Polk County
myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

2030 Proposed Polk County Attainment Goal: 3,478 (Stretch Goal: 3,506)
2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight
2020 Census: 19,330
2022 Estimate: 19,986
Change: 656

Growth Rate
3.4% vs. 2.5%
County State

$61,585 Median Household Income (2022)
State: $67,516

77% Home Owners (2022)
State: 67%

13.5% Child Poverty Rate (2022)
State: 17.2%

16.7% Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)
State: 10.0%

61% Households with Broadband (2022)
State: 77%

3.8% Unemployment Rate (2022)
State: 3.7%

Educational Attainment
Polk County residents ages 25-44, 2022

No Degree 1,708
48.1%

Have Degree or Credential 1,841
51.9%

Less than high school 8%

High school graduate (including GED) 27%

Some college, no credential 13%

Short-term credential 8%

Associate degree 14%

Bachelor’s degree 18%

Graduate or professional degree 12%

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

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

High School Graduation
82% of Polk County 9th graders complete high school in 4 years or less, below the rural - non-metro county average of 85%.

First-Year Persistence
78% of Polk County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the state average of 83%.

Adult Learners
13% of Polk County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the state average of 12%.

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 Polk County has been meeting local needs:
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Polk

In Asheville Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:
72.1% 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
Business Management & Administration bachelor’s

636 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:
3,023 graduates in 2020
69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
$35,824 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

43% of adults (ages 25-44) in Polk County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

UNC System College Enrollment
Curriculum

First-time Curriculum Enrollments

Basic Skills

Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Asheville Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Nurse Practitioners 5%
Logisticians 4%
Physician Assistants 3%

Top 3Employers in Polk County

Polk County Public Schools 250-499
Acts Inc 250-499
County Of Polk 250-499

LAb Market Alignment

In Polk County:
Foothills Workforce Development Board
Foothills Regional Commission

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Carolina Demography
myFutureNC
2 million by 2030

John M Belk Endowment
UNC Population Center
9% of Polk County residents have student loan debt. 9% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2022

### Success of Polk County High School Graduates

- 78% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 78% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2022

### Adult Learners

- Asheville Sub-Prosperity Zone post-secondary enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022
  - 733 Basic Skills
  - 8,927 Continuing Education
  - 2,725 Curriculum

### Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- 450 of all college-goers attended Isothermal CC
- 168 of all college-goers attended Blue Ridge CC
- 34 of all college-goers attended Asheville-Buncombe TCC

### Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

- 1,477 certificate
- 1,310 associate
- 1,451 bachelor's

### Postsecondary assets in Asheville Prosperity Zone sub-region

- Public, 4-year or above
  - University of North Carolina at Asheville
- Public, 2-year
  - Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Isothermal Community College
- Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above
  - Brevard College, Mars Hill University, Montreat College, Warren Wilson College
- Private not-for-profit, 2-year

### Access to Postsecondary Credits

- Students in Polk County completed 996 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (142 (14%) were industry-valued credentials) and 141 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Health Science; and Information Technology.
- 39 high school students took at least one AP test (6%) versus 8% in peer counties (2023).
- 97 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (61%) versus 51% in peer counties (2023).