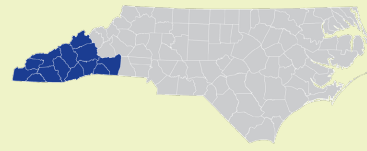


Western Prosperity Zone

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

2030 Proposed Western Attainment Goal: 128,232



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

Population Spotlight

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

| County | 2020 | 2022 | Change |
|---------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| North Carolina | 10,439,414 | 10,698,973 | 259,559 |
| Buncombe County | 269,446 | 273,589 | 4,143 |
| Cherokee County | 28,769 | 29,512 | 743 |
| Clay County | 11,085 | 11,614 | 529 |
| Graham County | 8,029 | 7,980 | -49 |
| Haywood County | 62,097 | 62,609 | 512 |
| Henderson County | 116,279 | 118,106 | 1,827 |
| Jackson County | 43,107 | 42,955 | -152 |
| Macon County | 37,016 | 38,065 | 1,049 |
| Madison County | 21,192 | 21,768 | 576 |
| Polk County | 19,330 | 19,986 | 656 |
| Rutherford County | 64,444 | 64,963 | 519 |
| Swain County | 14,115 | 13,967 | -148 |
| Transylvania County | 32,986 | 33,355 | 369 |



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



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

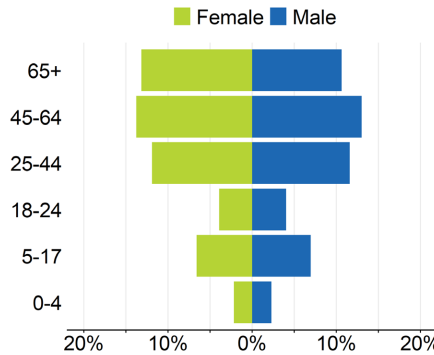


65%
 Households with Broadband (2022)
State: 77%

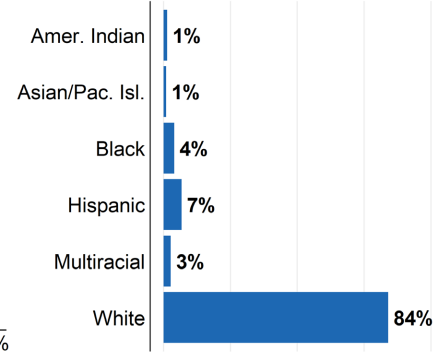


5%
 Foreign Born (2022)
State: 9%

Age Structure, 2022



Race/Ethnicity, 2022



Educational Attainment

Western residents ages 25-44, 2022

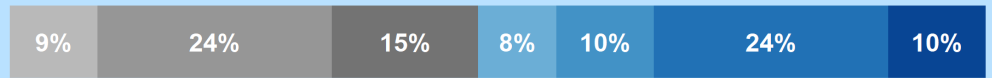
Less than high school
High school graduate (including GED)
Some college, no credential
Short-term credential
Associate degree
Bachelor's degree
Graduate or professional degree



No Degree
82,460
48.2%



Have Degree or Credential
88,566
51.8%



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

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

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

| Industry Name | Average Employment | Average Weekly Wages |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 47,091 | \$1,160 |
| Retail Trade | 38,313 | \$674 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 36,884 | \$528 |
| Public Administration | 17,059 | \$1,088 |
| Construction | 15,787 | \$1,134 |

Top Job Sectors in Western PZ

| Job Sector | Average Employment | Average Weekly Wages |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Private | 241,781 | \$948 |
| Local Government | 31,741 | \$996 |
| State Government | 8,780 | \$984 |
| Federal Government | 4,945 | \$1,615 |

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 |

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2022

2,188 certificate | **2,133** associate | **4,021** bachelor's

Postsecondary assets in Western Prosperity Zone

Public, 4-year or above

University of North Carolina at Asheville, Western Carolina University

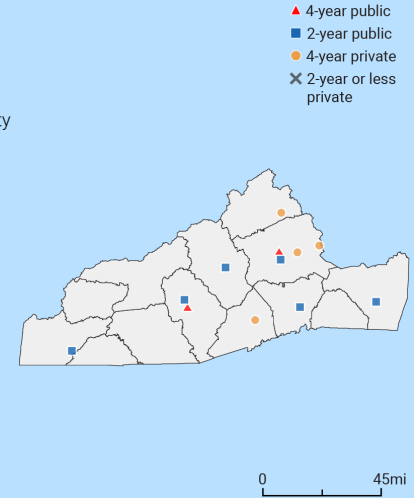
Public, 2-year

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Haywood Community College, Isothermal Community College, Southwestern Community College, Tri-County Community College

Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above

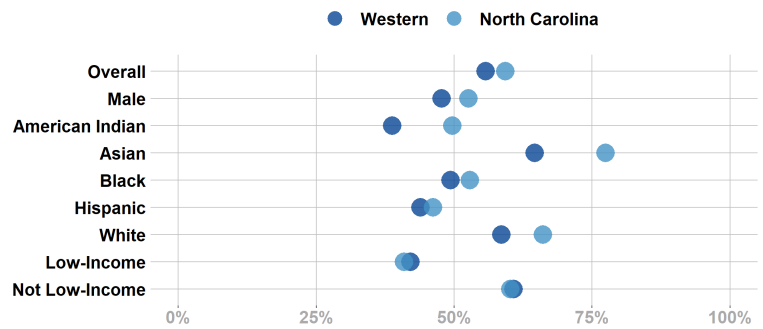
Brevard College, Mars Hill University, Montreat College, Warren Wilson College

Private not-for-profit, 2-year



- **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

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Western, 2022



How students in Western traditional schools are currently doing:

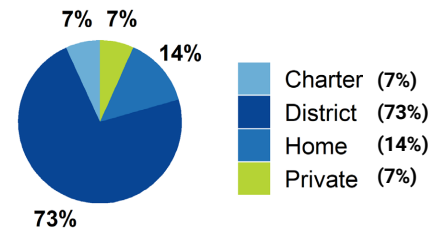
To meet state goals, each year Western needs:

- **54%** of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**, compared to **53%** statewide; 596 more needed 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 needed 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 needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2023
- **90%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**, compared to **87%** statewide; 316 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2023
- **31%** of students are **chronically absent from school**, compared to **32%** statewide; 15,632 less needed 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/