommends a two-permit process modeled on frameworks used by Johnston, Cabarrus, and Alamance counties. This ensures that no operations begin until both site construction and state/federal permitting are complete.

Step	Action	By Whom	Key Requirement
1	Pre-Application Meeting	Applicant + Staff	At least 14 days before formal application; identify required permits and any variance needs
2	Intent to Construct Application	Applicant	Certified site plan; groundwater study (if required); decommissioning plan; operations plan
3	Planning Board Meeting	Planning Board	Notice per ordinance provisions; certified mail to abutting owners; PB recommendation within 30 days
4	Intent to Construct — Decision	Planning Dept.	Written determination within 45 days; denial must state grounds
5	Construction / Site Preparation	Applicant	Must commence within 1 year of permit issuance; as-built site plan upon completion
6	Operations Permit Application	Applicant	As-built survey; proof of all state/federal permits; spill containment plan; final site inspection
7	Operations Permit — Renewal	Applicant (biennial)	Every 2 years; site visit required; proof of continued compliance; renewal denied if violations exist

Staff Contact: Stokes County Planning & Inspections Department



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: X.c

FY 2026-2027 Pay & Benefits Policy

Drafter: Jamie Clark

Summary:

The proposed FY 2026-2027 Pay and Benefits Policy has been updated to incorporate the results of the FY 2026-2027 Salary Study, including the revised General Class salary schedule. The policy also reflects the approved 2.7% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), updates to the pay plan, and revisions to compensation administration and employee benefits.

ATTACHMENTS:

[26-27 Stokes_County_Pay_Benefits_Policy REDLINE.pdf](#)



STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Pay and Benefits Policy

Fiscal Year 2026–2027



*"Protect, promote and enhance quality of life
for Stokes County residents and visitors."*

Department of Human Resources

Jamie F. Clark — Human Resources Director

Revised June 30, 2026

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Section 1. Pay and Benefits Policy

It is the policy of Stokes County to compensate employees at a level sufficient to encourage excellence of performance that contributes to the County's overall mission and strategic goals, and to maintain the labor market competitiveness necessary to recruit, motivate, develop and retain a competent and diverse work force. This policy is met by:

- Participating in annual salary surveys and pay practice discussions with various labor markets. The county will utilize the assistance of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) and the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM).
- Ensuring the county pay plan remains current by adjusting salary ranges annually using relevant methodologies and the previous year's Consumer Price Index (CPI) as of December 31st.
- Allocating funding annually to represent an average 2% merit increase for all employees. All employees will be eligible for a 0%–3% merit increase based on performance.

This Pay Plan is subject to an annual review and funded through the annual county budget, as approved by the Board of County Commissioners, and is effective July 1 each year.

Section 1-A — Salary & Position Classification Schedule

The county shall maintain a position classification plan that ensures the accuracy of position duties and responsibilities and consolidates similar job functions into defined classifications. The county manager shall determine the duties of each position and shall promulgate procedures to establish, revise and maintain the classification plan to ensure it reflects the duties performed by each employee in the classification system. Each position contains a detailed list of job requirements and is assigned a salary grade with a minimum, midpoint, and maximum salary for the responsibilities, education, and experience of that position. (Position Classification on page 11)

Section 1-B — Initial Salary Determinations

Each employee hired or assigned to a permanent position shall serve a probationary period of six (6) months. Upon new hire, promotion, grade change, reclassification, and voluntary transfer, each employee will be compensated at the minimum salary for the position assigned. Department Heads may hire at the minimum of the pay grade. Approval of the hire above the minimum will be made by the County Manager. In rare instances an employee may be involuntarily transferred to a lower grade position. Should that happen, the employee will be frozen at their current salary and placed on the lower grade until the employee's salary catches up with the salary on that grade.

In the Department of Social Services, if an employee is hired for a position and does not qualify per the North Carolina State Office of Human Resources, the employee can participate in the Work Against Program.

Section 1-C — Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

It is the policy of Stokes County to fully comply with the FLSA. All positions in the County are designated exempt or nonexempt under FLSA depending on whether they meet the requirements of the Act. These designations have nothing to do with the importance of a position to the County. Employees who are non-exempt must be paid overtime or granted compensatory time for over 40 hours worked each workweek. There are specific exceptions under the FLSA for law enforcement and firefighting.

Section 1-D — Overtime Authorization

From time to time, it becomes necessary for employees to work additional hours beyond the normal work period amount. Compensatory time will be given in lieu of overtime pay, except for personnel working in EMS and Communications and temporary employees. Compensatory Time must be approved by an employee's direct supervisor. If circumstances arise and the employee cannot obtain approval such as having to work after the end of the workday/shift due to an emergency, the employee should notify their direct supervisor as soon as possible.

Section 1-E — Employee Status

Non-Exempt Employees

This class of employees shall receive one hour of compensatory time for each hour worked over their standard work schedule up to forty (40) hours in a seven-day workweek. Compensatory Time will be awarded at a rate of 1.5 hours for each hour physically worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a seven-day workweek. For example, if an employee's standard work schedule is 37.5 hours per week, and he/she works 42 hours a week, he/she will receive 5.5 hours of compensatory time and pay for 37.5 hours.

Law enforcement personnel who are classified as 207(K) non-exempt shall receive compensatory hours at a rate of 1.5 hours for each hour physically worked in excess of 85 hours in each 14-day work period.

All overtime worked must be properly documented and must receive the approval of the supervisor before it is worked. Compensatory time shall be awarded at the end of each pay period as outlined above but may be used as paid time off any time after it is earned, with the approval of the supervisor. Each supervisor has discretion in allowing or directing an employee to use compensatory time. No compensatory time shall be allowed for work during an employee's lunch hour unless such work is of an emergency nature. In the event of a voluntary or involuntary termination of a non-exempt employee, compensatory time shall be eligible for monetary reimbursement.

Each non-exempt employee hired by the County, except EMS and Communications personnel and temporary personnel, shall be required to sign the Compensatory Time Agreement stating compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay is acceptable. Agreeing with the compensatory time method of payment is not a condition of employment; however, if an employee disagrees with this form of payment the employee shall be disallowed from working overtime or may be directed to taking time off during the week overtime is worked.

Non-exempt employees will be required to use compensatory time as soon as possible after accumulation at the direction of the Department Head and will be required to use compensatory time before the use of any other leave. Sheriff Office and Jail employees who accrue both holiday time and compensatory time will be required to use holiday time first.

Exempt Employees

Employees in this class are deemed to be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act minimum wage and overtime standards. Employees in this class fall into three categories: Executive, Administrative, and Professional. The County shall follow either the short test or the long test as set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act, whichever is applicable, to determine the "exempt" status employees.

Employees classified as exempt will not maintain a timesheet unless they are reporting the use of sick/personal, annual, or holiday leave. ~~in increments of full days/shifts.~~

~~Exempt employees in this category will use recorded comp time utilizing the same request and approval process established for annual / sick / holiday leave until the balance is exhausted and such recorded comp time will be utilized before use of annual or sick leave.~~

In the event of voluntary or involuntary termination as an employee of Stokes County, exempt personnel shall not be eligible for monetary reimbursement for recorded or un-recorded comp-time.

Upon appointment, each employee shall be notified of his/her exempt/non-exempt status.

Section 2. Longevity Pay

The Board of Commissioners and the County Manager demonstrate appreciation for full-time employees who have completed landmark years of continued service by presenting them with a longevity pay plan. Full-time employees who have been credited with five (5) or more years of compensated service with Stokes County and who are on the payroll as of November 1st may receive an annual longevity payment. Longevity pay shall be made annually when all eligibility requirements are met if funding is available upon approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

- Longevity payment shall be made in a lump sum each year on or before December 31st.
- Eligibility for payment shall be based on full years of service as of November 1 of each year.
- Payment shall be made to otherwise eligible employees who are on military leave, worker's compensation and approved medical leave of absence without pay.
- All appropriate federal, state, retirement, etc., deductions will be applied to this payment.
- Payment shall be made to the nearest cent rather than the nearest dollar.
- The annual salary of the employee will be determined by taking the individual's base rate of pay and multiplying it by the standard hours worked for that position.
- Longevity pay is not considered a part of annual base pay for classification and pay purposes, nor is it to be recorded in personnel records as a part of annual pay.

Annual longevity pay amounts are based on the length of consecutive years of service with the County of Stokes and vary based on the employee's most recent hire date:

Years of Service	Longevity Percent
5 years < 10	1.00%
10 years < 15	1.50%
15 years < 20	2.00%
20 years < 25	2.50%
25 plus years	3.00%

Section 3. Pay Periods

The County's pay period shall be based on a fourteen (14) day cycle. There shall be twenty-six (26) pay periods within a year. Paychecks shall be issued seven (7) calendar days following the last day of the pay period. The pay date will be on Fridays.

Payroll Deductions

Normal deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck each pay period for:

- Federal Income Tax
- State Income Tax
- FICA (Social Security and Medicare)
- Retirement (Permanent employees)
- Garnishments/Wage Withholdings

Employees may request to have the following additional deductions each pay period:

- Insurance
- 401K Supplemental Retirement Income
- Deferred Compensation Plans
- ~~Credit Union Deduction~~
- Stokes County Property Tax Deductions
- Flex Spending Benefits
- Firefighter and Rescue Squad Pension Fund

Section 4. Direct Deposit

The County utilizes direct deposit as the primary method for issuing payroll to employees. Employees are required to provide accurate banking information to ensure timely and secure deposits.

Section 5. Employee Benefits

In an effort to improve productivity and engagement, the county offers a variety of benefits to all full-time employees. Below are many of the offered programs:

- Twelve paid holidays per year

- Annual/Vacation Leave (based on work schedule and length of service)
- Sick Leave (based on work schedule and length of service)
- County Paid Health Insurance
- County Paid Dental Insurance
- County Paid Term Life Insurance (\$25,000 policy)
- Voluntary Vision
- Supplemental voluntary insurance (accident, cancer, critical illness, short-term disability, long-term disability and term life)
- Flexible spending accounts
- Dependent Day care accounts
- Voluntary 401(k) participation (Stokes County contributes 1% of salary to all employees who are contributing)
- Voluntary 457(b) plan
- NC State Retirement System Contributions
- Tuition Reimbursement (up to \$500 per fiscal year)
- Employee Assistance Program
- Ability to join CIVIC Federal Credit Union
- Parental School Leave
- Bereavement Leave
- **Personal Observance Leave**
- Family Medical Leave
- Jury Duty Leave
- Military Leave

Section 5-A — Cell Phone Allowance

Employees who require cell phones to perform their work may be offered a county owned cell phone and must follow all rules and regulations pertaining to cell phone usage and county owned property in the Stokes County Personnel Policy Handbook.

In lieu of a county provided cell phone, the county manager may approve a cell phone stipend on a case-by-case basis.

Section 5-B — Employee Travel and Reimbursement

The County provides vehicles for use by the employees to conduct County business. All take-home vehicles will be approved by the County Manager. (Please refer to the Stokes County Vehicle Use Policy.) Employees using a personal vehicle for County business will be reimbursed for mileage pursuant to the Travel Policy. Per IRS Publication 5137: "A standard mileage rate is considered to cover all expenses of operating a vehicle, including insurance, maintenance, tires, oil and so on."

Operators using a personal vehicle for County business should carry adequate personal vehicle liability insurance as required by law. All County officials and employees using a personal vehicle for County-related business are expected to consult with their insurance provider to ensure they are appropriately covered for business use.

Employees using a personal vehicle for County business must ensure that the vehicle is inspected annually, and that the vehicle is in safe operating condition with no pre-existing damage.

The County assumes no responsibility for accidents and damages to privately owned vehicles.

Section 5-C — Tuition Reimbursement

The provisions of this section do not apply to temporary employees. Stokes County shall provide up to a maximum of \$500.00 per employee per fiscal year for the reimbursement of tuition cost for courses of study taken on the employee's own time at accredited learning institutions. The following stipulations may apply:

1. Reimbursement shall be made only for course work completed at the accredited public, business, trade school, community college, college or university. Only semester or quarter-length courses are eligible. No workshops, seminars or conferences are eligible.
2. Applications for reimbursement shall be approved by the department head only for course work related to the employee's job area, or for course work allowing an employee to take on some greater tasks within his/her agency.
3. Upon application for reimbursement, the employee shall pledge a minimum of six (6) months service to the County after completion of the course or graduation from the chosen curriculum.

All applications for tuition reimbursement will be approved by the County Manager.

Section 5-D — Education & Certification Incentive Pay

The purpose of this policy is to outline pay incentives which may be earned by employees pursuing a degree in higher education or attaining certifications to their current position with the County. Not all degrees or certifications received by employees will be eligible for this policy. Only those determined in advance to be related to the employee's current position and/or future advancement opportunities with the County will be eligible.

Employees eligible for education pay incentives shall receive, upon approval of the County Manager, a salary increase in the amount shown below for each eligible degree and certification attainment:

Degree / Certification	Salary Increase
Associate's Degree	2%
Bachelor's Degree	3%
Master's Degree	4%
Doctoral Degree	5%
Certification	Up to 3%

Section 6. Salary Schedules

The salary minimums, midpoints, and maximums are hereby established for the following employee classification groups: General, Health, Social Services, Emergency Medical Services and Sheriff effective July 1, 2026. Salary Schedules are included in Sections 6-A through 6-H with the respective Position Classifications.

Position Classifications

Position Titles for full-time or part-time regular jobs have been assigned a salary grade within one of the Seven Salary Schedules. Each class includes a Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) designation to indicate if the position is Non-exempt (N) or Exempt (E) with respect to compensation for time and a half overtime. Exempt means an employee is exempt from being paid overtime for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.

Section 6-A — General Class Salary Schedules

Grade	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
G01	N	\$30,870 \$31,703	\$40,100 \$44,384	\$49,400 \$57,066
G02	N	\$33,237 \$33,288	\$43,200 \$46,604	\$53,200 \$59,920
G03	N	\$36,530 \$34,953	\$47,500 \$48,934	\$58,400 \$62,916
G04	N	\$40,234 \$36,700	\$52,300 \$51,381	\$64,400 \$66,061
G05	N	\$44,247 \$38,536	\$57,500 \$53,950	\$70,800 \$69,364
G06	N	\$48,672 \$40,463	\$63,300 \$56,648	\$77,900 \$72,833
G04H G06H	N	\$19.34 \$19.45/hr.	\$25.10 \$27.23/hr.	\$31.00 \$35.01/hr.
G07	N	\$53,508 \$42,486	\$69,600 \$59,480	\$85,600 \$79,474
G08	N	\$58,859 \$44,610	\$76,500 \$62,454	\$94,200 \$80,298
G09	N	\$64,724 \$46,840	\$84,100 \$65,577	\$103,600 \$84,313
G05H G09H	N	\$21.27 \$22.51/hr.	\$27.70 \$31.52/hr.	\$34.00 \$40.53/hr.
G10	N	\$71,207 \$49,183	\$92,600 \$68,856	\$113,900 \$88,529
G11	N	\$78,307 \$51,642	\$101,800 \$72,298	\$101,800 \$92,955
G12	N	\$86,127 \$54,224	\$112,000 \$75,913	\$137,800 \$97,603
G13	N/E	\$103,312 \$56,935	\$134,300 \$79,709	\$165,300 \$102,483
G14	N/E	\$144,060 \$59,782	\$187,300 \$83,694	\$230,500 \$107,607
G15	N/E	\$62,771	\$87,879	\$112,987
G16	N/E	\$65,909	\$92,273	\$118,637
G17	N/E	\$69,205	\$96,887	\$124,569
G18	E	\$72,665	\$101,731	\$130,797
G19	E	\$76,298	\$106,818	\$137,337

Grade	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
G20	E	\$80,113	\$112,158	\$144,204
G21	E	\$84,119	\$117,766	\$151,414
G22	E	\$88,325	\$123,655	\$158,985
G23	E	\$92,741	\$129,837	\$166,934
G24	E	\$97,378	\$136,329	\$175,280
CM-1	E	\$106,101	\$138,577	\$171,052
CM-2	E	\$147,950	\$193,162	\$238,375

Section 6-B — General Class Position Classifications

(Listed in alphabetical order)

Position Title	FLSA	Grade
Accounting Manager	N	G07 G12
Accountability & Recovery Court Coordinator	N	G05 G08
Administrative Assistant I	N	G02 G03
Administrative Assistant II	N	G03 G04
Administrative Officer I	N	G04 G07
Administrative Officer II	N	G05 G09
Animal Control Agent	N	G04 G06
Animal Control Director	E	G08 G15
Animal Control Office Clerk	N	G02 G03
Animal Shelter Attendant	N	G01 G02
Arts Place Coordinator	N	G02
Assistant Assessor	N	G06
Assistant County Manager	E	G13 CM-1
Assistant Finance Director	E	G08 G15
Assistant Health Director	E	G07 G15
Assistant Human Resources Director	E	G07 G13
Assistant Register of Deeds	N	G04 G07
Assistant Tax Collector	N	G05 G08
Asst. Fire Marshal/Suppression	N	G06 G10
Building Maintenance Supervisor	N	G06 G10
Clerk to the Board & Administrative Asst. to the Managers Office	N	G06 G10
Chief Code Enforcement Officer	N	G07 G14
Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer	N	G06 G10
Conservationist	N	G05 G09
County Manager	E	G14 CM-2
Custodian	N	G01
Custodian Supervisor	N	G04 G07
Deputy DSS Director	E	G10 G20
Deputy Election Director	N	G04 G06
Deputy Fire Marshal	N	G07 G13
Deputy Register of Deeds	N	G02 G03
Deputy Tax Collector	N	G04 G06

Position Title	FLSA	Grade
Deputy Tax Collector (EMS)	N	G04 G06
Director of Arts & Cultural Services	E	G09 G16
District Resource Director	E	G07 G12
DRC Work Program Coordinator	N	G02
DSS Director	E	G12 G23
Elections Director	E	G09 G16
Emergency Communications Director	E	G09 G16
Financial Analyst	N	G04 G07
Finance Accounting Technician – Accounts Payable	N	G04 G07
Finance Accounting Technician – Finance/Purchasing	N	G04 G07
Finance Director	E	G12 G23
Fire Marshal	E	G09 G16
FTCC Facilities Supervisor	N	G04 G07
GIS Land Records Supervisor	N	G06 G12
GIS Mapping Specialist	N	G04 G07
GIS Specialist	N	G05 G09
Health Director	E	G12 G24
Human Resources Analyst & Risk Management Coordinator	N	G05 G10
Human Resources Director	E	G11 G21
Information Technology Director	E	G11 G21
I.T. Security Specialist/Help Desk Technician	N	G09
Lead Public Safety Telecommunicator Supervisor & Training Officer	E	G07 G12
Maintenance Technician	N	G02 G04
Maintenance Technician/Parks	N	G02 G04
Maintenance Technician/Signs	N	G02 G04
Mechanic	N	G03 G06
Motor Vehicle Appraiser/Collection Clerk	N	G03 G04
Nutrition Site Manager	N	G01
Opioid Prevention Coordinator	N	G07 G12
Parks and Rec Coordinator	N	G09
Payroll Specialist	N	G06 G11
Permitting Office Manager	N	G04 G07
Permitting Technician	N	G02 G03
Personal Property Appraiser	N	G03 G05
Planning and Development Director	E	G11 G21
Planner / Zoning Officer	N	G12

Position Title	FLSA	Grade
Processing Assistant IV	N	G02 G03
Processing Assistant IV (WIC)	N	G02 G03
Public Safety Telecommunicator	N	G04H G06H
Public Safety Telecommunicator Supervisor	N	G05H G09H
Public Works Director	E	G11 G21
Purchasing and Project Manager	E	G08 G15
Real Property Appraiser II	N	G04 G07
Records Specialist	N	G04 G07
Register of Deeds	E	G09 G16
Sanitation Equipment Operator	N	G04 G07
Senior Personal Property Appraiser	N	G05 G09
Senior Services Director	E	G08 G14
Shelter Manager	N	G04 G07
Soil and Water Conservation Director	E	G08 G14
Solid Waste/Landfill Supervisor	N	G06 G10
Sr. Code Enforcement Officer	N	G06 G11
Systems Administrator	N	G07 G13
Tax Administrator	E	G11 G21
Tax/EMS Collections Clerk	N	G03 G04
Tourism/Marketing Coordinator	N	G05 G09
Training and Quality Assurance Officer	N	G08
Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor	N	G06 G10
Veterans Service Officer	N	G04 G07
Walnut Cove Senior Center Coordinator	N	G03 G04
Water & Sewer Maintenance Technician	N	G03 G05

