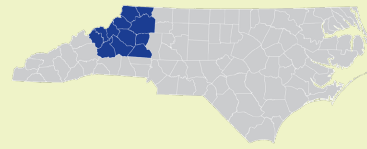


Northwest

Prosperity Zone

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

2030 Proposed Northwest Attainment Goal: 89,988




Northwest PZ Served By:
High Country, Foothills, and Western Piedmont Councils of Governments and Foothills, High Country, and Western Piedmont Workforce Development Boards


Population Spotlight


Growth Rate Prosperity Zone: 0.8% vs. **State: 2.5%**

County	2020	2022	Change
North Carolina	10,439,414	10,698,973	259,559
Alexander County	36,440	36,512	72
Alleghany County	10,886	11,185	299
Ashe County	26,581	27,110	529
Avery County	17,812	17,571	-241
Burke County	87,573	87,881	308
Caldwell County	80,664	80,492	-172
Catawba County	160,609	163,462	2,853
McDowell County	44,577	44,753	176
Mitchell County	14,906	15,094	188
Watauga County	54,077	55,089	1,012
Wilkes County	65,968	65,784	-184
Yancey County	18,470	18,811	341

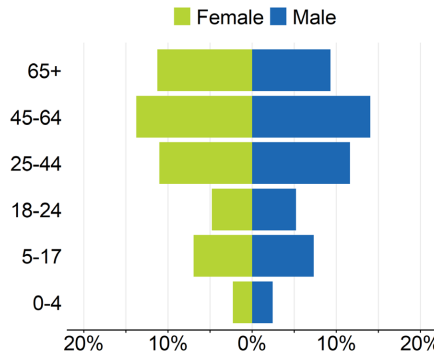

20.7%
Child Poverty Rate (2022)
State: 17.2%


12.8%
Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)
State: 10.9%

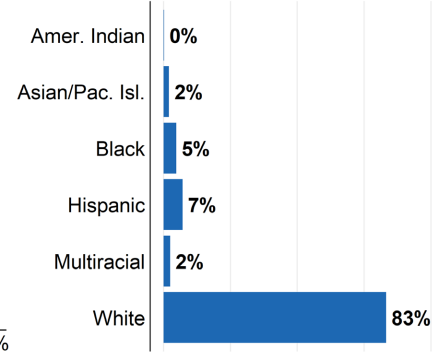

68%
Households with Broadband (2022)
State: 77%


4%
Foreign Born (2022)
State: 9%

Age Structure, 2022




Race/Ethnicity, 2022




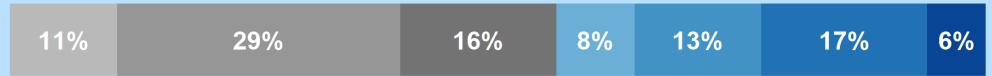
Educational Attainment

Northwest 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**
78,815
56.1%

 **Have Degree or Credential**
61,636
43.9%



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

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT


In Northwest Prosperity Zone:

84.3%

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


Top areas of misalignment:

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

 **376** Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

7,341 graduates in 2020
72% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$42,094 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

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

Top Industries in Northwest PZ

Industry Name	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Health Care and Social Assistance	33,043	\$1,064
Retail Trade	30,114	\$669
Accommodation and Food Services	23,170	\$387
Public Administration	13,491	\$941
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	11,326	\$736

Top Job Sectors in Northwest PZ

Job Sector	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Private	203,410	\$906
Local Government	24,666	\$909
State Government	12,068	\$1,057
Federal Government	1,217	\$1,191

Success of Northwest High School Graduates

- **80%** of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus **83%** for the state. 2022
- **61%** of students who enroll **earn a degree or certificate** within 6 years versus **59%** for the state. 2022

Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- **6,413** of all college-goers attended **Catawba Valley CC**
- **5,174** of all college-goers attended **Caldwell CC and TI**
- **4,062** of all college-goers attended **Wilkes CC**

Adult Learners

Northwest resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

727	Basic Skills
11,640	Continuing Education
2,331	Curriculum

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

2,483 certificate | **2,698** associate | **4,788** bachelor's

Postsecondary assets in Northwest Prosperity Zone

Public, 4-year or above

Appalachian State University

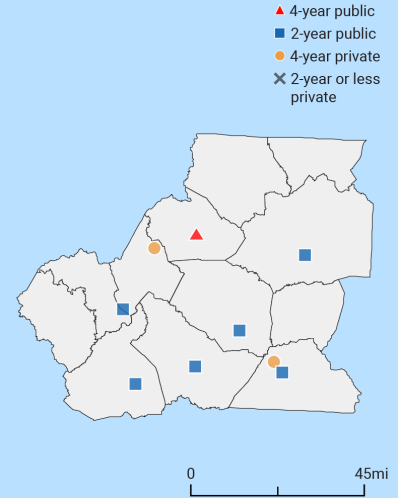
Public, 2-year

Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Community College, Mayland Community College, McDowell Technical Community College, Western Piedmont Community College, Wilkes Community College

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

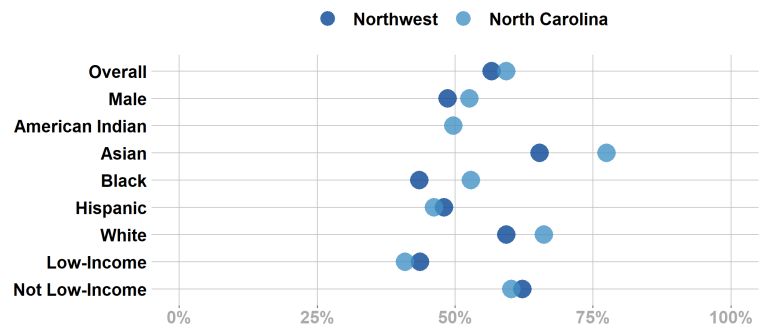
Lees-McRae College, Lenoir-Rhyne University

Private not-for-profit, 2-year



- **60%** of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2023, compared to **62%** statewide; 1,077 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of **80%**. 2023
- **73%** of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus **74%** in the state. 2022
- **55%** of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus **58%** in the state. 2022

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Northwest, 2022



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

How students in Northwest traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Northwest needs:

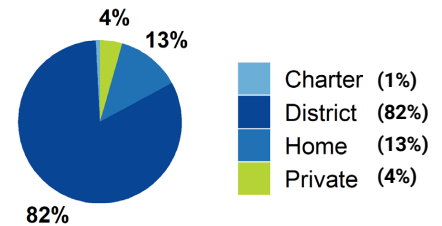
- **67%** of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**, compared to **53%** statewide; 242 more needed to meet state goal of **75%**. 2023
- **29%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**, compared to **30%** statewide; 14,880 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2023
- **37%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**, compared to **35%** statewide; 16,860 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2023
- **87%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to **87%** statewide; 514 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2023
- **23%** of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to **27%** statewide; 9,728 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2023

2% of students **drop out of high school** (491 total students), compared to **2%** statewide. 2023

School Choice

92,315 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Northwest in the 2022-23 school year.

Note: This profile focuses on outcomes of students enrolled in district schools.



Access to Postsecondary Credits

Students in Northwest completed **32,348 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (5,234 (16%) were industry-valued credentials) and 4,125 concentrations** in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Health Science; and Architecture and Construction.

2,372 high school students took at least one **AP test (10%)** versus **16%** in the state (2023).

3,043 high school students participated in **Career & College Promise programs (54%)** versus **36%** in the state (2023).

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit:

dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/