

North Carolina Urban Extension



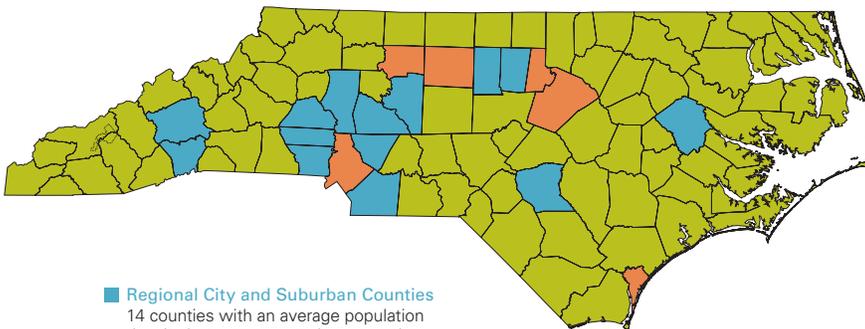
North Carolina is the ninth most populous state in the country with 10.3 million residents. **Currently, over a third of the state's population lives in the six urban counties of Mecklenburg, Wake, New Hanover, Durham, Forsyth, and Guilford.** The majority of future growth is projected to occur in these metropolitan regions and other micropolitan areas of the state.

While the needs of urban areas are not always different from their rural neighbors, the context in which Extension delivers services often varies greatly. **Extension has embraced an increased population size and density, greater diversity of citizens, and the complex organizational environment of NC's urban centers, where multiple partners often work toward similar goals.** And Extension has adapted programs and services to a vastly different physical environment of the city and suburbs.

Through urban extension efforts, we are working to fulfill NC State Extension's vision to be a dynamic and futuristic organization, responding to changes in the social, political, and economic environments of our state.



North Carolina's Urban Counties



Regional City and Suburban Counties
14 counties with an average population density between 250 and 750 people per square mile.

Urban Counties
6 counties with an average population density that exceeds 750 people per square mile.

Rural Counties
80 counties with an average population density of 250 people or fewer per square mile.

Densities calculated by the Rural Center based on 2014 U.S. Census population estimates.

2019 Highlights

Strengthening Communities in Durham County



Durham County Cooperative Extension recognizes that government employees need strong facilitation skills to run effective meetings. This is particularly important as public sector work grows increasingly complex, with departments needing to collaborate internally as well as with external partners, neighbors and civic organizations. Cooperative Extension worked with Durham County Strategic Initiatives to develop a facilitation-learning curriculum and ongoing support network for employees. What started as a pilot workshop in 2017, is now a three-part **Durham County Facilitation Program** which includes an annual one-day Facilitation 101 training for employees, a quarterly Facilitation Network, and ongoing opportunities for practice and training. Nearly 100 employees have been trained in meeting basics and facilitation through the introductory training, with approximately 90% opting in

to the ongoing Network. A diverse, six-person leadership team coordinates facilitators to provide assistance both at internal county meetings as well as external meetings (e.g., City-County Planning, Confederate Memorials Community Conversations, Early Childhood Planning). Facilitators have reached well over 1,000 citizens and employees directly through their work, which often has an impact beyond the individuals involved.

Enriching the Youth in Forsyth & New Hanover Counties

In 2019, Forsyth County Cooperative Extension held a week-long **Entrepreneurship Camp** as part of their 4-H Summer Adventures program. Twenty-two pre-teens participated in the program, learning about supply and demand, marketing, business plans, and more. Over the course of the week, students gained knowledge in financial record-keeping, soft skills, career opportunities and small business development. According to *Innovation Quarter*, "Winston-Salem...has grown rapidly into a hub of entrepreneurship. Today, there is a depth of resources and support for start-ups." 4-H is helping to plant seeds that can connect youth to these growing opportunities.



In New Hanover County, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers developed the **Explorer's Backpack Program**, a science-based program designed to engage elementary-aged children and their families in hands-on, discovery-oriented learning at the New Hanover County Arboretum. There are four different backpack adventures to choose from. Each one includes a field journal filled with activities for children to investigate the gardens, and each child who completes the backpack activities gets a pack of seeds to take home. Not only does the Explorer's Backpack program connect children and families to nature, but it exposes them to the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Protecting the Environment in Guilford County

In an urban area like Guilford County, home lawns and gardens can have a significant impact on the natural environment. Equipping community members with best practices in landscaping and gardening can help minimize environmental pollutants, conserve water, protect wildlife, and reduce stormwater runoff. Each year, Guilford County Cooperative Extension recruits and trains Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Volunteers with knowledge of best practices through a 40-hour weekday course. While the program is highly successful, only a small number of people can participate due to time constraints. To expand its reach, in 2019, Guilford County Extension reworked the training into a two-part series, opening **EMG Basic Training** to the general public. 61 community members signed up for the public course on topics like vegetable gardening, herbaceous ornamentals and integrated pest management. Classes were offered in-person on weekdays and evenings and via livestream at the High Point Library to minimize travel barriers. At the conclusion of the public series, the 23 participants who opted to become official EMG Volunteers received an additional eight weeks of training. By tweaking a successful training program, Extension was able to extend critical home gardening information to more residents while also recruiting committed volunteer educators.