Section 6-C — Health Department Salary and Classification Schedule

Grade	Position Title	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
H01	—	N	\$31,703	\$41,200	\$50,700
H02	Nutritionist II	N	\$36,987	\$48,100	\$59,200
H03	—	N	\$38,837	\$50,500	\$62,100
H04	Community Health Worker	N	\$40,686	\$52,900	\$65,100
H04	Nutritionist III	N	\$44,808	\$58,200	\$71,700
H05	Licensed Practical Nurse II	N	\$44,808	\$58,200	\$71,700
H06	Environmental Health Specialist-Trainee	N	\$49,246	\$64,000	\$78,800
H07	Environmental Health Specialist	N	\$54,213	\$70,500	\$86,700
H08	—	N	\$56,924	\$74,000	\$91,100
H09	Public Health Nurse II	E	\$59,603	\$77,500	\$95,400
H10	Environmental Health Supervisor I	E	\$65,521	\$85,200	\$104,800
H11	Public Health Nurse Supervisor	E	\$72,073	\$93,700	\$115,300
H12	Physician Extender II	E	\$86,445	\$112,400	\$138,300

Section 6-D — Social Services Salary and Classification Schedule

Grade	Position Title	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
DSS01	Community Social Service Assistant	N	\$32,654	\$42,500	\$52,200
DSS02	Accounting Technician I	N	\$35,123	\$45,700	\$56,200
DSS02	Income Maintenance Caseworker I	N	\$35,123	\$45,700	\$56,200
DSS03	—	N	\$36,637	\$47,600	\$58,600
DSS04	Income Maintenance Caseworker II	N	\$39,567	\$51,400	\$63,300
DSS04	Income Maintenance Investigator I	N	\$39,567	\$51,400	\$63,300
DSS04	Social Worker I	N	\$39,567	\$51,400	\$63,300
DSS05	—	N	\$40,359	\$52,500	\$64,600
DSS06	Child Support Agent II	N	\$42,377	\$55,100	\$67,800
DSS06	Income Maintenance Caseworker III	N	\$42,377	\$55,100	\$67,800
DSS07	—	N	\$43,224	\$56,200	\$69,200
DSS08	Accounting Technician IV	N	\$46,420	\$60,300	\$74,300
DSS08	Social Worker II	N	\$46,420	\$60,300	\$74,300
DSS08	Child Support Supervisor I	E	\$46,420	\$60,300	\$74,300
DSS08	Income Maintenance Supervisor II	E	\$46,420	\$60,300	\$74,300
DSS09	Business Officer I	E	\$47,616	\$61,900	\$76,200

Grade	Position Title	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
DSS10	Social Worker III	N	\$49,501	\$64,400	\$79,200
DSS11	Social Worker III-IA&T (CPS)	N	\$53,712	\$69,800	\$85,900
DSS11	Social Worker Supervisor II	E	\$53,712	\$69,800	\$85,900
DSS13	Income Maintenance Administrator I	E	\$60,593	\$78,800	\$96,900
DSS14	Social Worker Supervisor III	E	\$62,411	\$81,100	\$99,900
DSS15	Social Worker Program Manager	E	\$66,344	\$86,200	\$106,200

Section 6-E — Emergency Services Salary and Classification Schedule

Grade	Position Title	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
E01	EMT Basic	N	\$20.20/hr.	\$26.30/hr.	\$32.00/hr.
E02	EMT Advanced	N	\$21.53/hr.	\$28.00/hr.	\$34.00/hr.
E03	Community Paramedic	N	\$23.36/hr.	\$30.40/hr.	\$37.00/hr.
E03	Paramedic	N	\$23.36/hr.	\$30.40/hr.	\$37.00/hr.
E04	Paramedic Shift Supervisor	N	\$27.73/hr.	\$36.00/hr.	\$44.00/hr.
E05	EMS Training Officer	E	\$62,647	\$78,300	\$94,000
E06	EMS Operations Manager	E	\$66,550	\$83,200	\$99,800
E08	Emergency Management Director	E	\$80,421	\$100,500	\$120,600

Section 6-F — Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Salary and Classification Schedule

Grade	Position Title	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
S01	Deputy Sheriff	N	\$45,442	\$56,800	\$68,200
S02	Corporal	N	\$48,823	\$61,000	\$73,200
S03	Detective	N	\$50,092	\$62,600	\$75,100
S04	Sergeant	N	\$52,522	\$65,700	\$78,800
S05	Detective Sergeant	N	\$55,164	\$69,000	\$82,700
S06	Lieutenant	E	\$60,448	\$75,600	\$90,700
S07	Captain	E	\$69,536	\$86,900	\$104,300
S08	Chief Deputy	E	\$83,486	\$104,400	\$125,200
S09	Sheriff	E	\$114,133	\$142,700	\$171,200

Section 6-G — Sheriff's Office Detention Salary and Classification Schedule

Grade	Position Title	FLSA	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
D01	Bailiff/Transport Officer	N	\$45,442	\$56,800	\$68,200
D01	Detention Officer	N	\$45,442	\$56,800	\$68,200
D02	Corporal – Jail	N	\$48,823	\$61,000	\$73,200
D03	Sergeant – Jail	N	\$52,522	\$65,700	\$78,800
D04	Lieutenant – Jail	E	\$60,448	\$75,600	\$90,700
D05	Captain – Jail	E	\$69,536	\$86,900	\$104,300

Section 6-H — Part-time Temporary Classifications and Pay Rates

The County's job classifications include part-time temporary employees that are paid an hourly rate not included in the regular salary range. Those jobs are listed below, and rates of pay are hourly unless otherwise noted.

Position Title	Minimum Rate (Hourly)
Elections Assistant	\$15.86
Deputy Sheriff	\$20.81
Deputy Sheriff – SRO	\$20.81
Records Clerk	\$15.86
Detention Officer	\$20.81
DRC Work Program Coordinator	\$17.50
Telecommunicator	\$19.45
Green Box Site Attendant	\$12.68
Veteran's Service Officer	\$21.19
Office Assistant	\$17.50
Nutrition Site Manager	\$16.26
SHIPP Coordinator	\$17.50
Park Attendant (seasonal)	\$12.68
Basic EMT	\$17.96
Advanced EMT	\$19.02
Paramedic	\$22.19



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: X.d

Updated Personnel Policy Handbook

Drafter: Jamie Clark

Summary:

The Personnel Policy Handbook has been updated to reflect current County practices, applicable legal requirements, the EMS schedule change, and other administrative and operational revisions. Changes also include updates to employment, leave, and compensation-related policies to improve clarity and consistency.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Stokes-County-Personnel-Policy-Handbook-Formatted \(1\).pdf](#)



Stokes County Employee Personnel Policy Handbook

*Protect, promote and enhance quality of life for Stokes County
residents and visitors.*

Revised 07/08/2026

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Description of Stokes County Government

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners is composed of five members elected by Stokes County citizens for staggered four-year terms. At the first regular meeting in December each year, the Board elects a chair and vice-chair from its members for a one-year term. Refer to the County website for dates and times of regular meetings. The public is welcome to attend these meetings. The Commissioners consider ordinances and resolutions that establish County policies and levy taxes. They also make appointments to boards, committees and commissions and set levels of service provided to Stokes County residents. The Commissioners appoint a County Manager as the administrative head of Stokes County Government. The County Manager supervises the day-to-day operations of all departments under the general direction of the Commissioners. Stokes County Government has a broad scope of responsibilities in many areas including Animal Control, 911 Communications, Emergency Services, Fire & Rescue, Sheriff's Office /Jail, Planning and Inspections, Public Health, Social Services, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Services, Public Libraries, Parks, Solid Waste, Public Buildings, Economic Development, Senior Services, Information Systems, Finance, Veterans Services, Human Resources, Board of Elections, Register of Deeds, Tax, GIS Property Mapping, District Resource Center, Vehicle Maintenance, Arts Council, and Natural Resources.

Equal Opportunity

Equal employment opportunity is the policy of Stokes County. Stokes County Government is committed to providing Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) to all employees and qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetics, political affiliation or any other non-job related criteria. All employment and personnel policies and practices including recruiting, hiring, promotions, transfers, training, compensation, benefits, reductions-in-force, termination and tuition assistance will be administered in a nondiscriminatory manner consistent with EEO principles. The County is committed to complying with all applicable federal and state employment laws.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employers with 15 or more employees from discriminating against applicants and individuals with disabilities. This law provides reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job, with or without reasonable accommodations, so that they may perform the essential job duties of the position. It is the policy of Stokes County to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is our county policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability in all employment practices including hiring, firing, compensation and all employment related activities.

ADA Accommodations

The County will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they may perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to Stokes County. Contact the Human Resource department with any questions or requests for accommodation. Persons who feel they have not been afforded an equal employment opportunity after providing such notice to the Human Resources Director of such disability may follow the established grievance procedure outlined in this handbook. (See pg. 9)

Proof of Right to Work

When an offer of employment is made to an applicant, the applicant shall be informed that proof of identity and eligibility to work in the United States will be required upon hire. A list of acceptable documents will also be described to the candidate. The Human Resources Department will ensure that the candidate's documents are verified no later than three (3) working days after the commencement of employment. All new employees hired by the County will be required to complete INS Form I-9. These forms will be maintained in the Human Resources Department. Employment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the verification requirement.

Workplace Harassment Prevention / Complaint Procedure

Purpose

Stokes County Government strives to provide an environment where all employees are free to perform their job duties with respect and dignity; therefore, Stokes County will not tolerate or condone workplace harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, age, color, or disability in any department by co-workers, supervisors, or nonemployees who conduct business with the County. Retaliation or interference, coercion, restraint or reprisal against any person complaining of, or participating in an investigation of, alleged harassment is also prohibited.

Workplace Harassment is defined as unwelcome speech or conduct based upon race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, age, color, or disability or other protected status that creates a hostile work environment or constitutes quid pro quo harassment.

Hostile Work Environment is defined as unwelcome speech or conduct that unreasonably interferes with job performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Whether a hostile work environment exists depends upon, among other things, the following factors: (i) whether the harassment was verbal or physical or both; (ii) how frequently the harassment was repeated; (iii) how hostile and clearly offensive; (iv) the identity of the harasser (coworker or supervisor); (v) whether other people joined in the harassment; and (vi) whether the harassment was aimed at more than one person. In addition to actual verbal or physical behavior, some examples of things that could contribute

to a hostile work environment include posted social media post, written materials and/or cartoons, radio or audio played and computer images or websites that another person could find offensive based on one of the protected statuses listed above.

Complaint Procedure

1. Supervisors or any employee who experiences workplace harassment should immediately file a complaint with an employee in their supervisory chain, the Human Resources Office, or the County Manager.
2. It is the employee's responsibility to complain in writing or to request an individual interview and be prepared to provide as much specific information as possible.
3. Supervisors on notice of harassment or any employee who experiences workplace harassment should also immediately report the prohibited conduct to their supervisor or the HR Director. Working very closely with Department Managers and other County administrators, the HR Department is responsible for managing all complaints of workplace harassment and for ensuring that complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially.

Investigation Process

The confidentiality and privacy of county employees and others involved will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances. The parties and appropriate management officials will be advised of the outcome of investigations. Any employee found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal.

Employment

At Stokes County Government our intent is to ensure that each employee:

- Has a superior experience as a Stokes County Government employee.
- Understands County and Department expectations for work and behavior.
- Understands policies and procedures for Stokes County Government.

There are three (3) categories of employment with Stokes County: Probationary, Permanent, and Temporary. A position may be either full-time or part-time within each category. Each category is defined as follows:

Probationary

Each employee hired or assigned to a permanent position shall serve a probationary period of six (6) months. Probationary period may be extended for an additional period up to three (3) months, but under no circumstances may a probationary period exceed a total of nine months. Satisfactory completion of a probationary period with regard to job performance is a requirement before any employee shall be considered a "regular" permanent employee. An employee serving a probationary period may be dismissed at any time during the probationary period without following the dismissal stipulations allowed in this policy. Further, a dismissed probationary employee shall have no rights under the disciplinary, appeal, or grievance procedures.

Health Department, Social Services, and Emergency Services Director are subject to the rules and regulations of the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources.

Permanent

Each employee in this category, after successfully completing a probationary period, is considered a permanent employee of the County.

Health Department and Social Services are subject to the rules and regulations of the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources.

Temporary

Each employee in this category is employed with the County on a temporary basis. Employees in this category do not serve a probationary period. All employees not classified as probationary or permanent are considered temporary, and may be dismissed at any time without following the dismissal stipulations allowed in this ordinance. Temporary employees shall have no rights under the disciplinary, appeal, or grievance procedures.

The use of the word permanent in this article and throughout the resolution shall not be construed or interpreted to mean guaranteed or indefinite. Should it be determined that a position is no longer needed, or an employee violates the provision of the resolution, appropriate action may be taken.

Responsibility for Positive Employee Relations

All employees of Stokes County Government have a responsibility to understand and promote county policies. Employees shall set a positive example through their ethical behavior. Supervisors shall welcome employee questions and concerns; listen and respond in a positive manner; and not retaliate against an employee for raising a concern in good faith.

Nepotism, Employment of Relatives and Relationships

Stokes County discourages workplace practices that results in conflicts of interest, favoritism or the appearance of favoritism. This extends to practices that involve employee hiring, promotion, demotions and transfers. The employment of close relatives, partners, those in dating relationships or immediate family members within the same department or division will be avoided. Close relatives or members of an immediate family shall not be employed within the same department or division of the department if such employment results in a close relative occupying a position which has influence over the other's employment, promotion, salary administration or other related management or personnel considerations.

For the purpose of this policy, 'close relative' includes parents, children, siblings, spouses, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews, as well as in-laws and step-relatives within the same degree.

The County Manager may make exceptions in cases with extenuating circumstances.

It is the policy of Stokes County that Supervisors are not to date their subordinates, and any occurrence is to be immediately reported to Human Resources. Any employee knowing of any such dating arrangements must report it immediately to Human Resources.

Personal relationships should not interfere with professional responsibilities, decision-making, or department operations. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Sheriff's Office and Register of Deeds please refer to the Employment Policy of the Stokes County Sheriff's Office and Register of Deeds.

Grievance Procedure

Problems can arise in any job situation. It is Stokes County's management philosophy that problems can best be resolved by free and open discussion. The County Grievance Procedure is designed to promote such discussion along with an orderly resolution to the problem. It is the County's desire to address employee grievances promptly and fairly. Except as specified under the Exceptions to Grievance Procedure section, any employee who has a problem or complaint concerning his or her job, working conditions or County policies may use the following grievance procedure. Employees are expected to continue to perform their jobs as directed by their supervisors until their grievance is resolved. For purposes of this Grievance Procedure, a mere disagreement or difference of opinion with a supervisor or another employee, including disagreement with a performance appraisal, a written warning or a position classification decision, is ordinarily not a grievable issue.

Step 1:

Employees should first discuss the problem with their immediate supervisor. Many concerns can be resolved at this level. An employee must put the complaint in writing.

Step 2:

If a satisfactory solution is not reached in Step 1, employees may request an appointment and meet with their Department Head to discuss the matter further. At the meeting with the Department Head, an employee should openly discuss the problem. If a satisfactory solution is reached, the matter may be considered resolved.

Step 3:

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved in a conference between an employee and the Department Head, an employee may then request an appointment to discuss the matter with the Human Resources Officer. The Human Resources Director will investigate the matter and report the findings to the employee and the employee's Department Head in writing.

Step 4:

After meeting with the Human Resources Director, if an employees' problem is still unresolved, an employee may request an appointment and meet with the County Manager. After this conference, the County Manager will consider the matter and will respond to the employee and Department Head through the Human Resources Director. The decision of the County Manager is final.

The Sheriff, and the Register of Deeds are elected officials and, by law, have the sole right to hire and dismiss their employees, as does the Tax Assessor, Health Director, and Department of Social Services Director for certain employees. Any employee in one of these departments who has a grievance should follow the grievance procedure established by their department.

ADA Grievance Procedure

Any person may file a complaint of non-compliance of the ADA with the Stokes County Human Resources Department. The following procedures shall be followed to provide a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint.

1. The complaint should be filed in writing, contain the name and address of the complainant, and briefly describe the alleged violation.
2. A complaint shall be filed within thirty (30) days of the alleged violation.
3. An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall be conducted by Human Resources Director affording all interested persons and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit relevant evidence.
4. A written determination shall be issued by the Human Resources Director and a copy forwarded to the complainant no later than twenty-one (21) days after its filing outlining the findings of the investigation, the validity of the complaint, and a description of the resolution, if any.
5. The Department Head shall take the necessary appropriate action to resolve the complaint if possible, as well as initiate action to prevent further non-compliance if any exists.
6. A request for reconsideration of the case may be made in instances where the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution. The request should be made within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the written determination of the Human Resources Director. The reconsideration request shall be presented to the County Attorney. The County Attorney shall review the complaint and issue a decision within thirty days of receiving the complaint. The decision of the County Attorney is final.
7. The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as filing a complaint with the responsible Federal agency, and the use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
8. The procedures shall be construed to protect the substantive rights of interested persons to meet appropriate due process standards and to assure that Stokes County complies with the ADA.

General Rules of Conduct

Propper conduct of all employees is necessary to ensure a safe, productive and pleasant working environment. As a County employee, conduct yourself in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Know and observe all established County policies and procedures.
- Perform the job and duties assigned.
- Be prompt in reporting to work and devote full attention to your work while on duty.
- Know and abide by the published safety rules (pages 15 - 16) of the County for your own protection, that of fellow employees and the public.
- Be fair, respectful, courteous and cooperative in dealing with the public and with fellow employees.

The following actions are not permitted. Any employee discovered committing any of the following offenses while on duty is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. This list is not all-inclusive:

- Refusing to carry out the instructions of a supervisor or other authorized person
- **Grossly inefficient or ineffective job performance**
- Repeatedly disappearing from the work area without permission or without an acceptable reason
- Removing County property from the premises without permission from the proper authority
- Theft or misuse of County property or services (e.g., mailing personal things, personal use of a County car, extensive use of cell phone or office phone for personal calls, making personal long distance phone calls at the County's expense, personal use of tools or supplies, etc.)
- Intentionally falsifying County records or being untruthful during an investigation
- Using internet access, e-mail, the telephone, a facsimile machine or any other means to view, generate, send or receive materials that could be construed as fraudulent, illegal, harassing, obscene, indecent, profane or intimidating
- Violating the Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Abuse Policy
- Fighting or provoking a fight on County property; using abusive, obscene, profane or threatening language; or engaging in immoral conduct while on duty
- Engaging in workplace violence which includes, but is not limited to intimidation, threats, physical attack, profane or threatening language, domestic violence or property damage
- County employees, with the exception of sworn law enforcement officers, or other authorized personnel, may not at any time be in possession of a firearm, ammunition, or an explosive device in a County building or on County property
- Operating a County vehicle without a valid driver's license or otherwise in violation of policies regarding the use of County vehicles
- A suspension or revocation of drivers' license or a failure to notify the supervisor of the loss of driving privileges prior to reporting for the next scheduled shift if your County job requires a drivers' license
- A criminal conviction or failure to notify your department manager immediately but no later than five (5) business days after any criminal conviction
- Unwelcome or unsolicited speech or conduct based on age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or any other factor that creates a hostile work environment

- Destruction, altering or removal of public record from the office where it is usually kept
- Intentional damage or destruction of county property
- **Time theft, falsification of time records, or allowing another employee to falsify time records**

Disciplinary Action

While it is Stokes County's desire and expectation that all employees' job performance meet or exceed expectations, realistically there may be times when an employee's job performance or personal conduct falls below an acceptable level. In those instances where an employee does not achieve acceptable standards of performance or violates established rules of conduct, supervisors are expected to take prompt action in accordance with the disciplinary procedures provided below. *Employees of the Sheriff's Office should refer to their department policy. Health Department and Social Services follow the discipline guidelines of the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources.*

As soon as performance or conduct deficiencies occur, supervisors are encouraged to counsel or give feedback to employees. If one or more coaching conversations fail to resolve the problem, supervisors should proceed to the following measures:

Corrective Action: Corrective Action is designed to assist employees to correct job-related performance or conduct that does not meet expected or required standards of Stokes County. Corrective actions are designed to provide employees with fair understanding of what is expected of them and an opportunity to improve their performance and correct their conduct. Corrective Action includes verbal coaching, formal verbal warnings, and written warnings.

