

# Gaston County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles



Charlotte  
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region  
Peer County Type: Suburban  
Local Education Agencies: 1 (2023)  
Charter Schools: 4 (2023)

2030 Proposed Gaston County Attainment Goal: 35,691 (Stretch Goal: 36,140)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

## Population Spotlight

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

## Growth Rate

2.8% County vs. 2.5% State



\$65,430  
Median Household Income (2022)  
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

Less than high school High school graduate (including GED) Some college, no credential Short-term credential Associate degree Bachelor's degree Graduate or professional degree

No Degree  
29,858  
50.4%

Have Degree or Credential  
29,411  
49.6%



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

## 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](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Gaston)

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

## In Charlotte Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

80.4%

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

### Top areas of misalignment:

Business Management & Administration bachelor's  
Finance bachelor's  
Information Technology bachelor's

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

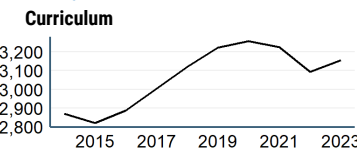
\$45,387 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

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

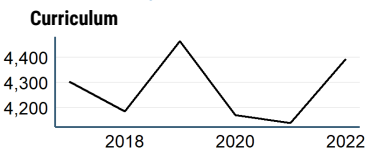
### Gaston County is served by:

Gaston County Workforce Development Board  
Centralina Regional Council

## UNC System College Enrollment



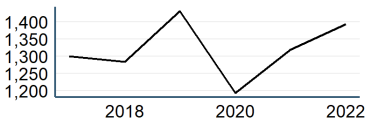
## NC Community College Enrollment



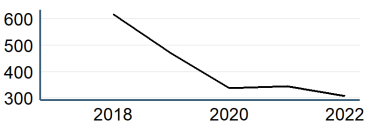
## Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Charlotte Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	5%
Data Scientists	4%
Logisticians	4%

## First-time Curriculum Enrollments



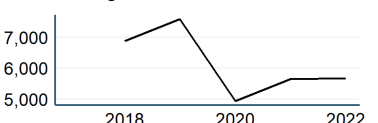
## Basic Skills



## Top 3 Employers in Gaston County

Employer	Employment Range
Gaston County Schools	1000+
Caromont Health (A Corp)	1000+
Freightliner Corp	1000+

## Continuing Education



### Adult Learners

Charlotte Sub-Prosperity 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 enroll 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

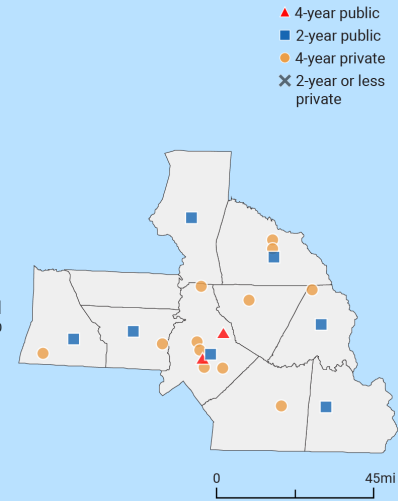
#### Public, 2-year

Central Piedmont Community College, Cleveland Community College, Gaston College, Mitchell Community College, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, South Piedmont Community College, Stanly Community College

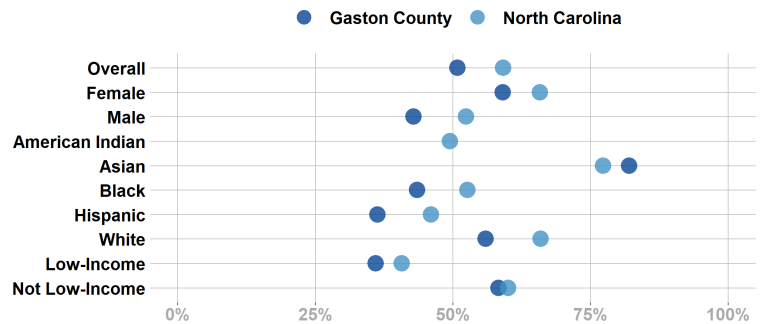
#### Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above

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



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

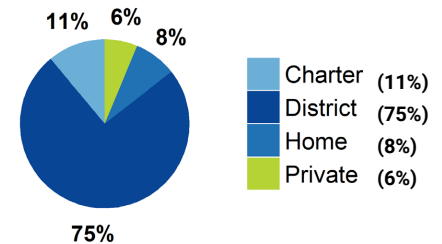


Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

### 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.



### 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).

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/)