

Alexander County



Hickory
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1
Charter Schools: 0

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Alexander County Attainment Goal: 4,753 (48%)

Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 37,198
2020 Census: 36,444
Change: -754

Growth Rate

-2.0% County vs. **9.5%** State

\$53,523
Median Household Income (2020)

19.2%
Child Poverty Rate (2020)

87%
Households with Broadband (2020)

81%
Home Owners (2020)

74%
Voter Registration Rate (2021)

4.2%
Unemployment Rate (2021)

Educational Attainment

Alexander County residents ages 25-44, 2021

No Degree
64.7%
5,517

Have Degree or Credential
35.3%
3,014

Less than high school | High school graduate (including GED) | Some college, no credential | Short-term credential | Associate degree | Bachelor's degree | Graduate or professional degree



Note: Numbers may add to more than 100% due to rounding

Top Opportunities for Growth

These three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Alexander County to improve future attainment outcomes.



NC Pre-K Enrollment

34% of Alexander County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural metro county average of 59%.



Opportunity Youth

16% of Alexander County youth ages 16-24 are not working and not in school, above the rural metro county average of 15%.

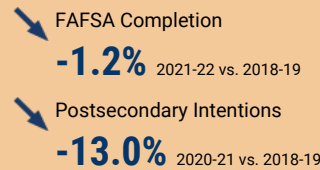
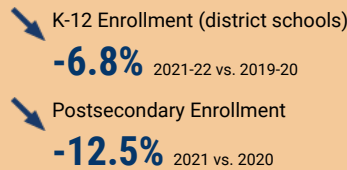


Transition to Postsecondary

52% of Alexander County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the state average of 55%.

Impact of Covid-19 on Education Pipeline

Covid-19 has affected critical transition points along the education continuum.



Data Disruptions

- College-and-Career-Ready in Reading
- College-and-Career-Ready in Math
- Chronic Absenteeism



ncdemography.org

ACADEMIC READINESS

How students in Alexander County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Alexander County needs:

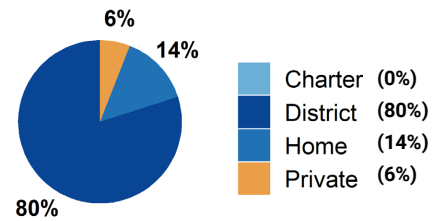
- 34%** of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**; 83 more needed to meet state goal of **75%**. 2022
- 30%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**; 883 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2022
- 37%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**; 1,008 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2022
- 87%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**; 30 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2021
- 14%** of students are **chronically absent from school**; 119 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2021

Alexander County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 298:1 versus 362:1 in peer counties. 2021

School Choice

5,522 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Alexander County in the 2021-22 school year.

Note: This profile focuses on outcomes of students enrolled in district schools.



Career and College Preparation

129 high school students took at least one **AP course (9%)** versus **9%** in peer counties (2021).

147 graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs (45%)** versus **43%** in peer counties (2021).

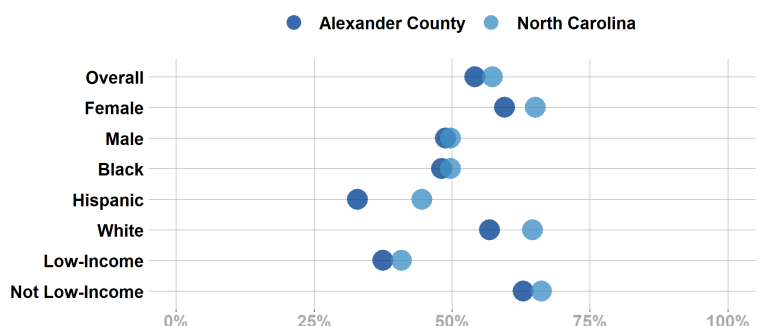
Students in Alexander County completed **264 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Architecture and Construction.

