



2024 North Carolina Development Tier Designations

Raleigh, N.C. – Since 2007, North Carolina has used a three-level system for designating county development tiers. The designations, which are mandated by state law, determine a variety of state funding opportunities to assist in economic development. This report documents the process for calculating tiers and lists counties that have changed tiers since 2023. A statewide county tier map and tier calculations are included for reference.

How Tier Rankings Are Calculated

The Development Tier Designation statute ([§143B-437.08](#)) provides specific guidelines for calculating annual tier rankings. This process assigns each county to a designation of Tier One (most distressed), Tier Two, or Tier Three (least distressed). Assuming no ties in rankings, the statute requires **40 Tier One, 40 Tier Two, and 20 Tier Three** counties each year. In the event of a tie for the final position as a Tier One or Tier Two county, both counties will be placed in the lower tier.

Tier Rankings use Four Factors

- **Average unemployment rate** for the most recent twelve months for which data are available (October 2022 – September 2023, NC Dept. of Commerce, LAUS)
- **Median household income** for the most recent twelve months for which data are available (2021, U.S. Census, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates)
- **Percentage growth in population** for the most recent 36 months for which data are available (July 2019 – July 2022, NC Office of State Budget & Management)
- **Adjusted property tax base per capita** for the most recent taxable year (FY 2023-24, NC Dept. of Public Instruction)

Each county is ranked from 1 to 100 on each variable, making the highest possible *County Rank Sum* 400, and the lowest 4. After calculating the *County Rank Sum*, counties are then ranked from most distressed (1) to least distressed (100) in order to determine their *Economic Distress Rank*. Note that the 2018 Appropriations Act ([S.L. 2018-5](#), Section 15.2.(a)) eliminated several “adjustment factors” that will no longer be used to calculate the final tier ranks, adjustments that previously factored small population sizes and poverty rates into the calculations. In addition, [§143B-437.07.\(d\)](#) calls for the Department of Commerce to publish the state performance statistic for each of the four factors, alongside the county values. Any county underperforming the state average on any of the four factors may request assistance from the

Department to improve their performance on the given factor. A ranked list of each county's performance by indicator, as well as the statewide value, is provided at the end of this document. For comparison, counties may also wish to access [historical tier designations](#). For assistance, please contact David Rhoades at drhoades@nccommerce.com.

County Tier Changes in 2024

Eight counties will change tiers in 2024. Counties moving to a **less distressed** tier include Burke, Davie, Randolph, and Surry. Counties moving to a **more distressed** tier include Avery, Beaufort, Gates, and Pasquotank.

Avery County

For 2024, Avery County is shifting from Tier Three to Tier Two. The county's economic distress rank is #77 (it was #91 in 2023). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's population growth rate rank, which moved from #81 last year to #54 this year.

Beaufort County

For 2024, Beaufort County is shifting from Tier Two to Tier One. The county's economic distress rank is #34 (it was #45 in 2023). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's unemployment rate rank, which moved from #43 last year to #34 this year.

Burke County

For 2024, Burke County is shifting from Tier One to Tier Two. The county's economic distress rank is #50 (it was #33 in 2023). Compared to last year, the county's population growth rank and median household income rank both improved.

Davie County

For 2024, Davie County is shifting from Tier Two to Tier Three. The county's economic distress rank is #81 (it was #77 in 2023). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's unemployment rate rank, which moved from #74 last year to #82 this year.

Gates County

For 2024, Gates County is shifting from Tier Two to Tier One. The county's economic distress rank is #38 (it was #41 in 2023). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's unemployment rate rank, which moved from #73 last year to #60 this year.

Pasquotank County

For 2024, Pasquotank County is shifting from Tier Two to Tier One. The county's economic distress rank is #31 (it was #43 in 2023). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's median household income rank, which moved from #73 last year to #45 this year.

