

Jackson County

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural - Non-Metro

Educational Attainment

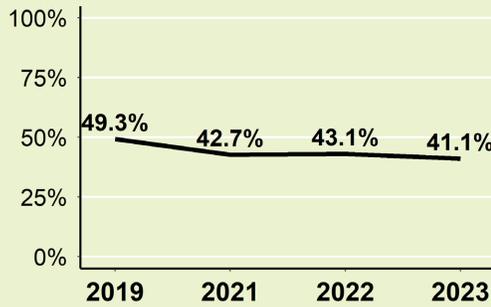
Jackson County residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
3,830
41.1%

No Degree
5,491
58.9%

Residents Ages 25-44
9,321

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 Jackson County Attainment Goal: 8,264 (Stretch Goal: 8,328)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 43,108
2023 Estimate: 44,574
Change: 1,466

Growth Rate

3.4% County vs. 3.8% State

Race/Ethnicity

Amer. Indian	7%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	1.2%
Black	2.2%
Hispanic	7.7%
Multiracial	3%
White	78.6%



\$55,462
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838



62.6%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%



51.7%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%



27.2%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%



14.5%
Single Parent Households (2023)
State: 17.0%



4.6%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

Top Opportunities for Growth



Family Sustaining Wage

34% of Jackson County adults 25-44 earn a family sustaining wage, below the rural - non-metro county average of 40%.

In Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

75.6%

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

Top Misalignments

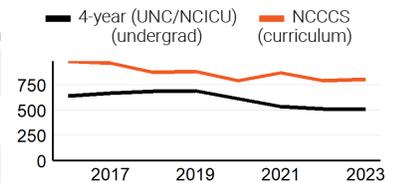
Job Openings vs. Degrees/Credentials

- Health Science Jobs > Creds
- Education & Training Jobs > Creds
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Jobs < Creds

Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	3.67%
Logisticians	3.54%
Medical and Health Services Managers	2.83%

Postsecondary Enrollment for Jackson County Residents



32 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

34.0% of adults (ages 25-44) in Jackson County earned a family sustaining wage. Peer: 40.5% | State: 57.6%, 2023

4.8% of youth (ages 16-24) in Jackson County were Opportunity Youth. Peer: 13.8% | State: 10.3%, 2023

78.7% of adults (ages 25-44) in Jackson County participated in the labor force. Peer: 78.3% | State: 84.2%, 2023

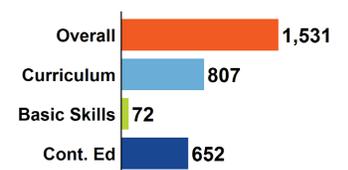
Top 3 Employers in Jackson County

Employer	Employment Range
Western Carolina University	1000+
Dlp Partner Midwest LLC	500-999
Jackson County	250-499

Top 3 industries in Jackson County

Industry	Jobs Percent
Educational Services	3,011 20.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	2,540 17.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,082 14.2%

Jackson County residents enrolled in NCCCS, Fall 2023



Jackson County is served by:

- Southwestern Workforce Development Board
- Southwestern Commission

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top Opportunities for Growth



First-Year Persistence

81% of Jackson County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education persist to their second year, below the state average of 84%.

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ Sub-Region, 2023

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

Adult Learners

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

35 Basic Skills
510 Continuing Education
251 Curriculum

13.6% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. Peer: 15.9% | State: 11.7%, 2023



10.4% of Jackson County residents have student loan debt, 0.0% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2024

Success of Jackson County High School Graduates

81.1% of students who enroll persist to their second year.

Peer: 79.6% | State: 83.8%, 2023

94.1% UNC | 63.9% NCCCS | NA NCICU

69.3% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. Peer: 55.5% | State: 60.0%, 2023

38.6% UNC | 27.1% NCCCS | <5% NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2023

- 1,262 of all college-goers attended Southwestern CC
- 315 of all college-goers attended Western Carolina University
- 106 of all college-goers attended Haywood CC

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

Top Opportunities for Growth

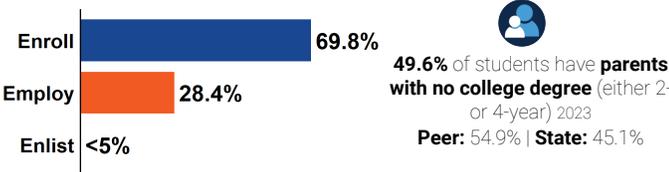


FAFSA Completion

49% of Jackson County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural - non-metro county average of 54%.

48.7% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 71 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. Peer: 54.0% | State: 55.0%

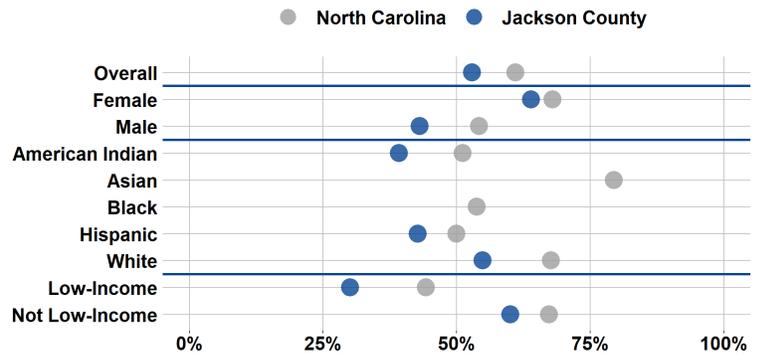
Post High School Graduation Intentions



84.0% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 32 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. Peer: 85.7% | State: 87.3% 2024

51.2% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. Peer: 52.6% | State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Jackson County, 2023



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

Top Opportunities for Growth



NC Pre-K Enrollment

47% of Jackson County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural - non-metro county average of 71%.

46.5% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program in 2024. 53 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. Peer: 71.0% | State: 57.2%

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

Jackson County Traditional Public Schools students:

23.2% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 763 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. Peer: 24.5% | State: 29.8%

30.8% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 847 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. Peer: 30.3% | State: 36.5%

31.7% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 746 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. Peer: 27.7% | State: 25.7%

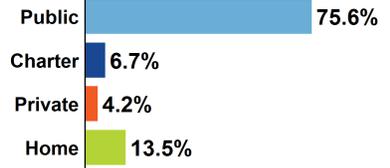
Jackson County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 255:1 compared to 332:1 in peer counties. 2024

1.0% of students drop out of high school (12 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 1
Traditional Public School(s): 9
Charter School(s): 1
Private School(s): 2
Home School(s): 385

4,440 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 649 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 131 concentrations. 63 (9.7%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Health Science; and Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security.

53 (<5%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

130 (50.4%) 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/