

# Wilkes County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



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

2030 Proposed Wilkes County Attainment Goal: 9,337 (Stretch Goal: 9,476)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

## Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 65,968  
2022 Estimate: 65,784  
Change: -184

## Growth Rate

-0.3% vs. 2.5%  
County State



\$48,229  
Median Household Income (2022)  
State: \$67,516



73%  
Home Owners (2022)  
State: 67%



28.2%  
Child Poverty Rate (2022)  
State: 17.2%



14.3%  
Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)  
State: 10.9%



74%  
Households with Broadband (2022)  
State: 77%



3.8%  
Unemployment Rate (2022)  
State: 3.7%

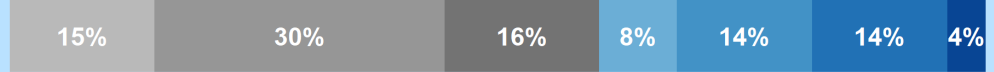
## Educational Attainment

Wilkes 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**  
8,791  
60.7%

**Have Degree or Credential**  
5,694  
39.3%



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

## Top Opportunities for Growth

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



### School Counselors

Wilkes County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 369:1, above the rural - non-metro county average of 325:1.



### First-Year Persistence

74% of Wilkes County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the state average of 83%.



### Postsecondary Completion

53% of Wilkes 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 Wilkes County has been meeting local needs:

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

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

## In Boone-Wilkesboro Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

83.4%

of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

### Top areas of misalignment:

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



17 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

### UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

5,202 graduates in 2020

69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021

\$44,421 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)



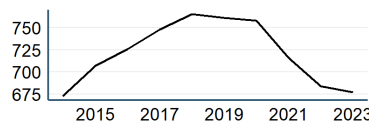
34% of adults (ages 25-44) in Wilkes County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

### Wilkes County is served by:

High Country Workforce Development Board  
High Country Council of Governments

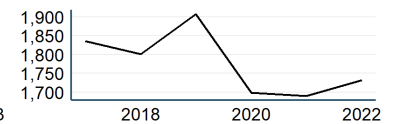
## UNC System College Enrollment

### Curriculum



## NC Community College Enrollment

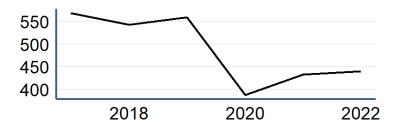
### Curriculum



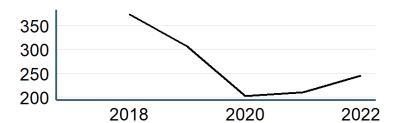
## Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Boone-Wilkesboro Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	4%
Logisticians	3%
Occupational Therapy Assistants	3%

### First-time Curriculum Enrollments



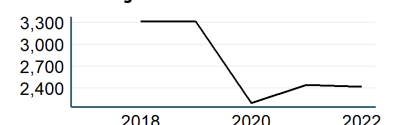
### Basic Skills



## Top 3 Employers in Wilkes County

Employer	Employment Range
Tyson Farms Inc	1000+
Wilkes County Board Of Education	1000+
Lowes Home Centers Inc	1000+

### Continuing Education



### Adult Learners

#### Boone-Wilkesboro Sub-Prosperity Zone post-secondary enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

- 249 Basic Skills
- 2,980 Continuing Education
- 407 Curriculum

8% of Wilkes County residents have **student loan debt**; 6% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2022

### Success of Wilkes County High School Graduates

- 74% 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

- 2,477 of all college-goers attended **Wilkes CC**
- 215 of all college-goers attended **Surry CC**
- 135 of all college-goers attended **Barton College**

### Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

763 certificate | 499 associate | 4,461 bachelor's

### Postsecondary assets in Boone-Wilkesboro Prosperity Zone sub-region

**Public, 4-year or above**  
Appalachian State University

**Public, 2-year**  
Mayland Community College, Wilkes Community College

**Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above**  
Lees-McRae College

**Private not-for-profit, 2-year**



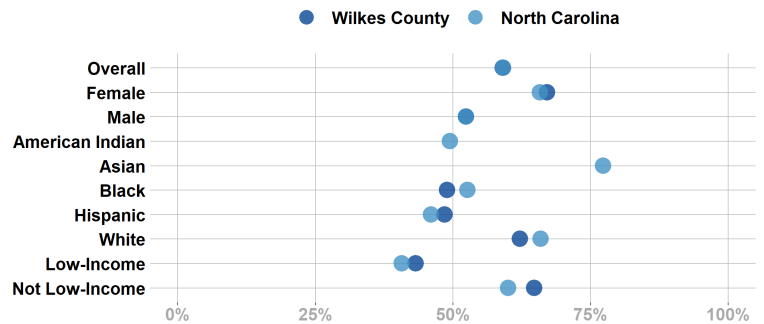
72% of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 45 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023

74% 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

58% of Wilkes 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 Wilkes County, 2022



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

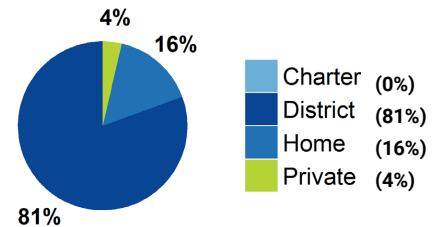
### How students in Wilkes County traditional schools are doing:

- Wilkes County has met the goal for **Pre-K enrollment**. (Goal: 75%). 2023
- 30% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**, compared to 30% statewide; 2,066 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; 1,718 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 90% of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to 87% statewide; 34 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 22% of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to 27% statewide; 953 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023
- Wilkes County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 369:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2023
- 2% of students **drop out of high school** (47 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2023

### School Choice

10,184 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Wilkes 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 Wilkes County completed 2,368 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (610 (26%) were industry-valued credentials) and 544 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Arts, Audio/Video Technology, & Communications; and Human Services.

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

394 high school students participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (63%) 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/)