

CATAWBA VALLEY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



an affiliate of
NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Community Needs Assessment

Alexander County

About the Catawba Valley Community Foundation

Founded in 1997, the Catawba Valley Community Foundation is an affiliate of the North Carolina Community Foundation. It is led by a local volunteer advisory board that helps build community assets by creating permanent endowments, making grants, and leveraging leadership and partnerships – all for the benefit of Alexander, Caldwell and Catawba counties.

One of the key roles of affiliate foundation advisory boards is that of a grant maker. Each year, CVCF holds a competitive grants program using dollars from a community grant-making fund and other board-advised funds. Learn more at nccommunityfoundation.org/Catawba-Valley.

About the North Carolina Community Foundation

The North Carolina Community Foundation brings together generous people and connects them to causes and organizations they care about, with a focus on inspiring lasting and meaningful philanthropy in the state's rural communities.

With \$400 million in assets, NCCF sustains over 1,200 endowments and partners with donors and a network of affiliates in 60 counties to strengthen our state. By stewarding and growing donors' gifts, NCCF makes a powerful impact through a robust grants and scholarships program, awarding over \$270 million since 1988.

For more information, visit nccommunityfoundation.org.

About the 2024 Community Needs Assessment

The North Carolina Community Foundation works with the 53 affiliate foundations within our network to implement a strong grants program that serves each community.

NCCF strives to develop boards that are representative of the local communities they serve. A diversity of perspectives enhances the ability to assess community needs and distribute grants.

This Community Needs Assessment is intended to supplement board members' first-hand knowledge of their community with county-specific data. **NCCF does not conduct the research for the Community Needs Assessment.** Rather, we rely upon the expertise of other organizations who have gathered data that are relevant to carrying out an effective community grant program.

Where Does the Information Come From?

The assessment is a compilation of recent, reliable county-level data provided by respected nonpartisan sources and trusted community partners. The data are focused on education, economic well-being, health, and child and youth development, and are not inclusive of all subject areas or all community needs.

However, review of the data by our boards can reveal strengths, priority issues and challenges facing the county's residents. Our boards can also turn to other local data sources in determining community needs.

Below is information about the organizations and data sources included in the Community Needs Assessment:

- The **North Carolina Association of County Commissioners** highlights key statistics, including demographics, health and well-being, education and broadband access. More at ncacc.org.
- The **Carolina Across 100 from the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill** highlights areas of opportunity and resiliency. More at carolinaacross100.unc.edu.
- **myFutureNC**, a cross-sector nonprofit focused on educational attainment, shows North Carolina's progress toward the state's 2030 goal for postsecondary educational attainment as well as 18 educational performance indicators. More at myfuturenc.org.
- **NC Child** county data cards provide local snapshots of child well-being by county and compare county data to children in the state as a whole. More at ncchild.org.
- The **North Carolina Housing Coalition** snapshots provide an overview of housing needs for each of North Carolina's 100 counties. More at nchousing.org.

Note: Information shared from this assessment should be sourced to the organization that provided the data, not NCCF.

Alexander County

Highlights from the 2023 NCACC Map Book



Demographics

2023 population 36,560
Population loss since 2013 (277)
Percentage decrease since 2013 -1%

2023 Population Facts	County	NC	Rank ¹
Median Age	44.2	39.8	34
Population Under 18	19%	21%	68
Population Age 65+	21%	18%	47
Veterans	6%	6%	61



Health & Wellbeing

27% of residents are covered by Medicaid.

12% of residents under 65 are uninsured.

12% of households are food insecure.

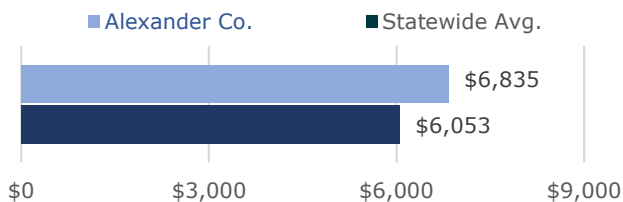
8 residents died from reported overdose in 2021.

301 residents served in 2021 via LME/MCO Opioid Use treatment programs (uninsured & Medicaid only).