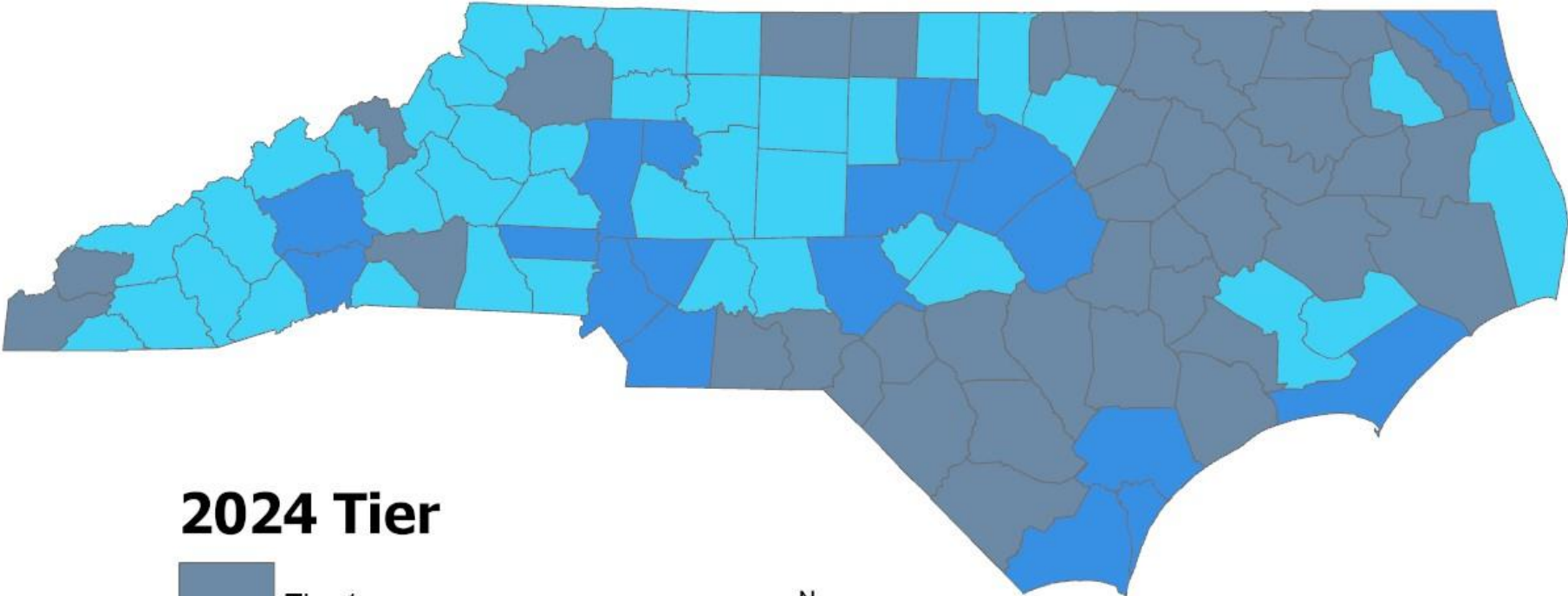
Randolph County

For 2024, Randolph County is shifting from Tier One to Tier Two. The county's economic distress rank is #44 (it was #39 in 2023). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's median household income rank, which moved from #38 last year to #66 this year.

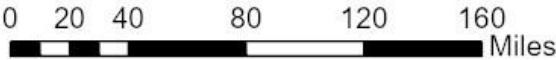
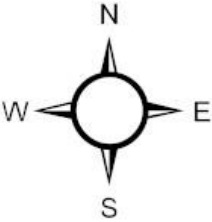
Surry County

For 2024, Surry County is shifting from Tier One to Tier Two. The county's economic distress rank is #45 (it was #38 in 2023). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's median household income rank, which moved from #30 last year to #48 this year.

