Catawba County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Catawba County Attainment Goal: 23,455 (56%)

Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 154,358
2020 Census: 160,610
Change: 6,252

Growth Rate
4.0% vs. 9.5% State

Median Household Income (2020)
$52,737

Child Poverty Rate (2020)
18.3%

Home Owners (2020)
71%

Local Education Agencies: 3

Charter Schools: 1

Peer County Type: Suburban

Hickory
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Educational Attainment
Catawba County residents ages 25-44, 2020

No Degree
53.7%
20,134

Have Degree or Credential
46.3%
17,373

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

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

FAFSA Completion
51% of Catawba County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the suburban county average of 57%.

First-Year Persistence
74% of Catawba County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the suburban county average of 77%.

Opportunity Youth
13% of Catawba County youth ages 16-24 are not working and not in school, above the suburban county average of 11%.

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

K-12 Enrollment (district schools)
-4.1% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20

Postsecondary Enrollment
-6.6% 2021 vs. 2020

FAFSA Completion
-16.2% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19

Postsecondary Intentions
-4.4% 2020-21 vs. 2018-19

Data Disruptions
- College-and-Career-Ready in Reading
- College-and-Career-Ready in Math
- Chronic Absenteeism

How students in Catawba County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Catawba County needs:

- 254 more eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 46%). 2022
- 4,505 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 28%). 2022
- 5,016 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 36%). 2022
- 139 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 87%). 2021
- 2,893 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 24%). 2021

Catawba County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 334:1 versus 336:1 in peer counties. 2021

51% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022. (411 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

55% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

55% of Catawba County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 49% in peer counties.

School Choice
26,218 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Catawba County in the 2021-22 school year.

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

Career and College Preparation
783 high school students took at least one AP course (12%) versus 15% in peer counties (2021).

Students in Catawba County completed 665 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Human Services; and Arts, Audio/Video Technology, & Communications.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Catawba County, 2021

Note: Outcomes for demographic groups with fewer than 10 students are not displayed.
Catawba County 2022 Attainment Profile

**Success of Catawba County High School Graduates**

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- 37% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
- 16% of college-goers attended a private 4-year college
- 46% of college-goers attended a public 2-year college
- <5% of college-goers attended a private 2-year college
- 93% of college-goers attended an in-state college

- 74% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 77% in peer counties. 2021
- 65% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 60% in peer counties. 2021

**Adult Learners**

Catawba County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 2,163 Continuing Education
- 3,621 Curriculum

- 12% of Catawba County residents have student loan debt; 7% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2020

**In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:**

70.2% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

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)

In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 7,184 in Basic Services
- 2,684 in Career Services
- 378 in Education Services

13.3% of young adults ages 16-24 in Catawba County were not working and not in school versus 11.2% in peer counties. 2019

**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 Catawba County has been meeting local needs:

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

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

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