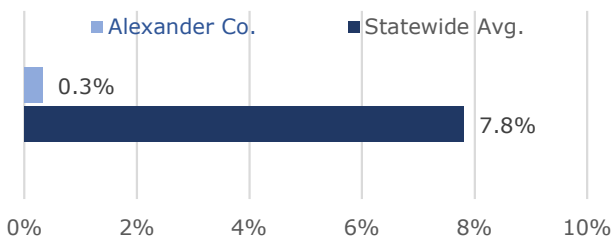


Education

Average Teacher Salary Supplement, 2022-23



Share of Students in Charter Schools, 2021-22



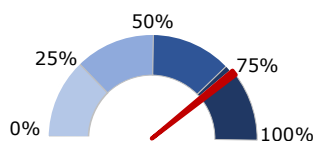
Economy & Taxes

Income & Jobs	County	NC	Rank ¹
Average Weekly Wage	\$822	\$1,215	80
Per Capita Income	\$46,513	\$56,173	63
Children in Poverty	18%	18%	28
May 2023 Unemployment	3.0%	3.4%	14
Employed residents whose job is within the county	47%	72%	82

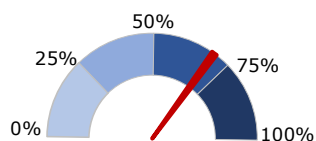
Local Taxes	County	NC	Rank ¹
Property Tax Rate, FY23-24	0.6700	0.6257	55
Taxable property per capita in \$1,000s, FY 22-23	\$78.3	\$136.3	94
Property tax levy per capita	\$619	\$854	84
Sales tax rate (state + local)	7.00%	—	—



Broadband Access



Households with a desktop, laptop, or tablet computer.



Broadband Serviceable Locations fully served by broadband internet.



To support counties in addressing North Carolinians' broadband needs, the NCACC released the Connecting Counties playbook, an online resource developed by the Connecting Counties Task Force under the leadership of NCACC President Tracey Johnson.

To access the playbook, use this QR code or visit <https://www.ncacc.org/connecting-counties>.

(1) A rank of 1 indicates the "best" or preferred value for each measure (i.e., the highest income, the lowest unemployment rate). For full notes, explanations of each indicator, and sources, or to download the Map Book or this fact sheet, visit www.ncacc.org/mapbook.

ALEXANDER COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY RESILIENCE PROFILES

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant changes in employment, education, and measures of health and well-being across North Carolina. Below are some categories and indicators that highlight areas of opportunity and resiliency.

GENERAL POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS



POPULATION GROWTH, 2020

2010 Census: 37,198
2020 Census: 36,444
Change: -754

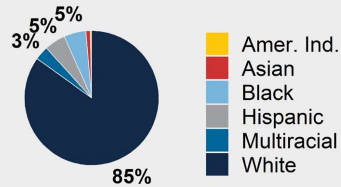
Growth Rate, 2010-2020

-2% Alexander
9% State



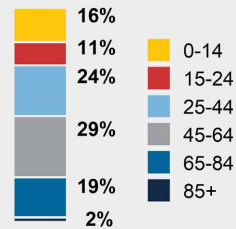
75% of county residents born in NC (vs. 56% statewide)

RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2020



Note: Values under 3% not labeled

AGE BREAKDOWN, 2020



POPULATION PROJECTIONS

By 2040: 35,890
Change: -554

Growth Rate, 2020-2040

-2% Alexander
21% State

BUSINESS AND ECONOMY



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

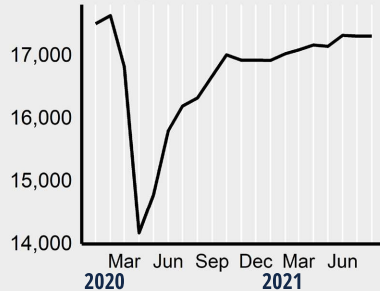
3.5% Aug 2019
3.7% Aug 2021



MEDIAN EARNED INCOME, 2019

\$24,170 Women
\$37,470 Men

MONTHLY NUMBER EMPLOYED, 2020 - 2021



TOP SECTORS BY EMPLOYMENT, 2021 Q1 (% Employed)

	County	State
Manufacturing	40.3%	10.5%
Public Administration	10.7%	5.6%
Educational Services	9.0%	8.5%
Retail Trade	7.8%	11.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	7.2%	8.4%

