

2023

Durham County

Community Health Assessment

Executive Summary

“True community is based upon equality, mutuality, and reciprocity [that] affirms the richness of individual diversity as well as the common human ties that bind us together.”

Pauli Murray

Durham’s health assessment is community rooted.

A Community Health Assessment (CHA) is a process of collecting, analyzing, and sharing information about community assets and needs. Durham County does the Community Health Assessment in collaboration with Durham County Department of Public Health, Duke Health, and the Partnership for a Healthy Durham every three years.

Community members and stakeholders gather and supply data to aid in understanding the health issues of the county. The Community Health Assessment uses high-quality, reliable data to provide a clear and detailed picture of the health, assets, and needs of Durham County residents to equitably guide decision-making, programs, and policies to improve health outcomes. The process results in the selection of community health priorities.

Durham, known as the “Bull City” and “City of Medicine” is recognized for its history, arts, restaurants, parks and trails, education, and healthcare. Rich in culture, diversity, and civic engagement, Durham continues to honor its history while it embraces innovation.

We envision a community where people are safe, connected, and have equitable opportunities to thrive in healthy environments.

Durham Summer Sunset & Mural Wall Texture - Photos © Discover Durham

Durham Facts and History

Durham County, founded in 1881, is in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, approximately 150 miles from the coast to the east and 170 miles from the Appalachian Mountains to the west. Durham is a 286-square mile single-city county that is 25 miles long, 16 miles wide and 28 miles from end to end. With an estimated 2022 population of 291,928, Durham is the fourth largest city in North Carolina.

Durham has many positives including diversity, history of activism, political engagement, and innovation. Despite all of its financial successes, extensive racial and ethnic disparities in housing, education, wealth, income, employment, criminal justice and other sectors persist due to historical policies, practices, and laws since the City of Durham and Durham County's inception.

Long before the Bull City was named for Dr. Bartlett Snipes Durham in the mid-1800s, Native people lived free on the land for thousands of years. Durham County was home to a number of Indigenous tribes and communities, the most prominent in the area being the Eno, Shakori, and Occaneechi. Other tribal nations that may have lived and hunted in the area include the Tuscarora, Cheraw, Lumbee, and Catawba peoples. The Eno and Shakori lived in a village called Adshusheer along the banks of the Eno River. Additionally, the Great Indian Trading Path, which approximately followed what is now I-85, passed through Durham and Native Americans helped mold Durham by establishing settlement sites, transportation routes and environmentally friendly patterns of natural resource use.

The 1700's saw an influx of European settlers consisting of Scots, Irish, and English colonists coming to Durham, and with their arrival Native Americans in the area were subjected to violence and forced removal. "White European colonialists used violence, terror, and a foreign legal system to claim Native homelands." Prior to the arrival of colonists, private land ownership as currently known did not exist. "In the Carolina colony, the British empire sold parcels of stolen Native land to European settlers. These were called land grants. With this legal document, all the land and its resources became private property."



Black Wall Street Historical Marker - Photo © Discover Durham

Durham continued to change and grow through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, Industrialization, Jim Crow, and several other major historical events and eras.

After slavery, many free Black or African Americans moved to Durham. Despite the racism and the systems of oppression that limited educational and economic opportunities, African American communities in Durham were able to grow and thrive. This included the Hayti community and what became Black Wall Street, located just south of downtown. The area was comprised of residences, businesses, schools, a library, theatres, a hotel, and Lincoln Hospital. "Despite run down housing, working-class Black neighborhoods were close-knit communities and spaces of refuge from the indignities of Jim Crow." By the early 20th century, Durham was home



Major the Bull - Photo © Discover Durham

The following are excerpts from the Facts and History section of the 2023 Durham County CHA written by Marissa Mortiboy and Jo Overstreet. For more information, see section 3.01 of the Community Health Assessment. Knowing the history of Durham is imperative for understanding the evolution of the community and the status of its health today.



Black Wall Street - Photo © Discover Durham

to dozens of African American businesses, including grocery stores, training schools, fish and meat merchants, a haberdashery, shoe supply and repair store, theatres, and restaurants.

