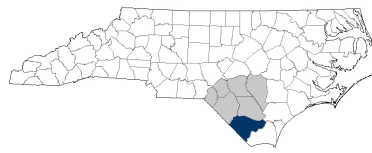


# Columbus County



Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone Sub-Region  
**Peer County Type:** Rural Non-Metro  
**Local Education Agencies:** 2  
**Charter Schools:** 2

**2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)**  
**2030 Proposed Columbus County Attainment Goal: 5,798 (40%)**

## Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 58,098  
 2020 Census: 50,623  
 Change: -7,475

## Growth Rate

**-12.9%** vs. **9.5%**  
 County State

**\$40,712**  
 Median Household Income (2020)

**28.9%**  
 Child Poverty Rate (2020)

**81%**  
 Households with Broadband (2020)

**72%**  
 Home Owners (2020)

**71%**  
 Voter Registration Rate (2021)

**6.3%**  
 Unemployment Rate (2021)

## Educational Attainment

Columbus County residents ages 25-44, 2021

**No Degree**  
**69.2%**  
 8,464

**Have Degree or Credential**  
**30.8%**  
 3,765

■ 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 Columbus County to improve future attainment outcomes.



### Postsecondary Completion

48% of Columbus County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary earn a degree or credential within 6 years, below the rural non-metro county average of 55%.



### Opportunity Youth

22% of Columbus County youth ages 16-24 are not working and not in school, above the rural non-metro county average of 15%.

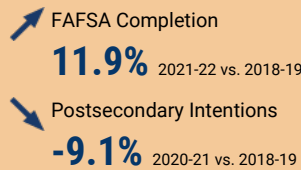
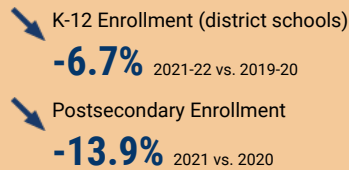


### Reading Performance

20% of Columbus County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Reading, below the rural non-metro county average of 24%.

## 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 Columbus County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Columbus County needs:

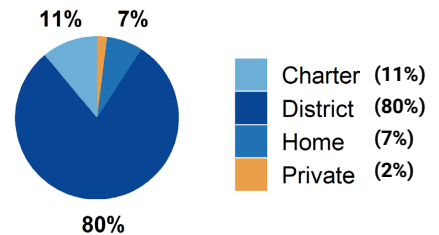
- Columbus County has met the goal for **Pre-K enrollment**. (Goal: **75%**). 2022
- **20%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**; 1,660 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2022
- **23%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**; 1,985 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2022
- **83%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**; 78 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2021
- **25%** of students are **chronically absent from school**; 954 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2021

Columbus County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 353:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

## School Choice

8,865 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Columbus County in the 2021-22 school year.

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



## Career and College Preparation

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

**276 graduates** participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (**50%**) versus **49%** in peer counties (2021).

Students in Columbus County completed **365 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Health Science; and Human Services.

## COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

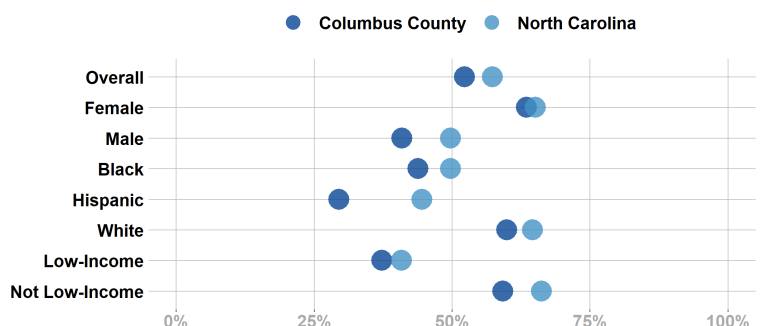
• **59%** of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2022; 112 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of **80%**. 2022  
<https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/>

