

Economic Development Assessment for the Coharie Tribe

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The findings and recommendations contained in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Coharie Tribe or the NCIEDI.

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This assessment represents an objective inventory of the assets and opportunities of the Coharie Indians related to improving the economic condition of their communities, including the development of jobs and Indian-owned businesses. It includes consideration of the economic resources and potentials of the tribal council, other Coharie-run organizations, Coharie business owners and citizens, and the communities in which the Coharie reside. This comprehensive and place-focused (rather than organization-focused) approach is consistent both with the way economic development is practiced and with the assessments UNC prepared for 10 other North Carolina tribes and associations. What each tribe and its members choose to do with those resources and potentials is a matter for local policy that this report is intended to inform.

SECTION 1

Background

Ancestry and History, Governing Structure, and Demographics

Ancestry and History¹

The present population of the Coharie Indian Tribe is located predominantly in south-east North Carolina in the counties of Sampson and Harnett. Coharie tribal members descended from the aboriginal tribe of the Neusiok Indians. Historical movements, caused by Inter-tribal as well as white/Indian colonial hostilities, moved the Coharie to their present location sometime between 1729 and 1746. Since that date, they have lived continuously as an Indian tribe and today inhabit the same area of land that their ancestral fathers migrated to three centuries ago. The contemporary Coharie community consists of four settlements: Holly Grove, New Bethel, Shiloh, and Antioch.

Throughout the 1800s, the Coharie Indians built a political base in Sampson County. The Coharie Indians had considerable freedom from their first settlement in North Carolina until the white state legislature became wary of the growing free non-white population. The Coharies unfortunately fell into this politically targeted group along with the mulattos and free blacks. In 1834, the N.C. Legislature disenfranchised the Coharie people and took away their right to bear arms. Despite these efforts by whites to politically and economically erase the free non-whites from the North Carolina population, the Coharie continued to administer their own society. After 1835, they operated politically with extreme cleverness and secrecy, taking advantage of the opportunities that were open to them and turning these opportunities into advantages for the membership.

In 1859, with its own funds and teachers, the tribe established its own small subscription schools for the Coharie children. In 1911, the tribe was given its own school system by the North Carolina legislature. This law was rescinded in 1913, but later reinstated in 1917, due to assertive tribal activity, which included a published book on the tribe's history by its attorney.

The fight to retain the school system was headed by the Sampson County Indian Clan, the governing body of the tribe at that time (organized in the early 1900s). Through

1. Excerpts taken from Coharie Intra-Tribal Council Fact Sheets.

their Indian Clan, the Coharie had a well-defined political structure for the management of internal kinship needs, such as pooling economic resources and financially supporting the schools and churches.

In 1910, the tribe designated Enoch Emanuel as chief, a descendant from one of the original Coharie Emanuels whose land grants are found in Tribal land records of the 1790s. The Tribal Clan chose the Indian teachers and contributed large portions of the funds through community projects. Politics, education and religion were interwoven parts of tribal life. The Coharie Chieftaincy passed to Enoch Emanuel's son Levander, who taught in the Coharie schools for 30 years. His greatest achievement was to politically pressure the county and the state to build an Indian High School for the Coharie and all other Indian people of eastern North Carolina. The East Carolina Indian School opened in 1942 as a high school for Coharie Tribe members and in 1943 was expanded to include other Indian students. Governor Melville Broughton gave the main address during the dedication services. The original building serves as the current tribal office.

Governing Structure

In the early 1960s a young Coharie leader, James D. Brewington, called tribal members together and formed a political organization called the Coharie Development Association, after the two Coharie Rivers, which had been the homeland of the tribe. After school integration, the Indian Clan and Indian school committee formed the Coharie structure into a more modern organization called the Sampson County Indian Association. The leader, James D. Brewington, increased the political presence of the tribe at the county, state, and federal levels. He helped form the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs (NCCIA) in 1971. Two years later, tribal leaders established the local organization, the Coharie People, Inc.

The modern day Coharie Intra-Tribal Council, Inc. is the outgrowth of an election of tribal members in 1975 to unite the Coharie organizations from Harnett and Sampson Counties into a single body to provide effective leadership, avoid duplication and seek projects that could benefit all Coharies regardless of county lines. This is the contemporary organization of the tribe. Currently, the tribe is governed by a tribal council of seven members — three from the Harnett County Coharie Indian Association, Inc., three from the Coharie People, Inc. of Sampson County, plus the Chief — all elected to two-year staggered terms in a public election by the enrolled tribal members.

Former Chief, Tom N. Carter, was a long time educator and leader like the earlier Chief Enoch Emanuel. The present Chief, Mr. Gene Faircloth, was elected in the last tribal election.

The tribe also has an Elders Review Committee and conducts monthly tribal meetings to inform and educate members about issues of importance to the tribe as a whole. The opinions and suggestions of tribal members are solicited during these meetings and are incorporated into the decision-making process.

