

myFUTURENC

2 million by 2030



NORTH CAROLINA'S STATE OF **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT REPORT**

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee of the North Carolina General Assembly pursuant to Session Law 2019-55 House Bill 664 Section 1.(c) as provided by G.S. 120-29.5

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North Carolina's State of Educational Attainment

To ensure North Carolina remains economically competitive now and into the future, in 2019, with bipartisan support in the General Assembly and a signature from the Governor, the state of North Carolina adopted one of the most ambitious goals in the nation—to have 2 million North Carolinians aged 25-44 to hold an industry-valued credential or postsecondary degree by 2030.

By increasing educational attainment opportunities for all, North Carolina creates upward mobility and enhanced economic prosperity for our citizens and communities while also meeting the current and future workforce needs of business and industry. Additionally, higher levels of education enhance entrepreneurship which can help boost local economies especially in rural areas of the state.

Vision

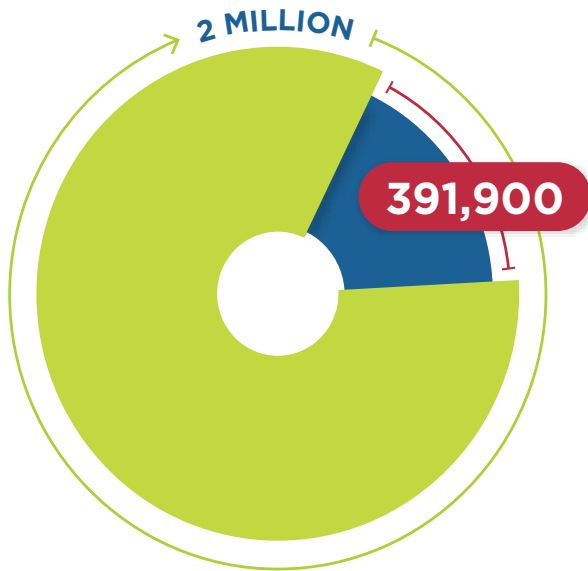
North Carolina employers have the necessary skilled workforce to meet business demands and every individual in the labor market earns a family-sustaining wage in a personally fulfilling career, positioning our state to remain economically competitive now and into the future.

Mission

- ▶ myFutureNC promotes work of all sectors and helps find and fill gaps to drive educational access and attainment outcomes that align with and fulfill employer needs.
- ▶ myFutureNC promotes a shared vision for an education-to-workforce continuum across North Carolina—from early childhood through adulthood—and aligns and supports local, regional, and state actions that will dramatically increase attainment of industry-valued credentials and postsecondary degrees.



Educational Attainment in North Carolina

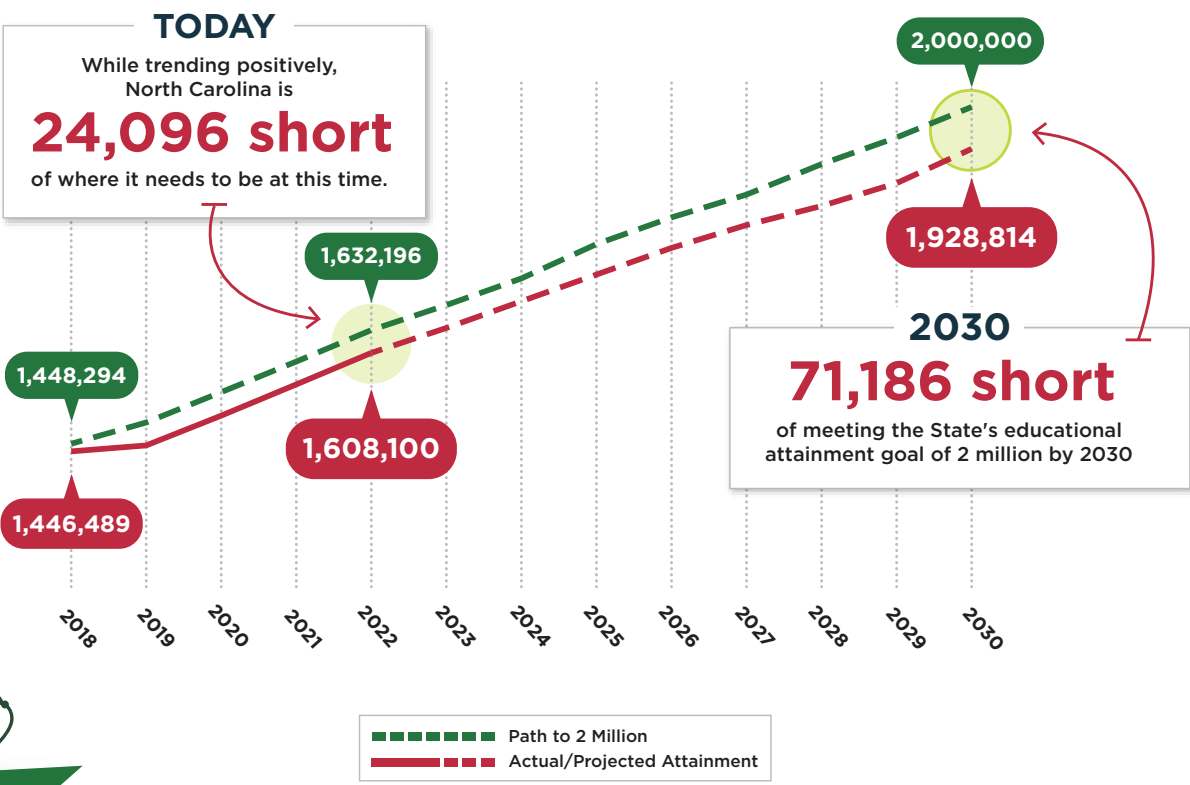


1,608,100

North Carolinians aged 25-44 hold a postsecondary degree/credential.

2022 American Census Survey
US Census Bureau

North Carolina's educational attainment is projected to be only 1.93M in 2030 if it remains on its current educational trajectory.



Preparing for Economic Prosperity for All North Carolinians

North Carolina continues to be blessed with a booming economy. In 2023, we have received the distinct honor of being named [America's Top State for Business](#) for the second year in a row, top ranking as [Best State for Starting a Business](#), and [#1 in Workforce](#). These recognitions were made possible by our excellent business and tax climate, ongoing statewide collaboration, and our state's robust educational infrastructure. **We have lots of successes to celebrate, and we have hope - hope for a future filled with economic prosperity for all North Carolinians.**

Yet, the state's education to workforce pathway doesn't work for everyone. In fact, only 30 of 100 ninth grade public school students in our state will graduate high school on time, enroll in a college on time, and earn a college degree or industry-valued credential within six years after high school graduation. That is one in three, while two-thirds of our jobs require higher levels of education. **Employers are struggling to find skilled workers, and almost half of individuals aged 25-44 are not earning a family-sustaining wage.**

Closing the education to workforce gap will help to resolve this talent crisis and position the Old North State to **fill North Carolina jobs with skilled North Carolinians.** To address this, North Carolina has taken action, and established a goal to have **2 million North Carolinians aged 25-44 to hold an industry-valued credential or a college degree by 2030.**

From 2019 to 2022, **the state has increased overall educational attainment by 4 percentage points from 53.4% to 57.4%.** But, most recent data show we still remain **391,900 away from 2 million, and are tracking 24,096 behind** where we needed to be at this point in time to reach the goal. **Action is needed now more than ever. The good news is...there is a path forward.**

This report highlights successes, gaps, and clear solutions to achieve 2 million by 2030. We must first focus on immediate opportunities for adults to earn credentials and college degrees. We must also ensure these credentials and college degrees align with the labor market needs. And, it is critical we prepare for the future by better bridging and providing seamless pathways in the transition from K12 to one of the three E's—postsecondary enrollment, enlistment, or employment in a job paying a family-sustaining wage.

North Carolina is fortunate. We have jobs, and now we must charge ahead on a path to prosperity for every North Carolinian. Even for our rural communities, access to broadband and higher levels of education open the door to virtual employment in high-wage positions.

We are grateful for the ongoing support from our Board of Directors and funders, the corporate community, state and local leaders, practitioners, our many partners, and policymakers who are working to ensure the realization of our shared vision for attainment.

Thank you for joining myFutureNC on our State's journey to positively impact the lives of all North Carolinians. Education is the gateway out of poverty, so onward and upward to 2 million by 2030 and economic prosperity for all - one student at a time!



