

COMMUNITY
SNAPSHOT

Sparta, North Carolina

This report was prepared by Atlas Community Studios through the mySidewalk platform. It was compiled to provide background information on the town of Sparta, NC and help inform the placemaking project.



History

Sparta, North Carolina is located in Alleghany County. The land was donated from three local businessmen, one of which was James H. Parks, who suggested the name Sparta after the Greek city-state. Sparta's founding year varies across sources—some say 1859, some say 1866. Other sources say that prior to the name Sparta, the town was called Bower's Store (1825) and then Gap Civil (1846), before it became Sparta.



Geography

Sparta is located in the northwest corner of North Carolina and is approximately 2.36 square miles, or 1510.4 acres. It is about an hour from Boone and Wilkesboro, NC, and is roughly three hours away from larger cities, such as Charlotte and Raleigh. Sparta serves as the county seat and is the only incorporated town within Alleghany County.

Demographics

POPULATION

Sparta's population has **fluctuated** between 1,600 and 1,800 over the last few decades. It dipped from 1,770 (2010) to 1,630 (2017); however, is projected to **increase** back up to around 1,750 **by 2025**.



Total Population

1,630

Sparta, NC

11,008

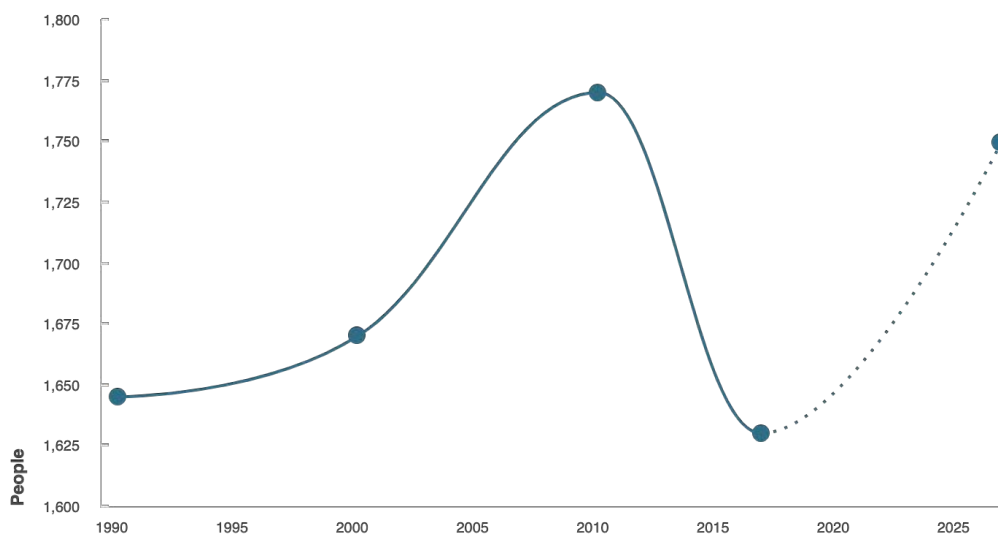
Alleghany County, NC

10,264,876

North Carolina

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Although a slight decline occurred in the past decade, the population is projected to recover over the next 10 years



Sources: US Census Bureau; US Census Bureau ACS 5-year

GENDER



50%
of total population
Males



50%
of total population
Females

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

RACE & ETHNICITY

The City of Sparta is a predominately white community—**only 14%** of its population are **people of color**.



14%
of total population
People of Color

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Sparta, NC

Race/Ethnicity: White (non-Hispanic)	85.9%
Race/Ethnicity: Two Or More Races Other (non-Hispanic)	0%
Race/Ethnicity - Hispanic	11.3%

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

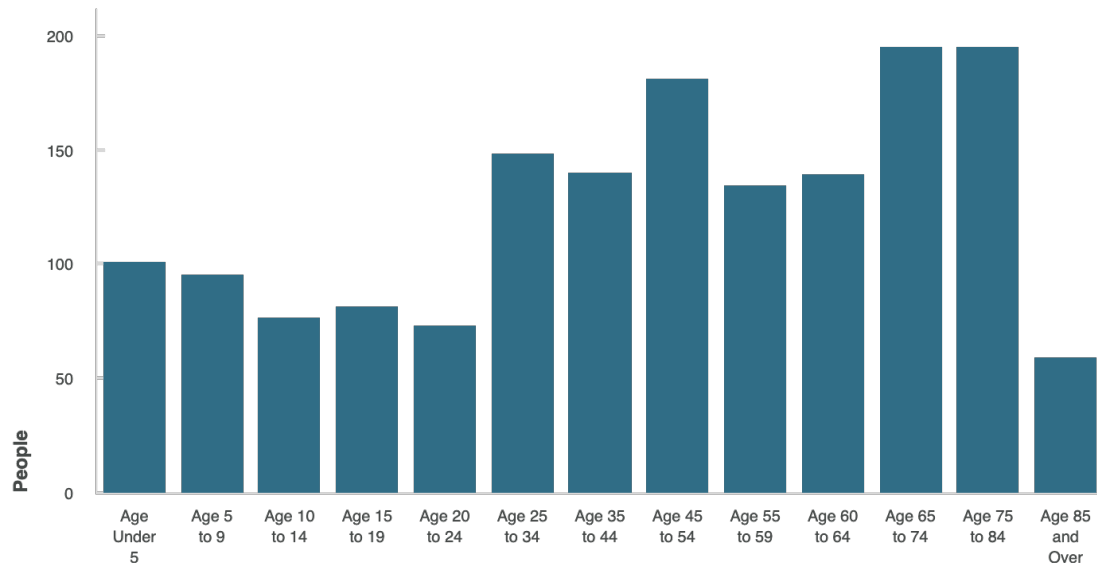
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AGE

Sparta is a fairly intergenerational city, though seems to skew more towards an aging population. The median age of residents is a little under 50, and 23% of the population are over 65. In addition to that, as noted in the bar graph below, the **largest age groups** in the town are **ages 65-74**, and **75-84**.

49.2 Years Old Median Age

Age Totals



Children
19%
Population Under Age 18
Sparta, NC

22%
Population Under Age 18
North Carolina

23%
Population Under Age 18
United States of America

Seniors
23%
Population Age 65 and Over
Sparta, NC

15%
Population Age 65 and Over
North Carolina

15%
Population Age 65 and Over
United States of America

HEALTH

When looking at the health of Sparta's population, it ranks **higher** in **obesity** and **poor physical and mental health** than the state of North Carolina and the U.S. Rural areas in the U.S. tend to lack [equitable access to healthcare](#) and can experience higher rates of overall poor health. It's important to understand the health of the population and how poor health conditions can affect other aspects of life, such as workforce, housing, and education.

Total Population 1,630

Sparta, NC

Obesity Among Adults 37.1%

Sparta, NC

10,264,876

North Carolina

33.3%

North Carolina

324,697,795

United States of America

30.9%

United States of America

Sources: CDC BRFSS PLACES 2018; US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Poor Physical Health Among Adults 20.1%

Sparta, NC

Poor Mental Health Among Adults 17.4%

Sparta, NC

13.1%

North Carolina

14.4%

North Carolina

12.5%

United States of America

12.7%

United States of America

Sources: CDC BRFSS PLACES 2018

DISABILITY

A little under 24% of the Sparta population lives with a disability. **13.2%** of that total is over the **age of 65**. Sparta has a significantly higher rate than the state of North Carolina and the U.S.

