

COLUMBUS COUNTY  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



*an affiliate of*  
NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

# Community Needs Assessment

2022

# What is a Community Needs Assessment?

One of the key roles of affiliate foundation boards is that of grantmaker. The North Carolina Community Foundation (NCCF) is committed to working with all affiliate foundations within our network to implement a strong grants program that serves the entire community.

NCCF strives to develop boards that are representative of the local communities they serve, recognizing that a diversity of perspectives enriches the collection of knowledge and experience applied to assessing community needs and distributing available funding accordingly.

This community needs assessment is intended to enhance the individual, first-hand insights of board members by gathering and summarizing county-specific data provided by respected, non-partisan sources and trusted community partners.

## Where Does the Information Come From?

NCCF does not conduct the research and assessment itself, but rather relies upon the expertise of others whose information is relevant to the execution of an effective community grant program.

The Community Needs Assessment:

- Is a compilation of reliable data about the major components of a specific area.
- Reveals strengths, priority issues, and challenges facing county's residents at a point in time.
- Focuses on education, economic well-being, health, child & youth development

The following sources are featured:

- 
- Census
- 
- Public School Forum of NC
- 
- myFutureNC
- 
- State of the County's Health report
- 
- NC Justice/Budget and Tax Center
- 
- NC Child
- 
- Department of Public Instruction
- 
- Department of Public Safety/Division of Juvenile Justice
-

# Summary of Highlighted Needs

- ▶ Columbus County experienced population decrease of 3% in the last decade.

*Impact:* Younger residents left for urban areas with more opportunities creating an aging population, fewer new homes, reduced tax base and revenues, fewer students causing less school funding

- ▶ Economic development ranked 90th out of 100.

- ▶ Child poverty ranked 95th out of 100.

- ▶ Education outcomes ranked 72nd out of 100.

- ▶ Health priority issues include:

- Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention
- Cancer
- Diabetes/Obesity

- ▶ Households with broadband: 61%

## POPULATION DATA

Demographic information for all of Columbus County may be found here:

[https://www.ncjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BTC\\_2020\\_County\\_Snapshots\\_columbus.pdf](https://www.ncjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BTC_2020_County_Snapshots_columbus.pdf)

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/columbuscountynorthcarolina/POP010220>

Columbus County Total Population 56,220

Population decrease of 3% over the past decade

### Race and ethnicity in 2021

WHITE	59.1%
BLACK	30.6%
HISPANIC	5.6%
American Indian	3.8%

### Age

18 AND UNDER	20.7%
18-64	58.7%
65 OR OVER	20.6%

# Roadmap of Need Youth Success Indicators

The Roadmap of Need is an in-depth needs assessment for NC youth, produced annually by the Public School Forum of North Carolina's Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP). The Roadmap examines 20 indicators, with each indicator identifying where young people are most at risk of failing, both in and out of school. 1 = best 100 = worst

<https://www.ncforum.org/roadmapofneed/>

Overall, Columbus County ranks 89th in North Carolina.

- Health ranking: 78th
- Youth behavior and safety ranking: 82nd
- Education ranking: 72nd
- Economic Development ranking: 90th
- Child Food Insecurity ranking: 86th
- Child Abuse & Neglect ranking: 67th
- Juvenile Delinquency ranking: 66th
- Child Poverty ranking: 95th
- 79th in 3rd grade reading proficiency and 73rd in Math 1 proficiency rankings
- Graduation rate ranking: 74th

## myFutureNC Educational Attainment

**my FUTURENC** is a statewide non-profit whose mission focuses on educational attainment. It provides pertinent data and develops strategies to increase workforce readiness by improving overall educational attainment outcomes. The **myFutureNC** Attainment Dashboard shows North Carolina's progress toward the state's overall 2030 goal for postsecondary educational attainment, as well as 18 educational performance indicators.

[https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/wp-content/uploads/county-profiles/Columbus\\_County.pdf](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/wp-content/uploads/county-profiles/Columbus_County.pdf)

In addition, there is a county attainment profile for each county, including key areas and indicators that highlight where interventions may be possible to improve overall educational attainment outcomes. See Appendix A for the profile for Columbus County.

- Households with broadband: 61%
- **Opportunities for Growth** Compared to rural non-metro counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Columbus County to improve future attainment outcomes.
  - Postsecondary Completion: 41% of Columbus County high school graduates who enroll in post secondary earn a degree or credential within 6 years, below the rural non-metro county average of 49%
  - FAFSA Completion: 48% of Columbus County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural non metro county average of 55%.
  - Disconnected Youth: 15% of Columbus County youth ages 16-19 are not working and not in school, above the rural non-metro county average of 9%.

# County Health Assessments

The Columbus County Department of Health Services in collaboration with other local organizations and the North Carolina Department of Public Health conducted a thorough health assessment of Columbus County in 2019 .

