

## NC Community Engagement Survey for MARCH 2023

The purpose of the NC Community Engagement Survey (NC CES) is to measure trends in community wellness across North Carolina. The NC CES is sent via email monthly to community members throughout the state.

The survey asks questions to assess local conditions throughout North Carolina. Researchers use the data to monitor the social wellness in communities across the state. In March we examined four areas that emerged as being of highest importance in the February survey results – access to food, healthcare, housing, and childcare.

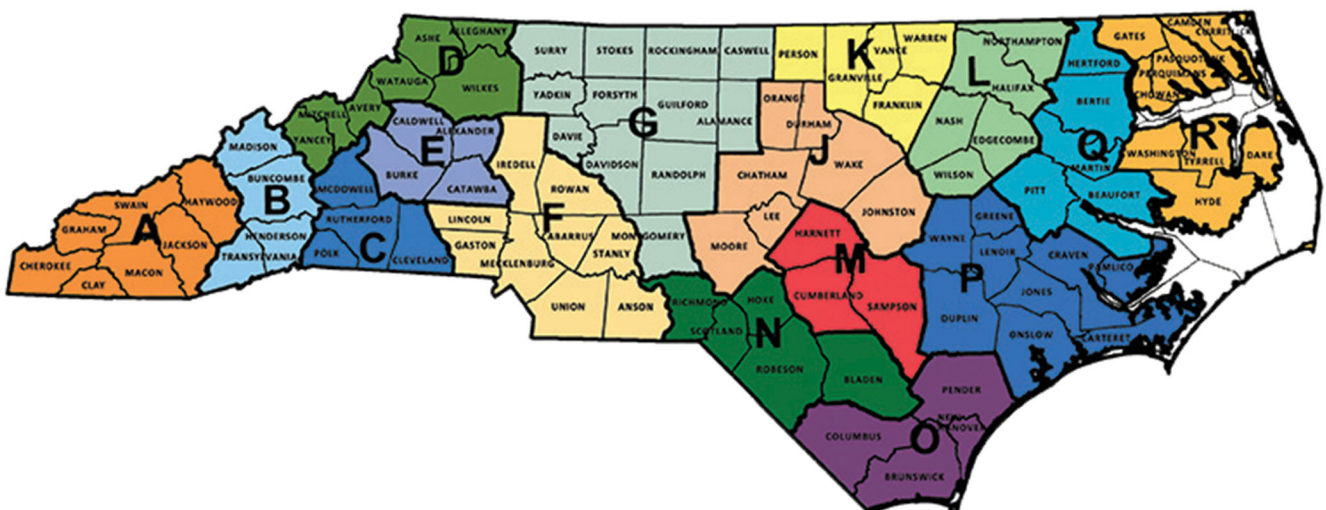
The North Carolina Community Engagement Panel (people who have responded to the survey) stands at 2,707 members across North Carolina's 100 counties. In March, 1,076 participants responded to the survey.

The March report presents observations based on data for a trailing three-month period (January 2023 through the end of March 2023). Results are reported state-wide for North Carolina and for each of the sixteen councils of government.

### Regional Councils of Government in North Carolina

North Carolina's 100 counties are grouped into 16 regional councils of government (COGs). These regional councils provide a forum for local governments to coordinate and collaborate on issues that affect the entire region. In this report, we will provide an overview of survey insights from the 16 regional councils in North Carolina. The map below provides a geographical depiction of how the councils are organized.

Map of North Carolina Councils of Government (See the map key on the following page)



Source: Land of Sky Regional Council <https://www.landofsky.org/ncregions.html>

Region A - Southwestern Commission  
 Region B - Land-of-Sky Regional Council  
 Region C - Foothills Regional Commission  
 Region D - High Country Council  
 Region E - Western Piedmont Council  
 Region F - Centralina Council  
 Region G - Piedmont Triad Regional Council  
 Region J - Triangle J Council

Region K - Kerr-Tar Council  
 Region L - Upper Coastal Plain Council  
 Region M - Mid-Carolina Council  
 Region N - Lumber River Council  
 Region O - Cape Fear Council  
 Region P - Eastern Carolina Council  
 Region Q - Mid-East Commission  
 Region R - Albemarle Commission

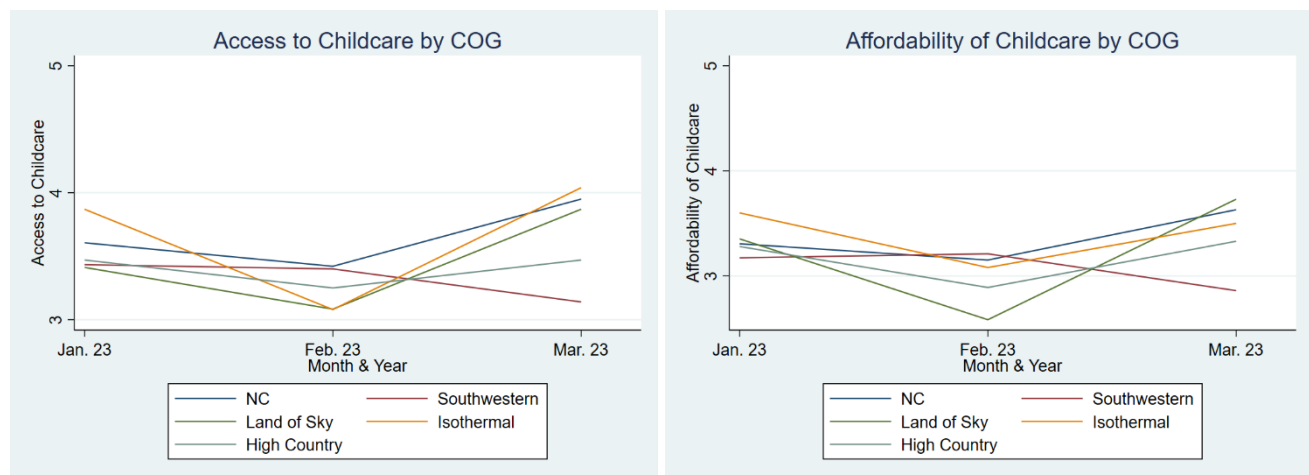
### North Carolina Overall

In March, survey respondents across North Carolina report that access to **childcare** and the affordability of childcare improved over both January and February. Access to healthy **food** and affordability of food also improved this month, including access for both families with children and the elderly. Access to affordable **healthcare** improved over January and February for both the elderly and families with children. Access to safe **housing** remained steady across the state overall and improved slightly for families with children and the elderly. However, affordability of housing declined month-over-month. Next, March results are provided for each council of government in comparison to North Carolina overall.