Population Living with a Disability 23.9%

Sparta, NC

13.4%

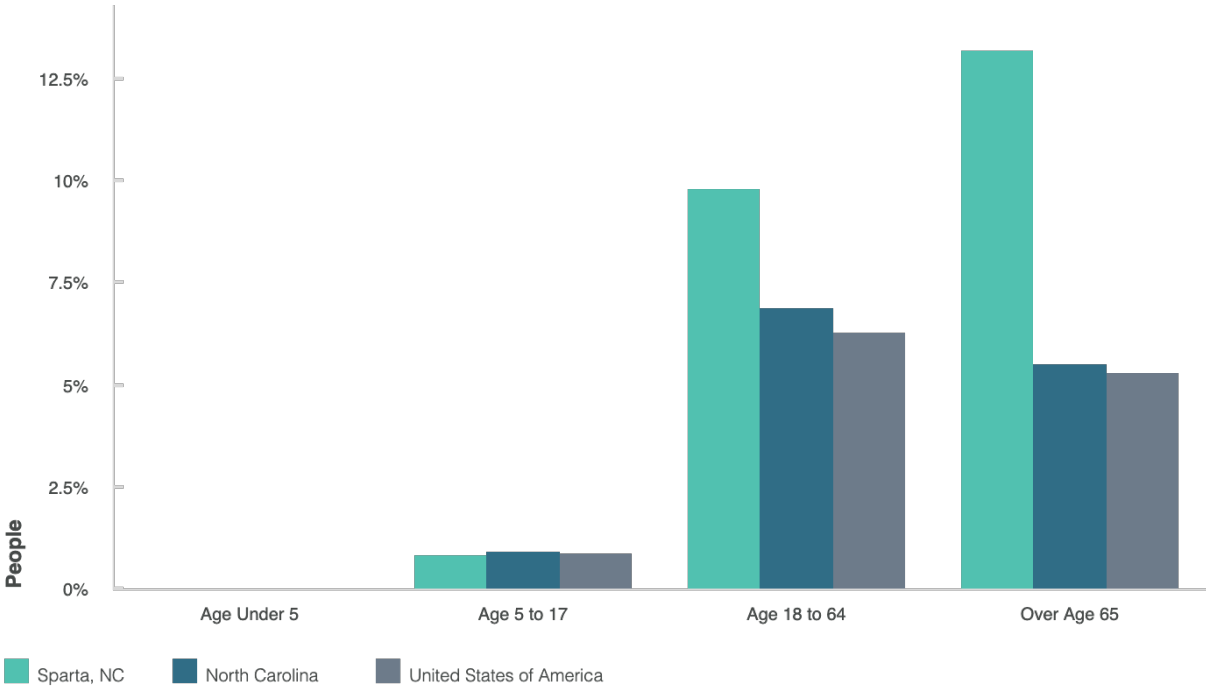
North Carolina

12.6%

United States of America

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Disability by Age



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019



Income

Sparta's **Median Household Income** (MHI) is **very low** when compared at the county, state, and national level. Roughly 44% of the population only earn \$25,000 or less per year.

Median Household Income
\$28,553

Sparta, NC

\$37,830

Alleghany County

\$54,602

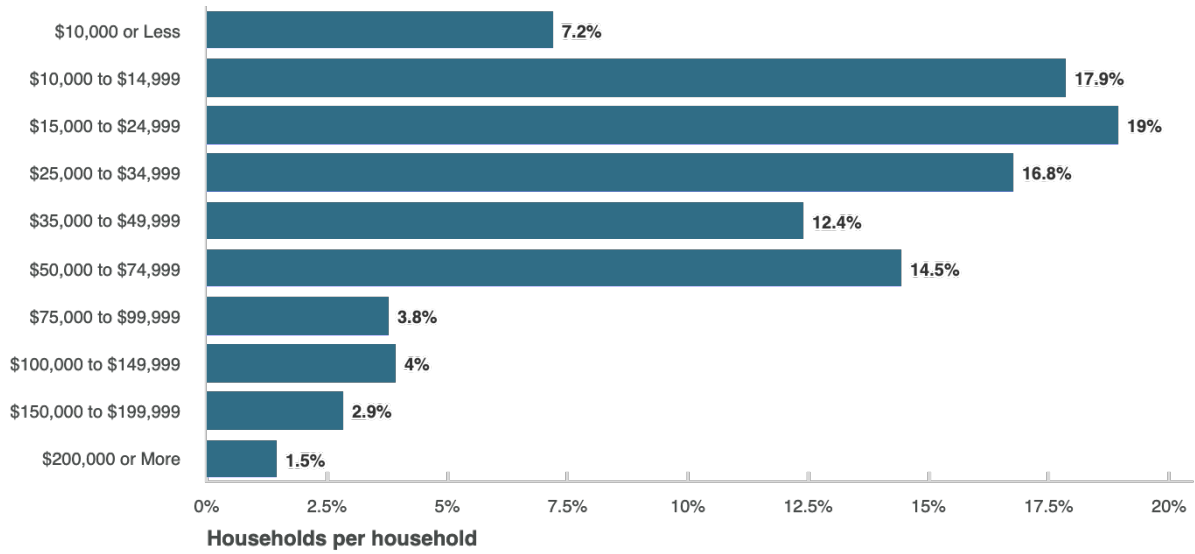
North Carolina

\$62,843

United States of America

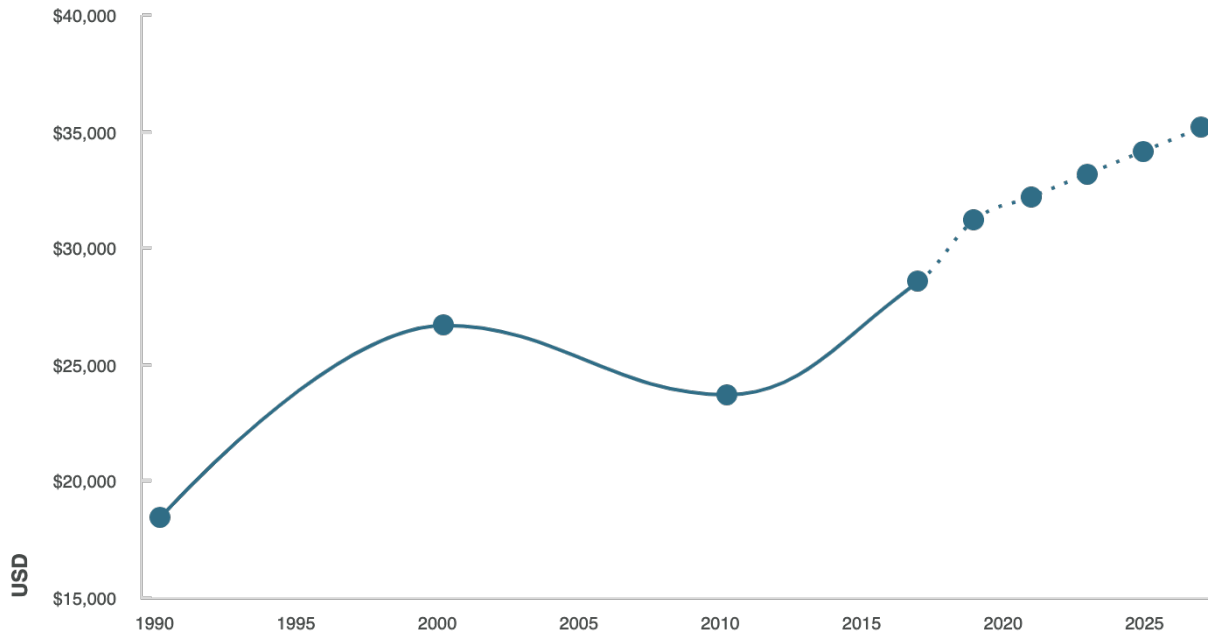
Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Household Income



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

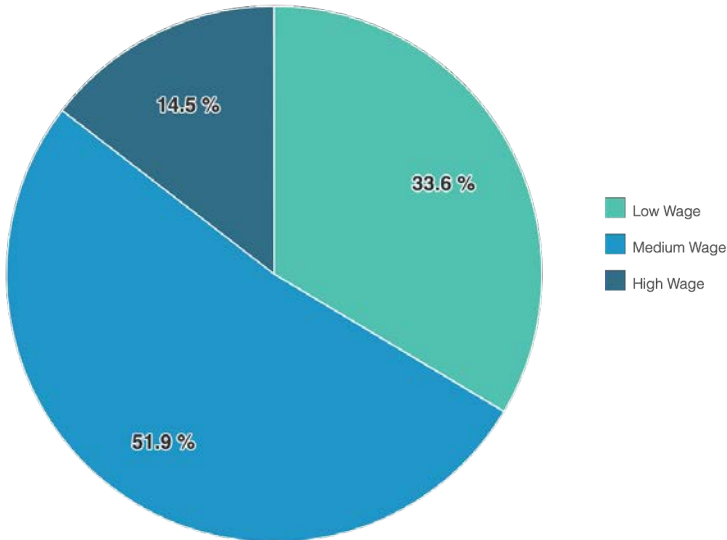
Median Household Income



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Roughly [26.9% of Sparta residents](#) live below the poverty level, and 33.6% of residents work low-wage jobs. This is a significant increase from 18.3% in 2000. Sparta's rate is increasingly higher than [Alleghany County](#) (16.9%), North Carolina (13.9%) and the U.S. (12.3%).