Verbal Coaching: Verbal coaching involves a discussion between a Department Head or Supervisor and an employee to address performance or conduct concerns of a minor nature. Verbal coaching is intended as an informal discussion between the Department Head or Supervisor and the employee and does not need to be documented.

Verbal Warning: A Department Head or Supervisor has an oral conversation with an employee about a deficiency. A written record of discussion is placed in the employee's personnel file for future reference.

Written Warning: A written warning is to be used for a first instance of a serious failure in job performance or personal conduct, or when coaching, counseling and/or verbal warning(s) have failed to resolve a particular issue. Receipt of a written warning places an employee in a probationary status for not less than ninety (90) days. Failure to show immediate and sustained improvement in the area(s) noted in a written warning will result in further disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

Dismissal: Dismissal from employment will result when an employee fails to demonstrate improvement in deficient areas despite written warning(s) as noted above or when an employee engages in misconduct or violation of policy which is so serious as to warrant immediate dismissal without progressive discipline. Examples would include, but not limited to, engaging in criminal actions in the workplace, workplace violence, use of alcohol or drugs in the workplace, gross insubordination, or theft

of County property. All employee terminations, regardless of reason or circumstances, must receive prior approval from the County Manager.

Disciplinary Authority

Elected Officials (Sheriff and Register of Deeds) and Appointed Department Heads have the discretion to suspend or dismiss employees. However, it is advisable they consult with the Human Resources Director on disciplinary actions. All other Department Heads are required to consult with the Human Resources Director prior to taking action to suspend, or dismiss employees. There should be no involvement from the Stokes County Board of Commissioners when dismissing an employee not appointed by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners. Suspensions are very rarely used as disciplinary action but may be considered in unusual circumstances. If an employee is suspended with pay pending an investigation, all attempts will be made to resolve the investigation within 7 business days.

Right to Appeal Disciplinary Action

Every permanent employee (including permanent part-time employees) shall have the right to appeal a disciplinary action taken against them by their supervisor. This process is to assure each employee that disciplinary decisions are administered fairly and uniformly.

Step One: The employee shall present, in writing his/her intention to appeal to his/her immediate supervisor within ten (10) working days of the time the employee is notified of the disciplinary action.

Step Two: The supervisor shall file the notice of appeal with his/her Department Head. The Department Head shall arrange a date for the disciplinary hearing within ten (10) working days of receiving the notice of appeal.

Step Three: The Department Head shall review all documents pertaining to the case and may hear from either party verbally. The Department head may require the supervisor, the employee, or both be present when he/she renders a decision.

Step Four: Should the employee disagree with the decision rendered by the Department Head, he/she may appeal the decision to the Human Resources Director. The appeal must be filed with the Human Resources Director within ten (10) working days of the formal decision by the Department Head. The Human Resources Director will review the appeal and provide a recommendation. The final determination will be made by the County Manager, whose decision will be binding and not subject to further appeal.

For employees in the Sheriff's Office and Register of Deeds, there shall be no appeal beyond the decision of the respective office holders. Employees covered under the State Personnel Act shall follow guidelines/procedures set forth by the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources.

Appeal Procedure – Discrimination

Any applicant for County employment, County employee, or former County employee who has a reason to believe that employment, promotion, training, or transfer was denied him/her or that demotion,

layoff or termination of employment was forced upon him/her because of his/her age, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, political affiliation, or physical disability, except where specified age, sex, or physical requirements constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration, shall have the right to file his/her appeal directly with the Human Resources (in the case of a general County employee) or the State Personnel Commission (in the case of competitive service employees.)

An employee or applicant must appeal an alleged act of discrimination within thirty (30) days of the alleged discriminatory action. Appeals filed by general employees will be considered by the County Manager, whose decision is final.

Complaint Procedure - Sexual Harassment

The North Carolina State Personnel Sexual Harassment Policy adopted effective April 1, 1985 defines sexual harassment as *“deliberate and unwelcome verbal and/or physical conduct of a sexual nature or with sexual implications by a supervisor or a co-worker which: 1) has or may have direct employment consequences resulting from the acceptance or rejection of such conduct; 2) creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or 3) interferes with an individual’s work performance.”*

Employees are entitled to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. No personnel decisions shall be made on the basis of the granting or denial of sexual favors. Neither shall the receipt of services offered by this County to the public be contingent upon the granting or denial of sexual favors.

Any applicant, general County employee, competitive service employee, or former employee of the County who believes that he/she has been sexually harassed by a County employee may file a complaint to the employees Supervisor or Department Head. In the event the complaint is filed against one of the two listed above, the complaint should be made to the County Manager.

Open Door Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide full open access to the County Manager should an employee desire to meet one on one. Please contact the County Managers office to schedule a meeting time. It is not the intent of this policy for employees to bring matters to the County Manager that should be resolved within their supervisory chain of command. Such matters will be directed back to the employee’s supervisor or Department Head.

Separation from Employment

All separations of employees from positions in the service of the County shall be designated as one of the following types and shall be accomplished in the manner indicated: Resignation, reduction in force (RIF), disability, retirement, dismissal, or death.

Resignation: All permanent non-exempt employees must give a minimum of two (2) weeks’ notice, unless authorized by the County Manager. All permanent exempt employees must give a minimum of three (3) weeks’ notice. Such notice shall be in writing and given to the Department Head, or in case of a

Department Head to the County Manager or to the appropriate Board of Authority. (See pg. 57 – 58) for definition of Exempt and Non-Exempt employees)

Should an employee resign with less than a two (2) weeks' notice or three (3) weeks' in the case of an exempt employee, the employee shall forfeit all payment(s) for accumulated leave. Sick leave will only be approved during the final two weeks of a notice with a physician's certification or comparable documentation.

The County Manager shall waive the provisions of this policy in the event of a catastrophic health event, family emergency, or to meet the needs of the department.

Reduction in Force (RIF)

In the event that reduction in force becomes necessary consideration shall be given to the quality of each employee's past performance, organizational needs and seniority in determining those employees to be retained. Employees who are laid off because of reduction in force shall be given at least thirty (30) days' notice of anticipated layoff. No permanent employee shall be separated while there are temporary employees serving in the same class in the department, unless the permanent employee is not willing to transfer to the position held by the temporary employee.

Disability

An employee may be separated for disability when the employee cannot perform the required duties because of physical or mental impairment. Action may be initiated by the employee of the County, but in all cases shall be supported by medical evidence as certified by a competent physician. The county may require an examination at its expense and performed by a physician of choice.

End of Employment

An employee's end of employment date will be their last day worked or the last day of the approved leave, whichever is later. An employee may not use accrued leave beyond the last day worked in order to receive longevity pay, holiday pay or for any other reason. All insurance policies will be terminated at midnight on the last day worked. Retirement is the only exception.

Unemployment Insurance

In accordance with Public Law 95-566 and Chapter 1124 of the Session Laws of 1977 of the North Carolina General Assembly, local governments are covered by unemployment insurance effective January 1, 1978. County employees who are laid off or released from County service may apply for unemployment compensation through the nearest office of the Employment Security Commission who will determine the employee's eligibility for this benefit.

Payment of Accrued Leave: (Accrual Schedule can be found on pg. 63)

Accrued annual leave: The accrued annual leave will be paid in the last paycheck for all reasons of separation.

Accrued sick leave: The accrued sick leave will not be paid out. If an employee resigns from Stokes County employment and retires within a year, Stokes County will report to the Retirement System the accrued sick leave at the time of separation. If the employee resigns and goes to another North Carolina government agency within a year, the employee should check with the new employer to see if they accept a transfer of sick leave.

Return of County Property

Employees separating from employment for any reason must return all county property at the time of separation, including but not limited to uniforms, cell phones, keys, PCs and identification cards.

Exit Interview

When an employee ends employment with Stokes County by resignation or retirement, an exit interview will be scheduled with the Human Resources Department. The separating employee needs to contact the Human Resources department prior to separation to schedule an exit interview. The interview will be no later than the employee's last day of work. In the event an employee is terminated, they will be contacted by the Human Resources Department to schedule their interview. The purpose of the exit interview is to discuss relevant matters of concern to the terminating employee. Such matters include:

- Reason for termination
- Status of employee benefits
- Refund of retirement contributions
- Forwarding address

Workplace Safety

Stokes County places a high value on the safety of its employees and is committed to providing a safe workplace. A Safety Program was developed to identify and eliminate hazards in the workplace. The Safety Program focuses on injury prevention through employee training and education, development of departmental and county-wide safety policies and procedures, planning for foreseeable emergencies, inspection of County worksites to identify and correct hazards, and assisting departments in complying with OSHA standards. Our goal is to sustain a culture of safety and awareness.

Animals in the Workplace

Animals or pets, other than service animals, are not permitted in the workplace, even if the workplace is outdoors.

Employee Badges

Safety and security of employees is of utmost importance. Each employee is issued a personal ID badge which should be carried at all times.

Smoking Policy

The use of all tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco products, and any new tobacco products of any and all types is limited to designated areas with county issued ash receptors. An employee should refer to his or her designated department for those designated areas. Designated areas are specific to the building in which the employee works. Tobacco usage is limited to designated smoking areas and may not be used inside County buildings, County vehicles, any enclosed areas and where work is performed.

Possession of Firearms, Explosive Devices, or Weapons

County employees, with the exception of sworn law enforcement officers, or other authorized personnel, may not at any time be in possession of a firearm, ammunition, or an explosive device in a County building or on County property. Possession is defined as carrying on one's person, in a container of any type, or placement in a desk, office, or personal vehicle. Violation of this policy may result in serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Workplace Searches and Monitoring

Situations will arise where there is a legitimate, job-related concern that requires Stokes County to conduct a search or to monitor. All employees should assume that there is no expectation of privacy and that what they do while at work or on County premises is not private. A search is a part of an investigation process to determine the facts and does not constitute an accusation of wrongdoing. The reasons for such searches may include, but are not limited to the suspicion of using or possessing County property without permission or in an unauthorized manner; use or possession of drugs, alcohol, weapons, stolen property or other illegal contraband; and harassment, violence or threats of violence. A department, after consultation with the Human Resources Director and with the consent of the subject may contact the Stokes County Sheriff's Office to search, inspect, or monitor persons, vehicles, work spaces, desks, lockers, computers, telephones, packages or other items on County premises or on those premises where an employee is conducting business on behalf of the County. Any such search must be conducted by at least two persons, one of whom must be at the level of Department Head or above. Employees refusing to allow or to properly cooperate in a search where there is reasonable suspicion will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

In addition, it is expected that in the normal course of work employees may enter your work areas in your absence to continue work-related functions. Anything that is discovered in this process is subject to investigation.

Drug-Free and Substance Abuse Policy

Stokes County is committed to promoting and maintaining a safe, healthy, and efficient working environment for all employees within the county. To help achieve this goal, employees are prohibited from:

- Possessing, distributing, selling, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any illegal drug;
- Consuming alcoholic beverages while on County premises, County customer premises, in County vehicles, or while on County business or time; and

- Abusing inhalants or prescription drugs or possessing prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the employee by a physician.

An employee will be considered "under the influence" if the presence of alcohol or the above-cited use of such drugs is detected. If a supervisor suspects that an individual is at work and under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the supervisor will notify the Department Head and the Human Resources Director. Any employee who refuses to grant consent for submission to a drug or alcohol screen is grounds for immediate termination or it may be considered a "voluntary termination."

CBD and THC Use

Employees should be aware that CBD products, including oils, gummies, or other hemp-derived products, may contain trace amounts of THC. The FDA does not currently regulate THC levels in these products, and even products labeled as "THC-free" can result in a positive drug test for marijuana/THC.

- Use of CBD products is not considered a legitimate defense for a positive THC/marijuana test.
- Employees who test positive for THC will be treated as having violated this Drug-Free and Substance Abuse Policy, regardless of claimed CBD use.
- For safety-sensitive positions, including employees whose duties directly impact public safety, CBD use is strongly discouraged, and any positive drug screen for THC will be addressed according to County disciplinary procedures

Self-Reporting Requirement - Prior to employees driving a County motor vehicle as a part of their regularly assigned duties or prior to driving sporadically as assigned, employees shall disclose the following occurrences to their Department Head or to the Human Resources Director: arrests for on or off-duty DUIs, as well as convictions and the terms of any "diversion " program as a result of on or off-duty driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs; and the use of prescription drugs according to a physician's instructions or the use of over-the counter drugs for medicinal purposes in the event such drugs would impair their physical, mental, emotional, or other facilities. Such reporting is a confidential record in the same manner as FMLA records. The confidential nature of the employee's counseling and rehabilitation for drug or alcohol abuse will be preserved.

All applicants for County employment are subject to drug testing prior to a final offer of employment.

During Employment:

- **Post-Accident** – After any work-related accident the County may require post-accident drug testing.
- **Reasonable Suspicion** – When an employee reports to work and is believed to be under the influence of a controlled substance or impaired by the use of prescription/nonprescription medication or alcohol.
- **Random Basis** – The County may randomly test safety-sensitive employees, defined as those whose primary duties are likely to endanger the public or other employees if they are under the influence.

Sheriff's Office employees please refer to the Drug Testing Policy of the Stokes County Sheriff's Office.

Closings and Delays

It is the policy of Stokes County to remain open during most periods of inclement weather; however, where extraordinary circumstances warrant, due to weather or other unforeseen business interruption, the County Manager reserves the right to close ~~and/or delay the facility,~~ **County facilities, delay opening, or dismiss employees early.**

In the event the offices are closed, delayed, or employees are dismissed early - no one (citizens or county employees) should report to work without their Department Head's approval. Department Heads should have the County Manager's approval before working during a "closed" condition or authorizing any of their employees to work during a "closed" condition. Pre-approval to work during a "closed" condition is granted to those Department Heads performing a public safety functions, ~~which includes~~ **esing** the Sheriff's Office Jail, Emergency Communications, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal, Vehicle Maintenance, Public Works, On Call Social Workers, and On Call Health Department Nurses.

~~During a "closed condition", regular scheduled hours not worked due to the closure, delay, or early dismissal, will not be charged against the employee. Employees will not receive compensatory time for hours worked during a closed condition unless approved by the Department Head or County Manager. Hours coded "Employer Paid Closing" will not count towards overtime and/or compensatory time accumulation. During a "closed" condition, regular scheduled hours will not be charged against the employee. Employees may be granted County Paid Closing time for the affected period. County Paid Closing time may only be used to bring an employee up to their normal scheduled hours for the applicable pay period and will not exceed the amount of hours granted for that specific closing, delay, or early dismissal.~~

~~County Paid Closing time may not be used to create overtime, compensatory time, or additional paid hours beyond the employee's normal work schedule. Hours coded as "Employer Paid Closing" do not count toward overtime or compensatory time accumulation.~~

~~Employees required and approved to work during a "closed" condition will be compensated for actual hours worked. Employees will not receive compensatory time for hours worked during a closed condition unless specifically approved by the Department Head or County Manager.~~

Emergency Management and Provision of Essential Services During Natural Disaster

During and after major emergencies and disasters (such as tornadoes, ice storms, hazardous material spills, etc.) the residents of Stokes County will still expect the County to provide some level of service; therefore it is an expectation that employees be available to work.

Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention Policy

It is the intent of Stokes County to provide a safe workplace for all employees. The County will not tolerate intimidation, threats, verbal abuse, bullying, physical attacks, or any other act of violence

against employees, visitors, customers, county facilities or property. This includes such conduct by anyone on County property, or on a County-controlled site and in connection with County employment or County business. This zero-tolerance policy also prohibits such conduct while not at work if there is a potential adverse impact on an employee's ability to perform their assigned duties. Although nothing can guarantee that an employee will not become a victim of workplace violence, this policy provides information which will assist the County with its efforts to keep the County free from violence or the threat of violence. Whether perpetrated by or towards an employee, any violence or the threat of violence is strictly prohibited. A violation of this policy will lead to an investigation and corrective action up to and including a separation from employment or if applicable, a referral for prosecution. Employees should be alert to the possibility of violence by employees, former employees, customers, and visitors; should take seriously any violent act or threat against themselves or others; should not attempt to handle a violent or potentially violent incident on their own; and should report such acts of violence or threats as follows:

Call 911 -- Violence or Imminent Violence: Employees shall call 911 immediately if employees believe a danger exists or if a danger is imminent which could cause death or serious physical harm. After calling 911, employees shall notify their Department Head, or any supervisor, or any on-site security.

Threat of Violence. Employees who witness a threat, or receive a threat, or are on notice of a threat to another; shall immediately notify their Department Head, or any supervisor, or any on-site security.

Potential Threat. Employees shall report any behavior that they witness and regard as potentially threatening or violent if it is carried out in connection with County employment or County business and shall do so even without a specific threat, and regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the behavior and the person being threatened.

Additional County Contacts. Employees should report to the Human Resources Director or the Risk Manager if unable to contact the Department Head or a supervisor.

Conceal Carry Policy

This section does not pertain to sworn law enforcement or security personnel.

Stokes County allows employees who have a Conceal Carry Permit issued by the State of North Carolina (or issued by a State with reciprocal agreement with North Carolina) to carry concealed weapons (CCW) on/in County property unless otherwise prohibited by State and Federal Statute. Some Federal or State programs, funding, rules or regulations prohibit carrying concealed weapons in specific areas/buildings or while participating in regulated programs, activities or in any transportation vehicle. In those situations employees, interns, or volunteers are not allowed to have a CCW with them or in a County building that provides the services. Always check with your Supervisor or your Department Head if you are unsure.

Employees must follow all state rules, regulations, and laws regarding the use of a CCW for self-defense or in the defense of others. Failure to do so can result in a personal liability issue and/or legal or criminal implications.

Safety Rules for CCW (any violations of these rules will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination).

- Concealed means concealed. Do not display a CCW at work or in public unless a qualifying emergency justifies it.
- Employees must keep the CCW under their control at all times while on County property. Do not leave your CCW unattended in a purse, bag, briefcase, etc.
- You may lock your CCW in a personal gun safe if you are the only one in control of the unlocking method. The gun safe must not be visible to the public. The County is not responsible if your CCW is lost or stolen.
- If so equipped, the safety must be engaged.
- In an emergency, never display your CCW in the presence of law enforcement.
- Open carry of a firearm or fixed blade knife is considered menacing and is not allowed.
- Employees must refrain from telling other employees that they have a CCW as this may be perceived as hostile or threatening.
- In keeping with state law, if approached by a law enforcement officer who is conducting an operation in an official capacity, the CCW holder should notify the officer that they have a CCW and have a permit. Employees must follow the officer's directions accordingly. This does not include casual/business contact with our local Sheriff's Office employees.

Disclosure and Protection of Confidential Information

Employees are not authorized to disclose confidential information: (a) to any other County employee unless there is a legitimate business reason, on a need to know basis, and pursuant to their job descriptions or; (b) to any person outside of the County unless management expressly states that the information may be disclosed to that person. An employee authorized to do so may access, use, or disclose confidential information only if they exercise due diligence in order to ensure the privacy and security of such information. This expectation applies to all such information whether in oral, written, photographic, or electronic form. The employee duty also extends to ensuring the privacy and security of County devices such as computers, smart phones, and tablets. This duty continues even after an employee separates from the County. County employees are required to treat all information as confidential County property unless the employee's Department Head directs otherwise or the employee obtains prior approval to disclose. This requirement extends to all contractors, personnel with organizations partnering with the County, and volunteers. Individuals allowed access by consent, by authorization based upon employees' job title, or by law are required to limit further use and disclosure. Such safeguards require employees to restrict access to certain designated areas and documents. Violations of County privacy and security policies or state and federal regulatory requirements which result in unauthorized or inappropriate use, disclosure, or access may be considered a breach, will not be tolerated, and subjects an employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

All employees are subject to close supervision and monitoring by Department Heads to ensure that employees review and comply with obligations under policies designed to safeguard the County's confidential property.

For the purpose of this policy, the term "confidential information" refers to any non-public information.

Whistleblowers Protection

Any employee who reasonably believes that a policy, practice, or activity of Stokes County Government is in violation of law, a clear mandate or public policy must file a written complaint with the Human Resources Director. This enables Stokes County to investigate and, if the complaint is substantiated, to correct the alleged violation. Stokes County will not retaliate against an employee who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of the County or of an employee of the County, or of another individual or entity with whom the County has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, a clear mandate or public policy. Stokes County does not retaliate against employees who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of the County that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, rule or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate or public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare or protection of the environment.

Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance and punctuality are very important responsibilities of a County employee. When an employee is unable to report for work, it is his/her responsibility to notify the supervisor. An employee should contact the supervisor as soon as it is apparent the employee will be unable to report to work.

Excessive tardiness may affect promotion and continued employment. An employee absent without an excuse shall be subject to suspension. Continued or repeated unexcused absences shall result in dismissal. An employee absent from work for three consecutive days without notification to the supervisor may be terminated as a voluntary resignation.

Required Licensures and Certifications

Employee Responsibility

If an employee's job requires a specific license (including driver's license) or certification, it is the employee's responsibility to keep the license or certification current and in good standing. An employee is required to notify the supervisor immediately upon notice of any pending disciplinary action, sanction or loss of privileges, suspension, revocation, lapse or loss of any credentials that make you eligible to perform your duties.

Department Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each County department to confirm proof through the proper licensing authority that such credentials are valid for each new hire, to monitor credentials regularly dependent upon the renewal cycle, and to perform periodic checks of licenses and certifications for all employees whose job requires it.

Information Acceptable Use Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure the responsible and lawful use of information technology resources by employees, contractors, and authorized users of Stokes County (the “County”). The rules below protect technology users and the County while not inhibiting job duties. Inappropriate use of IT systems, networks and equipment exposes the County to cyber-attacks, data, and financial loss along with service disruption.

Scope:

This policy applies to all individuals accessing or using Stokes County’s IT resources, including but not limited to employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, vendors, temporary workers and authorized third parties.

Information technology resources include any data in digital or audio-visual format or any hardware or software that stores or transmits such data including but not limited to external storage devices, personal computers, mobile devices, Internet of Things connected devices owned or leased by Stokes County.

Policy:**A. Information Access and Ownership**

All information transmitted by, received from, or stored on County systems is the property of Stokes County and as such, is subject to inspection by County officials. The County reserves the right without advance notice to access and monitor every message and file on the County’s email or Internet system. Despite the existence of any passwords, employees should not assume that any electronic communication is private. Highly confidential information or data should be transmitted in other ways. The County may monitor for any legitimate business purpose, including without limitation the following: (i) to measure cost analysis/allocation and the management of the County’s gateway to the Internet; (ii) to investigate theft or unauthorized disclosure of confidential business or proprietary information; (iii) to investigate personal abuse of the system; and (iv) to evaluate workflow and productivity. The County Manager shall designate persons authorized to conduct monitoring.

B. Prohibited Use

Stokes County must protect the security, integrity, and availability of all technology assets supporting Stokes County’s services as follows:

1. Any attempt to disable or circumvent any Stokes County security controls, policies, or procedures (e.g., disabling virus protection or installing unauthorized software, or password cracking programs) is prohibited.
2. Use that violates Stokes County policy or local, state, and/or federal laws is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Theft of Stokes County technology assets, including sensitive data.
 - b. Use of Stokes County systems for any type of harassment.
3. Unauthorized use, destruction, modification, or distribution of Stokes County external and internal systems, applications, and data is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Release or disclosure of Stokes County data to unauthorized parties inconsistent with federal, state, and local law, Stokes County policies, or inconsistent with assigned job role and responsibilities.
 - b. Attempts to modify administrative settings and configurations or repair hardware and software. Such modifications and repairs shall only be performed by authorized Stokes County technology support personnel.
 - c. Removal of technology assets from Stokes County premises without prior approval by authorized technology support personnel or department is prohibited. This excludes technology issued for remote work.
4. Use of personal devices including computers, network devices, or any other personal equipment to make a direct network connection (wired or wireless) to Stokes County internal private networks within Stokes County facilities is prohibited. This does not include use of Verizon extenders.
5. Personal devices such as mobile phones and tablets may be used to access Stokes County technology such as email, calendar, and unified communications and for purposes of multi-factor authentication. Personal devices must utilize apps (mobile applications and/or software) authorized by the Information Technology Department ("SCIT"). Personal devices may be denied access if insecure configurations are detected. Stokes County reserves the right to require personal mobile devices or mobile apps to be managed by a mobile device or mobile app management solution to protect Stokes County technology and data.
6. Use of Stokes County technology assets to solicit for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, or for personal gain unrelated to the processes of working for or on behalf of Stokes County is prohibited unless explicitly allowed by Stokes County policy or federal, state, or local law.
7. Stokes County's technology assets must never be left unattended in an unsecured location.
8. Lost or stolen Stokes County technology assets must be reported immediately by notifying SCIT and your immediate supervisor.

9. Immediately upon termination of any Stokes County workforce member, including any third party or contractor, all Stokes County technology assets must be returned to Stokes County.
10. Hardware and software must be procured in accordance with Stokes County procurement policies, in compliance with SCIT policies and standards, and properly licensed and registered in the name of Stokes County.
11. Downloading or installing pirated or unlicensed software and software not approved by SCIT is prohibited.
12. Employees and authorized users should not use unauthorized Cloud Services (e.g. file storage/share services like DropBox, Box.com, etc.) to store Stokes County data.
13. Employees and authorized users must not engage in activity that may negatively impact or degrade the performance of technology resources (e.g. network traffic) or circumvent information security measures.
14. Pursuant to *N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-805*, Stokes County does not permit employees, elected officials, or appointees of Stokes County to view pornography on devices owned, leased, maintained, or otherwise controlled by Stokes County.
 - a. Stokes County does not permit the viewing of pornography by employees on Stokes County networks.
 - b. This section is not applicable to an official or employee that is engaged in any of the following activities in the course of that official's or employee's official duties:
 - i. Investigating or prosecuting crimes, offering or participating in law enforcement training, or performing actions related to other law enforcement purposes.
 - ii. Identifying potential security or cybersecurity threats.
 - iii. Protecting human life.
 - iv. Establishing, testing, and maintaining firewalls, protocols, and otherwise implementing this section.
 - v. Participating in judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings.
 - vi. Conducting or participating in an externally funded research project at one of the constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina.

C. Personal Use

Stokes County technology assets (hardware, software, network and Internet) are purposed for conducting the business of Stokes County. Occasional personal use of technology assets available to workforce members is permitted if the use does not:

1. Introduce additional financial costs to Stokes County;

2. Interfere with staff assigned job duties;
3. Preempt or interfere with Stokes County service delivery;
4. Otherwise violate Stokes County, departmental, or agency policies.

Information created, processed, sent, received, or stored during personal use of Stokes County technology assets will not be handled differently by Stokes County. Personal files should not be permanently stored on Stokes County technology assets. Stokes County is not responsible for backing up or recovering personal data. Public records stored on personal devices are accessible by Section 132-6 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

D. Acceptable Use of the Internet or Artificial Intelligence Tools

System users are responsible for ensuring that use of the Internet is appropriate, ethical, lawful, and within the scope of employment at Stokes County.

1. Stokes County reserves the right to block access to Internet web sites and addresses, including malicious or dangerous Internet web sites or Internet addresses unrelated to Stokes County's business. This could be blocked by domain names, IP addresses, individually or by category (i.e. gambling, violence, pornography, known to be hostile). SCIT by way of a Help Desk ticket and supervisor approval can address site blocking.
2. Stokes County may monitor and log the use of the Internet by technology assets connected to Stokes County networks to comply with various laws, legal proceedings, or internal policy, to troubleshoot and support technology, or to monitor and investigate unauthorized activity.
3. While using Stokes County technology and Internet access it is not appropriate to:
 - a. Use the Internet for any unlawful activity or for personal gain.
 - b. Reproduce, distribute, or display copyrighted materials without prior permission of the copyright owner.
 - c. Accessing sites that are related to illegal activities.
 - d. Submit or input any Stokes County protected information like PHI, PII and/or HIPAA related into external websites or Artificial Intelligence systems (such as ChatGPT).
4. Use Stokes County passwords or email addresses as account information for any personal accounts used to access Internet services, websites, or social media (e.g., LinkedIn).

E. Acceptable Use of Electronic Messaging

Authorized users are responsible for ensuring that all electronic communications are professional and business-like and should assume that whatever messages sent have the potential to be shared with other audiences, including the general public and through requests for public records pursuant to

Section 132-6 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Use of the approved Stokes County messaging applications (e.g., email, instant message, text messaging, etc.) should be followed in this manner:

1. If the content of an email is suspicious immediately notify the SCIT Help Desk.
2. Use caution when opening emails and attachments, particularly those received from an external sender. Do not open attachments from an unknown sender.
3. Do not click on hyperlinks embedded in email or text messages from unknown senders.
4. Do not forward Stokes County email containing confidential, Personal Health Information (PHI) or Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and/or sensitive or regulated data to personal email accounts.
5. Only send email that contains County related Personal Health Information (PHI) or Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data externally using the County provided encryption method.
6. Use of non SCIT-approved electronic messaging tools while on the Stokes County network is prohibited.

F. Record Retention

Authorized users should always maintain electronic files, data, records, and electronic communication on the appropriate network drives established by SCIT as they are backed up routinely. Whenever authorized users maintain electronic files, data, records, and electronic communication on their local drives, they are responsible for backing up the data on a regular basis with backup procedures provided by SCIT. Authorized users are responsible for following all record retention and disposition schedules adopted by Stokes County.

G. No Expectation of Privacy

Stokes County monitors technology systems and technology assets to maintain a secure environment and meet compliance requirements. There is no expectation of privacy or confidentiality while using Stokes County technology assets, including network usage, Internet access and emails. Usage may be monitored for policy, security, or network management reasons and is subject to inspection at any time. Inspection and monitoring of Stokes County technology assets by management does not require the consent of individual workforce members. If any content violates regulations or laws, Stokes County reserves the right to submit the information to law enforcement for potential prosecution.

H. Reporting Known or Suspected Vulnerabilities or Security Incidents

Known or suspected security weaknesses, instances of inappropriate access, and/or suspicious activities should be reported to the appropriate supervisor and SCIT.

1. Users are responsible for the security, integrity, and availability of stored files.
2. Suspicious activities happening to a technology resource such as someone controlling the device remotely without consent or new and unfamiliar software performing unusual activities must be reported by contacting SCIT..

I. System Security

1. Users must not share Stokes County network and/or application account(s), passwords, Personal Identification Numbers (PIN), Security Fobs or other similar information or devices used for identification or authentication on County technology resources.
2. The use of Multi-Factor Authentication to access County technology assets will be enforced in accordance with the County Multi-Factor Authentication Policy.
3. Authorized users will be required to participate in Security Awareness Training sessions in order to enhance their understanding of security best practices, recognize potential threats, and develop the skills to protect sensitive information and systems.

J. Violations

Users must report any incidents of possible misuse or violation of the Acceptable Use Policy. Any employee or County representative who violates these rules or otherwise abuses the privilege of the County's technology resources will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination. If necessary, the County also reserves the right to advise appropriate officials of any illegal activities.

Political Activity

As prohibited by Chapter 153A-99 of the General Statutes of North Carolina:

Stokes County employees have a civic responsibility to support good governance by every available means and in every appropriate manner. Each employee may join or affiliate with civic organizations of a partisan or political nature, may attend political meetings, may advocate and support the principles or policies of civic or political organizations in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the State of North Carolina and in accordance with the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America.

However, no employee shall:

1. Engage in partisan or political activity while on duty, or while identifying themselves using their Stokes County job title.
2. Use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with affecting the result of an election or nomination for office;

3. Be required as a duty of employment or as a condition for employment, promotion, or tenure of office to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes;
4. Coerce or compel contributions for political or partisan purposes from another employee or serve as a fund raiser for a specific candidate or party; or
5. Use County funds, supplies or equipment for any political or partisan purpose;
6. Distribute or post any political goods, supplies, or materials for a specific candidate or party while on duty.

County employees subject to the State Employees Act and employees in certain Federally-aided programs are subject to the Hatch Act as amended in 2012. This federal act also prohibits candidacy for elective office in a partisan election. All county employees may be a candidate for and may serve in a nonpartisan elected or appointed public office, whether paid or not, including, but not limited to school boards, or city or town councils.

Solicitations, Distributions and Gifts and Favors

In order to protect employees from unwanted interruptions, it is the policy of Stokes County that solicitations by outsiders for any reason and solicitations by employees on County property are forbidden. (This provision does not apply to official campaigns such as United Fund of Stokes County.)

Gifts and Favors

No official or employee shall accept any gift, favor or object of value that may tend to influence the employee in the discharge of his/her duties.

This policy shall not prohibit:

1. Receipt of honorariums for officers' or employees' participation in meetings;
2. Advertising items or souvenirs of nominal value;
3. Meals furnished at banquets or business dinners;
4. Receipt of exchange of gifts or favors between employees/officers and their friends and/or relatives where it is clear that the motivating factor is a personal relationship rather than a business relationship.

Outside Employment

The work of the County should take precedence over other occupational interests of an employee and secondary employment work should not interfere with the employee's county duties, involve a potential conflict of interest, or in any way compromise the integrity or credibility of Stokes County Government. All outside employment for salaries, wages, or commission, and all self-employment must be disclosed to the Department Head in writing and is subject to review for conformance to this policy by the Department Head and County Manager. Conflicting outside employment will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Conflict of Interest

The credibility of local government rests heavily upon the confidence which citizens have in public offices and employees to render fair and impartial services to all citizens without regard to personal interest and/or political influence. Therefore, Stokes County employees must avoid any activity which may suggest a conflict of interest between their private interests and County responsibilities.

Examples of activities that are considered violations of this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Activities that require an employee to interpret County laws, codes, ordinances, or regulations when such activity involves matters with which the employee has business and/or family ties.
- Using an employee's authority, influence, or County position for the purpose of private or personal financial gain.
- The use of County time, facilities, equipment or supplies for the purpose of personal gain; financial or otherwise.
- Entering into a business transaction which involves using confidential information gained in the course of employment.
- Accepting or continuing other employment or positions where such activity will affect the employee's independence of judgment or require the use of confidential information gained as a result of County duties.
- Accepting rebates or procuring any financial gain through the bidding process or employment of outside personnel.
- Using or disclosing information gained in the course of employment or by reason of position for purposes of advancing a financial or personal interest, a business entity which there is an ownership interest, a financial or personal interest of a household member or a family member, or any other private or political interest.
- Disclosing confidential or privileged information concerning personnel matters, property, contract negotiations, litigation-related matters, or other affairs of the County that are afforded protection under state law.
- Engaging in public support for the campaign of any individual running for Stokes County offices while on duty or during any time they are expected to perform compensated services for the county.
- Using County time or resources in promoting or advocating the election of any individual.
- Engaging in activity which conflicts with North Carolina General Statute 160D-109 or North Carolina General Statute 160D-1108 while conducting development review on behalf of the County.

Any employee engaging in any activity involving either an actual or potential conflict of interest or having knowledge of such activity by another employee is encouraged to promptly report the activity to the County Manager, or if such activity is by the County Manager, to the Board Chair. The County Manager or Board Chair shall investigate the matter and decide as to whether an actual or potential conflict exists. If the County Manager or Board Chair determines a conflict exists, it shall be presumed that the continuation of the practice would be damaging to the effectiveness of the employee in carrying out his/her duties and responsibilities. In such cases, the employee shall immediately terminate the conflicting activity or be subject to termination of employment or removal from office.

Any County employee having knowledge of or a reason to know of a potential personal interest, or upon the discovery of a potential personal interest, has an affirmative duty to disclose such personal interest to the County Manager. Any attempts by any person, firm or corporation to influence the decision of a county employee with regard to County business must be reported to the County Manager. Nothing in this policy is intended to violate, supersede, or conflict with any applicable state or federal laws regarding conflicts of interest in public employment or disclosure requirements.

Any county employee who is found to have violated any provision of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Employee Personnel Records

Stokes County takes utmost precautions to protect confidential employee information. It is maintained in secured files for necessary business purposes only and considered property of the County. While most of the information contained in your personnel file is confidential, some information is a matter of public record under North Carolina law (G.S. §153A-98). Employees may inspect their personnel files at reasonable times upon reasonable notice.

What is Public Record?

- Name
- Age
- Date of original employment
- Terms of any written or oral employment contract
- Current position title
- Current salary (including benefits, incentives, bonuses, deferred and all other forms of compensation)
- Date and amount of each increase or decrease in salary
- Date and type of each promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation or other change in position classification
- Date and general description of the reasons for each promotion
- Date and type of each dismissal, suspension, or demotion for disciplinary reasons
- For dismissals due to disciplinary reasons, a copy of the written notice of final decision setting forth the specific acts or omissions that are the basis for the dismissal
- Current assigned office

Workweek

The workweek for general County employees is thirty-seven and one-half (37 ½) hours per week unless otherwise designated according to their job requirements. The schedule of some departments vary from the basic schedule. For example, law enforcement personnel normally work 84, 85, or 90 hours in a 14 day cycle, Communications personnel normally work 84 hours in a 14 day cycle, and EMS either works 96 or 120 hours in a 14 day cycle. The basic workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday and ends at 12:00 a.m. on the following Saturday for all County employees. Employees who work a 37.5 or 40.0 hour

work week will be required to take a one hour lunch break unless a change is approved by their immediate supervisor.

Flex schedules must be approved by the Department Head and County Manager.

Remote Working Policy

A Remote Working Program is an arrangement that allows eligible Stokes County employees to work in a designated area outside the office while still being accountable for their work. Remote Work is a cooperative arrangement between employees, their supervisors, and employing departments, and will only be used for temporary, special situations as approved by the County Manager.

Employment Procedures, Requirements, Incentives, Performance Evaluations

Employment Offer

Once the Department Head has selected a candidate for employment, the Department Head will work with the Human Resources Director to create a salary recommendation. It will be the responsibility of the Department Head to verify dates of service with prior employers and determine if previous employment is relevant to the job. The Human Resources Director will review the salary recommendation with the Finance Director. Once the salary recommendation has been verified by the Human Resources Director and the Finance Director, the salary recommendation will be presented to the County Manager for final approval. Once the County Manager has approved the candidate, if applicable, along with the salary recommendation, the Human Resources Director will forward this information to the Department Head. Once the Department Head has received approval notification from the Human Resources Director, Human Resources will send the candidate an offer of employment letter for confirmation. The candidate will not be allowed to start employment with Stokes County until the Job Description Acknowledgment Form (See pg. 66) has been signed and background check has been completed and returned to the Human Resources Department.

Appointments

It is the County's policy to create career opportunities for its employees when possible. Therefore, when a current employee applying for a vacant position possesses the best qualifications of all applicants, that applicant shall be appointed to the vacant position unless doing so violates other aspects of Stokes County's personnel policy (i.e., nepotism). Departments subject to the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources must verify that the employee is fully qualified for the position before such appointment.

Once a Department Head realizes a vacancy within the department, he/she shall notify the Human Resources Director or County Manager. The vacancy shall be advertised on the County website for a

period of no less than two (2) weeks. A longer and more widely circulated vacancy advertisement may be approved by the Human Resources Director or the County Manager.

All applications for employment shall be submitted through the Human Resources Office. Department Heads and supervisors shall refer all applicants to the Human Resources Office to ensure a consistent and equitable hiring process.

Before any commitment is made to the applicant, the Department Head, not subject to the State Personnel Act, shall forward an appointment recommendation and reasons for selecting the particular request to interview the recommended applicant, to the Human Resources Director or County Manager. The Human Resources Director or County Manager, may request to interview the recommended applicants himself/herself. After investigating the qualifications and experience of the recommended applicant, the County Manager shall approve or reject the appointment. After approval Human Resources may extend a conditional offer of employment to the selected applicant. Employment shall be contingent upon an acceptable physical examination, drug test, driver's license and criminal history report.

The appointment by the Sheriff or Register of Deeds of a relative by blood or marriage or nearer kinship than first cousin, of a person who has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude is subject to approval by the Board of County Commissioners as required by **G.S. 153A-103**. The Board of County Commissioners shall advertise for, interview, appoint, and evaluate the positions of County Manager and the County Attorney.

