

What we are hearing in Johnston

Report back from Down Home North Carolina



**AS GROWTH OCCURS, WE
NEED TO MAKE SURE IT
WORKS FOR ALL OF US.**

Listening session attendee

**WE CAN ONLY DO BETTER IF WE GET MORE FUNDING.
WE'VE ALWAYS HAD A REALLY GOOD REPUTATION FOR
OUR SCHOOLS, AND I'D REALLY LIKE FOR THAT TO
CONTINUE.**

A parent at a school board event

10,000 Conversations

We can't build power unless we know what people want and what people need. That's why Down Home is having 10,000 conversations this year across rural North Carolina, including right here in Johnston County. We've been knocking on doors and asking people about what needs to change to make our towns better for poor and working people like us. These conversations, this information, and people will guide our work here as we grow our new chapter.

Why JoCo?

Down Home works to build power with poor and working people in small towns and rural counties. Why? Because these are the places that matter to us and, because most of our state is rural, matter for North Carolina.

Johnston County has both suburbanizing and very rural places. JoCo is changing rapidly and we need to make sure that poor and working people have a seat at the table as decisions about their hometowns are being made. We need to come together across race to get policies and wins that our families need to survive and thrive.



What we are hearing in JoCo



Over the spring of 2022, Down Home spoke with Johnston County residents at street festivals, organized listening sessions, and in front porch conversations. Some common concerns and themes emerged from these conversations.

What worries you?

Several themes emerged when we asked local folks "What keeps you up at night?"

- The cost of healthcare and access to healthcare
- The quality and fair funding of public schools
- The lack of quality public transportation in the county

Who is responsible?

We asked participants "Who do you think is responsible for these problems?" The most common responses were:

- Rich and powerful people
- Local government
- The state government
- Career politicians