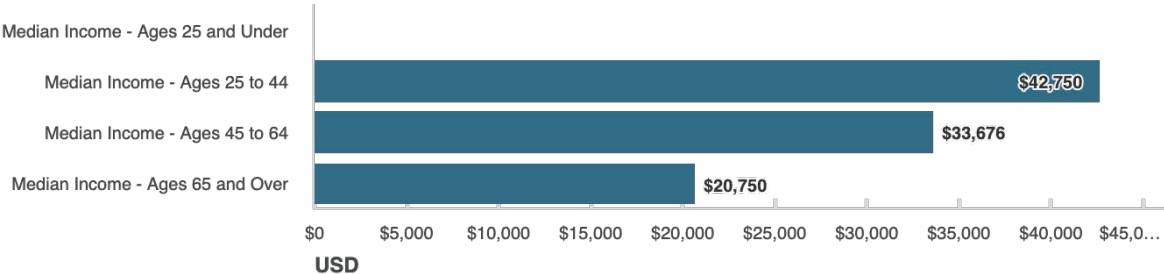
Wage of Workers



Sources: EPA Smart Location Database 2010

Wages typically increase throughout one’s lifetime and then might decrease upon retirement age (around 65). However, we see that in Sparta, the peak earning period is between the ages of 25-44, and gradually decreases with age. Individuals ages 65 and over have a lower median income than the total population (\$28k). Considering the two largest age groups in Sparta are over the age of 65, this indicates that Sparta has a **significant aging population that is very low-income.**

Median Income by Householder Age



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Employment

98.3%
Total Employed
Sparta, NC

1.7%
Total Unemployed
Sparta, NC

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Sparta, NC

Employment by Occupation: Sales	17.3%
Employment by Occupation: Office and Administrative Support	12.8%
Employment by Occupation: Construction and Extraction	11.1%
Employment by Occupation: Management	8.7%
Employment by Occupation: Food Preparation and Serving	7.1%
Employment by Occupation: Healthcare Support	6.7%
Employment by Occupation: Building, Grounds Cleaning, and Maintenance	5.9%
Employment by Occupation: Transportation	5.6%
Employment by Occupation: Production	5.3%
Employment by Occupation: Education, Training and Library	4.5%
Employment by Occupation: Community and Social Service	3.7%
Employment by Occupation: Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3.7%
Employment by Occupation: Health Diagnosis and Treating Practitioners	1.9%
Employment by Occupation: Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media	1.7%
Employment by Occupation: Business and Finance	1.5%
Employment by Occupation: Law Enforcement	0.9%
Employment by Occupation: Material Moving	0.9%
Employment by Occupation: Personal Care and Service	0.6%
Employment by Occupation: Farming, Fishing and Forestry	0%

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

-4.5%

Percent Change in Number of Jobs

Sparta, NC

Sources: LODES Version 7.5 Difference 2018-2008

By reviewing labor engagement data, it can demonstrate who is actively working or looking for work in the community and at what rate. For Sparta, roughly half the labor force is active. Although this is lower than the participation rate for North Carolina and the U.S., it's important to remember that Sparta has a higher aging population and that population is most likely not actively working or looking for work, which would attribute to lower participation rates overall.

Labor Force Participation Rate

49.3%

Sparta, NC

Labor Market Engagement Index

31

Sparta, NC

62.4%

North Carolina

16

North Carolina

63.4%

United States of America

No data

United States of America

In Labor Force Male per capita

21.2%

Sparta, NC

Not in Labor Force Male per capita

17.5%

Sparta, NC

26.1%

North Carolina

12.4%

North Carolina

26.8%

United States of America

12.3%

United States of America



**In Labor Force Female
per capita
19.1%**
Sparta, NC

**Not in Labor Force Female
per capita
24%**
Sparta, NC

23.9%
North Carolina

17.7%
North Carolina

23.9%
United States of America

17%
United States of America

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

**Labor Market Engagement measures the level of employment, labor force participation, and educational attainment in each neighborhood to describe its local human capital*

***Higher index scores indicate higher labor force participation and human capital*

This data also allows to compare participation among genders. It appears that Sparta has lower rates of both genders participating in the labor force when compared to a state and national level. Finding employment, especially employment that offer livable wages, can be more difficult in rural areas.

Community services and amenities can also be scarce. A reason for high rates of females who are NOT in the labor force could be due to a lack of available childcare services, and typically, women become the main caretaker. When families have to resort to living on one income, it can increase hardship and affect other areas of their lives.

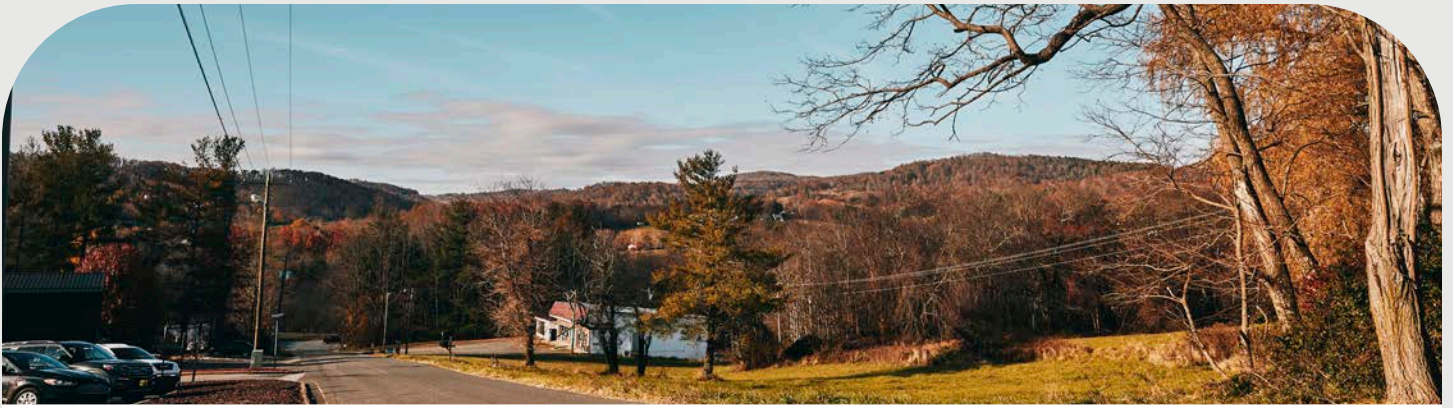
INFLOW & OUTFLOW

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap tool, in 2018, roughly 163 people both live in and are employed in Sparta. 446 people live in Sparta, but commute outside for work, and the majority, 1,227 people, are employed in Sparta, but commute in from other nearby areas.



MANUFACTURING DECLINE & PLANT CLOSINGS

Between 2000 and 2010, manufacturing plants in Sparta, such as Bristol Compressors and Martin Marietta Composites, permanently closed. These shutdowns affected job availability in the region -- the Bristol Compressors facility (York International Corp) had 450 jobs which were lost, and Martin Marietta Composites, at its peak, had 120 employees.



