Buncombe County

NC goal: 2 million by 2030
2020 County Attainment Profile

Prosperity Zone sub-region
Peer County Type: Suburban
Local Education Agencies: 2
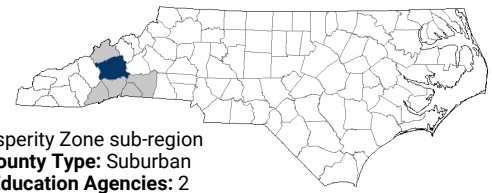
INTRODUCTION

From birth to career, there are many opportunities to develop strategies and interventions to increase attainment and improve workforce alignment. Below are some key areas and indicators that highlight where interventions may be possible to improve overall educational attainment outcomes.

COUNTY OVERVIEW

Buncombe County is in the **Asheville** Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 16 suburban counties in NC.

Overall, 13% of 25-44-year-olds in Buncombe County have earned a master's degree or higher as their highest degree; 28% have a bachelor's degree; 9% have an associate degree; 21% have some college, no degree; 20% have a high school diploma; and 9% have less than a high school diploma.
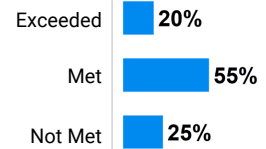
2018 Population	261,065
2030 Population	296,961
K-12 Students (2019)	
Traditional Schools	27,741
Charter/Private/Home	10,541
Median Household Income	$53,960
Child Poverty Rate	17%
Households with Broadband	81%

Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8

High-quality early learning and strong academic progress in early years helps prepare children for future success.

Buncombe County has 50 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, 4 or 8% were classified as low performing in 2019.

How students in Buncombe County traditional public schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, Buncombe County needs:

• **473 more eligible 4-year-olds** enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 35%).
• **3,154 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 48%).
• **5,356 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 44%).

Percent of Buncombe County schools by academic growth status, 2019

Exceeded	**20%**
Met	**55%**
Not Met	**25%**

Ready for College & Career

High school completion is a crucial step on the pathway to postsecondary success or the beginnings of a career. Activities that prepare students to navigate the transition to postsecondary include gaining experience in college-level coursework and applying for financial assistance.

To meet state goals, Buncombe County needs:

• **181 more 9th graders** to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 87%).
• **454 more seniors** to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 57%).
• **767 more students** to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 14%).

1,635 students took at least one AP course (19%) versus 17% of peer counties.

1,838 students participated in Career & College Promise programs (21%) versus 12% of peer counties.

Students in Buncombe County completed **1,280 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Architecture and Construction.

Postsecondary Access and Success

These metrics capture student progression and educational attainment from high school graduation to postsecondary completion. They indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of Buncombe County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

Buncombe County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 292:1.

Among Buncombe County high school graduates:

• **58% of graduates** enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 62% of peer counties.
• **79% of students** who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% of peer counties.
• **58% of students** who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 54% of peer counties.

In your Prosperity Zone sub-region, 2018-19:

553 individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program.

3,207 Basic Skills enrollments at NC community colleges.

22,514 Continuing Education enrollments at NC community colleges.

Labor Market Outcomes

Lack of technical skills and lack of education are among the primary reasons why NC employers struggle to fill vacancies. These metrics capture labor market outcomes among recent graduates, the alignment between postsecondary degree production and labor market demand, and future job demands.

6.9% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 6.8% of peer counties.

In your Prosperity Zone sub-region:

Public postsecondary institutions graduate **2,836 students per year.** After 5 years, 69% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of $33,116.

71% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gaps are: **Health Science** (all levels); **Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** (below bachelor's); and **Finance** (bachelor's).

There are **255,306 job openings** projected between 2017-2026. The top 3 in demand jobs with median wages of $50,000 or more are: 1) **Registered Nurses**; 2) **General and Operations Managers**; 3) **Sales Representatives, Services, All Other**.

Opportunities for Growth

Compared to suburban counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Buncombe County to improve future attainment outcomes.

NC Pre-K Enrollment

35% of Buncombe County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the suburban county average of 44%.

Transition to Postsecondary

58% of Buncombe County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the suburban county average of 62%.

High School Graduation

87% of Buncombe County 9th graders complete high school in 4 years or less, below the suburban county average of 88%.

Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region

Institution Name	Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18	Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years
Total Enrollments	**23,862**	**65%**
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College	10,492	53%
University of North Carolina at Asheville	4,366	89%
Blue Ridge Community College	2,812	48%
Isothermal Community College	2,662	58%
Mars Hill University	1,343	82%
Montreat College	845	71%
Brevard College	698	87%
Warren Wilson College	644	84%

Notes:
Enrollments reflect degree- or credential-seeking undergraduate enrollments. The graduate or transfer rate is drawn from IPEDS and represents the share of students who either graduate with a degree or credential from the institution or transfer to another institution within 8 years. The 8-year outcome is the only measure that includes information on transfer out.
Detailed data guidance is provided at http://go.unc.edu/countydata

Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: Community Schools

Working with Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools and a network of more than 50 local service providers, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County is organizing resources that will support the health, education and financial stability of the whole family and neighboring community. By using our local middle schools as a district-wide hub for services, we can find new ways to address the needs of the community.

We identified this example of an emerging cross-sector promising practice in partnership with local leaders. If you have additional examples you'd like to share with myFutureNC, please respond to this short survey.

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit:

dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/

ABOUT CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY

Located within the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, we use data and other available research to help you put a face or a story on the population-level changes facing your community. Our analysts provide a full array of demographic data and research services to inform decision making, evaluation, and policy across North Carolina, where we serve organizations and people in all 100 counties.

ncdemography.org
demography@unc.edu
@ncdemography

ABOUT MYFUTURENC

MyFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit organization focused on educational attainment and is the result of cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government. Our mission is to prepare North Carolina for the future by empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and ensuring our economic viability in a global economy.

myfuturenc.org
facebook.com/myfuturenc
@myFutureNC

CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY   myFUTURENC 2 million by 2030.   John M Belk Endowment ELEVATE THROUGH EDUCATION   UNC | CAROLINA POPULATION CENTER