Clay County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Clay County Attainment Goal: 1,376 (50%)

Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 10,587
2020 Census: 11,089
Change: 502

Growth Rate 4.7% vs. 9.5%
County State

Median Household Income (2020) $44,052
8.3% Child Poverty Rate (2020)
81% Households with Broadband (2020)
73% Home Owners (2020)
82% Voter Registration Rate (2021)
4.9% Unemployment Rate (2021)

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Educational Attainment
Clay County residents ages 25-44, 2020

No Degree 52.2% 1,116
Have Degree or Credential 47.8% 1,020

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

School Counselors
Clay County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 385:1, above the rural non-metro county average of 318:1.

First-Year Persistence
69% of Clay County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the rural non-metro county average of 73%.

Transition to Postsecondary
54% of Clay County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the state average of 55%.

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

K-12 Enrollment (district schools) -6.9% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20
Postsecondary Enrollment -18.9% 2021 vs. 2020

FAFSA Completion -16.1% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19
Postsecondary Intentions -12.0% 2020-21 vs. 2018-19

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

How students in Clay County traditional schools are currently doing:
To meet state goals, each year Clay County needs:

• Clay County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment (goal: 75% vs. 95%). 2022
• 225 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 32%). 2022
• 290 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 33%). 2022
• 5 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 89%). 2021
• Clay County has met the goal for student attendance (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 9%). 2021

• 64% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022. (11 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of 80%).
https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/
• 67% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021
• 54% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 50% in peer counties. 2021

Career and College Preparation
Fewer than 10 high school students took at least one AP course (<5%) versus 7% in peer counties (2021).

48 graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs (57%) versus 49% in peer counties (2021).

Students in Clay County completed 98 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Human Services; and Business Management & Administration.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Clay County, 2021

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

Success of Clay County High School Graduates
Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020
- 40% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
- 17% of college-goers attended a private 4-year college
- 43% of college-goers attended a public 2-year college
- <5% of college-goers attended a private 2-year college
- 77% of college-goers attended an in-state college

- 69% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
- 59% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners
Clay County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021
- 19 Basic Skills
- 120 Continuing Education
- 226 Curriculum

- 10% of Clay County residents have student loan debt; 11% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2020

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:
81.2% 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)
Education & Training (above 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)

In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:
- 6,126 in Basic Services
- 3,913 in Career Services
- 212 in Education Services

7.0% of young adults ages 16-24 in Clay County were not working and not in school versus 15.2% 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 Clay County has been meeting local needs:
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Clay

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit:
dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/