

Cherokee County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural - Non-Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1 (2023)
Charter Schools: 0 (2023)

2030 Proposed Cherokee County Attainment Goal: 4,455 (Stretch Goal: 4,492)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 28,769
 2022 Estimate: 29,512
 Change: 743

Growth Rate

2.6% County vs. **2.5%** State

\$51,607
 Median Household Income (2022)
 State: \$67,516

81%
 Home Owners (2022)
 State: 67%

22.8%
 Child Poverty Rate (2022)
 State: 17.2%

5.8%
 Opportunity Youth Rate (2021)
 State: 12.1%

58%
 Households with Broadband (2022)
 State: 77%

4.0%
 Unemployment Rate (2022)
 State: 3.7%

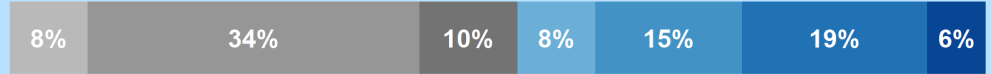
Educational Attainment

Cherokee 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 or Credential
2,735
 52.2%

Have Degree or Credential
2,504
 47.8%



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

Top Opportunities for Growth

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



Chronic Absenteeism

45% of Cherokee County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 35%.



NC Pre-K Enrollment

63% of Cherokee County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural - non-metro county average of 68%.



FAFSA Completion

60% of Cherokee County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural - non-metro county average of 61%.

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 Cherokee County has been meeting local needs:

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

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

In Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

80.1%

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

Top areas of misalignment:

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

15 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

3,111 graduates in 2020

69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021

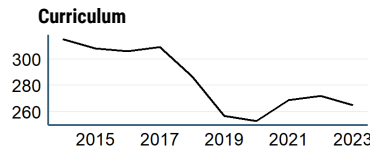
\$41,526 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

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

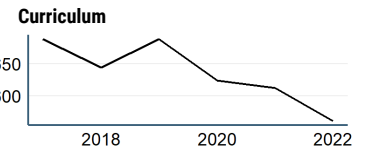
Cherokee County is served by:

Southwestern Workforce Development Board
 Southwestern Commission

UNC System College Enrollment



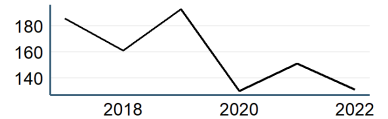
NC Community College Enrollment



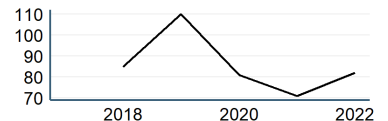
Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	4%
Logisticians	4%
Medical and Health Services Managers	3%

First-time Curriculum Enrollments



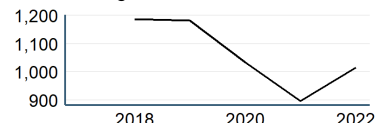
Basic Skills



Top 3 Employers in Cherokee County

Employer	Employment Range
Cherokee County Board Of Education	500-999
Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital	250-499
Moog Inc	250-499

Continuing Education



Adult Learners

Cherokee County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

- 82 Basic Skills
- 1,016 Continuing Education
- 561 Curriculum

8% of Cherokee County residents have **student loan debt**; 13% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2022

Success of Cherokee County High School Graduates

- 80% of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 53% of students who enroll **earn a degree or certificate** within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2022

Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- 1,020 of all college-goers attended **Tri-County CC**
- 56 of all college-goers attended **Southwestern CC**
- 24 of all college-goers attended **Western Carolina University**

- 60% of seniors **completed the FAFSA** in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 42 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 66% of graduates reported **intentions to enroll** in a postsecondary institution versus 68% in peer counties. 2022
- 56% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months versus 52% in peer counties. 2022

48% of Cherokee County students have **parents with no college degree** (either 2- or 4-year) versus 57% in peer counties.

How students in Cherokee County traditional schools are doing:

- 63% of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**, compared to 53% statewide; 12 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. 2023
- 31% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**, compared to 30% statewide; 742 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 35% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**, compared to 35% statewide; 687 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 92% of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to 87% statewide; 8 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 45% of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to 32% statewide; 1,023 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2022

Cherokee County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 251:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2022

0% of students **drop out of high school** (2 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2022

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

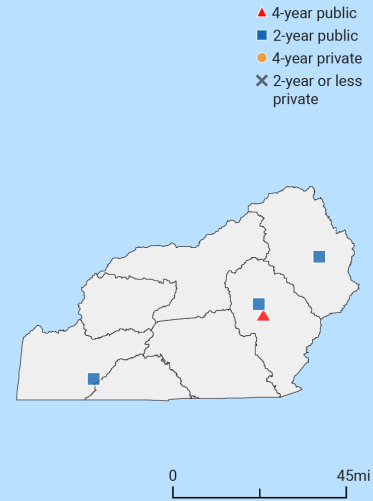
711 certificate | 823 associate | 2,570 bachelor's

Postsecondary assets in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone sub-region

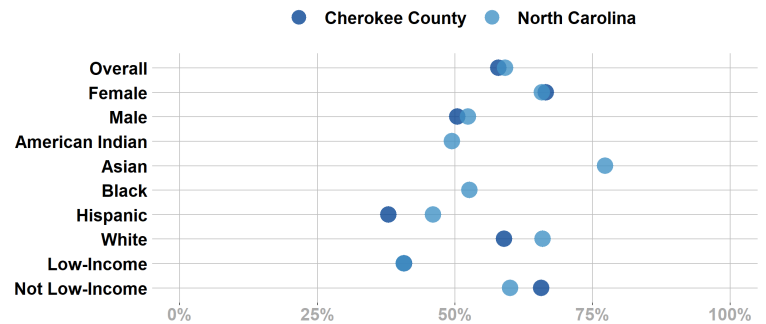
Public, 4-year or above
Western Carolina University

Public, 2-year
Haywood Community College,
Southwestern Community College, Tri-County Community College

Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above
Private not-for-profit, 2-year



Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Cherokee County, 2022

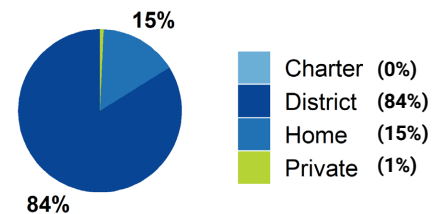


Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

School Choice

3,602 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Cherokee 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 Cherokee County completed 1,564 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (industry-valued credential data available in Spring 2024) and 131 concentrations in 2022. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Business Management & Administration; and Health Science.

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

256 high school students participated in **Career & College Promise programs** (56%) versus 39% in peer counties (2022).

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

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