

The State of North Carolina's Workforce Pipeline and Educational Attainment

What's New and What's Next



*my***FUTURE NC**
2 million by 2030

SESSION LAW 201955

To ensure that the State remains economically competitive,
the State shall ensure that by the year 2030 :

2 MILLION

25- to 44-year-olds will have completed a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree

*my*FUTURE NC
2 million by 2030



myFutureNC Leadership



Governed by a **cross-sector board of directors** comprised of NC education sector heads, policymakers, philanthropists, and business leaders. Additionally, the myFutureNC *Advisory Board of Commissioners* includes **50 individuals** representing **30 North Carolina counties** .

Board of Directors

John A. Fraley, Chair
Kathryn Black, ViceChair
MC Belk Pilon, Secretary and Treasurer

Deanna Ballard

Dr. Jeff Cox

Marshall Cherry

Eric C. Davis

Kindl Detar

Josh Dobson

Maurice “Mo” Green

Ann Goodnight

Peter Hans

Kevin Howell

→ **Rep. Donny Lambeth**

Anna Spangler Nelson

→ **Senator Brad Overcash**

Gary Salamido

Machelle Baker Sanders

Matthew Scott

Carol Steen

Dr. A. Hope Williams



An Opportunity for All

A better educated North Carolina is the key to economic prosperity and upward mobility for all citizens.

To achieve our goal, myFutureNC will:

- Monitor & Report Progress
- Accelerate Action
- Identify & Advocate for Policy Solutions

