Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Center for Research & Data Analytics



1st Quarter 2026 Data Snapshot
Western Piedmont Region

EMPLOYMENT

3.7% Unemployment Rate
-0.2% Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

166,189 Labor Force
-3,533 (-2.1%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

160,080 Employed Residents
-3,032 (-1.9%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

6,109 Unemployed Residents
-501 (-7.6%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Building Permits

733 Single-Family Units
168 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$184.9M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)
$28.9M Higher Est. costs than 1st Qtr. 2025

1,036 Total Units
281 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$237.9M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)
$57.4M Higher Est. costs than 1st Qtr. 2025

Residential Real Estate (Multiple Listing Services)

1,334 New Listings
-24 (-1.8%) Less Listings than 1st Qtr. 2025

810 Closed Sales
-188 (-12.7%) Less Sales than 1st Qtr. 2025

$375,688 Average Sales Price
$22,577 (10.3%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

2.9 Supply of Housing Inventory (Months)
-0.1 Months Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Sales and Use Tax Distribution and Taxable Sales*

$44.4M Sales & Use Tax Distribution
$1.6M (3.8%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

$1,630M Taxable Sales
$98.3M (6.3%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

**1st quarter 2025 employment results do not include September 2025 numbers due to Federal government shutdown. Taxable sales are retail sales subject to State sales tax.*
Data Sources: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, Regional Building Inspection Departments, Canopy Inc, and NC Department of Revenue, 2025.

1st Quarter 2026 Data Snapshot
Alexander County

EMPLOYMENT

3.6% Unemployment Rate

15,666 Labor Force

15,102 Employed Residents

564 Unemployed Residents

-0.4% Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

-395 (-2.5%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

-321 (-2.1%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

-75 (-11.7%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Building Permits

23 Single-Family Units (Site Built)

$8.3M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)

24 Total Units

$8.5M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)

-16 Less units than 1st Qtr. 2025

-$6.4M Lower Est. costs 1st Qtr. 2025

-16 Less units than 1st Qtr. 2025

-$6.2M Lower Est. costs 1st Qtr. 2025

Residential Real Estate (Multiple Listing Services)

85 New Listings

53 Closed Sales

$367,360 Average Sales Price

2.5 Supply of Housing Inventory (Months)

10 (13.3%) More Listings than 1st Qtr. 2025

-3 (-5.4%) Less Sales than 1st Qtr. 2025

$3,565 (1.0%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

-0.7 Months Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Sales and Use Tax Distribution and Taxable Sales*

$3.7M Sales & Use Tax Distribution

$0.1M (2.2%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

$95.8M Taxable Sales

$5.3M (5.9%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

**Taxable sales are retail sales subject to State sales taxes.*

Data Sources: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, Regional Building Inspection Departments, Canopy Inc, and NC Department of Revenue, 2026.

1st Quarter 2026 Data Snapshot
Burke County

EMPLOYMENT

3.6% Unemployment Rate

38,721 Labor Force

37,328 Employed Residents

1,393 Unemployed Residents

-0.6% Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

-994 (-2.5%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

-721 (-1.9%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

-256 (-15.5%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Building Permits

111 Single-Family Units (Site Built)

$41.8M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)

179 Total Units

$54.2M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)

26 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$13.0M Higher Est. costs 1st Qtr. 2025

88 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$23.6M Higher Est. costs 1st Qtr. 2025

Residential Real Estate (Multiple Listing Services)

233 New Listings

140 Closed Sales

$338,468 Average Sales Price

3.3 Supply of Housing Inventory (Months)

-32 (-12.1%) Less Listings than 1st Qtr. 2025

-25 (-15.2%) Less Sales than 1st Qtr. 2025

-$3,129 (0.9%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

-0.1 Months Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Sales and Use Tax Distribution and Taxable Sales*

$9.2M Sales & Use Tax Distribution

<$0.1M (-0.4%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

$301.8M Taxable Sales

$2.1M (0.7%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

**Taxable sales are retail sales subject to State sales taxes.*

Data Sources: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, Regional Building Inspection Departments, Canopy Inc, and NC Department of Revenue, 2026.

1st Quarter 2026 Data Snapshot
Caldwell County

EMPLOYMENT

3.8% Unemployment Rate

-0.1% Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

35,488 Labor Force

-689 (-1.9%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

34,143 Employed Residents

-613 (-1.8%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

1,345 Unemployed Residents

-76 (-5.3%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Building Permits

73 Single-Family Units

14 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$29.8M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)

$8.4M Higher Est. costs than 1st Qtr. 2025

74 Total Units

15 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$29.9M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)

$8.5M Higher Est. costs than 1st Qtr. 2025

Residential Real Estate (Multiple Listing Services)

215 New Listings

-18 (-7.7%) Less Listings than 1st Qtr. 2025

157 Closed Sales

-7 (-4.3%) Less Sales than 1st Qtr. 2025

$352,997 Average Sales Price

$29,469 (9.1%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

2.8 Supply of Housing Inventory (Months)

0.0 Months Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Sales and Use Tax Distribution and Taxable Sales*

$8.4M Sales & Use Tax Distribution

$0.6M (7.4%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

$275.0M Taxable Sales

$27.0M (10.9%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

**Taxable sales are retail sales subject to State sales taxes.*

Data Sources: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, Regional Building Inspection Departments, Canopy Inc, and NC Department of Revenue, 2026.

1st Quarter 2026 Data Snapshot
Catawba County

EMPLOYMENT

3.7% Unemployment Rate
-0.1% Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

76,313 Labor Force
-1,454 (-1.9%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

73,507 Employed Residents
-1,360 (-1.8%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

2,806 Unemployed Residents
-94 (-3.2%) Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Building Permits

526 Single-Family Units
145 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$105M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)
$13.8M Higher Est. costs than 1st Qtr. 2025

759 Total Units
194 More units than 1st Qtr. 2025

$145.2M Est. Construction Costs ($Millions)
$31.5M Higher Est. costs than 1st Qtr. 2025

Residential Real Estate (Multiple Listing Services)

801 New Listings
16 (2.0%) More Listings than 1st Qtr. 2025

460 Closed Sales
-83 (-15.3%) Less Sales than 1st Qtr. 2025

$395,720 Average Sales Price
$31,238 (8.6%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

2.9 Supply of Housing Inventory (Months)
-0.1 Months Lower than 1st Qtr. 2025

Sales and Use Tax Distribution and Taxable Sales*

$23.2M Sales & Use Tax Distribution
$1.0M (4.5%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

$990.7M Taxable Sales
$63.8M (6.9%) Higher than 1st Qtr. 2025

**Taxable sales are retail sales subject to State sales taxes.*
Data Sources: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, Regional Building Inspection Departments, Canopy Inc, and NC Department of Revenue, 2026.