The full report may be found here:

<https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/units/ldas/cha2019/2019%20Columbus%20County%20Community%20Health%20Assessment>

In North Carolina, the state requires each local health department to conduct a Community Health Assessment (CHA) every two to four years for accreditation and as part of its consolidated contract. During the years between community health assessments, health departments submit an abbreviated **State of the County's Health (SOTCH)** report. In Columbus County, this report consists of an overview of demographics, health indicators, and leading causes of morbidity and mortality. This report also contains various updates on the community's top three health priorities, action plan projects, local initiatives, and emerging trends.

The following were named as the priority issues for the County:

1. Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention
2. Cancer
3. Diabetes/Obesity

# County Economic Assessment

*The Budget & Tax Center 's Economic Snapshots provide a look at how well counties in North Carolina are faring across key indicators of economic well-being and opportunity.*

County-specific economic snapshots can be found here:

[https://www.ncjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BTC\\_2020\\_County\\_Snapshots\\_columbus.pdf](https://www.ncjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BTC_2020_County_Snapshots_columbus.pdf)

See Appendix B for the full Columbus County snapshot.

**County unemployment rate** is 4.4% compared to NC statewide rate of 3.3% in 2019 .

- Poverty and economic hardship: 25.3% of county residents lived in poverty in 2018 ; the state poverty rate was 14.1%
- 36.2% of children in the county live in poverty, compared to 20.2% statewide.

## Access to Affordable Housing

- 56.1% of renters in this county spent 30% or more of their income toward rent; NC state average was 52.9% in 2018 .
- # of hours needed to work per week to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair market rate 72 hours versus the state average of 94 hours a week.
- 20.0% of residents in Columbus County in 2019 were receiving assistance for food and nutrition services (or SNAP); NC state average was 12.1% .

# Other Resources

**SOURCE** NC Association of County Commissioners <https://www.ncacc.org/research-and-publications/research/county-map-book/>

**INDICATORS** Education, Economic Development, Health Services, Human Services, Environment, Government, Residency/Property, Transportation, Public Safety, Demographics, Employment, Income, etc.

**PUBLISHED**  
2021

**SOURCE** NC Crime Report <https://ncsbi.gov/Services/SBI-Statistics/SBI-Uniform-Crime-Reports/2020-Annual-Summary.aspx>

**INDICATORS** Crime rates

**PUBLISHED**  
2020

**SOURCE** Towncharts.com <https://www.towncharts.com/North-Carolina/Demographics/Columbus-County-NC-Demographics-data.html>

**INDICATORS** Demographics, Housing, Economy, Education ,Healthcare

**PUBLISHED**  
2020

**SOURCE** <http://www.columbuscountyarts.com/>

**INDICATORS** Art & Cultural Resources

**PUBLISHED**  
2022

**SOURCE** NC Child <https://ncchild.org/what-we-do/insights/data/2021county-data-cards/>

**INDICATORS** Voice of North Carolina Children's Wellbeing

**PUBLISHED**  
2021

**SOURCE** Institute for Emerging Issues <https://iei.ncsu.edu/countysnapshot/>

**INDICATORS** Civic Engagement, Rural Urban Connections, Technology, etc

**PUBLISHED**  
2021

**SOURCE** <https://www.usich.gov/homelessness-statistics/nc/>

**INDICATORS** Homelessness in NC

**PUBLISHED**  
2020

**SOURCE** Disability Services and Sources <https://disabilitycompendium.org/compendium/2019-state-report-for-county-level-data-prevalence/NC>

**INDICATORS** Evidence based advocacy for policy and services to benefit persons with disabilities

**PUBLISHED**  
2019

**SOURCE**

**INDICATORS**

**PUBLISHED**

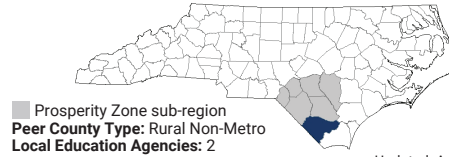
**SOURCE**

**INDICATORS**

**PUBLISHED**

# Columbus County

NC goal: 2 million by 2030  
2020 County Attainment Profile



Updated: Aug 04 2021

## INTRODUCTION

From birth to career, there are many opportunities to develop strategies and interventions to increase attainment and improve workforce alignment. Below are some key areas and indicators that highlight where interventions may be possible to improve overall educational attainment outcomes.

## COUNTY OVERVIEW

Columbus County is in the **Fayetteville-Lumberton** Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 50 rural non-metro counties in NC.

Overall, 4% of 25-44-year-olds in Columbus County have earned a master's degree or higher as their highest degree; 9% have a bachelor's degree; 9% have an associate degree; 31% have some college, no degree; 31% have a high school diploma; and 17% have less than a high school diploma.