Housing

GENERAL

2.1

Average Household Size

Sparta, NC

2015-2019

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Median Home Value

\$111,900

Sparta, NC

2015-2019

Median Home Value

\$128,050

Sparta, NC

2010

\$172,500

North Carolina

2015-2019

\$152,700

North Carolina

2010

\$217,500

United States of America

2015-2019

\$186,200

United States of America

2010



Median Home Value \$90,579

Sparta, NC

2000

Median Home Value \$51,158

Sparta, NC

1990

\$108,300

North Carolina

2000

\$65,300

North Carolina

1990

\$111,800

United States of America

2000

\$79,100

United States of America

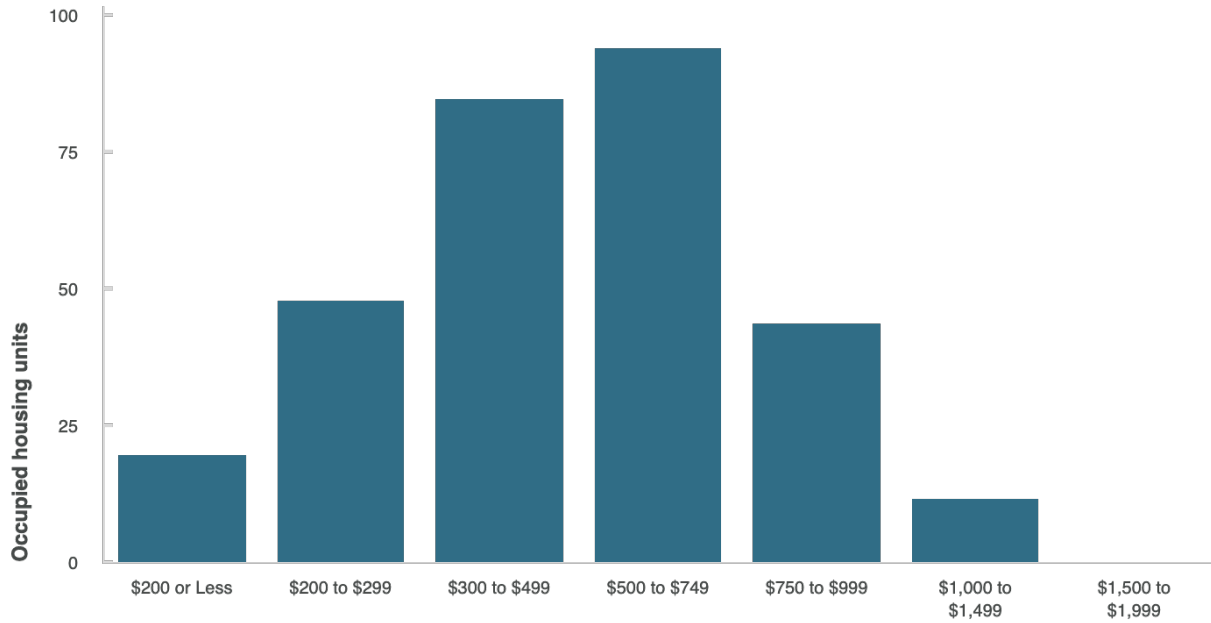
1990

Sources: US Census Bureau 1990, 2000, 2010; US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

The median home value (**MHV**) in Sparta has **steadily risen** over the last few decades, but has decreased in the last decade. From 1990 to 2000, the median home value increased by \$39,421, and from 2000 to 2010, it increased another \$37,471. **51 new homes were built** during this time and could be a factor in why value significantly increased.

However, from 2010 to 2019, the value **decreased by \$16,150**. During this time, only 5 new homes were built, with the last one being constructed in 2013. In total, only **6% of Sparta's homes** have been built in the **past 20 years**, indicating a significant lack of updated homes.

Monthly Home Rent



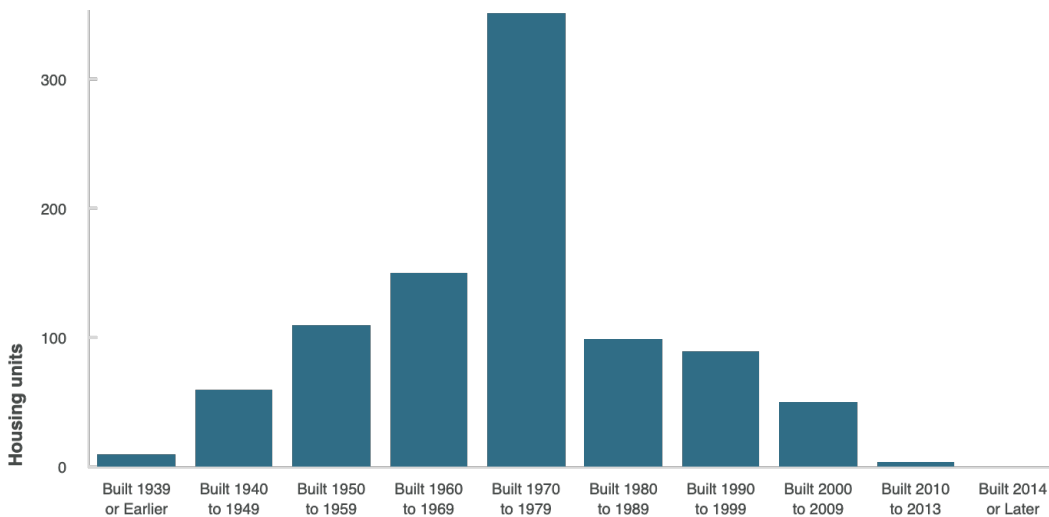
Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

1974

Building Age - Median Sparta, NC

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

A majority of housing units were built in the 1970's while only 56 units have been built since 2000



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

HOMEOWNERSHIP VS. RENTING

Over the last few decades (from 1990 to 2019), the number of **renter-occupied** housing units has **increased**, while the number of owner-occupied units has decreased. In 1990, 27.5% of housing units were renter-occupied units in Sparta, and 74.6% were owner-occupied. These numbers gradually shifted, and by 2019, **42.5% of units were renter-occupied and 57.5% were owner-occupied.**

The owner occupied rate has decreased over the past 30 years

Geography	2015-2019 Owner Occupied Housing Units	2010 Owner Occupied Housing Units	2000 Owner Occupied Housing Units	1990 Owner Occupied Housing Units
Sparta, NC	57.5%	68.1%	71.9%	74.6%
North Carolina	65.2%	66.7%	69.4%	68%
United States of America	64%	65.1%	66.2%	64.2%

Sources: US Census Bureau 1990, 2000, 2010; US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

The renter occupied rate has increased over the past 30 years

Geography	2015-2019 Total Renter Occupied Housing Units per occupied housing unit	2010 Total Renter Occupied Housing Units per occupied housing unit	2000 Total Renter Occupied Housing Units per occupied housing unit	1990 Total Renter Occupied Housing Units per occupied housing unit
Sparta, NC	42.5%	36%	32.1%	27.5
North Carolina	34.8%	33.3%	30.6%	32%
United States of America	36%	34.9%	33.8%	35.8%

Sources: US Census Bureau 1990, 2000, 2010; US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

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HOUSING UNITS

934
Housing Units
Total Housing Units

202
Housing Units
Vacant Housing Units

732
Occupied Housing Units
Total Occupied
Housing Units

239
Occupied Housing Units
Excessive Housing Costs:
30 Percent or More of Income

421
Occupied Housing Units
Owner Occupied
Housing Units

76
Occupied Housing Units
Excessive Owner Housing
Costs: 30 Percent or More of
Income

311
Occupied Housing Units
Total Renter Occupied
Housing Units

163
Occupied Housing Units
Excessive Renter Housing
Costs: Gross Rent 30
Percent or More of Income

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Roughly 33% of households in Sparta are burdened by housing costs and spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Within the 33%, households who rent are most affected. Roughly **68% of renters** are burdened by housing costs, where only 32% of homeowners are burdened by housing costs.

33%
Total Cost Burdened Households
Sparta, NC

Sources: US Census ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Note: Cost burden is defined as households spending 30% or more of household income on housing costs.