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

- 59%** of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2022; 60 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of **80%**. 2022
<https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/>
- 65%** of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021
- 52%** of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 49% in peer counties. 2021

58% of Alexander County students have **parents with no college degree** (either 2- or 4-year) versus 58% in peer counties.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Alexander County, 2021



Note: Outcomes for demographic groups with fewer than 10 students are not displayed.

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Success of Alexander County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- **28%** of college-goers attended a **public 4-year college**
 - **18%** of college-goers attended a **private 4-year college**
 - **54%** of college-goers attended a **public 2-year college**
 - **<5%** of college-goers attended a **private 2-year college**
 - **94%** of college-goers attended an **in-state college**
- **78%** of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
 - **64%** of students who enroll **earn a degree or credential** within 6 years versus 57% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

Alexander County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 24** Basic Skills
- 598** Continuing Education
- 717** Curriculum



10% of Alexander County residents have **student loan debt**; 10% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2020

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

70.2%

of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are **aligned with labor market needs**.

Top areas of misalignment:

- Health Science** (bachelor's and below bachelor's)
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** (below bachelor's)
- Business Management & Administration** (bachelor's)

359 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

- 2,139** graduates in 2020
- 80%** of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- \$37,952** annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

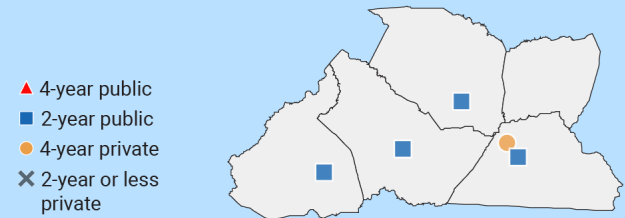
In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 7,184** in Basic Services
- 2,684** in Career Services
- 378** in Education Services



16.3% of young adults ages 16-24 in Alexander County were **not working and not in school** versus **15.2%** in peer counties. 2019

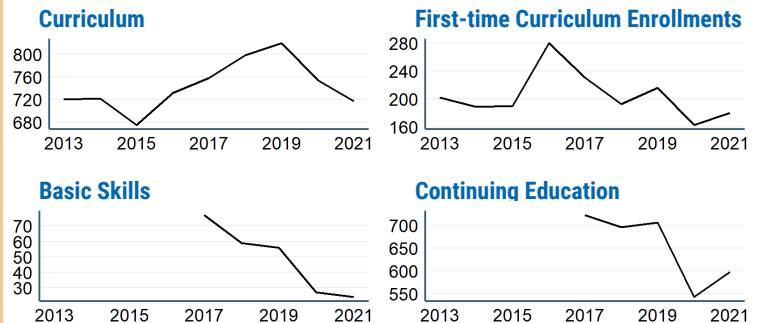
Postsecondary assets in Hickory Prosperity Zone sub-region



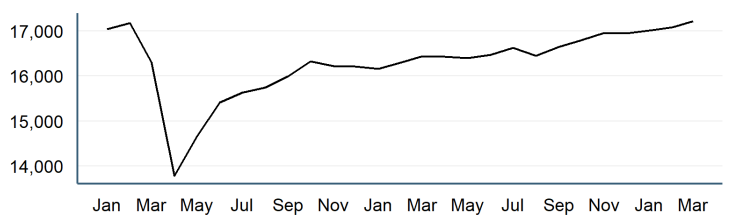
Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

1,578 certificate | **2,135** associate | **352** bachelor's

Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment



Number of Alexander County residents employed, January 2020 to March 2022



Promising Attainment Practices

The new **Promising Attainment Practices Database** is a curated, searchable, and filterable collection of about 250 county, region, and state-level initiatives and programs that directly address various components of the state's attainment challenge. The Database allows local and regional initiative leaders and other stakeholders to identify groups across the state who are developing or operating initiatives designed to boost attainment.

Follow link to discover how Alexander County has been meeting local needs:

https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Alexander

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

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