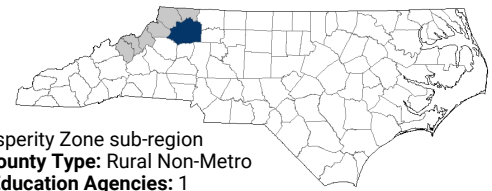


Wilkes County

NC goal: 2 million by 2030
2020 County Attainment Profile



Updated: Aug 04 2021

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

Wilkes County is in the **Boone-Wilkesboro** Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 50 rural non-metro counties in NC.

Overall, 5% of 25-44-year-olds in Wilkes County have earned a master's degree or higher as their highest degree; 12% have a bachelor's degree; 15% have an associate degree; 24% have some college, no degree; 28% have a high school diploma; and 16% have less than a high school diploma.

2018 Population	69,913
2030 Population	73,377
K-12 Students (2019)	
Traditional Schools	8,972
Charter/Private/Home	1,850
Median Household Income	\$44,080
Child Poverty Rate	32%
Households with Broadband	71%

Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8

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

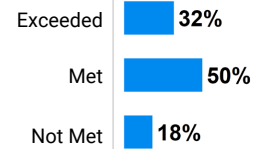
Wilkes County has 22 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, none were classified as low performing in 2019.

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

To meet state goals, Wilkes County needs:

- **Wilkes County has met the goal for eligible 4-year-olds** enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 106%).
- **1,174 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 45%).
- **1,902 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 41%).

Percent of Wilkes County schools by academic growth status, 2019

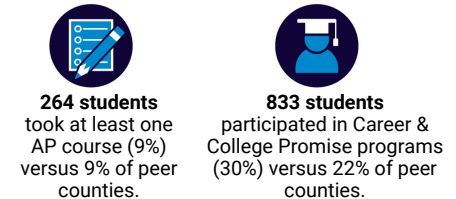


Ready for College & Career

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, Wilkes County needs:

- **53 more 9th graders** to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 88%).
- **143 more seniors** to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 57%).
- **53 more students** to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 12%).



Students in Wilkes County completed **525 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Manufacturing.

Postsecondary Access and Success

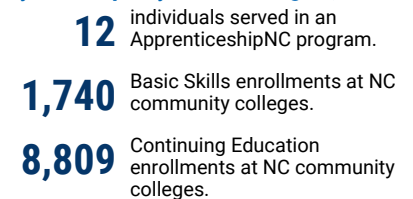
These metrics capture student progression and educational attainment from high school graduation to postsecondary completion. They indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of Wilkes County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

Wilkes County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 320:1.

Among Wilkes County high school graduates:

- **61% of graduates** enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% of peer counties.
- **69% of students** who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% of peer counties.
- **53% 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.

5.7% 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 **5,225 students per year**. After 5 years, 70% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of \$41,744.

72% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gap is: **Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** (below bachelor's).

There are **84,705 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 Wilkes County to improve future attainment outcomes.



First-Year Persistence

69% of Wilkes County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the rural non-metro county average of 73%.



AP Participation

9% of Wilkes County high school students took at least one Advanced Placement exam, below the state average of 17%.



FAFSA Completion

57% of Wilkes County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the state average of 64%.

Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region		
Institution Name	Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18	Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years
Total Enrollments	28,661	75%
Appalachian State University	18,135	91%
Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute	4,636	53%
Wilkes Community College	3,416	54%
Mayland Community College	1,455	55%
Lees-McRae College	1,019	66%

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: Wilkes Community College Student Advising

All Wilkes Community College students are assigned an ACA Advisor and a Faculty Mentor upon admission to the College. ACA Advisors help new students successfully transition to college. They help identify or clarify career interests; create an academic plan; recommend academic and campus resources; and answer questions about degrees. Faculty Mentors provide information about job opportunities within a student’s career and/or assist transfer students as they navigate their best path to a university. Faculty Mentors make sure graduating students understand their next step.




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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