<b>2018 Population</b>	56,424
<b>2030 Population</b>	56,219
<b>K-12 Students (2019)</b>	
Traditional Schools	7,671
Charter/Private/Home	1,545
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$36,862
<b>Child Poverty Rate</b>	36%
<b>Households with Broadband</b>	61%

### Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8

High-quality early learning and strong academic progress in early years helps prepare children for future success.



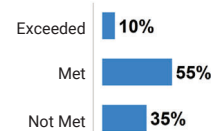
Columbus County has 20 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, 5 or 25% were classified as low performing in 2019.

### How students in Columbus County traditional public schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, Columbus County needs:

- **Columbus County has met the goal for eligible 4-year-olds** enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 82%).
- **1,121 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 40%).
- **1,811 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 33%).

### Percent of Columbus County schools by academic growth status, 2019



### Ready for College & Career

High school completion is a crucial step on the pathway to postsecondary success or the beginnings of a career. Activities that prepare students to navigate the transition to postsecondary include gaining experience in college-level coursework and applying for financial assistance.

To meet state goals, Columbus County needs:

- **67 more 9th graders** to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 86%).
- **191 more seniors** to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 48%).
- **641 more students** to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 19%).



**128 students** took at least one AP course (5%) versus 9% of peer counties.



**630 students** participated in Career & College Promise programs (24%) versus 22% of peer counties.

Students in Columbus County completed **219 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Hospitality & Tourism.

### Postsecondary Access and Success

These metrics capture student progression and educational attainment from high school graduation to postsecondary completion. They indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of Columbus County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.



Columbus County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 365:1.

Among Columbus County high school graduates:

- **56% of graduates** enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% of peer counties.
- **75% of students** who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% of peer counties.
- **41% of students** who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 49% of peer counties.

### In your Prosperity Zone sub-region, 2018-19:

- 1,621** individuals served in an Apprenticeship/NC program.
- 6,792** Basic Skills enrollments at NC community colleges.
- 32,293** Continuing Education enrollments at NC community colleges.

### Labor Market Outcomes

Lack of technical skills and lack of education are among the primary reasons why NC employers struggle to fill vacancies. These metrics capture labor market outcomes among recent graduates, the alignment between postsecondary degree production and labor market demand, and future job demands.



15.4% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 8.9% of peer counties.

In your Prosperity Zone sub-region:

Public postsecondary institutions graduate **5,110 students per year**. After 5 years, 64% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of \$36,969.

75% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gaps are: **Health Science** (above and below bachelor's); **Information Technology** (bachelor's); and **Finance** (bachelor's).

There are **258,519 job openings** projected between 2017-2026. The top 3 in demand jobs with median wages of \$50,000 or more are: 1) **Registered Nurses**; 2) **Business Operations Specialists, All Other**; 3) **General and Operations Managers**.

### Opportunities for Growth

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



#### Postsecondary Completion

41% of Columbus County high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary earn a degree or credential within 6 years, below the rural non-metro county average of 49%.



#### FAFSA Completion

48% of Columbus County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the rural non-metro county average of 55%.



#### Disconnected Youth

15% of Columbus County youth ages 16-19 are not working and not in school, above the rural non-metro county average of 9%.

### Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region

Institution Name	Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18	Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years
<b>Total Enrollments</b>	<b>52,924</b>	<b>54%</b>
Fayetteville Technical Community College	18,684	43%
Fayetteville State University	6,522	77%
University of North Carolina at Pembroke	6,252	79%
Sandhills Community College	5,329	39%
Richmond Community College	3,107	56%
Robeson Community College	2,631	60%
Methodist University	2,149	83%
Sampson Community College	2,049	27%
Southeastern Community College	1,887	54%
Bladen Community College	1,643	51%
Platt College-Miller-Motte-Fayetteville	1,504	43%
St. Andrews University	756	68%

**Notes:**

Enrollments reflect degree- or credential-seeking undergraduate enrollments. The graduate or transfer rate is drawn from IPEDS and represents the share of students who either graduate with a degree or credential from the institution or transfer to another institution within 8 years. The 8-year outcome is the only measure that includes information on transfer out. Detailed data guidance is provided at <http://go.unc.edu/countydata>

### Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: Southeastern Community College Project PRIME

Project PRIME is designed to provide comprehensive training and employment assistance for individuals to fill new jobs in the polymer/plastics extrusion industry. Components include customized training, short-term occupational skills training, soft skills, health and safety training, articulation to associate degrees, transferable third-party credentials, on-the-job training, linkages with the Columbus Career and College Academy (CCA), and paid internships for high school and college students. This project serves unemployed, underemployed, and dislocated workers, as well as enrolled students.




