

Cherokee County



Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural Non-Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1
Charter Schools: 1

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Cherokee County Attainment Goal: 4,455 (68%)

Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 27,444
 2020 Census: 28,774
 Change: 1,330

Growth Rate

4.8% County vs. **9.5%** State

\$44,449
 Median Household Income (2020)

24.4%
 Child Poverty Rate (2020)

83%
 Households with Broadband (2020)

82%
 Home Owners (2020)

77%
 Voter Registration Rate (2021)

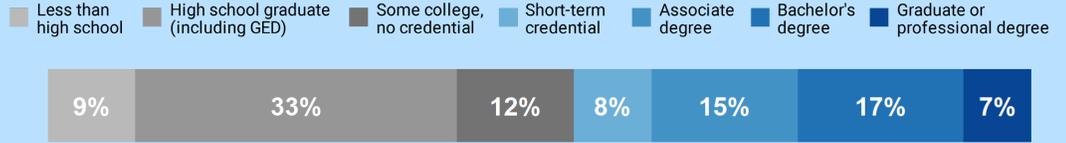
5.0%
 Unemployment Rate (2021)

Educational Attainment

Cherokee County residents ages 25-44, 2021

No Degree
53.4%
 2,822

Have Degree or Credential
46.6%
 2,465



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

Top Opportunities for Growth

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



NC Pre-K Enrollment

54% of Cherokee County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural non-metro county average of 68%.



Chronic Absenteeism

39% of Cherokee County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural non-metro county average of 29%.

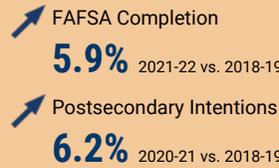


Transition to Postsecondary

51% of Cherokee 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 Cherokee County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Cherokee County needs:

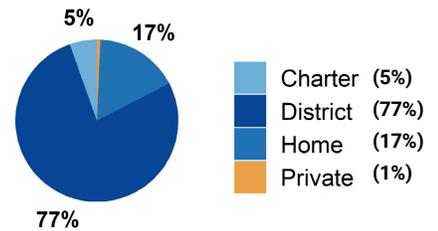
- 54%** of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**; 34 more needed to meet state goal of **75%**. 2022
- 28%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**; 588 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2022
- 28%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**; 757 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2022
- 87%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**; 23 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2021
- 39%** of students are **chronically absent from school**; 789 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2021

Cherokee County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 166:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

School Choice

3,695 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Cherokee County in the 2021-22 school year.

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



Career and College Preparation

13 high school students took at least one **AP course** (<5%) versus **7%** in peer counties (2021).

175 graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs (70%)** versus **49%** in peer counties (2021).

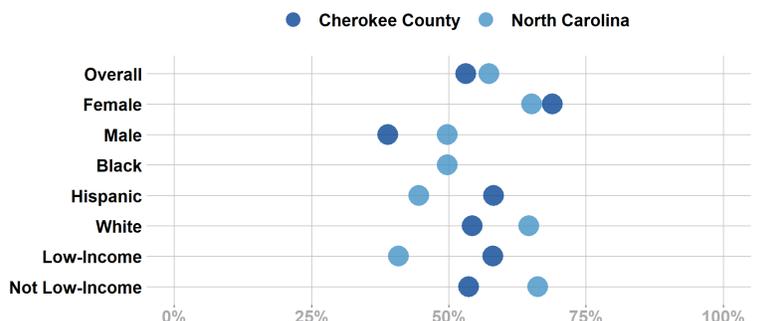
Students in Cherokee County completed **171 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Health Science; and Hospitality & Tourism.

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

- 57%** of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2022; 48 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of **80%**. 2022
<https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/>
- 73%** of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021
- 51%** of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 50% in peer counties. 2021

50% of Cherokee County students have **parents with no college degree** (either 2- or 4-year) versus 59% in peer counties.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Cherokee County, 2021



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

Success of Cherokee County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- 36% of college-goers attended a **public 4-year college**
 - 14% of college-goers attended a **private 4-year college**
 - 50% of college-goers attended a **public 2-year college**
 - <5% of college-goers attended a **private 2-year college**
 - 87% of college-goers attended an **in-state college**
- 74% of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
 - 63% of students who enroll **earn a degree or credential** within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

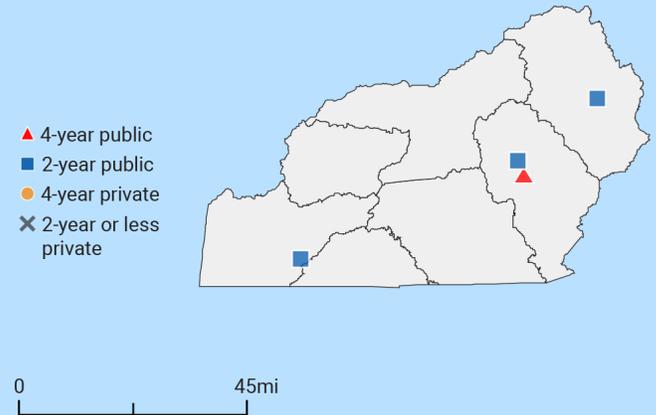
Cherokee County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 71 Basic Skills
- 427 Continuing Education
- 612 Curriculum



9% of Cherokee County residents have **student loan debt**; 18% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2020

Postsecondary assets in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone sub-region



Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

753 certificate | 846 associate | 2,351 bachelor's

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

81.2%

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)
- Education & Training** (above bachelor's)

15 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

- 3,111 graduates in 2020
- 69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- \$41,526 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

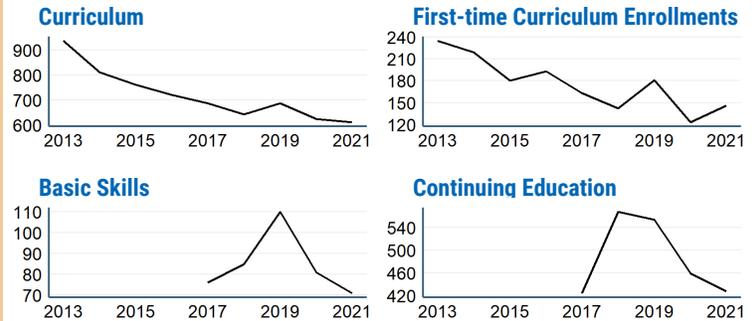
In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 6,126 in Basic Services
- 3,913 in Career Services
- 212 in Education Services

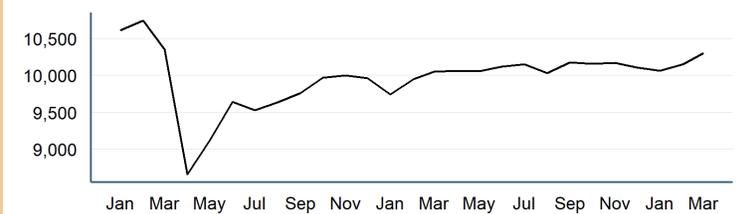


7.2% of young adults ages 16-24 in Cherokee County were **not working and not in school** versus 15.2% in peer counties. 2019

Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment



Number of Cherokee 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 Cherokee County has been meeting local needs:

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

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

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