Cecilia K. Holden
President/CEO
myFutureNC



John A. Fraley
Board Chair
myFutureNC



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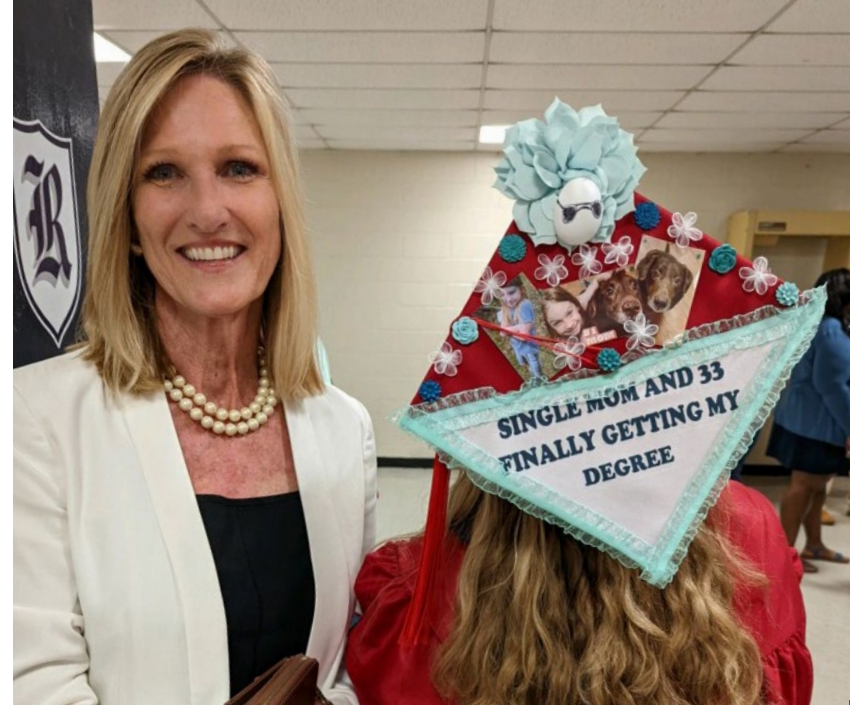
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NC Commerce

Catherine Truitt

State Superintendent,
NC Department of Public
Instruction

Dr. A. Hope Williams

President,
NC Independent Colleges and
Universities



ENSURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL NORTH CAROLINIANS

By increasing educational attainment opportunities for all, North Carolina creates upward mobility and enhanced economic prosperity for our citizens and communities while also meeting the current and future workforce needs of business and industry.

Through cross-sector collaboration, our Board of Directors uniquely represents the full education-to-workforce continuum, bringing together leaders from our education sectors, the business community, philanthropy, and policy. Together, we are charting the path forward toward the state's shared vision for educational attainment: 2 million by 2030.

Advisory Board of Commissioners

The work of myFutureNC aims to be state-led, but locally-driven. With a vision for improving postsecondary attainment across North Carolina, the myFutureNC Board of Directors and leadership team formally support the continued development of a diverse [Advisory Board of Commissioners](#) representing a breadth of stakeholders as willing advocates for the broader myFutureNC mission.

myFutureNC Advisory Board of Commissioners:

- Serve as an ambassador for myFutureNC's 2 million by 2030 goal, vision and initiatives.
- Provide insights and feedback about on-the-ground efforts to increase postsecondary attainment in local and regional areas across North Carolina.
- Share ideas, give input and provide critical feedback needed to enhance the larger, ongoing postsecondary attainment agenda in North Carolina.
- Help build capacity for myFutureNC to execute on its mission and make progress towards North Carolina's educational attainment goal.

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- Brenda Berg, *President & CEO, BEST NC*
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- Anita Brown-Graham, *Professor, nclIMPACT Initiative at the UNC School of Government*
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- J. Bradley Wilson, *CEO Emeritus, Blue Cross Blue Shield*
- Mary A. Winston, *President & CEO, WinsCo Enterprises*
- Tracy Zimmerman, *Vice President, Policy and Communications, Neimand Collaborative*

An Opportunity for All

By collaborating with partner stakeholders and creating more opportunities for all North Carolinians, myFutureNC is committed to creating a stronger, economically competitive and prosperous North Carolina. By increasing educational attainment opportunities for all, North Carolina can meet the workforce needs of business and industry and create upward mobility and economic prosperity for our citizens and communities.

MEASURING PROGRESS

In addition to the 2 million by 2030 goal, myFutureNC monitors progress on **18 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** that are leading benchmarks for educational attainment, aligned around four key transition points:

- ▶ [Academic Readiness](#)
- ▶ [Postsecondary Completion](#)
- ▶ [College & Career Access](#)
- ▶ [Workforce Alignment](#)

Strategic Priorities

Using data and research, myFutureNC, in partnership with education, business, and government officials, identifies key attainment trends, potential gaps in services and programs, and solutions that can improve outcomes as measured by **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**. Data and research resources are curated and made publicly available. myFutureNC supplements and promotes the work of education sectors to advance educational access and attainment. myFutureNC's **Regional Impact Managers (RIMs)** coordinate directly with local business, government, and education leaders to support local collaborative efforts. myFutureNC's actions are guided by data and research. Through its work, myFutureNC also identifies **promising attainment practices** from around the state and nation, sharing them with community leaders. myFutureNC works with both state and local leaders to turn promising practices into sustainable programs. Lessons learned at the local, state, and national levels also inform future policy considerations.

ACCELERATE ACTION

Connect and convene partner stakeholders to communicate and advance promising practices. Propose solutions through the curation and distribution of data and research.

IDENTIFY & ADVOCATE FOR POLICY SOLUTIONS

Collaborate with sector leaders and partner stakeholders to identify and advocate for effective policies.

MONITOR & REPORT PROGRESS

Monitor and report progress on the 2 million by 2030 goal. Identify attainment trends and gaps through the curation and distribution of data.





ACADEMIC READINESS

Year-Over-Year Gains in Academic Readiness, yet Still Tracking Below Pre-Pandemic Numbers

North Carolina public schools are improving on key academic readiness measures in reading and math, thanks to research-based professional development, successful implementation of the Science of Reading, and the ongoing dedication of our teachers and all school staff as they work with students and families. During the 2022-23 school year, [College and Career Ready \(CCR\) in Reading](#) grew to 31% (from 29%), and [College and Career Ready \(CCR\) in Math](#) grew to 35% (from 32%). Additionally, performance in both reading and math improved across all demographic groups.

While year-over-year improvements have been recognized, North Carolina students are still 14 percentage points below pre-pandemic (2019) numbers in CCR reading, and 6 percentage points below in CCR math. Therefore, it is critical that the significant progress being made on the implementation of the Science of Reading continue, and a further emphasis be placed on math.



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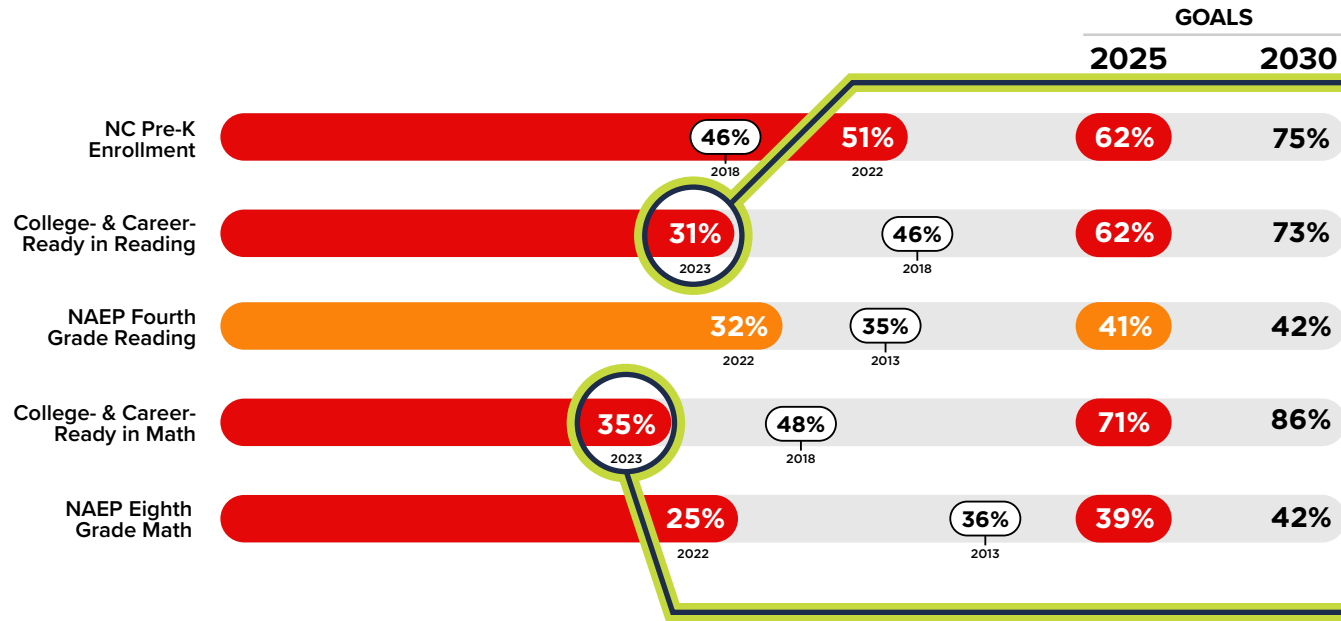
“Technology advancements are accelerating change in our economy. Alignment among pre-K-12, higher education and the world of work is necessary to meet the opportunities and demands of the future. We know that some form of postsecondary education will be necessary for our citizens going forward. myFutureNC is poised to help increase our state’s educational attainment by focusing on the education continuum—from pre-K through higher education. Our education sectors are collaborating and working together to develop approaches that promise to reach a broader set of students. By connecting sectors and programs, we are focused on student success. This approach should promote the pursuit of further education and ensure our economic well-being.”