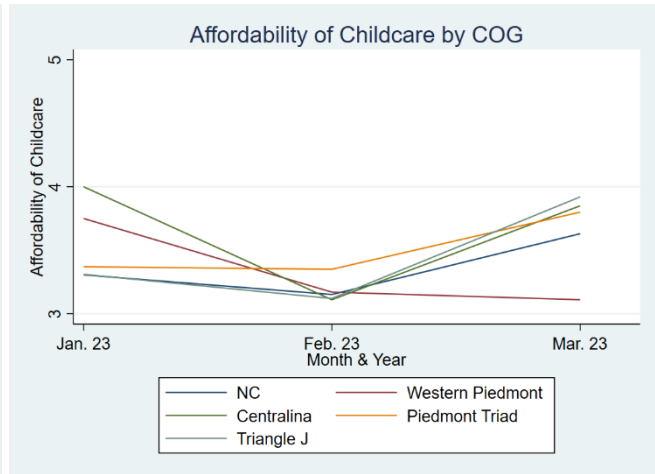
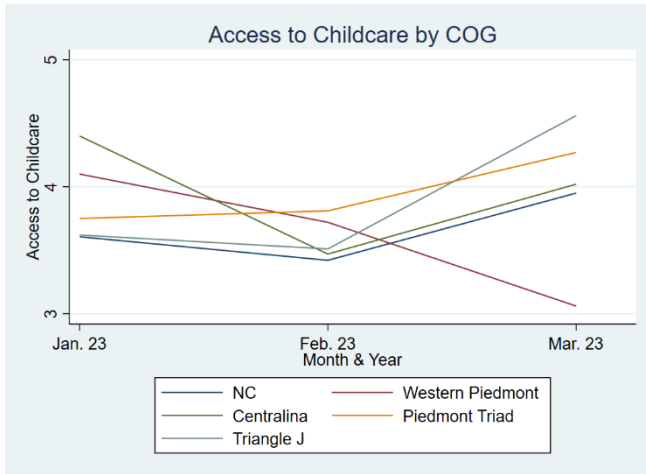
### Childcare Access and Affordability

In this section, we report on data collected for both access to childcare and affordability of childcare. For clarity of trend lines throughout the report, COGs were assigned alphabetically to groups of four. Each graph depicts trend data over a trailing three-month period and includes the three-month state trend line for comparison. Regarding childcare, March data indicates the following:

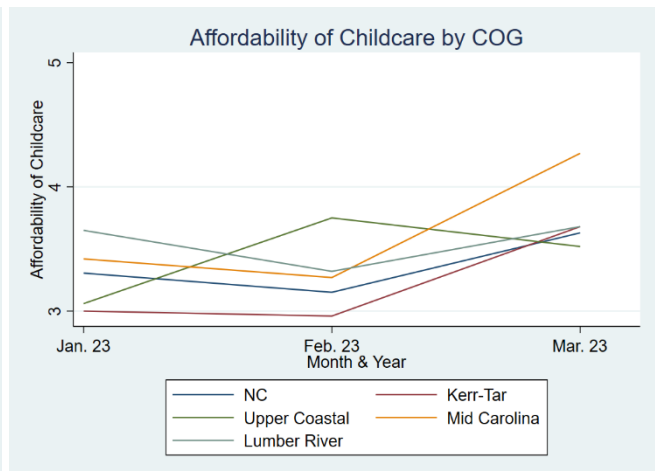
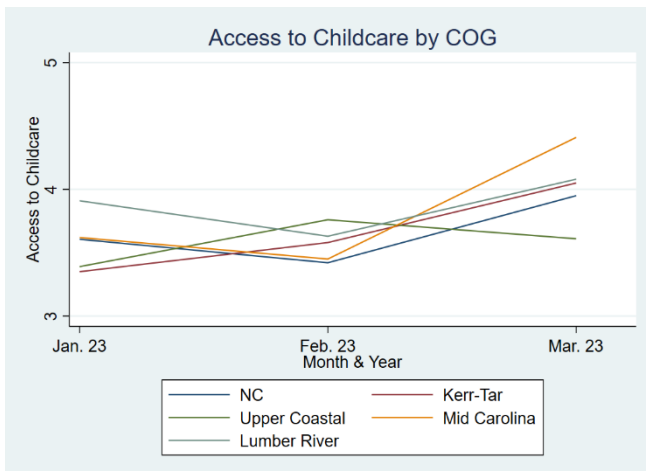
### Three-month trends for Regions A, B, C, and D



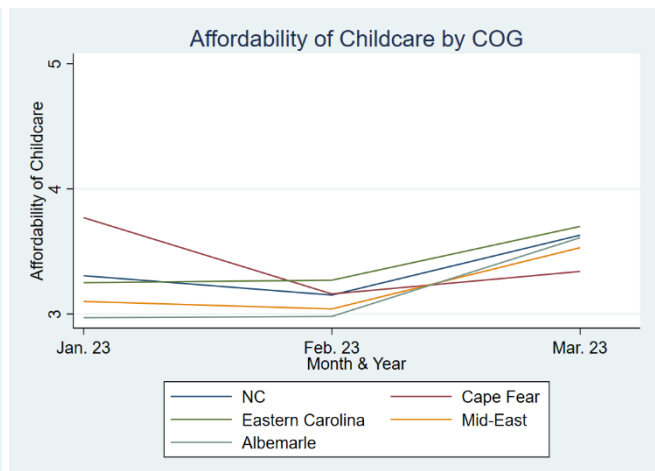
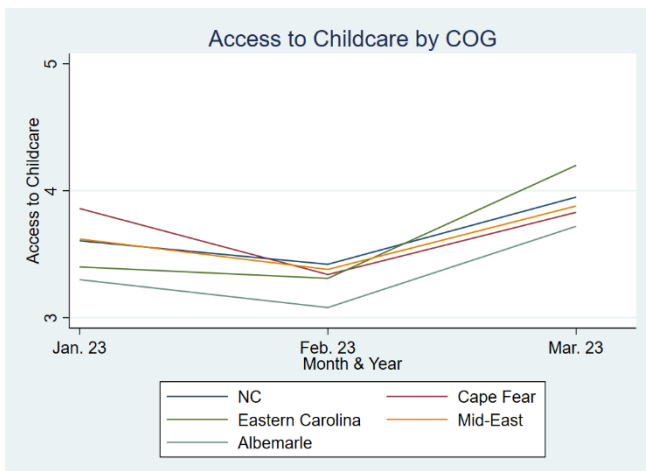
### Three-month trends for Regions E, F, G, and J



