Clay County

Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 11,089
2020 Census: 11,089
Change: 0

2030 Proposed Clay County Attainment Goal: 1,376 (50%)

Growth Rate
4.7% Country
9.5% State

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
83% Households with Broadband (2020)

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Clay County, 2021
- Overall: 86%
- Female: 86%
- Male: 86%
- Black: 86%
- Hispanic: 86%
- White: 86%
- Low-Income: 86%
- Not Low-Income: 86%

Note: Outcomes for demographic groups with fewer than 10 students are not displayed.

Educational Attainment
Clay County residents ages 25-44, 2021

No Degree
43.8% 828

Have Degree or Credential
56.2% 1,062

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

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

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

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%.

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%).
- 32% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading; 225 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2022
- 33% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math; 290 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2022
- 89% of 9th graders graduate within four years; 5 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2021
- Clay County has met the goal for chronic absenteeism. (Goal: 11%).

Clay County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 385:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

- 64% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022; 11 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of 80%. 2022
- 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

50% of Clay County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 59% in peer counties.

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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

Postsecondary assets in Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone sub-region

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

- 753 certificate
- 846 associate
- 2,351 bachelor’s

Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment

First-time Curriculum Enrollments

- 280 in 2013
- 260 in 2015
- 240 in 2017
- 220 in 2019
- 200 in 2021

Basic Skills

- 35 in 2013
- 30 in 2015
- 25 in 2017
- 20 in 2019
- 15 in 2021

Continuing Education

- 160 in 2013
- 150 in 2015
- 140 in 2017
- 130 in 2019
- 120 in 2021

Number of Clay County residents employed, January 2020 to March 2022

- 4,000 in January 2020
- 3,800 in March 2020
- 3,600 in May 2020
- 3,400 in July 2020
- 3,200 in September 2020

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

81.2% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

- 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/