Ann Goodnight
Senior Director of Community Relations, SAS

Trends in Academic Readiness

KEY: ● MET/EXCEEDED 2025 GOAL ● 1%-5% AWAY FROM 2025 GOAL ● 6%-10% AWAY FROM 2025 GOAL ● 11%+ AWAY FROM 2025 GOAL



READING DEMOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES

- ▶ Black: 17%
- ▶ Hispanic: 19%
- ▶ American Indian: 18%
- ▶ Economically Disadvantaged: 18%

MATH DEMOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES

- ▶ Black: 16%
- ▶ Hispanic: 24%
- ▶ American Indian: 21%
- ▶ Economically Disadvantaged: 21%

POLICY SOLUTIONS

PROGRESS IN 2023

myFutureNC endorsed the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education’s call for **Career Development Plans**, which was **included in the state’s 2023 budget, including recurring funding for [NCCareers.org](https://www.ncdoe.org/nc-careers)**. The intent is that all NC middle and high school students will receive assistance in the completion of career development plans to further enhance their ability to explore potential career pathways throughout middle and high school. These plans are also to ensure intentional alignment between a student’s career aspirations and their courses and extracurricular opportunities.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

ADVOCACY IN 2024

myFutureNC will continue to support our education partners on the following:

- Early foundations for success, including [NC Pre-K](#) and [Science of Reading](#) implementation; and
- High-quality implementation of Career Development Plans for middle and high school students.

NC Pre-K Prepares Students for Success in School, Reading & Life

One of the highest-return investments NC can make is expanding access to high-quality early care and education programs like [NC Pre-K](#). The results—increased kindergarten readiness, improved literacy rates, long-term academic gains and improved soft skills—speak for themselves. In addition, increased availability of seats in programs like NC Pre-K allow more parents to enter the workforce as well as to persist to completion of their own educational attainment.

NC Pre-K is a program for 4-year-olds, primarily from low-income families in North Carolina. It is a 10-month, all-day program, with teachers trained in early care and child development. It is considered one of the highest quality preschool programs in the country.

During the 2021-22 school year, [51% of North Carolina's eligible 4-year-olds](#) from lower income families were enrolled in the NC Pre-K program. **By 2030, the goal is that 75% of eligible four-year-olds in each county will be enrolled in NC Pre-K in North Carolina.** This goal is aligned with the [North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan](#). Currently, 36 out of 100 counties have met this enrollment goal.

Families Need More Access to NC Pre-K

This school year—2022-23—only 39% of students nationally were ready for kindergarten; in North Carolina, that percentage was 28%—only a one percentage point change from the prior year. Duke University studied NC Pre-K for over 15 years. This is the [longest longitudinal study](#) of its kind in the U.S., and it has resulted in four critical findings. Duke University confirmed that participation in NC Pre-K:

- Significantly increases reading proficiency;
- Significantly increases math proficiency;
- Reduces placement in special education – at a big savings to the state; and
- Decreases the chance of a student being held back a grade.

Duke found that these significant increases in proficiency particularly benefit children of color and those from low-income families, reducing the achievement gap as they enter and move through our K-12 system. Duke also found these benefits last through at least the eighth grade. NC Pre-K is a fundamental step to academic success for so many in our state and critical to increasing [third-grade reading proficiency](#).



ADVOCACY IN 2024

NC's early care and education sectors likely need an influx of support to dampen the impact of the loss of federal pandemic-era relief funding which has propped up the sectors over the last two-plus years. Because of persistent pressures from inflation, we need to continue meaningful increases to the amounts paid to providers so they can keep their doors open. To avoid this need to “catch up” in the future, we should consider an automatic adjustment for either labor costs or inflation of the state's funding of NC Pre-K.



Changing Demographics of NC

The makeup of North Carolina’s public school students continues to [change](#), mirroring similar shifts in the overall population. The Hispanic student population has increased significantly and now makes up 21% of all North Carolina public school students, a 7% increase compared to ten years ago. White, Black, Asian, and American Indian students make up 44%, 25%, 4%, and 1%, respectively. Given this demographic shift in the student population, and the historically lower educational attainment rates associated with persons of color, it is essential that all students are academically prepared to help North Carolina achieve its attainment goal by 2030 and beyond. This is particularly true for those from underserved and underrepresented backgrounds.

Although NC’s Graduation Rates for Public School Students Are Increasing, Still Too Many Students Are Not Finishing High School On Time

The [on-time \(four-year\) high school graduation rate](#) for North Carolina’s public school students has increased from 83% in 2013 to 87% in 2023. This year, 13% of 9th grade students (16,311 students) didn’t graduate from high school on time. Based on the larger senior class size this year, while remaining flat with current graduation rates, 6,463 more North Carolina public school seniors graduated on time than the prior year. However, the 2021 and 2022 cohorts had a combined 7,597 fewer public school graduates. Completing high school on time is crucial for individual success, as any delays are linked to a higher risk of dropping out. In the last five years, an average of 9,000 North Carolina public high school students dropped out each year.

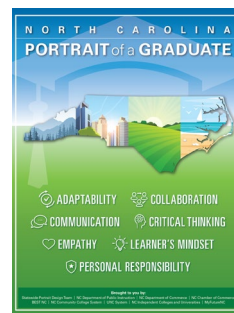
Of the **10,841** high school dropouts reported in the 2021-2022 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction data, over half of them, **56%** (6,120), were Black and Hispanic students.

SUCCESS

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

As determined by North Carolina of Public Instruction’s design teams, the statewide [Portrait of a Graduate](#) identifies seven durable skills that students should possess upon graduation from high school in order to thrive in a 21st century place of work—be it college, career, or military.

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Empathy
- Learner’s Mindset
- Personal Responsibility





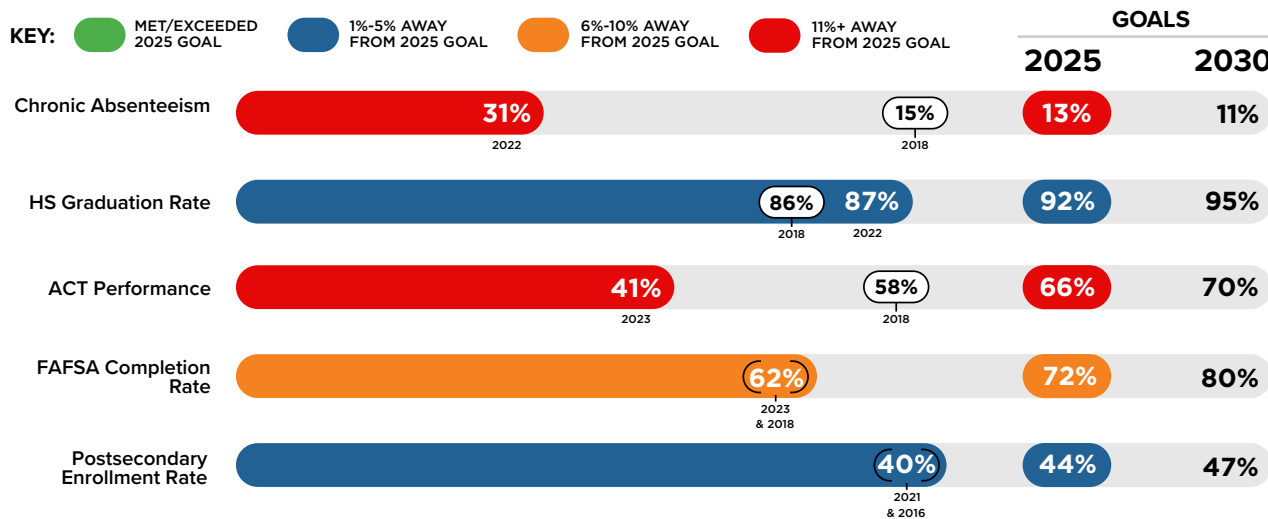
ON-TIME POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT & PERSISTENCE

Trends in College & Career Access

To meet our postsecondary enrollment goal, 47% of 18-24-year-olds must enroll in a postsecondary institution. Unfortunately, North Carolina is 7 percentage points behind. 70,682 more 18-24-year-olds need to enroll in a postsecondary institution to meet the statewide postsecondary enrollment goal this year.

This further elevates the importance of providing educational experiences that keep students connected with the purpose of their education. We are encouraged by the requirement of career development plans for all middle and high school students. Student engagement may also be enhanced by increasing connections between students, educators, and employers through work-based learning experiences. Resources like [NCcareers.org](https://www.nccareers.org) and the work-based learning [Navigator](#) are available for students and job seekers to identify high-demand fields, wage estimates, and other data to assist with informed decision-making about career paths and to find career opportunities.