COST BURDENS AND FINANCIAL RESILIENCE



HOME OWNERSHIP

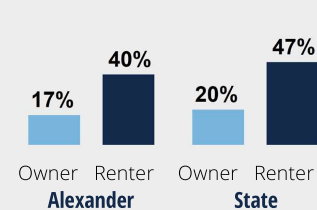
75.7% 2019



HOUSE VACANCY

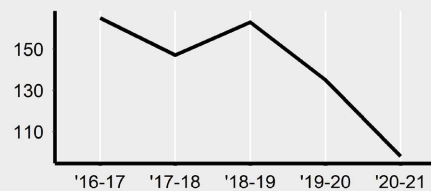
13.9% 2019

OWNER/RENTER COST BURDENED, 2019



Note: Cost burdened means spending 30% or more of income on housing costs. Costs include rent or mortgage, taxes, insurance, condo fees, and utilities.

EVICTIONS, FY 2016-17 TO 2020-21



Note: These represent the number of evictions granted in whole or in part in Civil Magistrate court. There were eviction moratoriums in place for the end of FY19-20 and much of FY20-21.

DEBT HOLDINGS

Alexander vs State, 2020

Medical Debt
13% vs 21%

Student Loan
10% vs 16%

Auto Loan
34% vs 33%

Any Debt in Collections
27% vs 21%

BUILT ENVIRONMENT



WATER QUALITY

Water Violations

NO

[follow link for more information](#)



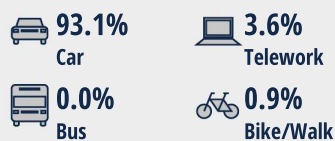
AIR QUALITY

GOOD (9.3)

Note: Concentrations of PM2.5 that are less than 15 µg/m3 are classified as "good" by the EPA.

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUTING, 2019

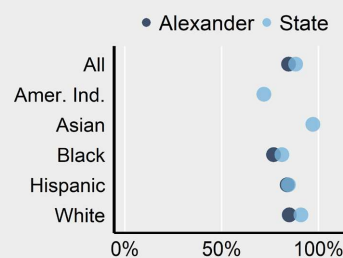
Means of Transportation



Average Commute Times

24.5 MINUTES

ACCESS TO BROADBAND, 2019



ACCESS TO CHILDCARE, 2018

Infant-Toddler Population

1,015

Infant-Toddler Enrollment

206

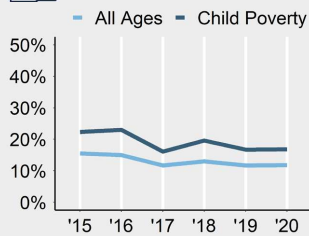
Infant-Toddler Per Available Slot

5

SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH



POVERTY RATES, 2015-2020



FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY

6,410

individuals were food insecure in 2020 (17.2%), an increase of 1,090 since 2019.

Note: Food insecurity means a lack of consistent access to enough food to live an active, healthy life.

ACCESS TO CARE AND INSURANCE

Patients : Physician

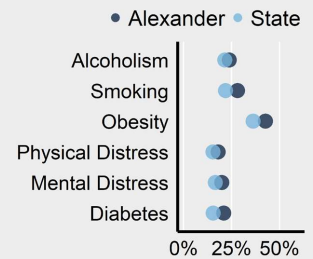
4,150:1

Uninsurance Rate, Adults (19-64)

