Clay County
myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

2030 Proposed Clay County Attainment Goal: 1,376 (Stretch Goal: 1,400)
2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight
2020 Census: 11,085
2022 Estimate: 11,614
Change: 529

Growth Rate
4.8% vs. 2.5%
County vs. State

Clay County residents ages 25-44, 2022

Educational Attainment

No Degree
832
45.6%

Have Degree or Credential
993
54.4%

Growth Rate
8%
Less than high school
10%
High school graduate (including GED)
21%
Some college, no credential
15%
Short-term credential
8%
Associate degree
22%
Bachelor’s degree
18%
Graduate or professional degree
7%

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

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

Earning College Credit in High School
13% of Clay County graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs; below the rural - non-metro county average of 39%. Also, <5% of high school students took at least one AP exam, below the peer county average of 7%.

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

Postsecondary Completion
52% of Clay County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary earn a degree or credential within 6 years, below the state average of 59%.

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

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)

57% of adults (ages 25-44) in Clay County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

Clay 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%

Top 3 Employers in Clay County

Employer
Employment Range
Clay County Board Of Education 100-249
County Of Clay 100-249
Ingles Markets Inc 100-249

First-time Curriculum Enrollments

Basic Skills

Continuing Education
Updated: Feb 12 2024

**Adult Learners**
Clay County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022
- 31 Basic Skills
- 263 Continuing Education
- 221 Curriculum

7% of Clay County residents have student loan debt. 0% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2022

**Success of Clay County High School Graduates**
- 82% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 52% 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**
- 333 of all college-goers attended Tri-County CC
- 14 of all college-goers attended Southwestern CC
- 9 of all college-goers attended Western Carolina University

**How students in Clay County traditional schools are doing:**
- Clay County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment. (Goal: 75%). 2023
- 36% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 268 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 32% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 285 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 88% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 6 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 26% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 32% statewide; 192 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023
- Clay County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 239:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2022
- 2% of students drop out of high school (8 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2022

**School Choice**
1,413 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Clay County in the 2022-23 school year.

**Access to Postsecondary Credits**
Students in Clay County completed 226 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (industry-valued credential data available in Spring 2024) and 91 concentrations in 2022. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Business Management & Administration; Health Science; and Human Services.

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