

Graham County

NC goal: 2 million by 2030
2020 County Attainment Profile



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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

Graham County is in the **Waynesville-Franklin** Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 50 rural non-metro counties in NC.

Overall, 6% of 25-44-year-olds in Graham County have earned a master's degree or higher as their highest degree; 10% have a bachelor's degree; 13% have an associate degree; 27% have some college, no degree; 33% have a high school diploma; and 10% have less than a high school diploma.

2018 Population	8,686
2030 Population	8,686
K-12 Students (2019)	
Traditional Schools	1,093
Charter/Private/Home	211
Median Household Income	\$39,502
Child Poverty Rate	26%
Households with Broadband	50%

Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8

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

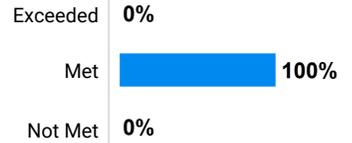
Graham County has 3 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, none were classified as low performing in 2019.

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

To meet state goals, Graham County needs:

- **13 more eligible 4-year-olds** enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 53%).
- **173 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 38%).
- **276 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 30%).

Percent of Graham County schools by academic growth status, 2019

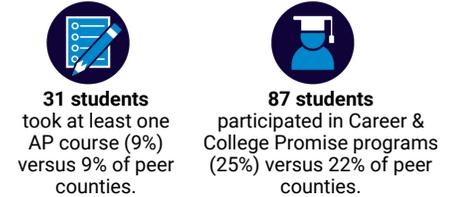


Ready for College & Career

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, Graham County needs:

- **9 more 9th graders** to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 84%).
- **8 more seniors** to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 67%).
- **140 more students** to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 23%).



Students in Graham County completed **35 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Hospitality & Tourism; and Manufacturing.

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 Graham County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

Graham County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 364:1.

Among Graham County high school graduates:

- **51% of graduates** enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% of peer counties.
- **75% of students** who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% of peer counties.
- **50% of students** who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 49% of peer counties.

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



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.

17.7% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 8.9% of peer counties.

In your Prosperity Zone sub-region:

Public postsecondary institutions graduate **3,691 students per year**. After 5 years, 70% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of \$39,941.

80% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gap is: **Health Science** (above bachelor's).

There are **81,375 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) **First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers**.

Opportunities for Growth

Compared to rural non-metro counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Graham County to improve future attainment outcomes.



NC Pre-K Enrollment

53% of Graham County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural non-metro county average of 64%.



Disconnected Youth

18% of Graham County youth ages 16-19 are not working and not in school, above the rural non-metro county average of 9%.



Chronic Absenteeism

23% of Graham County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural non-metro county average of 17%.

Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region

Institution Name	Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18	Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years
Total Enrollments	17,345	74%
Western Carolina University	10,449	88%
Southwestern Community College	3,262	62%
Haywood Community College	2,223	56%
Tri-County Community College	1,411	56%

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: EmPOWERing Mountain Food Systems

This three-year project is funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and created in partnership by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems and NC State Extension. The project supports farm and food businesses by providing educational programs related to business development and financial services, including grants, support from loans and advanced business consulting services including funding farmer equipment and supplies.

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.

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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.

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