It shall be the following policy of Stokes County, excluding the Sheriff and Register of Deeds, relating to the hiring of relatives:

- a. Close relatives shall not be employed at the same time if such employment would result in an employee directly or indirectly supervising their relatives.
- b. This policy shall not be retroactive, and no action will be taken concerning those members of the same family employed in conflict with (a) above prior to the adoption of this policy.
- c. Close relative is defined for the purpose of this section as spouse, mother, father, guardian, children, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparents, grandchildren, plus the various combinations of half, step, in-law, and adopted relations that can be derived from those names.

Physical Examinations

Each selected applicant for County employment in a permanent position shall, as a condition of employment, submit to a physical examination at no cost to the applicant. The Department shall schedule the applicant to be examined within 14 days or as soon as possible after the applicant begins his/her duties. The physician of the County's choice shall be used to perform the examination.

A physical examination is completed to determine whether the selected applicant is physically capable of satisfactorily performing the duties of the position and without endangering the safety of himself/herself or others. Should the results of the physical examination indicate the applicant is unable to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position and without endangering the safety of himself/herself or others, the applicant shall not fill the position.

Any employee of the County may be required to submit a physical examination if the Supervisor deems the employee unable to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position, and without endangering the safety of himself/herself or others. Should the results of the physical examination indicate the applicant is unable to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position and without endangering the safety of himself/herself or others, the employee may be transferred to a position suitable to his/her qualifications and capabilities, retired, or be terminated.

In all cases, the cost of required physical examinations shall be paid for by the County, and the results of the examination shall be kept confidential.

Permanent employees are encouraged, but not required, to undergo regular physical examinations.

Background Checks

It is the policy of Stokes County to provide a safe and secure working environment for all employees. Criminal background checks are an important tool in determining the suitability of an individual for either initial or continued employment with the county. Once an applicant becomes the final candidate for any position with the county, the hiring manager shall request a criminal background check from the Human Resources Department. The HR Department will request such a report from a reputable vendor. The background investigation shall include, at a minimum, an identity verification, a sex offender registry check, and a criminal record check. In addition, a credit check, educational verification check, and/or driving record history may be required depending on the position.

Any applicant refusing to authorize the background check will have their application rejected. If an applicant fails to reveal any previous conviction on the employment application, he/she will be disqualified from employment. The county shall not treat background check information differently for individuals based on their race, color, gender, religion, age, political affiliation, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, genetic information or any other non-job-related factors.

Stokes County reserves the right to conduct criminal background checks, including a criminal record check, on any current employee suspected of providing false information on his/her application or other documents. Any violations will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any employee promoted to a position shall be subject to a criminal background check.

An applicant for employment will be rejected if the criminal record check reveals conviction of a crime that indicates that employee (1) poses a threat to the physical safety of County personnel, or (2) does not have the integrity or honesty to fulfill his or her duties as a County employee. Conviction of a crime, as used in this policy, includes the entry of (1) a plea of guilty, no contest, or the equivalent; or (2) a verdict of guilty in a court of law or military tribunal.

If the county considers an applicant's criminal record in a decision adverse to an applicant, the County Manager shall make written findings with regard to the reason therefore.

The Stokes County Sheriff's Office may have pre-employment procedures for background checks that are more stringent than stated in this policy.

Additional Requirements for Positions Involving Work with Children

Effective October 1, 2025, in compliance with NC Session Law 2025-16, any applicant who is offered a position with Stokes County that requires working directly with children must undergo a criminal history record check through the State Bureau of Investigation, including both State and National repositories. These checks require the applicant's written consent and may include fingerprinting or other identifiers. A conditional offer of employment may be extended while the check is pending, but applicants may not assume regular duties involving children until the check is complete and reviewed by the Human Resources Department in consultation with the hiring department.

Employment decisions based on the results will consider whether the record indicates the applicant poses a risk to children's safety or lacks the integrity and honesty required for the role. If an applicant is rejected due to the results, the applicant will be notified in writing and provided an opportunity to respond. All records will be maintained securely and treated as confidential in accordance with law.

Recruitment Incentives

~~It is the County's policy to recruit the best qualified, most experienced personnel possible. Therefore, applicants hired within 6 months of their separation from other government agencies participating in the North Carolina Local/State/Federal Government Employees Retirement System shall be allowed to transfer a maximum of five years of their accrued years of service. This benefit applies only to those formally employed in local government or related agencies, and previously enrolled in the Local and State Employees' Retirement System, including employees previously employed by Stokes County.~~

To assist with recruitment, newly hired employees may receive credit for up to five (5) years of prior full-time local government, state government, or other qualifying public sector service for the sole purpose of determining their vacation leave accrual rate. Approved service credit will not affect the employee's hire date, longevity, retirement service, or any other employment benefits unless otherwise required by law or County policy.

Employees receiving prior service credit shall begin accruing vacation leave at the rate applicable to their approved years of service, up to a maximum of five (5) years. Verification of prior qualifying service must be provided and approved by the County Manager before the employee's leave accrual rate is adjusted.

County Holidays

The provisions of this article shall not apply to temporary employees with the exception of Workers' Compensation, Retirement, and Supplemental Retirement, as they are governed by State or Federal Law.

The County observes twelve (12) annual holidays.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Birthday
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving (2)
- Christmas (3)

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed.

If the Department Head or County Manager determines that it is necessary for an employees to work on a holiday, compensatory hours shall be awarded for the hours worked. Employees who are subject to work holidays because the department continues to operate as usual shall receive an accrual of holiday hours which will be taken at the direction of the Department Head and prior use of all other leave time. These departments are: Sheriff's Office, Emergency Communications, Jail, and EMS. Solid Waste employees who must work on holidays will accrue compensatory time. Accumulated holiday hours are compensable if the employee terminates. Employees will be required to use accrued holiday hours before using any other type of leave.

Holiday pay will be granted only when an employee works the day before and the day after the holiday, or has a sufficient earned leave balance to use. (The use of "day before" and "day after" represents the entire scheduled workday before and after the holiday.)

Permanent, part-time employees earn holiday pay only when the holiday falls on a regular scheduled workday and only earn the number of hours normally scheduled.

Leave Benefits

Vacation Leave

The County provides annual leave benefits to all part/full-time permanent County Employees. However, only employees that have attained permanent employee status may request to take annual leave. Employees that have not attained permanent employee status will not be allowed to take annual leave unless authorized by their Department Head or the County Manager.

To take annual leave, an authorized employee should first make a request to their supervisor at least three working days in advance of the date they wish to start their leave period and receive approval from their supervisor before taking the requested annual leave. Approval/denial of annual leave requests is based on the needs of the employer. Department Heads are authorized to extend the minimum 3-working day advance notice as needed for the proper operation of their department.

The rate at which annual leave is accrued is based on years of service. The following scale demonstrates the annual leave granted to an employee who works 37.50 hours per week.

Years of Employment	Earned Annual Leave
0-2 years	10 days
2-5 years	12 days
5-10	15 days
10-15 years	18 days
15-20 years	21 days
20 or more years	24 days

All other work schedules will be accrued and calculated in a proportional manner.

At the end of a calendar year, all annual leave accrued and available to an employee that exceeds the maximum carry-over limit for their position will automatically be converted to sick leave. **The transfer of excess vacation leave into sick leave shall occur with the first payroll of the following calendar year.** The annual leave carry-over limits are as follows:

37.50 hour workweek employees	180 hours
40 hour workweek employees	192.60 hours
Law Enforcement/Jail employees	216 hours
EMS employees	240 hours

Employees retiring, resigning, or terminated from County Service shall be paid for accrued annual leave at the wage rate in effect for the employee at the time of separation as long as required resignation notice is given. A minimum of two (2) weeks' notice is required for all resigning, non-exempt employees. A minimum of three (3) weeks' notice is required for all employees resigning, exempt personnel.

Employees are cautioned not to retain excess accumulation of annual leave late in the calendar year due to the necessity to keep all county functions in operation.

An employee who transfers from one county department to another shall retain any accumulated vacation leave.

Employees that have access or supervisory control over cash money, checks, certified checks, bank drafts, financial records, or other types of incoming revenue must take at least one consecutive week (5 consecutive workdays) per calendar year using either annual, holiday, or comp. time leave.

Non-exempt employees shall record/accrue and use Vacation/Holiday/Sick & Personal/Compensatory Leave in 15 minutes increments. ~~Exempt employees shall record the use of Vacation/Holiday/Sick & Personal/Compensatory Leave in increments of full day/shift.~~

Sick Leave

One of the most valuable benefits available to a permanent employee is sick leave ~~and personal~~ leave with pay. Sick/~~Personal~~ leave is earned at the rate of twelve (12) days per year for the basic workweek. Use of sick/~~personal~~ leave is permitted during the initial probationary employment period with the County. The rate for all other work schedules will be accrued and calculated in a proportional manner. (See Stokes County Leave Accrual Schedule pg.63)

Sick Leave may be used as follows: Employees may use sick leave when they are unable to perform their duties due to personal illness, injury, or a health condition. Sick leave may also be used for medical or dental appointments, as well as to care for an immediate family member with a serious illness or health condition.

~~***Personal Leave may be used as follows:*** Employees may request personal leave for matters that cannot be addressed outside of regular working hours. This includes, but is not limited to, family emergencies, personal appointments, urgent household needs, or other unavoidable personal obligations. Approval for personal leave must be obtained from the employee's supervisor in advance, unless the situation is an emergency.~~

~~Sick leave shall not be used for vacation purposes or to extend scheduled vacation leave, holidays, or other approved time off, unless the employee or an immediate family member experiences a qualifying illness, injury, or medical condition during that time.~~

Department Heads or the County Manager may require a physician's certificate as to the nature of an employee's illness and as to his/her physical capacity to resume duties for each occasion on which he/she uses sick leave. Failure to produce a physician's certificate as requested shall be considered just cause for disciplinary action.

Employees who retire, resign in good standing, or are dismissed from employment because of a reduction in force, and are reinstated in a permanent status within five (5) years shall be credited with their previously accumulated sick/~~personal~~ leave if this leave has not been "cashed in" through the Local Government Employees Retirement System, or transferred for use by the employee to another employer. No employee shall be paid for accumulated sick/~~personal~~ leave upon termination.

Sick/~~Personal~~ leave shall be cumulative with no limit on maximum accumulation. An employee who transfers from one County department to another shall retain any accumulated sick leave.

Notification of the desire to use Sick/~~Personal~~ leave shall be submitted to the employee's supervisor according to each individual departments' guidelines. If the department does not establish specific guidelines, employees must notify the supervisor no later than two hours after the beginning of the scheduled workday.

Employees using more than five consecutive sick days will be considered out on Family Medical Leave (FMLA).

Sick/~~Personal~~ leave is intended for use only under specific conditions as set forth in this policy.

Upon retirement from the County, an employee's unused sick leave is allowed as creditable service for members of the NC Local Government Employees Retirement System. One month of credit is allowed for each twenty (20) days of unused sick leave when the employee retires, and an additional month for any part of twenty (20) days left over.

Parental School Leave

North Carolina General Statute 95-28.3 requires employers to provide up to four (4) hours leave each year from assigned work time for an eligible employee to attend or otherwise be involved in their child's school. This policy may allow four (4) hours of paid leave for school enrollment, parent/teacher conferences, meeting with school staff for behavior problems, classroom activities, monitoring certain educational programs, school awards and assemblies, and volunteering at school functions. Per the statute, school is defined as any public school, private church school, church of religious charter, or nonpublic school described in parts 1 and 2 of Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes that regularly provides a course of grade instruction, preschool, and childcare facility as defined by NCGS 110-86(3)

- **Eligible Employee** – Parent, guardian, or someone who is otherwise a child's legal representative.
- **School** – Includes public and private childcare, pre-school, elementary and high schools.
- **Eligible Year** – July 1 through June 30 (fiscal year and normal year for most schools).
- **Eligible Time** – Up to a total of four (4) hours earned Parental School Leave with pay per year from assigned work time. The four (4) hours do not have to be taken all at once, but may be used in 15 minute periods.

Unless there is an emergency request from the child's school the employee is expected to request this leave in writing at least 48 hours prior to time desired. The Department Head and the employee must mutually agree upon Parental Leave Time.

Personal Observance Leave

Stokes County recognizes the importance of supporting employees in observing personal, cultural, religious, and family-related events that are meaningful to them. To provide flexibility while maintaining operational efficiency, the County provides Personal Observance Leave to eligible employees.

All permanent employees with less than fifteen (15) days of vacation leave accrued annually shall receive sixteen (16 hours) of Personal Observance Leave each calendar year. This leave is available for use at the beginning of each calendar year and does not accrue or carry over from year to year.

Personal Observance Leave may be used for observance of events or activities that are personally meaningful to the employee, including, but not limited to, religious or cultural observances, family-related activities such as school events or conferences, personal milestones, or other personal obligations that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of working hours. Employees are not required to provide detailed information regarding the nature of the observance beyond what is necessary to request leave.

Requests for Personal Observance Leave should be submitted in advance in accordance with departmental procedures and are subject to supervisory approval based on operational needs. Supervisors are expected to make reasonable efforts to accommodate such requests while ensuring adequate staffing and service delivery. Personal Observance Leave is separate from Sick Leave and Vacation Leave and may not be used for illness, injury, or medical appointments, which should be covered under Sick Leave, or for extended time off, which should be covered under Vacation Leave.

Personal Observance Leave has no cash value and will not be paid out upon separation from employment.

Bereavement Leave

Employees may request three (3) days, or three (3) shifts of paid leave because of a death in the immediate family. Any additional time off will be charged to accrued sick leave or vacation leave if such leave is available. Sick leave may be used for death in the employee's immediate family but may not exceed three (3) days for any one occurrence, except by special permission from the Department Head. *For the purposes of this policy, 'immediate family members' include an employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, or grandchild. This definition extends to step-relatives (such as step-parents, step-children, and step-siblings) and in-laws (such as parents-in-law, children-in-law, and siblings-in-law)."*

Leave of Absence

Jury Leave

The county supports employees fulfilling their civic responsibility by serving on a jury when summoned. Employees will be granted leave with regular pay for the duration of their jury service. During this time, employees must provide a copy of the jury duty notice to their supervisor as soon as possible. Employees are expected to return to work promptly if excused from jury duty before the end of the workday.

Should an employee appear as a plaintiff, defendant, or volunteer to appear as a witness in court (other than at the request or behalf of Stokes County), the absence from work must be approved by employee's supervisor. Either annual leave, compensatory leave, holiday leave or leave without pay may be used for the aforementioned court appearance. Sick/personal leave cannot be used for this purpose.

Military Leave

Permanent employees entering active duty with any branch of the United States Armed Forces are entitled to re-employment rights under the law. An employee who is entering military service is granted a leave of absence without pay for up to the maximum period of time during which re-employment is available under Federal Law. The employee must apply for re-employment within ninety (90) calendar days after release from active duty to be placed in a former job, if available, or to one of equal pay and status, unless there has been a change in circumstances which would make it impractical.

Employees must present their Department Head with a copy of their orders prior to their departure on leave, unless precluded by military necessity or circumstances that make notice unreasonable or impossible. Upon the presentation of an order to active duty, the Department Head will place the employee on Military Leave.

A permanent employee who is a member of a Reserve Unit or National Guard Unit, and who is called to active duty of not less than three (3) consecutive months may apply for re-employment within thirty-one (31) calendar days following release from active duty or be reinstated.

If the compensation received while on Military Leave is less than the salary that would have been earned during this same period as an active employee, the employee shall receive the difference not to exceed his/her normal salary.

Employees who are called to active duty will be allowed to accrue the following leave as if the employee was still working:

- General employees will accrue vacation and sick leave.
- Sheriff's Office, EMS, Jail, and Communications employees will accrue vacation, sick, and holiday leave.

Employees covered by the County health and dental plans prior to leaving for the uniformed services are entitled to continue the "employee only" portion of their health and dental insurance benefits if so desired. Coverage for family members is still at the expense of the employee to be paid monthly to the County prior to the first day of the coverage month.

Employees working in "temporary" positions are not eligible for military leave benefits.

Medical Leave without Pay

An employee may be granted a leave of absence from work due to an approved leave as allowed under the Family Medical Leave Act without pay for up to six (6) months after the latter of 12 approved weeks of Family Medical Leave or the exhaustion of earned accumulated leave time. The employee must provide the County with sufficient medical information regarding the need for extended leave. Medical leave without pay must be approved by the County Manager. Employees will be granted medical leave without pay in two-month increments, not to exceed six months. An employee on approved medical leave without pay shall not accrue vacation, sick, or holiday leave and will be responsible of timely paying the employee portion of any insurance premiums. Failure to pay premiums within 30 days of the due date will result in termination of insurance coverage. Failure to return to work at the end of the granted leave will be considered a voluntary resignation.

Administrative Leave

The County Manager, for purposes considered to be in the public interest, in case of civil disturbances, severe weather conditions, internal investigations, or in such other circumstances as good judgement and common practice would dictate may authorize Administrative Leave with or without pay.

Authorized Absence with Pay

An employee may be excused with pay at the discretion of the supervisor as follows:

1. To serve on Jury Duty.
2. For leave required for annual training as a member of the organized military reserves. Such leave shall not exceed two (2) calendar weeks in a calendar year. The County shall pay the difference between the employee's County pay and the military base pay during the two (2) week period.

Temporary employees are not eligible for military leave benefits.

Authorized Absence without Pay (leave of Absence)

Requests for authorized absences without pay may be granted for a maximum of two (2) weeks. First, the employee will request leave via their Department Head in memorandum form. The Department Head shall forward the request with his/her recommendation to the County Manager. The County Manager shall approve or disapprove the request. Authorization for absences for less than one day/shift per pay period, may be granted by the Department Head, not to exceed more than one absence per pay period. Absences during a probationary period must be approved by the County Manager.

No leave without pay shall be granted if the employee has an unused balance of accrued leave hours that may not be used. Additionally, time spent on personal leave without pay will not apply toward credited service and does not accrue employee benefits.

Family Medical Leave (FMLA)

In compliance with FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) Stokes County provides up to twelve (12) weeks of *job protected* leave without pay during any twelve (12) month period for one or more of the circumstances listed below. In addition, your group health and dental benefits will be maintained for the duration of the leave. (If both husband and wife request leave, they are limited to a total of twelve (12) weeks of leave between them within a twelve (12) month period.)

- Birth of a child of the employee, to care for the child;
- Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- A serious health condition of the employee's spouse, child, or parent that requires the care of the employee;
- A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his/her job. (A serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves hospitalization or continuing treatment by a doctor.)

It is the County's policy to require any employee to use their paid leave benefits (vacation, sick/personal, compensatory or holiday) before being without pay.

Any employee who takes Family Medical Leave is guaranteed the right to either return to the same position he/she left when the leave began, or to an equivalent position with the same pay and benefits.

While an employee is taking Family Medical Leave, the employee's group health/dental benefits will continue to be paid by the County for the duration of the leave. However, if the employee fails to

return to work for at least **30 calendar days**, Stokes County may recover the cost of health insurance premiums paid during the Family or Medical Leave, unless approved by the County Manager.

If the employee requests intermittent leave or a reduced time schedule that is foreseeable due to a planned medical treatment, the employee is required to give at least thirty (30) days' notice before the leave is to begin. In cases where 30 days notice is not possible, the employee is to provide notice as soon as practicable. The notice should contain the reason for the need to use Family Medical Leave, the date the leave is to begin and end, and the timetable leave is needed (full or reduced time schedule). The supervisor should forward the notice to the Human Resources Director who will review it for approval and notify the employee in writing of their determination. Family and Medical Leave Notice Forms available. (See pg. 65)

If an employee is using leave for a serious medical condition of the employee or a family member, a physician's statement must be provided containing the following information as soon as practicable after identifying the supervisor of the need to take leave:

1. The date the serious health condition began;
2. The probable duration of the condition;
3. The appropriate medical facts known by the physician regarding the condition;
4. A certificate containing a statement that the employee is needed to provide care if the leave concerns care for a family member;
5. A certificate containing a statement that the employee is unable to perform the functions of his/her position if the leave request is due to the employee's own serious health condition;
6. If the leave is for planned medical treatment and the employee wants a reduced time schedule, a certificate stating the dates when the treatment is to begin and the duration of the treatment;
7. For an intermittent leave request because of a serious medical condition of the employee or a member of the family – the certificate must state the medical necessity for the intermittent leave and how long the leave will be needed.

If an employee is using leave for their own serious medical condition, a physician's statement must be provided prior to returning to work stating the physician is authorizing or releasing the employee to return to work.