2024 County Tier Designations



2024 Tier



Map Created November 2023

2024 COUNTY DEVELOPMENT TIER RANKINGS (§ 143B-437.08)

NEW TIER	COUNTY	Adjusted Property Tax Base Per Capita FY 2023-2024		Population Growth July 2019-July 2022		Median Household Income 2021		Unemployment 12 Mth Avg Oct 22-Sept 23		County Rank Sum	ECONOMIC DISTRESS RANK (#1 = most distressed)	2024 TIERS
		Value	Rank	% Change	Rank	Income	Rank	Rate	Rank			
	ALAMANCE	\$99,209	34	4.98%	84	\$58,847	71	3.53%	49	238	62	2
	ALEXANDER	\$92,866	22	-0.19%	35	\$52,989	52	3.11%	84	193	46	2
	ALLEGHANY	\$172,829	84	3.71%	80	\$45,239	24	4.21%	23	211	53	2
	ANSON	\$108,078	47	-1.80%	22	\$40,773	6	4.05%	28	103	15	1
	ASHE	\$167,022	81	0.63%	49	\$45,551	25	3.11%	85	240	64	2
↓	AVERY	\$319,230	99	1.28%	54	\$48,470	34	3.04%	89	276	77	2
↓	BEAUFORT	\$144,900	69	-1.97%	19	\$50,312	41	3.91%	34	163	34	1
	BERTIE	\$90,701	20	-5.80%	2	\$41,280	9	4.45%	19	50	7	1
	BLADEN	\$110,192	49	-3.23%	9	\$42,398	11	4.21%	24	93	13	1
	BRUNSWICK	\$221,887	93	14.15%	100	\$67,286	85	4.30%	21	299	83	3
	BUNCOMBE	\$178,312	86	2.42%	68	\$63,838	82	2.75%	100	336	94	3
↑	BURKE	\$93,616	24	1.31%	55	\$53,758	55	3.30%	66	200	50	2
	CABARRUS	\$129,140	58	7.57%	93	\$79,148	94	3.26%	74	319	90	3
	CALDWELL	\$105,011	41	0.91%	52	\$44,705	20	3.37%	61	174	41	2
	CAMDEN	\$128,718	57	5.42%	89	\$79,162	95	3.42%	56	297	82	3
	CARTERET	\$266,156	97	2.76%	70	\$63,146	80	3.32%	64	311	85	3
	CASWELL	\$82,965	12	-1.97%	20	\$50,879	44	3.68%	42	118	18	1
	CATAWBA	\$128,134	56	3.12%	73	\$59,841	73	3.28%	69	271	73	2
	CHATHAM	\$177,577	85	4.99%	85	\$82,764	98	2.97%	96	364	98	3
	CHEROKEE	\$133,939	61	0.06%	38	\$44,211	17	3.88%	35	151	32	1
	CHOWAN	\$118,869	53	0.12%	40	\$48,568	35	3.72%	40	168	37	1
	CLAY	\$185,456	88	3.24%	75	\$51,537	46	3.67%	43	252	69	2
	CLEVELAND	\$106,388	42	1.38%	57	\$49,009	37	3.54%	48	184	43	2
	COLUMBUS	\$89,800	16	-2.40%	13	\$41,206	8	3.74%	38	75	11	1
	CRAVEN	\$108,597	48	2.16%	64	\$57,628	68	3.58%	46	226	58	2
	CUMBERLAND	\$76,589	5	1.82%	59	\$52,463	50	4.87%	11	125	23	1
	CURRITUCK	\$266,474	98	12.77%	99	\$82,759	97	3.20%	79	373	100	3
	DARE	\$446,844	100	3.48%	77	\$68,682	86	4.07%	26	289	80	2
	DAVIDSON	\$100,980	37	3.57%	78	\$53,473	53	3.35%	63	231	60	2
↑	DAVIE	\$124,415	55	3.21%	74	\$67,224	84	3.14%	82	295	81	3
	DUPLIN	\$103,023	39	-1.57%	23	\$45,149	23	3.42%	57	142	29	1
	DURHAM	\$156,398	78	3.85%	81	\$71,436	91	3.07%	88	338	95	3
	EDGECOMBE	\$74,323	2	-2.03%	18	\$41,157	7	5.91%	3	30	1	1
	FORSYTH	\$110,365	50	2.59%	69	\$60,228	74	3.52%	52	245	67	2
	FRANKLIN	\$99,258	35	11.32%	98	\$63,687	81	3.52%	51	265	72	2
	GASTON	\$99,037	33	5.06%	87	\$56,017	62	3.44%	54	236	61	2
↓	GATES	\$93,952	25	-2.47%	12	\$59,762	72	3.38%	60	169	38	1
	GRAHAM	\$165,336	80	-2.40%	14	\$43,647	15	4.59%	17	126	25	1
	GRANVILLE	\$99,730	36	2.32%	66	\$62,715	79	3.03%	90	271	73	2
	GREENE	\$74,799	3	-2.71%	11	\$42,884	13	2.98%	95	122	20	1
	GUILFORD	\$114,020	51	1.89%	61	\$60,915	76	3.92%	33	221	56	2
	HALIFAX	\$90,665	19	-3.57%	8	\$38,944	2	5.22%	6	35	3	1
	HARNETT	\$77,787	6	4.63%	83	\$61,701	77	3.95%	31	197	49	2
	HAYWOOD	\$157,308	79	2.19%	65	\$51,817	47	3.01%	92	283	78	2
	HENDERSON	\$154,021	77	2.85%	72	\$60,384	75	2.96%	97	321	91	3
	HERTFORD	\$85,193	13	-3.67%	6	\$40,461	4	4.82%	12	35	3	1
	HOKE	\$76,506	4	5.66%	90	\$54,948	57	4.62%	14	165	35	1
	HYDE	\$263,098	95	-6.49%	1	\$44,880	22	5.94%	2	120	19	1
	IREDELL	\$150,601	76	7.63%	95	\$69,734	89	3.26%	75	335	92	3
	JACKSON	\$265,530	96	0.30%	44	\$50,652	43	3.74%	39	222	57	2