Watts Hospital opened in 1895 as Durham's first hospital. The facility, funded by George W. Watts, served the city's white population regardless of ability to pay. Lincoln Hospital opened in 1901 to serve Durham's Black or African American population. Financed by the Duke family and founded by John Merrick, Dr. Stanford L. Warren, and Dr. Aaron McDuffie Moore, Lincoln Hospital was an African American hospital in Durham staffed with Black or African American doctors and Black or African American nurses and offered residency, and nursing and surgery programs to Black or African American medical professionals. Serving the Black or African American community with healthcare, health education programs, specialized clinics, and free medical care, Lincoln Hospital became one of the best Black or African American hospitals in the country due to support from Durham's African American leadership and The Duke Endowment.

Durham is also home to well-known civil rights activists such as Pauli Murray, Ann Atwater, Floyd McKissick and Virginia Williams. In 1957, the Royal Seven, a group of activists led by Reverend Douglas Moore of Asbury Temple United Methodist Church, protested at the Royal Ice Cream Parlor three years before the famous sit-in at the Woolworth's in Greensboro. The sit-in was the first civil rights demonstration in

Durham to result in arrests. Although the protest didn't gain national attention, it "nonetheless generated urgency among some Black or African American activists." This spirit of activism and protest has continued over the years and into the summer of 2020 with Black Lives Matter protests across Durham.

"The Hispanic and Latino community in Durham has roots originating in 33 countries, each with distinct histories and languages." In the 1990s, Durham's cultural landscape shifted once again as migrant farm workers from Mexico and Central America were drawn to the U.S. by seasonal agricultural work. By the early 2000s, construction became a driving force in the Durham economy. According to a 2013 study, "undocumented migrants in Durham lack access to basic social services, family and friend networks, civic associations, and a mature immigrant community that is

found in places like Los Angeles."

As more Latina/o/x or Hispanics were attracted by available jobs and called Durham home, local activists founded the Latino Community Credit Union. The institution serves unbanked individuals and immigrant communities. "The rapid Latino population growth jolted Durham economically and socially." Organizers pushed for services to support the growing Hispanic or Latina/o/x community such as Spanish language newspapers and church services, Spanish language signage in hospital and human services buildings and interpreters.



Continuing to Tell Mural Performance - Photo © Discover Durham



Durham Civil Rights Mural - Photo © Discover Durham

Gentrification is taking place in the same Durham neighborhoods the U.S. government redlined in the 1930s. Gentrification is the process involving of incoming new, wealthier and whiter residents and the displacement of existing low-income and populations of color. Durham's transition from a blue-collar town to white collar, bring economic benefits but at the loss of populations of color and long-term residents. Although efforts have been made to combat gentrification through the Durham County Tax Administration Office and the Durham County Department of Social Services Low-Income Homeowners Relief (LIHR) program, provisions in the 2019 \$95 million City of Durham housing bond and grassroots organizing by community groups, the trend continues.

Durham is a vibrant, engaged, creative and entrepreneurial community built on a rich and complex history of Black excellence, civil rights, social justice, housing and income inequality, education reform, access to healthcare, health disparities and more. Like the bold and brilliant aspects of history that make Durham the place it is, the inequities that exist here today also have roots in our past. Populations including Black and African American, Hispanic and Latina/o/x, and LGBTQ+ have been systematically denied equitable access and opportunities over multiple generations, and these communities continue to face worse and worsening health outcomes. These outcomes can be seen throughout this 2023 Durham County Community Health Assessment report.

Mural Wall Texture - Photo © Discover Durham

Why Do a Community Health Assessment?

- Check on the health of our community – how are we doing?
- Find out directly from the community what issues and factors affect their health
- Talk directly with the people we serve
- Work with the community to identify and carry out solutions to address community priorities

The Community Health Assessment helps:

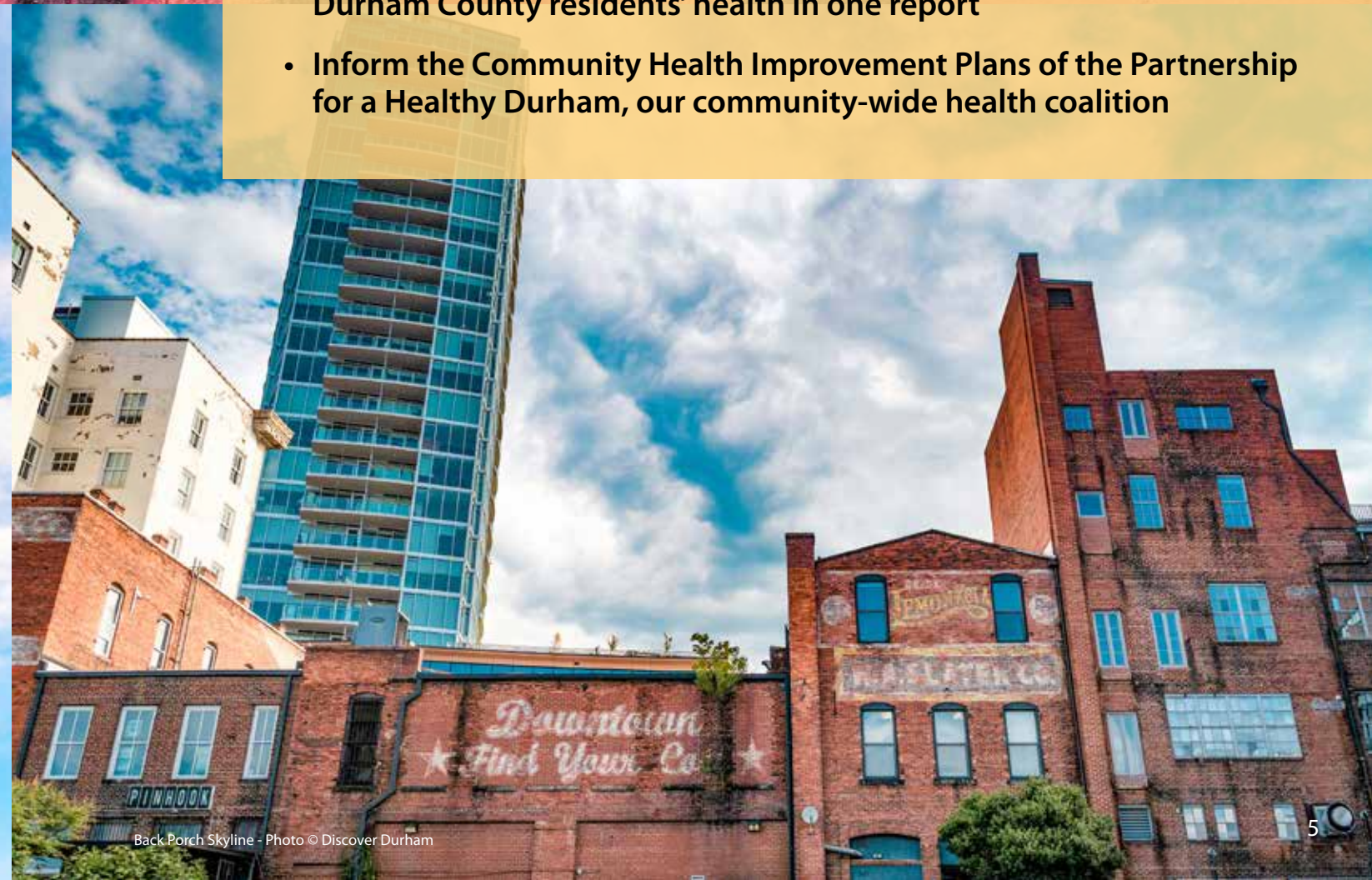
- Durham agencies and organizations focus resources and efforts on top health issues identified by the community
- Place the most recent health data and issues that impact all aspects of Durham County residents' health in one report
- Inform the Community Health Improvement Plans of the Partnership for a Healthy Durham, our community-wide health coalition

What's new?

in this Community Health Assessment

- Added a chapter on COVID-19
- Added a chapter on Environmental Justice
- More comprehensive focus on Durham's history to provide context for the rest of the CHA.
- CHA trend data dashboards for both survey samples. The Comunidad Latina dashboard is in English and Spanish.

El Futuro Community Mural - Photo © Discover Durham



Back Porch Skyline - Photo © Discover Durham

2023 Community Health Assessment Summary

Community Health Priorities

To identify the new top five health priorities in Durham County, data from three sources was used: 2022 and 2023 Community Health Assessment survey responses, listening session results held in English and Spanish, and US Census data. The third top health priority, violent crime, is new and replaces poverty. Although this was the health issue named, the Partnership decided to focus on Community Safety and Wellbeing, providing an assets-based public health lens that honors the community's voices.