Trends in College & Career Access



On-time Enrollment Has Not Rebounded From Pre-Pandemic

According to the NCDPI [National Student Clearinghouse report](#), **on-time enrollment is currently at the lowest rate in seven years**, with only 58% of students enrolled in a postsecondary institution within one year after high school graduation. Based on a smaller class size, the **last graduating cohort had over 1K fewer students enrolled** in college on time than the previous year, though the **enrollment rate remained flat at 58%**.

SUCCESS

INCREASING ON-TIME ENROLLMENT

[Career and College Promise](#) (CCP) allows all eligible NC high school students to enroll in courses at NC community colleges and universities (public and private) while in high school. These courses provide entry-level job skills and pathways that lead to a certificate, diploma, degree, or state- or industry-recognized credential. **CCP students are more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in a NC public postsecondary institution.**

In 2021-2022, 32% of all public school graduates enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course. This represents 32,269 students. Black, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and Hispanic students participate in CCP at lower rates (21%, 22%, and 25%, respectively).

K12 Chronic Absenteeism

In 2021-2022, **483,000 (31%)** North Carolina public school students missed at least 10% of the school year, an increase of 103,648 more than the prior year, and over double pre-pandemic percentages (~15%). Attending school is a necessary precursor to learning the skills needed for academic success in later grades, and chronically absent students are much more [likely to drop out](#). In fact, **improving attendance is a [better predictor](#) of high school outcomes than test score improvement**. Unfortunately, chronic absenteeism disproportionately affects economically-disadvantaged students.

“

“Children living in poverty are two to three times more likely to be chronically absent—and face the most harm because their community lacks the resources to make up for the lost learning in school. Students from communities of color as well as those with disabilities are disproportionately affected.”

— [Attendance Works](#)

North Carolina needs

10,270 more

high school seniors to graduate on time and

70,682 more

18-24-year-olds each year to enroll in a postsecondary institution to meet the statewide postsecondary enrollment goal, and to meet the workforce needs beyond 2030.



Overall College Enrollment in NC Increased—but 2 million by 2030 requires even more!

During the pandemic, enrollment in public two-year colleges nationwide took a hit. In 2020-2021, enrollment at NC community colleges dropped 18% (~115K) compared to the prior year. However, after the dramatic decline, NC community colleges' enrollment bounced back 9% (~49K) in 2021-22, preceded with another 3% (~20K) gain in 2022-23. While more work is still needed to compensate for the huge enrollment declines experienced during the pandemic, this recent reversal of trends is encouraging. The Great 58 is well-positioned to support strong communities and a strong economy in the state.

The latest data shows that in Fall 2023, the overall enrollment in the [UNC System](#) increased by 1.2% (2,855 students) compared to Fall 2022. While 11 institutions increased enrollment this fall, 5 universities faced challenges with declining enrollment. Overall enrollment of the five HBCUs in the UNC System increased enrollment this Fall. Total adult learners' headcount declined by 2% (1,220 students) in Fall 2023 compared to Fall 2022 (58,716 vs. 59,936).

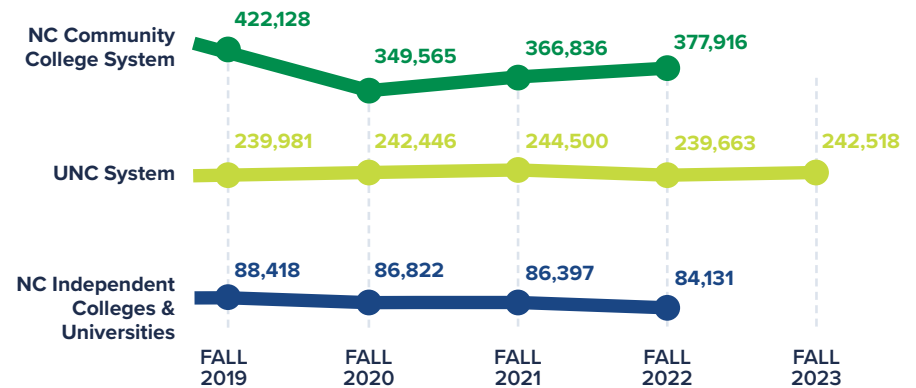
[North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities](#) will be collecting Fall 2023 enrollment data in January 2024. In Fall 2022, the 36 NCICU institutions had a total headcount of 84,131 students, a decrease of 2.6% (~2K students) compared to Fall 2021. While undergraduate student enrollment has decreased, graduate/professional student enrollment has increased over this period.

NC Community College Enrollment Increased but still tracking below pre-pandemic numbers

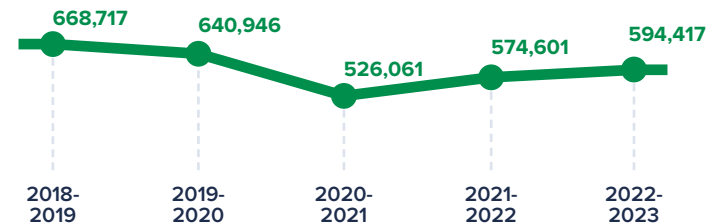
The number of students served across North Carolina community colleges (total headcount) increased 3% in 2022-2023 compared to the prior year. While this recent reversal of trends is encouraging, much more is still needed to compensate for the huge enrollment declines experienced during the pandemic.



North Carolina College Enrollment By Institution Sector



Total Headcount Over Time NC Community College System



FAFSA Is Key to On-Time College Enrollment

A student's high school years represent a critical period in the transition to adulthood, and schools are focused on keeping students engaged and on track to one of the "Three E's" – enrollment, employment, or enlistment. For students who choose to enroll in postsecondary education, an important first step for most students is completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, better known as the FAFSA. This is required to access Federal Pell Grants, state need-based grants, and many scholarships. Additionally, for students who believe college isn't affordable for them, they often find by completing the FAFSA that federal and state dollars are available that make paying for college more manageable. Yet, North Carolina is leaving millions of untapped federal dollars on the table each year in unclaimed Pell grants for students who would have qualified.

FAFSA completions are a strong predictor of on-time postsecondary enrollment. **A study** shows that **88%** of seniors who completed a FAFSA attended college, compared to **49%** of students who did not file a FAFSA.

According to **NCAN**, as of September 29, 2023, the state's current completion rate is **59.3%**, which is higher than the national average of **58.9%**. We are ranked **19th nationally** for our overall completion rate and **6th** in the nation for year-over-year increases (+5.5%). Additionally, the state has made significant progress leveling the playing field so students from schools serving higher levels of low-income households, higher minority populations, and small towns and rural communities had the support they need to complete a FAFSA. This is a significant statewide improvement but much work lies ahead.

SUCCESS

NC SUCCESS STORY

In support of myFutureNC's **Big Bet** to increase **On-Time Postsecondary Enrollment & Persistence**, myFutureNC partnered with **NCSEAA** and **GEAR UP NC** to facilitate the first-ever **NC 2023 Financial Aid Summit** June 20-21 at Wake Tech Community College.

More than 250 attendees attended the 2-day event, with **participants** representing over 100 different organizations, including colleges, financial aid organizations, and 85 NC school districts/charter schools. **Watch the Financial Aid Summit Video (YouTube).**

Looking ahead, the delay to FAFSA availability this year has the potential to impede our progress. The consolidated scholarship campaign that promotes FAFSA completion will hopefully mitigate the likely 3 percentage point loss by bringing significant paid and earned media attention to this critical step in the college-going process.

“

Many students want to go to college but need help with the college going process. With information provided through CFNC.org and events like the 2023 Financial Aid Summit, we had a 5.5% increase in FAFSA completions this year. Thanks to our strong partnerships with organizations like myFutureNC, we are building the network of support students need to envision the future they want and the education that will help them get there.



Andrea Poole
Executive Director, North Carolina State
Education Assistance Authority



Once Students Start College, We Need Them To Finish

It is crucial that students who begin college actually complete what they start so they do not end up with debt and no degree, and so employers can find skilled talent to fill open jobs. Considering the [“enrollment cliff”](#) that is projected for the second half of this decade, the current rate at which college students persist to their second year and the completion rate for those who do is insufficient to meet the state’s educational attainment goal by 2030. To achieve the goal will require tens of thousands more students to enroll in postsecondary programs, and while boosting enrollment is essential, without a significant increase in college completions, we will fall short of the goal. Therefore, it is also critical that the state direct resources for our college students to persist through college completion.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center’s [report](#), North Carolina four-year sectors saw declines in the six-year completion rate, with private nonprofit four-year declining by 0.8 percentage points to 73.8% and public four-year declining by 1.1 percentage points, to 76.0%. Community colleges were the only sector to see increases (+1.6 pp to 49.4%). These completion rates were updated for 2023, referring to students who began in 2017. Fewer students completing within six years appears to be a result of more students stopping out—putting education on hold to go back to work—as the proportion of students still enrolled anywhere in their sixth year declined.

Students who enroll in college at or before age 20 are more likely to earn a degree or credential within six years in the public sector. Full-time students complete college at a higher rate than part-time students, and female students have a higher completion rate than male students across all institutions. Additionally, the racial gap continues to exist; Asian and White students achieve higher completion rates compared to Hispanic and Black students.

