

# High Country

## Workforce Development Board (WDB)

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



**Counties in Workforce Development Board:**  
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties

### Educational Attainment

High Country WDB residents ages 25-44, 2023

**Have Degree or Credential**  
21,790  
48.9%

**No Degree**  
22,737  
51.1%

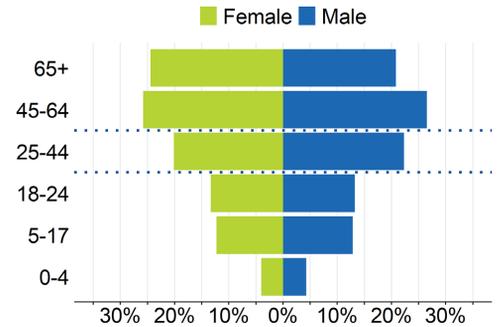
**Residents Ages 25-44**  
44,527

### Educational Level Breakdown, 2023

Graduate or Professional degree	9.7%
Bachelor's degree	20.0%
Associate degree	11.8%
Short-term credential	7.5%
Some college, no credential	13.5%
High school graduate (including GED)	26.6%
Less than high school	11.0%

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

### Age Structure, 2023



2030 Proposed High Country Attainment Goal: 34,980

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

### Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 208,698  
2023 Estimate: 210,664  
Change: 1,966

### Growth Rate

**0.9%** vs. **3.8%**  
County State

### Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Amer. Indian	0.2%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	0.7%
Black	2.3%
Hispanic	6.6%
Multiracial	1.9%
White	88.3%



**\$54,151**  
Median Household Income (2023)  
State: \$70,838



**72.6%**  
Home Owners (2023)  
State: 66.3%



**72.7%**  
Households with Broadband (2023)  
State: 77.1%



**18.9%**  
Child Poverty Rate (2023)  
State: 17.6%



**12.9%**  
Single Parent Households (2023)  
State: 17.0%



**3.5%**  
Foreign Born (2023)  
State: 9.2%

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

### In High Country:

**63** 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

**39.3%** of adults (ages 25-44) in High Country earned a **family sustaining wage**. State: 57.6%, 2023

**7.7%** of youth (ages 16-24) in High Country were **Opportunity Youth**. State: 10.3%, 2023

**80.5%** of adults (ages 25-44) in High Country **participated in the labor force**. State: 84.2%, 2023

### High Country Labor Force Snapshot, 2024 Q2

Total Jobs	<b>72,548</b>	Business Establishments	<b>6,205</b>
Employed	<b>91,635</b>	Unemployed	<b>3,725</b>
Avg. Weekly Wage	<b>\$882</b>		

### Top Industries in High Country, 2024 Q2

Industry Name	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Health Care and Social Assistance	<b>10,557</b>	<b>\$1,068</b>
Retail Trade	<b>10,018</b>	<b>\$592</b>
Educational Services	<b>9,032</b>	<b>\$1,005</b>
Accommodation and Food Services	<b>8,987</b>	<b>\$407</b>
Public Administration	<b>4,629</b>	<b>\$949</b>

### Top Job Sectors in High Country, 2024 Q2

Job Sector	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Private	<b>58,504</b>	<b>\$855</b>
Local Government	<b>7,664</b>	<b>\$824</b>
State Government	<b>5,879</b>	<b>\$1,191</b>
Federal Government	<b>501</b>	<b>\$1,204</b>

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Degree Credentials Awarded in High Country, 2023

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

Adult Learners

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

372 Basic Skills  
3,261 Continuing Education  
737 Curriculum

13.5% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. State: 11.7%, 2023

Success of High Country High School Graduates

82.5% of students who enroll persist to their second year. State: 83.8%, 2023

91.8% UNC | 73.7% NCCCS | 90.9% NCICU

62.5% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. State: 60.0%, 2023

27.3% UNC | 21.7% NCCCS | 5.9% NCICU

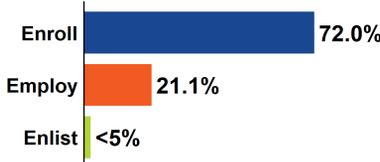
Top destinations of all college-goers, 2024

- 4,358 of all college-goers attended Wilkes CC
- 1,785 of all college-goers attended Mayland CC
- 1,377 of all college-goers attended Caldwell CC and TI

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

59.4% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 333 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. State: 55.0%

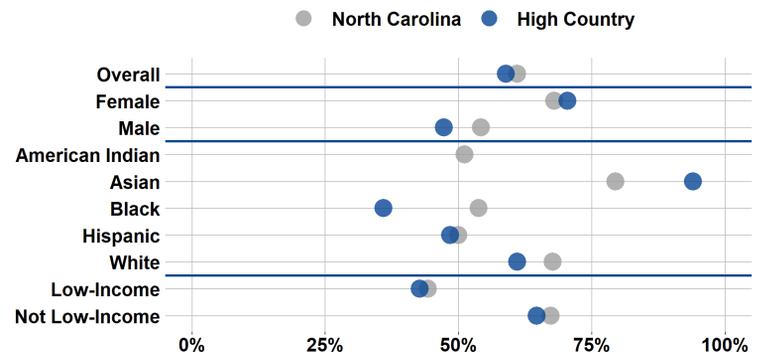
Post High School Graduation Intentions, 2023



89.3% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 104 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. State: 87.3% 2024

57.1% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in WDB, 2023



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

High Country has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment. (Goal: 75%). State: 57.2% 2024

High Country Traditional Public Schools students:

32.2% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 5,341 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. State: 29.8%

40.5% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 3,233 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. State: 36.5%

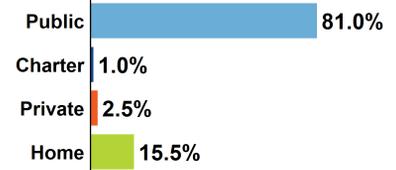
18.6% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 1,761 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. State: 25.7%

1.7% of students drop out of high school (131 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 7  
Traditional Public School(s): 65  
Charter School(s): 2  
Private School(s): 12  
Home School(s): 2,640

27,361 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 8,500 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 1,504 concentrations. 1,731 (20.4%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Health Science; Human Services; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

687 (9.7%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

1,131 (66.5%) 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/](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/)