

Southwestern Commission

Council of Governments (COG)

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



Counties in Council of Governments:

Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties

Educational Attainment

Southwestern Commission COG residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
19,305
44.9%

No Degree
23,678
55.1%

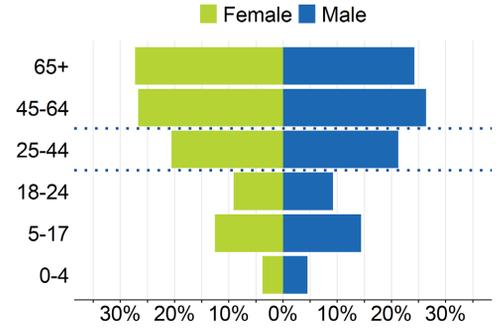
Residents Ages 25-44
42,983

Educational Level Breakdown, 2023

Graduate or Professional degree	7.3%
Bachelor's degree	17.2%
Associate degree	12.9%
Short-term credential	7.5%
Some college, no credential	15.7%
High school graduate (including GED)	29.1%
Less than high school	10.3%

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

Age Structure, 2023



2030 Proposed Southwestern Commission Attainment Goal: 32,575

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 204,213
2023 Estimate: 209,746
Change: 5,533

Growth Rate

2.7% County vs. 3.8% State

Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Amer. Indian	4.2%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	0.7%
Black	1.4%
Hispanic	6%
Multiracial	2.6%
White	84.9%



\$55,425
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838



74.4%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%



58.1%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%



20.5%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%



13.7%
Single Parent Households (2023)
State: 17.0%



3.4%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

In Southwestern Commission:

55 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

3,111 graduates in 2020
69.4% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$41,526 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs), 2021

44.5% of adults (ages 25-44) in Southwestern Commission earned a family sustaining wage. State: 57.6%, 2023

7.4% of youth (ages 16-24) in Southwestern Commission were Opportunity Youth. State: 10.3%, 2023

81.8% of adults (ages 25-44) in Southwestern Commission participated in the labor force. State: 84.2%, 2023

Southwestern Commission Labor Force Snapshot, 2024 Q2

Total Jobs	67,976	Business Establishments	6,799
Employed	88,303	Unemployed	3,599
Avg. Weekly Wage	\$865		

Top Industries in Southwestern Commission, 2024 Q2

Industry Name	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Retail Trade	10,196	\$640
Accommodation and Food Services	9,795	\$507
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,512	\$988
Public Administration	6,762	\$1,043
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6,507	\$855

Top Job Sectors in Southwestern Commission, 2024 Q2

Job Sector	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Private	50,249	\$816
Local Government	13,306	\$968
State Government	3,760	\$1,059
Federal Government	661	\$1,379

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Degree Credentials Awarded in Southwestern Commission, 2023

710 certificate | 819 associate | 2,609 bachelor's

Adult Learners

Southwestern Commission Residents Aged 25+ enrolled in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2023

187 Basic Skills
2,897 Continuing Education
1,069 Curriculum

15.7% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. State: 11.7%, 2023

Success of Southwestern Commission High School Graduates

78.3% of students who enroll persist to their second year. State: 83.8%, 2023

90.0% UNC | 65.4% NCCCS | 90.9% NCICU

58.8% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. State: 60.0%, 2023

28.9% UNC | 20.1% NCCCS | <5% NCICU

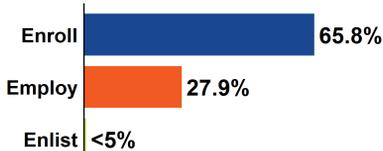
Top destinations of all college-goers, 2024

- 3,419 of all college-goers attended Southwestern CC
- 1,996 of all college-goers attended Haywood CC
- 1,780 of all college-goers attended Tri-County CC

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

46.9% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 484 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. State: 55.0%

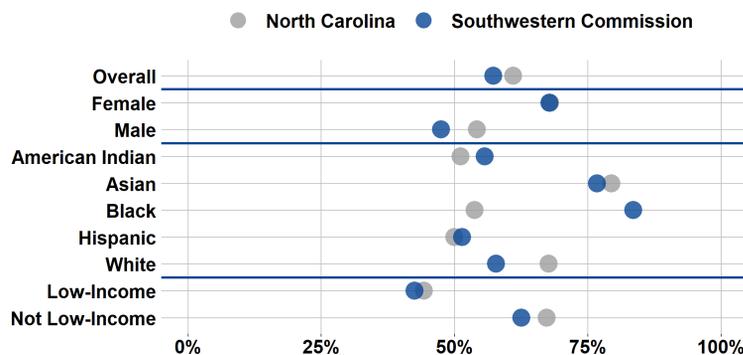
Post High School Graduation Intentions, 2023



89.6% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 95 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. State: 87.3% 2024

55.5% 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

68.6% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program in 2024. 57 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. State: 57.2%

Southwestern Commission Traditional Public Schools students:

28.8% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 5,435 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. State: 29.8%

34.7% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 3,641 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. State: 36.5%

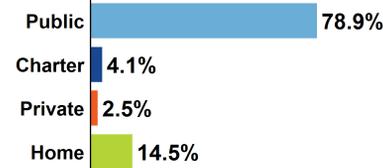
29.4% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 4,120 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. State: 25.7%

1.2% of students drop out of high school (80 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 7
Traditional Public School(s): 61
Charter School(s): 3
Private School(s): 15
Home School(s): 2,474

26,817 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 4,773 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 1,290 concentrations. 1,135 (23.8%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Health Science; and Manufacturing.

351 (5.4%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

877 (52.4%) 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/