

# Cherokee County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



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

2030 Proposed Cherokee County Attainment Goal: 4,455 (Stretch Goal: 4,492)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

## Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 28,769  
 2022 Estimate: 29,512  
 Change: 743

## Growth Rate

**2.6%** County vs. **2.5%** State



**\$51,607**  
 Median Household Income (2022)  
 State: \$67,516



**81%**  
 Home Owners (2022)  
 State: 67%



**22.8%**  
 Child Poverty Rate (2022)  
 State: 17.2%



**5.3%**  
 Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)  
 State: 10.9%



**58%**  
 Households with Broadband (2022)  
 State: 77%



**4.0%**  
 Unemployment Rate (2022)  
 State: 3.7%

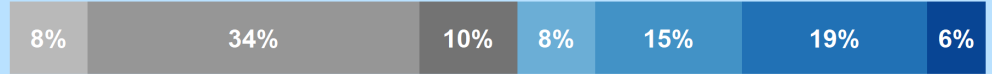
## Educational Attainment

Cherokee 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

**No Degree**  
**2,735**  
 52.2%

**Have Degree or Credential**  
**2,504**  
 47.8%



Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

## Top Opportunities for Growth

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



### Chronic Absenteeism

36% of Cherokee County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 29%.



### NC Pre-K Enrollment

63% of Cherokee County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural - non-metro county average of 68%.



### FAFSA Completion

60% of Cherokee County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural - non-metro county average of 61%.

## 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](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Cherokee)

## LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

### In Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

**80.1%**

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  
**Business Management & Administration** 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)

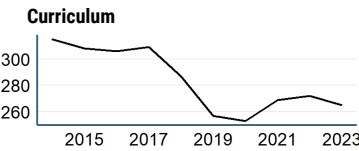


**45%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Cherokee County earned a **family sustaining wage**, 2022

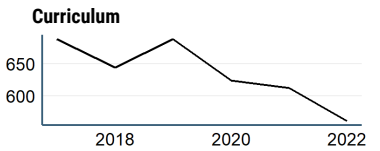
### Cherokee County is served by:

Southwestern Workforce Development Board  
 Southwestern Commission

### UNC System College Enrollment



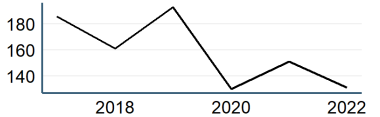
### NC Community College Enrollment



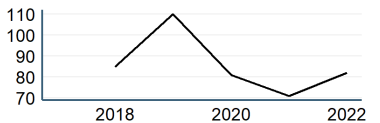
### Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	4%
Logisticians	4%
Medical and Health Services Managers	3%

### First-time Curriculum Enrollments



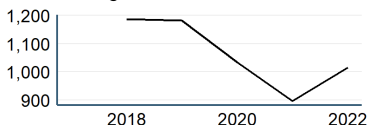
### Basic Skills



### Top 3 Employers in Cherokee County

Employer	Employment Range
Cherokee County Board Of Education	500-999
Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital	250-499
Moog Inc	250-499

### Continuing Education



### Adult Learners

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

- 148 Basic Skills
- 3,797 Continuing Education
- 1,037 Curriculum

8% of Cherokee County residents have student loan debt; 13% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2022

### Success of Cherokee County High School Graduates

- 80% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 53% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2022

### Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- 1,020 of all college-goers attended Tri-County CC
- 56 of all college-goers attended Southwestern CC
- 24 of all college-goers attended Western Carolina University

- 60% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 42 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 66% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 68% in peer counties. 2022
- 56% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 52% in peer counties. 2022

49% of Cherokee County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 55% in peer counties.

### How students in Cherokee County traditional schools are doing:

- 63% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program, compared to 53% statewide; 12 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. 2023
- 31% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 742 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 35% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 687 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 92% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 8 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 36% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 27% statewide; 805 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Cherokee County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 251:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2023

1% of students drop out of high school (10 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2023

### Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

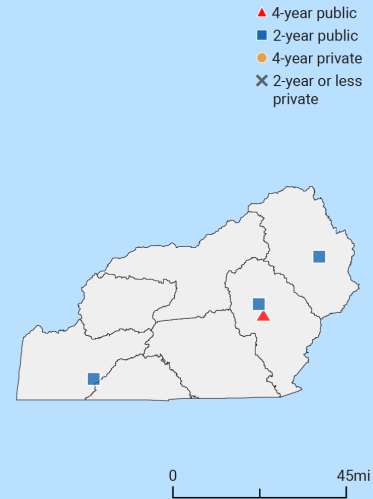
711 certificate | 823 associate | 2,570 bachelor's

### Postsecondary assets in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone sub-region

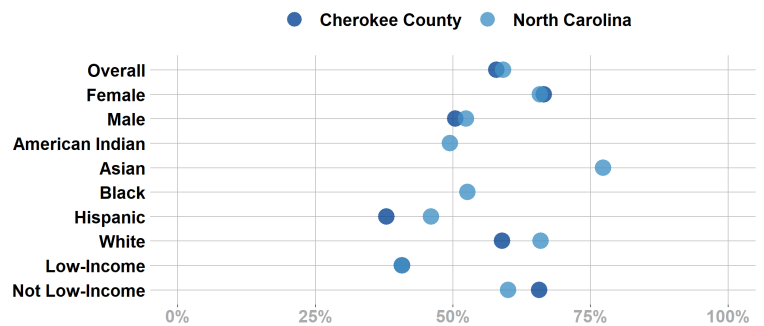
Public, 4-year or above  
Western Carolina University

Public, 2-year  
Haywood Community College, Southwestern Community College, Tri-County Community College

Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above  
Private not-for-profit, 2-year



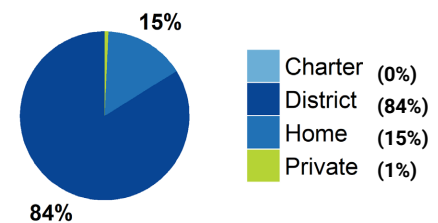
### Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Cherokee County, 2022



Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

### School Choice

3,602 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Cherokee 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 Cherokee County completed 1,217 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (338 (28%) were industry-valued credentials) and 143 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Business Management & Administration; and Health Science.

34 high school students took at least one AP test (<5%) versus 8% in peer counties (2023).

156 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (64%) versus 51% in peer counties (2023).

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/)