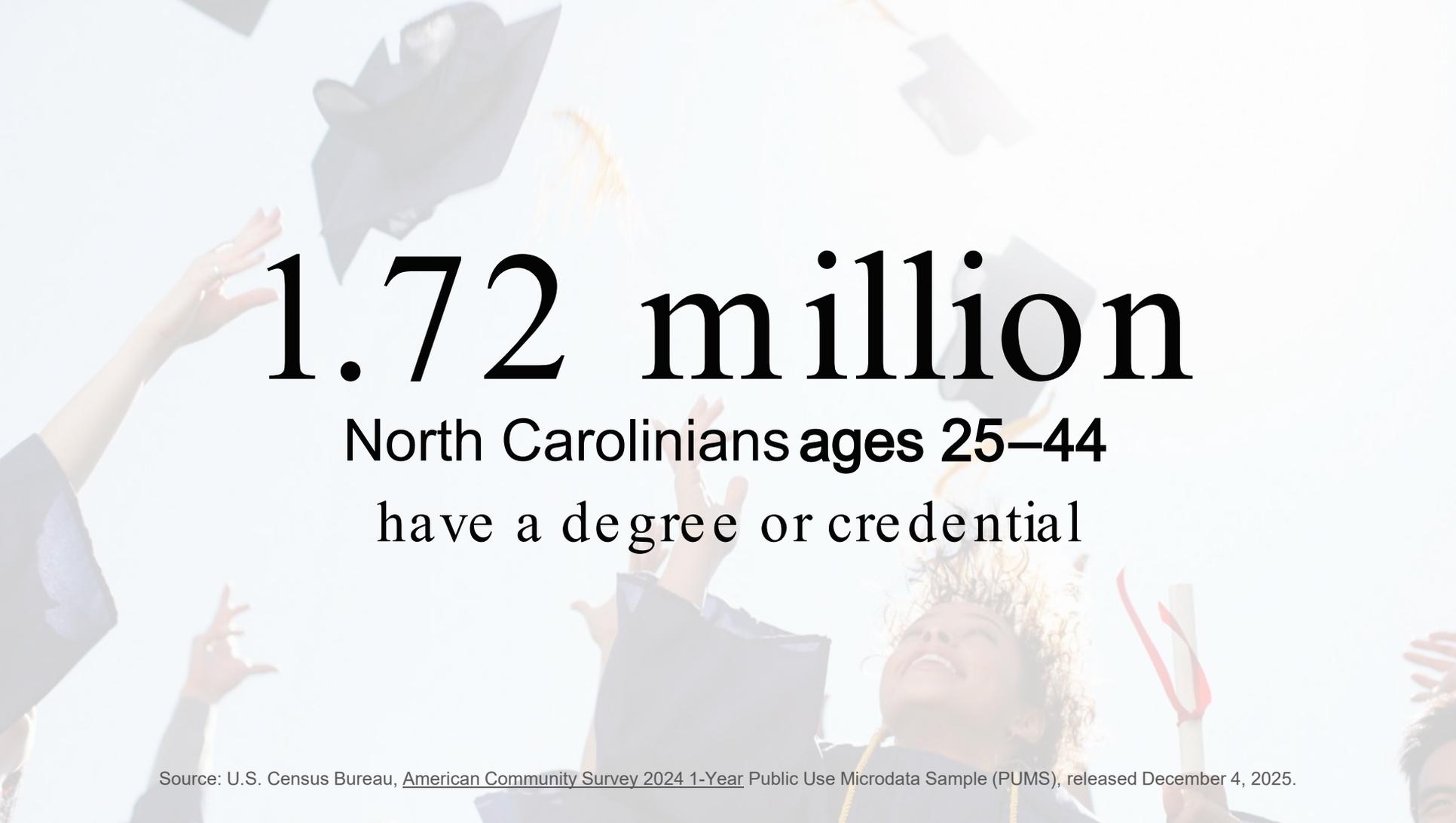
*my***FUTURENC**
2 million by 2030

01

Monitor & Report Progress



*my***FUTURE NC**
2 million by 2030

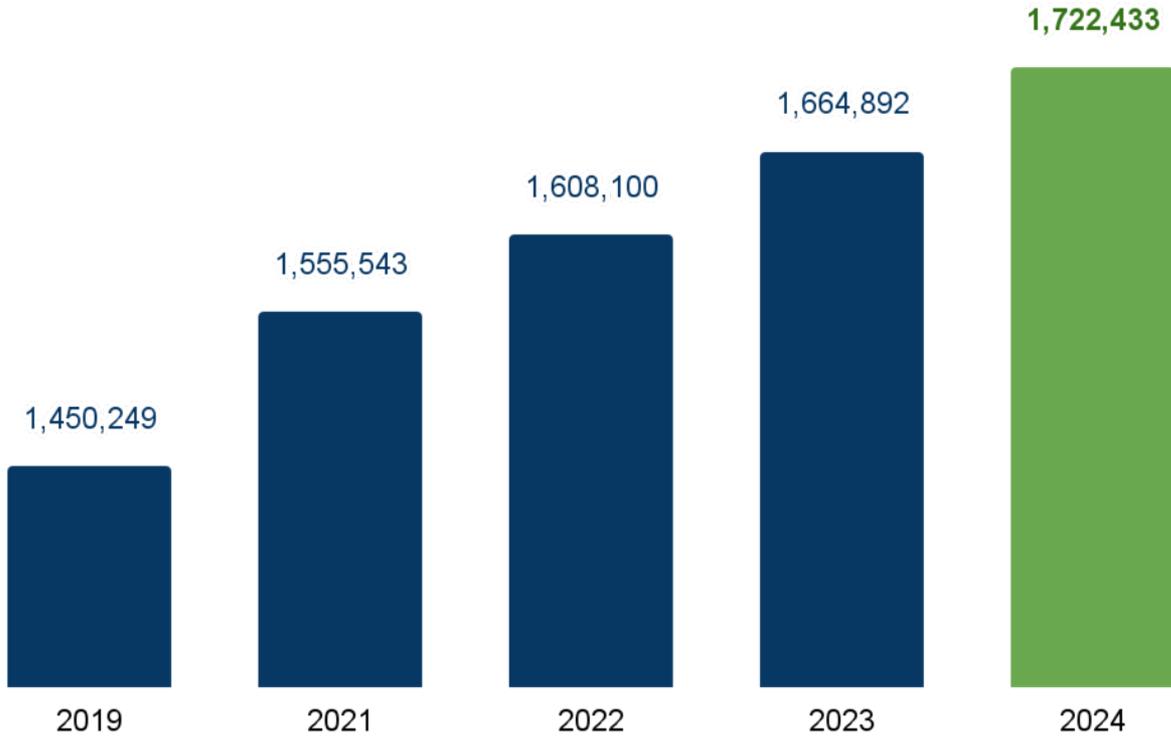
A background image of a graduation ceremony. Several graduates in blue gowns and black caps are visible. Some are throwing their caps into the air, and one woman in the foreground is smiling and looking up. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor or well-lit indoor setting.

