

Southwest

Prosperity Zone (PZ)

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



Counties in Southwest PZ:

Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, and Union Counties

Southwest PZ Served By:

Centralina and Foothills Councils of Governments and Centralina, Charlotte Works, Foothills, and Gaston County Workforce Development Boards

Educational Attainment

Southwest residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
417,798
60.5%

No Degree
272,359
39.5%

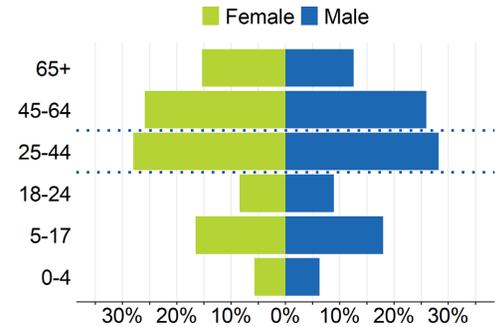
Residents Ages 25-44
690,157

Educational Level Breakdown, 2023

Graduate or Professional degree	14.4%
Bachelor's degree	29.6%
Associate degree	9.1%
Short-term credential	7.5%
Some college, no credential	11.1%
High school graduate (including GED)	19.3%
Less than high school	9.0%

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

Age Structure, 2023



2030 Proposed Southwest Attainment Goal: 537,030

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 2,411,985
2023 Estimate: 2,533,431
Change: 121,446

Growth Rate

5.0% County vs. **3.8%** State

Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Amer. Indian	0.1%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	4.3%
Black	21.8%
Hispanic	12.5%
Multiracial	3.7%
White	57.2%



\$84,492
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838



64.4%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%



79.3%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%



15.0%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%



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



11.7%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

In Southwest Prosperity Zone:

79.7%

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
- **Business Management & Administration** Jobs > Creds
- **Health Science** Jobs > Creds

3,571 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

12,495 graduates in 2020
74.0% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$45,387 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs), 2021

59.4% of adults (ages 25-44) in Southwest earned a **family sustaining wage**. State: 57.6%, 2023

11.7% of youth (ages 16-24) in Southwest were **Opportunity Youth**. State: 10.3%, 2023

85.7% of adults (ages 25-44) in Southwest **participated in the labor force**. State: 84.2%, 2023

Top Industries in Southwest PZ, 2024 Q2

Industry Name	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Health Care and Social Assistance	155,695	\$1,491
Retail Trade	125,852	\$773
Accommodation and Food Services	116,091	\$517
Manufacturing	102,464	\$1,406
Finance and Insurance	94,159	\$2,357

Top Job Sectors in Southwest PZ, 2024 Q2

Job Sector	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Private	1,103,981	\$1,369
Local Government	125,404	\$1,487
State Government	15,194	\$1,167
Federal Government	11,106	\$1,738

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ, 2023

4,911 certificate | 5,727 associate | 8,744 bachelor's

Adult Learners

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

4,726 Basic Skills
17,464 Continuing Education
9,960 Curriculum

11.1% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. State: 11.7%, 2023

Success of Southwest High School Graduates

85.0% of students who enroll persist to their second year. State: 83.8%, 2023

94.1% UNC | 70.6% NCCCS | 84.8% NCICU

60.8% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. State: 60.0%, 2023

35.5% UNC | 9.1% NCCCS | 6.0% NCICU

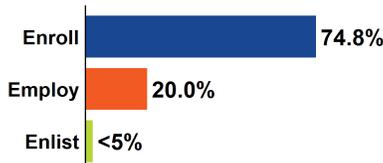
Top destinations of all college-goers, 2024

- 26,378 of all college-goers attended Central Piedmont CC
- 11,270 of all college-goers attended Rowan-Cabarrus CC
- 11,139 of all college-goers attended UNC_Charlotte

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

53.6% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 6,264 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. State: 55.0%

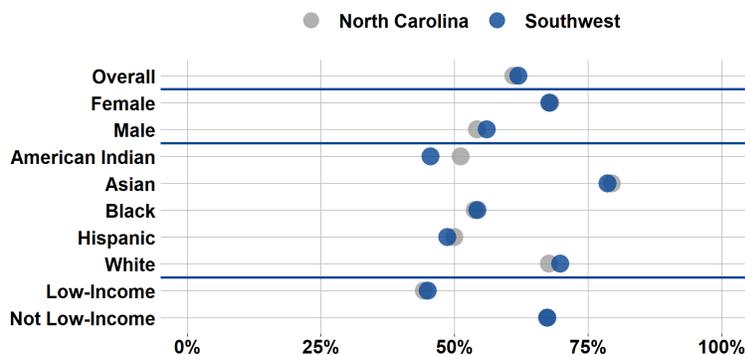
Post High School Graduation Intentions, 2023



86.9% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 2,287 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. State: 87.3% 2024

60.2% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Southwest, 2023



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

42.6% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program in 2024. 3,497 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. State: 57.2%

Southwest Traditional Public Schools students:

30.8% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 83,421 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. State: 29.8%

40.0% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 49,802 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. State: 36.5%

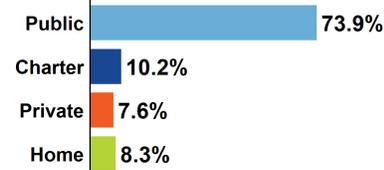
22.9% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 41,872 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. State: 25.7%

2.3% of students drop out of high school (2,593 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 12
Traditional Public School(s): 504
Charter School(s): 57
Private School(s): 197
Home School(s): 22,998

449,528 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 55,544 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 14,408 concentrations. 14,834 (26.7%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Health Science; Hospitality & Tourism; and Human Services.

20,985 (20.1%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

8,372 (33.1%) 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/