

Alexander County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



Hickory
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural - Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1 (2023)
Charter Schools: 0 (2023)

2030 Proposed Alexander County Attainment Goal: 4,753 (Stretch Goal: 4,842)

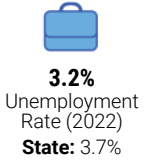
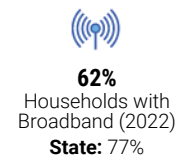
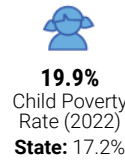
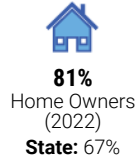
2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 36,440
2022 Estimate: 36,512
Change: 72

Growth Rate

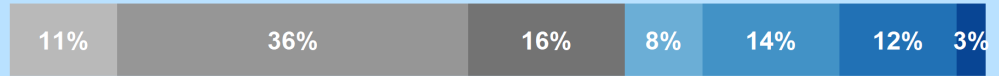
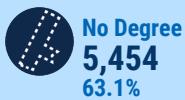
0.2% County vs. 2.5% State



Educational Attainment

Alexander County residents ages 25-44, 2022

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 not add up to 100% due to rounding

Top Opportunities for Growth

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



NC Pre-K Enrollment

35% of Alexander County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural - metro county average of 59%.



Earning College Credit in High School

42% of Alexander County graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs, below the rural - metro county average of 43%. Also, 8% of high school students took at least one AP exam, below the peer county average of 8%.



First-Year Persistence

75% of Alexander County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the state average of 83%.

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 Alexander County has been meeting local needs:

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

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

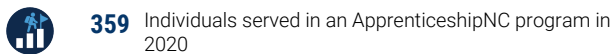
In Hickory Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

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
Business Management & Administration bachelor's
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics below bachelor's



UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

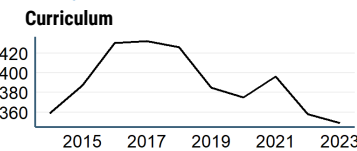
2,139 graduates in 2020
80% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$37,952 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)



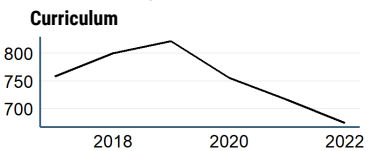
Alexander County is served by:

Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board
Western Piedmont Council of Governments

UNC System College Enrollment



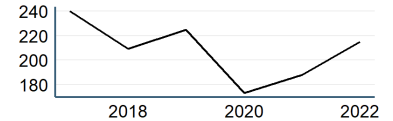
NC Community College Enrollment



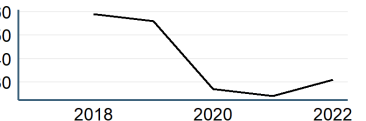
Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Hickory Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	4%
Logisticians	3%
Physician Assistants	3%

First-time Curriculum Enrollments



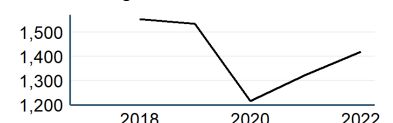
Basic Skills



Top 3 Employers in Alexander County

Employer	Employment Range
Alexander County Schools	500-999
Craftmaster Furniture	500-999
The Mitchell Gold Co	500-999

Continuing Education



POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Adult Learners

Hickory Sub-Prosperity Zone post-secondary enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

- 478 Basic Skills
- 8,660 Continuing Education
- 1,924 Curriculum

8% of Alexander County residents have student loan debt; 9% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2022

Success of Alexander County High School Graduates

- 75% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 79% in peer counties. 2022
- 62% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years versus 56% in peer counties. 2022

Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- 953 of all college-goers attended Catawba Valley CC
- 133 of all college-goers attended Mitchell CC
- 103 of all college-goers attended Caldwell CC and TI

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

- 58% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 75 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 70% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 68% in peer counties. 2022
- 52% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 51% in peer counties. 2022

56% of Alexander County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 55% in peer counties.

ACADEMIC READINESS

How students in Alexander County traditional schools are doing:

- 35% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program, compared to 53% statewide; 78 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. 2023
- 30% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 1,128 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 39% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 941 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 85% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 43 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 21% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 27% statewide; 470 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Alexander County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 269:1 versus 362:1 in peer counties. 2023

3% of students drop out of high school (40 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2023

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

1,720 certificate | 2,199 associate | 327 bachelor's

Postsecondary assets in Hickory Prosperity Zone sub-region

Public, 4-year or above

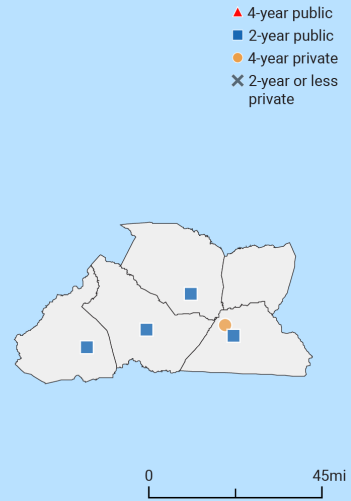
Public, 2-year

Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Community College, McDowell Technical Community College, Western Piedmont Community College

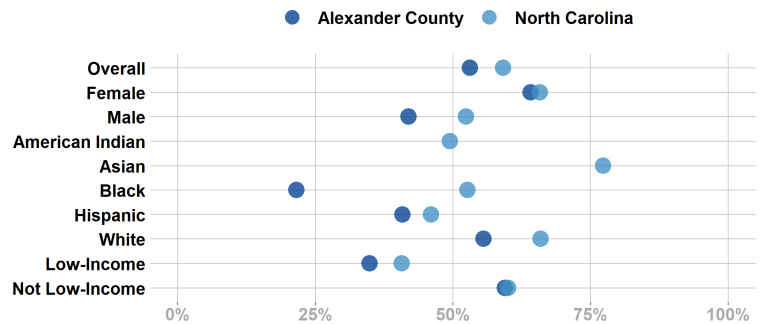
Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above

Lenoir-Rhyne University

Private not-for-profit, 2-year



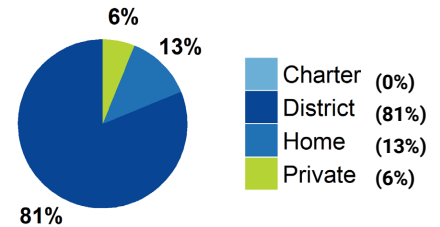
Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Alexander County, 2022



School Choice

5,359 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Alexander County in the 2022-23 school year.

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



Access to Postsecondary Credits

Students in Alexander County completed 2,193 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (363 (17%) were industry-valued credentials) and 334 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Architecture and Construction; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

109 high school students took at least one AP test (8%) versus 8% in peer counties (2023).

146 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (42%) versus 43% in peer counties (2023).

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

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