Top 5 Health Priorities

- 1 Affordable Housing
- 2 Access to Healthcare and Health Insurance
- 3 Community Safety and Wellbeing
- 4 Mental Health
- 5 Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Food Access

As Durham County continues to work on these new priorities, progress will be tracked for accountability via committee meetings, results-based accountability initiatives, and community outreach to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Updates will be available on the Partnership website. State of the County Health reports are posted every year that the community does not submit a CHA.



Downtown Skyline - Photo © Discover Durham

1 Affordable Housing

- The most common reason for having difficulty finding housing was affordability followed by the commute being too far.
- Over half the participants reported that housing impacts their health in a positive way followed by a good location. The third most common way housing impacts participant's health was living in poor housing conditions.
- Of participants who own their home, whites were three times more likely to own their home than Black or African Americans. This gap has expanded since the 2019 survey in which whites were only 0.68 times more likely to own their home.

2 Access to Healthcare and Health Insurance

- Most residents (80.4%) have someone they consider a Personal Care Provider (PCP).
- Fewer Black or African Americans have a PCP than whites (23.2%, 39.4% respectively). This difference is much smaller between those that responded they did not have a PCP.
- Many respondents (42.8%) said they visited a healthcare provider within the last 12 months followed by 2-4 weeks ago (25.6%).
- Most respondents (88.8%) reported not having a lapse in health insurance or coverage within the past year.



3 Community Safety and Wellbeing

- Neighborhood violence was a primary cause of stress for 12.2% of respondents.
- Participants named violent crime (18%), theft (4.7%), and gang activity (4.2%) when asked what has the greatest impact on quality of life.

How is the Community Health Assessment Done?

- 2022
 - Work with partners to develop community surveys for County-Wide and Comunidad Latina samples
- September 2022-early 2023
 - Conduct door-to-door surveys for the County-Wide sample and administered surveys at community events for the Comunidad Latina sample
- Spring and Summer of 2023
 - Analyze survey data and develop results report and data dashboards
- June-November 2023
 - Write CHA document
- December 2023- Early January 2024
 - Edit the CHA sections
- January-February 2024
 - Put the final document together
- March 2024
 - Submit CHA to the state
- March-April 2024
 - Open for public comment
- April-June 2024
 - Hold community listening sessions
- April-August 2023
 - Develop Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs)
- Early September 2024
 - Submit CHIPs to the state

Key Findings

Key findings from the Community Health Assessment survey samples found:

- Racial and ethnic disparities exist across nearly all health outcomes.
- Structural racism and historical policies such as redlining, immigration laws and segregation are causes of health disparities.
- Issues are linked: for example, housing issues are also access to care and food insecurity issues.
- Most participants reported that their neighbors made their community a good place to live followed by the neighborhood being quiet and safe.



U-Hill Walls - Photo © Discover Durham



Durham Pride Parade 2022 - Photo © Discover Durham



Durham Mural at Sherwood Park - Photo © Discover Durham



4 Mental Health

- Most participants (67.1%) responded that they had fewer than six bad days in the past 30. There were too few respondents with 16-20 bad days to report. However, 9.3% reported having greater than 20 bad days in the past 30.
- Most residents (79.9%) felt they either always or usually have the social and/or emotional support they need.
- Financial stress was the most common reason for stress followed by work (30%) and personal relationships. Many people listed other reasons for stress including political environment and the social wellbeing of society. Interestingly, 12% of respondents reported not experiencing stress.
- Many participants (40%) reported their mental health worsened since March 2020.



Durham Pride Festival 2022 - Photo © Discover Durham

5 Physical Activity, Nutrition, And Food Access

- Most participants reported walking as their primary form of exercise followed by lifting weights and gardening. These are the same top three forms of exercise as in 2019.
- The most common reason for not eating healthily all the time was not enough time followed by cost.
- Most respondents reported they have never worried that food would run out before they got money to buy more (83.1%).



Westover Park Murals - Photo © Discover Durham



Public Health

Visit healthydurham.org to view the full report, see the data dashboards, and join the Partnership for a Healthy Durham.

For more information, contact:

www.HealthyDurham.org • 919-560-7833 • briamiller@dconc.gov