Programs like the [Longleaf Commitment Grant](#), [GROW \(Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce\)](#), [Finish Line Grants](#), [Federal Pell Grants](#), and other state need-based grants and scholarships in NC help make college more affordable. Yet, **driving awareness of available resources and opportunities is critical**. To increase enrollments, we continue to recommend increased outreach to students and families in rural areas, from low-income backgrounds, and persons of color who may need more support and encouragement in the college-going process.

Many occupations in NC require an education higher than a two-year degree. It is projected that in 2030, 25% of jobs (1.3 million) will require a four-year degree. Currently, only 698K adults ages 25-44 hold a four-year degree.



POLICY SOLUTIONS

ADVOCACY IN 2024

How can we assist more college students to persist? myFutureNC supports:

- ▶ Extending persistence supports to more students across higher education to build on the success of completion assistance programs like [Finish Line Grants](#), which have provided support for nearly 11,000 NC community college students who faced unexpected financial emergencies—including medical bills, car repairs, and loss of childcare—that might have prevented them from finishing their coursework.
- ▶ Coordinated communications efforts, aligned with our education partners, promoting the value of postsecondary education, specifically in high-demand fields.
- ▶ The development and quality implementation of student-centered interoperable data systems, including a common digital transcript.

Meeting the Needs of All Students

Data show that Hispanic and Black students complete at a lower rate than Asian and White students. Over the past two decades, the number of Hispanic students in North Carolina public schools has increased by 275%, from 77K in 2003 to 290K in 2023. Currently, Hispanic students make up 21% of all public school students in North Carolina. This demographic shift, coupled with the historically lower educational attainment rates associated with low socio-economic status, including persons of color, makes it even more urgent that all students, particularly those from underserved and underrepresented backgrounds are completing college at higher percentages if North Carolina is to achieve its attainment goal by 2030 and meet the workforce demands beyond 2030.

SUCCESS

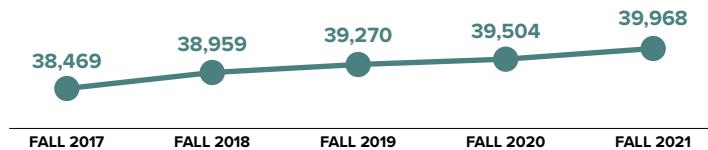
SUCCESS FOR NC'S HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

While gaps in attainment persist for Black students, North Carolina's 10 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a strong history of graduating persons of color. The 10 HBCUs are home to over 40% of Black graduates with a Bachelor's degree from North Carolina's 4-year postsecondary institutions. While enrollment in higher education nationally has declined in recent years, enrollment at HBCUs is increasing. To further increase enrollments and completions, we partner through the [NC 10](#) with [The Hunt Institute](#), [EdNC](#), and the [Center for Racial Equity in Education \(CREED\)](#) to learn from North Carolina's 10 HBCUs and identify best practices in supporting students through degree completion. [myFutureNC](#) and the [NC Chamber](#) are bringing together business leaders and HBCUs to identify partnerships to increase attainment in high-demand fields among these student populations.

► [myFutureNC Encourages Workforce Partnerships](#)

While some institutions continue to face challenges, overall enrollment at the state's 10 HBCUs has steadily increased.

NC HBCU OVERALL ENROLLMENT



SUCCESS

SUCCESS FOR NC'S HISPANIC COLLEGE STUDENTS

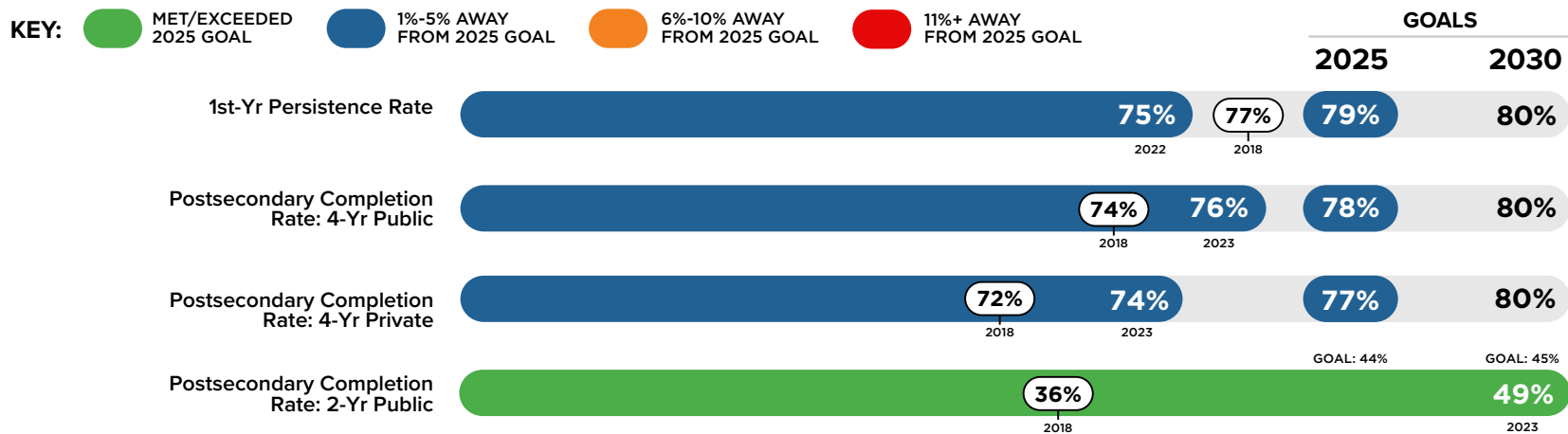
[myFutureNC](#) partnered with James Sprunt, Lenoir, Sampson, and Wayne Community Colleges to connect resources through [Anonymous Trust](#) in support of a new, two-year Latino Initiative [Train the East](#). Each college will receive \$250K to be used over two years to help increase enrollments and completions of Hispanic students through the [Train the East](#) initiative. [Hispanic Serving Institutions](#), or HSIs, are on the rise in North Carolina, which is no surprise as the Hispanic and Latinx population has **grown by over 40% over the last decade**.





POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Trends in Postsecondary Completion



NC's Adult Learners

Adult learners are key to the success of North Carolina meeting the state's 2 million by 2030 goal. This is important for two reasons. First, based on age and time to completion, students in the K12 education pipeline will not count towards the 2030 goal, so we must focus on the adult population. Additionally, when a student's parent earns a degree, it has ripple effects that span multiple generations. Children of parents with higher levels of education have a better chance at achieving academic and career success themselves. To achieve 2 million by 2030, we must engage and encourage more adults to start and/or return to college, and then support them through completing an industry-valued college degree or credential. 1,193,945 (43%) North Carolinians ages 25-44 do not have a postsecondary degree or credential, including 348,164 of them who have some college but no degree and 610,864 with only a high school diploma (2022 American Census Survey).

In 2022-2023, NC Community colleges saw a 2% increase year-over-year in enrollments of adult learners, or students ages 25 and above. This represents over 330K adult learners and 6,565 more than the prior academic year. Adult learners make up 55% of the overall student population in our NC community colleges.

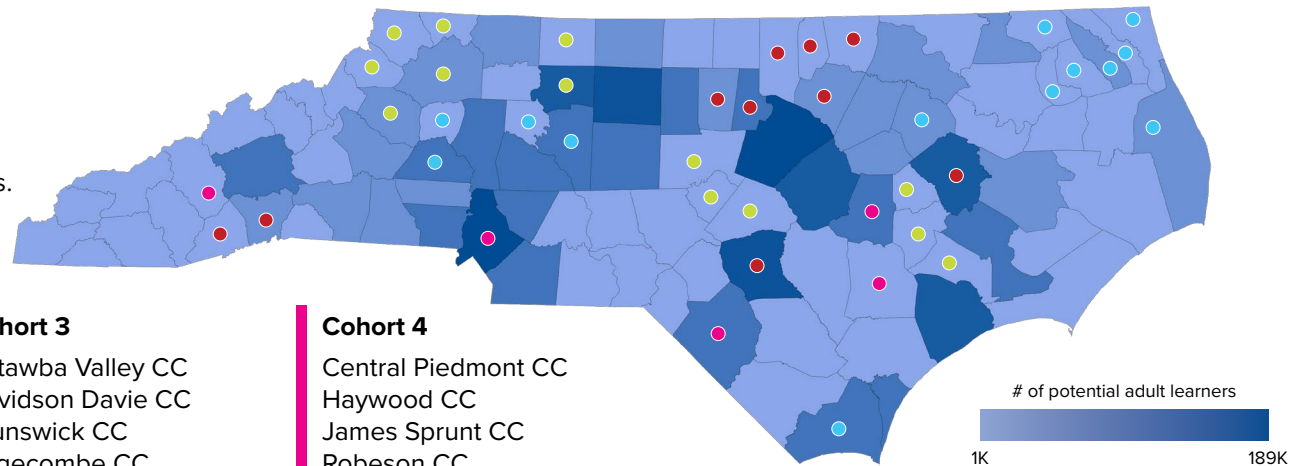
Promising Practices for NC's Adult Learners

PROMISING PRACTICE: NC RECONNECT

[NC Reconnect](#) focuses on engaging, informing, and supporting adult learners who have completed some college but did not earn a degree or credential. This initiative is being led by [John M. Belk Endowment](#), in partnership with myFutureNC, our local community colleges, the [NCSU Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research](#), and the North Carolina Community College System. The goal of this collaborative project is to recruit adult learners with some college but no degree back to the classroom, and to drive systemic change in our colleges to best support adult learners. To date, the initiative has included three cohorts of five local community colleges, and combined, these fifteen colleges successfully re-enrolled 2,035 adult learners. Each cohort drew an average of 678 learners back to college. A fourth cohort was recently announced and ultimately, the plan is to roll this out among all 58 NC community colleges. NC Reconnect is projected to re-enroll ~7K adult learners in NC community college by 2030. Best practices and lessons learned from the NC Reconnect initiative have been highlighted in the [Adult Learner Guidebook](#) by the Belk Center, in collaboration with these other partners.

