

#1 in Labor Market Resilience Among NC Metro Areas — ALEX Intelligence 2026

Wilmington's Labor Market Is #1 in NC

Most balanced unemployment spread among NC metro areas — ALEX
Intelligence, 2026

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THE DATA

0.7

Spread in County Unemployment Rate Across the Market, in Points (July 2026)

Wilmington's unemployment gap between its highest- and lowest-unemployment counties is the narrowest in North Carolina.

This 0.7-point spread—between Brunswick County at 4.1% and New Hanover County at 3.4%—reveals a rare degree of labor market cohesion. Unlike regions where economic strain concentrates in one county while another booms, Wilmington's counties are moving in near-unison. This balance reduces systemic risk and increases workforce predictability for employers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, July 2026
(county, seasonally unadjusted) • ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-18-wilmington-within-county-unemployment>



01

Balance Is a Strategic Asset

This balance makes the market attractive for long-term investors and developers who prioritize predictability over volatility. It's a quiet advantage that doesn't show up in price-per-square-foot metrics but underpins every transaction.

02

Divergence Isn't the Norm— It's the Exception

The fact that this balance persists despite rising coastal development pressures—such as the denied Hilton Bluffs proposal—signals that governance is not just reactive but proactive. It's not that growth is uniform, but that its impact is diffused. That's the hallmark of a mature, integrated regional economy.



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