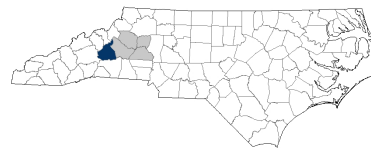


McDowell County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed McDowell County Attainment Goal: 5,871 (50%)



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

Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 44,996
 2020 Census: 44,578
 Change: -418

Growth Rate

-0.9% vs. **9.5%**
 County State

\$47,579
 Median Household Income (2020)

18.8%
 Child Poverty Rate (2020)

84%
 Households with Broadband (2020)

74%
 Home Owners (2020)

70%
 Voter Registration Rate (2021)

4.5%
 Unemployment Rate (2021)

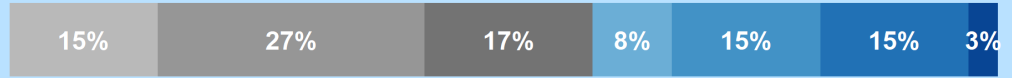
Educational Attainment

McDowell County residents ages 25-44, 2021

No Degree
59.5%
 6,384

Have Degree or Credential
40.5%
 4,341

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 McDowell County to improve future attainment outcomes.



First-Year Persistence

65% of McDowell County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the rural non-metro county average of 73%.



Transition to Postsecondary

43% of McDowell County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the rural non-metro county average of 50%.

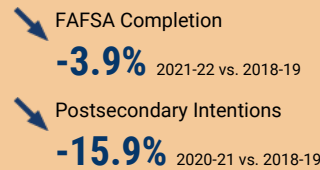
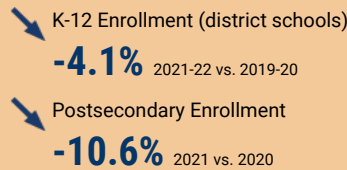


Chronic Absenteeism

33% of McDowell County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural non-metro county average of 29%.

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 McDowell County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year McDowell County needs:

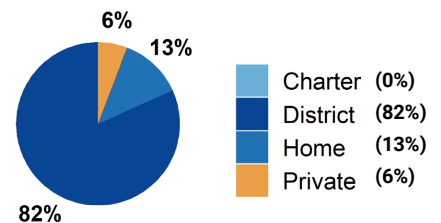
- McDowell County has met the goal for **Pre-K enrollment**. (Goal: **75%**). 2022
- 26%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**; 1,215 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2022
- 29%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**; 1,478 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2022
- 85%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**; 45 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2021
- 33%** of students are **chronically absent from school**; 1,216 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2021

McDowell County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 310:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

School Choice

6,931 total students were enrolled in K-12 in McDowell County in the 2021-22 school year.

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



Career and College Preparation

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

212 graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (58%) versus 49% in peer counties (2021).

Students in McDowell County completed **231 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Arts, Audio/Video Technology, & Communications; Manufacturing; and Health Science.

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

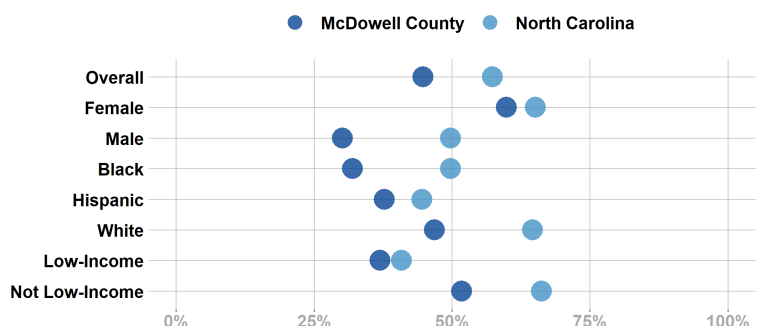
54% of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2022; 74 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of **80%**. 2022
<https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/>

62% of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021

43% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 50% in peer counties. 2021

61% of McDowell 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 McDowell County, 2021



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

Success of McDowell County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- 34% of college-goers attended a **public 4-year college**
 - 12% of college-goers attended a **private 4-year college**
 - 53% of college-goers attended a **public 2-year college**
 - <5% of college-goers attended a **private 2-year college**
 - 92% of college-goers attended an **in-state college**
- 65% of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
 - 59% of students who enroll **earn a degree or credential** within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

McDowell County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

146	Basic Skills
820	Continuing Education
1,290	Curriculum



11% of McDowell County residents have **student loan debt**; 13% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2020

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)

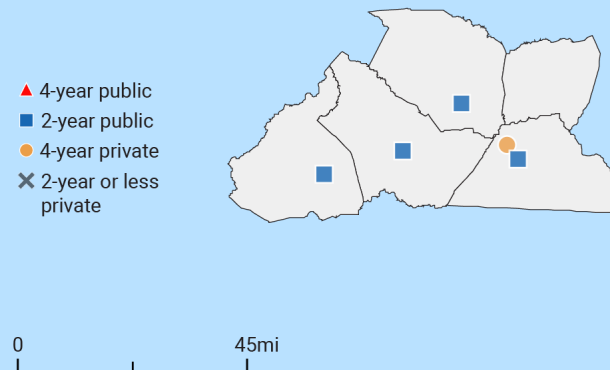
In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 6,325** in Basic Services
- 2,960** in Career Services
- 200** in Education Services



18.1% of young adults ages 16-24 in McDowell County were **not working and not in school** versus 15.2% in peer counties. 2019

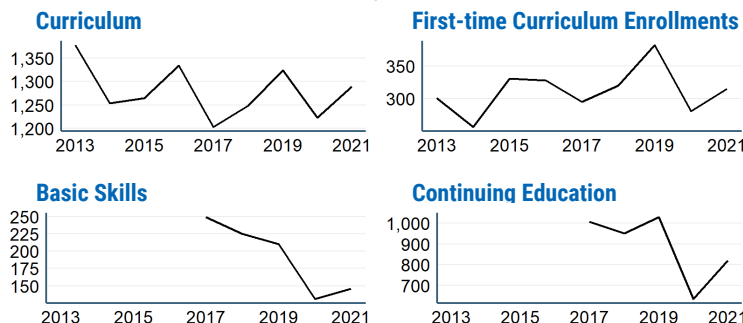
Postsecondary assets in Hickory Prosperity Zone sub-region



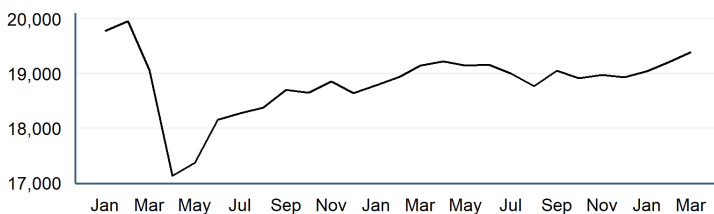
Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

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

Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment



Number of McDowell 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 McDowell County has been meeting local needs:

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

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

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