

# Swain County

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



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

## Educational Attainment

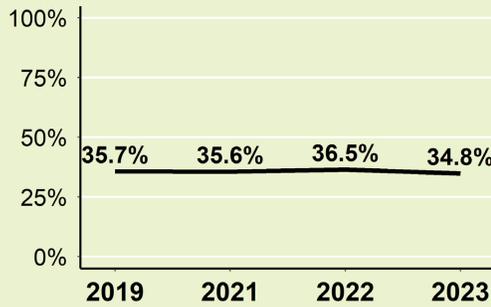
Swain County residents ages 25-44, 2023

**Have Degree or Credential**  
1,130  
34.8%

**No Degree**  
2,116  
65.2%

**Residents Ages 25-44**  
3,246

## 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 Swain County Attainment Goal: 1,475 (Stretch Goal: 1,506)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

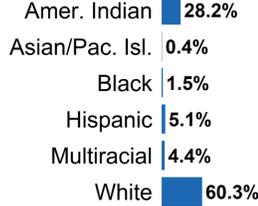
## Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 14,117  
2023 Estimate: 13,916  
Change: -201

## Growth Rate

-1.4% vs. 3.8%  
County State

## Race/Ethnicity



**\$54,357**  
Median Household Income (2023)  
State: \$70,838



**73.3%**  
Home Owners (2023)  
State: 66.3%



**51.2%**  
Households with Broadband (2023)  
State: 77.1%



**36.8%**  
Child Poverty Rate (2023)  
State: 17.6%



**22.7%**  
Single Parent Households (2023)  
State: 17.0%



**1.6%**  
Foreign Born (2023)  
State: 9.2%

## Top Opportunities for Growth



### Family Sustaining Wage

49% of Swain County adults 25-44 earn a family sustaining wage, below the state average of 58%.

## 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

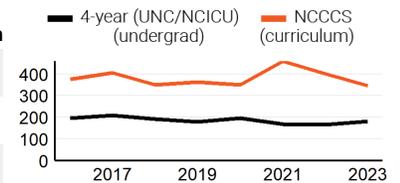
### Job Openings vs. Degrees/Credentials

- **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 Swain County Residents



1 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

**48.7%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Swain County earned a **family sustaining wage**. Peer: 40.5% | State: 57.6%, 2023

**12.7%** of youth (ages 16-24) in Swain County were **Opportunity Youth**. Peer: 13.8% | State: 10.3%, 2023

**78.5%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Swain County **participated in the labor force**. Peer: 78.3% | State: 84.2%, 2023

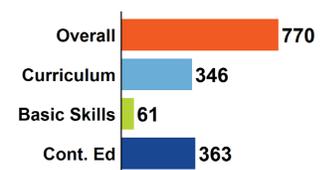
## Top 3 Employers in Swain County

Employer	Employment Range
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians	1000+
Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority	500-999
Nantahala Outdoor Center LLC	500-999

## Top 3 industries in Swain County

Industry	Jobs   Percent
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,822   42.4%
Public Administration	2,528   22.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	945   8.3%

## Swain County residents enrolled in NCCCS, Fall 2023



## Swain County is served by:

- Southwestern Workforce Development Board
- Southwestern Commission

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top Opportunities for Growth



First-Year Persistence

73% of Swain County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education persist to their second year, below the rural - non-metro county average of 80%.

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ Sub-Region, 2023

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

Adult Learners

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

- 10 Basic Skills
- 263 Continuing Education
- 116 Curriculum

19.2% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. Peer: 15.9% | State: 11.7%, 2023



10.3% of Swain County residents have student loan debt. NA of debt holders had student loans in default. 2024

Success of Swain County High School Graduates

73.0% of students who enroll persist to their second year.

Peer: 79.6% | State: 83.8%, 2023

95.0% UNC | 60.0% NCCCS | NA NCICU

53.6% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. Peer: 55.5% | State: 60.0%, 2023

24.6% UNC | 14.5% NCCCS | NA NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2023

- 642 of all college-goers attended Southwestern CC
- 81 of all college-goers attended Western Carolina University
- 27 of all college-goers attended Haywood CC

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

Top Opportunities for Growth

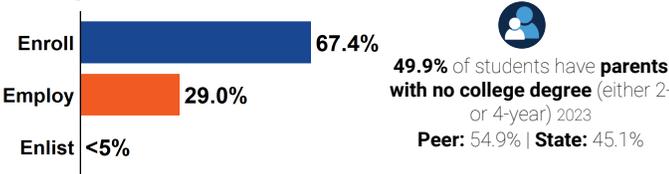


Postsecondary Enrollment

49% of Swain County seniors enroll in postsecondary education within 12 months of graduation, below the rural - non-metro county average of 52%.

55.6% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 24 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. Peer: 54.0% | State: 55.0%

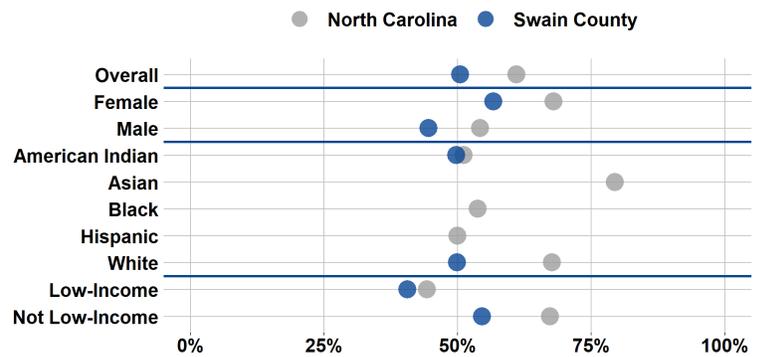
Post High School Graduation Intentions



84.5% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 14 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. Peer: 85.7% | State: 87.3% 2024

48.8% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. Peer: 52.6% | State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Swain 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

41% of Swain County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 28%.

Swain County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment (Goal: 75%). Peer: 71.0% | 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.

Swain County Traditional Public Schools students:

25.0% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 358 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. Peer: 24.5% | State: 29.8%

29.4% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 421 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. Peer: 30.3% | State: 36.5%

41.2% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 568 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. Peer: 27.7% | State: 25.7%

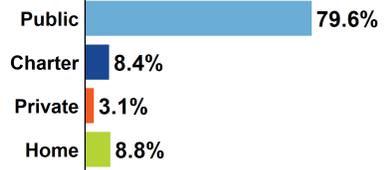
Swain County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 350:1 compared to 332:1 in peer counties. 2024

1.9% 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): 5  
Charter School(s): 1  
Private School(s): 2  
Home School(s): 119

2,240 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 244 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 138 concentrations. 180 (73.8%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Arts, Audio/Video Technology, & Communications; Health Science; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

35 (6.2%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

86 (78.9%) 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/](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/)