Intermittent FMLA

If an employee's entitlement to leave is for a serious health condition, when medically necessary, medical leave may be taken on an intermittent or reduced time schedule (a reduced workday or workweek.)

Stokes County reserves the right in cases of medical hardship, at the discretion of the County Manager, to waive the requirement of the employee to repay the health insurance premiums paid by the County while the employee was taking Family Medical Leave in the event the employee does not return to work due to illness.

Sick & Compensatory Time Donation

Permanent, part/full time employees who have been approved for continuous Family Medical Leave may receive donations of sick leave and compensatory time from permanent, part/full time employees in cases where the employee has exhausted all available leave. This policy provides an opportunity for employees to voluntarily assist another employee affected by a medical condition that requires a leave of absence from duty for a prolonged period of time resulting in a loss of income due to lack of accumulated leave. Sick and compensatory donation will carry the following guidelines:

1. Both the employee(s) making the donation and the employee(s) receiving the donation shall be permanent, part/full time employees.
2. To be eligible to receive donated time, the employee must have or will exhaust all leave accumulations prior to cessation of family Medical Leave.
3. This policy shall not preclude or enhance the absence thresholds stipulated in the Stokes County Family Medical Leave policy.
4. Each approved medical condition shall stand alone and donated leave not used for each approved incident shall be returned to the donor(s).
5. This policy shall cover the transfer of unused, accumulated sick time and compensatory time only.
6. Leave transferred under this policy will be available for use on a current basis or may be retroactive for up to thirty (30) calendar days to substitute for leave without pay already granted to the leave recipient.
7. An employee may donate no less than one day/shift or no more than three hundred (300) hours to the leave recipient.
8. Hours donated must be in full hours and may not be fractions of hours.
9. Donated leave may not exceed 50% of the donor's total accumulated sick or compensatory hours
10. The donor must present an "Application to Donate Accrued Leave" to his/her Department Head which is approved by the Human Resources Director.

Worker's Compensation

An employee must report a job related injury to their supervisor immediately or as soon as possible, regardless of the severity. Failure to report said incident shall result in forfeiture of rights to benefits. The Stokes County Employee Incident Report Form shall be completed. The Supervisor is responsible for investigating the incident, completing a Supervisor Employee Incident Report, and forwarding all pertinent documentation to Human Resources as soon as possible. Employees with minor injuries will go to ~~LifeBrite Community Hospital of Stokes~~ either the Stokes County Employee Health Clinic or Novant Health Community Hospital of Stokes. Employees with emergency incidents will go to a hospital best suited for that incident. Any employee absent from duty because of a sickness or disability covered by the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act may receive Worker's Compensation benefits. The Worker's Compensation Act requires a disability of seven calendar days before Worker's Compensation benefits begin. The employee will be paid directly from the Worker's Comp insurance agency. All of the employee's medical bills shall be paid and the employee will receive compensation set by the North Carolina Worker's Compensation Commission until the employee is able to return to work. While employees are out of work on workers' compensation, per the North Carolina Local Government Retirement System, neither the County nor the employee may contribute to the Retirement System. The

time out on workers' compensation does not count towards years of service for retirement eligibility. Please contact the NC Local Government Retirement System if interested in information about purchasing time lost. www.MyNCRetirement.com

Employees are still responsible for payment of all personal premiums that are deducted from their pay checks such as insurance, disability, supplemental benefits, etc. If the employee is on leave without pay status, they must forward payment for these premiums no later than the first day of each month while on leave. Any employee eligible for wage compensation through Workers' Compensation benefits may use their accumulated leave to replace the difference in their normal weekly salary and comparable rate, but in no case may the employee receive compensation in excess of 100% of their normal weekly salary.

When an employee returns to work under specific restrictions the Department Head must work with the Risk Manager to provide modified duties for the employee. If the accommodations cannot be met within that department, the Department Head should notify Human Resources to locate another department where the accommodations may be met. The light duty accommodation last until the employee is released by the doctor or the restrictions become permanent. If the restrictions become permanent and the employee cannot perform their job duties, the employee may be transferred into a vacant position anywhere within the County that he/she meets the qualifications and can perform the job duties. If there are no vacant positions available that the employees qualifies for and could perform the job duties, they will be released from employment with the County after ninety (90) days.

Notes:

- On-the-job injuries are covered by Workers' Compensation. Off-the-job injuries are covered by the employee's medical insurance.
- While employees are out of work on workers' compensation they do not receive accruals from Stokes County Government.

Light Duty Program

It is the policy of Stokes County to provide and establish procedures for uniform response and handling of a County-wide Light Duty/Return to Work Program for employees with work-related injuries and illnesses who are unable, temporarily, to return to their permanent job classification. Light duty work shall be provided to employees who have incurred temporary or permanent injuries in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. (ADA)

Basic Requirements

Employees may be assigned to light duty assignments when temporarily unable to perform their normal work due to industrial injury or illness, provided the following requirements are met:

- The assignment shall fulfill a meaningful job function(s) within limitations set by the treating physician.
- The assignment shall not create a new job, but may incorporate or modify a present position on a temporary basis.
- The assignments shall be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Employees shall be compensated at their regular salary. An employee who declines a light duty position which meets the treating physician's requirements shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination in accordance with the Stokes County Personnel Policy.

Health and Dental Insurance

The County of Stokes shall offer group health and dental insurance to all full-time, permanent County employees. The County shall pay the full premium of the individual employee's hospital, surgical, and medical group health insurance along with dental insurance upon approval each budget year. Additional coverage for the employee's family, spouse or child shall be paid by the employee through payroll deduction. County Commissioners shall be eligible for coverage and paid for by the County upon approval each budget year, provided the insurance plan allows such eligibility.

Employee health and dental insurance benefits become effective the first of the month following a thirty (30) day waiting period from the date of employment. Employee health and dental insurance benefits end on the last day worked when the employee terminates employment with the County.

(COBRA) Health Benefits

It is the policy of the County to comply with the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA). COBRA requires that employers sponsoring group health and dental coverage offer participants and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity for a temporary extension of coverage at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end because of certain qualifying events. COBRA benefits are administered by the County's health insurance provider

The County offers continuation of health and dental insurance benefits for the employee and his/her dependents effective the following day after the date of termination. This benefit is available under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) and the Tax Reform Act of 1986. To receive this benefit, under COBRA regulation, the employee must elect to do so within sixty (60) days from the date of termination, or other qualifying event, by completing and submitting a "continuation of coverage" application. Furthermore, the employee is responsible for paying the premium. Payment amount will be at the group rate for the coverage elected plus two percent (2%) for administrative handling. The coverage elected by the employee may be continued for a period of eighteen (18) months or thirty-six (36) months, whichever is applicable under COBRA.

Breastfeeding Support

To support employees in providing their child with their own mother's milk, Stokes County will strive to allow breastfeeding employees to express milk while at work under the guidelines listed below:

1. Any employee who wishes to express milk in the workplace shall make a request to her supervisor so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.
2. Breastfeeding employees shall be allowed a flexible schedule for nursing or pumping. The time allowed will not exceed the normal time allowed for lunch and breaks. For time beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick/annual leave will be used. Employees required to use

holiday/compensatory time before any other time, will be required to follow the County requirements.

3. A confidential area will be provided where the breastfeeding mother can nurse or express breast milk to be stored for later use.
4. Breastfeeding mothers will be allowed to store breast milk if properly stored and labeled in a County refrigerator if available, otherwise, employees will be responsible to provide their own refrigeration such as a cooler for storing breast milk. Stokes County will not be responsible for the mother's stored milk in a county refrigerator.

Retirees' Health Insurance

Employees whose most recent full-time hire date with Stokes County was **prior to July 1, 2026**, who retire from employment with Stokes County, Employees retiring from employment with Stokes County shall be allowed to retain health insurance coverage (no dental) through the Stokes County Health Insurance Group Plan provided the employee is a member of and retires under the rules set forth by the NCLGERS and has worked his/her final **ten (10) years** prior to retirement with Stokes County. A retiring employee must follow both guidelines to be eligible for retiree health insurance coverage:

Minimum Years of Service	Minimum Stokes County Service	County Contributions	Employee Contribution
25 years +	20 years +	100%	0%
25 years +	10 years +	50%	50%
20 years +	10 years +	0%	100%
Less than 20 years	Less than 10 years	No coverage	No coverage

1. Retiring employees with less than 20 years of service in the Retirement System or less than 10 years of service with Stokes County shall not be eligible for retiree health insurance coverage with Stokes County. Sick leave transferred to the Retirement System, does not count toward minimum years of service for the purpose of retiree's health insurance.
2. Retired employees shall be dropped from Stokes County health insurance upon reaching the age of 65. No dependents will be allowed to remain on the coverage if the employee's coverage has been terminated.
3. Any coverage paid less than 100% by the County shall be assessed a 2% administrative fee.
4. Under no circumstances shall the County pay more than the individual premium. Coverage beyond the individual employee shall be totally the responsibility of the retired employee.
5. Retiring employees must elect to take or reject this coverage before their last day of work before their retirement date.
6. Retired employees paying any portion of their coverage or dependent coverage must be paid no later than the 25th of the month prior to coverage. For example, you must pay your March premium no later than February 25th.
7. Late payments are subject to immediate insurance cancellations.
8. Coverage may change depending on the County's insurance carrier. Coverage, cost, and insurance carriers are determined yearly.

Retirement

Employees of Stokes County are enrolled in the North Carolina Local Government Employee's Retirement System (NCLGERS). The employee shall contribute a percentage of his/her salary, which shall be deducted from the employee's paycheck each pay period according to requirements set forth by the NCLGERS. The County shall contribute an employer's share, which is based on the calculations prepared by an actuary. (Different provisions in the NCLGERS apply to Law Enforcement Personnel. For more information on the retirement system, reference the retirement system handbook at www.MyNCRetirement.com.

The employee may retire from government service with unreduced benefits after:

1. You reach age 65 and complete 5 years of creditable service, or
2. You reach age 60 and complete 25 years of creditable service, or
3. You complete 30 years of creditable service at any age.

Law Enforcement personnel may be eligible to retire with an additional retirement benefit provided by the County called the "Separation Allowance". To qualify for this benefit, the following guidelines apply:

1. Either accrue 30 years of creditable service, regardless of age, or have attained 55 years of age with a minimum of 5 years of creditable service.
2. Complete a minimum of 5 years of continuous service as a law enforcement officer immediately preceding retirement.

Amount of Allowance: The annual allowance to an eligible retired law enforcement officer, which is payable monthly, is equal to 0.85% of his/her annual base rate of compensation multiplied by his/her total creditable service.

Cessation of Allowance: The Separation Allowance for law enforcement officer's payable at retirement ceases at age 62, at death, or upon re-employment by a State department, agency, or institution.

Contributions: All law enforcement officers who are members of the North Carolina Governmental Employee's Retirement System are covered and no member contributions are required. The full cost of the allowance is paid by Stokes County.

Supplemental Retirement Programs

The County offers three (3) supplemental retirement programs - the 401K Plan, the Deferred Compensation Program (457) and the North Carolina Deferred Compensation Plan (457). The County shall contribute 1% of the employee's base pay period salary (law enforcement officers do not apply) to the 401(k) Plan if the employee matches the 1% contribution. Employees may contribute to either, or both plans through payroll deduction, and contributions can be deducted pretax or after tax basis. The employee may contribute more than 1% to the 401(k) Plan, but the County will only match 1%.

Law enforcement officers are provided a contribution by the County into the 401K Plan at a rate of five percent (5%) of the employee's gross pay per pay period. This benefit is provided whether or not the

employee contributes to the Plan. To qualify for this benefit, the employee must be: 1) a certified law enforcement officer with the power of arrest, and perform these duties for the majority of the time on the job, and 2) be a member of the NCLGERS.

Time and Attendance Record

Non Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees are required to complete a Time and Attendance Record documenting the time worked each day of the pay period. The County provides an electronic attendance record for employees. It is the responsibility of each employee to punch in and out each day in the Attendance Enterprise Software. The Attendance Software allows with departments who do not have computer access/internet capability to be auto punch; therefore the department head/supervisor can require the employee to submit a paper document to verify the time worked. This electronic attendance record is an official record of the time and attendance of each employee, and requires an employee and department head/supervisor to approve the attendance record electronically. Any misstatement or falsification of hours worked is grounds for disciplinary action.

Exempt Employees

Exempt employees will only complete a Time and Attendance Record using the electronic Attendance Record System for the purpose of documenting the use of leave (annual, sick/personal, holiday or compensatory time).

Leave Request

Nonexempt and exempt employees who have access to computer/internet should request any leave (vacation, sick/personal, holiday or compensatory time) with the Attendance Software. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to approve/deny/change the request in order to document time taken on the Attendance Record.

On Call Policy

Purpose:

The on-call program insures that the after hour's needs of the County are met in a reliable and timely way. The following Stokes County Departments will participate in the on-call program:

- Fire Marshal's Office
- Sheriff's Office (DVO's)
- Information Technology
- Public Building Maintenance
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Animal Control

The Health Department and Department of Social Services please refer to your department guidelines for On-call Procedures

Definitions:

On-Call is compensation for an employee who must remain available to be called back to work on short notice if the need arises.

On-Call is compensation for an employee who has left the work site and is requested to respond (either by returning to work or by responding by telephone or computer) on short notice to an emergency work situation in order to avoid significant service disruption; or to avoid placing employees or the public in unsafe situations; or to provide department specific needs to the requesting agency, citizen, or county manager.

Exempt and non-Exempt employees will be required to participate in the on-call program. Compensation will only be awarded to non-exempt employees in compliance with FSLA standards.

Compensation:

Each participant in the on-call program will be paid a flat rate as described below:

- Monday – Monday Rate = \$200.00
- Daily rate = \$28.57
- Hourly Rate = \$1.19

Record Keeping:

All Non-Exempt employees participating in the on-call program will be required to complete the on-call documentation form and submit it to their department head for review and approval. Department heads will sign off on the documentation form and keep a copy in the personnel file for each employee participating in the program and forward the original to Finance Department for scheduled pay dates.

Emergency Call-Back Policy

Emergency Callback is when an employee has left the work site and is requested to respond (either by going back to work or responding via telephone or computer) on short notice to an emergency situation at work for any of the following reasons:

- Avoid significant service disruption
- Avoid placing employees, or the public in unsafe situations
- Protect and/or provide emergency services to property or equipment
- Respond to emergencies with staff, clients, or residents

The following Stokes County Departments will participate in the Emergency Call-Back program:

- Finance
- Emergency Communications
- EMS
- Emergency Management
- Fire Marshall's Office
- Planning & Inspections
- Health Department
- Department of Social Services

- Public Building Maintenance
- Animal Control
- Sheriff's Office
- Solid Waste

Compensation

In emergency situations, non-exempt employees will be compensated at the overtime rate of time-and-one-half for hours worked in excess of (40) forty hours per week and double time for hours worked on holidays. Exempt employees (including Department Heads) required to work extended hours during an emergency situation, the county shall compensate for hours worked over and above the regular workweek at the regular hourly rate or as compensatory time.

Vehicle Use Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes uniform vehicle use practices and requirements for Stokes County employees. Unless stated otherwise, this policy applies to vehicles owned by the County, vehicles leased or rented by the County, as well as personal vehicles, to ensure safe driving and efficient use of public property and/or resources.

This policy applies to all Stokes County departments, employees, partners, and affiliated agencies who receive pay and benefits from Stokes County Government. Where there is conflict with any department-specific policy, this document will supersede.

Policy**Use of Vehicles for County Business**

All vehicle operators must be properly licensed and insured to operate a motor vehicle to conduct business on behalf of Stokes County.

Vehicle operators are responsible for ensuring their vehicle is in good working condition according to the vehicle manual.

County vehicles may be assigned to one or more vehicle operators for their primary use for County business and obligations. At the end of the workday, all County vehicles are to be parked in their assigned parking area unless otherwise authorized by the respective department/agency head.

Vehicle operators assigned County-owned vehicles are expected to maintain the interior and exterior cleanliness of the vehicle.

When fueling vehicles, vehicle operators are expected to select the lowest available fuel grade. Fuel-specific credit cards (WEX Cards) are issued with each vehicle.

Driver's Responsibilities

Vehicle operators are expected to operate all vehicles in a safe and courteous manner. Operators will obey all traffic laws, to always include the wearing of a seat belt.

Violations, citations, fines, and other actions taken by any enforcement agency against a vehicle operator while operating a motor vehicle are the responsibility of the employee and may be cause for disciplinary action by the County.

Employees are required to notify their department/agency head immediately of any change in their driving status, which includes reporting all vehicle accidents that occur while conducting County business. This includes but is not limited to fines, citations, suspensions, and revocations. Failure to notify the department/agency head may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

In the case of an accident involving any level of damage while conducting County business, the employee driving the vehicle shall immediately (or as soon as practically possible) notify their supervisor. When the accident involves another vehicle, involves any property damage or causes injury, the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency should be notified to obtain a full accident report.

The County will not be responsible for any increase in the employees' automobile insurance premium as a result of an accident or fines, as well as any increases as a result of carrying adequate coverage for business use.

Driving after the consumption of alcohol or while under the influence of any controlled substance is prohibited per the Drug-Free and Substance Abuse policy.

The use of tobacco products or E-Cigarettes/vaping products are prohibited in a County-owned vehicle.

Possession, transportation or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs by anyone in the vehicle is prohibited per the Drug-Free and Substance Abuse policy. The exceptions are emergency and law enforcement personnel who may transport lawfully confiscated items as required and within the scope and course of their official duties or residents with known or unknown substances.

Open carrying of handguns is strictly prohibited in all county-owned vehicles. The use of concealed handguns must comply with the county's concealed handgun policy. Adherence to these guidelines is required at all times.

Distracted Driving

Stokes County has a vital interest in maintaining a safe, healthy and efficient working environment for its employees. This includes a safe and appropriate environment while traveling on County business. Distracted driving is a serious safety risk, not only to the driver, but also to other occupants in the vehicle, other vehicles on the road and pedestrians. To reduce the risks associated with distracted driving, certain conduct is prohibited while driving a County-owned vehicle or while driving a personal vehicle while on County business, including but not limited to:

- Manually entering multiple letters or text on an electronic device or mobile telephone as a means of communicating with another person.
- Distractions by passengers.
- Distractions caused by eating or drinking while driving.

- Operating laptops, tablets, portable media devices, and GPS devices.
- Reading maps or any type of document, printed or electronic.

Drivers must pull over safely to the side of the road or another safe location before reading messages, returning calls, text messaging, emailing, reading maps for directions, or programming/resetting GPS devices. The provisions of this section do not apply to any of the following while in the performance of their official duties:

- Law Enforcement Officers
- Members of Emergency Management
- Members of the Fire Marshal's office
- Operators of a County ambulance

Use of County Vehicles

County-owned vehicles are to be operated exclusively by employees of Stokes County. No unauthorized individuals are permitted to drive these vehicles under any circumstances. Volunteer/paid fire personnel that are authorized to operate fire apparatus may be authorized to operate a county ambulance if they have received explicit approval from the senior EMS official on-scene. This approval must consider the individual's qualifications as well as the operational requirements during the incident.

Per North Carolina General Statute 14-247, personal use of County-owned or leased vehicles is prohibited. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Per North Carolina General Statute 143-341(8)i7a, County vehicles are to be used for official County business only and shall not be used for the convenience of the employee regarding transportation needs or other non-business-related activities.

The County acknowledges that its employees may need at times, to keep personal items and information stored in or on County-owned property. However, due to security and accountability concerns, personal items/ information stored on or in a County-owned vehicle are subject to inspection at any time without any prior notice. This includes the installation of a GPS device to track the whereabouts of the County-owned vehicle.

When conducting County business in the field, County vehicles may be used to travel to a nearby restaurant for lunch where the cost-benefit in travel time to the work quarters for a personal vehicle would not be in the best interest of the County.

Department/agency heads should notify Human Resources and Purchasing of any operator changes including assignment of take-home vehicles within five (5) business days.

It is the responsibility of the vehicle operator to ensure County-owned vehicles are serviced as needed. This includes notifying the County Garage of any issues needing repair as well as ensuring the vehicle is scheduled for regular maintenance as instructed by Garage personnel.

Use of Personal Vehicles

Employees using a personal vehicle for County business will be reimbursed for mileage pursuant to the Travel Policy. Per IRS Publication 5137: "A standard mileage rate is considered to cover all expenses of operating a vehicle, including insurance, maintenance, tires, oil and so on."