12.8% Alexander

12.7% State

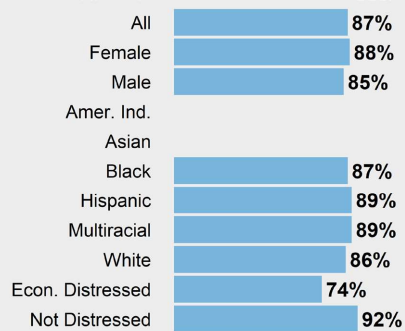
ADULT HEALTH INDICATOR RATES



TALENT DEVELOPMENT

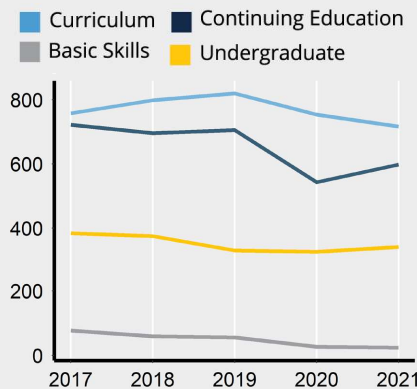


HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES, 2021

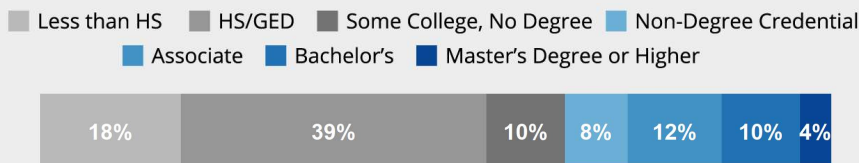


Note: Bars not shown indicate that the data is suppressed by NC DPI due to small sample size.

FALL ENROLLMENTS IN PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY



ADULT (25-64) EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2019



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS, 11/3/2020

24,983

VOTER TURNOUT RATE

81.3% Alexander

75.1% State

Note: Turnout rate is the share of registered voters who cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential election.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

259

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS PER 10,000 RESIDENTS

7.1 Alexander

13.7 State

OUR STATE, OUR WORK

Carolina Across 100's first program, **Our State, Our Work: Connecting Young Adults with Their Future**, will focus on expanding employment and education pathways for Opportunity Youth. These are young people aged 16-24 who are not connected to school or the workforce.

OPPORTUNITY YOUTH



16.3%

of young adults (16-24) not in school and not working (2019).

ABOUT CAROLINA ACROSS 100 INITIATIVE

UNC-Chapel Hill's Carolina Across 100 initiative is a five-year program which will partner with communities in all North Carolina's 100 counties to aid in pandemic recovery and help build resiliency. Carolina Across 100 is charged by Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz and led by Anita Brown-Graham and her team at the UNC School of Government's nclIMPACT Initiative. nclIMPACT supports policy innovations through key insights and data-informed opportunities, striving to be the go-to place in North Carolina for trusted tools that bridge policy and practice in response to complex challenges. Visit carolinaacross100.unc.edu to learn more and share pressing challenges facing your community.

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.

[HTTPS://WWW.NCDEMOGRAPHY.ORG](https://www.ncdemography.org)



LEARN MORE AT: [HTTPS://CAROLINAACROSS100.UNC.EDU](https://carolinaacross100.unc.edu)

CAROLINA
DEMOGRAPHY

Alexander County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Alexander County Attainment Goal: 4,753 (48%)



Hickory
 Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural Metro
Local Education Agencies: 1
Charter Schools: 0

Population Spotlight

2010 Census: 37,198
 2020 Census: 36,444
 Change: -754

Growth Rate

-2.0% County vs. **9.5%** State

\$53,523
 Median Household Income (2020)

19.2%
 Child Poverty Rate (2020)

87%
 Households with Broadband (2020)

81%
 Home Owners (2020)

74%
 Voter Registration Rate (2021)

4.2%
 Unemployment Rate (2021)

Educational Attainment

Alexander County residents ages 25-44, 2021

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
64.7%
 5,517

Have Degree or Credential
35.3%
 3,014



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

Top Opportunities for Growth

These three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Alexander County to improve future attainment outcomes.



NC Pre-K Enrollment

34% of Alexander County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural metro county average of 59%.



Opportunity Youth

16% of Alexander County youth ages 16-24 are not working and not in school, above the rural metro county average of 15%.



Transition to Postsecondary

52% of Alexander County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the state average of 55%.

Impact of Covid-19 on Education Pipeline

Covid-19 has affected critical transition points along the education continuum.

K-12 Enrollment (district schools)
-6.8% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20

Postsecondary Enrollment
-12.5% 2021 vs. 2020

FAFSA Completion
-1.2% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19

Postsecondary Intentions
-13.0% 2020-21 vs. 2018-19

Data Disruptions

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



ncdemography.org

How students in Alexander County traditional schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, each year Alexander County needs:

- 34%** of eligible 4-year-olds **enrolled in NC Pre-K program**; 83 more needed to meet state goal of **75%**. 2022
- 30%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **reading**; 883 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**. 2022
- 37%** of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in **math**; 1,008 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**. 2022
- 87%** of 9th graders **graduate within four years**; 30 more needed to meet state goal of **95%**. 2021
- 14%** of students are **chronically absent from school**; 119 less needed to meet state goal of **11%**. 2021

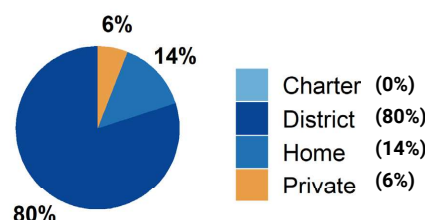


Alexander County has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 298:1 versus 362:1 in peer counties. 2021

School Choice

5,522 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Alexander County in the 2021-22 school year.