### Three-month trends for Regions K, L, M, and N



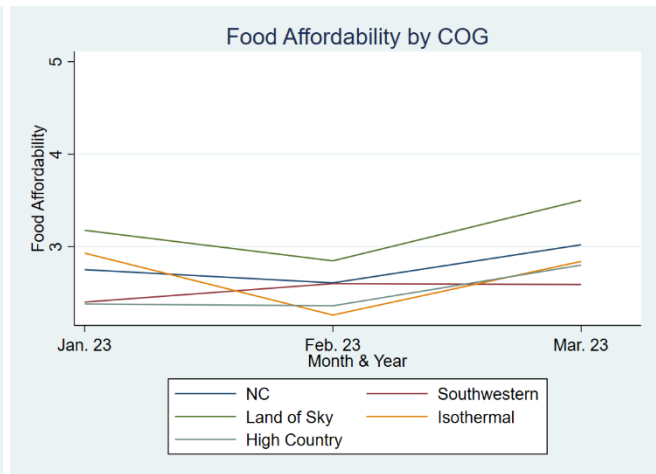
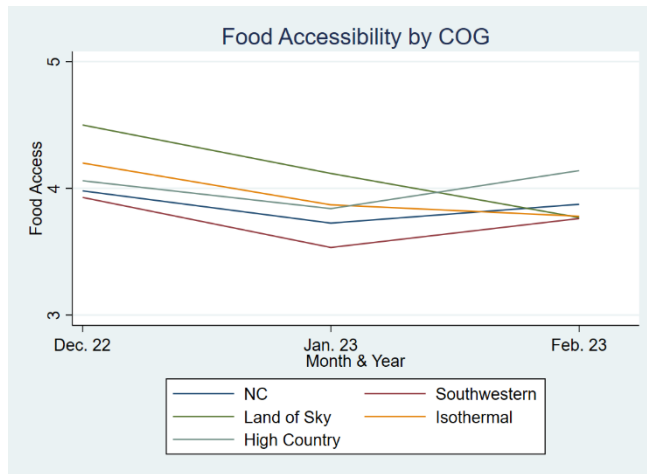
### Three-month trends for Regions O, P, Q, and R



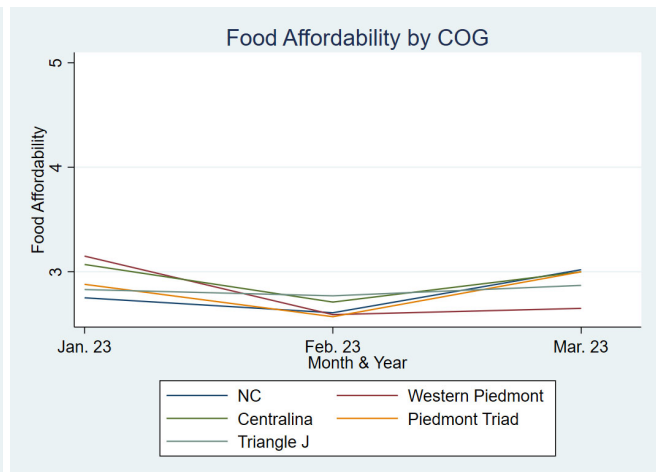
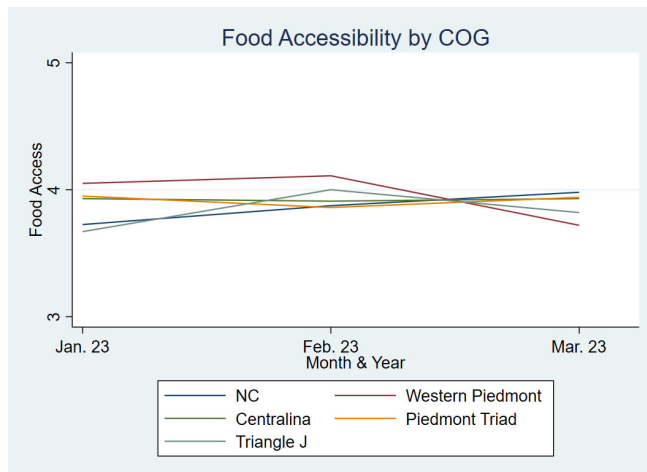
## Food Access and Affordability

In this section, we report on data collected regarding access to and affordability of healthy food. For clarity, COGs were assigned alphabetically to groups of four. Each graph depicts trend data over a trailing three-month period and includes the three-month state trend line for comparison. Regarding healthy food access and affordability, March data indicates the following trends:

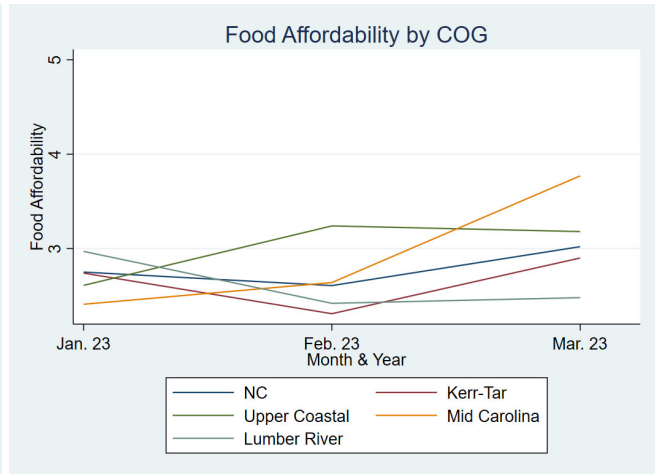
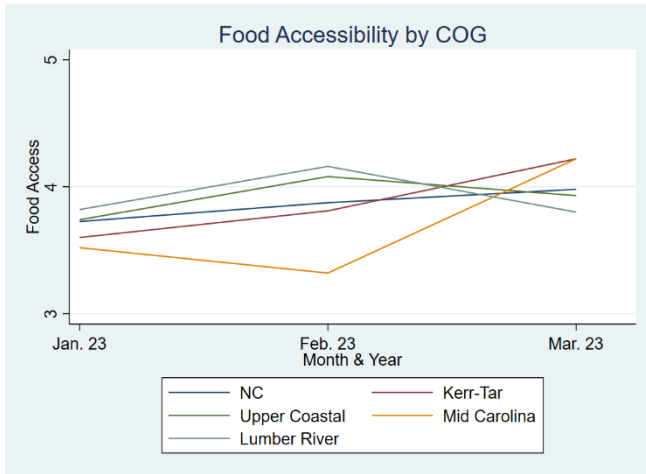
### Three-month trends for Regions A, B, C, and D