1.72 million

North Carolinians **ages 25–44**

have a degree or credential

Progress Since 2019



NC Adults (ages 25-44) with a Degree or Credential

19% ↑
Growth from 2019

+272,184

Educational Attainment is Outpacing Population Growth

+8% since 2019

Population of 25-44-year-olds

2019	2,713,594
2021	2,727,601
2022	2,802,045
2023	2,850,656
2024	2,934,367

+19% since 2019

Population of 25-44-year-olds with a postsecondary degree/credential

2019	1,450,249
2021	1,555,543
2022	1,608,100
2023	1,664,892
2024	1,722,433

277,567 More Credentialed Adults Needed *to Reach the 2M Goal*

North Carolina residents ages 25-44

TOTAL POPULATION

2M

2,934,367

1,722,433

Attained a Degree or Credential

277,567
Additional
Needed

As of December 2025

Progress toward 2M depends on outcomes across the education -to-workforce continuum.

18 Key Performance Indicators



Academic
Readiness



College & Career
Access



Postsecondary
Completion



Workforce
Alignment



North Carolina's Leaky Education Pipeline

100

9th Graders in NC public schools



88

Graduated high school on time (within 4 years)



53

Graduates enrolled in college on time (within 12 months)



43

Enrollees persisted into 2nd year of study



32

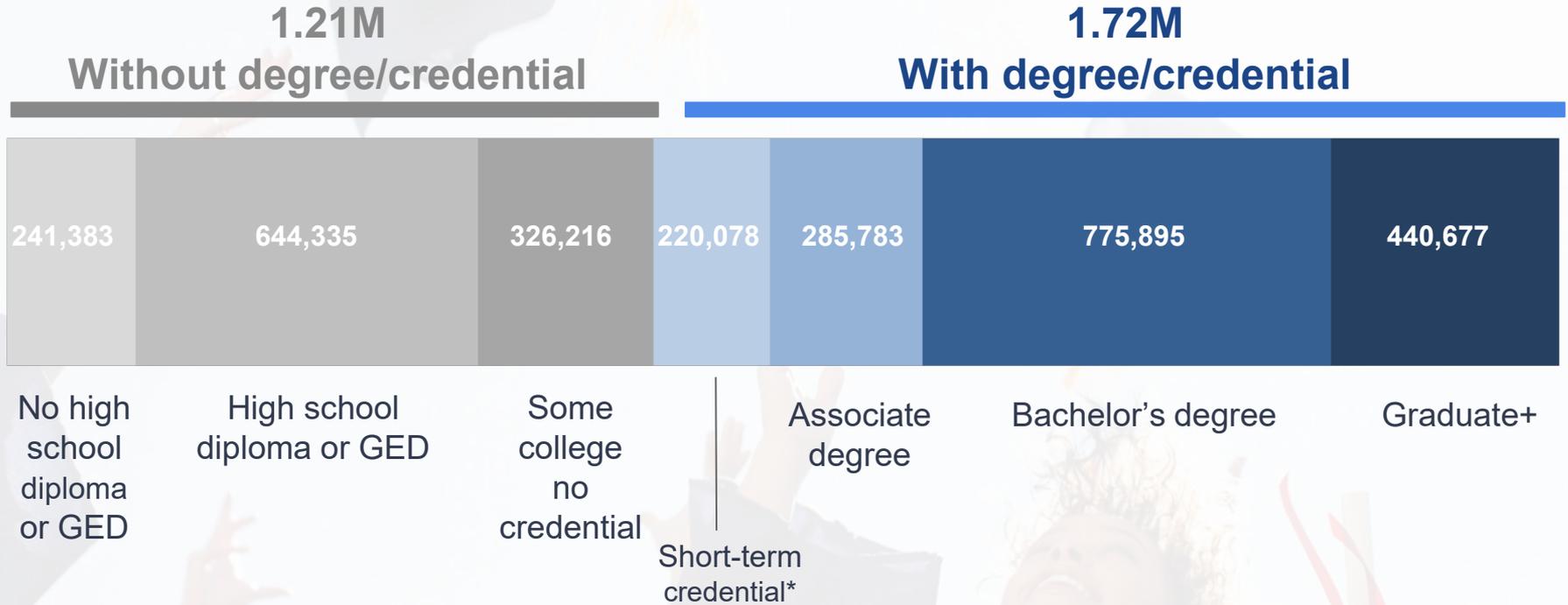
Graduated with a degree/certificate on time (within 6 years)