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



Career and College Preparation



129 high school students took at least one **AP course (9%)** versus **9%** in peer counties (2021).

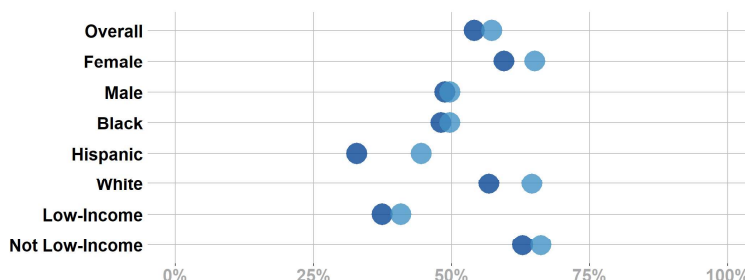


147 graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs (45%)** versus **43%** in peer counties (2021).

Students in Alexander County completed **264 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Architecture and Construction.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Alexander County, 2021

Alexander County North Carolina



Note: Outcomes for demographic groups with fewer than 10 students are not displayed.

Success of Alexander County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- **28%** of college-goers attended a **public 4-year college**
 - **18%** of college-goers attended a **private 4-year college**
 - **54%** 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**
- **78%** of students who enroll **persist to their second year** versus 73% in peer counties. 2021
 - **64%** of students who enroll **earn a degree or credential** within 6 years versus 57% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

Alexander County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

24	Basic Skills
598	Continuing Education
717	Curriculum



10% of Alexander County residents have **student loan debt**; 10% of debt holders had **student loans in default**. 2020

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

70.2%

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

Top areas of misalignment:

Health Science (bachelor's and below bachelor's)
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics (below bachelor's)
Business Management & Administration (bachelor's)

359 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

2,139 graduates in 2020
80% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$37,952 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

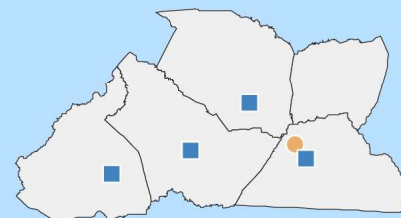
7,184 in Basic Services
2,684 in Career Services
378 in Education Services



16.3% of young adults ages 16-24 in Alexander County were **not working and not in school** versus **15.2%** in peer counties. 2019

Postsecondary assets in Hickory Prosperity Zone sub-region

- ▲ 4-year public
- 2-year public
- 4-year private
- ✕ 2-year or less private

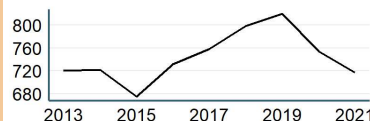


Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

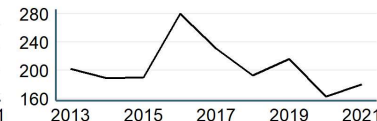
1,578 certificate | **2,135** associate | **352** bachelor's

Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment

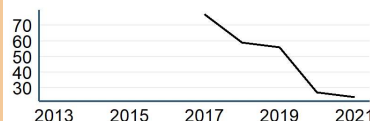
Curriculum



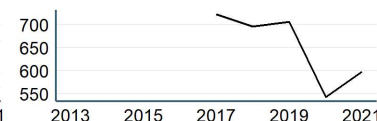
First-time Curriculum Enrollments



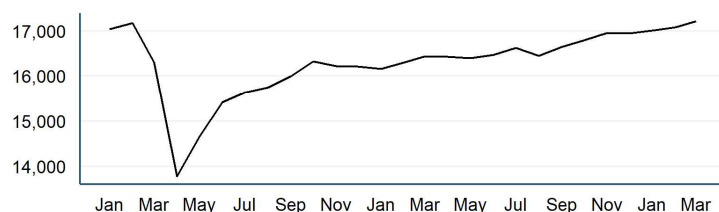
Basic Skills



Continuing Education



Number of Alexander County residents employed, January 2020 to March 2022



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 Alexander County has been meeting local needs:

https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Alexander

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

dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/

Alexander COUNTY

2023 NC DATA CARD

NORTH CAROLINA

Child population: 2,850,460
Percent under age six: 24%
Number of live births: 120,501

