

# Rutherford County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



Asheville  
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region  
**Peer County Type:** Rural - Non-Metro  
**Local Education Agencies:** 1 (2023)  
**Charter Schools:** 2 (2023)

2030 Proposed Rutherford County Attainment Goal: 9,547 (Stretch Goal: 9,683)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

## Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 64,444  
2022 Estimate: 64,963  
Change: 519

## Growth Rate

**0.8%** County vs. **2.5%** State

**\$53,485**  
Median Household Income (2022)  
State: \$67,516

**73%**  
Home Owners (2022)  
State: 67%

**24.9%**  
Child Poverty Rate (2022)  
State: 17.2%

**16.6%**  
Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)  
State: 10.9%

**53%**  
Households with Broadband (2022)  
State: 77%

**4.7%**  
Unemployment Rate (2022)  
State: 3.7%

## Educational Attainment

Rutherford 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 or Credential**  
**9,153**  
63.2%

**Have Degree or Credential**  
**5,338**  
36.8%



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

## Top Opportunities for Growth

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



### Chronic Absenteeism

38% of Rutherford County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 29%.



### Adult Learners

22% of Rutherford County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the rural - non-metro county average of 16%.



### Earning College Credit in High School

45% of Rutherford County graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs, below the rural - non-metro county average of 51%. Also, 7% of high school students took at least one AP exam, below the peer county average of 8%.

## 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 Rutherford County has been meeting local needs:

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

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:

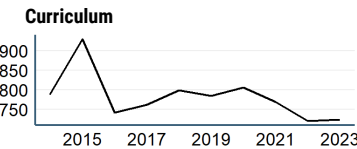
**3,023** graduates in 2020  
**69%** of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021  
**\$35,824** annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

**37%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Rutherford County earned a **family sustaining wage**, 2022

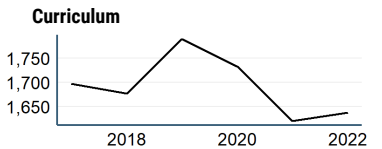
### Rutherford County is served by:

**Foothills Workforce Development Board**  
**Foothills Regional Commission**

## UNC System College Enrollment



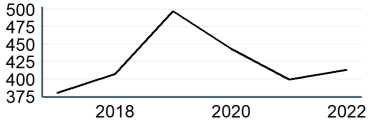
## NC Community College Enrollment



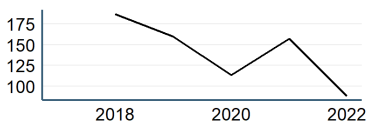
## Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Asheville Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

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

## First-time Curriculum Enrollments



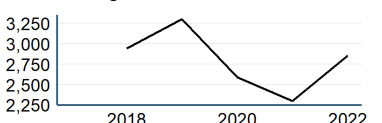
## Basic Skills



## Top 3 Employers in Rutherford County

Employer	Employment Range
Rutherford County Board Of Educatio	1000+
County Of Rutherford	500-999
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	250-499

## Continuing Education



POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

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

10% of Rutherford County residents have student loan debt; 8% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2022

Success of Rutherford County High School Graduates

- 76% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 62% 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

- 2,356 of all college-goers attended Isothermal CC
- 327 of all college-goers attended Cleveland CC
- 82 of all college-goers attended Blue Ridge CC

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

69% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 54 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023

78% 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 52% in peer counties. 2022

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

ACADEMIC READINESS

How students in Rutherford County traditional schools are doing:

- 63% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program, compared to 53% statewide; 48 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; 1,817 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 33% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 1,703 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 89% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 36 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 38% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 27% statewide; 2,083 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Rutherford County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 276:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2023

1% of students drop out of high school (18 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

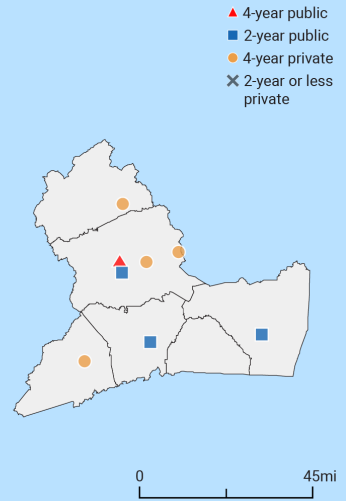
Public, 2-year

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Isothermal Community College

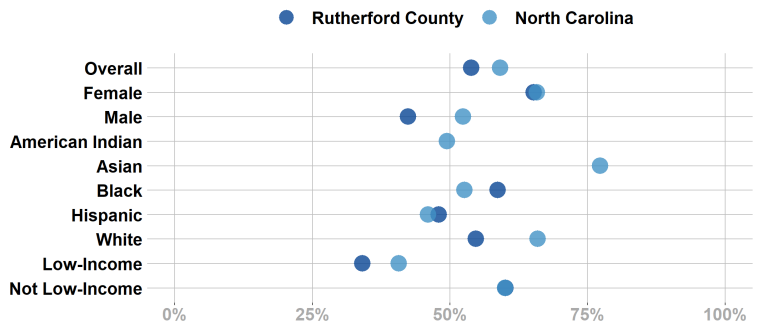
Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above

Brevard College, Mars Hill University, Montreat College, Warren Wilson College

Private not-for-profit, 2-year



Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Rutherford County, 2022

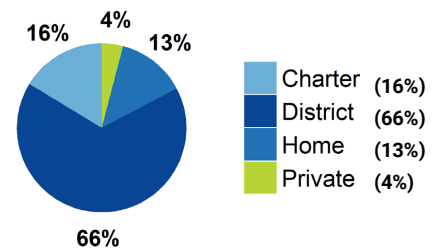


Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

School Choice

10,828 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Rutherford 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 Rutherford County completed 2,795 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (166 (6%) were industry-valued credentials) and 475 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Hospitality & Tourism.

143 high school students took at least one AP test (7%) versus 8% in peer counties (2023).

240 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (45%) 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/)