Gaston County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

Population Spotlight
2020 Census: 227,942
2022 Estimate: 234,215
Change: 6,273

Growth Rate
2.8% vs. 2.5%
County State

Median Household Income (2022)
$65,430 State: $67,516
67% Home Owners (2022) State: 67%
15.6% Child Poverty Rate (2022) State: 17.2%
14.6% Opportunity Youth Rate (2022) State: 10.9%
72% Households with Broadband (2022) State: 77%
3.7% Unemployment Rate (2022) State: 3.7%

Educational Attainment
Gaston County residents ages 25-44, 2022

No Degree
29,858 50.4%

Have Degree or Credential
29,411 49.6%

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

FAFSA Completion
55% of Gaston County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the suburban county average of 62%.

Earning College Credit in High School
33% of Gaston County graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs, below the suburban county average of 39%. Also, 10% of high school students took at least one AP exam, below the peer county average of 15%.

Math Performance
31% of Gaston County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Math, below the suburban county average of 36%.

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 Gaston County has been meeting local needs:
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Gaston

In Charlotte Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:
80.4% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

4,230 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:
12,495 graduates in 2020
74% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
$45,387 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

53% of adults (ages 25-44) in Gaston County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

Gaston County is served by:
Gaston County Workforce Development Board
Centralina Regional Council
Gaston County 2024 Attainment Profile

**Postsecondary Completion**

**Adult Learners**
Charlotte Sub-Prospertity Zone post-secondary enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022
- 2,910 Basic Skills
- 29,351 Continuing Education
- 8,357 Curriculum

14% of Gaston County residents have student loan debt; 8% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2022

**Success of Gaston County High School Graduates**
- 81% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 82% in peer counties. 2022
- 54% of students who earn a degree or certificate within 6 years versus 60% in peer counties. 2022

**Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023**
- 5,531 of all college-goers attended Gaston College
- 822 of all college-goers attended Central Piedmont CC
- 584 of all college-goers attended Cleveland CC

- 55% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 488 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 73% in peer counties. 2022
- 49% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% in peer counties. 2022

53% of Gaston County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 48% in peer counties.

**How students in Gaston County traditional schools are doing:**
- 69% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program, compared to 53% statewide; 75 more needed to meet state goal of 75%. 2023
- 26% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 8,235 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 31% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 7,661 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 85% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 237 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 27% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 27% statewide; 4,963 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Gaston County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 274:1 versus 327:1 in peer counties. 2023

3% of students drop out of high school (300 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2023

**Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022**
- 6,906 certificate
- 6,066 associate
- 9,125 bachelor’s

**Postsecondary assets in Charlotte Prosperity Zone sub-region**
- Public, 4-year or above
  - Carolinas College of Health Sciences,
  - University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- Public, 2-year
  - Central Piedmont Community College,
  - Cleveland Community College,
  - Gaston College,
  - Mitchell Community College,
  - Rowan-Cabarrus Community College,
  - South Piedmont Community College,
  - Stanly Community College
- Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above
  - Belmont Abbey College,
  - Cabarrus College of Health Sciences,
  - Catawba College,
  - Charlotte Christian College and Theological Seminary,
  - Davidson College,
  - Gardner-Webb University,
  - Johnson & Wales University-Charlotte,
  - Johnson C Smith University,
  - Livingstone College,
  - Pfeiffer University,
  - Queens University of Charlotte,
  - Wingate University
- Private not-for-profit, 2-year
  - Gaston College

**Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Gaston County, 2022**

**Access to Postsecondary Credits**
Students in Gaston County completed 7,720 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (3,196 (41%) were industry-valued credentials) and 1,793 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Arts, Audio/Video Technology, & Communications; Health Science; and Human Services.

973 high school students took at least one AP test (10%) versus 15% in peer counties (2023).
706 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (33%) versus 39% in peer counties (2023).

**School Choice**
39,695 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Gaston County in the 2022-23 school year.

Note: This profile focuses on outcomes of students enrolled in district schools.

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