Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 9,535,483
2020 Census: 10,439,388
Change: 903,905

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)

North Carolina

Educational Attainment
North Carolina residents ages 25-44, 2021

- No Degree: 43.0% (1,172,058)
- Have Degree or Credential: 57.0% (1,555,543)

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

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

- Math Performance: Increasing the number of 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores in Math is one of the three biggest opportunity areas for 37 counties.
- NC Pre-K Enrollment: Increasing the number of 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K is one of the three biggest opportunity areas for 35 counties.
- Transition to Postsecondary: Increasing the number of high school seniors enrolling in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation is one of the three biggest opportunity areas for 30 counties.

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

- K-12 Enrollment (district schools): -3.4% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20
- Postsecondary Enrollment: -6.2% 2021 vs. 2020
- FAFSA Completion: -3.4% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19
- Postsecondary Intentions: -5.3% 2020-21 vs. 2018-19

School Choice
1,779,410 total students were enrolled in K-12 in North Carolina in the 2021-22 school year.

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

Career and College Preparation
67,484 high school students took at least one AP course (16%) (2021).
32,458 graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs (32%) (2021).

Students in North Carolina completed 53,728 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Human Services; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in North Carolina, 2021

Note: Outcomes for demographic groups with fewer than 10 students are not displayed.
Updated: Jun 16 2023

Success of North Carolina High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020
- 45% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
- 14% of college-goers attended a private 4-year college
- 40% of college-goers attended a public 2-year college
- 5% of college-goers attended a private 2-year college
- 90% of college-goers attended an in-state college

- 77% of students who enroll persist to their second year. 2021
- 59% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years. 2021

Adult Learners
North Carolina resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- Basic Skills: 26,988
- Continuing Education: 131,916
- Curriculum: 208,573

16% of North Carolina residents have student loan debt; 10% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2020

In North Carolina:

83.9% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

Top areas of misalignment:
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics (below bachelor’s)
- Health Science (below bachelor’s)
- Business Management & Administration (bachelor’s)

15,898 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:
- 84,346 graduates in 2020
- 69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- $43,833 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

In 2021 NC Workforce Development Boards served:
- 215,964 in Basic Services
- 102,436 in Career Services
- 9,883 in Education Services

12.1% of young adults ages 16-24 in North Carolina were not working and not in school. 2021

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

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 North Carolina has been meeting local needs: https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/