Operators using a personal vehicle for County business should carry adequate personal vehicle liability insurance as required by law. All County officials and employees using a personal vehicle for County-related business are expected to consult with their insurance provider to ensure they are appropriately covered for business use.

Employees using a personal vehicle for County business must ensure that the vehicle is inspected annually, and that the vehicle is in safe operating condition with no pre-existing damage.

The County assumes no responsibility for accidents and damages to privately owned vehicles.

Take-Home Vehicle Use

The County's policy is to only authorize the assignment of a take-home (overnight) vehicle when the best interest of the public is served by providing County employees with transportation according to the criteria listed in this section. The assignment of a County vehicle is neither a privilege nor a right of any County employee. Assignment of a County vehicle will not be made based on employee merit or employee status.

Authorization for continual use of County vehicles for commuting purposes may be granted by the County Manager to specified positions based on the following criteria:

- The position is full-time **AND** requires work in the field, away from a physical office or workplace, more than 75% of the position's total work time **AND** the position starts the day from home directly to the field three (3) or more days per week **AND** special equipment is needed that cannot reasonably be kept in a personal vehicle, **OR**
- The position is full-time **AND** responds to after-hours business calls away from the office or workplace at least one (1) time per week **AND** the position is expected to respond to after-hours business calls within thirty (30) minutes **AND** special equipment is needed that cannot reasonably be kept in a personal vehicle

Employees assigned county-owned take-home vehicles for commuting are considered to be receiving a taxable fringe benefit. The value of the taxable fringe benefit will be calculated based on the IRS guidelines and added to the employee's taxable income. The county payroll department will report the taxable fringe benefit on the employee's W-2 form.

For more detailed information, you can refer to the [IRS Publication 15-B](#) and the [Fringe Benefit Guide](#) . These documents provide comprehensive guidelines on how to handle taxable fringe benefits, including employer-provided vehicles.

Certain take-home vehicles are excluded from the commuting reimbursement requirement. These exceptions are consistent with those as outlined in [IRS Publication 15-B](#). Take-home vehicles for Law Enforcement, Emergency Management and Fire Marshal may qualify as "qualified non-personal use vehicles" under IRS guidelines, which would exempt them from being considered taxable fringe benefits. To qualify, the vehicles must be clearly marked and primarily used for official duties, such as responding to emergencies.

Employees permitted to take a County-owned vehicle home (commute) from their workstation may do so for job-related reasons and not as a compensatory measure.

Employees must be able to reasonably keep the assigned take-home vehicle at their home or at a County approved location after work hours.

Each department/agency head will provide the Human Resources and Purchasing Departments with a list of manager approved County vehicles assigned for take-home (overnight) use and provide updates a vehicle assignments change. The list must include the vehicle number, driver's name, driver's license number, and valid business reasons for take-home use.

If an employee with an assigned take-home vehicle is on a leave of absence for longer than five (5) working days, the County-owned vehicle should be parked at a County-owned facility until the employee resumes the duties assigned to their position.

Occasional Overnight Vehicle Assignment

Occasional overnight usage of County-owned vehicles is permitted with the approval of the department/agency head. Such occasional usage of County vehicles may occur when an employee conducts County business away from the employee's normal place of work, and outside an employee's normally scheduled workday. Other types of occasional overnight usage are permitted when the following conditions exist:

- Inclement weather conditions: When employee is on-call and has primary responsibility to respond.
- Emergency preparedness or seasonal assignment: County-owned vehicles are permitted when an employee is on-call and vehicles are taken home less than four (4) times per quarter on average.

Marking of County-owned Vehicles

All county-owned vehicles will be clearly marked to indicate their ownership and purpose, ensuring transparency and accountability. Exceptions to this requirement include vehicles assigned to law enforcement officers performing detective duties. Additionally, the use of confidential license plates on county-owned vehicles must be expressly approved by the County Manager.

Maintaining Valid Driver's Licenses

All employees who are required to operate county-owned vehicles or equipment as part of their job responsibilities must maintain a valid driver's license or Commercial Driver's License (CDL), as appropriate for the type of vehicle or equipment operated. Employees must present proof of a valid driver's license or CDL upon hire and provide updates periodically as requested by the department/agency head.

Employees operating vehicles or equipment requiring a CDL must comply with all federal, state, and local regulations, including U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines. This includes mandatory drug and alcohol testing, adherence to hours-of-service rules, and proper vehicle inspections.

It is the responsibility of all employees to immediately notify their supervisor if their driver's license or CDL becomes invalid, suspended, or revoked for any reason. Failure to maintain a valid driver's license or CDL or to comply with applicable regulations may result in reassignment of duties, suspension of driving privileges, or disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Stokes County the right to conduct routine checks to verify the status of employees' licenses and ensure compliance with this policy.

Reporting Injuries and Accidents

If an employee is injured as a result of an accident while on duty, regardless of the severity of the injury, the employee is required to report the injury at once to his/her immediate supervisor so that proper medical attention can be provided. The injured employee and their direct supervisor are required to complete the county's incident reports with a copy forwarded to Human Resources as soon as possible following incident.

Accidents

In the event of an accident involving a County-owned vehicle, the operator/employee should:

1. Render first aid if qualified to do so and arrange for medical care if necessary;
2. Notify 911 Emergency Services
3. Never move the vehicle or leave the scene of the accident without law enforcement approval
4. Exchange driver's license numbers, insurance information, and vehicle numbers with all parties involved. Obtain the names and addresses of anyone witnessing the accident. Offer no information regarding the responsibility for the accident or what should have been done to avoid the accident. Stay calm. These stipulations are especially important if the accident takes place outside of Stokes County.
5. The operator shall report any accident to his/her supervisor immediately;
6. The Safety Officer shall report the accident to the Accident Review Committee immediately;
7. All claims against the County insurance policies will be forwarded to the County Risk Manager;
8. Operators/Employees shall not permit unauthorized persons to operate or ride in or on a County vehicle.

Vehicle Accidents

When a County employee is involved in a vehicle accident involving a County-owned vehicle, the employee shall:

1. Notify his/her supervisor immediately.
2. The supervisor/director will immediately notify the County Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor of the accident.
3. The employee will complete and submit a Stokes County Vehicle Accident Report to their supervisor/director as soon as possible following the accident. The supervisor/director will forward a copy of the Accident Report to the Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor and the Human Resources department immediately after receipt of the completed form from the employee.
Failure to follow the steps outlined may result in disciplinary action against the employee

Accident Review Board

When an employee is involved in a vehicle accident while operating a County-owned vehicle, he/she shall appear before the Accident Review Board for a determination as to whether the accident was preventable or non-preventable. The Accident Review Board shall be comprised of the current Safety Committee.

Purpose of Accident Review Board

- To establish a fair and impartial review system for all accidents involving motorized equipment and operators with the primary objective being to improve the driving safety of County-owned motorized vehicles.
- To identify problem drivers, unsafe conditions, and pursue remedial steps to reduce damage to County-owned vehicles and prevent injury to County employees.
- To establish the responsibilities for each vehicle accident.

Appearance before the Board

Approximately five (5) working days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Board Secretary shall notify all relevant County personnel to appear. Notification shall be directed through the appropriate department/agency heads.

- All personnel shall appear before the Board at its regularly scheduled meeting.
- Any employee unable to appear due to sickness, personal injury, or death to an immediate family member, must notify the Board Secretary twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
- Other than those cases which have been deferred, all vehicle accident cases scheduled shall be heard and action taken, whether the individual is present. Department/agency heads shall be notified of the action taken by the Accident Review Board.

Uniforms

Some employees are required to wear a uniform on the job. The County shall provide these employees with the appropriate uniforms and necessary equipment at no cost to the employee. Any department with work taking place outside of the office will be provided with county logoed apparel. The property issued shall remain the property of the County and the employee is responsible for returning all property issued if the employee terminates employment with the County. Should the employee fail to return the County-issued property, the County shall use all means at its disposal, including legal action, to regain the property or the value of the property monetarily.

Each Department Head shall be responsible for maintaining a record of the property issued for the personal use of the employee, and the collection of the property should the employee terminate employment with the County. If the Department Head is unsuccessful in collecting the property at termination, the County Manager shall be notified as soon as possible in writing, detailing the property not collected with an estimated value of the property.

The Sheriff shall have the discretion to provide a non-uniform clothing allowance for special needs of the department.

Professional Dress Code

County employees are expected to represent the County to its citizens in an exemplary manner both in conduct and appearance. The attire worn by county employees is to be clean, neat, and in keeping with the nature of the duties performed. Employees should wear “business casual” attire or county issued uniforms. Inappropriate clothing for the workplace includes, but is not limited to the following: clothing with offensive or inappropriate designs or stamps, torn or ripped clothing, sweat suits, sweat shirts, shorts, halter-tops, miniskirts, shirts with spaghetti straps, and observable underclothing. When wearing leggings or similar fitted pants, clothing must provide appropriate coverage of the buttocks. Hair should be clean and neatly arranged. Clean personal hygiene habits must be maintained to minimize body odor unless prohibited by sincerely held religious beliefs. In addition, strong-smelling perfumes, cologne and body lotions are discouraged.

All employees should keep in mind that their clothing should be suitable to their work environment. For example, employees who routinely interact with the public will want to project a professional image at all times. Employees who work out in the field and are subject to unknown conditions should expect to wear more casual attire.

The immediate supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed and that employees are dressed appropriately for the workplace. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor to talk to the employee if the policy is not being followed. If this does not solve the problem, the Department Head, the Human Resources Director or County Manager will be asked to intervene.

Stokes County reserves the right to advise any employee at any time that his or her grooming, attire or appearance is unacceptable.

Employees will be allowed to have “dress down days” on Fridays, following the guidelines related to inappropriate clothing as previously stated in this section.

Pay and Benefits

It is the policy of Stokes County to compensate employees at a level sufficient to encourage excellence of performance that contributes to the County’s overall mission and strategic goals, and to maintain the labor market competitiveness necessary to recruit, motivate, develop and retain a competent and diverse work force. This policy is met by:

- Participating in annual salary surveys and pay practice discussions with various labor markets. The county will utilize the assistance of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) and the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM).
- Ensure county pay plan remains current by adjusting salary ranges annually using relevant methodologies and the previous years Consumer Price Index (CPI) as of December 31.
- Allocate funding annually to represent an average 2% merit increase for all employees. All employees will be eligible for 0% - 3% merit increase based on performance.

This Pay Plan is subject to an annual review and funded through the annual county budget, as approved by the Board of County Commissioners, and is effective July 1 each year.

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

To ensure equitable compensation adjustments, cost-of-living increases will be applied based on an employee's hire date and prorated accordingly.

- **Eligibility:** Employees hired before the start of the fiscal year will receive the full COLA adjustment. Employees hired mid-year will receive a prorated COLA based on the number of months worked during the adjustment period.
- **Calculation:** The full COLA percentage will be divided by 12, with employees receiving one-twelfth of the increase for each month worked during the designated COLA cycle.
- **Implementation:** Prorated COLA adjustments will be reflected in salary updates effective July 1st in accordance with budgetary allocations and county financial policies

Merit Increase Policy

The county recognizes the importance of rewarding employees for performance and contributions through merit-based salary adjustments. Merit increases are determined annually based on employee performance evaluations and are prorated based on hire dates to ensure fairness.

Eligibility & Proration

- Employees hired before December 31 – Merit increases will be prorated based on the supervisor's recommended percentage (0–3%), reflecting the employee's tenure within the evaluation period.
- Employees hired after December 31 – A standard prorated merit increase of 2% will be applied, as supervisors may not have sufficient time to accurately assess performance for employees with less than six months of experience.

Performance Evaluation Process

- Merit increases are based on annual performance reviews, where department heads and supervisors assess employees on predefined criteria such as job proficiency, initiative, teamwork, and overall contributions.
- Department heads will recommend merit percentage increases within the 0–3% range for eligible employees based on their individual performance. Department heads must distribute requested merit increases such that the average increase, based on cost, is 2%. Departments with fewer than five employees (not including the department head) may request a higher average than 2% with sufficient, clear justification.

Review Deadline & Retroactive Pay

- Performance reviews must be completed by August 15. Merit pay requests must be submitted to HR not later than September 1.
- Any merit pay adjustments will be retroactively applied to salaries dating back to July 1, ensuring employees receive their rightful merit increase once evaluations are completed.

Implementation & Budget Considerations

- ~~Merit adjustments will take effect on July 1st and will be processed in accordance with county budgetary allocations.~~ Merit adjustments will become effective on the first day of the pay period

following the completion of the County's evaluation and merit process, but no later than September 1, and will be processed in accordance with County budgetary allocations.

- All merit increases are subject to available funding and approval by county leadership, ensuring alignment with financial policies and sustainability.

Salary & Position Classification Schedule

The county shall maintain a position classification plan that ensures the accuracy of position duties and responsibilities and consolidates similar job functions into defined classifications. The county manager shall determine the duties of each position and shall promulgate procedures to establish, revise and maintain the classification plan to ensure it reflects the duties performed by each employee in the classification system. Each position contains a detailed list of job requirements and is assigned a salary grade with a minimum, midpoint, and maximum salary for the responsibilities, education, and experience of that position.

Initial Salary Determinations

Each employee hired or assigned to a permanent position shall serve a probationary period of six (6) months. Upon new hire, promotion, grade change, reclassification, and voluntary transfer, each employee will be compensated at the minimum salary for the position assigned. Department Heads may hire at the minimum of the paygrade. Approvals to hire above the minimum will be made by the County Manager. In rare instances an employee may be involuntarily transferred to a lower grade position. Should that happen, the employee will be frozen at their current salary and placed on the lower grade until the employee's salary catches up with the salary on that grade.

In the Department of Social Services, if an employee is hired for a position and does not qualify per the North Carolina State Office of Human Resources, the employee can participate in the Work Against Program.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

It is the policy of Stokes County to fully comply with the FLSA. All positions in the County are designated exempt or nonexempt under FLSA depending on whether they meet the requirements of the Act. These designations have nothing to do with the importance of a position to the County. Employees who are non-exempt must be paid overtime or granted compensatory time for hours over 40 worked each workweek. There are specific exceptions under the FLSA for law enforcement and firefighting. Employees who are exempt do not have to be paid overtime for hours over 40 worked each workweek. It is County policy to promptly investigate and correct any improper payroll deductions or other payroll practices that do not comply with the FLSA. If an employee believes that an improper payroll practice has occurred, such as an improper deduction from an exempt salary, the employee is required to file a written complaint to the Human Resources Director. The report should provide the date the reduced paycheck was issued and the circumstance that led to the deduction. HR will see that the matter is appropriately reviewed. The employee will be reimbursed for the amount of any inappropriate deduction taken. Nonexempt employees required to work when daylight savings time begins or ends will be paid for the hours actually worked. In the spring, employees will be paid one hour less when clocks are set forward one hour. Conversely, in the fall when clocks are set back one hour, employees

will be paid for the extra hour. The extra hour is work time and included for purposes of calculating overtime.

Overtime Authorization

From time to time, it becomes necessary for employees to work additional hours beyond the normal work period amount. Compensatory time will be given in lieu of overtime pay, except for personnel working in EMS and Communications and temporary employees. Compensatory Time must be approved by an employee's direct supervisor. If circumstances arise and the employee is not able to obtain approval such as having to work after the end of the workday/shift due to an emergency, the employee should notify their direct supervisor as soon as possible.

Employee Status:

Non-Exempt Employees

This class of employee shall receive one hour of compensatory time for each hour worked over their standard work schedule up to forty (40) hours in a seven day workweek. Compensatory Time will be awarded at a rate of 1.5 hours for each hour physically worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a seven day workweek. For example, if an employee's standard work schedule is 37.5 hours per week, and he/she works 42 hours in a week. He/she will receive 5.5 hours of compensatory time and pay for 37.5 hours.

Law enforcement personnel who are classified as 207 (K) non-exempt shall receive compensatory hours at a rate of 1.5 hours for each hour physically worked in excess of 85.5 hours in each 14 day work period.

All overtime worked must be properly documented and must receive approval of the supervisor before it is worked. Compensatory time shall be awarded at the end of each pay period as outlined above, but may be used as paid time off any time after it is earned, with the approval of the supervisor. Each supervisor has discretion in allowing or directing an employee to use compensatory time. No compensatory time shall be allowed for work during an employee's lunch hour unless such work is of an emergency nature. In the event of a voluntary or involuntary termination of a non-exempt employee, compensatory time shall be eligible for monetary reimbursement.

Each non-exempt employee hired by the County except EMS and Communications personnel and temporary personnel, shall be required to sign the Compensatory Time Agreement (See pg. 64) stating compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay is acceptable. Agreeing to the compensatory time method of payment is not a condition of employment, however, if an employee disagrees with this form of payment the employee shall be disallowed from working overtime or may be directed to taking time off during the week overtime is worked.

Non-exempt employees will be required to use compensatory time as soon as possible after accumulation at the direction of the Department Head and will be required to use compensatory time before the use of any other leave. Sheriff's Office and Jail employees who accrue both holiday time and compensatory time will be required to use holiday time first.

Exempt Employees

Employees in this class are deemed to be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act minimum wage and overtime standards. Employees in this class fall into three categories: Executive, Administrative, and Professional. The County shall follow either the short test or the long test as set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act, whichever is applicable, to determine the “exempt” status employees.

Employees classified as exempt will not maintain a timesheet unless they are reporting the use of sick/personal, annual, or holiday leave. ~~in increments of full days/shifts.~~

~~Exempt employees in this category will use recorded comp time utilizing the same request and approval process established for annual / sick / holiday leave until the balance is exhausted and such recorded comp time will be utilized before use of annual or sick leave.~~

In the event of voluntary or involuntary termination as an employee of Stokes County, exempt personnel shall not be eligible for monetary reimbursement for recorded or un-recorded comp-time.

Upon appointment, each employee shall be notified of his/her exempt/non-exempt status.

Longevity Pay

The Board of Commissioners and the County Manager demonstrate appreciation for full-time employees who have completed landmark years of continued service by presenting them with a longevity pay plan. Full-time employees who have been credited with five (5) or more years of compensated service with Stokes County and who are on the payroll as of November 1st may receive an annual longevity payment. Longevity pay shall be made annually when all eligibility requirements are met if funding is available upon approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

- Longevity payment shall be made in a lump sum each year on or before December 31st.
- Eligibility for payment shall be based on full years of service as of November 1 of each year.
- Payment shall be made to otherwise eligible employees who are on military leave, worker's compensation and approved medical leave of absence without pay.
- All appropriate federal, state, retirement, etc., deductions will be applied to this payment.
- Payment shall be made to the nearest cent rather than the nearest dollar.
- The annual salary of the employee will be determined by taking the individual's base rate of pay and multiplying it by the standard hours worked for that position.
- Longevity pay is not considered a part of annual base pay for classification and pay purposes.

Annual longevity pay amounts are based on the length of consecutive years of service with the County of Stokes and vary based on the employee's most recent hire date.

Years of Service	Percent
5 years < 10	1.00%
10 years <15	1.50%
15 years < 20	2.00%
20 years <25	2.50%
25 plus years	3.00%

Pay Periods

The County's pay period shall be based on a fourteen (14) day cycle. There shall be twenty-six (26) pay periods within a year. Paychecks shall be issued seven (7) calendar days following the last day of the pay period. Pay date will be on Fridays.

Payroll Deductions

Normal deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck each pay period for:

- Federal Income Tax
- State Income Tax
- FICA (Social Security and Medicare)
- Retirement (Permanent employees)
- Garnishments/Wage Withholdings

Employees may request to have the additional deductions each pay period:

- Insurance
- ~~NC State Employees Credit Union~~
- 401K Supplemental Retirement Income
- Deferred Compensation Plans
- Stokes County Property Tax Deductions
- Flex Spending Benefits
- Firefighter and Rescue Squad Pension Fund

Direct Deposit

The County utilizes direct deposit as the primary method for issuing payroll to employees. Employees are required to provide accurate banking information to ensure timely and secure deposits.

Flexible Benefits Plan

Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code allows the County to offer a plan to employees where certain expenses of the employee may be deducted from their salary on a pre-tax basis. The County offers this plan as Stokes County Flexible Benefits Plan. Qualified expenses in the plan are: health and dental insurance premiums, supplemental benefit premiums (disability, intensive care, and cancer benefits policies), dependent child care expenses, and unreimbursed medical expenses. This benefit will be offered to each employee when they start work, and once a year thereafter on the anniversary of the Plan – July 1. Unless there is a family status change in the employee's family during the year, these are the only times the benefit is offered to participants.

