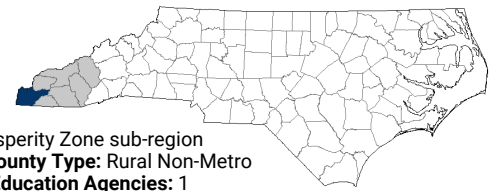


# Cherokee County

NC goal: 2 million by 2030  
2020 County Attainment Profile



Updated: Aug 12 2020

## INTRODUCTION

From birth to career, there are many opportunities to develop strategies and interventions to increase attainment and improve workforce alignment. Below are some key areas and indicators that highlight where interventions may be possible to improve overall educational attainment outcomes.

## Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8

High-quality early learning and strong academic progress in early years helps prepare children for future success.



Cherokee County has 12 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, none were classified as low performing in 2019.

## Ready for College & Career

High school completion is a crucial step on the pathway to postsecondary success or the beginnings of a career. Activities that prepare students to navigate the transition to postsecondary include gaining experience in college-level coursework and applying for financial assistance.

## Postsecondary Access and Success

These metrics capture student progression and educational attainment from high school graduation to postsecondary completion. They indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of Cherokee County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.



Cherokee County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 208:1.

## Labor Market Outcomes

Lack of technical skills and lack of education are among the primary reasons why NC employers struggle to fill vacancies. These metrics capture labor market outcomes among recent graduates, the alignment between postsecondary degree production and labor market demand, and future job demands.



9.4% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 8.9% of peer counties.

## Opportunities for Growth

Compared to rural non-metro counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Cherokee County to improve future attainment outcomes.



### NC Pre-K Enrollment

53% of Cherokee County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural non-metro county average of 64%.



### AP Participation

3% of Cherokee County high school students took at least one Advanced Placement exam, below the rural non-metro county average of 9%.



### Chronic Absenteeism

18% of Cherokee County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural non-metro county average of 17%.

## COUNTY OVERVIEW

Cherokee County is in the **Waynesville-Franklin** Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 50 rural non-metro counties in NC.

Overall, 9% of 25-44-year-olds in Cherokee County have earned a master's degree or higher as their highest degree; 13% have a bachelor's degree; 17% have an associate degree; 23% have some college, no degree; 33% have a high school diploma; and 5% have less than a high school diploma.

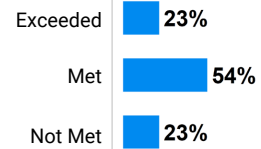
<b>2018 Population</b>	29,275
<b>2030 Population</b>	32,681
<b>K-12 Students (2019)</b>	
Traditional Schools	3,113
Charter/Private/Home	737
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$41,262
<b>Child Poverty Rate</b>	28%
<b>Households with Broadband</b>	70%

## How students in Cherokee County traditional public schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, Cherokee County needs:

- **29 more eligible 4-year-olds** enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 53%).
- **358 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 49%).
- **652 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 42%).

## Percent of Cherokee County schools by academic growth status, 2019



To meet state goals, Cherokee County needs:

- **8 more 9th graders** to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 93%).
- **64 more seniors** to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 55%).
- **236 more students** to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 18%).



**33 students** took at least one AP course (3%) versus 9% of peer counties.



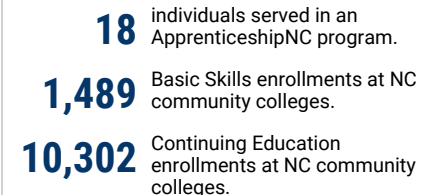
**368 students** participated in Career & College Promise programs (35%) versus 22% of peer counties.

Students in Cherokee County completed **174 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Hospitality & Tourism.

Among Cherokee County high school graduates:

- **63% of graduates** enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% of peer counties.
- **79% of students** who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% of peer counties.
- **50% of students** who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 49% of peer counties.

## In your Prosperity Zone sub-region, 2018-19:



In your Prosperity Zone sub-region:

Public postsecondary institutions graduate **3,691 students per year**. After 5 years, 70% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of \$39,941.

80% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gap is: **Health Science** (above bachelor's).

There are **81,375 job openings** projected between 2017-2026. The top 3 in demand jobs with median wages of \$50,000 or more are: 1) **Registered Nurses**; 2) **General and Operations Managers**; 3) **First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers**.

## Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region

Institution Name	Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18	Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years
<b>Total Enrollments</b>	<b>17,345</b>	<b>74%</b>
Western Carolina University	10,449	88%
Southwestern Community College	3,262	62%
Haywood Community College	2,223	56%
Tri-County Community College	1,411	56%

**Notes:**

Enrollments reflect degree- or credential-seeking undergraduate enrollments. The graduate or transfer rate is drawn from IPEDS and represents the share of students who either graduate with a degree or credential from the institution or transfer to another institution within 8 years. The 8-year outcome is the only measure that includes information on transfer out.

Detailed data guidance is provided at <http://go.unc.edu/countydata>

### Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: Tri-County Early College

Tri-County Early College focuses on Project-Based Learning, STEM-focused learning activities, competency-based assessment, experiential hands-on activities, college courses, 21st Century skills, Tony Wagner's Survival Skills, and college visitation experiences. Students are required to take responsibility for their own learning and must complete a Service Learning component comprised of 100 hours of volunteer work by the time they graduate from high school.

We identified this example of an emerging cross-sector promising practice in partnership with local leaders. If you have additional examples you'd like to share with myFutureNC, please respond to this short survey.

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/)

### ABOUT CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY

Located within the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, we use data and other available research to help you put a face or a story on the population-level changes facing your community. Our analysts provide a full array of demographic data and research services to inform decision making, evaluation, and policy across North Carolina, where we serve organizations and people in all 100 counties.


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### ABOUT MYFUTURENC

MyFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit organization focused on educational attainment and is the result of cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government. Our mission is to prepare North Carolina for the future by empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and ensuring our economic viability in a global economy.

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