This section also indicates that there is a **significant number of vacant homes** (21.6%) that could potentially be filled/renovated/demolished in Sparta. This could become a strong focus area since costs for new housing development have skyrocketed in the past year, and are an unlikely option to provide affordable housing in Sparta.

According to the [U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development](#), **there are no current HUD homes for sale** in Alleghany County, indicating further need for accessible and affordable housing.

AVERAGE INCOME

\$43,125
Median Income - Owner Occupied
Sparta, NC

\$16,676
Median Income - Renter Occupied
Sparta, NC

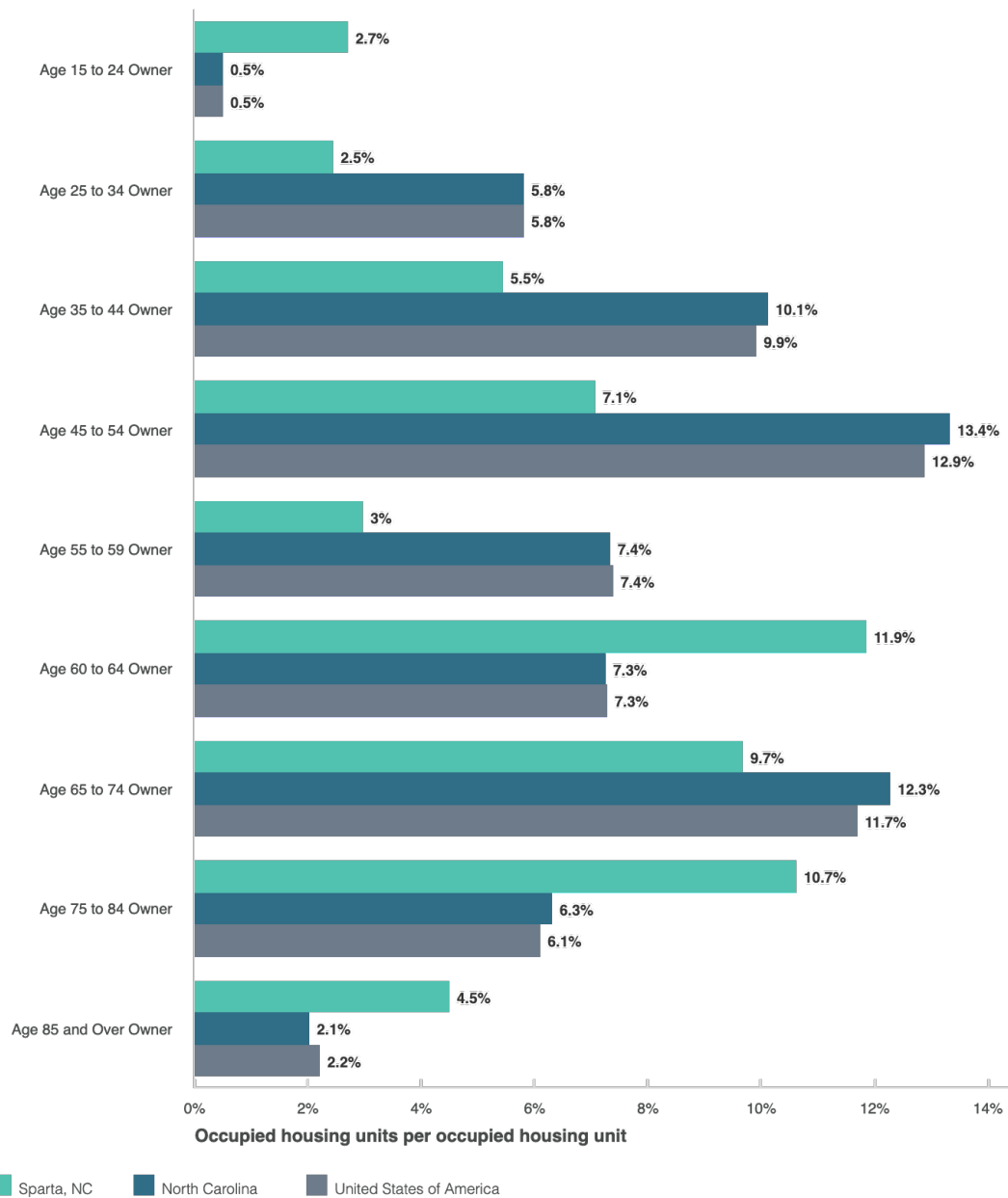
Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Although this demonstrates a serious need for more **affordable housing**, both for homeowners and renters, this problem is exacerbated even more for renters when comparing average incomes of the two populations. **Homeowners** in Sparta make more than **2.5 times** the amount of income that renters do. The average income of renters is also **significantly lower** than the average household income of \$28,553, a gap of about **almost \$12,000**.

AGE

Now we want to breakdown homeownership vs. renting by age to see which age groups could be target populations. Here you can see high homeownership rates among people 60 and older, which is common since aging populations typically no longer have children living at home, have more years as a working professional than younger generations, which in the end, can lead to a higher income.

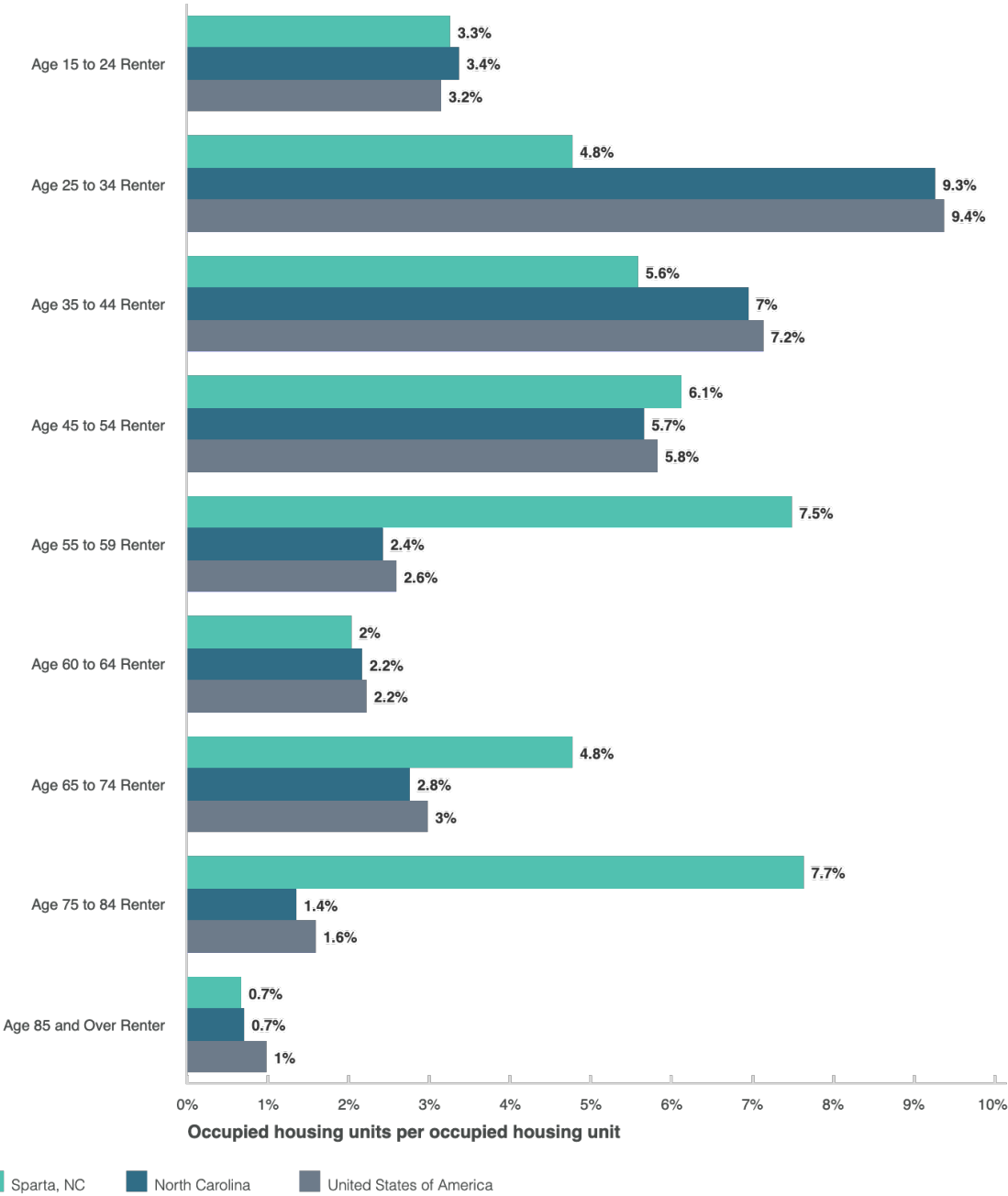
Owner Occupied housing units by Householder Age



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

However, when you look at the **42.5%** of the population who **rent** in Sparta, **53% are above the age of 55**. This demonstrates a large portion of the renting population is older than your typical population that might be renting (ages 15-34). This goes against comparison rates in North Carolina and the U.S., where renting among these age groups is lower.

