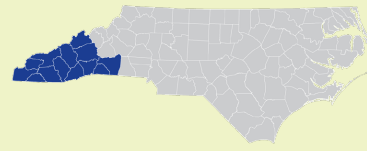


# Western Prosperity Zone

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

2030 Proposed Western Attainment Goal: 128,232

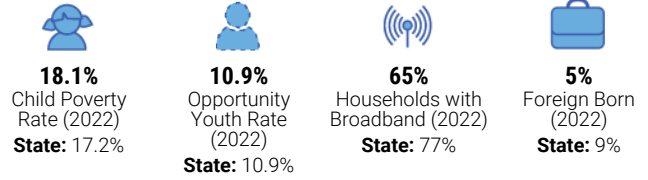


**Western PZ Served By:**  
 Foothills, Land-of-Sky, and Southwestern Councils of Governments  
**and**  
 Foothills, Mountain Area, and Southwestern Workforce Development Boards

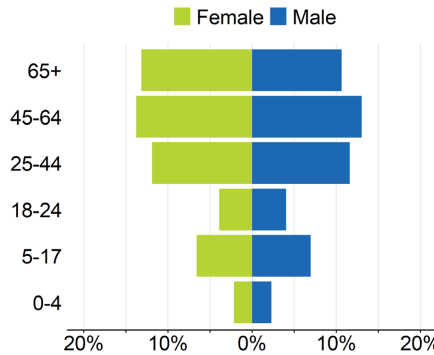
## Population Spotlight

**Growth Rate Prosperity Zone: 1.5%** vs. **State: 2.5%**

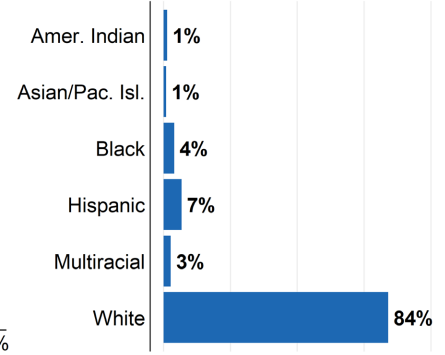
County	2020	2022	Change
North Carolina	10,439,414	10,698,973	259,559
Buncombe County	269,446	273,589	4,143
Cherokee County	28,769	29,512	743
Clay County	11,085	11,614	529
Graham County	8,029	7,980	-49
Haywood County	62,097	62,609	512
Henderson County	116,279	118,106	1,827
Jackson County	43,107	42,955	-152
Macon County	37,016	38,065	1,049
Madison County	21,192	21,768	576
Polk County	19,330	19,986	656
Rutherford County	64,444	64,963	519
Swain County	14,115	13,967	-148
Transylvania County	32,986	33,355	369



### Age Structure, 2022



### Race/Ethnicity, 2022



## Educational Attainment

Western residents ages 25-44, 2022

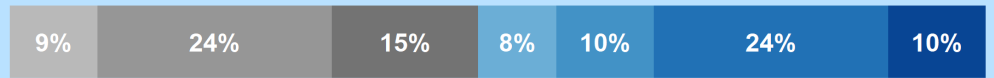
Less than high school
High school graduate (including GED)
Some college, no credential
Short-term credential
Associate degree
Bachelor's degree
Graduate or professional degree



**No Degree**  
**82,460**  
**48.2%**



**Have Degree or Credential**  
**88,566**  
**51.8%**



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

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

### In Western Prosperity Zone:

**79.0%**

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



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

#### UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

**6,134** graduates in 2020

**69%** of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021

**\$38,657** annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)



**47%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Western earned a **family sustaining wage**, 2022

### Top Industries in Western PZ

Industry Name	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Health Care and Social Assistance	47,091	\$1,160
Retail Trade	38,313	\$674
Accommodation and Food Services	36,884	\$528
Public Administration	17,059	\$1,088
Construction	15,787	\$1,134

### Top Job Sectors in Western PZ

Job Sector	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Private	241,781	\$948
Local Government	31,741	\$996
State Government	8,780	\$984
Federal Government	4,945	\$1,615