The tribal council employs a tribal administrator to handle day-to-day operations of the tribe. The administrator supervises the management of tribal grant programs and provides a monthly reporting of the status of grant activities to local, state,

and federal agencies, private donors, the tribal council, and tribal members. The tribe's annual budget is approximately \$1 million. The financial officer prepares monthly fiscal reports for the tribe, processes the tribal payroll, and is responsible for preparing and sending quarterly and final reports to each funding agency after review by the administrator and council. Twelve staff persons work under the supervision of the Administrator. An independent certified public accounting firm performs audits on a yearly basis.

The Coharie Tribe has been recognized by the state of North Carolina since 1971 and incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 organization in 1975. Since 1980, the Lumbee Legal Services, Inc. has represented the Coharie Tribe on the administration process for federal recognition. A substantial amount of research has been conducted to write the tribe's petition for federal acknowledgement to the U.S. Government.

Demographics

Currently the majority of the population of the Coharie Indian tribe lives in the counties of Harnett and Sampson, North Carolina, basically divided by Interstate 95. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Indian population in Sampson and Harnett Counties is 1781, 1029 and 752, respectively. This only represents 1.18 percent of the total combined population.

Between 1980 and 2000, the two-county area experienced a population increase of 38.4 percent, compared with a 37 percent rate of growth for North Carolina overall. The in-migration in the two counties has been fairly even in all population groups except for a huge increase in the percentage of Hispanics. The Indian, black and white populations of the two counties increased by 30 percent, 27 percent, and 27 percent respectively, compared with 945 percent for Hispanics. Table 1 provides population and percent share for Indian, Hispanic, black, and white population groups.

TABLE 1
Population Numbers and Percentage Shares of Population Groups,
Sampson and Harnett Counties (1980–2000)

Year	Sampson	Harnett	American Indian		Hispanic		Black		White	
			Sampson	Harnett	Sampson	Harnett	Sampson	Harnett	Sampson	Harnett
2000	60,161	91,025	1029	752	6477	5336	17,871	20,371	34,190	62,708
1990	47,297	67,822	847	591	727	1159	15,630	15,221	30,016	50,553
1980	49,687	59,570	884	488	461	669	16,616	13,611	31,665	44,537
2000	100%	100%	1.7%	0.8%	10.8%	5.9%	29.7%	22.4%	56.8%	68.9%
1990	100%	100%	1.8%	0.9%	1.5%	1.7%	33.1%	22.4%	63.5%	74.5%
1980	100%	100%	1.8%	0.8%	0.9%	1.1%	33.4%	22.9%	63.7%	74.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The current Coharie tribal enrollment reflects **2,363 members**, with approximately 20 percent of these members residing outside the tribal communities. To be on the membership roll, persons must not belong to any other Indian tribe.

Tribal Mission, Current Priority Programs, and Plans for Economic Development

Coharie Intra-Tribal Council Mission

The mission of the Coharie Intra-Tribal Council is to promote the health, education, social and economic well being of the Native American people and constantly evaluate new and existing programs to provide a positive impact on the Coharie Indian Community. It is also to provide programs and services to further promote the growth and development of the Coharies in cultural and economic avenues for the following goals:

- To become a federally recognized Indian Tribe with its own governing system so as to become self-sufficient and be a sovereign political entity capable of determining its own identity, exercising local control and decision-making over its own resources.
- To improve Tribal members' housing through implementation of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) program in their communities.
- To improve the economic status of members and communities.
- To provide greater access to community services through out-stationing services and referral.
- Improve education of Tribal children through in-school advocacy and access to resources for post secondary education.

Current Priority Programs

- Federal recognition activities, including tribal enrollment and genealogy research:
 - The tribe has been active in federal recognition activities since 1981, when its letter of intent to petition for recognition was submitted.
 - In the early 1980s the tribe established enrollment criteria and began enrolling members. The tribe issues enrollment cards that allow members to participate in programs and receive benefits such as State Opportunity Scholarships, job training (WIA), Indian Education projects, as well as participation in cultural events and dancing at pow-wows.
 - The tribe received an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Status Clarification Grant of \$65,000 in 1995 to revamp and computerize its entire enrollment and genealogy system to be compatible with the Bureau of Acknowledgement and Research (BAR) computers; received additional ANA funding in 1997 to concentrate on tribal research and genealogy; received

ANA funding in 2000 for tribal roll updating and maintenance to be completed by February 28, 2002; submitted an additional request for \$75,000 to complete a current and up-to-date Tribal roll determining eligibility of members in receiving services and complete the community sections of 83.7b & c, Federal Acknowledgement Provisions of CFR 83.7.

