Western Prosperity Zone
myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles
2030 Proposed Western Attainment Goal: 128,232

Population Spotlight

Growth Rate
Prosperity Zone: 1.5% vs. State: 2.5%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>10,439,414</td>
<td>10,698,973</td>
<td>259,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buncombe County</td>
<td>269,446</td>
<td>273,589</td>
<td>4,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee County</td>
<td>28,769</td>
<td>29,512</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>11,085</td>
<td>11,614</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham County</td>
<td>8,029</td>
<td>7,980</td>
<td>-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haywood County</td>
<td>62,097</td>
<td>62,609</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henderson County</td>
<td>116,279</td>
<td>118,106</td>
<td>1,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson County</td>
<td>43,107</td>
<td>42,955</td>
<td>-152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macon County</td>
<td>37,016</td>
<td>38,065</td>
<td>1,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison County</td>
<td>21,192</td>
<td>21,768</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk County</td>
<td>19,330</td>
<td>19,986</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutherford County</td>
<td>64,444</td>
<td>64,609</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swain County</td>
<td>14,115</td>
<td>13,967</td>
<td>-148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transylvania County</td>
<td>32,986</td>
<td>33,355</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18.1% Child Poverty Rate (2022)
State: 17.2%

11.1% Opportunity Youth Rate (2021)
State: 12.1%

65% Households with Broadband (2022)
State: 77%

5% Foreign Born (2022)
State: 9%

Western PZ Served By:
Foothills, Land-of-Sky, and Southwestern Councils of Governments
and Foothills, Mountain Area, and Southwestern Workforce Development Boards

Race/Ethnicity, 2022

Amer. Indian: 1%
Asian/Pac. Isl.: 1%
Black: 4%
Hispanic: 7%
Multiracial: 3%
White: 84%

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

Educational Attainment
Western residents ages 25-44, 2022

No Degree: 82,460 (48.2%)
Have Degree or Credential: 88,566 (51.8%)

In Western Prosperity Zone:
79.0% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

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

651 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:
6,134 graduates in 2020
69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
$38,657 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

47% of adults (ages 25-44) in Western earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

Top Industries in Western PZ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Name</th>
<th>Average Employment</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>47,091</td>
<td>$1,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>38,313</td>
<td>$674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>36,884</td>
<td>$528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>17,059</td>
<td>$1,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>15,787</td>
<td>$1,134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top Job Sectors in Western PZ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Sector</th>
<th>Average Employment</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>241,781</td>
<td>$948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>31,741</td>
<td>$996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government</td>
<td>8,780</td>
<td>$984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>4,945</td>
<td>$1,615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Success of Western High School Graduates

- 80% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 83% for the state. 2022
- 60% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years versus 59% for the state. 2022

Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- 10,195 of all college-goers attended Asheville-Buncombe TCC
- 6,014 of all college-goers attended Blue Ridge CC
- 3,538 of all college-goers attended Southwestern CC

Adult Learners

Western resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2022

881 Basic Skills
12,724 Continuing Education
3,762 Curriculum

- 60% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 1,033 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 78% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution versus 74% in the state. 2022
- 54% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 58% in the state. 2022

How students in Western traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Western needs:

- 54% of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program, compared to 53% statewide; 596 more need to meet state goal of 75%. 2023
- 32% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 13,514 more need to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 36% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 16,418 more need to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 90% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 316 more need to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 31% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 32% statewide; 15,632 less need to meet state goal of 11%. 2022
- 2% of students drop out of high school (459 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2022

School Choice

102,257 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Western in the 2022-23 school year.

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

Access to Postsecondary Credits

Students in Western completed 11,467 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (industry-valued credential data available in Spring 2024) and 3,884 concentrations in 2022. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Human Services; and Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources.

- 2,472 high school students took at least one AP course (10%) versus 15% in the state (2022).
- 4,255 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (38%) versus 23% in the state (2022).

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