Credit Union

All employees of the County are eligible to join the CIVIC Credit Union. The Credit Union offers full-service banking to its members while offering very competitive rates and charges. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of the services of the Credit Union.

Employee Benefits

In an effort to improve productivity and engagement, the county offers a variety of benefits to all full-time employees. Below are many of the offered programs:

- Twelve paid holidays per year
- Annual/Vacation Leave (based on work schedule and length of service)
- Sick/~~Personal~~ Leave (based on work schedule and length of service)
- **Personal Observance Leave**
- County Paid Health Insurance
- County Paid Dental Insurance
- County Paid Term Life Insurance (\$25,000 policy)
- Voluntary Vision
- Voluntary supplemental insurance (accident, critical illness, short/long-term disability, and life)
- Flexible spending accounts
- Dependent care accounts
- Voluntary 401(k) participation (Stokes County contributes 1% of salary to all employees who are contributing)
- Voluntary 457(b) plan
- NC State Retirement System Contributions
- Tuition Reimbursement (up to \$500 per fiscal year)
- Employee Assistance Program
- **On-Site Employee Health Clinic (\$0 Co-pay)**
- Ability to join CIVIC Federal Credit Union
- Parental School Leave
- Bereavement Leave
- Family Medical Leave
- Jury Duty Leave
- Military Leave

Cell Phone Allowance

Employees who require cell phones to perform their work may be offered a county owned cell phone and must follow all rules and regulations pertaining to cell phone usage and county owned property in the Stokes County Personnel Policy Handbook.

In lieu of a county provided cell phone, the county manager may approve a cell phone stipend on a case-by-case basis.

Employee Travel and Reimbursement

The County provides vehicles for use by the employees to conduct County business. All take-home vehicles will be approved by the County Manager. Personal use of a County vehicle is prohibited except in a minimal amount. (Example of minimal personal use: a stop for lunch between two business appointments.) No passenger is allowed in a county vehicle unless he/she is a County employee, the passenger is being transported as a direct function of the department, the passenger is a colleague traveling with the employee to some educational or business related function, or the passenger is in distress and the employee is acting as a “good Samaritan.” Each employee that operates a County

vehicle is cautioned to always obey all traffic laws of the State of North Carolina. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Any employee involved in an accident while operating a County vehicle should immediately notify his/her Supervisor. The accident shall be subject to review by the Safety Review Board. The findings of the Safety Review Board may result in disciplinary action.

If an employee is provided with a county vehicle for travel purposes related to their job and the employee chooses to drive their own vehicle; the county will not reimburse the employee for the mileage.

In lieu of a county provided vehicle, the county manager may approve a vehicle stipend on a case-by-case basis.

Tuition Reimbursement

The provisions of this section do not apply to temporary employees. Stokes County shall provide up to a maximum of \$500.00 per employee per fiscal year for the reimbursement of tuition cost for courses of study taken on the employee's own time at accredited learning institutions. The following stipulations may apply:

- 1.Reimbursement shall be made only for course work completed at the accredited public, business, trade school, community college, college or university. Only semester or quarter-length courses are eligible. No workshops, seminars or conferences are eligible.
- 2.Applications for reimbursement shall be approved by the department head only for course work related to the employee's job area, or for course work allowing an employee to take on some greater tasks within his/her agency.
- 3.Upon application for reimbursement, the employee shall pledge a minimum of six (6) months service to the County after completion of the course or graduation from the chosen curriculum.

All applications for tuition reimbursement will be approved by the County Manager.

Education & Certification Incentive Pay

The purpose of this policy is to outline pay incentives which may be earned by employees pursuing a degree in higher education or attaining certifications to their current position with the County. Not all degrees or certifications received by employees will be eligible for this policy. Only those determined in advance to be related to the employee's current position and/or future advancement opportunities with the County will be eligible.

Employees eligible for education pay incentives shall receive, upon approval of the County Manager, a salary increase in the amount shown below for each eligible degree and certification attainment.

- Associate Degree - 2%
- Bachelor's Degree – 3%
- Master's Degree – 4%
- Doctoral Degree - 5%
- Certification Up to 3%

Employee Stipend

Employee stipends are intended for meeting temporary needs of the department when services cannot be provided by other means. An employee stipend may be paid when an employee is temporarily assigned a substantial portion of the duties of a position in a higher grade or classification, or when other significant new projects or duties, that are not part of the employee's regular position, are assigned. An employee stipend is not to exceed one year, with the employee possibly returning to his/her original position upon the expiration of the temporary action. All stipends and temporary assignments including any extensions and returning to original positions, must be approved by the County Manager.

Stokes County Leave Accrual Schedule

Years of Employment	Workweek Schedule (Hrs.)	Year (Days)	Pay Period (Hrs.)	Max End of Year Carryover (Hrs.)
0 to 2 Years	37.5	10	2.88	180
	45	10	3.46	180
	50	10	3.85	200
2 to 5 Years	37.5	12	3.46	180
	45	12	4.15	216
	50	12	4.62	240
5 to 10 Years	37.5	15	4.33	180
	45	15	5.19	216
	50	15	5.77	240
10 to 15 Years	37.5	18	5.19	180
	45	18	6.23	216
	50	18	6.92	240
15 to 20 Years	37.5	21	6.06	180
	45	21	7.27	216
	50	21	8.08	240
20 Years +	37.5	24	6.92	180
	45	24	8.31	216
	50	24	9.23	240

Managers and Department Heads of departments with three (3) or more employees shall accrue vacation leave at no less than the equivalent of twenty-one (21) days annually. Upon completing twenty (20) years of service with Stokes County, eligible employees shall accrue vacation leave at the maximum rate of twenty-four (24) days annually.

Sick Leave/Holiday Leave

Years of Employment	Workweek Schedule	Sick Leave - Year	Sick Leave - Pay Period	Holiday - Year	Holiday Per Day
Any number	37.5	12 days	3.46 hrs.	12 Days	7.5 hrs.
	45		4.15 hrs.		9 hrs.
	50		4.61 hrs.		10 hrs.

Stokes County Compensatory Time Agreement

Name:

Department:

Position:

Employment Date:

According to the Fair Labor Standards Act, non-exempt employees shall be compensated for overtime hours worked at a rate of one and one-half hours for each hour physically worked in excess of 40 hours per week. Non-exempt Law Enforcement employees shall be compensated for overtime hours worked at a rate of one and one-half hours for each hour physically worked in excess of 171 hours in a 28 day period.

You are hereby informed that Stokes County classifies your position as “non-exempt,” which entitles you to overtime compensation at a rate of one-and-one-half hours.

STOKES COUNTY ELECTS TO AWARD COMPENSATORY HOURS IN LIEU OF CASH FOR OVERTIME HOURS WORKED.

This agreement is your acknowledgment of understanding that the County shall award compensatory hours instead of cash payment for overtime hours worked. You have the opportunity to agree or disagree with this method of overtime reimbursement. Agreement to compensatory hours is not a condition of employment. However, disagreement to this method of overtime reimbursement will disqualify you from working overtime.

Agreement

I have read and understand that my position is considered a “non-exempt” position. I agree that any overtime hours worked will be compensated by awarding compensatory hours off.

_____ Employee Signature/Date

Disagreement

I have read and understand that my position is considered a “non-exempt” position. I disagree to compensatory hours off as an acceptable method of overtime payment.

_____ Employee Signature/Date

Stokes County Family and Medical Leave Request

Name:	Date:
--------------	--------------

Department:	Employment Date:
--------------------	-------------------------

Full/Part Time (Circle): Full-Time Part-Time

Check the item listed below that applies to this request.

- ☐ Birth of a child of the employee to care for the child.
- ☐ Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care
- ☐ A serious health condition of the employee's spouse, child, or parent that requires the care of the employee.
- ☐ A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his/her job.

Explanation of Leave Request	
-------------------------------------	--

Timetable for Leave Requested (Estimate if necessary):

Date Leave Begins:	Date Leave Ends:
---------------------------	-------------------------

Schedule Requested (Circle): Continuous Intermittent Reduced Time

By signing this request for Family or Medical Leave, the employee agrees that if he/she fails to return to work at the end of the leave, he/she shall repay Stokes County for the cost of the health insurance premiums the County paid for the employee while out on Family or Medical Leave.

Employee Signature

Date

Human Resources Director Comments:

--

Human Resources Director

Date



Stokes County
PO Box 20
Danbury, NC 27016
Phone (336) 593-2811

JOB DESCRIPTION ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

This is to certify that I have been given the opportunity to review my job description entitled _____. This description is intended to indicate the kinds of tasks and levels or work difficulty that will be required of positions that will be given this title and shall not be construed as declaring what the specific duties and responsibilities of any particular position shall be. I understand that my job may change on a temporary or regular basis according to the needs of my location or department. If I have any questions about job duties not specified in this description that I am asked to perform, I should discuss them with my immediate supervisor or a member of the Human Resources staff.

I have discussed any questions I may have had about this job description prior to signing this form.

Employee Signature

Date

Employee Name (please print)

Witness Signature

Date

Witness Name (please print)

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Stokes County Government Employee Personnel Policy Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read, become familiar with, and adhere to the policies, procedures, and standards of conduct outlined in this handbook.

I understand that this handbook is intended to provide guidance regarding general personnel policies and procedures and does not constitute a contract of employment.

I understand that if I have any questions about the policies or my responsibilities as an employee of Stokes County Government, I should contact my supervisor or the Human Resources Department for clarification.

By signing below, I certify that I have received a copy of the Employee Personnel Policy Handbook and that I understand and agree to comply with the policies and procedures as a condition of my employment.

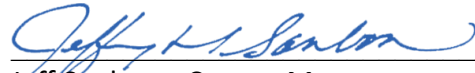
Employee Name (Print): _____

Employee Signature: _____

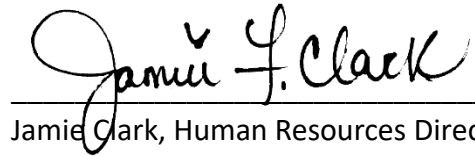
Date: _____

Policy Approval

This personnel policy handbook has been reviewed and approved by the Stokes County Manager and the Human Resources Director on this ~~day 27th of May 2025.~~



Jeff Sanborn, County Manager



Jamie Clark, Human Resources Director



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: XI.a

Appointment to Forsyth Technical Community College Board of Trustees

Drafter: Olivia Jessup

Summary:

Assistant Superintendent of Stokes County Schools, Dr. Jared Jones, expressed interest to serve on the Forsyth Technical Community College Board of Trustees. His nomination was approved at the last meeting the Board of Commissioners. No other applications or interest has been expressed.

The Board will be polled for his appointment.



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: XI.b

Tourism Development Authority Appointment

Drafter: Olivia Jessup

Summary:

Rebecca Gibson submitted an application for the TDA board and was recommended by current board member David Willard who currently serves as the Walnut Cove representative. At the last meeting she was nominated for the TDA board.

The Board will be polled for her appointment.

Attached is her application and supporting materials.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Gibson Application for Appointment TDA](#)

[Rebecca Gibson Resume](#)

[References](#)



STOKES COUNTY

APPOINTMENT

APPLICATION

NAME: AGE:

ADDRESS:

CITY: STATE: ZIP:

E-MAIL: PHONE:

PLEASE INDICATE THE COMMITTEE OR BOARD YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON:

Comments: Please note why you are interested in serving on this committee.

Conflicts of Interest: Please list any conflicts that would limit your ability to serve this committee or board.

****IT IS PREFERRED TO ATTACH OR INCLUDE REFERENCES OR A RESUME IF AVAILABLE.**

Fax/Mail/Email appointment application to **Olivia Jessup, Clerk to the Board**,
PO Box 20, Danbury, NC 27016 | Phone: 336-593-2428 | Fax: 336-593-2346

Email: ojessup@co.stokes.nc.us

Rebecca K. Gibson

📍 Westfield, NC | ☎ (336) 414-2079 | 📧 Gibsonrk74@gmail.com | [in Rebecca Gibson - LinkedIn](#)

Versatile project coordinator and educator with a 20+ year track record of success in communication, team leadership, training, and program execution. Known for managing time-sensitive initiatives, streamlining processes, and creating a culture of recognition and accountability. Proficient at building strong relationships, leveraging technology, and delivering exceptional stakeholder experiences.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- › Active Listener
- › Empathetic Leader
- › Relationship Builder
- › Collaborative Teammate
- › Customer Driven
- › Results-Driven
- › Solution Oriented
- › Highly Adaptable
- › Event Coordination
- › Articulate Communicator
- › Creative Problem Solver
- › Technology Expertise
- › Extremely Organized

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

John Brown's Country Store - King, NC October 2025-January 2026

- Assist in daily operations of food delivery industry
- Interact with customers via telephone and personally
- Acclimate to a high paced demanding work environment daily
- Perform culinary tasks daily
- Ensure clean and sanitary work environment

The George Farmhouse - Westfield, NC (Hanging Rock Area) March 2014 - Present

- Co-operator of rental property and community advocate for local tourism
- Manage end-to-end operations, including guest communications, bookings, and onsite needs
- Handle maintenance scheduling, vendor coordination, and budget management to ensure a positive guest experience
- Market the property through online platforms and social media to maximize occupancy and revenue
- Ensure compliance with local regulations, insurance, and safety protocols
- Develop systems for check-in/check-out, cleaning, and customer service to ensure guest satisfaction
- Respond quickly to guest issues or needs, demonstrating strong problem-solving and service orientation

Patrick County High School - Stuart, VA August 1999 – July 2025 *High School Instructor*

- English Instructor Grades 9-12
 - Effectively instructed approximately 2,600 students throughout tenure
 - Utilized innovative methods and materials to produce effective experiences for all stakeholders
 - Designed and executed strategic learning plans tailored to diverse needs, driving measurable improvements in engagement and outcomes
 - Monitored ongoing progress of student performance compared to individual goals
 - Encouraged a culture of accountability, performance, and growth across student cohorts and faculty teams
 - Developed plans to ensure consistency in successful student pass rate each year
 - Managed annual budget with financial responsibility for assigned projects
 - Served as Summit Club Sponsor for 7 years
 - › Led school-wide recognition and morale initiatives, including “Of the Month” awards for teachers, staff, and

- students which included management of school wide voting, recognition, and rewards
- › Managed student incentives such as attendance and coordinated various celebrations and field trips
- › Oversaw concession operations for specified sporting events; handled invoicing and inventory
- › Organized community clean-up efforts on and off campus

Forsyth Technical Community College - Winston-Salem, NC May 2000 *Instructor*

- Instructed adults in an Introduction to Computers course within the Continuing Education Program

Other Work Experience (Seasonal) 1992-2009

The Law Offices of Gary J. Mills (Pilot Mountain)
 R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company Promotions (Downtown)
 R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company BIG1F Program (Whitaker Park and Rural Hall)
 R. J. Reynolds Packaging Shipping and Receiving Office (Polo Rd. Winston Salem)
 The Dan River Company (Danbury)
 Hillside Market and Tubing (Danbury)

COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

Community-Related:

- Dan River Basin Association: Board Member and School Club Director
 Sponsored numerous off and on campus clean sweep efforts, field trips to various places, including Vade Mecum and Hanging Rock
- Stokes Arts Council
- Friends of Sauratown Mountain
 Assisted with the organization of numerous fund raising efforts including Reach the Peaks and trail clearing and educational tours including Vade Mecum
- Advocate in local tourism community

School-Related:

- Women's Varsity Tennis Coach, District Champions in 2009
- Banquet Committee Chair
- Junior Class Sponsor
- Varsity Club Sponsor
- Summit Club Sponsor

EDUCATION

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA August 2000-May 2002

Masters in Education, Administration & Supervision

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC August 1992-May 1997

Bachelor of Science, English – Secondary Education

Surry Community College, Dobson, NC January 1998-May 1999

Associate in Applied Science, Computer Information Systems

References

Scott Brown: Co-owner and operator of John Brown's Country Store

Phone: 336-416-3017

Email: scott.jbcstorecatering@gmail.com

David Willard

Phone: 336-403-6423

Dave Hoskins: Owner of The Dan River Company

Phone: 336-978-0894

Johanna Stern

Phone: 336-202-2815

Eddy McGee: Director of the Stokes Arts Council

Phone: 336-593-8159

Phone: 336-407-0884

stokesarts@gmail.com

Debbie Vaden: Friends of Sauratown

Phone: 619-987-6257

debbie.vaden@sauratownfriends.org

Mike Bowman: former Director of Camp Sertoma

Phone: 336-528-2303

David Willard

Phone:

Trey Cox: Retired Administrator

Phone: 276-692-7609

Email: pchsprincipal1@gmail.com

115 Sunset Dr. Stuart, VA 24171

Michele Arnder: Retired Educator and Department Head

Phone: 276-692-5867

Email: michelearnder@gmail.com

65 Moir Martin Rd, Stuart, VA 24171

Jennifer Turner: Educator

Phone: 276-692-7101

Email: uvajenn@yahoo.com

4993 Pleasant View Dr, Patrick Springs, VA 24133

Garrison York Schmidt: Human Resources Director Forsyth Country Club
Phone: 336-816-4036
Email: garrison421@gmail.com
248 Flintshire Rd, Winston Salem, NC 27104

Crystal Freeman: Educator and Department Head
Phone: 276-340-4116
Email: crystaldawn81@hotmail.com

Houstan Boles Deskins: Educator, Special Education
Phone: 276-692-8942
Email: houstonboles@gmail.com
3259 Moorefield Store Rd, Stuart, VA 24171



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: XI.c

Voluntary Agriculture Board Appointments

Drafter: Olivia Jessup

Summary:

The Voluntary Agriculture District Board has approved two applications for nomination. Attached are the applications of Sherry Smith and Cheryl Knight. The Board of Commissioners nominated these applications at the last meeting.

The Board will be polled for their appointment.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Smith and Knight Applications](#)



STOKES COUNTY

APPOINTMENT

APPLICATION

NAME: SHERRY A. SMITH AGE: 62

ADDRESS: 1409 EASLEY ROAD

CITY: WALNUT COVE STATE: NC ZIP: 27052

E-MAIL: surfclick63@yahoo.com PHONE: 336-314-2315

PLEASE INDICATE THE COMMITTEE OR BOARD YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON:

VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL BOARD

Comments: Please note why you are interested in serving on this committee.

I AM A 6TH GENERATION FARMER
IN STOKES COUNTY. I WANT TO SERVE
MY COUNTRY HOWEVER I CAN.

Conflicts of Interest: Please list any conflicts that would limit your ability to serve this committee or board.

NONE

**IT IS PREFERRED TO ATTACH OR INCLUDE REFERENCES OR A RESUME IF AVAILABLE.

Fax/Mail/Email appointment application to **Olivia Jessup, Clerk to the Board**,
PO Box 20, Danbury, NC 27016 | Phone: 336-593-2428 | Fax: 336-593-2346
Email: ojessup@co.stokes.nc.us



STOKES COUNTY

APPOINTMENT APPLICATION

NAME: Cheryl Knight AGE: 43

ADDRESS: 1220 Hubbie Moore Rd

CITY: Lawsonville STATE: NC ZIP: 27022

E-MAIL: cherylknight07@gmail.com PHONE: 336-344-2709

PLEASE INDICATE THE COMMITTEE OR BOARD YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON:

Voluntary Agriculture District board

Comments: Please note why you are interested in serving on this committee.

To help educate others on the importance of Voluntary Ag Districts throughout our county.

Conflicts of Interest: Please list any conflicts that would limit your ability to serve this committee or board.

None.

- References- Mark Bray, George Cutchins, Mary Jo Hanes, Bobby Baker, John Ayers.

**IT IS PREFERRED TO ATTACH OR INCLUDE REFERENCES OR A RESUME IF AVAILABLE.

Fax/Mail/Email appointment application to **Olivia Jessup, Clerk to the Board,**
PO Box 20, Danbury, NC 27016 | Phone: 336-593-2428 | Fax: 336-593-2346

Email: ojessup@co.stokes.nc.us



**Board of County Commissioners
July 13, 2026**

Item number: XII.a

Rationales

Drafter: Olivia Jessup

Summary:

To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4), and to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)