Renter Occupied housing units by Householder Age



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

VACANCY RATES

Sparta has a **high percentage** of vacant homes, homes that could potentially be sold or rented to current and future residents. Although some of this is due to a significant **migrant population** only residing in Sparta seasonally, this indicates a **gap in connecting potential renters/buyers** to available homes.

202
Housing Units
Vacant Housing Units

63
Vacant Housing Units
Vacancy Status: For
Seasonal, Recreational,
or Occasional Use

52
Vacant Housing Units
Vacancy Status: For
Sale

12
Vacant Housing Units
Vacancy Status: Sold,
Not Occupied

32
Vacant Housing Units
Vacancy Status:
For Rent

0
Vacant Housing Units
Vacancy Status: Rented,
Not Occupied

4
Vacant Housing Units
Vacancy Status: For
Migrant Workers

39
Vacant Housing Units
Vacancy Status: Other

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

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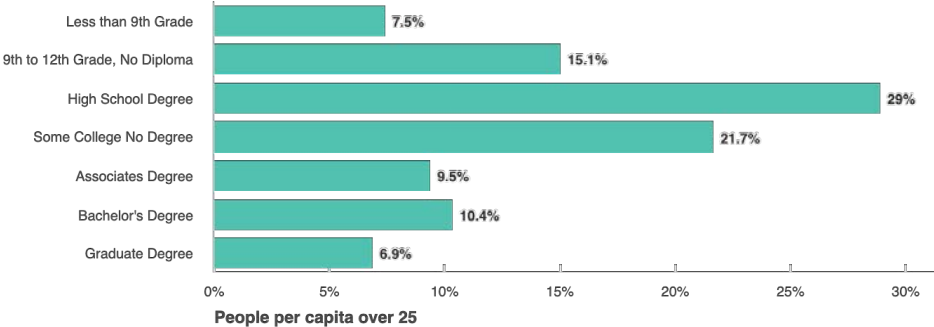


Education

The majority of Allegheny County residents have a high school degree. The number of individuals who solely hold a high school diploma has slowly increased then slightly decreased over the last few decades, from 26.5% in 1990 to **29% in 2019**. This indicates **more individuals are completing high school** but not necessarily pursuing further education upon graduation.

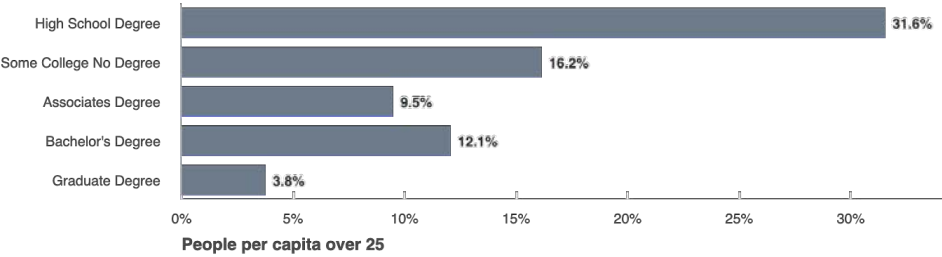
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational Attainment (2015-2019)



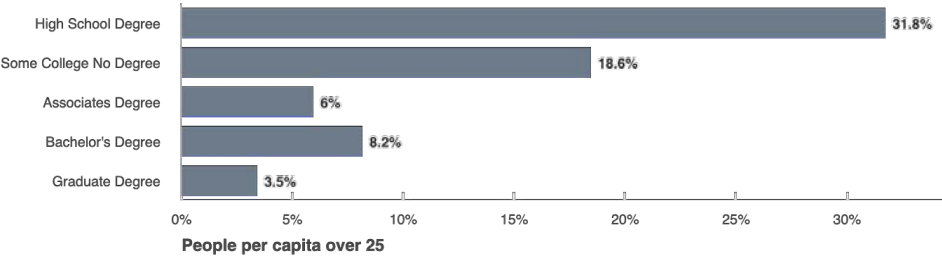
Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

Educational Attainment (2010)



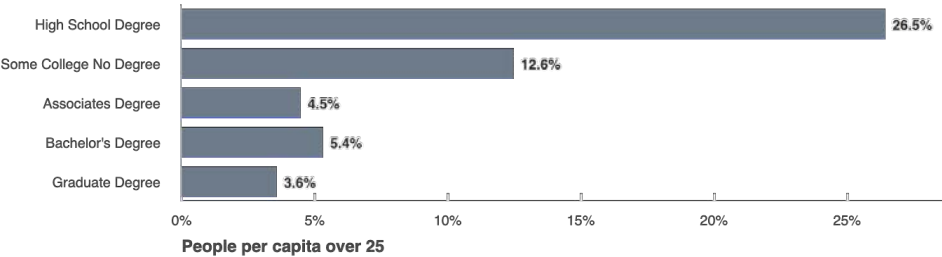
Sources: US Census Bureau 2010

Educational Attainment (2000)



Sources: US Census Bureau 2000

Educational Attainment (1990)



Sources: US Census Bureau 1990

SCHOOLS

The data below indicates poverty levels in relation to educational attainment levels. This is important to review especially since Sparta has a [high poverty rate](#) among its population.

1,630
Total Population
Sparta, NC

408
People Below Poverty Level
Sparta, NC

67
Below Poverty Level with Educational Attainment - Less than High School
Sparta, NC

121
Below Poverty Level with Educational Attainment - High School Degree
Sparta, NC

32
Below Poverty Level with Educational Attainment - Some College or Associate's Degree
Sparta, NC

3
Below Poverty Level with Educational Attainment - Bachelor's Degree or Higher Attainment
Sparta, NC

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

The numbers below indicate that Sparta has a **25% poverty rate**. It is typical to see poverty rates decrease as educational attainment levels increase; however, in Sparta, there are **more individuals below the poverty line with a high school degree** than those that did not graduate from high school. This insight can help shape policy and programming to focus on those two populations and works towards lifting them out of poverty.

Continued on the next page >>

Preschool

Gap Civil Head Start: Gap Civil Head Start is affiliated with the Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission Head Start program. It is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 2pm. It has two classrooms with a total capacity of 30 kids, and a child to staff ratio of 15:3.

Sparta Elementary Preschool: All three elementary schools in Allegheny County provide a preschool option for four-year-olds. It is geared towards educational development with the goal of helping prepare children for kindergarten.

Ollie's Small World Learning Center: Ollie's Small World Learning Center is a center-based childcare facility that takes infants through twelve-year-olds. It has a capacity of 71, and according to Care.com, is estimated to cost \$157/week.

Blue Ridge Developmental Day: Blue Ridge Developmental Day is a locally owned non-profit offering educational opportunities and programming for newborns to pre-kindergarteners.

Free Worship Christian Day Care: Free Worship Christian Day Care offers full- and part-time care for children from 6 weeks to 12-years-old.

