Every year, the North Carolina Department of Commerce assigns each county a tier designation and ranks the state’s 100 counties based on economic well-being. The 41 most distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 39 most distressed as Tier 2 and the 20 least distressed as Tier 3. The Department of Commerce incorporates the tier system into many of its incentive programs to encourage economic activity in less prosperous areas of the state. For more information about county tier designations, visit the North Carolina Department of Commerce’s website.