NC RECONNECT COHORTS

NC Reconnect aims to increase enrollment and completion among adult learners through partnerships.



Cohort 1

- Blue Ridge CC
- Durham Tech
- Fayetteville Tech
- Pitt CC
- Vance-Granville CC

Cohort 2

- Caldwell CC&TI
- Central Carolina CC
- Forsyth Tech
- Lenoir CC
- Wilkes CC

Cohort 3

- Catawba Valley CC
- Davidson Davie CC
- Brunswick CC
- Edgecombe CC
- College of the Albemarle

Cohort 4

- Central Piedmont CC
- Haywood CC
- James Sprunt CC
- Robeson CC
- Wayne CC

“

“The future of North Carolina depends on our ability to meet the challenges of postsecondary attainment. From Manteo to Murphy, the state’s economic vitality is deeply tied to our ability to promote educational opportunities for as many as possible. Regardless of ZIP Code, we must do more to encourage learners to find pathways for their own happiness and economic capacity. The work of myFutureNC helps connect the dots on these efforts and plays a critical role in making this vision a reality. Through our collective work of reengaging adult learners and promoting better access to financial aid, myFutureNC has become a fundamental ingredient in the recipe of making North Carolina be the best version of itself. With a renewed focus on increased pathways for economic and social mobility, North Carolina **WILL** have the talent and skilled citizenry needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow.”



MC Belk Pilon
President and Board Chair, John M. Belk Endowment

UNC SYSTEM

[Project Kitty Hawk](#) (PKH) is a nonprofit education technology and service provider that supports UNC System universities in serving adult learners. The goal is to have 65.4K new undergraduate adult learners start in the UNC System by 2030, and 10.8K projected to complete a degree or credential by 2030. Additionally, PKH partners with universities to re-engage learners who previously stopped out of programs. The goal is to have 4K adult learners re-enroll, and based on the current completion rate of four-year public institutions (77%), ~3K of them will complete a degree or credential by 2030.

NORTH CAROLINA'S INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

[North Carolina's Independent Colleges and Universities](#) (NCICU) have long provided maximum flexibility for adult learners, most of whom are employed and have family commitments. [The Teagle Foundation](#) has provided grant support recently to assist campuses in simplifying and enhancing options for transfer students. Related to this work, campuses such as Catawba College and the Universities of Gardner-Webb, Lenoir-Rhyne, Pfeiffer, Shaw, and Wingate have continued encouraging adults to return to college and have expanded supports to students while they are still in their community college programs. These include providing a lower, set cost for students to transfer and complete a bachelor's degree, offering free courses at the four-year college while the students are still attending community college, offering courses in a concise time period such as six to eight weeks, and providing four-year Student IDs so students can attend activities, and use the library and other facilities at the four-year institution.

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

[NCCCS Adult Learner Pilot Program](#): NC Community College System (NCCCS) expanded adult learner pilot programs to focus on adults with varying amounts of education including some college credits, but no degree, and who may be attending part-time and balancing work and family responsibilities. NCCCS granted 29 community colleges funds for marketing, outreach, and enrollment efforts.

- ▶ Between 2020 and 2022, the number of adult learners enrolled in North Carolina community colleges **increased 10%**, growing from 171,759 to **189,004**. Of these 189,004 adult learners, **62%** were enrolled in workforce and continuing education programs.
- ▶ The biggest enrollment growth took place in workforce and continuing education, **increasing 19%** from 94,608 in Fall 2020 to 112,510 in fall 2022 and adult basic skills **increasing 37%** from 13,510 to 18,455.

[The REACH Collaborative](#) is a grant-funded effort to increase the completion rates of adult learners from communities of color in high-value, short-term credential programs. 23 community colleges in North Carolina are part of the Collaborative. From Fall 2021 to Spring 2023, the number of Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Multiracial adult new students enrolled in degree-seeking programs at the participating schools was 10,131. During the same timeframe, there were 10,241 Black, Hispanic, Native American, and multi-racial adult learners who completed a certificate or associates degree. Additionally, from Fall 2021 to Spring 2023, the number of Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Multiracial adult new students enrolled in non-degree seeking programs at the participating schools was 15,251.



“

“NC Reconnect’s mission is important to the future of our state’s workforce and I’m glad my community college was able to benefit from the resources NC Reconnect has developed to help support adult learners. While attending Wilkes Community College I saw firsthand how much the institution has done to improve their accessibility for adult students, meeting people where they are to help them attain vital career training and postsecondary education. Since returning to college as an adult learner, I can say higher education is the best pathway to better career outcomes.”

— Willard Sheets

Wilkes Community College



WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

Efforts Are Underway To Align With the Labor Market

In most regions of North Carolina, postsecondary degrees and credentials awarded are not sufficiently aligned with job opportunities in the area, limiting a graduate's ability to earn a family-sustaining wage. North Carolina's [labor market alignment](#) was 82% in the most recently available data, meaning roughly eight of every ten graduates from state postsecondary institutions had skills and credentials aligned with job openings. This is a 2% decrease from the prior year. In addition, 11 out of 16 [Prosperity Zone Sub Regions](#) fell short of the state average. This indicates that individuals who graduate within a region may need to move elsewhere in the state or commute longer distances to find a job aligned with their skills. Likewise, an employer might not be able to find recent graduates with the skills they need within that region.

SUCCESS

PREPARING STUDENTS TO FILL HIGH-DEMAND JOBS & EARN A FAMILY-SUSTAINING WAGE

Communities across North Carolina, including those in rural areas, are facing a growing talent shortage. Many of our state's rural counties have seen their populations decline in the last decade, and as workers retire, fewer new candidates are being trained to fill their positions. In their efforts to recruit for specialized roles, employers often find themselves looking to surrounding towns and communities to source talent.

- ▶ [UNC School of Government - ncIMPACT Carolina Across 100](#) - A two-year initiative with 13 teams representing 37 counties connecting young adults to living-wage employment opportunities.
- ▶ [Surry-Yadkin Works](#), an innovative regional work-based learning program is the first of its kind in North Carolina. This collective includes four K-12 school districts, one community college, two boards of county commissioners, and businesses spanning both Surry and Yadkin Counties. Their efforts to develop a new generation of talent and drive their local economy exemplify the collaborative approach to problem-solving known as collective impact.

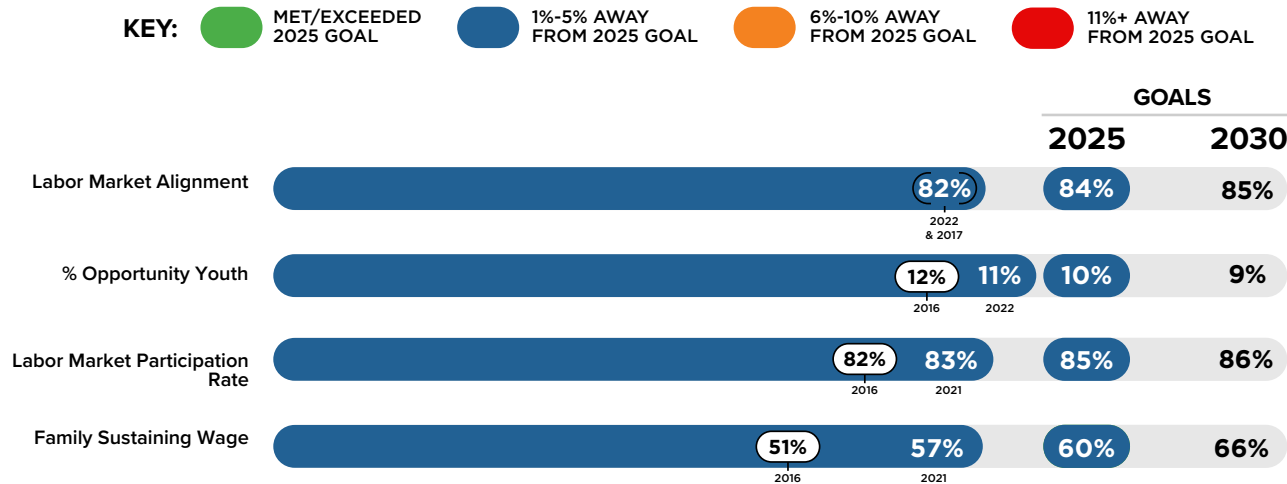
READ MORE about the conditions that primed Surry-Yadkin Works for success and the specific steps leaders took to bring the program to life in this [NCSU Belk Center](#) playbook supported by [myFutureNC](#), [NC Business Committee for Education](#), [NC Department of Commerce](#), [Office of NC Governor Roy Cooper](#), and [Jobs for the Future](#).

