

Education and Economic Opportunities in Venango County

A REPORT BY BRIDGE BUILDERS COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

50,475

County Population (2022)

3.8%

Unemployment Rate (2024)

\$59,278

Median Household Income (2022)

1,153

Business Establishments (2022)

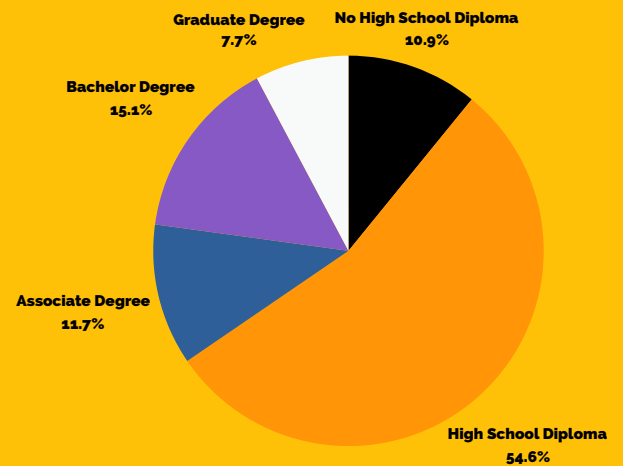
INTRODUCTION

Education and economic growth go hand-in-hand. A well-educated and skilled workforce fosters innovation and productivity which helps local businesses become more competitive in the wider market. On average, the axiom is simple: “the more you learn, the more you earn.”

From a community development standpoint, investing in education is just as rewarding. In fact, a UNESCO study in 2012 found that for every \$1 spent on education, \$10-\$15 was generated in economic growth. Therefore, by committing to providing quality educational and vocational programs, communities can promote social mobility, lower poverty rates, and create a more resilient local economy. This report intends to describe the connection between these two community indicators and provide insight into the future economic benefits to Venango County.

Educational Attainment in Venango County Residents

(2022)



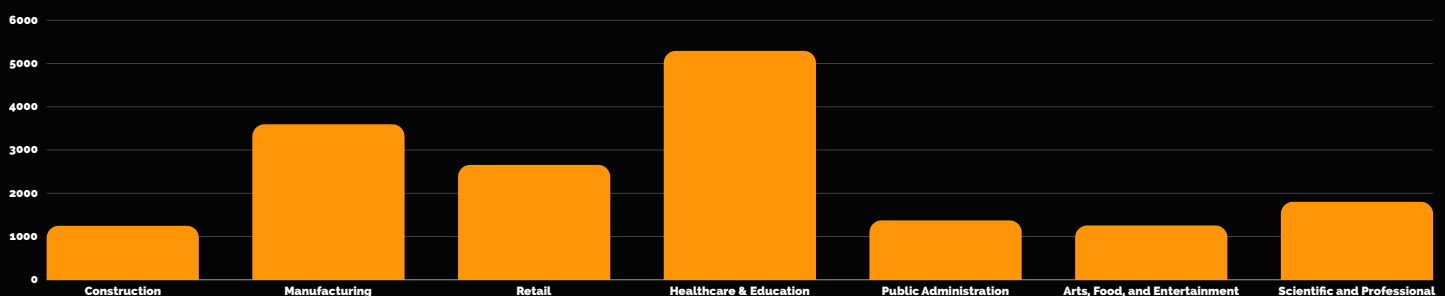
EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY = ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

While government funding is often earmarked for the development of industry clusters, a diversity of industry is also critical to the long-term economic health of a community. Through support for programs in STEM, humanities, arts, vocational training, and beyond, Venango County can nurture a well-rounded workforce that is capable of driving innovation and meeting diverse market demands. Promoting more opportunities for development can diversify the industries available for current county residents and entice new residents to move to the area for employment and industry opportunities.

However, simply providing educational opportunities is not enough to convince graduates to continue living within the community. Simply put, graduates need job opportunities, or they will relocate to find them. As leaders work to diversify the economy of Venango County, they must ensure that educational opportunities align with the employment outlook within the industries they have targeted for growth.

AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN VENANGO COUNTY

(2022)



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN VENANGO COUNTY

The region offers the following educational opportunities for residents. These options include:

- **K-12 Education:** The county is served by several public school districts and private schools offering K-12 education.
- **Higher Education Institutions:** Northern Pennsylvania Regional College of Venango is a two-year college that offers associate degrees and workforce training for high school graduates. The recent departure of PennWest University's Venango campus makes this the only higher education opportunity in the area at the time of this report.
- **Vocational and Technical Training:** The Venango Technology Center offers vocational programs in areas such as agriculture, automotive technology, welding, healthcare, and culinary arts, preparing students for careers in skilled trades. The Keystone Education Council also facilitates locally-delivered workforce training and education.
- **Adult Education and Lifelong Learning:** Venango County Adult Education provides GED preparation, basic skills improvement, and English language classes to help adults enhance their educational qualifications.
- **Online Learning:** Many residents also have access to online learning platforms and resources.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Education has a profound impact on median household income by influencing individual earning potential and overall economic prosperity. Higher levels of education are associated with increased earning potential, as individuals with advanced degrees or specialized training often qualify for higher-paying professions. Education also opens the door to a broader range of employment opportunities, including skilled professions and managerial positions that offer higher wages. Communities with well-educated populations attract industries that require specialized skills, leading to the creation of high-paying jobs and elevating median household income levels. Ultimately, promoting more educational opportunities within Venango County can drive more economic growth, innovation, and improved quality of life.

At \$59,278, Venango County's median household income is marginally higher than the median household income in the selected Pennsylvania comparison counties. Despite this small victory, Venango County is still falling behind significantly when compared to Pennsylvania (\$70,713) and the wider Northeastern region (\$80,360). When compared to the chart below, Pennsylvania and the Northeast region far surpass Venango and the comparison counties in terms of higher education. Nearly a quarter of these populations have a bachelor degree, whereas Venango, Lawrence, Warren, Jefferson, and Bedford counties range from 10-16%.

VENANGO COUNTY'S EDUCATION ATTAINMENT DATA IN CONTEXT

BY PERCENTAGE (2022)

