



2020 NC Commerce Tier ranking data shows strong growth in Burlington Metro

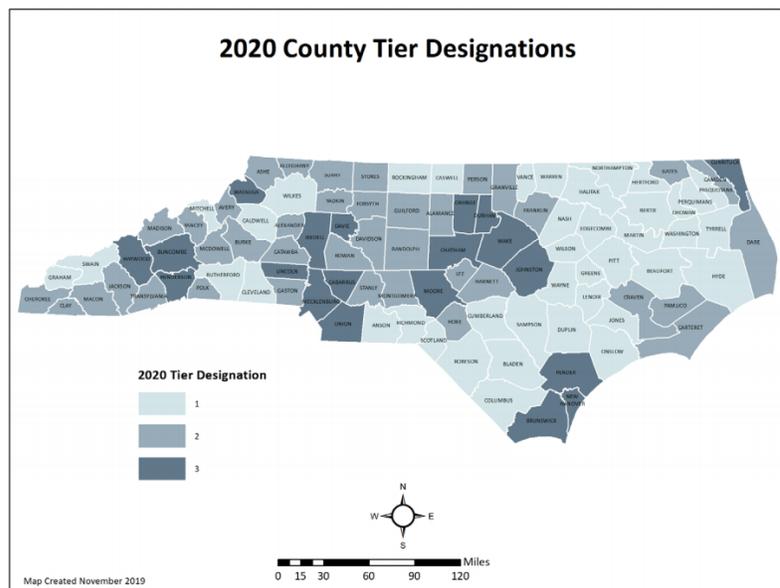
The North Carolina Department of Commerce annually ranks the economic well-being of the State's 100 counties, grouping like economies in tiers. This Tier system is incorporated into various state development and financing programs to encourage economic activity and leverage more dollars in less prosperous areas of the State. The 40 most distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 40 as Tier 2 and the 20 least distressed as Tier 3.

County Tiers are calculated using four factors:

- Average unemployment rate
- Median household income
- Percentage growth in population
- Adjusted property tax base per capita

In the [2020 rankings](#), Burlington / Alamance County slotted in the top of the Tier 2 cohort, at 26th out of 100. This ranking is just outside of the top 20 most economically stable counties in the State, representing our highest ever score and capping three consecutive years of rank improvement. Burlington's neighbors to the south and east rank inside the top 20 with Chatham the 2nd and Orange the 7th highest performing counties in North Carolina based on these measures. Our neighbors to the north and west in Caswell and Guilford rank 75th and 35th, respectively.

Alamance County is grouped with a collection of Tier 2 Triad counties and borders the Triangle's cluster of Tier 3 communities. The concentration of Tier 3 counties in the Triangle, Charlotte, Wilmington, and



Asheville Metros is illustrative of the highest-performing and stable economies in the state.

Burlington is the place to Grow

The 2020 Tier rankings provided welcome data to confirm what we're seeking throughout the City: we are growing. The Burlington metropolitan area (Alamance County) was ranked as the 6th fastest growing county in the State. The Burlington Metro's population growth rate of 6.44% over the last year is nearly twice that of Greensboro-High Point and Guilford County's rate of 3.46% or Winston-Salem and Forsyth County's rate of 2.99%.

This places the Burlington metro as the fastest growing Triad region and joins the trend of suburban county growth in central North Carolina. Indeed, much of this population growth can be attributed to our location on the outskirts of one of the hottest markets in the country, Raleigh-Durham metro area, to the east and the fast-developing areas of Greensboro and Burlington to the west.

Will growth keep coming? An analysis of population data by the [American City Business Journals](#) expects the Burlington metro area to continue to be the Triad region's fastest growing community. Over the next two decades, Burlington is anticipated to grow 15.4%, boosting the metro area population to nearly 185,000.

While Burlington's location is enviable, it is not the sole contributing factor to this growth. Focused planning efforts and strategic City investments have fostered a revitalized historic Downtown with breweries, loft apartments and hip office locations, beautiful parks and arboretums connected by multiuse paths and industry-friendly development sites with easy interstate access.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the Tier System in North Carolina or questions about the trends in growth and how that will affect our community, please reach out to our Economic Development Office at 336-222-5081. If you would like to join our mailing list for news and publications similar to this, please email Blake Moyer at BMoyer@BurlingtonNC.gov.