TOP 25 COUNTY SCHOOL CHOICE MARKETS

(December 2020) Nearly 100,000 students attend charter, home or private schools, or are eligible to participate in a public school choice program, state Department of Education and non-profit records show.\(^1\) The following 25 counties have the largest number of charter, home and private school students.\(^2\) Most Arkansas public companies are based in one of the 10 largest markets.

#1 Pulaski County  
#2 Benton County  
#3 Washington County  
#4 Garland County  
#5 Faulkner County  
#6 Sebastian County  
#7 Baxter County  
#8 White County  
#9 Crittenden County  
#10 Crawford County  
#11 Boone County  
#12 Saline County  
#13 Mississippi County  
#14 Craighead County  
#15 Phillips County  
#16 Lonoke County  
#17 Independence County  
#18 Greene County  
#19 Pope County  
#20 Jefferson County  
#21 Sharp County  
#22 Poinsett County  
#23 Conway County  
#24 Miller County  
#25 Cross County

Economic Strength & Top School Choice Markets

Publicly-traded companies are the backbone of a state's market-based economic system. Eleven Arkansas public companies have headquarters in one of the 10 largest school choice markets.

\(^1\) Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Non-Public Accrediting Association. The niche market (2020-21) includes 40,512 in charters, 27,563 at home, and 17,843 in private schools. About 13,000 are eligible for public school choice programs.

\(^2\) Other counties: Carroll 407; Union 388; Bradley 386; Arkansas 378; Polk 346; Columbia 343; Hot Spring 334; Randolph 331; Logan 320; Cleburne 319; Madison 301; Lawrence 297; Grant 279; Stone 268; Van Buren 256; Johnson 240; Searcy 237; Franklin 205; Ouachita 174; Yell 173; Marion 170; Ashley 160; Fulton 138; Izard 132; Drew 131; Clark 129; Howard 127; Newton 121; Pike 120; Clay 118; Jackson 114; Montgomery 99; Hempstead 98; Cleveland 88; Perry 81; Scott 81; Nevada 68; Bradley 67; Little River 65; Lincoln 57; Prairie 55; St. Francis 52; Desha 44; Chicot 43; Woodruff 42; Calhoun 36; Lee 28; Lafayette 27; Monroe 27; and Dallas 15.
(#1, Pulaski County) Bank of the Ozarks, Dillard’s, Uniti;
(#2, Benton County) America’s Car-Mart, J.B. Hunt, Walmart
(#3, Washington County) P.A.M. Transportation Services, Tyson Foods;
(#5, Faulkner County) Home Bancshares;
(#6, Sebastian County) ArcBest;
(#10, Crawford County) USA Truck.\(^3\)

**Proximity to Higher Education**

A large number of post-secondary institutions are based in the 10 largest county school choice markets.

(#1, Pulaski County) Arkansas Baptist College, Philander Smith College, Pulaski Technical College, Univ. of Arkansas at Little Rock, Univ. of Arkansas for Medical Sciences;
(#3, Washington County) University of Arkansas;
(#4, Garland County) National Park Community College;
(#5, Faulkner County) Central Baptist College, Hendrix College, University of Central Arkansas;
(#6, Sebastian County) Univ. of Arkansas at Fort Smith;
(#7, Baxter County) Arkansas State University Mountain Home;
(#8, White County) Arkansas State University Beebe, Harding Academy;
(#9, Crittenden County) Arkansas State University Mid-South.

The state Department of Education reports 473,004 students in Arkansas public schools in the 2020-2021 school year.

--Greg Kaza

\(^3\) Simmons First National is based in Jefferson County (#20) and Murphy USA has headquarters in Union County (#27).