We identified this example of an emerging cross-sector promising practice in partnership with local leaders. If you have additional examples you'd like to share with myFutureNC, please respond to this short survey.

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

[dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/)




### ABOUT CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY

Located within the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, we use data and other available research to help you put a face or a story on the population-level changes facing your community. Our analysts provide a full array of demographic data and research services to inform decision making, evaluation, and policy across North Carolina, where we serve organizations and people in all 100 counties.

 [ncdemography.org](http://ncdemography.org)  
 [demography@unc.edu](mailto:demography@unc.edu)  
 [@ncdemography](https://twitter.com/ncdemography)

### ABOUT MYFUTURENC

MyFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit organization focused on educational attainment and is the result of cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government. Our mission is to prepare North Carolina for the future by empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and ensuring our economic viability in a global economy.

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



# Columbus County

Columbus County has a population of 56,220, a decrease of 3% over the past decade.

## We all thrive when we ...



### Expand Access to Health Services

- 13.7% of people do not have health insurance.
- Life expectancy for white newborns is 74.9 years; life expectancy for Black newborns is 72.8 years.
- There is one mental health provider for every 807 residents.



### Provide Affordable Housing for All

- Rent is unaffordable for 56.1% of renters.
- 29.8% of people spend more than half of their income on rent.
- The median hourly wage is only 83.2% of what's needed for 1 adult and 2 children to make ends meet (LIS\*).



### Address Structural Barriers to Equality

- 48.1% of residents are considered low-income (less than \$50,200 for a family of four).\*\*
- The richest 5% of households make an average of 36 times more than the poorest 20% of households.

**... make the investments needed to promote shared prosperity for everyone in every county in N.C.**

The Budget & Tax Center's Economic Snapshots provide a look at how well counties in North Carolina are faring across key indicators of economic well-being and opportunity.

Contact Leila Pedersen at [leila@ncjustice.org](mailto:leila@ncjustice.org) or 919-861-1451 for media inquiries or other questions.

Poverty and Economic Hardship			
	County	State	Year
Percentage of people living in poverty	25.3%	14.1%	2014-2018
Black	37.6%	23.5%	
White	15.3%	10.6%	
Latinx	45.8%	28.5%	
Asian	50.7%	11.9%	
American Indian	24.6%	25.1%	
Child poverty rate	36.2%	20.2%	

Healthy Lives and Communities			
	County	State	Year
Percentage of residents without health insurance	13.7%	11.1%	2014-2018
Life expectancy	74.2 years	77.6 years	2016-2018
Black	72.8 years	75.2 years	
White	74.9 years	78.4 years	
Mental health provider : residents	1 : 807	1 : 409	2019
Percentage of residents receiving SNAP	20.0%	12.1%	2019

Jobs and Ability to Afford the Basics			
	County	State	Year
Jobless worker : Job openings	1,148 : 515	182,598 : 283,392	Feb. 2020
Unemployment rate	4.4%	3.3%	2019
Change in number of people employed since December 2007	1,009 fewer	611,291 more	2007, 2019
Living Income Standard* wage (1 adult, 2 kids)	\$18.01	\$22.94	2019
Hourly median wage	\$14.99	\$17.19	2019
Change in median wage since 2009 recovery began	grew 10 cents	grew 38 cents	2009, 2019
Median Household Income	\$36,862	\$53,922	2018

Educational Attainment			
	County	State	Year
Graduation rate	85.4%	86.5%	2018-2019
Black	81%	83.7%	
White	88.3%	89.6%	
Latinx	94.4%	81.1%	
Asian	***	94.5%	
American Indian	80.8%	81.2%	
Percentage of adults with Bachelor's degrees	12.5%	29.5%	2014-2018
Bachelor's degree, men	9.4%	26.4%	
Bachelor's degree, women	15.6%	32.7%	
Median salary, men with at least a Bachelor's	\$51,623	\$61,426	
Median salary, women with at least a Bachelor's	\$39,091	\$41,197	

Access to Affordable Housing			
	County	State	Year
Percentage of people paying more than 30% of income toward rent	56.1%	52.9%	2014-2018
Percentage of people paying more than 50% of income toward rent	29.8%	23.9%	2014-2018
Fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit	\$679	\$881	2019
Number of hours needed to work to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair market rate	72 hours a week	94 hours a week	2019

\* The Living Income Standard is a measure of what a family needs in order to cover the basic expenses. See more at [NCJustice.org/LIS](http://NCJustice.org/LIS).

\*\* A family of four is considered low-income if they make below 200% of the federal poverty line, or \$50,200 in 2018.

\*\*\* Insufficient data

Note: This County Snapshot provides a pre-COVID-19 economic picture of counties throughout North Carolina.

**For data sources or other counties, visit [NCJustice.org/snapshots](http://NCJustice.org/snapshots)**

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