

Burke County

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



Hickory
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural - Metro

Educational Attainment

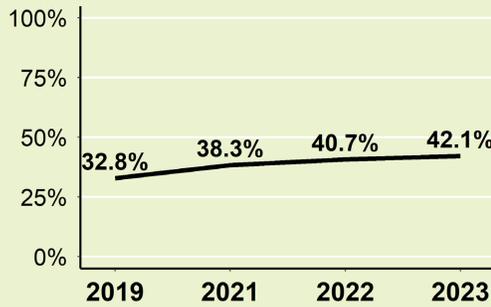
Burke County residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
8,750
42.1%

No Degree
12,029
57.9%

Residents Ages 25-44
20,779

Educational Attainment Trend



Note: 2020 data not shown due to inconsistency

Educational Level Breakdown, 2023



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

2030 Proposed Burke County Attainment Goal: 9,970 (Stretch Goal: 10,206)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 87,551
2023 Estimate: 88,338
Change: 787

Growth Rate

0.9% County vs. 3.8% State

Race/Ethnicity

Amer. Indian 0.1%
Asian/Pac. Isl. 3.4%
Black 5.9%
Hispanic 8.2%
Multiracial 2.5%
White 79.3%



\$55,616
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838



74.8%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%



66.6%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%



30.8%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%



19.0%
Single Parent Households (2023)
State: 17.0%



5.6%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

Top Opportunities for Growth



Family Sustaining Wage

41% of Burke County adults 25-44 earn a family sustaining wage, below the rural - metro county average of 47%.

In Hickory Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

68.3%

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

Top Misalignments

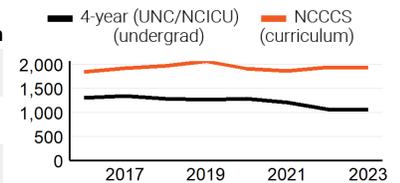
Job Openings vs. Degrees/Credentials

- Education & Training Jobs < Creds
- Health Science Jobs > Creds
- Business Management & Administration Jobs > Creds

Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Hickory Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

| Job Title | Annual Growth |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Nurse Practitioners | 4.11% |
| Logisticians | 3.20% |
| Physician Assistants | 2.68% |

Postsecondary Enrollment for Burke County Residents



103 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

2,139 graduates in 2020
80.0% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$37,952 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs), 2021

41.1% of adults (ages 25-44) in Burke County earned a family sustaining wage. Peer: 46.7% | State: 57.6%, 2023

17.6% of youth (ages 16-24) in Burke County were Opportunity Youth. Peer: 14.8% | State: 10.3%, 2023

80.3% of adults (ages 25-44) in Burke County participated in the labor force. Peer: 80.7% | State: 84.2%, 2023

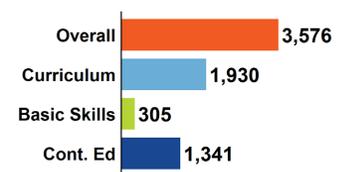
Top 3 Employers in Burke County

| Employer | Employment Range |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| NC Dept of Health & Human Services | 1000+ |
| Burke County Public Schools | 1000+ |
| Blue Ridge Healthcare Hospitals Inc | 1000+ |

Top 3 industries in Burke County

| Industry | Jobs Percent |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Manufacturing | 7,600 25.4% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 6,540 21.8% |
| Retail Trade | 3,008 10.0% |

Burke County residents enrolled in NCCCS, Fall 2023



Burke County is served by:

- Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board
- Western Piedmont Council of Governments

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top Opportunities for Growth



Adult Learners

14% of Burke County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the state average of 12%.

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ Sub-Region, 2023

1,394 certificate | 1,970 associate | 380 bachelor's

Adult Learners

Burke County Residents Aged 25+ enrolled in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2023

161 Basic Skills
1,263 Continuing Education
505 Curriculum

14.2% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. Peer: 16.0% | State: 11.7%, 2023



11.2% of Burke County residents have student loan debt, 1.3% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2024

Success of Burke County High School Graduates

82.1% of students who enroll persist to their second year.

Peer: 80.1% | State: 83.8%, 2023

92.2% UNC | 75.0% NCCCS | 87.2% NCICU

61.6% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. Peer: 57.5% | State: 60.0%, 2023

30.7% UNC | 19.4% NCCCS | 7.6% NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2023

- 2,511 of all college-goers attended Western Piedmont CC
- 348 of all college-goers attended Catawba Valley CC
- 280 of all college-goers attended Caldwell CC and TI

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

Top Opportunities for Growth

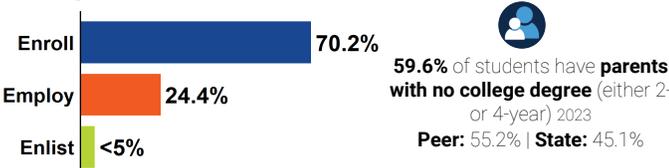


FAFSA Completion

47% of Burke County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural - metro county average of 52%.

47.3% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 284 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. Peer: 52.0% | State: 55.0%

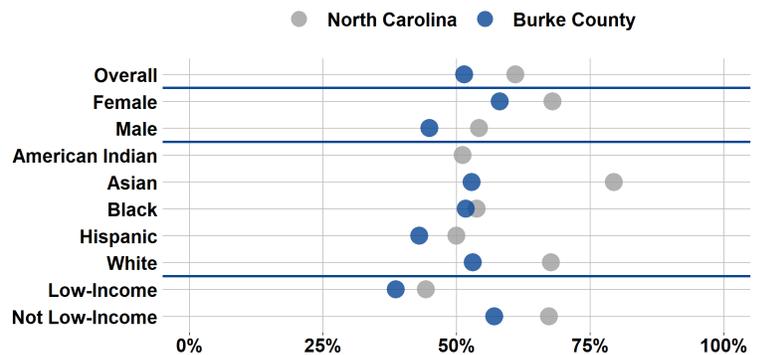
Post High School Graduation Intentions



88.3% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 66 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. Peer: 85.7% | State: 87.3% 2024

49.7% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. Peer: 52.0% | State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Burke County, 2023



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

Top Opportunities for Growth



School Counselors

Burke County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 347:1, above the state average of 314:1.

Burke County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment (Goal: 75%) Peer: 61.7% | State: 57.2% 2024

Note: Enrollment numbers only include students served by the NC Pre-K Program and may not represent all Pre-K offerings available.

Burke County Traditional Public Schools students:

27.0% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 2,269 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. Peer: 25.3% | State: 29.8%

38.5% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 2,342 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. Peer: 32.3% | State: 36.5%

18.5% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 883 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. Peer: 27.4% | State: 25.7%

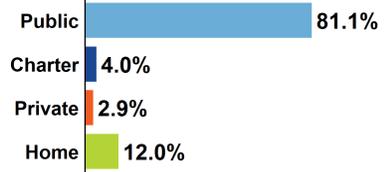
Burke County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 347:1 compared to 352:1 in peer counties. 2024

1.3% of students drop out of high school (51 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 1
Traditional Public School(s): 27
Charter School(s): 1
Private School(s): 5
Home School(s): 993

13,783 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 6,236 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 538 concentrations. 547 (8.8%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Human Services; Architecture and Construction; and Health Science.

511 (13.5%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

456 (51.5%) 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/