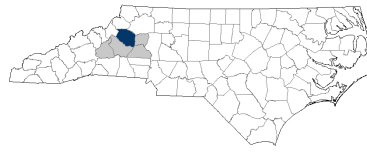


# Caldwell County

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% County vs. 2.5% 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 (2021)  
State: 12.1%



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.



### Chronic Absenteeism

40% of Caldwell County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - metro county average of 34%.



### 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%.

## 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](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)



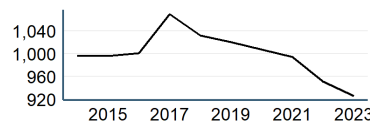
45% of adults (ages 25-44) in Caldwell County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

### Caldwell County is served by:

Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board  
Western Piedmont Council of Governments

### UNC System College Enrollment

#### Curriculum



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

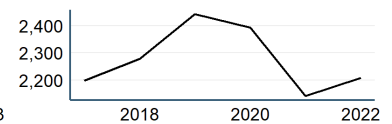
Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	4%
Logisticians	3%
Physician Assistants	3%

### Top 3 Employers in Caldwell County

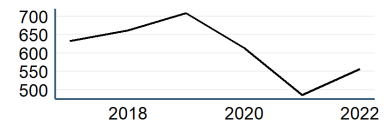
Employer	Employment Range
Merchants Distributors Llc	1000+
Caldwell County Schools	1000+
NC Health	1000+

### NC Community College Enrollment

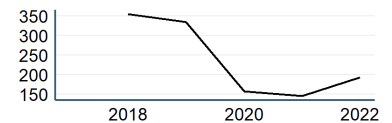
#### Curriculum



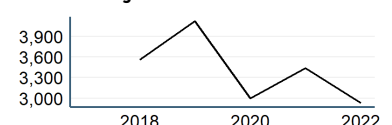
#### First-time Curriculum Enrollments



#### Basic Skills



#### Continuing Education



## Adult Learners

## Caldwell County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

**193** Basic Skills  
**2,933** Continuing Education  
**2,209** 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**

• **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



**57%** of Caldwell County students have **parents with no college degree** (either 2- or 4-year) versus **57%** in peer counties.

## 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

• **40%** of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to **32%** statewide; 3,241 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2022



Caldwell County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of **333:1** versus **362:1** in peer counties. 2022



**3%** of students **drop out of high school** (122 total students), compared to **2%** statewide. 2022

## 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

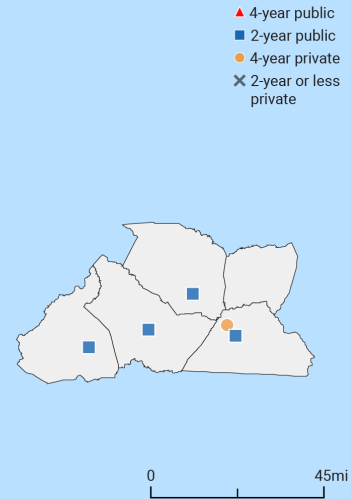
## Public, 2-year

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

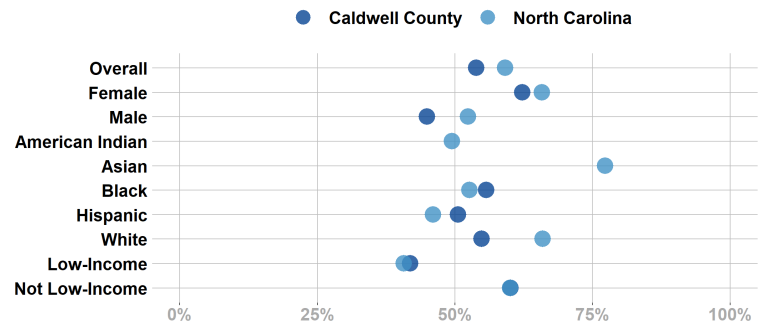
## Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above

Lenoir-Rhyne University

## Private not-for-profit, 2-year



## Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Caldwell County, 2022

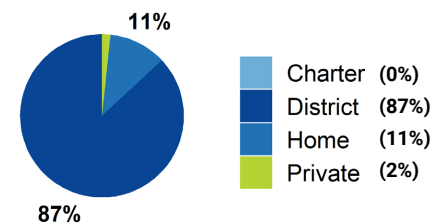


Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

## 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 **6,686 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials** (industry-valued credential data available in Spring 2024) and **496 concentrations** in 2022. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Health Science; and Architecture and Construction.



**133 high school students** took at least one **AP course** (<5%) versus **7%** in peer counties (2022).



**671 high school students** participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (**45%**) versus **31%** in peer counties (2022).

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/)