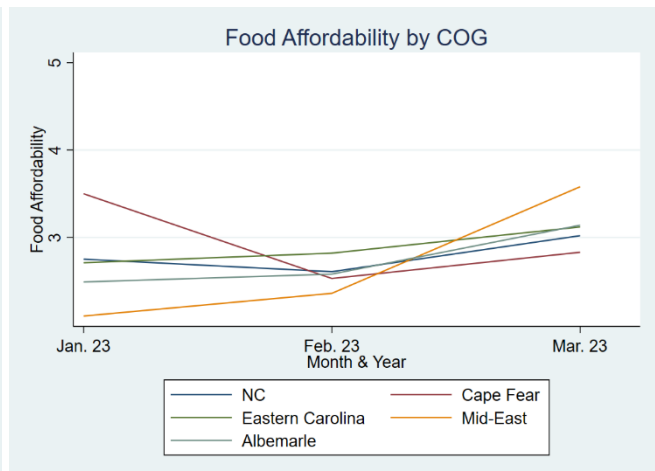
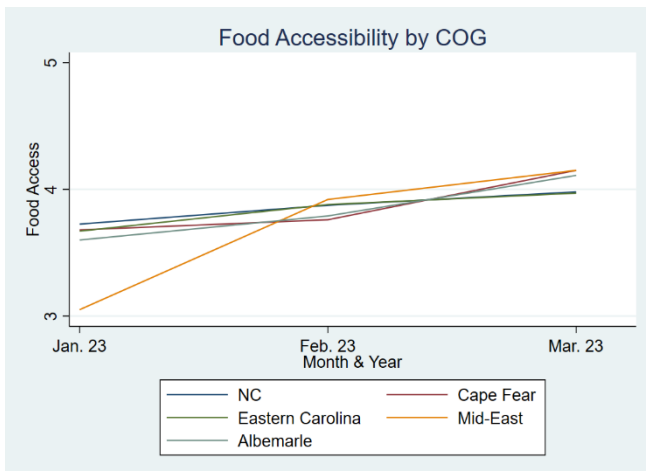
### Three-month trends for Regions E, F, G, and J



### Three-month trends for Regions K, L, M, and N



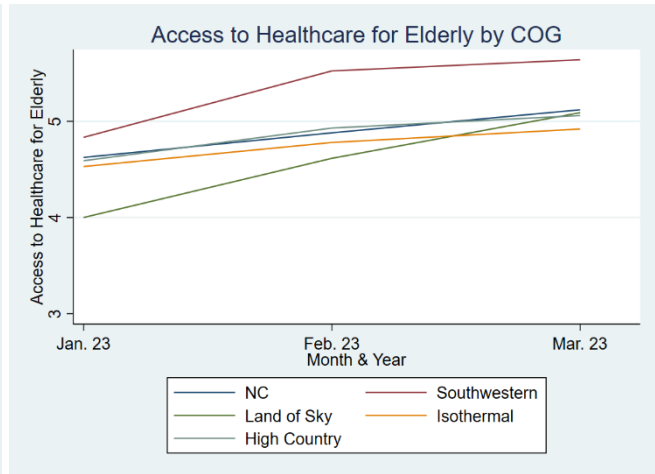
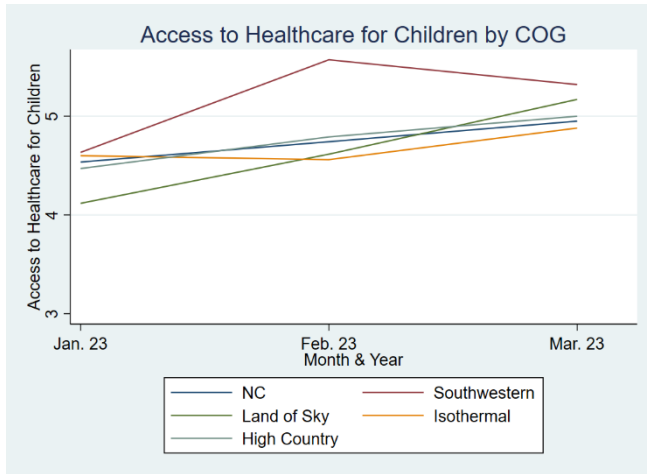
### Three-month trends for Regions O, P, Q, and R



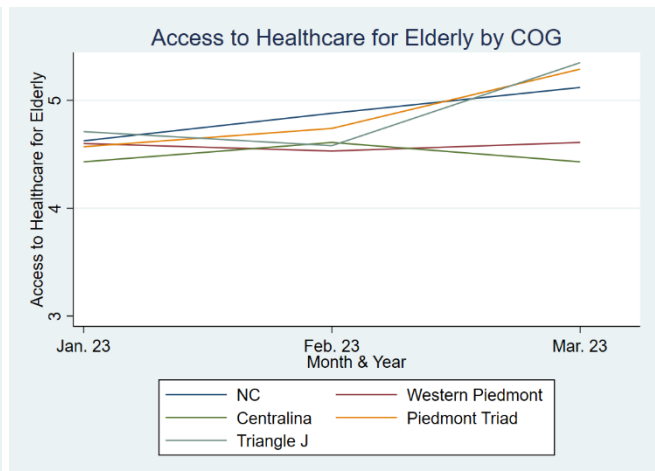
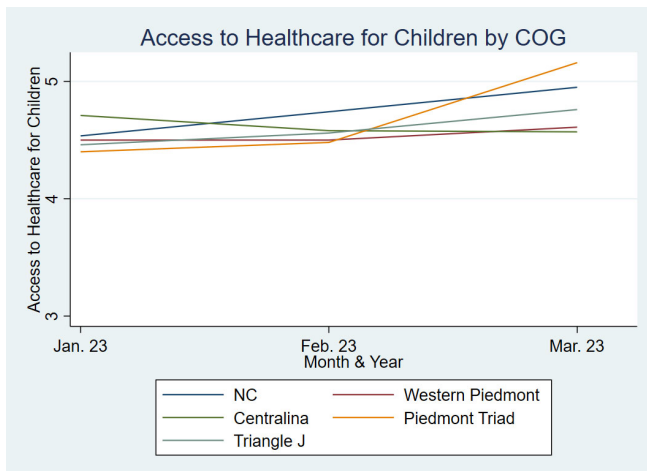
### Healthcare Access for Children and the Elderly

