

# Buncombe County



Asheville  
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region  
Peer County Type: Suburban  
Local Education Agencies: 2  
Charter Schools: 6

**2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)**  
**2030 Proposed Buncombe County Attainment Goal: 57,403 (74%)**

## Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 238,318  
2020 Census: 269,452  
Change: 31,134

## Growth Rate

**13.1%** vs. **9.5%**  
County State

**\$66,156**  
Median Household Income (2020)

**14.1%**  
Child Poverty Rate (2020)

**88%**  
Households with Broadband (2020)

**64%**  
Home Owners (2020)

**85%**  
Voter Registration Rate (2021)

**4.2%**  
Unemployment Rate (2021)

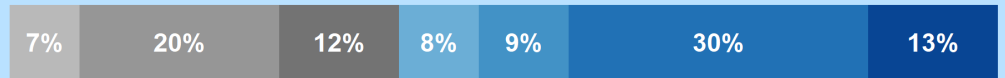
## Educational Attainment

Buncombe County residents ages 25-44, 2021

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

**No Degree**  
**39.9%**  
29,106

**Have Degree or Credential**  
**60.1%**  
43,930



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

## Top Opportunities for Growth

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



### NC Pre-K Enrollment

41% of Buncombe County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the suburban county average of 45%.



### Transition to Postsecondary

51% of Buncombe County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the suburban county average of 55%.

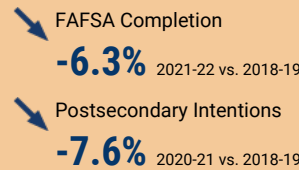
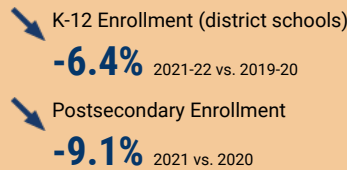


### Chronic Absenteeism

28% of Buncombe County students are chronically absent from school, above the suburban county average of 26%.

## 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](http://ncdemography.org)

## ACADEMIC READINESS

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

To meet state goals, each year Buncombe County needs:

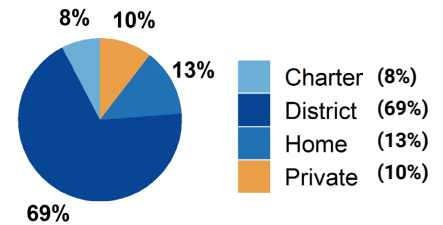
- 41%** of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**; 360 more needed to meet state goal of **75%**. 2022
- 31%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**; 4,824 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2022
- 34%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**; 6,007 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2022
- 91%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**; 97 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2021
- 28%** of students are **chronically absent from school**; 4,313 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2021

Buncombe County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 262:1 versus 336:1 in peer counties. 2021

## School Choice

38,187 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Buncombe County in the 2021-22 school year.

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



## Career and College Preparation

**1,321 high school students** took at least one **AP course (16%)** versus **15%** in peer counties (2021).

**1,002 graduates** participated in **Career & College Promise programs (50%)** versus **33%** in peer counties (2021).

Students in Buncombe County completed **1,286 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Human Services; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

## COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

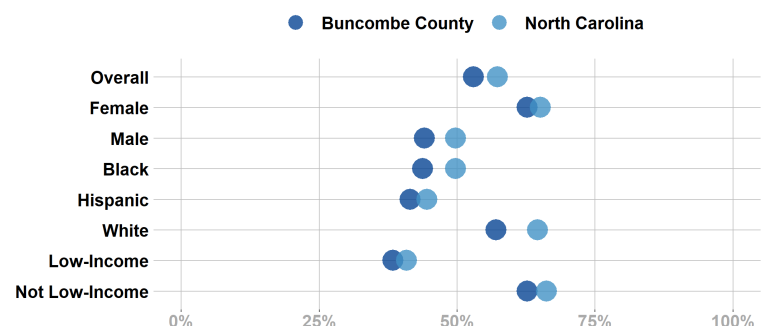
**56%** of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2022; 485 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of **80%**. 2022  
<https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/>

**76%** of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 75% in peer counties. 2021

**51%** of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

**42%** of Buncombe County students have **parents with no college degree** (either 2- or 4-year) versus 49% in peer counties.

## Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Buncombe County, 2021



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

## Success of Buncombe County High School Graduates

### Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- **48%** of college-goers attended a **public 4-year college**
  - **15%** of college-goers attended a **private 4-year college**
  - **36%** of college-goers attended a **public 2-year college**
  - **<5%** of college-goers attended a **private 2-year college**
  - **85%** of college-goers attended an **in-state college**
- **78%** of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 77% in peer counties. 2021
  - **65%** of students who enroll **earn a degree or credential** within 6 years versus 60% in peer counties. 2021

## Adult Learners

### Buncombe County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

**677** Basic Skills  
**3,332** Continuing Education  
**5,098** Curriculum



**14%** of Buncombe County residents have **student loan debt**; **9%** of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2020

## In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

**71.6%**

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

### Top areas of misalignment:

**Health Science** (all levels)  
**Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** (below bachelor's)  
**Finance** (bachelor's)

**636** Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

### UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

**3,023** graduates in 2020  
**69%** of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021  
**\$35,824** annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

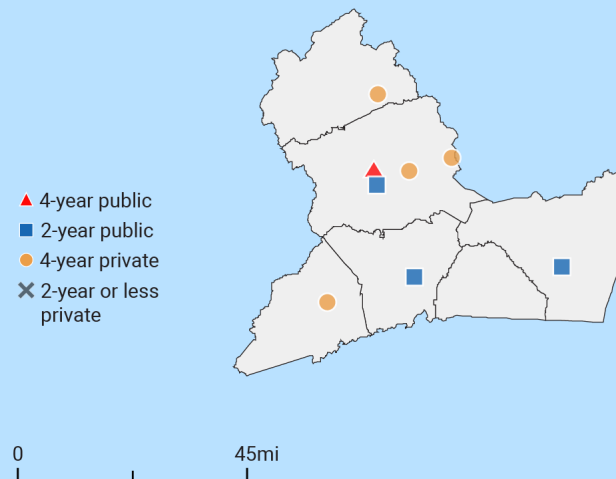
### In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

**7,566** in Basic Services  
**3,523** in Career Services  
**260** in Education Services



**11.5%** of young adults ages 16-24 in Buncombe County were **not working and not in school** versus **11.2%** in peer counties. 2019

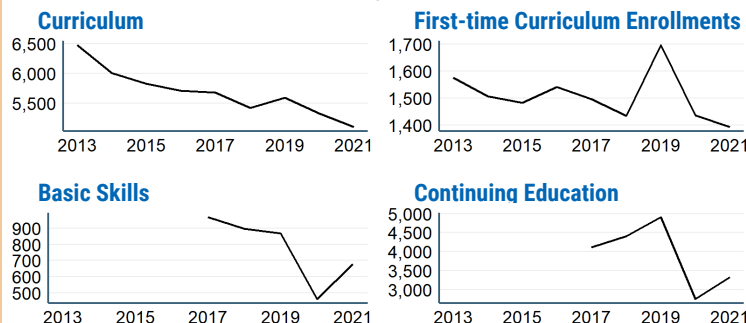
## Postsecondary assets in Asheville Prosperity Zone sub-region



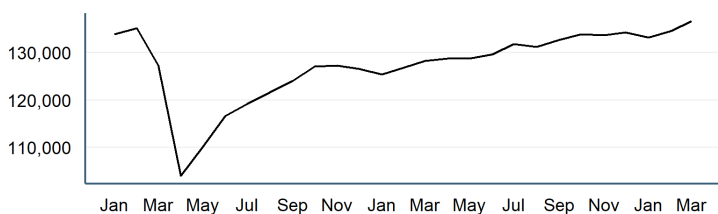
### Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

**1,557** certificate | **1,492** associate | **1,388** bachelor's

## Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment



## Number of Buncombe 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 Buncombe County has been meeting local needs:

[https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt\\_search=Buncombe](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Buncombe)

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

[dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/)