Buncombe County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Buncombe County Attainment Goal: 57,403 (74%)

Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 238,318
2020 Census: 269,452
Change: 31,134

Growth Rate
County: 13.1% vs. State: 9.5%

Educational Attainment
Buncombe County residents ages 25-44, 2020

No Degree: 40.0% (28,290)
Have Degree or Credential: 60.0% (42,493)

Note: Numbers may add to more than 100% due to rounding

Top Opportunities for Growth
These three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Buncombe County to improve future attainment outcomes.

NC Pre-K Enrollment
41% of Buncombe County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the suburban county average of 45%.

Transition to Postsecondary
51% of Buncombe County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the suburban county average of 55%.

Chronic Absenteeism
28% of Buncombe County students are chronically absent from school, above the suburban county average of 26%.

Impact of Covid-19 on Education Pipeline
Covid-19 has affected critical transition points along the education continuum.

How students in Buncombe County traditional schools are currently doing:
To meet state goals, each year Buncombe County needs:

- 360 more eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 41%). 2022
- 4,824 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 31%). 2022
- 6,007 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 34%). 2022
- 97 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 91%). 2021
- 4,313 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 28%). 2021

Buncombe County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 262:1 versus 336:1 in peer counties. 2021

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Buncombe County, 2021

School Choice
38,187 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Buncombe County in the 2021-22 school year.

Career and College Preparation
1,321 high school students took at least one AP course (16%) versus 15% in peer counties (2021).
Students in Buncombe County completed 1,286 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Human Services; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Buncombe County, 2021

- 56% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022. (485 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of 80%).
  https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/
- 76% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 75% in peer counties. 2021
- 51% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

42% of Buncombe County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 49% in peer counties.
**Buncombe County 2022 Attainment Profile**

### Success of Buncombe County High School Graduates

**Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020**
- 48% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
- 15% of college-goers attended a private 4-year college
- 36% of college-goers attended a public 2-year college
- <5% of college-goers attended a private 2-year college
- 85% of college-goers attended an in-state college

- 78% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 77% in peer counties.
- 65% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 60% in peer counties.

### Adult Learners

**Buncombe County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021**
- 677 Basic Skills
- 3,332 Continuing Education
- 5,098 Curriculum

14% of Buncombe County residents have student loan debt; 9% of debt holders had student loans in default.

### In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

- **71.6%** of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

**636** Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

**UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:**
- 3,023 graduates in 2020
- 69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- $35,824 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:
- 7,566 in Basic Services
- 3,523 in Career Services
- 260 in Education Services

11.5% of young adults ages 16-24 in Buncombe County were not working and not in school versus 11.2% in peer counties.

### Promising Attainment Practices

The new Promising Attainment Practices Database is a curated, searchable, and filterable collection of about 250 county, region, and state-level initiatives and programs that directly address various components of the state’s attainment challenge. The Database allows local and regional initiative leaders and other stakeholders to identify groups across the state who are developing or operating initiatives designed to boost attainment.

Follow link to discover how Buncombe County has been meeting local needs:
[https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Buncombe](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Buncombe)

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit: