



Regional Economic Impact Brief Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear Cape Fear HOP



Regional Economic Impact Brief. Cape Fear HOP

Counties: Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender

Period analyzed: January 2022 - August 2025

The Healthy Opportunities Pilot

The NCDHHS Healthy Opportunities Pilot (HOP) was designed to address the social determinants of health (SDOH) that often stand in the way of medical stability: housing, food and nutrition, interpersonal violence & toxic stress, and transportation supports. It is the nation's first comprehensive program to test and evaluate the impact of providing select evidence-based, non-medical interventions and the effects on health outcomes and healthcare costs for high-risk NC Medicaid Managed Care members. The Pilot operates in three geographic regions of the state, which are defined by three Healthy Opportunities Network Leads including the Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear (CCLCF) Cape Fear HOP region covering six counties. While a key component is to comprehensively evaluate impact on health and health associated costs, additional impacts have been noted.

Executive Summary

The Cape Fear Healthy Opportunities Pilot (HOP), led by Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear (CCLCF), is a groundbreaking health initiative that doubles down as a regional economic engine, moving dollars into local businesses, supporting jobs, and stabilizing families so they can work, recover, and stay housed. CCLCF Cape Fear HOP invested approximately \$103 million into the regional economy: around \$88 million in reimbursements for services delivered (paid to local providers, vendors, and partners) and \$15 million in capacity-building funding (systems, staffing, operations, readiness to deliver). That \$103 million investment generated:

- \$161.7 million in total economic activity
- 1,421 jobs supported (FTE)
- \$58 million generated in paychecks (labor income)

In other words, HOP dollars didn't stop at the service providers; they circulated through local businesses and household spending.

Economic Ripple Effects of the Investment in HOP

IMPLAN (IMpact analysis for PLANning) estimates that HOP generated ~\$59.6 million in additional ripple effects (supplier spending + household spending) on top of direct program spending.

Table 1. Economic Impact Summary of Cape Fear HOP Program

Impact Category	Output (Millions \$)	Employment (FTE jobs)	Labor Income (Millions \$)
Direct HOP Spending	\$102.1	1,098	\$41.6
Indirect & Induced	\$59.6	323	\$16.5
Total Economic Impact	\$161.7	1,422	\$58.1

IMPLAN is a widely used I-O modeling system that provides detailed regional data and tools for estimating the economic impact of projects or policies. Using data collected from government sources such as the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, IMPLAN models regional economies by industry and geographic level (national, state, county). Analysts use IMPLAN to estimate how direct spending—like funding to health and human service organizations—translates to broader economic impacts on output, employment, and labor income. It is particularly useful in evaluating programs like the Healthy Opportunities Pilot, where spending occurs across many sectors and regions, and understanding the total economic contribution requires capturing both the direct and cascading effects throughout the local economy.

Where the investment went

HOP reimbursements supported everyday necessities that stabilized families and reduced avoidable strain on hospitals and county systems:

- Food supports: ~\$48 million
- Housing supports: ~\$44.5 million
- Transportation: ~\$4.2 million
- Case management & wraparound: ~\$6.2 million
- Health education / parenting: ~\$0.5 million

The economic impact is not limited to the 50 organizations that delivered HOP services in the Cape Fear region. The biggest ripple effects show up in sectors like housing & real estate,

hospitals & physician offices, restaurants, retail, banking/finance, utilities, auto sales & repair. When funding was paused in June 2025, local sectors felt the impact, too.

Top Ripple Effect Industries (IMPLAN)

Specific sectors are more impacted by the Healthy Opportunities Pilot Programs. These are the downstream industries that gain business because HOP dollars are spent locally:

- Owner-occupied housing/landlords: \$9.6 million
- Hospitals: \$3.7 million
- Other real estate: \$2.8 million
- Restaurants (limited + full): \$4.7 million
- Physician offices: \$2.4 million
- Banking/credit: \$1.85 million
- Auto dealers + auto repair: \$2.56 million combined
- Retail (general + grocery/food & beverage): \$2.45 million combined
- Utilities: \$1.22 million

Impacts exclude the HOP outlays and only include direct and induced impacts. However, other sectors including real estate, wholesale, and housing are all significantly affected by this program.

Economic Impact of HOP by Service Area

Food

Food programs, including fruit and vegetable prescriptions, healthy food boxes, healthy meals and medically tailored meals totaled \$45.8 million in direct HOP spending/investments and generated 480 FTE jobs and \$17.4 million in labor income.