- **Housing programs:** Since 1998, the Coharie tribe has operated several housing programs using an annual appropriation from HUD (currently \$900,000 annually). These programs provide tribal members access to support as first-time homeowners, new housing down payment assistance, housing counseling and services, and help with housing rehabilitation.
- **Workforce assistance:** The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program or its predecessors (CETA and JTPA) have been in place for 28 years, since 1975. Services are provided by staff from the North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs (NCCIA) and include training, job search, and job placement assistance, job-related counseling and orientation to the work force.
- **Childcare:** The Coharie Tribe operates two childcare centers, both open to the public, one in Sampson County and one in Harnett County. They were first established in 1977 and serve 29 children, aged from six weeks to five years old. The childcare centers are self-sustaining through receipts. Enrollment is down in Harnett County due to water damage and the center being closed for a period of time.
- **Health care:** Tri-County Community Health Center Migrant Benevolent Association is renovating a building owned by the Coharies to provide a nurse onsite, promote healthy lifestyles and a spa/work out center will be available.
- **Community Service Block Grant for Senior Citizens** to operate a Senior Employment Project employing senior citizens.
- **Federal grant for support of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).**
- **Food Bank Project**
- **N.C. Substance Abuse Project**
- **Operation of a Career Teen Center** funded through the Duplin County Mental Health (provides after school day care and has computers for use by younger individuals).
- **N.C. Arts Council Project** supporting the culture and arts room at the tribal center and the annual pow-wow.

Plans for Economic Development

The Coharie are looking at the feasibility of several long-term projects:

- Create a “one stop” resource center at the Tribal Office.
- Increase resources to become self-sufficient (reliance on a few grants currently).
- Obtain federal recognition.
- Train staff in grants writing rather than having to rely on outside entities.

- Establish tribal enterprises; possibly a storage building project due to the low overhead requirements.

History of American Indian Economic Development Activity

Occupations of Tribal Members

According to focus group participants and interviews, the primary occupations of the tribal members who work outside the Coharie community would include but are not limited to factory work, work in the construction trades (e.g. sheetrock hangers), florists, farmers, welders, auto mechanics, meat cutters/processors, childcare workers, health care/medicine, house movers, craft work, teachers and law enforcement. In the past, a sizeable number worked in construction, but tribal members now feel that Hispanics have begun to dominate employment in this industry. Approximately 2 percent of tribal members own small businesses. In addition, a small number of people are employed in local government positions (clerks), USDA food safety, or utilities, such as rural telecom cooperatives.

Tribal Member Businesses

Most Coharie businesses are sole proprietorships and microenterprises employing fewer than ten people. Some examples of businesses attempted by tribal members include building contractors, car dealerships, auto body shops, hairdressing, childcare centers, home improvement, restaurants, florists, and insurance. Farming employment has decreased, with only a couple of tribal members still in large farming operations and a few in small farming operations.

Areas of weakness or challenges to the success of small businesses that were cited by business owners and tribal leaders are: lack of dedicated staff, poor business management skills, lack of adequate financing and appropriate educational skills (sometimes not even high school education). Other barriers included lack of markets for crafts, lack of good role models, lack of collateral for capital, the problem of “*it’s who you know — what bloodline you are in*” and lack of technology savvy with computers and the Internet.

The business owners cited key factors in their business success to include: strong desire to succeed, strong work ethic, knowing where to “*plug into the system*”, having goals and writing them down (business plan), and fair price value for product/service to attract repeat customers. Some indicated they ventured away from the county to learn a trade and came back.

Tribal Enterprises

- The tribe’s annual Coharie Indian Cultural Pow-wow was instituted in 1970 and is held annually in September, open to the public and intended for fun and fellowship. Arts and crafts are inherent to the Coharies and are showcased in expositions. Other activities include dancing, drumming competitions, ground blessing ceremonies, gospel singing, as well as pageants for Miss Teen Coharie, Miss Junior Coharie and Little Miss Coharie. It is hosted by contribu-

tions and fund raising events with each year's receipts going into reserve for the next year's event.

- The Coharie received an ANA grant to start and operate a mobile home park in the late 1980s–early 1990s. They had 6 mobile homes but people destroyed them and would not pay their rent, so the tribe had to evict residents and eventually sold the units.
- The tribe received an ANA Economic Development grant to set up three catfish ponds in 1980s; this project has closed now and none are operational. This model was transferred from the Waccamaw Siouan but the Coharie had the same problems: the tribe lacked real estate and the farming required a special type of soil. ANA does not provide resources for land purchase so additional sources for land would have to be sought.
- A woodworking business was not successful due to a lack of markets for its products.
- A doll project failed due to a lack of funds for marketing.
- The tribe established two childcare centers in Sampson and Harnett Counties in 1977, which remain in operation and are currently self-sustaining.

Partnering and Resource Pooling

The focus group identified an example of resource pooling: 9–10 individuals have partnered in forming an investment group (stock market-related). The Intra-tribal Council has partnered with Duplin County Mental Health to offer after-school programs, the N.C. Arts Council for cultural and art projects, and with the Tri-County Community Health Center Migrant Benevolent Association which is currently renovating a building on-site to provide health-related projects.

SECTION 2

Strategic Assets and Critical Challenges

In evaluating the strategic assets and critical challenges of each N.C. tribe and association, the UNC team used a framework that looks at four types of capital: physical, human, financial, and social. Economic developers have always recognized the importance of physical infrastructure and workforce; the addition of financial and social capital reflects an increased emphasis in the knowledge economy on business finance and networks.

Below we summarize our key findings from statistical data, focus groups, individual interviews, and review of tribal documents (where available).