Feeding the future in Mecklenburg County



THE BUSINESS OF FOOD + FARMING FREE WEBINAR SERIES

Cooperative Extension found that key knowledge gaps among this audience include: food safety, social media marketing, distribution and scale, and business funding. Cooperative Extension partnered with Carolina Farm Stewardship to offer a **six-part educational series, “The Business of Food + Farming.”** Live webinars were offered on topics such as “Marketing as Storytelling,” “How to Fund Your Farm or Food Business” and “Food Regulations” for both farmers and food businesses. 245 participants from Mecklenburg and other NC counties attended the webinars to learn how to strengthen their businesses. In an urban area where traffic can often affect program participation, it worked well to offer the program online. Another successful series is planned for 2020.

Improving Health in Wake County

Wake County Cooperative Extension leads efforts to foster health and wellbeing among youth and adults in Wake County. The 4-H Youth Development Team provides the internationally-recognized **Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Training** for organizations working with youth. Individuals are trained to recognize warning signs and to help link youth to appropriate care to prevent self-harm. Eighty-four adults, including 18 4-H Agents from across NC, have been trained by Wake County 4-H in the 8-hour YMHFA curriculum, thus increasing their likelihood to recognize and prevent self-harm and suicide among youth.

Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (EMGVs) are working to improve mental health through a **therapeutic gardening program at The Women’s Center** in Wake County. The Women’s Center is the only drop-in safety and stabilization day-shelter in the region for women, and each day, serves up to 60 women who have experienced trauma, abuse and/or homelessness. In 2019, EMGVs helped develop a raised garden area on-site and refurbish a small, nearby community garden. They used research-based models of adult learning through therapy to integrate therapeutic horticulture into daily garden tasks and into the center’s indoor, cold-weather programming. Women at the center are enthusiastic about the garden and have taken on watering, weeding and planting. Many grew up on farms or with gardens, and it brings joy to reflect on those memories. Three women have obtained hourly, garden-related jobs from their experience, so the garden is helping to cultivate economic stability in addition to positive mental health.



2019 Urban Impacts

33,078 individuals

used extension-
recommended best
management practices
in landscapes, turf, and
gardens

27,311 youth

increased their knowledge in
STEM (Science, Technology,
Engineering, & Math)

21,201 youth

developed life skills

**94% of EFNEP
participants**

(Expanded Food & Nutrition
Education Program) showed
improvement in two or more
areas of their diet*

871

Master Gardener Volunteers
provided

66,179 hours

of outreach at a value of

\$1.6 million

Data from NC’s six urban counties
*Durham & New Hanover excluded - no EFNEP program

What We Do

Feed Our Future

- Increasing agricultural awareness and engagement
- Supporting home, school and community gardens and commercial urban agriculture
- Strengthening local food systems
- Promoting farmland and open space preservation

Enrich the Youth

- Teaching life skills
- Developing future leaders
- Strengthening STEM education opportunities
- Preparing youth for college
- Promoting mental and physical wellbeing

Improve Our Health

- Promoting health and decreasing the risk of chronic disease through nutrition education
- Educating families about food safety, food preservation, nutrition, and physical activity
- Certifying retail food managers in food safety practices

LEARN MORE

Kristin Feierabend
 Area Agent for Urban Programs
 919-856-5212
 kristin_feierabend@ncsu.edu

Protect the Environment

- Promoting water conservation and protecting water quality
- Reducing environmental pollutants
- Improving waste management practice

Strengthen Communities

- Increasing food security
- Promoting physical, mental, environmental, social and financial wellness
- Building capacity of local non-profits
- Leading local impact initiatives to address community issues

North Carolina's Urban Counties					
County (Largest City)	2017 Population Estimates		People per Square Mile (County, 2010)	NC House Members	NC Senate Members
	County	City			
Mecklenburg (Charlotte)	1,034,290	826,060	1,755.5	12	5
Wake (Raleigh)	1,023,811	449,477	1,078.8	11	5
New Hanover (Wilmington)	219,866	115,261	1,058.1	3	2
Durham (Durham)	300,865	257,232	935.7	4	2
Forsyth (Winston-Salem)	368,362	240,193	859.2	5	2
Guilford (Greensboro / High Point)	517,197	284,816 / 109,849	756.4	6	4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; NC General Assembly (www.ncleg.net)