

Rutherford County

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



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

Educational Attainment

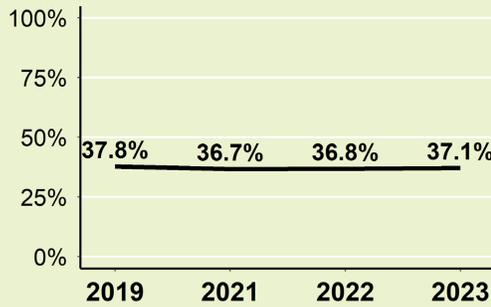
Rutherford County residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
5,372
37.1%

No Degree
9,094
62.9%

Residents Ages 25-44
14,466

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 Rutherford County Attainment Goal: 9,547 (Stretch Goal: 9,683)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 64,446
2023 Estimate: 65,507
Change: 1,061

Growth Rate

1.6% County vs. 3.8% State

Race/Ethnicity

Amer. Indian 0.2%
Asian/Pac. Isl. 0.6%
Black 8.1%
Hispanic 5.4%
Multiracial 3.9%
White 81.1%



\$50,714
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838



74.1%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%



54.7%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%



21.8%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%



18.0%
Single Parent Households (2023)
State: 17.0%



3.2%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

Top Opportunities for Growth



Family Sustaining Wage

37% of Rutherford County adults 25-44 earn a family sustaining wage, below the rural - non-metro county average of 40%.

In Asheville Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

67.8%

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

Top Misalignments

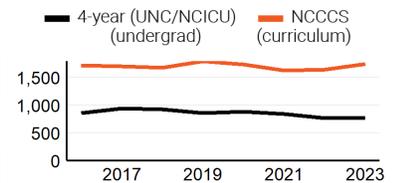
Job Openings vs. Degrees/Credentials

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

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

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	4.72%
Logisticians	3.51%
Physician Assistants	3.08%

Postsecondary Enrollment for Rutherford County Residents



97 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

3,023 graduates in 2020
68.9% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$35,824 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs), 2021

36.6% of adults (ages 25-44) in Rutherford County earned a family sustaining wage. Peer: 40.5% | State: 57.6%, 2023

15.6% of youth (ages 16-24) in Rutherford County were Opportunity Youth. Peer: 13.8% | State: 10.3%, 2023

76.8% of adults (ages 25-44) in Rutherford County participated in the labor force. Peer: 78.3% | State: 84.2%, 2023

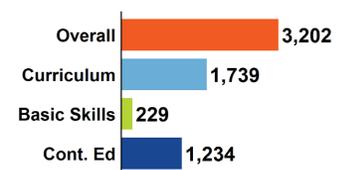
Top 3 Employers in Rutherford County

Employer	Employment Range
Rutherford County Board of Education	1000+
County of Rutherford	500-999
American Greetings Corporation	250-499

Top 3 industries in Rutherford County

Industry	Jobs Percent
Retail Trade	2,708 14.7%
Manufacturing	2,580 14.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,230 12.1%

Rutherford County residents enrolled in NCCCS, Fall 2023



Rutherford County is served by:

- Foothills Workforce Development Board
- Foothills Regional Commission

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top Opportunities for Growth



Adult Learners

20% of Rutherford County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the rural - non-metro county average of 16%.

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ Sub-Region, 2023

1,689 certificate | 1,451 associate | 1,326 bachelor's

Adult Learners

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

139 Basic Skills
1,054 Continuing Education
493 Curriculum

20.2% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. Peer: 15.9% | State: 11.7%, 2023



10.7% of Rutherford County residents have student loan debt, 1.4% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2024

Success of Rutherford County High School Graduates

75.7% of students who enroll persist to their second year.

Peer: 79.6% | State: 83.8%, 2023

86.5% UNC | 69.3% NCCCS | 80.0% NCICU

59.0% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. Peer: 55.5% | State: 60.0%, 2023

22.6% UNC | 25.4% NCCCS | 6.7% NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2023

- 2,524 of all college-goers attended Isothermal CC
- 266 of all college-goers attended Cleveland CC
- 165 of all college-goers attended Western Carolina University

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

Top Opportunities for Growth

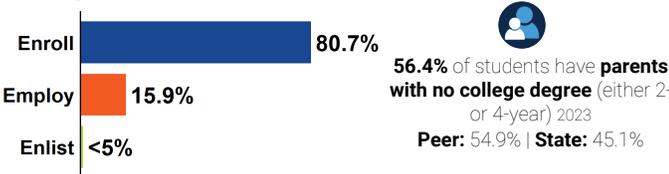


Postsecondary Enrollment

51% of Rutherford County seniors enroll in postsecondary education within 12 months of graduation, below the rural - non-metro county average of 52%.

60.7% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 87 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. Peer: 54.0% | State: 55.0%

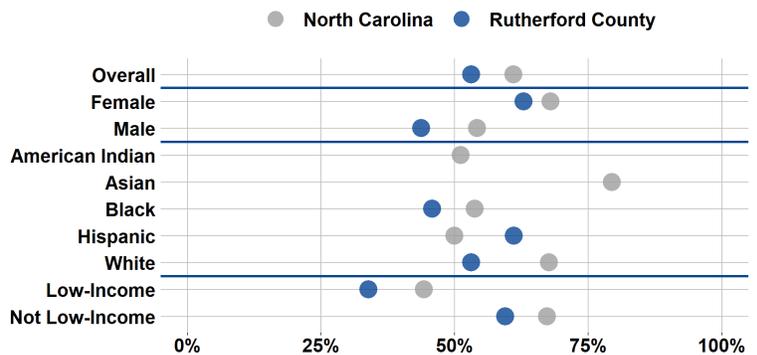
Post High School Graduation Intentions



88.8% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 34 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. Peer: 85.7% | State: 87.3% 2024

51.4% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. Peer: 52.6% | State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Rutherford County, 2023



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

Top Opportunities for Growth



Chronic Absenteeism

37% of Rutherford County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 28%.

64.9% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program in 2024. 43 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.

Rutherford County Traditional Public Schools students:

29.3% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 1,396 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. Peer: 24.5% | State: 29.8%

35.3% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 1,615 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. Peer: 30.3% | State: 36.5%

36.8% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 1,953 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. Peer: 27.7% | State: 25.7%

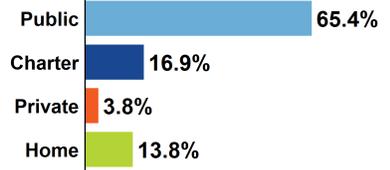
Rutherford County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 319:1 compared to 332:1 in peer counties. 2024

0.8% of students drop out of high school (18 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 1
Traditional Public School(s): 18
Charter School(s): 2
Private School(s): 7
Home School(s): 965

10,794 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 2,795 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 475 concentrations. 166 (5.9%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Human Services; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Hospitality & Tourism.

163 (7.4%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

207 (40.5%) 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/