Physical Capital

Land

Harnett County has 595 square miles in land area, and in 1997 the percentage of land in farms was 30.5 percent or 116,004 acres of land. Sampson County has 945 square miles in land area, and in 1997 the percentage of land in farms was 44.8 percent or 270,840 acres of land. The county seats of Sampson County and Harnett County are Clinton and Lillington, respectively. There are no major municipalities in either county. Both counties are located within an hour of the Raleigh-Durham area and are little more than an hour away from North Carolina beaches. Their available land and strategic locations are certainly advantages for businesses locating in Harnett and Sampson Counties.

Most tribes consider land to be a major asset, especially given the losses they experienced over the years. The Coharie Tribe owns 5 acres, which was the site of the East Carolina Indian School, given to the tribe in 1943. It also owns approximately 2.5 acres in Harnett County, the location of a day care center, and an additional 1.75 acres of land, the site of a day care center in Sampson County. There is no other land owned by the Harnett Indian Association or Coharie People, Inc.

Buildings

In 1943, the tribe was given the East Carolina Indian School, which affords the tribe a central physical location and houses its current tribal administration building. In 1977,

the tribe constructed childcare centers in Sampson County and in Harnett County. The administrative center houses a museum for tribal cultural arts and youth services programs. The facility is also available to tribal leaders and members for meetings, trainings, social activities, and recreational events. The building was refurbished in 1988 and in 1999, but is still in need of additional repairs. The Board tries to set aside some funds annually for additional work.

The Tri-County Community Health Center Migrant Benevolent Association is presently renovating a building owned by the Coharies to provide a nurse on site as well as a spa and workout center.

Infrastructure

A major advantage for business development is that most necessary infrastructure is in place in both Harnett and Sampson County and both have several industrial parks available. Sampson County has 1,212 acres total land available in sites (0.20 percent of total land) whereas Harnett County has 1,047 acres total land available in sites (0.27 percent of total land). Sampson County has a variety of suitable industrial locations with 466 acres available in the 799-acre Sampson Southeastern Business Complex in Clinton which has all needed infrastructure to include hard-surfaced, curbed and guttered roads, street lighting, water, sewer, natural gas and high speed Internet access. A number of the major companies in Sampson County are located in this complex. Additional industrial parks include Roseboro Industrial Park in Roseboro and the J B Warren Industrial Site in Newton Grove. Harnett County has one industrial site certified by the N.C. Department of Commerce and Sampson County has none.

Rail access is available and there is an excellent transportation infrastructure with convenient access to I-40 and I-95. Both counties have a public transportation system: the Sampson County Transportation Advisory Board provides transportation in Sampson while the Harnett Area Rural Transit System provides service for Harnett County.

Sampson County is in Phase II to complete a countywide water distribution system. Progress Energy has installed gas lines serving the N.C. Hwy 24 corridor. According to the e-NC initiative, the proportion of households with high-speed Internet access in Sampson and Harnett Counties is 61 percent and 53 percent, respectively, compared to a state average of 75 percent.

The Cape Fear River is the main drainage system in Harnett County with tributaries from the Little River System, Lower Little River, and Black River. Harnett County is home to the Raven Rock State Park, a 3,000-acre park on the Cape Fear River, which provides for fishing, camping, hiking, and other recreational activities. There are eight golf courses in Harnett County. Sampson County has a number of rivers within its borders to include the Great Coharie Creek, Six Run Creek, Black River, and South River. There are three public golf courses and one private golf course in Sampson County.

Housing

The 2000 Census reflects that there were 22,226 households in Sampson County and 33,837 in Harnett County. The home ownership rates for Sampson and Harnett County are 73.5 percent and 70.3 percent respectively. Some form of home ownership is important to tribal members, but many live in sub-standard housing or mobile homes. Obtaining some form of affordable housing is a challenge to many tribal members. They have difficulty in qualifying for consumer loans as many of them have poor credit and/or do not maintain a checking account. The Coharie Intra-tribal Council provides housing repairs, renovations, and limited financing for a few homes but in no way are able to meet all of the demand. The tribe also owns Coharie Village, a 20-unit housing project. The N.C. Indian Housing Authority manages it but the Coharies now have a tribal member that works there to keep things in order.

Human Capital

Income and Poverty Challenges

The 1999 median household income for both Sampson and Harnett County (\$31,792 and \$35,105, respectively) lags the state average (\$39,184). The Sampson County per capita personal income was \$20,437 and for Harnett County it was \$19,781. The percentage of persons below the poverty level was 17.6 percent and 14.9 percent, in Sampson and Harnett Counties, respectively, compared to the state level of 12.3 percent. Sampson County's per capita income grew by only 1.5 percent between 1990 and 2000 (adjusted for inflation), whereas the per capita income for Harnett County grew by 12.2 percent during the same time period.

