
Business Climate

A strong business climate has resulted in tremendous growth in the Charlotte Region. Businesses capitalize on the talented workforce, affordable utilities, access to healthcare, and low cost of doing business in the region. A high quality of life that includes access to cultural assets and safe neighborhoods and communities is critical to a thriving economic environment. North Carolina has been named the top state in the nation to do business, and tourism continues to be a leading industry from the mountains to the coast. The Charlotte Regional Business Alliance® is committed to nurturing and further improving the business climate in the Carolinas with the goal of creating the most vibrant, innovative, and healthy economy in the nation.

Priority #1: Continue to be the best place in the world to do business

- Ensure that businesses can operate within the free market. Oppose unnecessary governmental engagement, regulations, fees and legislation that reduce consumer choice, increase cost, hamper innovation, and limit technology advancement and availability.
- Support AI and consumer data privacy and protection policies that contribute to seamless state and federal regulatory regimes, based upon consistency, recognition of existing oversight, and risk-based, industry-specific, and tailored approaches that contemplate ongoing technological advances.
- Support engagement between government and business during the consideration of permitting and impact fees to quantify the financial impact of such decision-making on businesses and ensure there are no unintended consequences. Advocate for swift local review policies to avoid regulatory slowdowns.
- Support innovative solutions to business issues, including enhancing the fintech, proptech, and insurtech regulatory sandbox.
- Support the continuation and expansion of existing economic development incentive programs and creation of programs to assist early-stage startups. Promote certainty in qualifying for incentives.
- Promote policies that ensure job creators can stay competitive in attracting and retaining talent, while appropriately managing risk.
- Pursue civil justice reform to enhance fairness in state courts.
- Support policies that expand trade and investment opportunities for all businesses to encourage economic growth, jobs, and a fair playing field.



- Protect retailers and consumers from organized retail theft that results in lost revenue and higher costs.
- Support Right to Work laws for private and public employees and promote certainty in state labor laws.
- Ensure wage and labor laws are followed, and local units of government adhere to their roles and responsibilities in complying with such laws.

Priority #2: Lead the country on reasonable tax policy

The CLT Alliance supports tax policies that encourage business expansion and growth.

- Support efforts that reduce and provide a path to eliminate the state franchise tax in North Carolina.
- Support policies that overhaul and create a competitive, business-friendly tax code in the Carolinas.
- Support the continued exemption of business inputs.
- Maintain competitive and fair property tax rates.

Priority #3: Maintain a high quality of life in the Carolinas

- Prioritize public safety throughout the region so that all individuals can thrive in their personal and professional pursuits.
- Support policies that promote efficiency and modernization in the criminal justice system.
- Advocate for increased pay for judicial and legal personnel in the criminal justice system and law enforcement officers, and greater resources intended to improve public safety.
- Support policies and regulations that curb violence in the workplace and protect employees and customers, promoting public safety in our communities.
- Support policies that encourage cultural assets, travel, professional sports, events, and other things that make the Charlotte Region attractive for economic development and tourism.
- Promote Central Piedmont's Law and Public Safety program and new training facility to build a pipeline of local residents who are trained in the various fields of public safety.
- Advocate for expanding mental health support for individuals in crisis, enabling law enforcement officers to focus resources more effectively by directing behavioral and mental health-related situations to appropriate care.
- Support policies that appropriately adjudicate quality-of-life violations, including addressing repeat offenders, to improve residents' quality of life and expand capacity of existing law enforcement officers.

Economic Empowerment

The Charlotte Regional Business Alliance® enthusiastically collaborates to promote and advance the Charlotte Region, creating opportunity, economic growth, and prosperity for all. Through our convenings and programs, we seek to make social capital available to small business owners and entrepreneurs. The CLT Alliance influences and informs economic and social policies to ensure the highest quality of life in the region. The Charlotte Region comprises fifteen counties in two states, with businesses operating in urban, suburban, and rural environments. Ensuring economic opportunity is available to all businesses and residents in the region is a key driver for the CLT Alliance.

Priority #1: Provide economic opportunity for all

- Ensure affordable and workforce housing is available to accommodate population growth and community needs, such as aging in place, while supporting participation in rental assistance programs.
- Support policies that reduce regulatory burdens on housing providers, collaborate with local municipalities and the development community to identify other mechanisms to streamline more housing development at all levels, including workforce housing.
- Support innovative market solutions, including adaptive re-use of buildings to help meet housing demand.
- Advocate for policies that address childcare funding gaps and ensure access to safe, reliable childcare services for families in the workforce.
- Support efforts to improve access to capital, especially for small businesses and entrepreneurs from diverse or marginalized communities.

Priority #2: Support access to healthcare

- Protect and strengthen states' Medicaid programs by safeguarding the State Directed Payment (SDP) program at the federal level and ensuring successful implementation of Medicaid programs through policies that maintain operational efficiency, provider participation, and financial sustainability.
- Promote efforts to ensure healthcare accessibility and affordability for individuals and employers to improve the physical and mental health of our community and attract and retain a skilled workforce.



- Enhance and expand telehealth by advancing coverage policies, modernizing licensure frameworks, and supporting innovation in virtual care technologies. Build on existing successful models, such as Hospital at Home, to increase access to high-quality care for patients in rural, underserved, and urban communities, ensuring telehealth is a reliable option statewide.
- Support innovation and research and development investments in the region, including the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), and expand clinical trial infrastructure and partnerships to attract groundbreaking research and improve patient access to cutting-edge treatments.
- Advocate for streamlined regulatory processes that allow easier entry into the workforce for the talent pipeline, including in health care and other in-demand fields.

