

# Graham County

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region  
Peer County Type: Rural - Non-Metro

## Educational Attainment

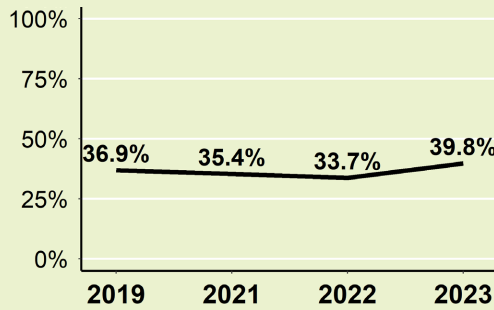
Graham County residents ages 25-44, 2023

**Have Degree or Credential**  
681  
39.8%

**No Degree**  
1,031  
60.2%

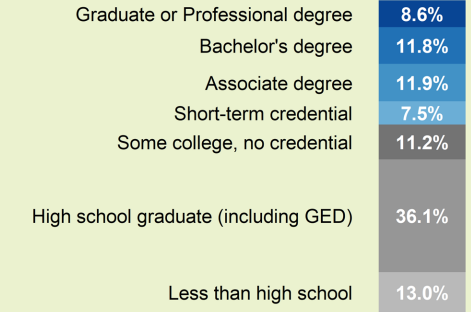
**Residents Ages 25-44**  
1,712

## Educational Attainment Trend



Note: 2020 data not shown due to inconsistency

## Educational Level Breakdown, 2023



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

2030 Proposed Graham County Attainment Goal: 1,248 (Stretch Goal: 1,263)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

## Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 8,028  
2023 Estimate: 8,052  
Change: 24

## Growth Rate

0.3% County vs. 3.8% State

## Race/Ethnicity

Amer. Indian 8.4%  
Asian/Pac. Isl. 1.1%  
Black 0.7%  
Hispanic 2.9%  
Multiracial 1.3%  
White 85.2%

**\$51,841**  
Median Household Income (2023)  
State: \$70,838

**80.8%**  
Home Owners (2023)  
State: 66.3%

**54.1%**  
Households with Broadband (2023)  
State: 77.1%

**4.1%**  
Child Poverty Rate (2023)  
State: 17.6%

**4.3%**  
Single Parent Households (2023)  
State: 7.1%

**2.4%**  
Foreign Born (2023)  
State: 9.2%

## Top Opportunities for Growth



### Labor Force Participation

76% of Graham County adults 25-44 are in the labor force, below the rural - non-metro county average of 78%.

## In Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

**75.6%**

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

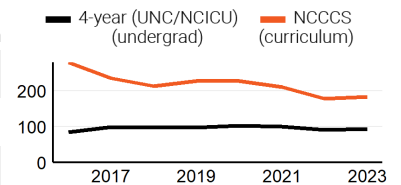
## Top Misalignments Job Openings vs. Degrees/Credentials

- Health Science Jobs > Creds
- Education & Training Jobs > Creds
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Jobs < Creds

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

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	3.67%
Logisticians	3.54%
Medical and Health Services Managers	2.83%

## Postsecondary Enrollment for Graham County Residents



0 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

## UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

**3,111** graduates in 2020  
**69.4%** 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), 2021

**49.2%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Graham County earned a **family sustaining wage**. Peer: 40.5% | State: 57.6%, 2023

**12.7%** of youth (ages 16-24) in Graham County were **Opportunity Youth**. Peer: 14.5% | State: 10.9%, 2022

**75.8%** of adults (ages 25-44) in Graham County **participated in the labor force**. Peer: 78.3% | State: 84.2%, 2023

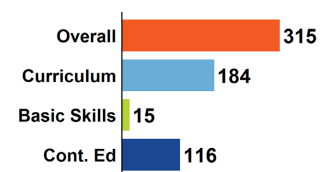
## Top 3 Employers in Graham County

Employer	Employment Range
Graham County	100-249
Graham County Schools	100-249
Fontana Ventures LLC	100-249

## Top 3 industries in Graham County

Industry	Jobs   Percent
Construction	411   20.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	323   15.9%
Public Administration	280   13.8%

## Graham County residents enrolled in NCCCS, Fall 2023



## Graham County is served by:

- Southwestern Workforce Development Board
- Southwestern Commission

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top Opportunities for Growth



First-Year Persistence

82% of Graham County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education persist to their second year, below the state average of 84%.

