

Polk County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



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

2030 Proposed Polk County Attainment Goal: 3,478 (Stretch Goal: 3,506)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 19,330
2022 Estimate: 19,986
Change: 656

Growth Rate

3.4% County vs. **2.5%** State



\$61,585
Median Household Income (2022)
State: \$67,516



77%
Home Owners (2022)
State: 67%



13.5%
Child Poverty Rate (2022)
State: 17.2%



16.7%
Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)
State: 10.9%



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



3.8%
Unemployment Rate (2022)
State: 3.7%

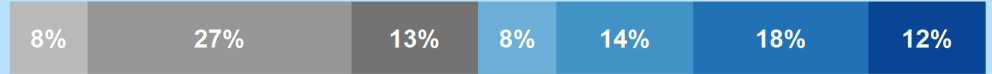
Educational Attainment

Polk 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
1,708
48.1%

Have Degree or Credential
1,841
51.9%



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

Top Opportunities for Growth

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



High School Graduation

82% of Polk County 9th graders complete high school in 4 years or less, below the rural - non-metro county average of 85%.



First-Year Persistence

78% of Polk County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the state average of 83%.



Adult Learners

13% of Polk County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the state average of 12%.

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 Polk County has been meeting local needs:

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

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

In Asheville Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

72.1%

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



636 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

3,023 graduates in 2020

69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021

\$35,824 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

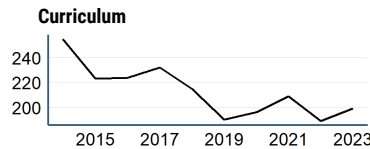


43% of adults (ages 25-44) in Polk County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

Polk County is served by:

Foothills Workforce Development Board
Foothills Regional Commission

UNC System College Enrollment



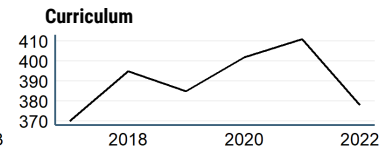
Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Asheville Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	5%
Logisticians	4%
Physician Assistants	3%

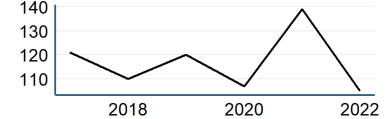
Top 3 Employers in Polk County

Employer	Employment Range
Polk County Public Schools	250-499
Acts Inc	250-499
County Of Polk	250-499

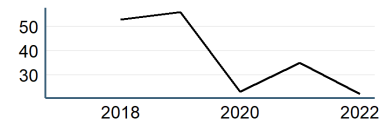
NC Community College Enrollment



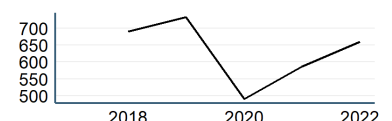
First-time Curriculum Enrollments



Basic Skills



Continuing Education



Adult Learners

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

- 733 Basic Skills
- 8,927 Continuing Education
- 2,725 Curriculum

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

Success of Polk County High School Graduates

- 78% of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 64% 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

- 450 of all college-goers attended **Isothermal CC**
- 168 of all college-goers attended **Blue Ridge CC**
- 34 of all college-goers attended **Asheville-Buncombe TCC**

- 65% of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 22 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 65% of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 68% in peer counties. 2022
- 65% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 52% in peer counties. 2022

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

How students in Polk County traditional schools are doing:

- Polk County has met the goal for **Pre-K enrollment**. (Goal: 75%). 2023
- 47% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**, compared to 30% statewide; 375 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 45% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**, compared to 35% statewide; 396 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 82% of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to 87% statewide; 25 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 27% of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to 27% statewide; 352 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Polk County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 223:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2023

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

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

1,477 certificate | 1,310 associate | 1,451 bachelor's

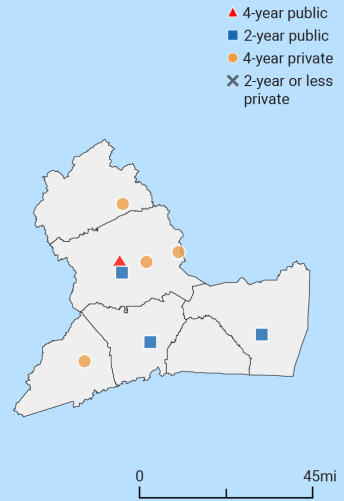
Postsecondary assets in Asheville Prosperity Zone sub-region

Public, 4-year or above
University of North Carolina at Asheville

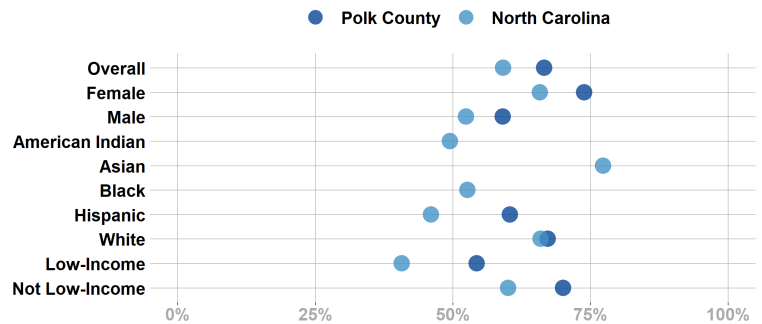
Public, 2-year
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Isothermal Community College

Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above
Brevard College, Mars Hill University, Montreat College, Warren Wilson College

Private not-for-profit, 2-year



Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Polk County, 2022

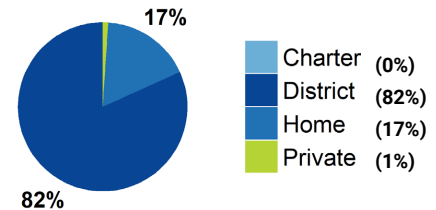


Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

School Choice

2,489 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Polk 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 Polk County completed 996 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (142 (14%) were industry-valued credentials) and 141 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Health Science; and Information Technology.

39 high school students took at least one **AP test** (6%) versus 8% in peer counties (2023).

97 high school students participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (61%) 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/