2020: 30 2021: 31 2023: 31
2024: 30 2025: 31

Sources: Special calculation by Carolina Demography for myFutureNC using data from NCDPI and the National Student Clearinghouse.
Note: This pipeline simulation is based on 2025 HS graduation rate and 2024 data for the rest of the indicators. Data includes all public schools students (LEAs+charters).

Educational Attainment of North Carolina Residents Ages 25 –44



**an estimate of 7.5% of the population based on Lumina survey data*

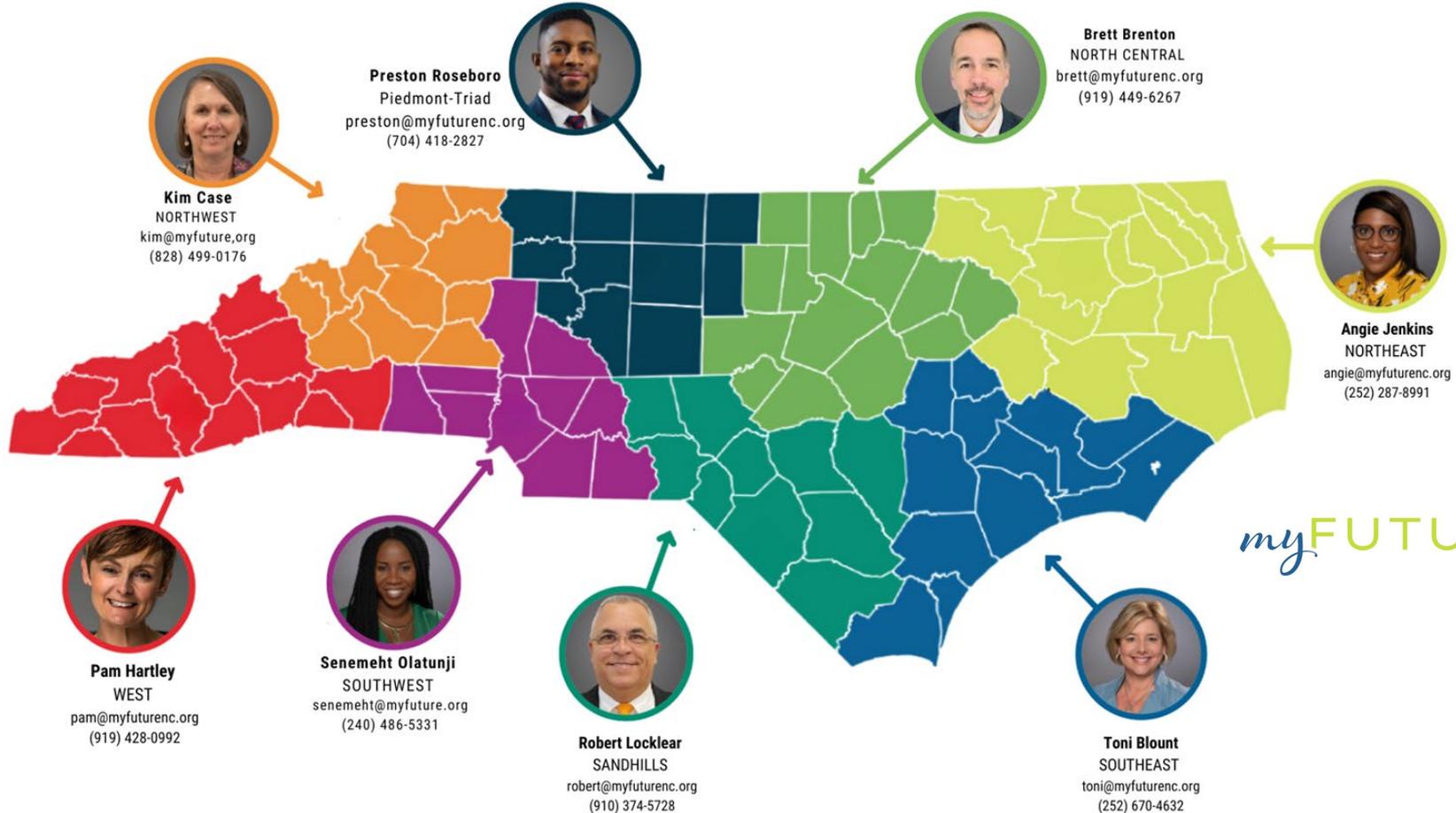
02

Accelerate Action



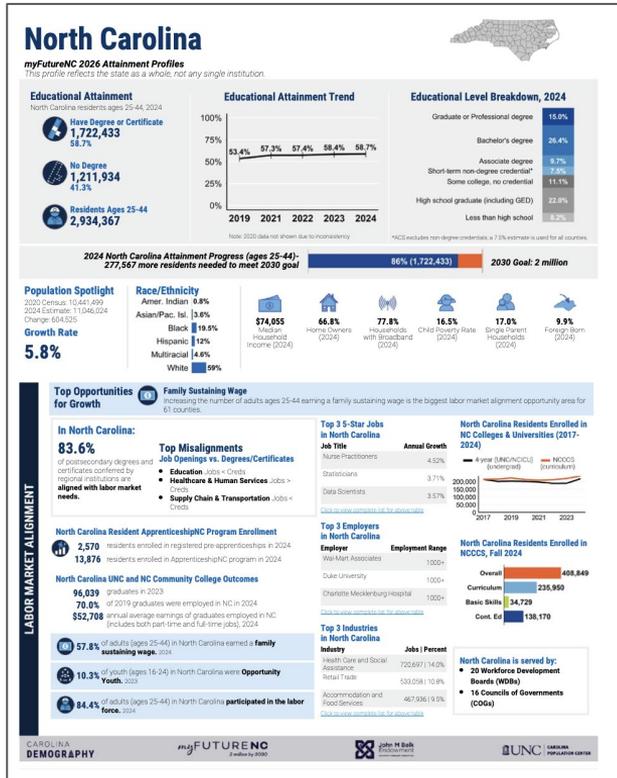
*my***FUTURE**NC
2 million by 2030

State-led, locally owned, and driven



*my***FUTUREnc**
2 million by 2030

County Attainment Data Drives Action



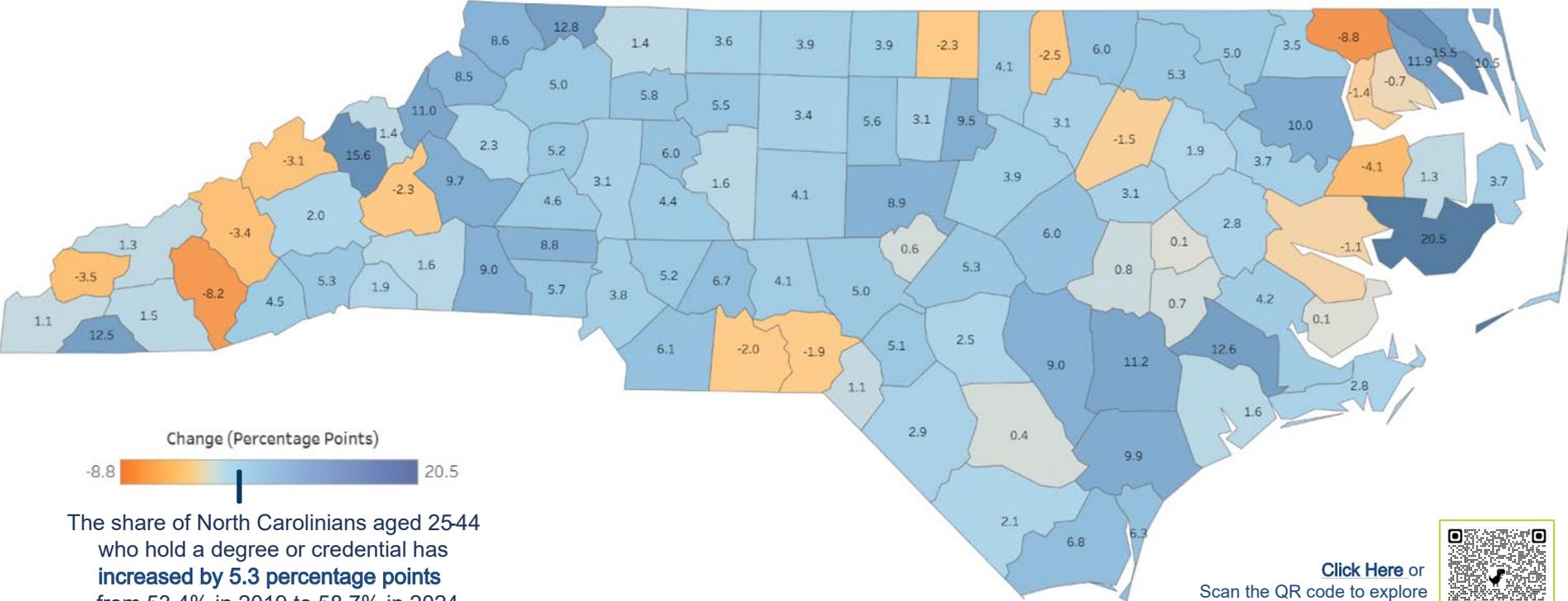
2026 myFutureNC County Attainment Profiles Supplemental Profiles:

- City/District School Profiles
- Regional Charter School Profiles
- Regional Profiles
 - Prosperity Zone (PZ)
 - Workforce Development Board (WDB)
 - Council of Government (COG)