• **71%** of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021

• **50%** of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 50% in peer counties. 2021

**67%** of Columbus 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 Columbus County, 2021



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

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

## Success of Columbus County High School Graduates

### Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- **35%** of college-goers attended a **public 4-year college**
  - **7%** of college-goers attended a **private 4-year college**
  - **57%** of college-goers attended a **public 2-year college**
  - **<5%** of college-goers attended a **private 2-year college**
  - **95%** of college-goers attended an **in-state college**
- **77%** of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
  - **48%** of students who enroll **earn a degree or credential** within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

## Adult Learners

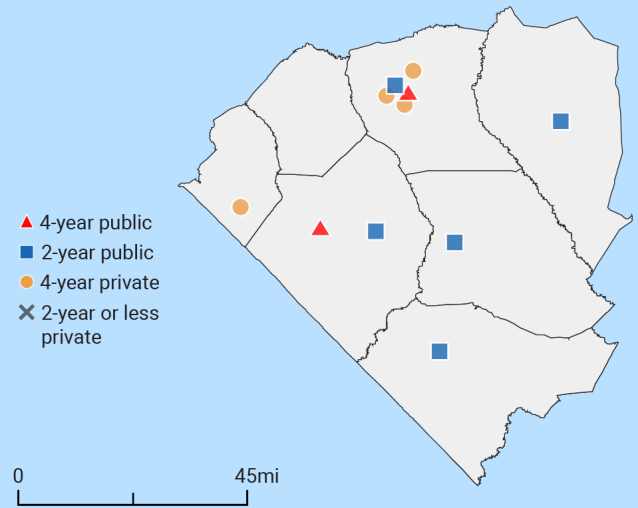
### Columbus County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 244** Basic Skills
- 1,441** Continuing Education
- 1,368** Curriculum



10% of Columbus County residents have **student loan debt**; 7% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2020

## Postsecondary assets in Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone sub-region



### Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

**2,584** certificate | **3,044** associate | **2,900** bachelor's

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

## In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

**80.4%**

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

### Top areas of misalignment:

- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** (below bachelor's)
- Business Management & Administration** (bachelor's)
- Information Technology** (bachelor's)

**1,855** Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

### UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

- 5,664** graduates in 2020
- 56%** of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- \$38,415** annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

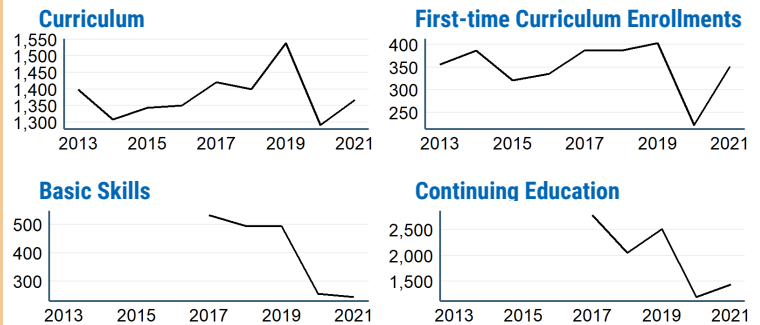
### In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 8,319** in Basic Services
- 4,329** in Career Services
- 501** in Education Services

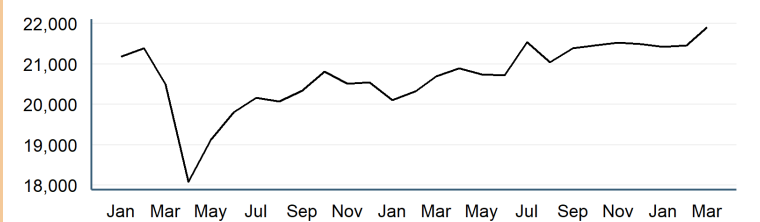


**22.0%** of young adults ages 16-24 in Columbus County were **not working and not in school** versus **15.2%** in peer counties. 2019

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



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

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

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/)