

Press Release

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Brunswick Family Assistance announces our Community Housing Affordability Survey

(September 1st, 2016 – Shallotte, N.C.) Brunswick Family Assistance (BFA), a non-profit organization in Shallotte, NC, is undertaking a County-wide affordable housing survey. The survey is being conducted by Dr. Kristen DeVall and Dr. Christina Lanier (Co-Directors, UNCW Social Science Applied Research Center) with funding provided by UNCW's Office of Community Engagement through a Community Engagement Grant. The survey will be available to County residents beginning on September 1st through October 13th, 2016 on-line at:

<https://redcap.uncw.edu/surveys/?s=LEKY8AWFHN>

Paper copies of the survey can be obtained at Brunswick Family Assistance at 4600-10 Main Street in Shallotte and Brunswick County Department of Social Services, 60 Government Center Drive in Bolivia to include input from traditionally marginalized communities.

Affordable housing is an important issue across the country and Brunswick County is no exception. On a local level, data indicate that housing costs in Brunswick County are generally higher than the State average. Housing affordability has been identified not only as an economic issue for communities, but also a determinant of an individual's quality of life.

Housing is considered *affordable* to the homeowner or tenant if their housing costs, including mortgage or rent, utilities, taxes, and insurance, are 30% of their income or less and housing cost burdened if they are paying over that amount. There is a widening gap between market-rents and starting prices of new homes and the amounts many households can afford. In 2014, 21.3 million Americans were considered housing cost burdened (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2016).

The overall objective of this survey is to examine various aspects of housing affordability in Brunswick County. This will help to:

- Develop an understanding of community members' perceptions and attitudes regarding housing affordability.
- Identify supported solutions to increase access to affordable housing within Brunswick County.
- Increase knowledge among Brunswick County leaders regarding the issue of affordable housing.

When the survey data is finalized, it will be shared with county and local officials, business leaders, developers, and non-profit organizations involved in housing issues, so they have a more complete understanding of residents' perceptions when making decisions regarding housing and economic development.

If you have questions or would like to request paper copies of the survey please call: **Olivia Dorsey, BFA Housing Program Manager**

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