

High Country

Council of Governments (COG)

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



Counties in Council of Governments:

Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties

Educational Attainment

High Country COG residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
21,790
48.9%

No Degree
22,737
51.1%

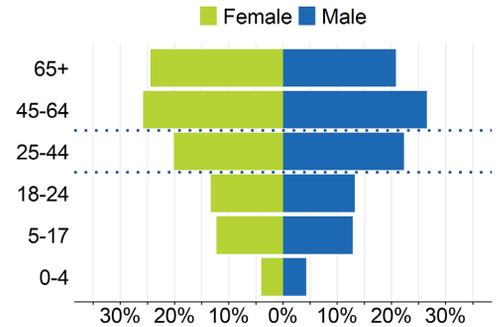
Residents Ages 25-44
44,527

Educational Level Breakdown, 2023

Graduate or Professional degree	9.7%
Bachelor's degree	20.0%
Associate degree	11.8%
Short-term credential	7.5%
Some college, no credential	13.5%
High school graduate (including GED)	26.6%
Less than high school	11.0%

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

Age Structure, 2023



2030 Proposed High Country Attainment Goal: 34,980

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 208,698
2023 Estimate: 210,664
Change: 1,966

Growth Rate

0.9% vs. 3.8%
County State

Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Amer. Indian	0.2%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	0.7%
Black	2.3%
Hispanic	6.6%
Multiracial	1.9%
White	88.3%



\$54,151
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838



72.6%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%



72.7%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%



18.9%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%



12.9%
Single Parent Households (2023)
State: 17.0%



3.5%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

In High Country :

63 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

5,202 graduates in 2020
68.7% 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), 2021

39.3% of adults (ages 25-44) in High Country earned a **family sustaining wage**. State: 57.6%, 2023

7.7% of youth (ages 16-24) in High Country were **Opportunity Youth**. State: 10.3%, 2023

80.5% of adults (ages 25-44) in High Country **participated in the labor force**. State: 84.2%, 2023

High Country Labor Force Snapshot, 2024 Q2

Total Jobs	72,548	Business Establishments	6,205
Employed	91,635	Unemployed	3,725
Avg. Weekly Wage	\$882		

Top Industries in High Country , 2024 Q2

Industry Name	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Health Care and Social Assistance	10,556	\$1,068
Retail Trade	10,017	\$592
Accommodation and Food Services	8,987	\$407
Educational Services	7,680	\$1,034
Manufacturing	7,015	\$1,005

Top Job Sectors in High Country , 2024 Q2

Job Sector	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Private	58,505	\$855
Local Government	7,664	\$824
State Government	5,880	\$1,191
Federal Government	500	\$1,207

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Degree Credentials Awarded in High Country, 2023

923 certificate | 534 associate | 4,232 bachelor's

Adult Learners

High Country Residents Aged 25+ enrolled in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2023

372 Basic Skills
3,261 Continuing Education
737 Curriculum

13.5% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. State: 11.7%, 2023

Success of High Country High School Graduates

82.5% of students who enroll persist to their second year. State: 83.8%, 2023

91.8% UNC | 73.7% NCCCS | 90.9% NCICU

62.5% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. State: 60.0%, 2023

27.3% UNC | 21.7% NCCCS | 5.9% NCICU

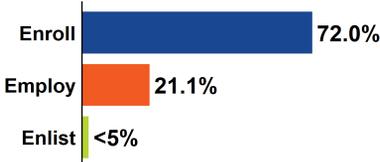
Top destinations of all college-goers, 2024

- 4,358 of all college-goers attended Wilkes CC
- 1,785 of all college-goers attended Mayland CC
- 1,377 of all college-goers attended Caldwell CC and TI

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

59.4% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 333 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. State: 55.0%

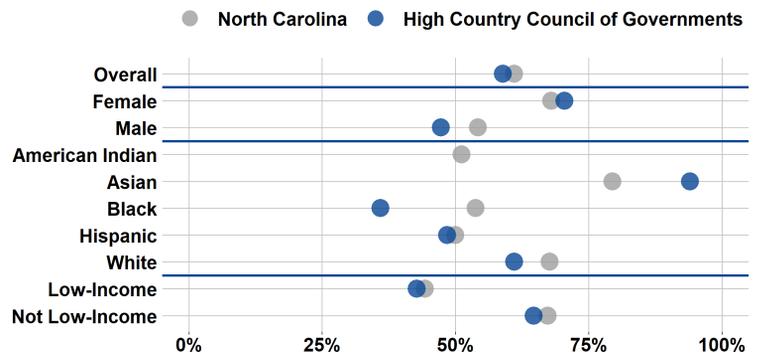
Post High School Graduation Intentions, 2023



89.3% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 104 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. State: 87.3% 2024

57.1% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in COG, 2023



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

High Country Council of Governments has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment. (Goal: 75%) State: 57.2% 2024

High Country Traditional Public Schools students:

32.2% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 5,341 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. State: 29.8%

40.5% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 3,233 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. State: 36.5%

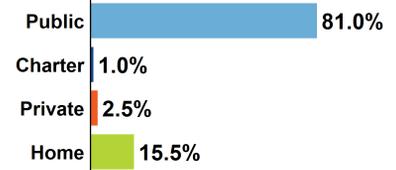
18.6% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 1,761 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. State: 25.7%

1.7% of students drop out of high school (131 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 7
Traditional Public School(s): 65
Charter School(s): 2
Private School(s): 12
Home School(s): 2,640

27,361 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 8,500 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 1,504 concentrations. 1,731 (20.4%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Health Science; Human Services; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

687 (9.7%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

1,131 (66.5%) high school graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs. State: 36.0% (2024).

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

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