In this section, we report on data collected for access to healthcare for families with children and the elderly. Again, COGs were assigned alphabetically to groups of four. Each graph depicts trend data over a trailing three-month period and includes the three-month state trend line for comparison. Regarding access to healthcare for families with children and the elderly, March data indicates the following:

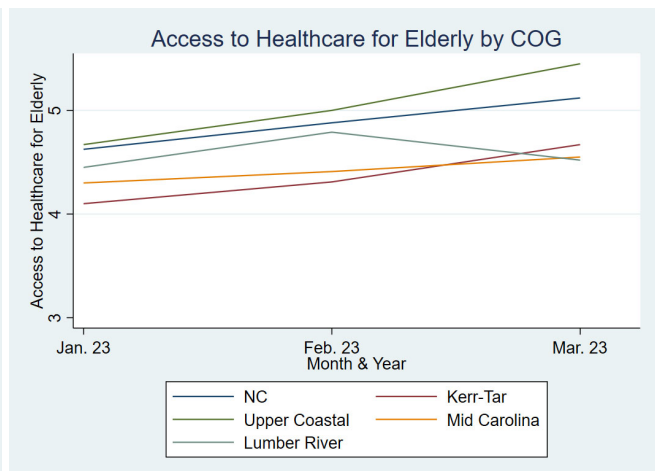
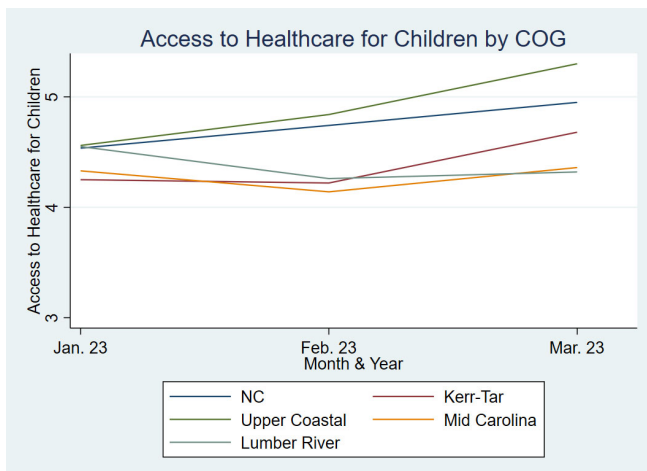
### Three-month trends for Regions A, B, C, and D



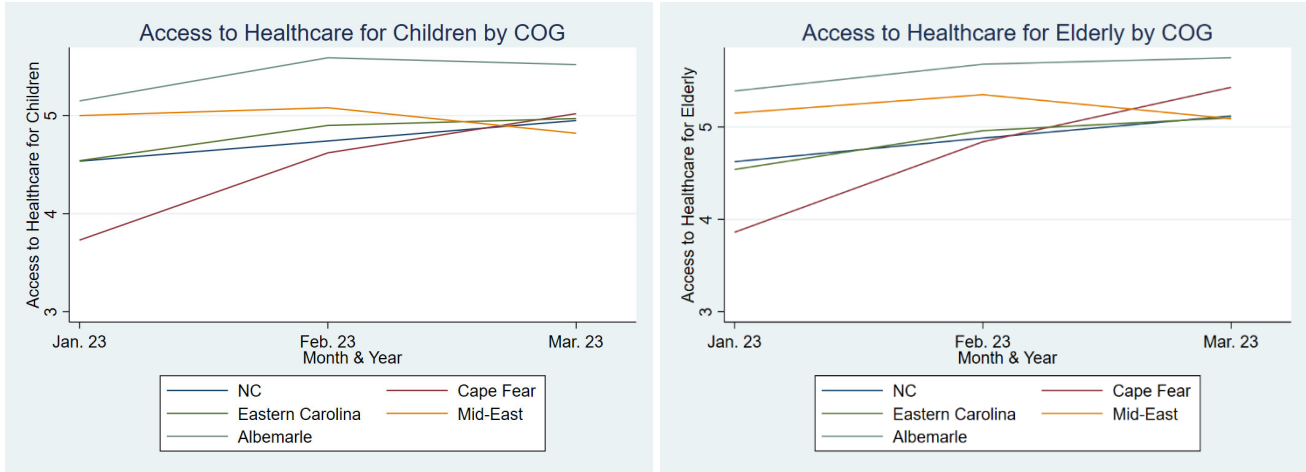
### Three-month trends for Regions E, F, G, and J



### Three-month trends for Regions K, L, M, and N



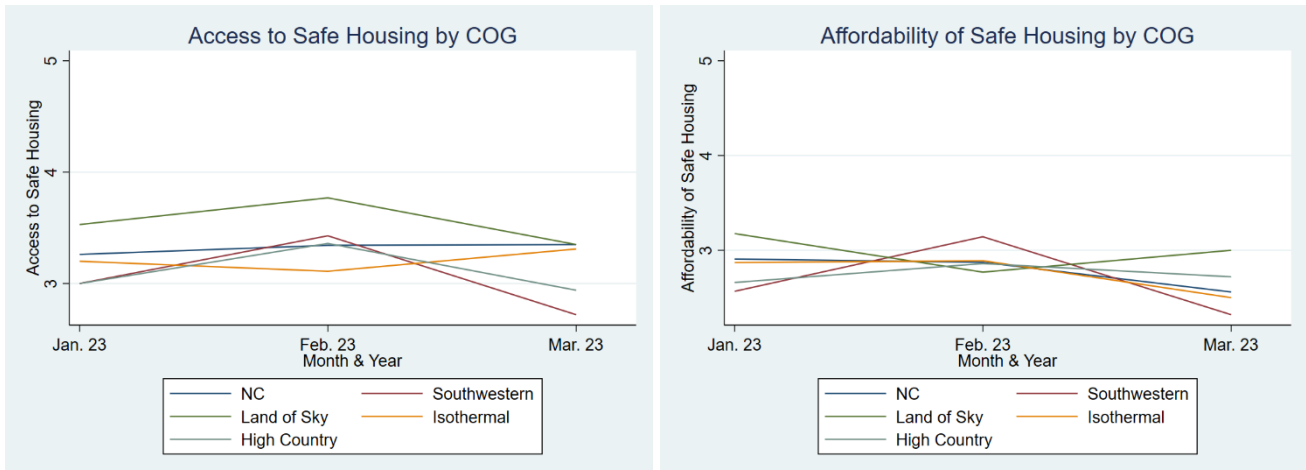
### Three-month trends for Regions O, P, Q, and R



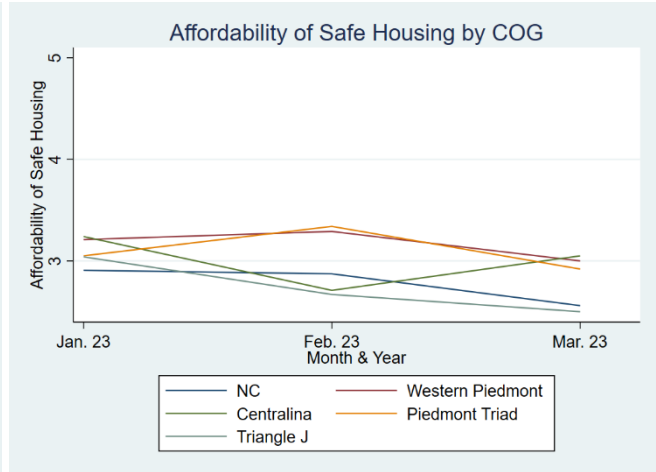
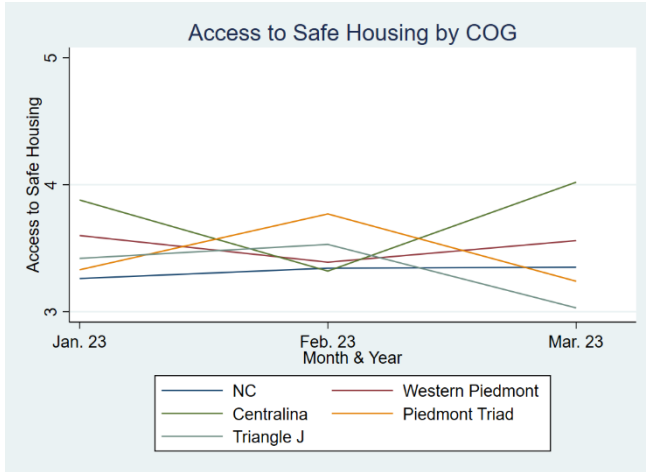
### Housing Access and Affordability

In this section, we report on data collected for access to safe and affordable housing. Consistent with prior sections, COGs were assigned alphabetically to groups of four. Each graph depicts trend data over a trailing three-month period and includes the three-month state trend line for comparison. Regarding access to safe and affordable housing, March data indicates the following:

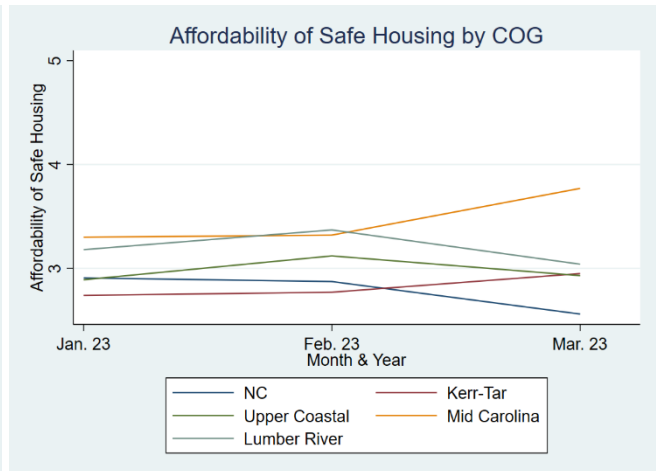
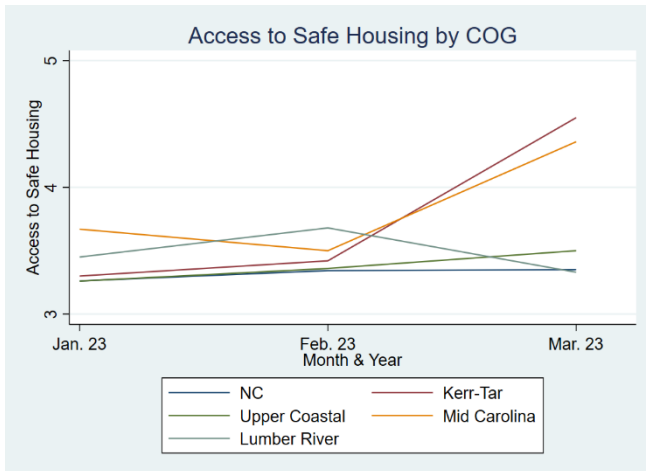
### Three-month trends for Regions A, B, C, and D



