A policy brief from Lumina Foundation for Education

A stronger nation through higher education — and Indiana's role in that effort

In Indiana, 33 percent of the state's nearly 3.4 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a two-year degree, according to 2008 Census data. This compares to a national average of around 38 percent.

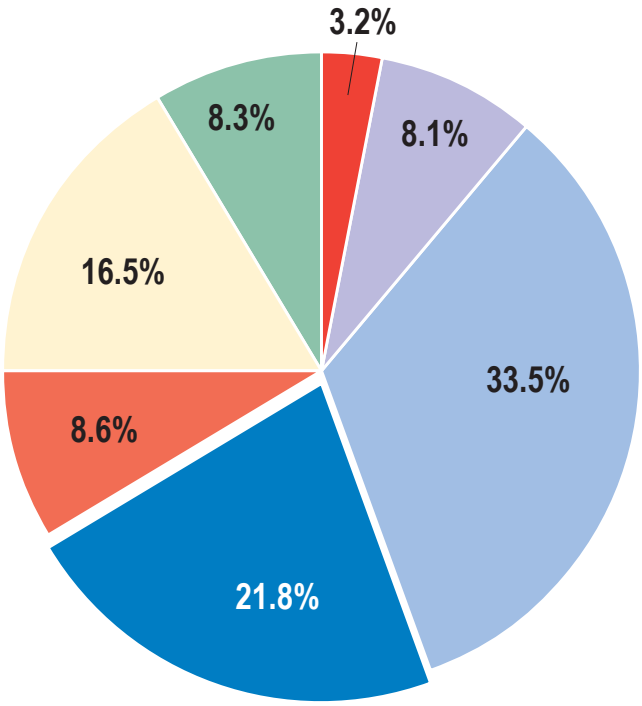
Attainment rates in Indiana are increasing modestly, even though the proportion of degree-holding young adults — those 25-34 years old — mirrors that of the overall adult population. If Indiana continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have a college-attainment rate of 44 percent in 2025 — far short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 6,454 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 6.3 percent — Indiana will reach the Big Goal.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of Indiana residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In 2008, 730,000 Indiana residents fit into this category — representing nearly 22 percent of the state's adult population. If only a small portion of this group could be enticed to return to college to complete either a two- or four-year degree, it would go a long way to helping Indiana reach the goal of 60 percent higher education attainment.

Also, by looking at the geographic distribution of college graduates within the state (see chart on reverse), policymakers and other stakeholders can begin to work strategically and systematically to close achievement gaps. They can target counties and regions that show the greatest need and focus their efforts on those specific areas.

How do we know that Indiana's economy will demand more college graduates? A recent analysis by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce provides the answer. According to the center's analysis of occupation data and workforce trends, 55 percent of Indiana's jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Indiana will need to fill about 930,000 vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies,



Levels of education for Indiana residents, ages 25-64

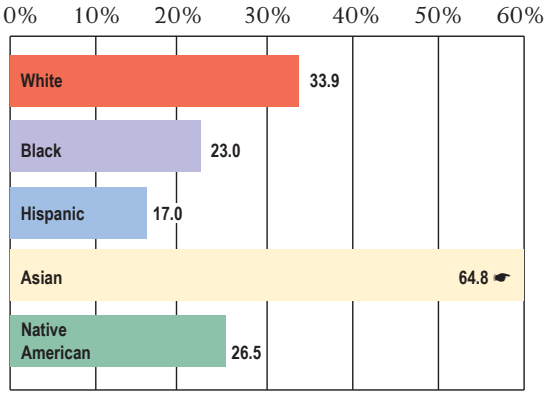
Less than ninth grade	108,812	3.2%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	273,086	8.1%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	1,125,166	33.5%
Some college, no degree	**734,541**	**21.8%**
Associate degree	290,493	8.6%
Bachelor's degree	554,593	16.5%
Graduate or professional degree	277,639	8.3%
TOTAL	3,364,330	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

506,000 will require postsecondary credentials, while only 424,000 are expected to be filled by high school graduates or dropouts.

It will be impossible to reach the Big Goal without significantly increasing college success among the groups that can accurately be called 21st century students, including working adults, low-income and first-generation students and students of color. Closing attainment gaps among racial and ethnic groups is a particular challenge in Indiana, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in Indiana are displayed in the accompanying bar graph.

Degree-attainment rates among Indiana adults (ages 25-64), by population group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

These gaps have persisted for decades, and closing them is obviously a big challenge. Still, it can and *must* be done. It will require concerted and strategic efforts over many years — efforts based on solid evidence about what works to increase attainment. Information about successful strategies to increase the number of students who complete higher education is available on Lumina Foundation's Web site. The site also provides specific information about Indiana's degree-attainment rates at **www.luminafoundation.org/state_data/**. From there, you can find links to data from all 50 states.

Still more information is available at a Web-based resource created by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). The NCHEMS Information Center provides detailed comparative data for all states and counties, as well as other contextual information that can help higher education policymakers and analysts make sound policy decisions. We urge you to visit the site (**www.higheredinfo.org**).

Percentage of Indiana adults (25-64) with a two- or four-year degree, by county:

Adams	22.7	Fulton	21.9	Kosciusko	27.2	Ripley	25.4
Allen	37.1	Gibson	28.4	LaGrange	14.2	St. Joseph	36.2
Bartholomew	39.2	Grant	27.2	Lake	29.1	Scott	21.0
Boone	48.5	Greene	24.0	LaPorte	26.1	Shelby	27.4
Cass	20.1	Hamilton	63.6	Lawrence	20.4	Spencer	31.1
Clark	28.4	Hancock	38.3	Madison	25.4	Starke	18.6
Clay	28.4	Harrison	22.9	Marion	36.2	Steuben	26.9
Clinton	20.9	Hendricks	43.8	Marshall	25.5	Sullivan	28.5
Daviess	22.6	Henry	24.3	Miami	20.2	Tippecanoe	45.1
Dearborn	28.0	Howard	27.8	Monroe	50.2	Vanderburgh	33.0
Decatur	22.6	Huntington	26.6	Montgomery	24.4	Vigo	32.2
DeKalb	28.3	Jackson	23.6	Morgan	24.8	Wabash	27.1
Delaware	32.0	Jasper	23.9	Noble	23.2	Warrick	40.1
Dubois	30.7	Jay	20.0	Owen	16.2	Washington	16.7
Elkhart	24.4	Jefferson	25.6	Porter	35.6	Wayne	25.4
Fayette	18.9	Jennings	16.7	Posey	29.4	Wells	27.6
Floyd	33.0	Johnson	36.7	Putnam	25.6	White	21.9
Franklin	28.9	Knox	34.2	Randolph	20.6	Whitley	30.1
						Other counties	20.9*

***This percentage is an average for the 20 Indiana counties with fewer than 20,000 residents.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

Lumina Foundation for Education is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college — especially low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Our goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025.

Lumina pursues this goal in three ways: by identifying and supporting effective practice, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change. For more details on the Foundation, visit our Web site at **www.luminafoundation.org**.

GOAL 2025

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