Jackson County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Jackson County Attainment Goal: 8,264 (69%)

Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 40,271
2020 Census: 43,109
Change: 2,838

Growth Rate

7.0% vs. 9.5% State

$49,488 Median Household Income (2020)
24.0% Child Poverty Rate (2020)
77% Households with Broadband (2020)
64% Home Owners (2020)
67% Voter Registration Rate (2021)
4.5% Unemployment Rate (2021)

Waynesville-Franklin Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural Non-Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1
Charter Schools: 2

Educational Attainment

Jackson County residents ages 25-44, 2020

No Degree 55.4% 5,181
Have Degree or Credential 44.6% 4,171

No Degree

55.4%
5,181

Have Degree or Credential

44.6%
4,171

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

Top Opportunities for Growth

These three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Jackson County to improve future attainment outcomes.

NC Pre-K Enrollment
24% of Jackson County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural non-metro county average of 68%.

Chronic Absenteeism
42% of Jackson County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural non-metro county average of 29%.

FAFSA Completion
45% of Jackson County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural non-metro county average of 55%.

Impact of Covid-19 on Education Pipeline

Covid-19 has affected critical transition points along the education continuum.

K-12 Enrollment (district schools)
-3.3% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20

Postsecondary Enrollment
-22.7% 2021 vs. 2020

FAFSA Completion
-17.9% 2022-23 vs. 2018-19

Postsecondary Intentions
-15.6% 2020-21 vs. 2018-19

Data Disruptions

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

How students in Jackson County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Jackson County needs:

- 115 more eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 24%). 2022
- 747 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 24%). 2022
- 872 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 29%). 2022
- 7 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 93%). 2021
- 1,090 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 42%). 2021

Jackson County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 389:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

• 45% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022. (87 more need to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of 80%).
  https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/
• 69% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 69% in peer counties. 2021
• 44% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 50% in peer counties. 2021

Jackson County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 389:1 versus 318:1 in peer counties. 2021

Career and College Preparation

71 high school students took at least one AP course (6%) versus 7% in peer counties (2021).

Students in Jackson County completed 75 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Manufacturing.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Jackson County, 2021

Note: Outcomes for demographic groups with fewer than 10 students are not displayed.
Success of Jackson County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020
• 49% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
• 7% of college-goers attended a private 4-year college
• 44% of college-goers attended a public 2-year college
• <5% of college-goers attended a private 2-year college
• 91% of college-goers attended an in-state college

• 72% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
• 65% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners
Jackson County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

47 Basic Skills
621 Continuing Education
867 Curriculum

12% of Jackson County residents have student loan debt; 8% 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.

Top areas of misalignment:
Health Science (all levels)
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics (below bachelor’s)
Education & Training (above bachelor’s)

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

8.9% of young adults ages 16-24 in Jackson 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 Jackson County has been meeting local needs:
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Jackson

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