Leadership

The Coharie Tribe is a relatively small but hard-working tribe. Tribal staff and board members serve at the state level on the NCCIA Board and N.C. Indian Housing Authority Board. Locally, there are no Coharie members on the local county commissioner boards. Tribal members do serve on the Community Health Center Board and the School Board. The Tribe is a member of the Sampson Chamber of Commerce. The current Tribal Chief is Gene Faircloth, a District Judge from Sampson County and the Vice Chairman is Isabell Freeman-Elliott (Independent Paralegal with ISSE & Company in Dunn). Some interviewees felt additional management training for tribal leaders, particularly those responsible for the planning and implementation of tribal enterprises, might be helpful.

Economic Development Committees or Staff

There currently is no dedicated staff for economic development and the Intra-Tribal Council Board does not have an Economic Development Committee.

Key Employers and Entrepreneurs

Table 2 lists the 10 largest employers overall in Sampson and Harnett Counties. The largest employers of Coharies in Sampson County are Lundy's and Hog Slat Co., Inc.

and in Harnett County, the largest employers of Coharies are the Food Lion Distribution Center and Edward Brothers, Inc. From 1997 through 2001, Harnett County had business/industry closings or layoffs affecting 2,161 people. During the same period, Sampson County had business/industry closings or layoffs affecting 534 people. Sampson and Harnett County industries most affected by closings included textile mill products, electronic and other electrical equipment and components (except computer equipment), and lumber and wood products other than furniture.

TABLE 2
Largest Private-Sector Employers in Sampson and Harnett Counties

<u>Sampson</u>	<u>Harnett</u>
Premium Standard Farms/Lundys	Morganite, Inc.
Schindler Elevator Corp.	Food Lion Distribution Center
Hog Slat Co. Inc.	Campbell University
NuWay	Wal-Mart
Prestage Farms, Inc.	Edwards Brothers, Inc.
Brooks Brothers, Inc.	Good Hope Hospital
Wal-Mart	Machine & Welding Supply
Steel Technologies, Inc.	Affinity Health Services, Inc.
Burch Equip LLC	Betsy Johnson Hospital
Murphy-Brown LLC	Carlie C's Operation Center, Inc.

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission

In Sampson County, the business start-up rate was 10.6 percent and failure rate was 7.3 percent. In Harnett County, the business start-up rate was 11.9 percent and failure rate was 6.6 percent. These compare with state averages of 11.6 percent and 7 percent, respectively. According to the N.C. Employment Security Commission, investments for new business from 1997–2001 in Sampson County totaled \$3.7 million and created 145 jobs and expansion of businesses totaled \$58.2 million, resulting in 287 jobs. In Harnett County, new business investment totaled \$3.5 million and created 60 jobs and expansion of businesses totaled \$35.7 million, resulting in 615 jobs. Patents issued from 1990–1999 were 16 and 23, Sampson and Harnett County, respectively. Sampson and Harnett Counties are both Tier 4 for the N.C. Commerce Department’s incentives for businesses.

It was the feeling of interviewees and attendees at the focus group that an American Indian business directory would be especially helpful for economic development and the business owners were willing to secure information from their area.

Workforce Attributes and Existing Skills

The total labor force average for 2001 was 24,300 (Sampson) and 36,840 (Harnett). The average unemployment rate for 2001 was 7.2 percent and 6.9 percent, Sampson and Harnett, respectively, compared to the state average of 5.5 percent. The unemployment rate for August 2002 was 7.4 percent (Sampson) and 8.1 percent (Harnett). Neither county is in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and the federally designated economic area for both counties is Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill.

Table 3 provides a distribution of employment by sector for each county. The greatest percentages of jobs in Sampson County are in manufacturing, trade, and government; in Harnett County the largest number is in trade, followed by services and government. Sampson County has traditionally been perceived as a major agricultural region over the years with agriculture and related jobs resulting in \$357 million in business. Sampson County is one of the state's leading producers of poultry and vegetables and the nation's number one producer of pork.

TABLE 3
Employment in Sampson and Harnett
Counties by Sector, Second Quarter, 2001

Employment Sector	Percent Share of Labor Force in	
	Sampson	Harnett
Construction	4.5	8.3
Manufacturing	22.0	14.7
Services	13.3	22.2
Trade	20.2	25.2
Fin., Ins. & Real Estate	1.6	3.4
Government	20.1	21.0

Source: N.C. Department of Commerce,
<http://emedis.commerce.state.nc.us/countyprofiles/>

Of the Sampson County population aged 25 and older (38,796) in 2000, the distribution of educational attainment is 35 percent high school graduates, 6.2 percent associate degree, 7.8 percent bachelor's degree and 3.2 percent graduate degrees. The Sampson County population who are high school graduates or higher is 69 percent, with 11.1 percent having a bachelor's degree or higher. Of the Harnett County population aged 25 and older (57,138) in 2000, the breakdown of educational attainment is 32.6 percent high school graduates, 7.6 percent associate degree, 9.4 percent bachelor's degree and 3.4 percent graduate degrees. The Harnett County population of high school graduates or higher is 75.0 percent with 12.8 percent having a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares with state educational attainment averages of 78.1 percent high school graduates and 22.5 percent bachelor's degrees.