ALEXANDER

Child population: 8643
Percent under age six: 23%
Number of live births: 371



A STRONG START

Women who receive
early prenatal care:

80.6%

2021

78.0% 2020

Babies born at
a low birthweight:

8.9%

2021

8.1% 2020

Babies born
pre-term:

10%

2021

9.8% 2020



FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

Children living in
poor or low-income homes:

45.1%

2021

48.1% 2016-2020

Children in households
that are food insecure:

13.5%

2021

19.5% 2019

Median family
income:

\$55,041

2021

\$51,329 2016-2020



NURTURING HOMES & COMMUNITIES

Delinquency rate per
1,000 youth ages 6-15:

21.6

2021

14.1 2020

Children assessed for
abuse or neglect per 1,000:

64.8

2021

65.5 2020

Teen births per
1,000 girls ages 15-17:

-

2021

- 2020



HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

3rd grade students
scoring proficient in reading:

54.6%

2021-2022

56.1% 2020-2021

High school students
graduating on time*:

83.8%

2021-2022

86.9 2020 - 2021

Residents with bachelor's
degree or higher:

14.9%

2021

13.6% 2020



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Children without
health insurance:

4.2%

2021

3.4% 2020

Infant mortality per
1,000 live births:

7.8

2021

- 2020

NC Pathways to
Grade-Level Reading
Measures of Success.

Learn more at:

buildthefoundation.org/pathways

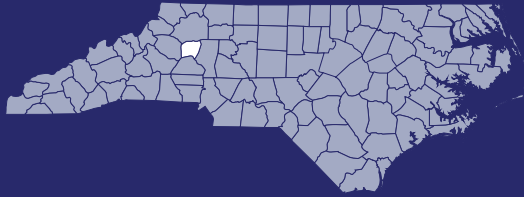


*Percentage is not reported if it is greater than 95% or less than 5%

For complete data notes and sources, visit ncchild.org
Contact Luna Homsy at luna@ncchild.org with any questions.

NC Child
The Voice for North Carolina's Children

The 2023 Housing Need in Alexander County



17%

2,279 households

of Alexander County
are **cost-burdened**

Renters who have
difficulty affording
their homes:



33%

744 households

Homeowners who
have difficulty
affording their homes:



14%

1,535 households

Families that spend more than 30% are considered **cost-burdened**, more than 50%, are considered **severely cost-burdened**.



\$791 monthly Fair Market Rent*:

An income of **\$31,640 per year** is needed
to afford the Fair Market Rent.



\$15.21 hour Housing Wage:

The hourly wage needed to afford a Fair
Market Rent apartment.

Average Annual Salaries



Healthcare
\$28,900



Childcare
\$23,570



Police officer
\$46,840



Farming labor
\$26,390

**Fair Market Rents, regularly published by HUD, represent the cost to rent a moderately-priced dwelling unit in the local housing market. The above FMR is for a two-bedroom unit.*

When Housing Costs Too Much

When housing costs become too much, a family can lose their home. This takes an incredible toll not only on a family, but also on the entire community.



26 families in
Alexander County
faced a foreclosure
this year...

1.69% of all cost-
burdened
homeowners.



134 families in
Alexander County
faced an eviction
filing this year...

18.01% of all cost-
burdened
renters.

Ranks

#46

for evictions among
renter households.

(1 = highest and 100 = lowest)

The mission of the North Carolina Housing Coalition is to lead a movement to ensure that every North Carolinian has a home in which to live in dignity and opportunity.

Join the movement:  @NCHCOnline | nchousing.org

NORTH CAROLINA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



North Carolina Community Foundation
3737 Glenwood Ave., Suite 460, Raleigh, NC 27612

919-828-4387

nccommunityfoundation.org