	JOHNSTON	\$107,473	46	10.69%	97	\$69,889	90	3.20%	78	311	85	3
	JONES	\$107,236	45	-2.36%	15	\$47,616	29	3.30%	65	154	33	1
	LEE	\$106,749	43	5.06%	86	\$56,679	65	3.94%	32	226	58	2
	LENOIR	\$80,586	9	-2.07%	17	\$44,244	18	3.48%	53	97	14	1
	LINCOLN	\$140,537	65	7.62%	94	\$73,319	92	3.01%	91	342	96	3
	MACON	\$228,319	94	2.37%	67	\$49,406	39	3.28%	72	272	75	2
	MADISON	\$139,526	64	0.76%	50	\$51,849	49	3.25%	77	240	64	2
	MARTIN	\$94,822	28	-4.30%	5	\$43,261	14	4.32%	20	67	10	1
	MCDOWELL	\$116,886	52	-0.64%	30	\$50,476	42	3.28%	71	195	47	2
	MECKLENBURG	\$183,689	87	3.24%	76	\$75,138	93	3.37%	62	318	87	3
	MITCHELL	\$136,259	62	-0.38%	34	\$49,086	38	3.75%	37	171	40	1
	MONTGOMERY	\$148,167	74	-1.19%	26	\$52,897	51	3.61%	44	195	47	2
	MOORE	\$145,462	71	7.43%	92	\$69,373	87	3.52%	50	300	84	3
	NASH	\$94,583	27	2.13%	63	\$55,956	61	4.61%	15	166	36	1
	NEW HANOVER	\$204,471	90	4.59%	82	\$66,212	83	3.19%	80	335	92	3
	NORTHAMPTON	\$140,986	66	-5.57%	3	\$40,524	5	4.73%	13	87	12	1
	ONSLow	\$81,833	11	2.83%	71	\$55,645	60	4.05%	27	169	38	1
	ORANGE	\$149,795	75	0.62%	48	\$79,814	96	2.93%	99	318	87	3
	PAMLICO	\$171,315	83	0.39%	46	\$53,732	54	3.29%	68	251	68	2
↓	PASQUOTANK	\$94,016	26	1.35%	56	\$51,365	45	4.24%	22	149	31	1
	PENDER	\$142,308	67	8.98%	96	\$69,555	88	3.30%	67	318	87	3
	PERQUIMANS	\$123,344	54	0.25%	43	\$53,760	56	4.12%	25	178	42	2
	PERSON	\$133,556	60	0.30%	45	\$55,287	59	3.56%	47	211	53	2
	PITT	\$93,141	23	1.94%	62	\$48,116	32	3.96%	30	147	30	1
	POLK	\$185,585	89	0.11%	39	\$58,064	70	3.40%	59	257	71	2
↑	RANDOLPH	\$91,826	21	0.94%	53	\$57,088	66	3.58%	45	185	44	2
	RICHMOND	\$86,888	14	-1.53%	24	\$42,158	10	4.61%	16	64	9	1
	ROBESON	\$68,212	1	-1.28%	25	\$38,613	1	5.11%	8	35	3	1
	ROCKINGHAM	\$90,106	17	0.88%	51	\$46,868	28	4.00%	29	125	23	1
	ROWAN	\$101,588	38	3.58%	79	\$56,441	63	3.41%	58	238	62	2
	RUTHERFORD	\$132,576	59	-0.81%	28	\$44,477	19	4.59%	18	124	22	1
	SAMPSON	\$89,732	15	-0.63%	31	\$48,267	33	3.43%	55	134	28	1
	SCOTLAND	\$78,104	7	-2.90%	10	\$44,060	16	6.30%	1	34	2	1
	STANLY	\$96,685	31	1.87%	60	\$57,465	67	3.14%	83	241	66	2
	STOKES	\$103,432	40	1.49%	58	\$57,763	69	3.10%	86	253	70	2
↑	SURRY	\$98,335	32	-0.04%	37	\$51,820	48	3.27%	73	190	45	2
	SWAIN	\$143,813	68	-2.23%	16	\$47,838	30	2.96%	98	212	55	2
	TRANSYLVANIA	\$211,721	92	-0.59%	32	\$61,737	78	3.28%	70	272	75	2
	TYRRELL	\$147,905	73	-1.83%	21	\$39,970	3	5.21%	7	104	16	1
	UNION	\$145,961	72	6.62%	91	\$87,553	99	3.01%	93	355	97	3
	VANCE	\$78,404	8	-3.65%	7	\$45,557	26	5.53%	5	46	6	1
	WAKE	\$169,515	82	5.16%	88	\$91,558	100	2.99%	94	364	98	3
	WARREN	\$144,989	70	-0.07%	36	\$44,794	21	5.56%	4	131	26	1
	WASHINGTON	\$96,012	29	-5.06%	4	\$42,582	12	4.89%	10	55	8	1
	WATAUGA	\$209,660	91	0.50%	47	\$55,183	58	3.07%	87	283	78	2
	WAYNE	\$81,795	10	-0.93%	27	\$49,955	40	3.81%	36	113	17	1
	WILKES	\$96,295	30	-0.75%	29	\$47,891	31	3.68%	41	131	26	1
	WILSON	\$106,868	44	-0.45%	33	\$48,777	36	4.93%	9	122	20	1
	YADKIN	\$90,121	18	0.22%	42	\$56,547	64	3.17%	81	205	51	2
	YANCEY	\$138,393	63	0.14%	41	\$46,299	27	3.25%	76	207	52	2
	NORTH CAROLINA	\$136,274		3.20%		\$61,997		3.48%				

