**INTRODUCTION**

From birth to career, there are many opportunities to develop strategies and interventions to increase attainment and improve workforce alignment. Below are some key areas and indicators that highlight where interventions may be possible to improve overall educational attainment outcomes.

**COUNTY OVERVIEW**

Graham County is in the Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 50 rural non-metro counties in NC. Overall, 6% of 25-44-year-olds in Graham County have earned a master’s degree or higher as their highest degree; 10% have a bachelor’s degree; 13% have an associate degree; 27% have some college, no degree; 33% have a high school diploma; and 10% have less than a high school diploma.

**Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8**

High-quality early learning and strong academic progress in early years helps prepare children for future success. Graham County has 3 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, none were classified as low performing in 2019.

**Ready for College & Career**

High school completion is a crucial step on the pathway to postsecondary success or the beginnings of a career. Activities that prepare students to navigate the transition to postsecondary include gaining experience in college-level coursework and applying for financial assistance.

**Postsecondary Access and Success**

These metrics capture student progression and educational attainment from high school graduation to postsecondary completion. They indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of Graham County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline. Graham County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 364:1.

**Labor Market Outcomes**

Lack of technical skills and lack of education are among the primary reasons why NC employers struggle to fill vacancies. These metrics capture labor market outcomes among recent graduates, the alignment between postsecondary degree production and labor market demand, and future job demands.

** Opportunities for Growth**

Compared to rural non-metro counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Graham County to improve future attainment outcomes.
### Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18</th>
<th>Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollments</td>
<td>17,345</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Carolina University</td>
<td>10,449</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern Community College</td>
<td>3,262</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haywood Community College</td>
<td>2,223</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-County Community College</td>
<td>1,411</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
Enrollments reflect degree- or credential-seeking undergraduate enrollments. The graduate or transfer rate is drawn from IPEDS and represents the share of students who either graduate with a degree or credential from the institution or transfer to another institution within 8 years. The 8-year outcome is the only measure that includes information on transfer out.
Detailed data guidance is provided at [http://go.unc.edu/countydata](http://go.unc.edu/countydata)

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### Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: EmPOWERing Mountain Food Systems

This three-year project is funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and created in partnership by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems and NC State Extension. The project supports farm and food businesses by providing educational programs related to business development and financial services, including grants, support from loans and advanced business consulting services including funding farmer equipment and supplies.

We identified this example of an emerging cross-sector promising practice in partnership with local leaders. If you have additional examples you’d like to share with myFutureNC, please respond to this [short survey](http://go.unc.edu/countydata).

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**For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit:**

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### ABOUT CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY

Located within the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, we use data and other available research to help you put a face or a story on the population-level changes facing your community. Our analysts provide a full array of demographic data and research services to inform decision making, evaluation, and policy across North Carolina, where we serve organizations and people in all 100 counties.

- [ncdemography.org](http://ncdemography.org)
- [demography@unc.edu](mailto:demography@unc.edu)
- [@ncdemography](https://twitter.com/@ncdemography)

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### ABOUT MYFUTURENC

MyFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit organization focused on educational attainment and is the result of cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government. Our mission is to prepare North Carolina for the future by empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and ensuring our economic viability in a global economy.

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