

In Arkansas, postsecondary learning builds the talent that helps us rise

# Arkansas

he need to increase postsecondary attainment — the number of Americans who hold degrees and other high-quality credentials — has never been clearer. State leaders are responding to the growing global demand for talent by setting goals and enacting policies to increase attainment. Like Lumina Foundation, states have come to understand the scope of the effort required. Much is left to be done, but real progress is being made through the efforts of those who are committed to assuring that millions more Americans benefit from postsecondary education.

Lumina began reporting the attainment rate (associate degree and higher) in 2008. That year, the rate in Arkansas stood at 26.5 percent. In 2014, the most recent year for which data are available, the rate reached 29.8 percent.

However, the degree attainment rate doesn't tell the whole story. Lumina has always said that other postsecondary credentials — including certificates and certifications — should count toward national and state goals for attainment, with one important caveat. To count, non-degree credentials should be of high quality, which we define as having clear and transparent learning outcomes leading to further education and employment.

This year, for the first time, we have nationally representative data on the number of Americans who hold high-quality postsecondary certificates; we now feel confident we can count these credentials toward attainment goals. In states, we are able to use estimates from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce on the number of residents who hold high-quality certificates as their highest earned credential. In Arkansas, 9 percent of residents between the ages of 25 and 64 hold a high-quality certificate. This brings the state's overall postsecondary attainment rate to 38.8 percent.

As the data in this report make clear, increasing overall attainment is not the only challenge Arkansas faces. There are also significant gaps in attainment that must be closed. While current systems work very well for many students, more postsecondary credentials must be earned by Americans who, by definition, are *post-traditional* learners. Compared with current students, they will be older; more will be African-American, Hispanic and Native American; and they will have lower incomes. Most will be first-generation students. The data in this report show the extent of the attainment gaps in Arkansas by race and ethnicity.

To date, 26 states have responded to the need to increase attainment by setting state attainment goals that meet Lumina's criteria for rigor and efficacy (i.e., the goal is quantifiable, challenging, long term, addresses gaps, and is in statute and/or a strategic plan). Arkansas is one of those 26 states.

There is much more that states can do to increase attainment. It begins with assuring that all prospective students, including working adults, have access to affordable programs that lead to quality credentials. State policies such as outcomes-based funding can encourage colleges and universities to direct resources to approaches that increase student success. States can also help assure that students get full recognition for *all* of their learning — whether it was obtained in an institution, in the military or on the job — and can apply it to further education and credentials.

Lumina is working with state leaders from around the nation to expand postsecondary opportunity and success. More information on that work, including our full state policy agenda and additional data, is available on Lumina's Strategy Labs website (http://strategylabs.luminafoundation.org/).

## Tracking the trend

Percentage of the state's working-age population (25-64) with a quality postsecondary credential



### Levels of education for Arkansas residents, ages 25-64



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

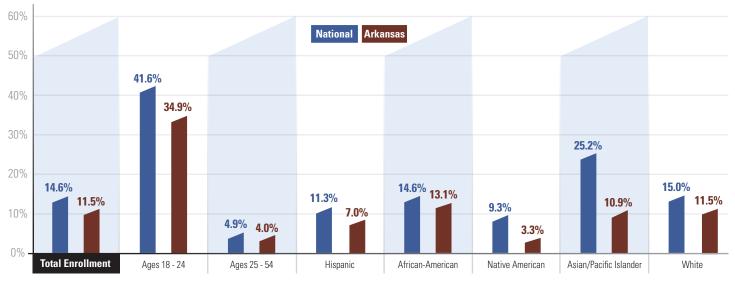
Estimated attainment of certificates:

Note: The accompanying pie chart does not account for residents who have earned high-value postsecondary certificates. The percentage above – admittedly, an estimate – aims to fill that gap. To calculate this percentage, labor market experts at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce used Survey of Income Program Participation 2008 Wave 12 data (2012) and data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2014.

# Degree-attainment rates among Arkansas residents (ages 25-64), by population group White 31.78% African-American 12.44% Asian/Pacific Islander 50.95% Native American 26.94%

## College enrollment among Arkansas residents, ages 18-54

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, 2013, and 2014 American Community Survey One-Year PUMS Files



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

Note: These percentages reflect the enrollment of non-degree-holding students, ages 18-54, at public and private, two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions

## Percentage of Arkansas residents (ages 25-64) with at least an associate degree, by county

21.16	Columbia	31.47	Grant	23.82	Lincoln	13.30	Perry	22.09	Sebastian	28.81
18.73	Conway	23.37	Greene	22.11	Little River	18.55	Phillips	25.34	Sevier	13.25
27.54	Craighead	33.53	Hempstead	21.75	Logan	19.47	Pike	21.64	Sharp	18.89
37.13	Crawford	25.17	Hot Spring	24.79	Lonoke	30.10	Poinsett	14.77	Stone	25.31
24.20	Crittenden	23.15	Howard	21.73	Madison	13.46	Polk	21.82	Union	27.92
18.31	Cross	18.92	Independence	23.25	Marion	18.14	Pope	27.68	Van Buren	16.58
20.01	Dallas	20.97	Izard	21.62	Miller	19.81	Prairie	18.85	Washington	36.04
24.20	Desha	16.12	Jackson	14.64	Mississippi	20.79	Pulaski	40.04	White	28.49
14.77	Drew	27.94	Jefferson	24.11	Monroe	19.84	Randolph	25.49	Woodruff	15.11
32.29	Faulkner	36.56	Johnson	21.02	Montgomery	24.40	St. Francis	18.24	Yell	16.20
15.52	Franklin	21.43	Lafayette	16.84	Nevada	19.37	Saline	32.45		
23.34	Fulton	20.25	Lawrence	19.84	Newton	18.90	Scott	19.05		
26.33	Garland	29.36	Lee	12.61	Ouachita	26.17	Searcy	23.03		
	18.73 27.54 37.13 24.20 18.31 20.01 24.20 14.77 32.29 15.52 23.34	18.73         Conway           27.54         Craighead           37.13         Crawford           24.20         Crittenden           18.31         Cross           20.01         Dallas           24.20         Desha           14.77         Drew           32.29         Faulkner           15.52         Franklin           23.34         Fulton	18.73         Conway         23.37           27.54         Craighead         33.53           37.13         Crawford         25.17           24.20         Crittenden         23.15           18.31         Cross         18.92           20.01         Dallas         20.97           24.20         Desha         16.12           14.77         Drew         27.94           32.29         Faulkner         36.56           15.52         Franklin         21.43           23.34         Fulton         20.25	18.73         Conway         23.37         Greene           27.54         Craighead         33.53         Hempstead           37.13         Crawford         25.17         Hot Spring           24.20         Crittenden         23.15         Howard           18.31         Cross         18.92         Independence           20.01         Dallas         20.97         Izard           24.20         Desha         16.12         Jackson           14.77         Drew         27.94         Jefferson           32.29         Faulkner         36.56         Johnson           15.52         Franklin         21.43         Lafayette           23.34         Fulton         20.25         Lawrence	18.73         Conway         23.37         Greene         22.11           27.54         Craighead         33.53         Hempstead         21.75           37.13         Crawford         25.17         Hot Spring         24.79           24.20         Crittenden         23.15         Howard         21.73           18.31         Cross         18.92         Independence         23.25           20.01         Dallas         20.97         Izard         21.62           24.20         Desha         16.12         Jackson         14.64           14.77         Drew         27.94         Jefferson         24.11           32.29         Faulkner         36.56         Johnson         21.02           15.52         Franklin         21.43         Lafayette         16.84           23.34         Fulton         20.25         Lawrence         19.84	18.73         Conway         23.37         Greene         22.11         Little River           27.54         Craighead         33.53         Hempstead         21.75         Logan           37.13         Crawford         25.17         Hot Spring         24.79         Lonoke           24.20         Crittenden         23.15         Howard         21.73         Madison           18.31         Cross         18.92         Independence         23.25         Marion           20.01         Dallas         20.97         Izard         21.62         Miller           24.20         Desha         16.12         Jackson         14.64         Mississisppi           14.77         Drew         27.94         Jefferson         24.11         Monroe           32.29         Faulkner         36.56         Johnson         21.02         Montgomery           15.52         Franklin         21.43         Lafayette         16.84         Nevada           23.34         Fulton         20.25         Lawrence         19.84         Newton	18.73         Conway         23.37         Greene         22.11         Little River         18.55           27.54         Craighead         33.53         Hempstead         21.75         Logan         19.47           37.13         Crawford         25.17         Hot Spring         24.79         Lonoke         30.10           24.20         Crittenden         23.15         Howard         21.73         Madison         13.46           18.31         Cross         18.92         Independence         23.25         Marion         18.14           20.01         Dallas         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    23.15         Howard         21.73         Madison         13.46         Polk           18.31         Cross         18.92         Independence         23.25         Marion         18.14         Pope           20.01         Dallas         20.97         Izard         21.62         Miller         19.81         Prairie           24.20         Desha         16.12         Jackson         14.64         Mississisppi         20.79         Pulaski           14.77         Drew         27.94         Jefferson         24.11         Monroe         19.84         Randolph           32.29         Faulkner         36.56         Johnson         21.02         Montgomery         24.40         St. Francis           15.52         Franklin         21.43         Lafayette         16.84	18.73         Conway         23.37         Greene         22.11         Little River         18.55         Phillips         25.34           27.54         Craighead         33.53         Hempstead         21.75         Logan         19.47         Pike         21.64           37.13         Crawford         25.17         Hot Spring         24.79         Lonoke         30.10         Poinsett         14.77           24.20         Crittenden         23.15         Howard         21.73         Madison         13.46         Polk         21.82           18.31         Cross         18.92         Independence         23.25         Marion         18.14         Pope         27.68           20.01         Dallas         20.97         Izard         21.62         Miller         19.81         Prairie         18.85           24.20         Desha         16.12         Jackson         14.64         Mississisppi         20.79         Pulaski         40.04           14.77         Drew         27.94         Jefferson         24.11         Monroe         19.84         Randolph         25.49           32.29         Faulkner         36.56         Johnson         21.02         Montgomery	18.73         Conway         23.37         Greene         22.11         Little River         18.55         Phillips         25.34         Sevier           27.54         Craighead         33.53         Hempstead         21.75         Logan         19.47         Pike         21.64         Sharp           37.13         Crawford         25.17         Hot Spring         24.79         Lonoke         30.10         Poinsett         14.77         Stone           24.20         Crittenden         23.15         Howard         21.73         Madison         13.46         Polk         21.82         Union           18.31         Cross         18.92         Independence         23.25         Marion         18.14         Pope         27.68         Van Buren           20.01         Dallas         20.97         Izard         21.62         Miller         19.81         Prairie         18.85         Washington           24.20         Desha         16.12         Jackson         14.64         Mississispipi         20.79         Pulaski         40.04    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**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-14 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

