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
Rutherford County is in the Asheville Prosperity Zone sub-region. It’s one of 50 rural non-metro counties in NC. Overall, 5% of 25-44-year-olds in Rutherford County have earned a master’s degree or higher as their highest degree; 14% have a bachelor’s degree; 13% have an associate degree; 22% have some college, no degree; 30% have a high school diploma; and 16% 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.

- Rutherford County has 17 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.

- 77 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 84%).
- 94 more seniors to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 62%).
- 639 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 19%).

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 Rutherford County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

- 58% of graduates enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% of peer counties.
- 73% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% of peer counties.
- 48% of students who earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 49% of peer counties.

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.

- 13.8% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 8.9% of peer counties.

Opportunities for Growth
Compared to rural non-metro counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Rutherford County to improve future attainment outcomes.

- NC Pre-K Enrollment
  55% of Rutherford County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural non-metro county average of 64%.

- Disconnected Youth
  14% of Rutherford County youth ages 16-19 are not working and not in school, above the rural non-metro county average of 9%.

- School Counselors
  Rutherford County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 370:1, above the rural non-metro county average of 338:1.
### 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>23,862</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College</td>
<td>10,492</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina at Asheville</td>
<td>4,366</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Community College</td>
<td>2,812</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isothermal Community College</td>
<td>2,662</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mars Hill University</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreat College</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevard College</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Wilson College</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>84%</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)

---

### Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: McNair Educational Foundation

The mission of The Robert and Janice McNair Educational Foundation is to increase college and career awareness, readiness and success for all students. To achieve this goal, McNair works in collaboration with Rutherford County Schools to provide programs and activities that are designed to raise awareness, expand knowledge and prepare students for a postsecondary education in their desired career.

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.

---

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


---

### 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)

---

### 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.

- [myfuturenc.org](http://myfuturenc.org)
- [facebook.com/myfuturenc](https://facebook.com/myfuturenc)
- [@myFutureNC](https://twitter.com/myFutureNC)