Per the 2000 Census, the mean travel time to work for workers aged 16 and older in Sampson County was 25 minutes and in Harnett County it was 29.2 minutes. The members of the Coharie focus group indicated that a high percentage of tribal members currently commute to Cumberland County and other areas in order to work. Workers in the construction field travel as far as Raleigh, Wilmington, and Charlotte to find work.

Brain drain is a major problem and tribal leaders are searching for ways to lure people back. Young people are leaving the rural areas due to the lack of available jobs or jobs that pay a decent wage. In the past, some have ventured away to learn a trade and then came back, but now few return. Tribal members are in need of more workforce development opportunities, particularly related to computer technology and Internet

use. Although both types of classes are offered at Sampson Community College, many people are reluctant to spend the time and money to attend classes. A good motivation course was recommended by one tribal member, who stated that members are “set in their ways” and are reluctant to venture out; they have to be approached very carefully about change.

Education/Workforce Development Institutions

Sampson County has two public school systems, Sampson County Schools and Clinton City Schools as well as one private school, Harrells Christian Academy. There is also Sampson Community College located in Clinton, which provides literacy education, continuing education, vocational and technical education, as well as specific training for business and industry. The N.C. Justice Academy is located in Sampson County in Salemburg providing criminal justice training for state and local law enforcement agencies. Harnett County has one public school system and is home to Central Carolina Community College and Campbell University, a private four-year university.

Sampson and Harnett Counties are both within an hour’s commute to a number of other public and private universities including Fayetteville State University, Methodist College, UNC Pembroke, UNC Wilmington, and they are about two hours from universities in the Raleigh-Chapel Hill area such as N.C. State and UNC-Chapel Hill.

Each county also has a JobLink Career Center and/or Employment Security Commission to match individuals to appropriate jobs and/or link individuals with appropriate training.

Financial Capital

Federal or State Grants

Receipt of federal funds and grants per capita for 2001 for Sampson County was \$5,152 and for Harnett County it was \$3,710. The total dollar amounts were \$282,088 for Sampson County and \$337,728 for Harnett County.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Source of Funding</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Housing Programs	HUD	\$600,000
Housing Programs	Federal Loan Home Bank to supplement housing program for 40 additional people	\$310,000
Sampson Day Care	Tribal funds via receipts	Break even
Harnett Day Care	Tribal funds via receipts	Break even
Pow Wow	Tribal funded (contributions, fund raisers, etc.)	Break even
Tribal Enrollment Maintenance	ANA	\$75,000
Senior Aide Program	NCCIA	N/A
Workforce Development	NCCIA	N/A
After School Day Care	N.C. Dept of Health & Human Services; serves 34 individuals currently (age 5–17 in violence prevention program)	\$30,000
Senior Citizens Program	State Black Caucus; serves senior citizens	N/A

Sources and Amounts of Program Funds

The Coharie Intra-Tribal Council currently administers or has access to the following grants/resources:

Comments from tribal members indicated the need to focus on seeking grants other than just grants for American Indians (i.e. private sector, foundations).

Scholarships

The Coharie People College Scholarship goes to the Coharie Princess each year (\$250) plus \$50 savings bonds donated by local banks.

Local Banks/Credit Unions

There are two banks based in and local to the area: First Federal Bank and New Century Bank, both based in Dunn. Local banks are often more supportive of local entrepreneurship than branches of larger banks. There are also branches of a number of major financial institutions to include First Citizens Bank, First Union Bank, RBC Centura Bank, BB&T Bank and State Employees Credit Union.

Unity Community Credit Union was recently established with offices in downtown Clinton. Coharie Tribal Chief, Gene Faircloth is a board member. The mission of the Unity Community Credit Union is to encourage savings among its members and the opportunity for economic development and growth by providing affordable ac-

TABLE 4

Assets and Services of Local and Regional Banks

<u>Financial Institution</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Services</u>
First Federal Bank	1/1/1958	\$157,468,000	lines of credit, acquisition and development, real estate, construction, and small business loans
New Century Bank	5/24/2000	\$140,631,000	equipment and vehicle financing, commercial real estate loans, construction lending, lines of credit

cess to credit. It will target on serving the “underserved” in each community within its boundary of Sampson and Duplin Counties.

Community Resources and Networks

A few of the notable community resources include the Sampson Regional Medical Center, the Sampson County Agri-Exposition Center, the Sampson CenterStage Performing Arts Series, and the Sampson Community Theater.

Social Capital

Institutions

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Coharie leaders used the establishment of separate Indian institutions as a strategy to promote self-sufficiency, to

improve educational and social opportunities for tribal members, and to mitigate repression of Indian identity by authorities. The tribe established the East Carolina Indian School in Sampson County, which later closed mainly because of integration in the public school system.

Within the main Coharie settlement there are a number of Indian churches. The churches are the center of Coharie activities. It is through the churches that families interact, the elders are honored and the social rules are enforced. The Coharies' sense of themselves is manifested most clearly through their religious activities. There are 34 Protestant churches in Sampson County. Churches with predominant Coharie membership include: New Bethel Church (250 members); Hollys Grove Holiness Church (208 members); East Carolina Church (40 members); Coharie Methodist Church (50 members) and Shiloh Holiness Church (150 members).

Technology-based Resources

The tribe has created a computer database for organizing the genealogical enrollment information and historical research on ancestor tribes collected as part of its federal recognition project. There are a few computers available for younger individuals to use in the Teen Career Center. The tribe did not participate in the recent E-Communities Initiative of the N.C. Rural Internet Access Authority. The Intra-Tribal Council's web site is currently offline for modification purposes but there are plans to bring it back online in several months.

Small Business Resources

A few of the local resources accessible to Coharie tribe members include:

- Small Business Center at Sampson Community College
- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) chapters in Fayetteville and Wilmington
- Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC) in Fayetteville
- Business Center in Dunn incubator
- Triangle South Small Business Center
- Small Business Center at Central Carolina Community College
- N.C. Commission on Indian Affairs
- USDA — Agricultural support
- Minority Credit Union in Sampson/Harnett

A minority credit union in Sampson/Harnett is under development. Tribal members said they receive good agricultural support from USDA (good with outreach). However, some of the challenges with small business resources include: SBCs are not open at convenient times to serve tribal members, and all advertised services are not available; SBTDC does not do outreach, they are responsive to specific requests only; NCCIA needs to be more involved in economic development (not just send a packet of information).

Local and State Policy-Making

It is the belief of many tribal members that they continue to suffer from discrimination in their dealings at all levels, county, state, or federal. They feel this is especially true with workforce training and social service programs.

Focus group participants indicated they would like to see:

- Tax credits to regional businesses that hire Indians in management positions.
- Distinction for American Indians from other minorities in forms that are completed.
- Public funds for Indians only.

Community Resources and Other Networks

The tribe collaborates with the Duplin-Sampson County Mental Health for after school day care and programs for teens and the Tri-County Community Health Center for health programs. They have worked out an arrangement with the Sampson County Schools where a tutor comes to the Center twice per week to tutor youth (funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Title VII Indian Education Program).

The tribe is a member of the Sampson County Chamber of Commerce and just recently joined the Harnett County Chamber of Commerce. Executive Director of the tribe recently joined the Minority Business Group and You Care Domestic Violence.

SECTION 3

Most Promising Opportunities for Economic Development

This final section of the report summarizes key conclusions of the UNC study team, as well as the main assets and challenges of the tribe for economic development purposes. It concludes with a list of our recommendations for the tribe in developing general practices and specific strategies for improving the economic situation of members of the Coharie Tribe.

Conclusions

- The Coharie Tribe has limited visibility and presence in the broader community but has already begun to address this issue.
- There are limited employment and business opportunities in both counties compared to the state at large.
- The unemployment rate is higher than the state average and the percentage of individuals below the poverty level is significantly higher than the state average.
- The population in Sampson and Harnett Counties is growing (38 percent between 1980–2000) and growth has been fairly evenly distributed, but the highest increase is a 945 percent increase in Hispanics for the same time period.
- The Tribe does not have a staff person or committee devoted to economic development planning.
- The Tribe focuses on individual grants but does not yet have a comprehensive, strategic approach of bundling multiple resources for an initiative like economic development.

Key Assets

- Strong partnerships with several community groups for provision of services.
- Own two childcare centers including 4.25 acres.

- Own their administrative offices including 5 acres of property, which has tremendous visual appeal and opportunity for further development (note: this was formerly the East Carolina Indian School).
- Own Coharie Village consisting of 18 rental units.
- Receive \$600,000+ for housing assistance.
- Have many motivated and talented artisans.

Key Challenges

- Tribal enrollment is small, with little voice in politics and other boards.
- Narrow and unstable base of programs, focused mostly on housing assistance.
- Limited job opportunities in Sampson County.
- Tribe is not large enough to market crafts alone.
- Need to leverage federal grants better with other sources around common issues.
- Need to encourage young folks to stay in school and adults to continually upgrade their educational skills due to comparatively low education levels.
- Lack of collateral for start-up of businesses.
- Lack of technology skills.

Recommendations

Table 5 reflects the preferred ranking of economic development strategies for the Coharie Tribe as recorded in our focus group interviews (and may not represent the views of the tribe as a whole).

TABLE 5
Preferred Economic Development Strategies for Coharie Tribe

14	Entrepreneurship/business start-up mentoring, financing, training
12	Partnerships with non-Indians in community, county, federal agencies, state, private sector
5	Workforce training to enter mainstream jobs
4	Tribal Enterprises
3	Assistance to existing businesses
3	Recruiting new businesses
2	Infrastructure Development
1	Agricultural or other cooperatives
1	Tourism
0	Selling or optioning land to county or college
0	Mineral Rights, etc.

To this list of generic options, which the UNC team shared with several tribes around the state, the Coharie focus group added “Business Resource Center” (one-stop) at tribal center — hire good staff that is trustworthy where people feel at home.