WHAT IS LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT?

Labor market alignment represents how well-matched the supply of graduates is with the demand of job openings. A rate of 100% means that the distribution of credentials awarded by postsecondary institutions is perfectly aligned with job openings, in that all degrees and credentials conferred are in demand in the job market.

Trends in Workforce Alignment

Employers in many sectors in North Carolina already struggle to fill vacancies, and, as the [MyFutureNC Call to Action](#) noted, “as many as half of the occupations available today are projected to transform significantly in the coming years, increasing demand for workers with technical and highly employable skills.” NC Department of Public Instruction’s [Portrait of a Graduate](#) ensures that NC students are well equipped for the broadest range of postsecondary opportunities, whether it’s college, career, or military.



In 2022, 81% of NC employers who tried to hire reported difficulty hiring, and 69% claimed hiring has been more difficult than in pre-pandemic conditions.

Working To Support & Engage NC’s Opportunity Youth

When students do not see the link between their coursework and goals for the future, unfortunately, many become frustrated and disconnected as early as middle school. These students often drop out of high school and become [opportunity youth](#)—teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not enrolled in school or working.

1 in 9
(11%) North Carolina 16-24 year-olds are not in school or working, representing a one-percentage-point decrease year-over-year.

Who Are NC’s Opportunity Youth?

BY RACE/ETHNICITY

American Indian youth were least likely to be in school or working, showing the highest disconnection rates at 18%. Black (15%) and Multiracial (13%) youth both had disconnection rates above the state average (10.9%). Hispanic youth at 10.8% were close to the state average, while Asian (8.9%) and White (9.0%) youth ages 16-24 were the only groups to meet or exceed the statewide goal in 2030—to have 9% or less of 16-24-year-olds neither working nor in school.

BY SEX

North Carolina men ages 16-24 had slightly lower shares of opportunity youth compared to women ages 16-24 (10.4% vs. 11.5%).



Almost Half of Working North Carolinians Are Not Earning a Family-Sustaining Wage

A “[family-sustaining](#)” or “[living wage](#)” is defined as earning enough to cover necessary expenses—such as food, medical care, childcare, housing, and transportation—without having to rely on financial assistance from other sources.

In 2021, 43% of North Carolina adults ages 35-44 did not earn a family-sustaining wage, which includes a range from \$17.14 per hour for one working adult living alone, to \$55.59 per hour for one working adult supporting three children.

In 2021, a single adult with no children living in North Carolina would need to earn [an annual income of at least \\$35,665](#) to meet this threshold. See each county’s living wage [here](#).

POLICY SOLUTIONS

PROGRESS IN 2023

Federal Pell Grants and state need-based grants do not cover non-degree continuing education. However, beginning in 2021, North Carolina leveraged federal pandemic relief dollars to provide financial assistance for students pursuing industry-valued non-degree credentials at a North Carolina community college. The General Assembly then created the [Short-Term Workforce Development Grant](#) program in 2022 and codified it into state law in 2023, along with \$1M in recurring funding.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

ADVOCACY IN 2024

myFutureNC policy priorities to increase attainment of NC Workforce Credentials include:

- Financial support for students pursuing industry-valued credentials, and outreach to boost enrollment in such programs.
- Alignment and strengthened efforts between the NC Workforce Credentials Advisory Council, NC Commerce, NCWorks, education sectors, and employers.
- Improved tracking of certification/licensure completions aligned with industry-valued credentials.
- Modification of US Census to allow for counting of individuals with non-degree credentials.

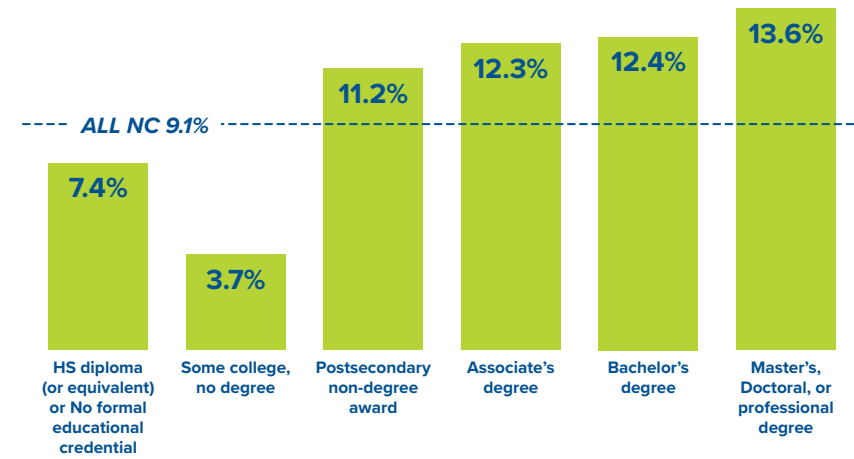


There is a Pathway to Family-Sustaining Wage Credentials and Careers for All North Carolinians

For North Carolina to meet our 2 million by 2030 goal, we must engage and support more adults to earn postsecondary non-degree credentials that have industry value and provide a path to economic prosperity.

North Carolina has many jobs that are in high demand, high growth that also pay a family-sustaining wage, yet we don't have enough skilled workers to fill the jobs. While many of these opportunities don't require a college degree, ~330,000 North Carolina jobs require an industry-valued credential or certificate, and this number is projected to grow by more than 11% by 2030. To meet labor market demands now and in the future, it is critical that we increase educational attainment statewide for [industry-valued credentials](#).

PROJECTED GROWTH RATES OF OCCUPATIONS IN NC BY REQUIRED MINIMUM EDUCATION



Source: NC Commerce

SUCCESS

DEFINING & COUNTING NON-DEGREE WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS FOR NC

myFutureNC partners with the NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Community College System, and NC Department of Commerce who created the NC Workforce Credentials Advisory Council. The Council is made up of business, industry, and education partners who are working to identify the short-term, industry-valued credentials needed to fill high-demand and high-growth jobs that will count towards the state's 2 million by 2030 goal. The model being followed was outlined by Education Strategy Group, a national organization focused on increasing postsecondary attainment. The model promotes hearing the voices of employers, prioritizing these short-term, industry-valued credentials, through incentives and policies, and tracking progress.

To date, the NC Workforce Credentials Advisory Council endorsed more than 150 credentials and it has created a structure to engage with sectors on a regular basis, allowing it to respond to evolving needs that influence which credentials employers are seeking.

Efforts are also underway to develop the NC License & Credential Warehouse in order to more accurately track how many individuals are earning these industry-valued credentials.

NC's fastest growing jobs require a postsecondary degree or non-degree credential. Growth of jobs requiring a non-degree credential or postsecondary degree is projected to outpace total job growth.

SUCCESS


MYFUTURENC AND SECTOR PARTNERS RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION


myFutureNC and the [NC Workforce Credentials](#) initiative was named a [PIE \(Policy Innovators in Education\) Network finalist](#) for an Eddy Award in the category of *Best Collaboration*.





Important Data Products and Tools


We must meet the talent pipeline needs and create opportunities for all North Carolinians. It is critical that we identify attainment trends, gaps, and most importantly, develop solutions with our partners in order to equip leaders and policymakers to prioritize resources and drive change. Leveraging our data and research, myFutureNC partners with [Carolina Demography at UNC](#), education sectors, and commerce to produce and share these data products widely.

 **[Degree Ticker and Progress Toward 2 Million by 2030](#)**
The predominant myFutureNC tracking tool, with updated counts of the state's progress toward the 2M/2030 goal, as well as annual counts of 2-year and 4-year degrees earned.

 **[Key Performance Indicators](#)**
Progress tracker for North Carolina's 18 myFutureNC-established performance indicators. Each indicator includes a North Carolina goal and, when available, the neighboring state with the highest performance on that indicator and outcomes for demographic groups. Each indicator page contains information on why the indicator matters for education and employment, detailed information on outcomes over time and across groups, and links to resources and additional information.

 **[Data Trends Workbook](#)**
A longitudinal data profile of every North Carolina county, with up to five years of overall (and, in some cases, group-level) trend data for three attainment-relevant areas: Academic Readiness, College & Career Access, and Labor Market.

 **[County Attainment Profiles](#)**
An individualized profile of every North Carolina county, with data for myFutureNC's four Pathways to 2M/2030, as well as data-defined opportunities for growth uniquely identified for each county. Supplement Profiles (releasing in February 2024) will include Workforce Development Board (WDBs) profiles, Council of Government (CoGs) profiles, Prosperity Zones (PZs) profiles, Charter School profiles, and District/City School profiles.