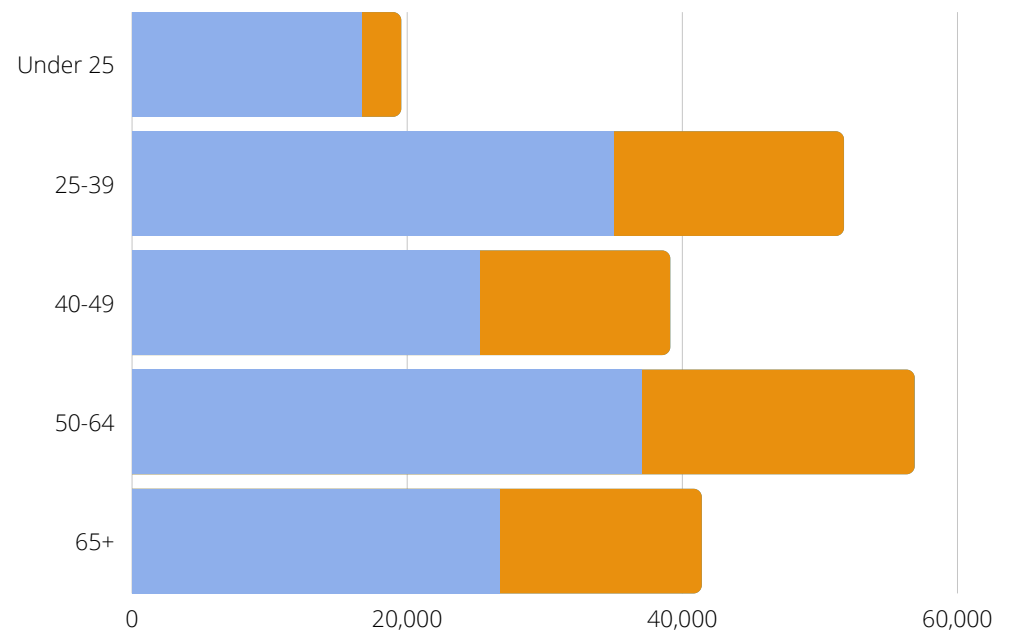
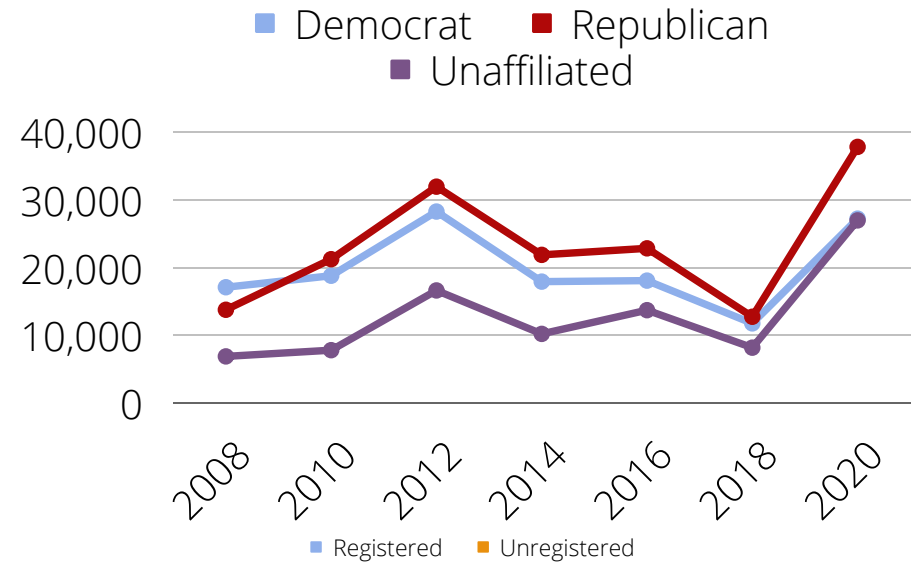
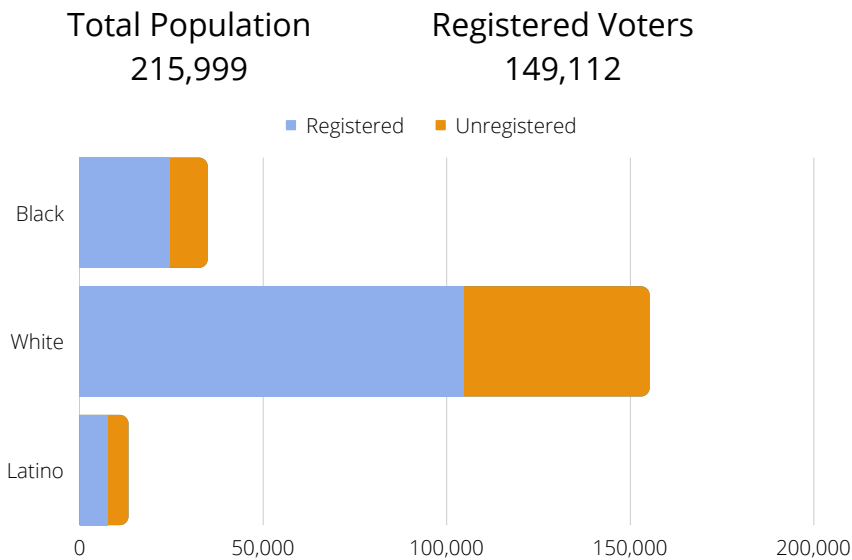
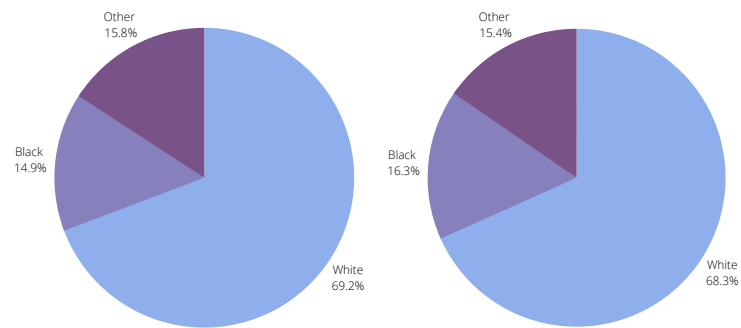
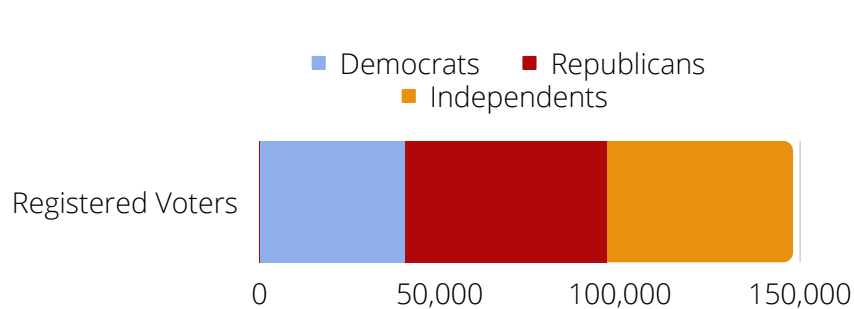
What should we do?

Finally, we asked what they thought we should do about these concerns and two major themes emerged:

- Take community or collective action
- Work to provide better public services



The electoral landscape in Johnston



How do we build power in Johnston?



1

We work together. We build a multiracial, working class chapter that rejects dog whistle and divisive politics. We are powerful when we work together, not apart.



2

We endorse candidates. Members research, interview, and vote on who to endorse in elections. Once those endorsements are made, we all throw our work and weight behind them.



3

We turnout voters. We mobilize together to engage poor and working people in our county and make sure they know what is at stake. We work as a collective force to hold those we elected accountable to our needs.



4

We organize. Nothing happens without organizing. We organize around local issues that our neighbors tell us matter to them, helping everyone see our collective power to make change.