General Recommendations of UNC Team

- Continue to improve visibility and presence in the community and seek out partnerships with the non-Indian community.
- Examine the feasibility of establishing a “One-Stop” Center for Business and Workforce Services, housed at the Coharie administrative offices. The purpose of the center would be to be a liaison, advocate and partner for providing management and leadership training, technology training, business plan development, and other assistance to Coharie workers and businesses.
- Create an economic development committee or have a staff person dedicated (at least in part) to economic development activities. The role should be to consider business opportunities for profit-making enterprises (such as storage center, alternative farm crops, market for artisans) with recommendations to Executive Director to the Intra-Tribal Council Board.
- Capitalize on Sampson Community College and Central Carolina Community College to increase computer literacy at all ages and to increase the number of college and advanced degrees earned by tribal youth and raise the educational levels of interested adults.

Specific Projects, Activities and Resources

1. Improve visibility of the Coharie Tribe and develop partnerships:

- Submit news stories about tribe activities to the local newspapers;
- Invite local elected officials to the tribal offices (to visit the museum or participate in a joint board or planning meeting);
- Strengthen internal public relations, keeping tribal members apprised of activities;
- Re-activate web site for the tribe and regularly update it;
- Become more active in the community by tribal members seeking elected office or appointment to boards; and
- Forge stronger alliances with local governments for economic development planning to ensure the Coharie voice is heard. Invite economic developers to an event or meeting at the tribal office.

Contacts:

- New economic developer for Sampson County, John Swope: 910/592-8921 and see www.sampsonedc.com
- Lee Anne Nance, Marketing Director with Harnett County: 910/893-7524 and see www.harnettedc.org

Resource:

- Lumbee Tribe as they have more tribal members in professional/elected positions than most tribes (www.lumbee Tribe.com)

2. Revitalize or create a strategic plan with a focus on not only providing services in the short-term but the long-term as well. Incorporate long-term goals/plans into grants — bundle multiple sources as part of large projects (look at the “big picture”). Specific longer-term projects to consider:

- Establish a “One-Stop” Center for Business and Workforce Services housed at the tribal offices:
 - Conduct a needs assessment of American Indian entrepreneurs;
 - Conduct research to ascertain use of and satisfaction with existing small business services (SCORE, SBC, SBTDC);
 - Consider assignment of a staff person to help with employment and making connection to business resources.

Resources:

- The NCIEDI intends to make assistance to Indian business owners a priority area for future statewide initiatives.
 - Examine Lumbee Tribe’s Business Resource Center for possible replication and funding ideas (www.lumbeetribe.com);
 - Small Business & Technology Development Centers (SBTDC) (www.sbtdc.org)
 - U.S. Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov)
 - SCORE (www.score.org)
 - N.C. Community College System’s Small Business Center Network (www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Business_and_Industry/sbcnmainpage.htm)
 - America’s Small Business Development Center (www.asbdc.org)
- Establish an Economic Development Committee or designate staff or shared staff to focus on economic development activities;
 - Seek strategies for artisans, particularly disabled crafters, to market their wares; examine a technology cooperative to market crafts
 - Consider establishing an *ad hoc* committee around crafts only;
 - Examine alternative strategies for farm crops;
 - Work with local SBCs to do a business plan or feasibility study for a tribal enterprise storage building facility.

Resources:

- Handmade in America is a crafts marketing co-op in western N.C. that is widely regarded as a successful model of business development for artisans. See www.handmadeinamerica.org and also the write-up about this project in the appendix of best practices in UNC’s full report to NCIEDI. There are several North Carolina tribes interested in this type of effort so it may become a NCIEDI initiative in the future.

- The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (www.Cherokee-nc.com) have developed one of the higher quality stores for Indian crafts in the U.S.
- The Guilford Native American Association has recently established a store in downtown Greensboro that may be either a model or an opportunity for Coharie artisans to sell their crafts.
- Mashantucket Pequots in Connecticut (www.foxwoods.com). This tribe now has a large casino, but long before that a history of developing profitable tribal enterprises of various kinds.

3. *Conduct a campaign to encourage tribal members to continue their education, not only completing high school but continuing to post-secondary:*

- encourage individuals to go into health services employment;
- encourage individuals to take computer-related courses;
- sponsor a Career Fair in collaboration with community college or JobLink Career Center.

Resources:

- The North Carolina Health Careers Access Program is set up to attract more minorities to health careers. It works with local Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) around the state and have forums, workshops and summer programs for secondary and college-level students about the health professions. See <http://nc-hcap.unc.edu/programs.html>. The closest AHEC for the Coharie is in Fayetteville; its web site is www.southernregionalahec.org.
- There are several sites that offer free or very inexpensive computer and Internet training, including all the community colleges, as well as the Harnett County Public Library in Lillington (www.harnett.org/lib), and the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board in Roseboro (910/525-4183). See also www.E-nc.org for general information about other digital literacy initiatives.
- There is a new organization called Futures for Kids based in Raleigh that was established to help high-school students from across the U.S. understand and make more informed career choices. Perhaps this group is a partner for a career fair in North Carolina. See www.futuresforkids.org.

