

Wilkes County

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



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

Educational Attainment

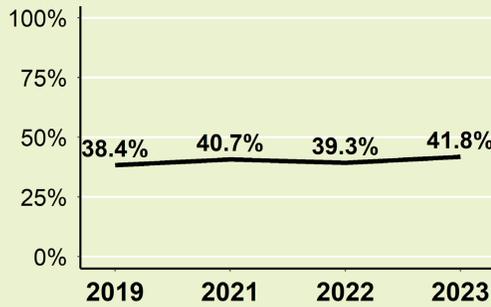
Wilkes County residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
6,048
41.8%

No Degree
8,415
58.2%

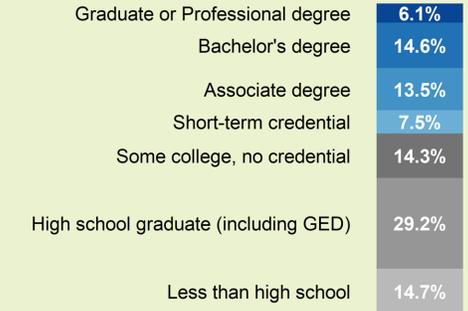
Residents Ages 25-44
14,463

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 Wilkes County Attainment Goal: 9,337 (Stretch Goal: 9,476)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 65,973
2023 Estimate: 66,013
Change: 40

Growth Rate

0.1% County vs. 3.8% State

Race/Ethnicity

Amer. Indian 0.2%
Asian/Pac. Isl. 0.7%
Black 3.7%
Hispanic 7.3%
Multiracial 2%
White 86.1%

\$50,848
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838

73.9%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%

76.4%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%

25.5%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%

17.3%
Single Parent Households (2023)
State: 17.0%

3.3%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

Top Opportunities for Growth



Family Sustaining Wage

35% of Wilkes County adults 25-44 earn a family sustaining wage, below the rural - non-metro county average of 40%.

In Boone-Wilkesboro Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

79.6%

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

Top Misalignments

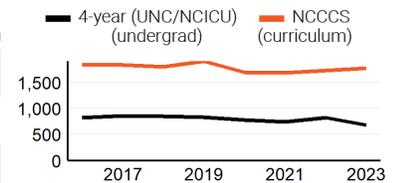
Job Openings vs. Degrees/Credentials

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

Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Boone-Wilkesboro Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	3.93%
Occupational Therapy Assistants	2.99%
Logisticians	2.98%

Postsecondary Enrollment for Wilkes County Residents



24 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

5,202 graduates in 2020
68.7% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$44,421 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs), 2021

34.7% of adults (ages 25-44) in Wilkes County earned a family sustaining wage. Peer: 40.5% | State: 57.6%, 2023

13.4% of youth (ages 16-24) in Wilkes County were Opportunity Youth. Peer: 13.8% | State: 10.3%, 2023

81.2% of adults (ages 25-44) in Wilkes County participated in the labor force. Peer: 78.3% | State: 84.2%, 2023

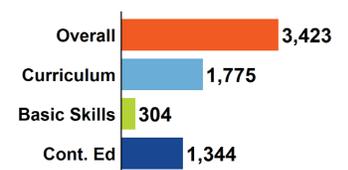
Top 3 Employers in Wilkes County

Employer	Employment Range
Tyson Foods Inc	1000+
Wilkes County Board of Education	500-999
Wilkes County	500-999

Top 3 industries in Wilkes County

Industry	Jobs Percent
Manufacturing	3,595 18.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,103 16.3%
Retail Trade	2,631 13.8%

Wilkes County residents enrolled in NCCCS, Fall 2023



Wilkes County is served by:

- High Country Workforce Development Board
- High Country Council of Governments

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top Opportunities for Growth



Adult Learners

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

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ Sub-Region, 2023

923 certificate | 534 associate | 4,232 bachelor's

Adult Learners

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

179 Basic Skills
1,176 Continuing Education
272 Curriculum

14.3% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. Peer: 15.9% | State: 11.7%, 2023



7.8% of Wilkes County residents have student loan debt, 2.4% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2024

Success of Wilkes County High School Graduates

81.6% of students who enroll persist to their second year.

Peer: 79.6% | State: 83.8%, 2023

91.2% UNC | 76.7% NCCCS | 92.9% NCICU

61.6% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. Peer: 55.5% | State: 60.0%, 2023

27.5% UNC | 24.2% NCCCS | 6.1% NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2023

- 2,748 of all college-goers attended Wilkes CC
- 244 of all college-goers attended Surry CC
- 203 of all college-goers attended Appalachian State University

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

Top Opportunities for Growth

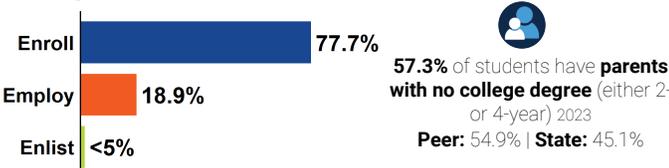


FAFSA Completion

63% of Wilkes County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the state goal of 80%.

63.0% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 100 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. Peer: 54.0% | State: 55.0%

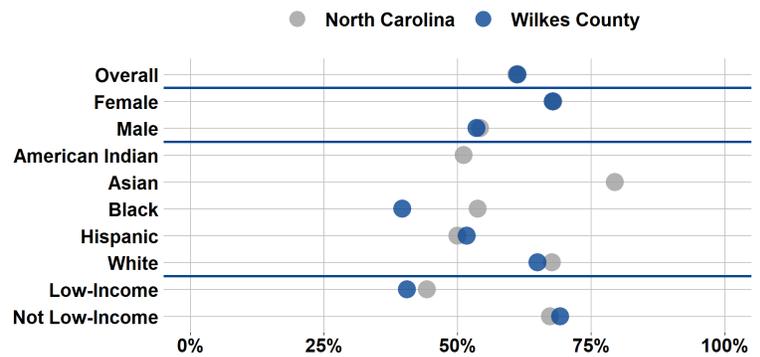
Post High School Graduation Intentions



91.4% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 23 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. Peer: 85.7% | State: 87.3% 2024

59.5% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. Peer: 52.6% | State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Wilkes 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

Wilkes County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 352:1, above the rural - non-metro county average of 332:1.

Wilkes 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.

Wilkes County Traditional Public Schools students:

28.5% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 1,642 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. Peer: 24.5% | State: 29.8%

38.4% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 1,758 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. Peer: 30.3% | State: 36.5%

19.7% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 745 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. Peer: 27.7% | State: 25.7%

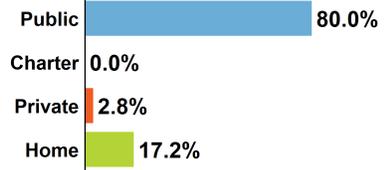
Wilkes County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 352:1 compared to 332:1 in peer counties. 2024

1.7% of students drop out of high school (47 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 1
Traditional Public School(s): 22
Charter School(s): 0
Private School(s): 2
Home School(s): 1,133

10,222 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 2,368 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 544 concentrations. 610 (25.8%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Health Science; Arts, Audio/Video Technology, & Communications; and Human Services.

158 (6.2%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

410 (67.1%) 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/