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

### Success of Western High School Graduates

- **80%** of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus **83%** for the state. 2022
- **60%** 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

- **10,195** of all college-goers attended **Asheville-Buncombe TCC**
- **6,014** of all college-goers attended **Blue Ridge CC**
- **3,538** of all college-goers attended **Southwestern CC**

### Adult Learners

#### Western resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

<b>881</b>	Basic Skills
<b>12,724</b>	Continuing Education
<b>3,762</b>	Curriculum

### Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

**2,188** certificate | **2,133** associate | **4,021** bachelor's

### Postsecondary assets in Western Prosperity Zone

#### Public, 4-year or above

University of North Carolina at Asheville, Western Carolina University

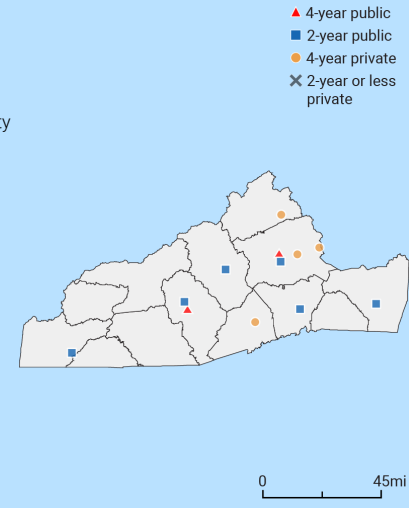
#### Public, 2-year

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Haywood Community College, Isothermal Community College, Southwestern Community College, Tri-County Community College

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

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

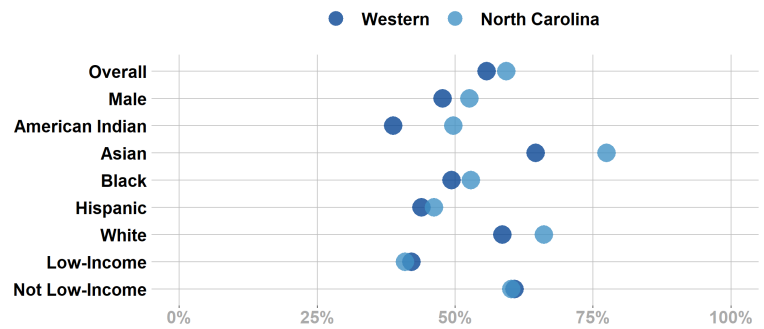
#### Private not-for-profit, 2-year



COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

- **60%** of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2023, compared to **62%** statewide; 1,033 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 **74%** in the state. 2022
- **54%** of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus **58%** in the state. 2022

### Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Western, 2022



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

### How students in Western traditional schools are currently doing:

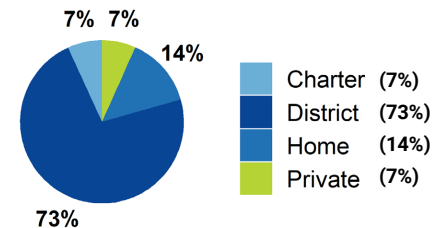
To meet state goals, each year Western needs:

- **54%** of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**, compared to **53%** statewide; 596 more needed to meet state goal of **75%**. 2023
- **32%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**, compared to **30%** statewide; 13,514 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2023
- **36%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**, compared to **35%** statewide; 16,418 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2023
- **90%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to **87%** statewide; 316 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2023
- **27%** of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to **27%** statewide; 12,445 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2023
- **1%** of students **drop out of high school** (339 total students), compared to **2%** statewide. 2023

### School Choice

102,257 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Western in the 2022-23 school year.

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



### Access to Postsecondary Credits

Students in Western completed **14,673 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (3,093 (21%) were industry-valued credentials)** and **4,363 concentrations** in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Health Science.



**2,613 high school students** took at least one **AP test (11%)** versus **16%** in the state (2023).



**2,963 high school students** participated in **Career & College Promise programs (51%)** 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/](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/)