2024 COUNTY DEVELOPMENT TIER ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Adjusted Property Tax Base Per Capita FY 2023-2024				Population Growth July 2019-July 2022				Median Household Income 2021				Unemployment Rate, 12 Mth Avg October 2022-September 2023			
Rank	County	Value		Rank	County	Value		Rank	County	Income		Rank	County	Rate	
100	Dare	\$446,844		50	Forsyth	\$110,365		100	Wake	\$91,558		100	Buncombe	2.75%	
99	Avery	\$319,230		49	Bladen	\$110,192		99	Union	\$87,553		99	Orange	2.93%	
98	Currituck	\$266,474		48	Craven	\$108,597		98	Chatham	\$82,764		98	Swain	2.96%	
97	Carteret	\$266,156		47	Anson	\$108,078		97	Currituck	\$82,759		97	Henderson	2.96%	
96	Jackson	\$265,530		46	Johnston	\$107,473		96	Orange	\$79,814		96	Chatham	2.97%	
95	Hyde	\$263,098		45	Jones	\$107,236		95	Camden	\$79,162		95	Greene	2.98%	
94	Macon	\$228,319		44	Wilson	\$106,868		94	Cabarrus	\$79,148		94	Wake	2.99%	
93	Brunswick	\$221,887		43	Lee	\$106,749		93	Mecklenburg	\$75,138		93	Union	3.01%	
92	Transylvania	\$211,721		42	Cleveland	\$106,388		92	Lincoln	\$73,319		92	Haywood	3.01%	
91	Watauga	\$209,660		41	Caldwell	\$105,011		91	Durham	\$71,436		91	Lincoln	3.01%	
90	New Hanover	\$204,471		40	Stokes	\$103,432		90	Johnston	\$69,889		90	Granville	3.03%	
89	Polk	\$185,585		39	Duplin	\$103,023		89	Iredell	\$69,734		89	Avery	3.04%	
88	Clay	\$185,456		38	Rowan	\$101,588		88	Pender	\$69,555		88	Durham	3.07%	
87	Mecklenburg	\$183,689		37	Davidson	\$100,980		87	Moore	\$69,373		87	Watauga	3.07%	
86	Buncombe	\$178,312		36	Granville	\$99,730		86	Dare	\$68,682		86	Stokes	3.10%	
85	Chatham	\$177,577		35	Franklin	\$99,258		85	Brunswick	\$67,286		85	Ashe	3.11%	
84	Alleghany	\$172,829		34	Alamance	\$99,209		84	Davie	\$67,224		84	Alexander	3.11%	
83	Pamlico	\$171,315		33	Gaston	\$99,037		83	New Hanover	\$66,212		83	Stanly	3.14%	
82	Wake	\$169,515		32	Surry	\$98,335		82	Buncombe	\$63,838		82	Pitt	3.14%	
81	Ashe	\$167,022		31	Stanly	\$96,685		81	Franklin	\$63,687		81	Yadkin	3.17%	
80	Graham	\$165,336		30	Wilkes	\$96,295		80	Carteret	\$63,146		80	New Hanover	3.19%	
79	Haywood	\$157,308		29	Washington	\$96,012		79	Granville	\$62,715		79	Currituck	3.20%	
78	Durham	\$156,398		28	Martin	\$94,822		North Carolina		\$61,997		78	Johnston	3.20%	
77	Henderson	\$154,021		27	Nash	\$94,583		78	Transylvania	\$61,737		77	Madison	3.25%	
76	Iredell	\$150,601		26	Pasquotank	\$94,016		77	Harnett	\$61,701		76	Yancey	3.25%	