Table 2. Economic Impact Summary of Cape Fear **Food** Programs

Impact Category	Output (Millions \$)	Employment (FTE jobs)	Labor Income (Millions \$)
Direct HOP Spending	\$45.8	480	\$17.4
Indirect & Induced	\$25.2	134	\$6.8
Total Economic Impact	\$71.0	614	\$24.2

Some of the top industries that benefited from Cape Fear HOP food program outlays include real estate (output impact: \$4,195,802); owner-occupied housing (\$1,982,165); electric

power transmission and distribution (\$1,346,000); banking/credit (\$863,986); hospitals (\$767,474); limited- and full-service restaurants (\$1,159,584); physician offices (\$505,350); auto dealers & auto repairs (\$422,919); insurance (\$379,943); employment services (\$343,666); software publishers/services (\$343,301); warehousing & storage (\$324,148); and services to buildings (\$322,978).

Housing

Table 3. Economic Impact Summary of Cape Fear **Housing** Programs

Impact Category	Output (Millions \$)	Employment (FTE jobs)	Labor Income (Millions \$)
Direct HOP spending	\$18.1	82	\$5.2
Indirect & induced	\$9.0	53	\$2.8
Total Economic Impact	\$27.1	135	\$24.2

The industries most impacted are retail entities including general stores (i.e. Walmart) and furniture/home improvement stores (i.e. Home Depot), as well as community housing programs who coordinate the provision of goods and services. Even when a retailer is a national chain, a portion of spending remains local through employee wages, locally purchased services (i.e. maintenance, utilities, security), and the local operating margin captured in the region. In addition, the real estate industry also benefited significantly. The top industries that benefited from housing program outlays include:

- Owner-occupied housing & other real estate: \$1,274,735
- Retail - Building material and garden equipment and supplies stores: \$392,153
- Banking/credit: \$276,212
- Transportation and support activities for transportation: \$273,131
- Hospitals: \$257,683
- Employment services: \$ 256,462
- Truck transportation: \$206,522
- Limited-service restaurants: \$195,113
- Electric power transmission and distribution: \$193,641
- Full-service restaurants \$191,115
- Offices of physicians \$169,610
- Couriers and messengers \$158,894
- Waste management and remediation services \$155,965

Transportation

Table 4. Economic Impact Summary of Cape Fear **Transportation** Programs

Impact Category	Output (Millions \$)	Employment (FTE jobs)	Labor Income (Millions \$)
Direct HOP spending	\$4.3	60	\$1.1
Indirect & induced	\$4.0	22	\$1.1
Total Economic Impact	\$8.3	82	\$2.2

The industries that benefited most by HOP transportation services impacted include insurance agencies (\$830,448), real estate agencies (\$326,331), banking/credit (\$336,446), owner-occupied housing (\$193,954), employment services (\$177,438), services to buildings (\$101,864), hospitals (\$74,642), automotive repair services (\$59,958), as well as local transit services and food establishments.

Conclusion

Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear HOP brought roughly \$103 million into six counties: about \$88 million reimbursing local services delivered and roughly \$15 million building the capacity to deliver those services reliably. Using IMPLAN's regional economic model, that investment generated an estimated \$161.7 million in total economic activity, supported 1,422 jobs, and produced \$58.1 million in labor income across the Cape Fear region. The benefits extended beyond direct providers into industries like housing and real estate, hospitals and physician offices, restaurants, retail, banking, utilities, and automotive services, meaning cuts would be felt across the broader economy.

About Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear

Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear's (CCLCF) mission is to support patients and providers through our community care teams by implementing innovative methods to deliver comprehensive care management and care navigation within our service area. CCLCF is a local 501c3 nonprofit organization, accredited through NCQA, that for the last 21 years has served a six-county region in southeastern NC. Our care team of registered nurses, social workers, pharmacists, and health care navigators, supports patients and providers using innovative health care solutions to deliver whole health care in the communities we serve. In 2021, NCDHHS selected CCLCF as one of three organizations to be Network Lead for the Healthy Opportunities Pilot. The Healthy Opportunities Pilot is the nation's first comprehensive program to test and evaluate the impact of providing non-medical interventions related to food, housing, transportation, and interpersonal safety to high-needs beneficiaries.