Talent & Workforce Development

Attracting and retaining talented workers is critical to the Charlotte Region's continued growth. From leading colleges, universities, and community colleges to the region's K-12 schools, the business community is committed to supporting a world-class education system that prepares the workforce of tomorrow. Education institutions and employers must continue to collaborate to ensure that classroom learning is calibrated to workplace needs. Appropriate investments must be made to ensure education institutions at all levels have the resources needed to achieve success for students and employers.

Priority #1: Innovatively address workforce shortages for employers in the Charlotte Region

- Invest in targeted research innovations at UNC Charlotte, USC Lancaster, Johnson C. Smith, Winthrop, and all four-year colleges and universities and Community Colleges to focus on infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, energy, data analytics, automation and AI, cybersecurity, life sciences, optoelectronics, electric vehicles and other fields to assist industries in economic recovery and health-related discoveries.
- Support second-chance hiring to advance equity and meet the workforce needs of employers.
- Support economic and wage policies that encourage financial stability and economic mobility.
- Increase program and degree capacity and workforce training opportunities for in-demand careers.
- Promote policies that support military families in the Carolinas. This includes streamlined professional licensing, in-state tuition for spouses and children of military families, and continued support for hiring of and expansion of job training opportunities for veterans and reservists.
- Support immigration policy and regulatory processes that contribute to talent pool growth in high-demand fields.
- Support mental health coverage and funding for all populations, including members of the workforce in need of services that create stability and certainty in their work-life balance.

Priority #2: Support the mission of higher education institutions and K-12 schools in educating students

- Support education and workforce development funding that meets the needs of students, workers, and employers, including skilled trades and apprenticeships, and ensure universal access to the population of North Carolina
- Continue ongoing support for UNC Charlotte, the region's only R1 research university, as it scales its research initiatives to drive innovation and economic prosperity throughout the region.
- Support funding for UNC Charlotte and Central Piedmont's growing enrollment.
- Support ongoing investment in compensation for education personnel from pre-K through higher education, including funding to address teacher shortages and equitable teacher funding supplements across all counties.
- Support efforts to reform K-12, community colleges and universities to allow for local flexibility in items such as managing budget issues; recruiting, retaining, and promoting the best talent; and creating innovation for academic success.
- Support the continued funding of classroom enrollment growth in early childhood programs, pre-K, K-12, community colleges and public universities to meet the demand for talent in the Charlotte Region.
- Support policies that better connect businesses and job seekers and efficiently deploy skills development programs.

Transportation & Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a leading factor impacting business growth in the Charlotte Region. To sustain the growth experienced in the region in recent years, the foundational building blocks of infrastructure – roads and bridges, water, sewer, electricity, gas, and broadband – must be delivered to businesses and consumers in an affordable and efficient way. Appropriate levels of funding must be maintained to ensure the continued usefulness of the region’s infrastructure. This includes supporting funding for diverse mobility options throughout the region and continued investment in critical infrastructure such as Charlotte Douglas International Airport, one of the region’s leading economic development assets. All investment should be made through an equity lens, ensuring that all residents have mobility options to suit their needs.

Priority #1: Support funding of critical infrastructure projects throughout the region

- Be the voice of business by advocating for allocation of state and federal funding for significant projects in the Charlotte Region.
- Advocate for a modernized transportation funding structure, including the Strategic Transportation Investment Program to improve our quality of life and meet the demands of a growing state in an increasingly competitive business environment.
- Support legislation around the weather radar gaps in the Charlotte Region. The region’s closest National Weather Service (NWS) radar station with the most current technology is nearly 100 miles away, meaning later detection of natural disasters that affect the region.

Priority #2: Modernize the Charlotte Region’s transportation network and infrastructure-related policies

- Increase alternative methods of delivering critical infrastructure, including transportation projects, by expanding the utilization of reimbursement agreements.
- Support Charlotte Water in requests to maintain our current and future infrastructure and water and sewer levels at a capacity to accommodate our growing business population.
- Support smart policies and regulations for next generation personal and commercial mobility systems.



- Support universities and private businesses partnering to find innovative solutions to meet the region's infrastructure needs.
- Support policies to increase the region's ability to support electric vehicle and semiconductor supply chains and efforts to solidify the Carolinas as a leader in battery and semiconductor production.
- Establish an inland port along the I-77 corridor in South Carolina and support existing facilities, including the Ports of Wilmington and Charleston to promote economic growth in the Carolinas.
- Actively engage with the Metropolitan Public Transportation Authority to ensure a clear line of communication between the business community and the appointed board.

Priority #3: Support existing frameworks that deliver affordable and reliable services

- Support legislative action to reduce carbon emissions, modernize the grid, and keep energy prices as affordable as possible.
- Support policies that promote private sector investment in next generation broadband, 5G technologies, and infrastructure.
- Support cybersecurity improvements critical to accelerating our 21st century economy for the Charlotte Region.

Priority #4: Support the aviation industry throughout the Charlotte Region

- Promote modernization of technologies and procedures that advance efficiencies in the airspace and national aviation system, including air traffic control capabilities, airport infrastructure, noise compatibility updates, and policies addressing commercial spaceflight and unmanned aircraft; support legislation that creates community college and university training programs associated with these innovations, through program and infrastructure funding
- Support CLT's applications for federal and state infrastructure funding.
- Continue the low-cost, efficient business model that has helped make CLT into one of the most successful airports in the world.
- Support the permanent extension of the jet fuel sales tax exemption in North Carolina.
- Promote research, development, and production incentives to accelerate the use of sustainable aviation fuel.
- Support the North Carolina Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding formula for capital improvements at the State's commercial service airports.
- Support UNC Charlotte's AIR Institute research partnership with Charlotte Douglas International Airport to drive innovative research projects.