75	Orange	\$149,795		25	Gates	\$93,952		76	Guilford	\$60,915		75	Iredell	3.26%	
74	Montgomery	\$148,167		24	Burke	\$93,616		75	Henderson	\$60,384		74	Cabarrus	3.26%	
73	Tyrrell	\$147,905		23	Pitt	\$93,141		74	Forsyth	\$60,228		73	Surry	3.27%	
72	Union	\$145,961		22	Alexander	\$92,866		73	Catawba	\$59,841		72	Madison	3.28%	
71	Moore	\$145,462		21	Randolph	\$91,826		72	Gates	\$59,762		71	McDowell	3.28%	
70	Warren	\$144,989		20	Bertie	\$90,701		71	Alamance	\$58,847		70	Transylvania	3.28%	
69	Beaufort	\$144,900		19	Halifax	\$90,665		70	Polk	\$58,064		69	Catawba	3.28%	
68	Swain	\$143,813		18	Yadkin	\$90,121		69	Stokes	\$57,763		68	Pamlico	3.29%	
67	Pender	\$142,308		17	Rockingham	\$90,106		68	Craven	\$57,628		67	Pender	3.30%	
66	Northampton	\$140,986		16	Columbus	\$89,800		67	Macon	\$57,465		66	Burke	3.30%	
65	Lincoln	\$140,537		15	Sampson	\$89,732		66	Randolph	\$57,088		65	Jones	3.30%	
64	Madison	\$139,526		14	Richmond	\$86,888		65	Haywood	\$56,679		64	Carteret	3.32%	
63	Yancey	\$138,393		13	Hertford	\$85,193		64	Craven	\$56,547		63	Davidson	3.35%	
North Carolina		\$136,274		12	Caswell	\$82,965		63	Nash	\$56,441		62	Mecklenburg	3.37%	
62	Mitchell	\$136,259		11	Onslow	\$81,833		62	Pitt	\$56,017		61	Caldwell	3.37%	
61	Cherokee	\$133,939		10	Wayne	\$81,795		61	Guilford	\$55,956		60	Gates	3.38%	
60	Person	\$133,556		9	Lenoir	\$80,586		60	Stanly	\$55,645		59	Polk	3.40%	
59	Rutherford	\$132,576		8	Vance	\$78,404		59	Cumberland	\$55,287		58	Rowan	3.41%	
58	Cabarrus	\$129,140		7	Scotland	\$78,104		58	Stokes	\$55,183		57	Duplin	3.42%	
57	Camden	\$128,718		6	Harnett	\$77,787		57	Cleveland	\$54,948		56	Camden	3.42%	
56	Catawba	\$128,134		5	Cumberland	\$76,589		56	Pasquotank	\$53,760		55	Sampson	3.43%	
55	Davie	\$124,415		4	Hoke	\$76,506		55	Burke	\$53,758		54	Gaston	3.44%	
54	Perquimans	\$123,344		3	Greene	\$74,799		54	Avery	\$53,732		53	Lenoir	3.48%	
53	Chowan	\$118,869		2	Edgecombe	\$74,323		53	Davidson	\$53,473		North Carolina		\$3,48%	
52	McDowell	\$116,886		1	Robeson	\$68,212		52	Alexander	\$52,989		52	Forsyth	3.52%	
51	Guilford	\$114,020		2024 Tiers State Value		\$136,274		51	Montgomery	\$52,897		2024 Tiers State Value		\$61,997	

Note: 2024 Tiers State Values are provided as required by G.S. 143B-437.07(d). Both adjusted property tax base per capita and median household income are presented in nominal terms.