Graham County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Graham County Attainment Goal: 1,248 (60%)

Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 8,861
2020 Census: 8,030
Change: -831

Population Growth Rate
-9.4% County vs. 9.5% State

Growth Rate

$42,057 Median Household Income (2020)
17.2% Child Poverty Rate (2020)
76% Households with Broadband (2020)
83% Home Owners (2020)
79% Voter Registration Rate (2021)
6.9% Unemployment Rate (2021)

Waynesville-Franklin
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural Non-Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1
Charter Schools: 0

Educational Attainment
Graham County residents ages 25-44, 2020

No Degree
60.3% 1,084

Have Degree or Credential
39.7% 713

Note: Numbers may add to more than 100% due to rounding

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

Math Performance
14% of Graham County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Math, below the rural non-metro county average of 26%.

Reading Performance
17% of Graham County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Reading, below the rural non-metro county average of 24%.

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

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

K-12 Enrollment (district schools)
-0.7% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20

Postsecondary Enrollment
-15.8% 2021 vs. 2020

FAFSA Completion
-13.6% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19

Postsecondary Intentions
-3.9% 2020-21 vs. 2018-19

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

How students in Graham County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Graham County needs:

- Graham County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment (goal: 75% vs. 84%). 2022
- 280 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 75% vs. 17%). 2022
- 359 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 14%). 2022
- 3 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 92%). 2021
- 58 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 16%). 2021

Graham County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 357:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

- 56% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022. (21 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of 80%).
  https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/
- 53% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021
- 46% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 50% in peer counties. 2021

56% of Graham County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 59% in peer counties.

School Choice
1,320 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Graham County in the 2021-22 school year.

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

Career and College Preparation
25 high school students took at least one AP course (7%) versus 7% in peer counties (2021).
53 graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs (62%) versus 49% in peer counties (2021).

Students in Graham County completed 33 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Architecture and Construction; and Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics.
Success of Graham County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- 38% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
- 17% of college-goers attended a private 4-year college
- 45% of college-goers attended a public 2-year college
- <5% of college-goers attended a private 2-year college
- 88% of college-goers attended an in-state college

- 69% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
- 57% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

Graham County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 8 Basic Skills
- 103 Continuing Education
- 211 Curriculum

- 5% of Graham County residents have student loan debt; 14% 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.

- 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

- 15.4% of young adults ages 16-24 in Graham 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 Graham County has been meeting local needs:
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Graham

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