Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 138,428
2020 Census: 146,875
Change: 8,447

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Rowan County Attainment Goal: 19,840 (53%)

Growth Rate
Rowan County 6.1% vs. 9.5% State

Median Household Income
$55,398 County 2020
24.7% Child Poverty Rate (2020)
89% Households with Broadband (2020)
70% Home Owners (2020)
79% Voter Registration Rate (2021)
5.0% Unemployment Rate (2021)

Educational Attainment
Rowan County residents ages 25-44, 2021

No Degree
59.8% 20,930
Have Degree or Credential
40.2% 14,050

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

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

Math Performance
16% of Rowan County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Math, below the suburban county average of 34%.

Reading Performance
18% of Rowan County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Reading, below the suburban county average of 30%.

First-Year Persistence
67% of Rowan County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary persist to their second year, below the suburban county average of 77%.

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

K-12 Enrollment (district schools)
-4.2% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20
Postsecondary Enrollment
-11.7% 2021 vs. 2020

FAFSA Completion
-16.4% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19
Postsecondary Intentions
0.1% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19

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

How students in Rowan County traditional schools are currently doing:
To meet state goals, each year Rowan County needs:

- 37% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program; 323 more needed to meet state goal of 75%.
- 18% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading; 4,745 more needed to meet state goal of 73%.
- 16% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math; 5,981 more needed to meet state goal of 86%.
- 86% of 9th graders graduate within four years; 166 more needed to meet state goal of 95%.
- 27% of students are chronically absent from school; 3,106 less needed to meet state goal of 11%.
- 63% of Rowan County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 49% in peer counties.

Rowan County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 253:1 versus 336:1 in peer counties.

• 47% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2022; 362 more needed to complete in 2022 to meet state goal of 80%.
  https://www.myfuturenc.org/ourwork/first-in-fafsa/

• 66% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 75% in peer counties.

• 45% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 55% in peer counties.

School Choice
22,985 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Rowan County in the 2021-22 school year.

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

Career and College Preparation
670 high school students took at least one AP course (11%) versus 15% in peer counties (2021).

466 graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs (32%) versus 33% in peer counties (2021).

Students in Rowan County completed 734 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Human Services; and Architecture and Construction.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Rowan County, 2021

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

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- 36% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
- 20% 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
- 94% of college-goers attended an in-state college

- 67% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 77% in peer counties. 2021
- 55% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 60% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

Rowan County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 158 Basic Skills
- 1,877 Continuing Education
- 2,686 Curriculum

14% of Rowan County residents have student loan debt; 15% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2020

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

82.2% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

Top areas of misalignment:
- Business Management & Administration (bachelor’s)
- Information Technology (bachelor’s)
- Finance (bachelor’s)

4,230 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

- 12,495 graduates in 2020
- 74% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- $45,387 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 16,131 in Basic Services
- 7,386 in Career Services
- 506 in Education Services

12.8% of young adults ages 16-24 in Rowan County were not working and not in school versus 11.2% 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 Rowan County has been meeting local needs:
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Rowan

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