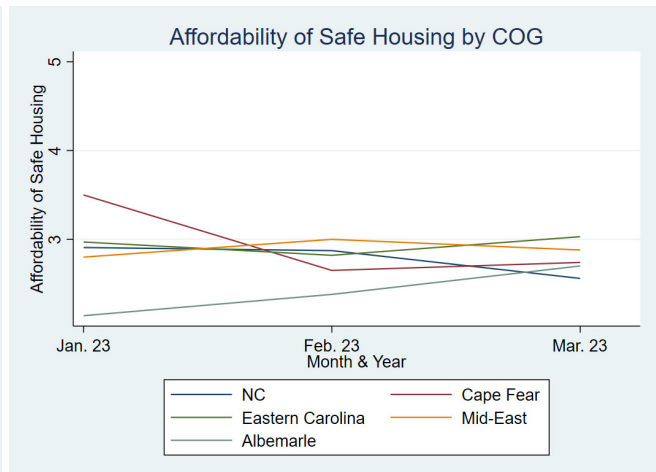
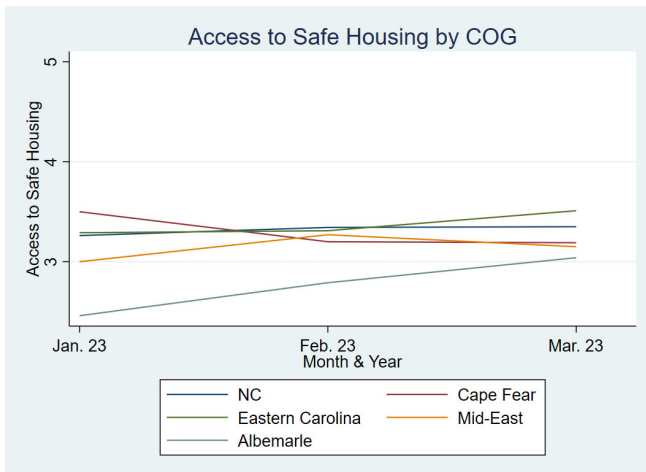
### Three-month trends for Regions E, F, G, and J



### Three-month trends for Regions K, L, M, and N



### Three-month trends for Regions O, P, Q, and R

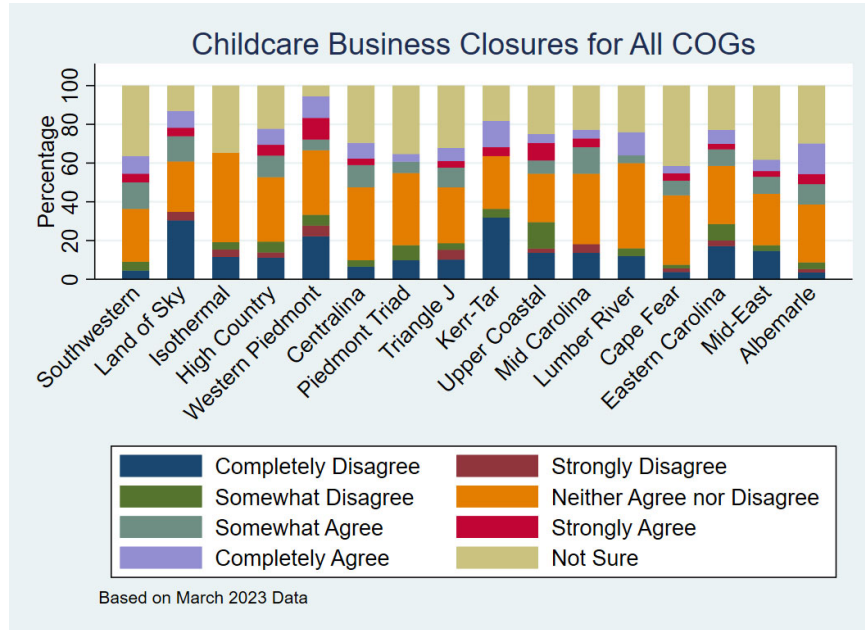




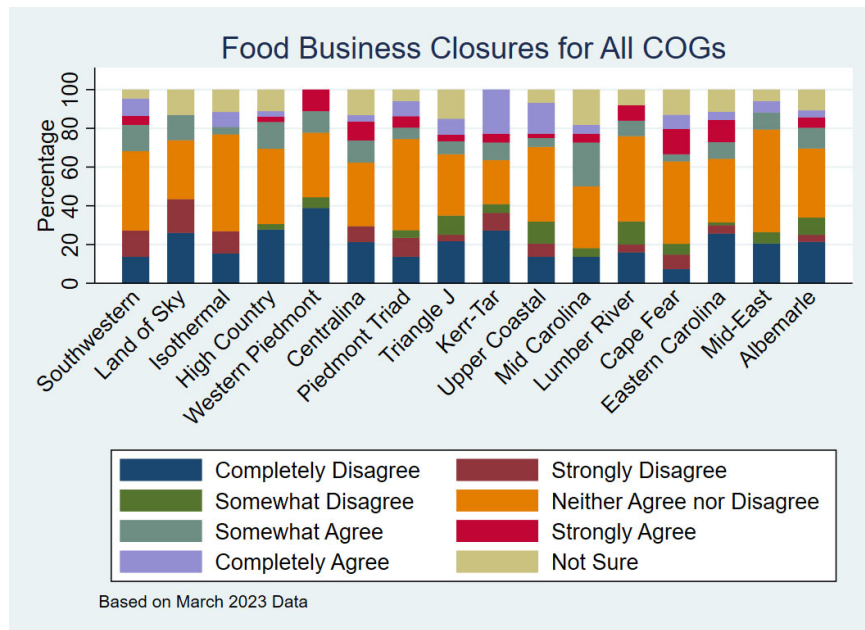
### Business Closures Impacting Childcare, Food, Healthcare, or Housing

The March survey asked questions related to business closures that may be impacting availability of services in the four areas covered in this report: childcare, food, healthcare, and housing. Here, we provide each question as stated on the survey with a bar chart representing the level of agreement to the question by COG.

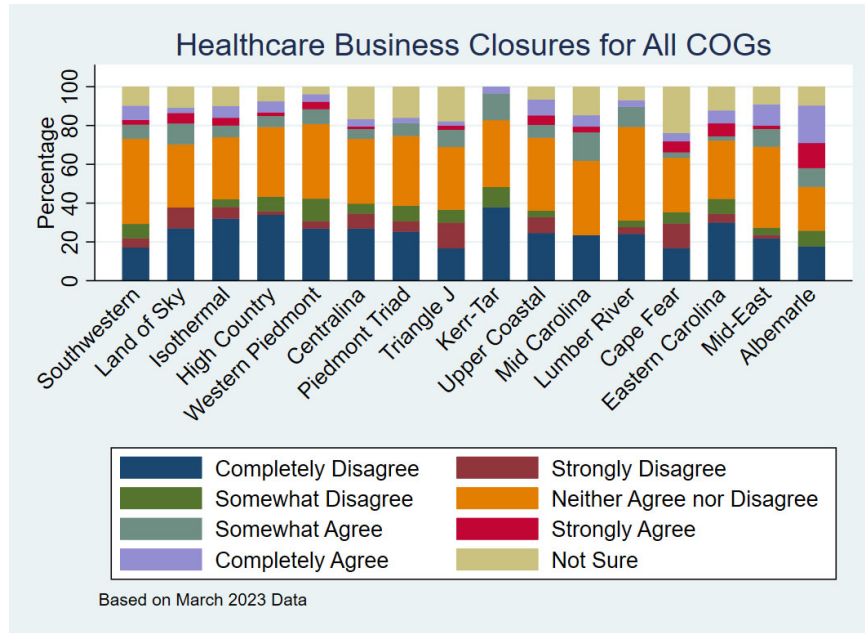
Question: One or more BUSINESSES that provide CHILDCARE in my community have CLOSED.