Progress Since 2019

85 of 100 counties increased the share of residents with a degree or credential



The share of North Carolinians aged 25-44 who hold a degree or credential has **increased by 5.3 percentage points** from 53.4% in 2019 to 58.7% in 2024

[Click Here](#) or Scan the QR code to explore County-by-County Progress



Examples of Local Action Driving Progress

2025 Champions of Attainment

- Appalachian State University's Aspire Appalachian Program
- Campbell University's Second Chance Initiative
- Craven Community College's Volt Center
- Gregory Singleton for justice-involved advocacy
- Wayne County Reentry Council

2026 Champions of Attainment

- Bertie Attainment Coalition
- NCCCS Career Coaches
- NC Health Talent Alliance
- NC Reconnect
- Surry-Yadkin Works
- The Forward Fund



Examples of State-Level Efforts Driving Progress

- NC College Connect (Direct Admission)
- NCCCS Boost / Completion Assistance - Arnold Ventures
- NC Reconnect / Adult Learners - John M Belk Endowment
- Credit for Prior Learning / Military Equivalency System
- Common Course Numbering
- Articulation Agreements
- UNC System & NCICU Transfer Portals
- NC Workforce Credentials
- ApprenticeshipNC

Examples of Legislative-Supported Items Driving Progress

- FAFSA Tracker
- Next NC and NC Need-Based Scholarships
- Finish Line Grants
- UNC Completion Assistance Program
- Project Kitty Hawk - [Flight Path](#)
- National Student Clearinghouse Data
- Career Development Plans
- [NCcareers.org](#)
- Digital Transcript
- Short-Term Workforce Development Grants

NC #1 for Workforce & Business Yet Work Still Ahead

- **62% of North Carolina employers** struggle to fill roles —while many learners lack real-world experience and employer connections
- **Fewer than 30%** of high school students feel prepared for college or careers and **less than 1/3** complete a credential on time
- Transfer students lose an average of **13 credits**—costing time, money, and momentum
- **68% of jobs** require education beyond high school, but cost and misalignment limit access to relevant credentials

