

Caldwell County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



Hickory
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural - Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1 (2023)
Charter Schools: 1 (2023)

2030 Proposed Caldwell County Attainment Goal: 10,959 (Stretch Goal: 11,149)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 80,664
2022 Estimate: 80,492
Change: -172

Growth Rate

-0.2% vs. 2.5%
County State



\$53,586
Median Household Income (2022)
State: \$67,516



75%
Home Owners (2022)
State: 67%



20.0%
Child Poverty Rate (2022)
State: 17.2%



16.7%
Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)
State: 10.9%



64%
Households with Broadband (2022)
State: 77%



3.6%
Unemployment Rate (2022)
State: 3.7%

Educational Attainment

Caldwell County residents ages 25-44, 2022

Less than high school High school graduate (including GED) Some college, no credential Short-term credential Associate degree Bachelor's degree Graduate or professional degree



No Degree
11,003
61.6%



Have Degree or Credential
6,847
38.4%



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

Top Opportunities for Growth

These three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Caldwell County to improve future attainment outcomes.



Math Performance

28% of Caldwell County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Math, below the rural - metro county average of 30%.



Adult Learners

18% of Caldwell County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the rural - metro county average of 17%.



High School Graduation

84% of Caldwell County 9th graders complete high school in 4 years or less, below the rural - metro county average of 85%.

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 Caldwell County has been meeting local needs:

https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Caldwell

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

In Hickory Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

70.2%

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

Top areas of misalignment:

Health Science bachelor's and below bachelor's
Business Management & Administration bachelor's
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics below bachelor's



359 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

2,139 graduates in 2020

80% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021

\$37,952 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

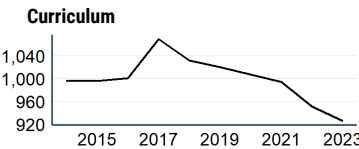


45% of adults (ages 25-44) in Caldwell County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

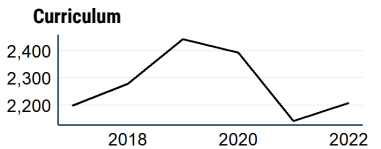
Caldwell County is served by:

Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board
Western Piedmont Council of Governments

UNC System College Enrollment



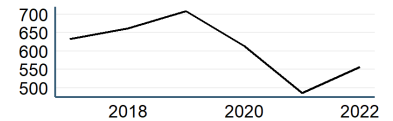
NC Community College Enrollment



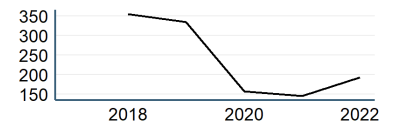
Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Hickory Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	4%
Logisticians	3%
Physician Assistants	3%

First-time Curriculum Enrollments



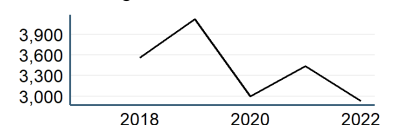
Basic Skills



Top 3 Employers in Caldwell County

Employer	Employment Range
Merchants Distributors Llc	1000+
Caldwell County Schools	1000+
NC Health	1000+

Continuing Education



POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Adult Learners

Hickory Sub-Prosperity Zone post-secondary enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

- 478 Basic Skills
- 8,660 Continuing Education
- 1,924 Curriculum

9% of Caldwell County residents have **student loan debt**; 6% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2022

Success of Caldwell County High School Graduates

- 80% of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 79% in peer counties. 2022
- 58% of students who enroll **earn a degree or certificate** within 6 years versus 56% in peer counties. 2022

Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- 2,993 of all college-goers attended **Caldwell CC and TI**
- 344 of all college-goers attended **Catawba Valley CC**
- 209 of all college-goers attended **Western Piedmont CC**

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

- 60% of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 147 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 71% of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 68% in peer counties. 2022
- 52% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 51% in peer counties. 2022

56% of Caldwell County students have **parents with no college degree** (either 2- or 4-year) versus 55% in peer counties.

ACADEMIC READINESS

How students in Caldwell County traditional schools are doing:

- 62% of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**, compared to 53% statewide; 59 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. 2023
- 26% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**, compared to 30% statewide; 2,799 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 28% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**, compared to 35% statewide; 2,692 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 84% of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to 87% statewide; 97 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 28% of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to 27% statewide; 1,811 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Caldwell County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 333:1 versus 362:1 in peer counties. 2023

2% of students **drop out of high school** (82 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2023

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

1,720 certificate | 2,199 associate | 327 bachelor's

Postsecondary assets in Hickory Prosperity Zone sub-region

Public, 4-year or above

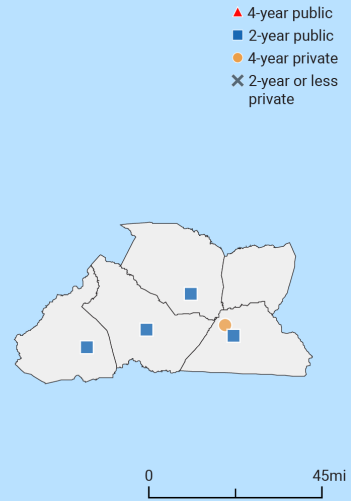
Public, 2-year

Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Community College, McDowell Technical Community College, Western Piedmont Community College

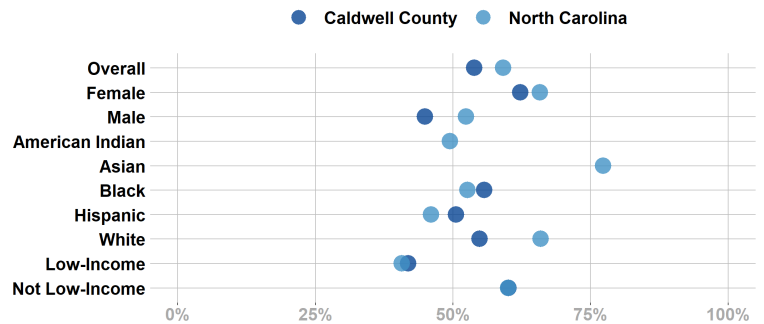
Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above

Lenoir-Rhyne University

Private not-for-profit, 2-year



Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Caldwell County, 2022

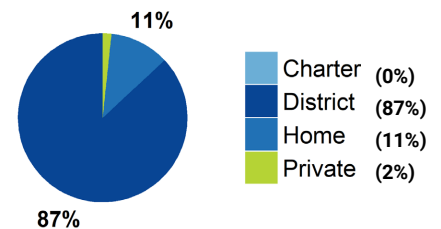


Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

School Choice

11,979 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Caldwell County in the 2022-23 school year.

Note: This profile focuses on outcomes of students enrolled in district schools.



Access to Postsecondary Credits

Students in Caldwell County completed 6,668 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (1,084 (16%) were industry-valued credentials) and 497 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Health Science; and Architecture and Construction.

219 high school students took at least one **AP test** (6%) versus 8% in peer counties (2023).

415 high school students participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (56%) versus 43% in peer counties (2023).

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

dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/