 **[Recommended County Attainment Goals](#)**
In partnership with Carolina Demography, [local attainment goals](#) have been recommended for every county to consider, and these cross-sector partnerships have either adopted those local goals or set their own to feed into the statewide 2 million by 2030 goal.

 **[Promising Attainment Practices Database](#)**
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.

These data products and tools are available on our website. Visit <https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/>

County Attainment Change From 2018-2021

The Census data reflecting North Carolina's educational attainment from 2018 to 2021 indicates a 3.5 percentage point rise in attainment rate. In 2021, 57 percent of North Carolinians aged 25-44 attained a postsecondary degree or credential, up from 53.5 percent in 2018. [An interactive map](#) created by myFutureNC showcases the change in each county's change while factoring in population changes. Seventy-five counties increased the attainment rate during this period, with Clay, Dare, and Avery counties demonstrating the most rapid growth. These three counties increased by over 9 percentage points, with Clay County increasing its attainment rate by more than 15 percentage points in three years. myFutureNC is in the process of analyzing the most recent 2022 Census data, and it plans to release an updated map showcasing the ongoing progress in educational attainment across counties.



myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

myFutureNC released the 2024 Attainment Profiles on February 15, a comprehensive resource that offers detailed insights into educational attainment across North Carolina. **The Attainment Profile includes individual county profiles, one for each of NC's 100 counties.** Each consists of a 2-page document showcasing 100 data indicators. These indicators are categorized into general information and four key transition points: academic readiness, college & career access, postsecondary completion, and workforce alignment. **In addition to the county profiles, myFutureNC's 2024 Attainment Profile introduces a set of new profiles,** including Prosperity Zone Profiles, Councils of Government (COGs) Profiles, Workforce Development Board (WDBs) Profiles, Charter School Profiles, and District/City School Profiles. The profiles are invaluable tools for local stakeholders and communities that provide a deeper understanding of educational achievement at various levels and across different regions.

Alamance County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

Greensboro Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Suburban
Local Education Agencies: 1
Charter Schools: 4

2030 Proposed Alamance County Attainment Goal: 25,925 (54%) **2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million**

Population Spotlight
2020 Census: 171,429
2022 Estimate: 176,353
Change: 4,924

Growth Rate
2.9% vs 2.5%
County vs State

\$58,847 Median Household Income (2021)
State: \$61,997

66% Home Owners (2021)
State: 67%

19.1% Child Poverty Rate (2021)
State: 17.2%

11.9% Opportunity Youth Rate (2021)
State: 12.1%

73% Households with Broadband (2021)
State: 77%

3.7% Unemployment Rate (2022)
State: 3.7%

Educational Attainment
Alamance County 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: 52.3% (21,958) **Have Degree or Credential: 47.7%** (20,008)

11% | 27% | 14% | 7% | 11% | 21% | 8%

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

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

- Chronic Absenteeism:** 41% of Alamance County students are chronically absent from school, above the suburban county average of 30%.
- Math Performance:** 27% of Alamance County 3-8 graders earn college-and-career-ready scores in Math, below the suburban county average of 36%.
- Transition to Postsecondary:** 56% of Alamance County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the suburban county average of 63%.

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

In Greensboro Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:
83.7% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

891 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:
8,468 graduates in 2020
73% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in Fall 2022
\$41,353 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

49% of adults in Alamance County earned a family sustaining wage, 2021

Alamance County is served by:
Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Board
Piedmont Triad Council of Governments

UNC System College Enrollment Curriculum
3,100
3,000
2,900
2,800
2,700
2015 2017 2019 2021 2023

NC Community College Enrollment Curriculum
4,000
3,800
3,600
3,400
3,200
2018 2020 2022

Top 3 Five-Star Jobs
Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners 4%
Legisticians 4%
Web Developers 4%

Top 3 Employers in Alamance County
Employment Range
Alamance-Burlington School System 1000+
Alamance Regional Medical Center 1000+

First-time Curriculum Enrollments
1,300
1,200
1,100
1,000
900
800
700
600
500
2018 2020 2022

Basic Skills
1,000
900
800
700
600
500
2018 2020 2022

Continuing Education
7,000
6,000
5,000
2018 2020 2022

CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY myFUTURENC 2 million by 2030 John M. Belk UNC CAROLINA POPULATION CENTER

North Carolina

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

Local Education Agencies: 115
Charter Schools: 206

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight
2020 Census: 10,439,414
2022 Estimate: 10,658,973
Change: 259,559

Growth Rate
2.5%
State

\$61,997 Median Household Income (2022)

67% Home Owners (2022)

17.2% Child Poverty Rate (2022)

10.9% Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)

77% Households with Broadband (2022)

3.7% Unemployment Rate (2022)

Educational Attainment
North Carolina 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: 42.6% (1,193,945) **Have Degree or Credential: 57.4%** (1,608,100)

8% | 22% | 12% | 7% | 10% | 26% | 13%

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

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

- Transition to Postsecondary:** Increasing the number of high school seniors enrolling in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation is one of the three biggest opportunity areas for 39 counties.
- NC Pre-K Enrollment:** Increasing the number of 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K is one of the three biggest opportunity areas for 33 counties.
- High School Graduation:** Increasing the number of 9th graders completing high school in 4 years or less is one of the three biggest opportunity areas for 33 counties.

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 North Carolina has been meeting local needs:
<https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices>

In North Carolina:
82.3% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

15,898 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:
84,346 graduates in 2020
69% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in Fall 2022
\$43,833 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

54% of adults in North Carolina earned a family sustaining wage, 2021

UNC System College Enrollment Curriculum
205,000
200,000
195,000
190,000
185,000
180,000
2015 2017 2019 2021 2023

NC Community College Enrollment Curriculum
224,000
220,000
216,000
212,000
208,000
204,000
200,000
2018 2020 2022

Top 3 Five-Star Jobs
Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners 4%
Statisticians 4%
Data Scientists 4%

Top 3 Employers in North Carolina
Employment Range
Wal-Mart Associates Inc. 1000+
Duke University 1000+
Food Lion 1000+

First-time Curriculum Enrollments
72,000
68,000
64,000
60,000
56,000
52,000
48,000
2018 2020 2022

Basic Skills
35,000
30,000
25,000
2018 2020 2022

Continuing Education
330,000
300,000
270,000
2018 2020 2022

CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY myFUTURENC 2 million by 2030 John M. Belk UNC CAROLINA POPULATION CENTER

2024 Policy Projections

		ON-TIME ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE	ADULT LEARNER ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE	LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT
POLICY SOLUTIONS	NC WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS			
	▶ Financial support for students pursuing industry-valued credentials and outreach to boost enrollment in such programs.	✓	✓	✓
	▶ Alignment and strengthened efforts between the NC Workforce Credentials Advisory Council, NC Commerce, NCWorks, education sectors, and employers.	✓	✓	✓
	▶ Improved tracking of certification/licensure attainment.			✓
	ACCESS, PERSISTENCE & COMPLETION			
	▶ Targeted financial aid provided to all postsecondary students who face unexpected emergencies—such as medical bills, car repairs, and loss of childcare—that might otherwise prevent them from finishing their coursework.	✓	✓	
	LOCAL/REGIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE			
	▶ Funding for community technical assistance grants to increase educational attainment through support for cross-sector collaborations that leverage local leadership, existing initiatives and partnerships, and innovative new approaches.	✓	✓	✓
PARTNER SUPPORT ITEMS				
▶ Early foundations for success, including NC Pre-K and Science of Reading implementation.	✓	✓		
▶ High-quality implementation of Career Development Plans integrated through NCcareers.org.	✓		✓	

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Bank of America
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Credit Suisse
Dan Cameron Family Foundation
Dogwood Health Trust
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Goodnight Educational Foundation
Goodwill Industries of Northwest NC
John M. Belk Endowment

L. David Mounts Foundation
Leon Levine Foundation
Lumina Foundation
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NC Business Committee for Education, Inc.
NC Department of Commerce
NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation
North State Bank
Truist
UNC GearUpNC
Weyerhaeuser
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

INDIVIDUALS

The Alcorn Family Fund
Mark Kingsmore
myFutureNC Board of Directors
myFutureNC Staff

Endorsements

myFutureNC is proud to have more than [290 organizations](#) endorse the two million by 2030 statewide attainment goal. Achieving this goal will only be possible with deep, cross-sector support from state and local leaders and groups in business, education, and government.

Citations

For a list of all citations, please go to www.myfuturenc.org to access the online version of the North Carolina State of Educational Attainment Report which includes all citation hyperlinks.

Opportunities to Donate to myFutureNC

Whether they are a foundation, individual, or corporate sponsor, our donors play an important role in helping myFutureNC support and advance the mission to close the educational attainment gap in North Carolina.

If you or your organization would like to learn more about how to financially support this important work, please contact us at office@myfuturenc.org.

