

RACIAL DISPARITIES WORKSHOP

Tuesday, February 23, 2021



A FEW MAJOR TAKEAWAYS



- White and African-American populations are aging the fastest.
- Hispanic and Asian populations are growing the fastest.
- Large household income gap between African-Americans/Hispanics and Whites/Asian-Americans.
- Large educational achievement gap between African-Americans and all groups.
- Large educational attainment gap between African-Americans/Hispanics and Whites/Asian Americans.
- Our economy is transitioning to one that will require more advanced skill sets and as a result, will offer more pay to those that are prepared.
- It is vital that our residents are prepared for and connected to the employment opportunities that exist today and in the future.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE ON THE DISPARITIES



- Hickory and Catawba Co. are focused on economic development and job growth.
- Our economy is growing and so is economic opportunity in our community.
- We need to add 500 people a year to the workforce just to maintain status quo.
- Catawba County EDC has landed over **2,000 new jobs** over the past few years.
- All of these jobs pay above the Catawba County average wage which is **\$44,000**.
- Additionally, there are currently over **8,000 vacant jobs** in the metro area.



UNIQUE COMMUNITY ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS TO PREPARE RESIDENTS FOR THE ECONOMY OF THE FUTURE



- Hickory citizens control their own school system – Hickory Public Schools.
- City of Hickory is one of 8 cities in NC that operates its own library system.
- SALT Block is *Science Art and Literature Together*.
- CVCC is located in Hickory and is one of the best community colleges in the US.
- The Small Business Center is located at CVCC and its services are free.
- K-64 provides Chromebooks, and internet service if needed, to all students.
- WPCOG NC Works/Career Center.
- Every child in Hickory ages 0-5 gets a new book delivered every month to their home.
- Hickory Trail system will contain conduit for nearly 10 miles of broadband fiber.
- Lenoir-Rhyne University.

WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS AND ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT: ARE ENTITIES FULFILLING THEIR RESPECTIVE MISSION

- **City of Hickory** – Infrastructure and Economic Development
- **Catawba County** – School Funding and Economic Development
- **Hickory Public Schools** – Education
- **Catawba County Public Schools** – Education
- **K-64** – Developing a “Future Ready Workforce” and Lifetime Learning
- **CVCC** – Workforce Development and Small Business Assistance
- **WPCOG** – Workforce Development and Job Placement
- **Catawba Co. Economic Development Corp.** – Economic Development

TODAY'S MEETING



- Special City Council Workshop:

 - K-64**

 - CVCC/Workforce Solutions Complex**

 - WPCOG/Career Centers**

- Understand their role and mission in our community.

- Determine what work is currently being done to connect disadvantaged communities to employment opportunities.

- What work is being done to help individuals overcome employment obstacles.

- Identify the gaps that exist in serving Hickory residents and preparing them for success.

How do we ensure that our residents are connected to these opportunities?