School District

The Allegheny County Schools serve students in Sparta through two schools—Sparta School, which teaches PreK through eighth grade, and Allegheny High School, which teaches grades 9-12. In total, Allegheny County Schools enrolls 1,452 students from PreK-12, with a student-teacher ratio of 13:1.

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Colleges & Universities

Wilkes Community College: Wilkes Community College's main campus is in Wilkesboro, about a half hour away from Sparta, but it has a secondary location in Sparta. It is a public community college that is a part of the broader North Carolina Community College System, serving people in Wilkes, Ashe, and Alleghany counties. It offers a wide range of programs from the arts to STEM to business to manufacturing and more. Its average in-state tuition costs before aid is \$14,778.

Other nearby colleges include:

Surry Community College: Located roughly 45 minutes away is Surry Community College, a public community college in Dobson, NC. It is also part of the broader North Carolina Community College System, and offers two-year associates degrees, certificates, diplomas, workforce certification, and skills training across a range of subject areas.

Appalachia State University: Located about an hour away in Boone is Appalachia State University, a four-year public university. Appalachia State offers 150+ undergraduate and graduate programs across a range of study focuses. The average in-state tuition prior to aid is roughly \$19,715.

Infrastructure

TRANSPORTATION

Airports

The closest airport is the Ashe County Airport in Jefferson, North Carolina. It is a small, county-owned, public-use airport. There is also Wilkes County Airport, located in Wilkesboro, which is another small, public airport with just one runway. The closest international airport to Sparta is the Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro, which is roughly 94 miles away.

Highways & Interstates

There are two main roads into Sparta. The first is Route 21, which is the main highway running northwest-southeast through Sparta, and the second is NC-18, which runs northeast-southwest.

MEDICAL CARE

Alleghany Memorial Hospital is Sparta's community hospital, which offers a range of medical care from primary and emergency care, orthopedics, surgical care, inpatient care, and more.

Additional medical services in Sparta include: High Country Health Care System, Medi Home and Health Hospice, Generations Home Health Agency, Ashe Family Healthcare, Alleghany Pregnancy Center, Alleghany Star Therapy, and Alleghany Co Hospice. There is also the Alleghany Senior Citizens Center and two dentist offices.

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BROADBAND & CELLULAR

Sparta, and the larger [Alleghany County](#), is only one of few areas in the state of North Carolina that offers broadband availability to almost every resident in the county. According to broadbandnow.com, the top residential internet providers in Sparta are: Viasat, HughesNet, and Skybest, which are available to almost all Sparta residents.

73%
Household With Computer
Sparta, NC

27%
Household Without Computer
Sparta, NC

69%
Household With Internet Access
Sparta, NC

31%
Household Without Internet Access
Sparta, NC

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

POLICE & FIRE

The Alleghany County Sheriff's Office is located in Sparta, and is responsible for courts and corrections and county communications as well as law enforcement—a responsibility it shares with the Sparta Police Department. The Sparta-Alleghany Volunteer Fire Department, located in Sparta, has roughly 30 volunteer firefighters.

BANKS

There are six banking options in Sparta, NC: State Employees Credit Union, BB&T, Skyline National Bank, First Community Bank, First Citizens Bank, and Fifth Third Bank.

GROCERY & MARKETS

The biggest grocery store option in Sparta, NC is Food Lion, which is located right on Route 21. There is also a Family Dollar and Charlies County Store, which have smaller food offerings. In addition, there are two Mexican markets, Las Dos Rosas and Guadalajara Tienda Mexicana.



Environment

AIR QUALITY

According to the CDC, which only tracks county-wide data, [Allegheny County's](#) ambient concentration of particulate matter in the air is 7.7 micrograms per cubic meter in 2016. This particulate matter includes things like dust, dirt, soot, and smoke. Levels higher than 12 can lead to breathing problems, make asthma and heart conditions worse, and lead to low birth weights.

WATER QUALITY

The City of Sparta published their [2020 Annual Water Report](#) explaining the water quality testing done over the 2019 calendar year, which determined that the water supply in Sparta is safe. All water supplies are expected to have some contaminants, whether from plumbing pipes or natural erosion. The contaminants found in Sparta's water supply were all well under their respective Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL).



NATURAL DISASTERS

Sparta has an unsurprisingly low earthquake index of 0.19, and North Carolina's earthquake index falls roughly on the same scale at 0.18. This is a very small index compared to the United States' overall earthquake index, which is 1.81.

However, in August 2020, a [5.1 earthquake](#) was felt near Sparta, one of the largest to occur in North Carolina. Fortunately, there were no reported injuries or deaths and no widespread damage occurred. The last time an earthquake of that scale hit North Carolina was in 1916.

In Sparta, the tornado index number is roughly 42.87, which is significantly lower than North Carolina's tornado index, which is 115.21. This is just under the United States' tornado index of 136.45. These index values are calculated based on [historical weather events](#).

In addition to earthquake and tornado measurements, there have, of course, been other natural disasters and major weather events in Sparta. Between the years of [1950 and 2010](#), there were 1,251 thunderstorm events, 854 hail storms, and 437 instances of flooding within 50 miles of Sparta. These were the biggest weather events noted during this time period, however there were other smaller weather events, such as heavy snow, strong winds, ice storms, and hurricanes.



Art, Culture & Historic Sites

EVENTS

Alleghany Farmer's Market: Open Saturday's from 9am to 1pm in Crouse Park, the Alleghany Farmer's Market offers fresh produce as well as baked goods, meat, cheeses, coffee & teas, as well as crafts.

Mountain Heritage Festival: Mountain Heritage Festival is an annual event with live music, contests, food vendors, and arts and craft opportunities. It is hosted by the Alleghany County Chamber of Commerce.

Music on Main: The first Friday of every month the Alleghany County Chamber of Commerce hosts Music on Main, a concert series with rotating artists hosted right on Main Street in Sparta.

Saturdays in the Park: Hosted by the Alleghany County Art Council every Saturday from 6pm-9pm in Crouse Park, Saturdays in the Park offers the opportunity for Sparta residents to enjoy live music.

HISTORIC SITES MUSEUMS & ATTRACTIONS

Alleghany Historical Museum: The Alleghany Historical Museum, located on Main Street in Sparta, showcases the history of Alleghany County. It hosts events each month, inviting in historians and featured community members.

Sparta Teapot Museum: The Sparta Teapot Museum closed in 2010, but it was a collection of roughly 6,000 historic and artisan teapots worth \$5 million, owned by the Kamm family. It was set to receive \$500,000 in funding from Congress to renovate, along with other donations from private organizations and grants, to put towards a \$10 million rebuild project. The board of directors hoped that the museum could help Sparta turn to tourism from manufacturing -- in the years leading up to the museum's opening, four of Sparta's five manufacturing plants closed, leaving an estimated 25% of residents without employment. An economic impact study projected that the museum's annual attendance would be approximately 61,000 visitors, bringing in a total of \$7.5 million to the area ([Source](#)). However, despite the projected benefits, this project received a lot of pushback and critique from both politicians and residents.