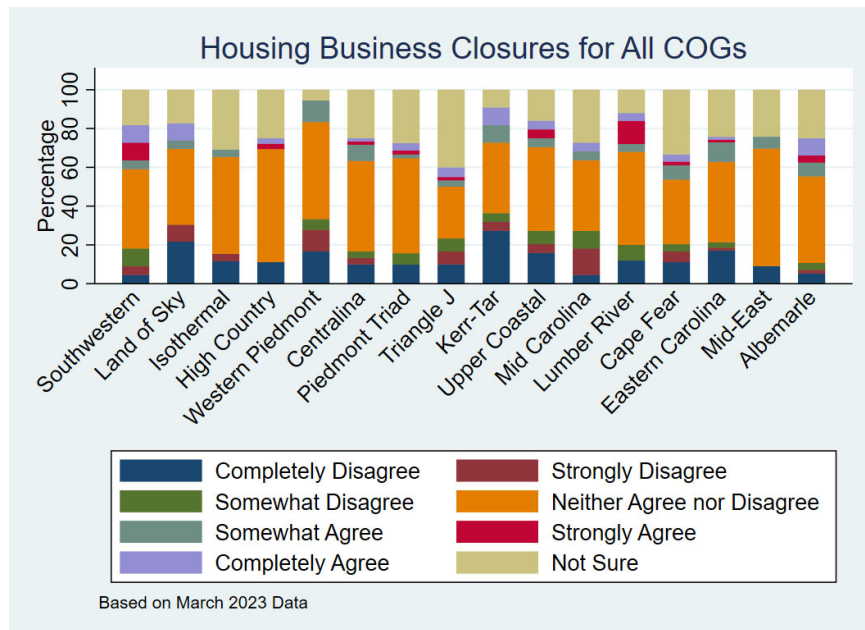
Question: One or more BUSINESSES that supply healthy FOOD in my community have CLOSED.



Question: One or more BUSINESSES that provide HEALTHCARE in my community have CLOSED.



Question: One or more BUSINESSES that are essential to the availability and maintenance of HOUSING in my community have CLOSED.



## Conclusion

Considering state-level data for North Carolina, notable improvements were reported regarding access to childcare and the affordability of childcare, access to healthy food and the affordability of food, and access to affordable healthcare. Access to safe housing was largely unchanged but affordability of safe housing declined noticeably.

At the substate-level, most COGs reported improvements in March compared to February regarding access to food, childcare, and healthcare. This is a positive sign considering the declines that were reported in January and February. The most challenging area reported in March concerns stagnant access to safe housing and a drop in affordability.

Looking ahead to the April survey, data will cover eight areas of interest – food, housing, healthcare, childcare, eldercare, technology, transportation, and workforce. A baseline performance measure will be collected for each area in addition to other characteristics like access, affordability, and the impact of business closures. The April report will be available on the NCPRO Data Dashboard at the following link: <https://ncpro.nc.gov/data-research/north-carolina-community-engagement-survey>

## Background

The **NC Community Engagement Survey** is a monthly survey that solicits timely insights into the state of community conditions across North Carolina. The approach monitors, measures, and evaluates the impact of economic and social interruptions found at the substate level. The survey results help measure the progress toward recovery from these interruptions and help strengthen regional economic resilience.

The design is inspired by the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, which provides statewide data on several topics related to COVID-19. The **NC Community Engagement Survey** seeks participation from community leaders in each county to share their perspectives on regional and local trends related to housing, broadband, food access, education, and more. The survey is a shared resource among project partners seeking to generate and analyze local community health.

The objective is to obtain statistically relevant results for every county in the state. As of February 2023, substate results are provided by Prosperity Zones and the Regional Councils of Government. Individual counties will be provided when appropriate.

The **NC Community Engagement Survey** was launched in May 2022 by the NC Pandemic Recovery Office. The Survey is being conducted by researchers from East Carolina University and is funded through a grant to the Governor's Office from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The grant also will support additional, related research efforts over the next two years.

Supporters of the **NC Community Engagement Survey** include the UNC School of Government ncIMPACT Initiative, the NC Rural Center, the NC Association of County Commissioners, and the NC League of Municipalities.

*For questions about the survey, please contact NCPRO by reaching out to [Andy McCracken](#) or [Dr. Jim Kleckley](#). Survey administration and analysis is coordinated by East Carolina University faculty [Dr. William \(Jason\) Rowe](#) and [Dr. Dennis Barber](#).*

## **Appendix – Counties Served by Each COG**

**Region A Southwestern Commission** serves Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties.

**Region B Land-of-Sky Regional Council** serves Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties.

**Region C Foothills Regional Commission (Isothermal)** serves Cleveland, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford counties.

**Region D High Country Council** serves Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties.

**Region E Western Piedmont Council** serves Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba.

**Region F Centralina Council** serves Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties.

**Region G Piedmont Triad Regional Council** serves Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin counties.

**Region J Triangle J Council** serves Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange, and Wake counties.

**Region K Kerr-Tar Council** serves Franklin, Granville, Person, Vance, and Warren counties.

**Region L Upper Coastal Plain Council** serves Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson counties.

**Region M Mid-Carolina Council** serves Cumberland, Harnett, and Sampson counties.

**Region N Lumber River Council** serves Bladen, Hoke, Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland counties.

**Region O Cape Fear Council** serves Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender counties.

**Region P Eastern Carolina Council** serves Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne counties.

**Region Q Mid-East Commission** serves Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt counties.

**Region R Albemarle Commission** serves Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington counties.