

# Clay 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 Clay County Attainment Goal: 1,376 (Stretch Goal: 1,400)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

## Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 11,085  
 2022 Estimate: 11,614  
 Change: 529

## Growth Rate

**4.8%** County vs. **2.5%** State



**\$57,698**  
 Median Household Income (2022)  
 State: \$67,516



**80%**  
 Home Owners (2022)  
 State: 67%



**6.3%**  
 Child Poverty Rate (2022)  
 State: 17.2%



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



**61%**  
 Households with Broadband (2022)  
 State: 77%



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

## Educational Attainment

Clay 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**  
**832**  
 45.6%

**Have Degree or Credential**  
**993**  
 54.4%



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

## Top Opportunities for Growth

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



### FAFSA Completion

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



### Chronic Absenteeism

30% of Clay County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 29%.



### Postsecondary Completion

52% of Clay County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary earn a degree or credential within 6 years, below the state average of 59%.

## 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 Clay County has been meeting local needs:

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

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)

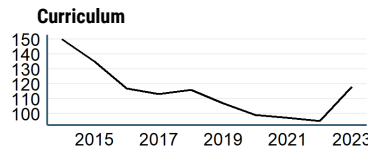


**57%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Clay County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

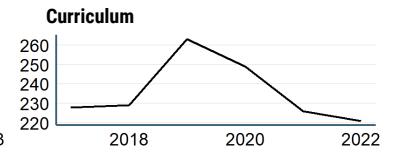
### Clay County is served by:

Southwestern Workforce Development Board  
 Southwestern Commission

## UNC System College Enrollment



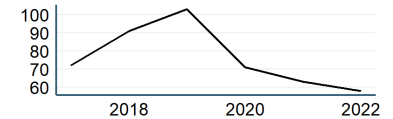
## NC Community College Enrollment



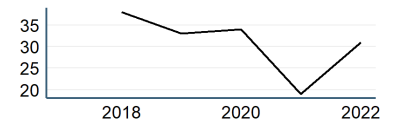
## Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

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

## First-time Curriculum Enrollments



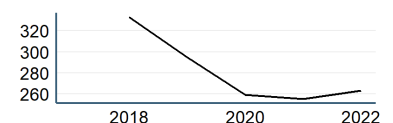
## Basic Skills



## Top 3 Employers in Clay County

Employer	Employment Range
Clay County Board Of Education	100-249
County Of Clay	100-249
Ingles Markets Inc	100-249

## 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

7% of Clay County residents have **student loan debt**; 0% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2022

### Success of Clay County High School Graduates

- 82% of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 52% 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

- 333 of all college-goers attended **Tri-County CC**
- 14 of all college-goers attended **Southwestern CC**
- 9 of all college-goers attended **Western Carolina University**

### 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

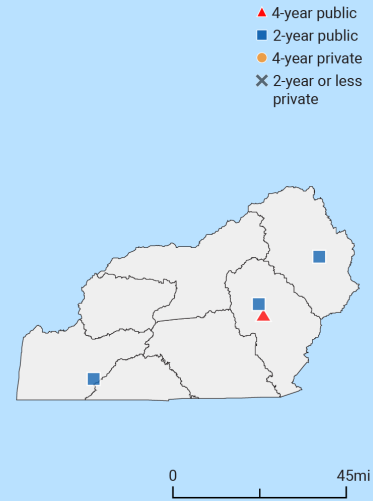
Western Carolina University

#### 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



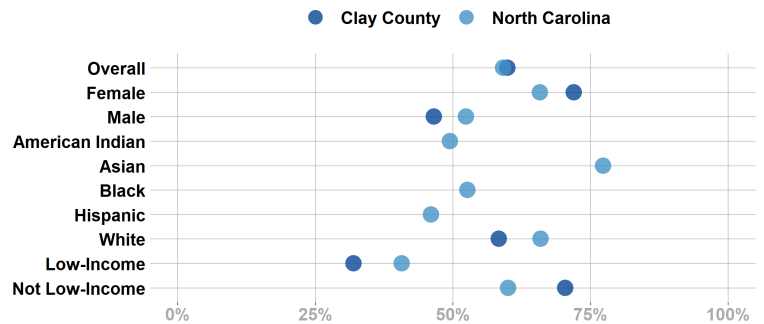
60% of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 15 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023

68% of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 68% in peer counties. 2022

58% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 52% in peer counties. 2022

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

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



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

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

Clay County has met the goal for **Pre-K enrollment**. (Goal: 75%). 2023

36% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**, compared to 30% statewide; 268 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023

32% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**, compared to 35% statewide; 285 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023

88% of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to 87% statewide; 6 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023

30% of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to 27% statewide; 242 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

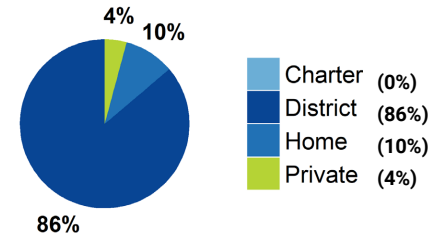
Clay County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 239:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2023

2% of students **drop out of high school** (9 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2023

### School Choice

1,413 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Clay 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 Clay County completed 533 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (84 (16%) were industry-valued credentials) and 76 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Business Management & Administration; and Human Services.

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

47 high school students participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (54%) 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/)