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ Sub-Region, 2023

710 certificate | 819 associate | 2,609 bachelor's

Adult Learners

Graham County Residents Aged 25+ enrolled in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2023

- 7 Basic Skills
- 98 Continuing Education
- 41 Curriculum

11.2% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. Peer: 15.9% | State: 11.7%, 2023



6.7% of Graham County residents have student loan debt; NA of debt holders had student loans in default. 2024

Success of Graham County High School Graduates

82.1% of students who enroll persist to their second year.

Peer: 79.6% | State: 83.8%, 2023

92.3% UNC | 68.4% NCCCS | NA NCICU

59.0% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. Peer: 55.5% | State: 60.0%, 2023

25.6% UNC | 20.5% NCCCS | 10.3% NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2023

- 220 of all college-goers attended Tri-County CC
- 63 of all college-goers attended Southwestern CC
- 41 of all college-goers attended Western Carolina University

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

Top Opportunities for Growth

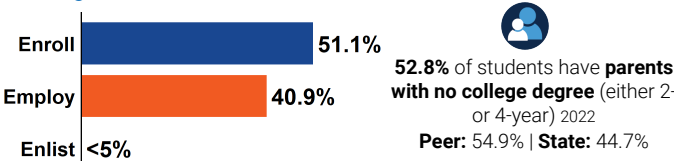


FAFSA Completion

44% of Graham County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural - non-metro county average of 54%.

43.7% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 26 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. Peer: 54.0% | State: 55.0%

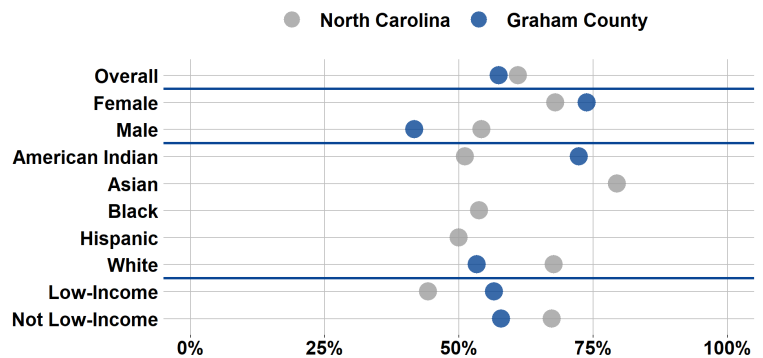
Post High School Graduation Intentions



93.5% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 1 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. Peer: 85.7% | State: 87.3% 2024

55.7% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. Peer: 52.6% | State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Graham County, 2023



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

ACADEMIC READINESS

Top Opportunities for Growth



Math Performance

17% of Graham County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Math, below the rural - non-metro county average of 30%.

Graham County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment. (Goal: 75%). Peer: 71.0% | State: 57.2% 2024

Note: Enrollment numbers only include students served by the NC Pre-K Program and may not represent all Pre-K offerings available.

Graham County Traditional Public Schools students:

15.9% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 276 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. Peer: 24.5% | State: 29.8%

16.8% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 334 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. Peer: 30.3% | State: 36.5%

34.4% of students were chronically absent from school in 2023. 265 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. Peer: 29.3% | State: 27.5%

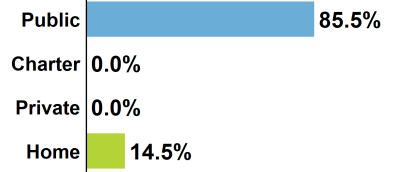
Graham County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 347:1 compared to 332:1 in peer counties. 2024

0.0% of students drop out of high school (0 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 1  
Traditional Public School(s): 3  
Charter School(s): 0  
Private School(s): 0  
Home School(s): 113

1,231 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 325 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 62 concentrations. 68 (20.9%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Business Management & Administration; Health Science; and Architecture and Construction.

15 (<5%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

48 (54.5%) high school graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs. State: 35.5% (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/)