

Wilkes County



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

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Wilkes County Attainment Goal: 9,337 (54%)

Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 69,340
2020 Census: 65,969
Change: -3,371

Growth Rate

-4.9% County vs. **9.5%** State

\$46,830
Median Household Income (2020)

28.4%
Child Poverty Rate (2020)

85%
Households with Broadband (2020)

74%
Home Owners (2020)

72%
Voter Registration Rate (2021)

4.7%
Unemployment Rate (2021)

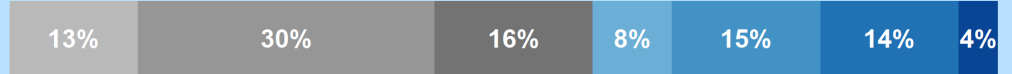
Educational Attainment

Wilkes 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
59.3%
8,708

Have Degree or Credential
40.7%
5,974



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

Top Opportunities for Growth

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



Opportunity Youth

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



Transition to Postsecondary

53% of Wilkes County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the state average of 55%.

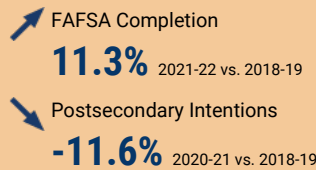
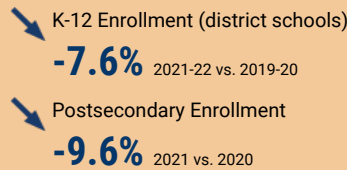


Adult Learners

17% of Wilkes County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the state average of 15%.

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 Wilkes County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Wilkes County needs:

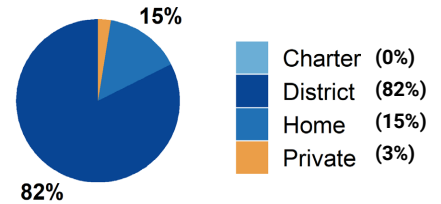
- Wilkes County has met the goal for **Pre-K enrollment**. (Goal: **75%**). 2022
- 31%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**; 1,599 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2022
- 35%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**; 1,930 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2022
- 89%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**; 47 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2021
- 18%** of students are **chronically absent from school**; 556 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2021

Wilkes County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 309:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

School Choice

10,076 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Wilkes County in the 2021-22 school year.

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



Career and College Preparation

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

435 graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (66%) versus 49% in peer counties (2021).

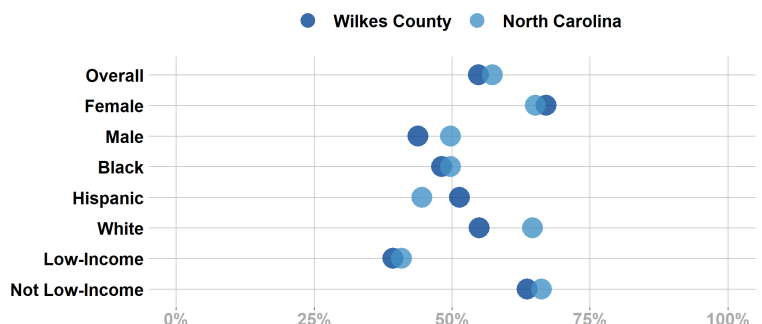
Students in Wilkes County completed **439 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Human Services; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

- 65%** of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2022; 80 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of **80%**. 2022
<https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/>
- 72%** of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021
- 53%** of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 50% in peer counties. 2021

58% of Wilkes 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 Wilkes County, 2021



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

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Success of Wilkes County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- **28%** of college-goers attended a **public 4-year college**
 - **9%** of college-goers attended a **private 4-year college**
 - **63%** 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
 - **59%** of students who enroll **earn a degree or credential** within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

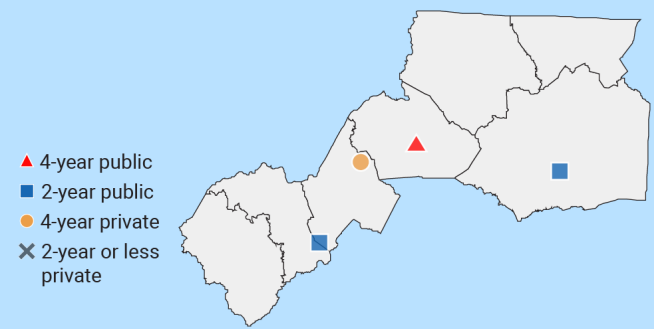
Wilkes County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 211** Basic Skills
- 1,146** Continuing Education
- 1,690** Curriculum



9% of Wilkes County residents have **student loan debt**; 11% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2020

Postsecondary assets in Boone-Wilkesboro Prosperity Zone sub-region



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Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

1,077 certificate | **547** associate | **4,433** bachelor's

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

84.0%

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

Top areas of misalignment:

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

17 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

- 5,202** graduates in 2020
- 69%** of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- \$44,421** annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

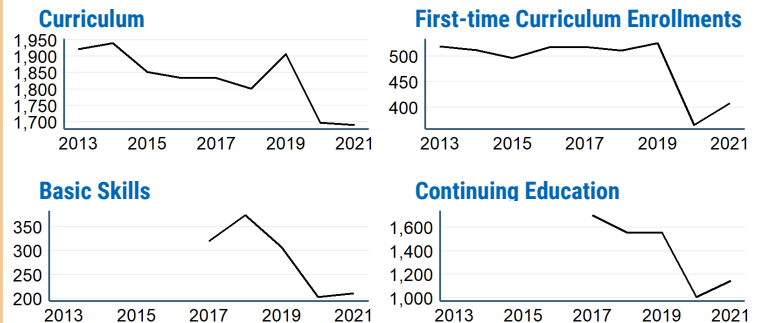
In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 3,616** in Basic Services
- 1,617** in Career Services
- 245** in Education Services

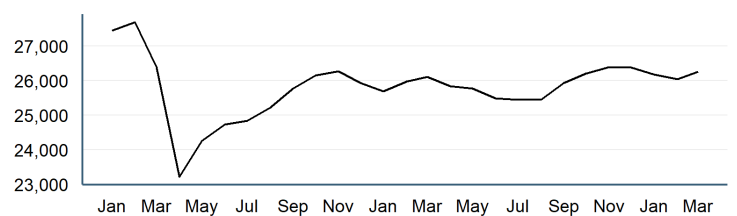


15.5% of young adults ages 16-24 in Wilkes County were **not working and not in school** versus **15.2%** in peer counties. 2019

Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment



Number of Wilkes 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 Wilkes County has been meeting local needs:

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

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

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