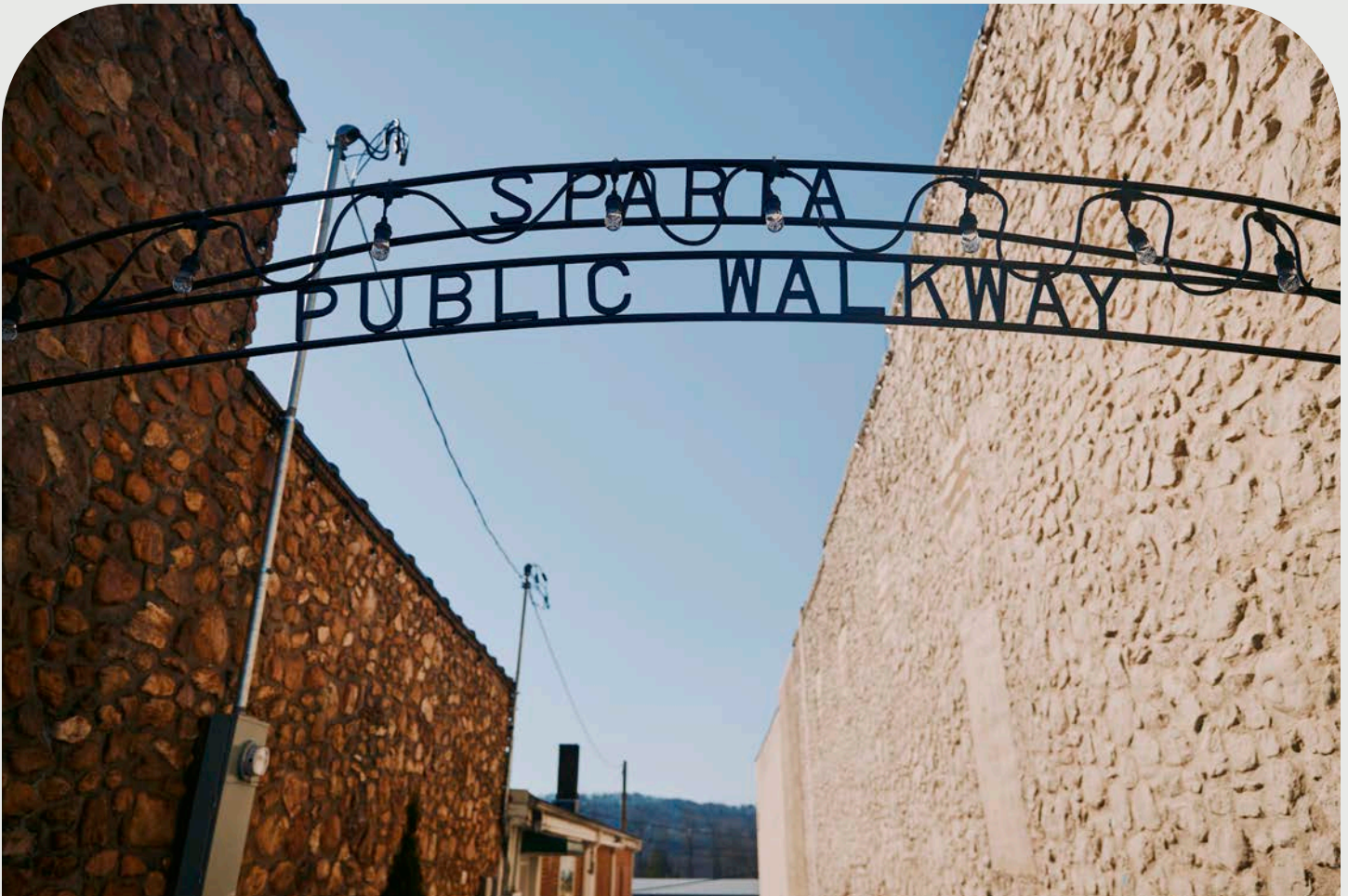
334 Housing Units Building Built 1969 or Earlier - Potentially Eligible for National Register of Historic Places

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2015-2019

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Sparta has a variety of Christian denominations in and around the area. Below is a list of some of the churches (does not include all) within the Sparta city limits:

- St. Frances of Rome Catholic
- Sparta United Methodist Church
- Sparta First Baptist Church
- Sparta Church of God
- Sparta Presbyterian Church
- Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints



PUBLIC ART & GALLERIES

Art We There Yet? Mural Project: Art We There Yet? partnered with the Alleghany County Art Council to create a series of murals in and around downtown Sparta—one on the Blue Ridge Parkway by mile marker 229.7, one on 67 West Whitehead Street, and one on the Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) House at 142 3rd Avenue West.

LIBRARIES & RESOURCE CENTERS

Alleghany County Public Library: The Alleghany County Public Library is a branch of the Northwest Regional Library. In addition to offering books, the library also has meeting spaces available, and hosts events such as story time readings, webinars and trainings through VAYA Health, a publicly managed care organization, as well as art displays, employment tools through NCWorks, and even mini free libraries at key establishments around town.



Recreation

According to the CDC, which only tracks county-wide data, in 2015, **19% of residents in [Alleghany County](#)** lives within a half a mile of a park. In the state of North Carolina, 23% of the population lives within a half a mile of a park.

Sparta's main park is Crouse Park, which has trails, basketball and volleyball courts, a playground, and covered pavillions with grills. Many events are hosted in the park, such as live music, the farmer's market, and holiday events. There are other smaller parks in Sparta, such as Veteran's Memorial Park and the A&C Campground, which is just outside of town.

Appendix:
*Alleghany County
Attainment Profile*

Alleghany 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

Alleghany County is in the **Boone-Wilkesboro** Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 50 rural non-metro counties in NC.

Overall, 3% of 25-44-year-olds in Alleghany County have earned a master's degree or higher as their highest degree; 9% have a bachelor's degree; 7% have an associate degree; 24% have some college, no degree; 29% have a high school diploma; and 28% have less than a high school diploma.

2018 Population	11,422
2030 Population	11,948
K-12 Students (2019)	
Traditional Schools	1,332
Charter/Private/Home	139
Median Household Income	\$39,735
Child Poverty Rate	30%
Households with Broadband	71%

Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8

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

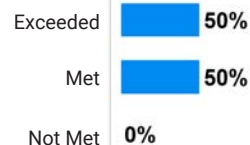
Alleghany County has 4 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, none were classified as low performing in 2019.

How students in Alleghany County traditional public schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, Alleghany County needs:

- **Alleghany County has met the goal for eligible 4-year-olds** enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 81%).
- **190 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 42%).
- **255 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 45%).

Percent of Alleghany County schools by academic growth status, 2019

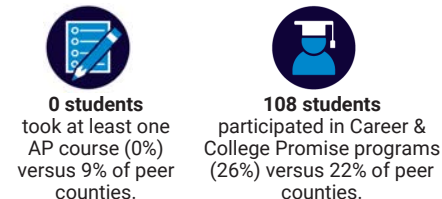


Ready for College & Career

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, Alleghany County needs:

- **7 more 9th graders** to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 89%).
- **26 more seniors** to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 57%).
- **61 more students** to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 16%).



Students in Alleghany County completed **159 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Arts, Audio/Video Technology, & Communications; and Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics.

Postsecondary Access and Success

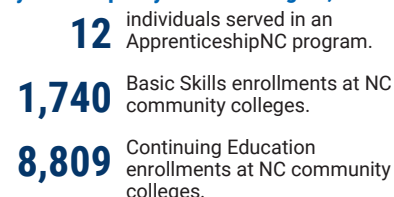
These metrics capture student progression and educational attainment from high school graduation to postsecondary completion. They indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of Alleghany County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

Alleghany County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 333:1.

Among Alleghany County high school graduates:

- **54% of graduates** enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% of peer counties.
- **76% of students** who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% of peer counties.
- **51% 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:



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.

12.7% 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 **5,225 students per year**. After 5 years, 70% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of \$41,744.

72% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gap is: **Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** (below bachelor's).

There are **84,705 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) **General and Operations Managers**; 3) **First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers**.

Opportunities for Growth

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



AP Participation

0% of Alleghany County high school students took at least one Advanced Placement exam, below the rural non-metro county average of 9%.



Disconnected Youth

13% of Alleghany County youth ages 16-19 are not working and not in school, above the rural non-metro county average of 9%.



Transition to Postsecondary

54% of Alleghany County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the rural non-metro county average of 57%.

Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region		
Institution Name	Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18	Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years
Total Enrollments	28,661	75%
Appalachian State University	18,135	91%
Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute	4,636	53%
Wilkes Community College	3,416	54%
Mayland Community College	1,455	55%
Lees-McRae College	1,019	66%

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: WCC Tuition Free Guarantee MOU

The WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee initiative is an innovative program developed through a unique partnership between Wilkes Community College, Alleghany County Schools and the Alleghany County Educational Foundation. The purpose of this program is to guarantee all students in Alleghany County Schools have access to an Associate Degree from Wilkes Community College tuition-free.




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/




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.

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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.

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