03

Advocate for Policy Solutions



*my***FUTURE NC**
2 million by 2030

Workforce Act of 2026

Four Cross-Sector Partnerships That Deliver Results

Work-Based Learning

Employer-led apprenticeship, delivered in partnership with education

NEED

State funding to sustain and scale **ApprenticeshipNC**

RESULT

Employers fill roles faster while workers earn as they learn

Career Exploration

Statewide, demand-driven career navigation

NEED

State investment to strengthen **NC Careers** for students and working adults

RESULT

Clearer career choices, less mismatch, smarter use of training dollars

Seamless Education Pathways

Clear, connected pathways across education systems

NEED

Leverage new technology and the digital transcript to **make credit transfer easier**

RESULT

Faster credit transfer, fewer dead ends, more on-time completions

Employer-Valued Credentials

Employer-recognized, workforce-aligned credentials

NEED

State funding for **NC Workforce Credentials** and short-term credential grants

RESULT

Credentials employers value, quicker hiring, stronger return on investment



Summary of Requested Investments

TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$8.45M



Work-Based Learning

Sustain and Scale [ApprenticeshipNC](#) - \$3.1M Recurring

Supports continued expansion of employer-led apprenticeships across North Carolina. Funding sustains program infrastructure, technical assistance, and employer engagement so more businesses can train talent while workers earn wages.



Career Exploration

Enhance [NCcareers.org](#) for Students and Working Adults - \$1.5M Non-Recurring

Modernizes and enhances NCcareers.org to improve performance, usability, reporting, and integration with education and workforce systems. Strengthens career navigation and delivers high-quality NC labor market data.



Seamless Education Pathways

Improve Transfer and Reverse Transfer + Strengthen Digital Transcript by Integrating NCICU Institutions - \$2.5M Non-Recurring

Improves credit mobility across institutions and expands the statewide digital transcript system to include NCICU institutions, reducing barriers for students who transfer.



Employer-Valued Credentials

Strengthen [NC Workforce Credentials](#) and Bolster Financial Aid for High-Demand Credential Pathways - \$1.35M Recurring

Provides continuous support for NC Workforce Credentials and expands financial aid access for short-term, high-demand credential programs aligned with employer needs.

Recurring: \$4.45M

Non-Recurring: \$4.0M

Additional Partner Efforts Supported by myFutureNC

- **Propel NC** (NCCCS)
- **NC Need-Based Scholarships** (NCICU)
- **NC Works Work-Based Learning** (NC Commerce)
- **Boost/Completion Assistance** (NCCCS)
- **NC College Connect** (NCSEAA, DPI, NCCCS, UNC, NCICU)
- **Next NC** (NCSEAA, NCCCS, UNC)

04

Call to Action



*my***FUTURE NC**
2 million by 2030

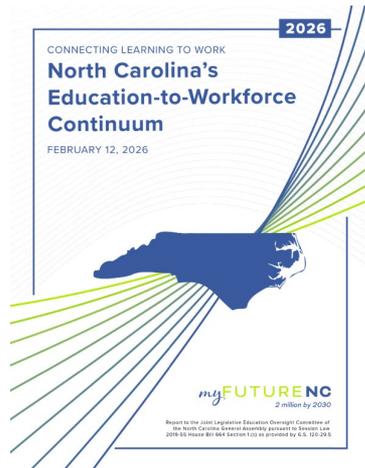
Annual State of Educational Attainment in NC

Goal: 2M adults (ages 25-44) with a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030

1.72 million
adults hold a
credential or degree

+272,000
since 2019 | attainment up **19%**
vs. **8%** population growth

85 of North Carolina's
100 counties increased
attainment since 2019



Call to Action

Pass the Workforce Act of 2026 and Support Our Partners' Requests

It reflects what works and what North Carolina's employers and learners need now. Staying aligned and focused on results is how we hit the goal—and expand opportunity statewide.



Workforce Act of 2026

TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$8.45M

Recurring: \$4.45M

Non-Recurring: \$4.0M