Southeast
Prosperity Zone (PZ)
myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles

Counties in Southeast PZ:
Brunswick, Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, and Wayne

Southeast PZ Served By:
Cape Fear and Eastern Carolina Councils of Governments
and Cape Fear and Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Boards

Educational Attainment
Southeast residents ages 25-44, 2023

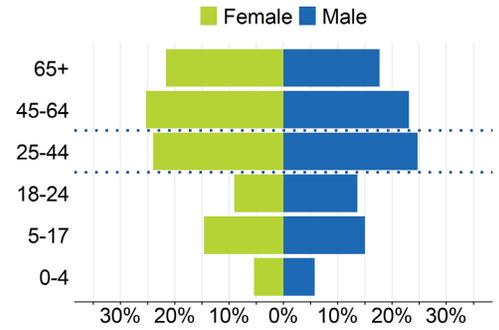**Have Degree or Credential**
132,658
50.3%

No Degree
130,919
49.7%

Residents Ages 25-44
263,577

Educational Level Breakdown, 2023

Graduate or Professional degree	8.9%
Bachelor's degree	21.5%
Associate degree	12.5%
Short-term credential	7.5%
Some college, no credential	16.8%
High school graduate (including GED)	24.5%
Less than high school	8.4%

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

Age Structure, 2023

Female / Male

Age	
65+	
45-64	
25-44	
18-24	
5-17	
0-4	

30% 20% 10% 0% 10% 20% 30%

2030 Proposed Southeast Attainment Goal: 178,458

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight
2020 Census: 1,058,629
2023 Estimate: 1,118,474
Change: 59,845

Growth Rate
5.7% vs. **3.8%**
County   State

Race/Ethnicity, 2023
Amer. Indian	0.3%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	1.3%
Black	16%
Hispanic	9.8%
Multiracial	4.5%
White	67.8%

$66,317 Median Household Income (2023) **State:** $70,838

67.9% Home Owners (2023) **State:** 66.3%

75.2% Households with Broadband (2023) **State:** 77.1%

18.6% Child Poverty Rate (2023) **State:** 17.6%

15.1% Single Parent Households (2023) **State:** 17.0%

5.0% Foreign Born (2023) **State:** 9.2%

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

In Southeast Prosperity Zone:
81.3%
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
- **Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** Jobs > Creds

1,220 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:
9,381 graduates in 2020
65.1% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
$41,694 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs), 2021

48.3% of adults (ages 25-44) in Southeast earned a **family sustaining wage. State:** 57.6%, 2023

10.5% of youth (ages 16-24) in Southeast were **Opportunity Youth. State:** 10.3%, 2023

82.1% of adults (ages 25-44) in Southeast **participated in the labor force. State:** 84.2%, 2023

Top Industries in Southeast PZ, 2024 Q2

Industry Name	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Health Care and Social Assistance	61,792	$1,108
Retail Trade	57,774	$670
Accommodation and Food Services	53,149	$446
Manufacturing	35,149	$1,169
Construction	25,661	$1,180

Top Job Sectors in Southeast PZ, 2024 Q2

Job Sector	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Private	332,767	$962
Local Government	44,312	$1,015
Federal Government	16,061	$1,339
State Government	15,574	$1,094

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ, 2023

3,810 certificate | **4,438** associate | **4,267** bachelor's

Adult Learners

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

1,812 Basic Skills
13,664 Continuing Education
6,673 Curriculum

16.8% of residents (aged 25-44) **have some college but no degree. State:** 11.7%, 2023

Success of Southeast High School Graduates

80.8% of students who enroll **persist to their second year. State:** 83.8%, 2023

93.7% UNC | **71.2%** NCCCS | **80.9%** NCICU

58.7% of students who enroll **earn a degree or certificate** within 6 years. **State:** 60.0%, 2023

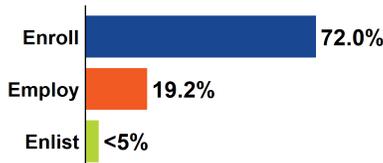**31.1%** UNC | **17.6%** NCCCS | **<5%** NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2024

- **12,441** of all college-goers attended **Cape Fear CC**
- **5,151** of all college-goers attended **Coastal Carolina CC**
- **4,775** of all college-goers attended **Wayne CC**

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

51.6% of 2024 high school class **completed the FAFSA** as of Sept. 27, 2024. 2,622 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of **80%. State:** 55.0%
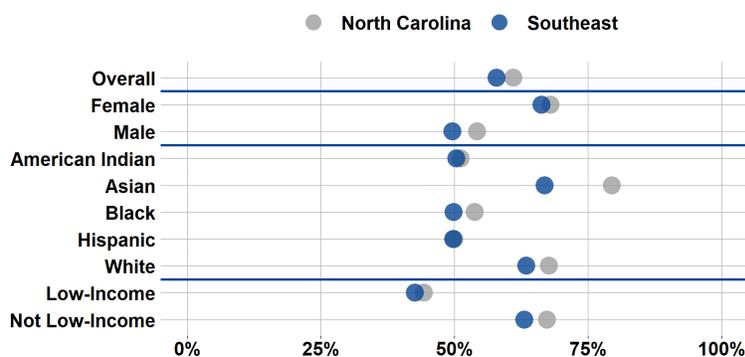
Post High School Graduation Intentions, 2023

Enroll **72.0%**
Employ **19.2%**
Enlist **<5%**

86.1% of 9th graders **graduated within four years.** 999 more needed to meet state goal of **95%. State:** 87.3% 2024

56.1% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months. **State:** 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Southeast, 2023

● North Carolina ● Southeast

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

ACADEMIC READINESS

65.2% of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program** in 2024. 534 more needed to meet state goal of **75%. State:** 57.2%

Southeast Traditional Public Schools students:

28.4% of 3-8 graders **earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading** in 2024. 35,543 more needed to meet state goal of **86%. State:** 29.8%

35.1% of 3-8 graders **earned college-and-career-ready scores in math** in 2024. 23,356 more needed to meet state goal of **73%. State:** 36.5%
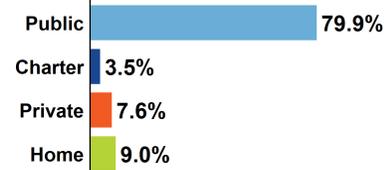
26.8% of students were **chronically absent from school** in 2024. 22,610 fewer needed to meet state goal of **11%. State:** 25.7%

1.9% of students **drop out of high school** (843 total students), compared to **2.1%** statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 12
Traditional Public School(s): 241
Charter School(s): 16
Private School(s): 100
Home School(s): 9,201

Public **79.9%**
Charter **3.5%**
Private **7.6%**
Home **9.0%**

168,908 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.

Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed **34,717 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 6,779 concentrations. 6,306 (18.2%) of credentials were industry-valued** in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Human Services; Health Science; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

4,306 (10.4%) high school students took at least one **AP, IB, or CIE exam. State:** 16.8% (2023).

4,178 (41.7%) high school graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs. State:** 36.0% (2024).