



A STRONGER NATION

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

A policy brief from Lumina Foundation



Iowa

The 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 Iowa stood at 38.8 percent. In 2014, the most recent year for which data are available, the rate reached 43.3 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 Iowa, 4 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 47.3 percent.

As the data in this report make clear, increasing overall attainment is not the only challenge Iowa 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 Iowa by race and ethnicity.

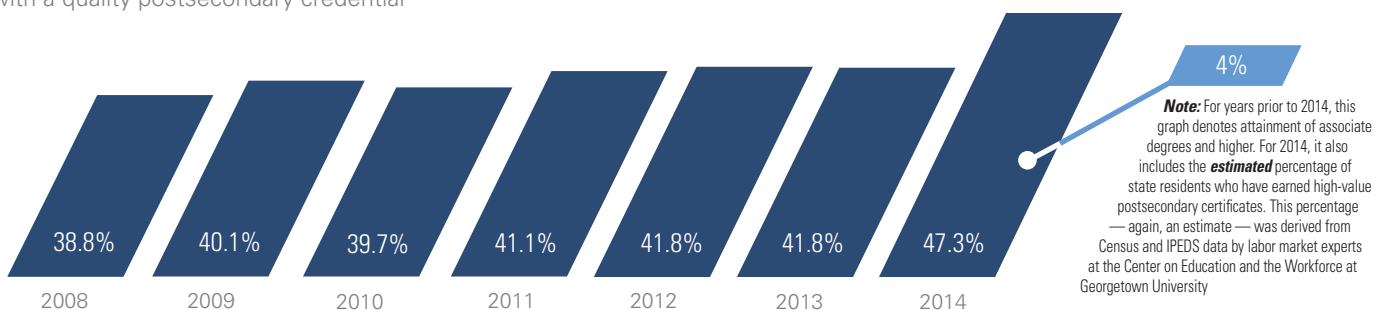
To date, 26 states have responded to the need to increase attainment by setting state attainment goals that meet Lumina's criteria for rigor and efficacy (i.e., the goal is quantifiable, challenging, long term, addresses gaps, and is in statute and/or a strategic plan). Our analysis shows that Iowa has not set a goal that meets Lumina's criteria; we urge state leaders to do so.

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.

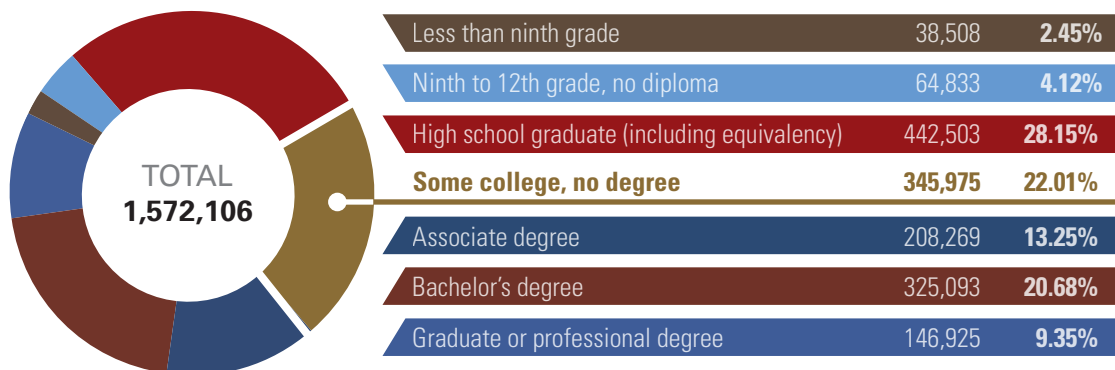
Lumina is working with state leaders from around the nation to expand postsecondary opportunity and success. More information on that work, including our full state policy agenda and additional data, is available on Lumina's Strategy Labs website (<http://strategylabs.luminafoundation.org/>).

Tracking the trend

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



Levels of education for Iowa residents, ages 25-64

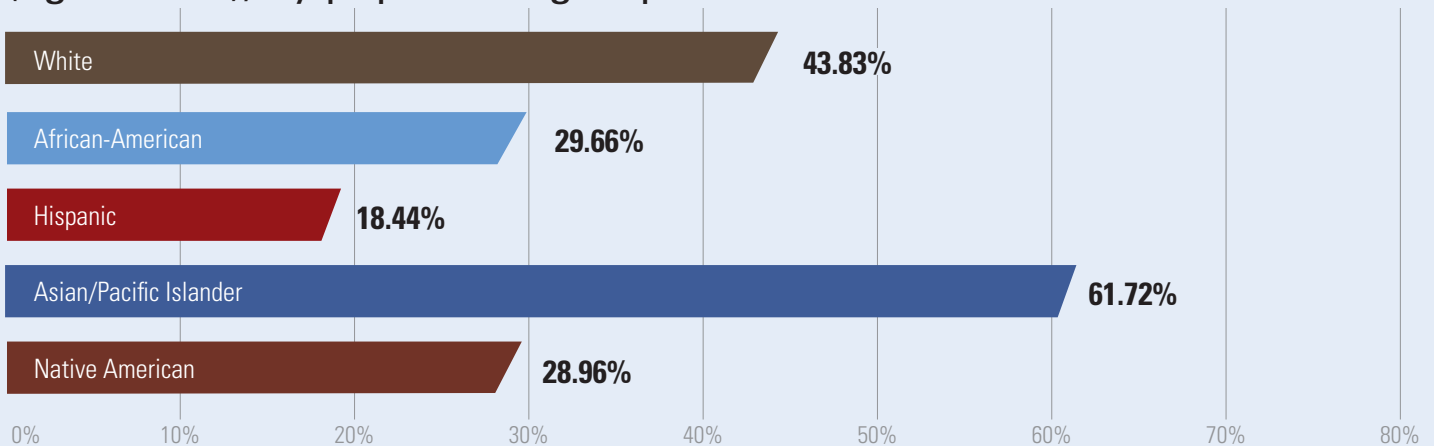


Estimated attainment of certificates: **4%**

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.

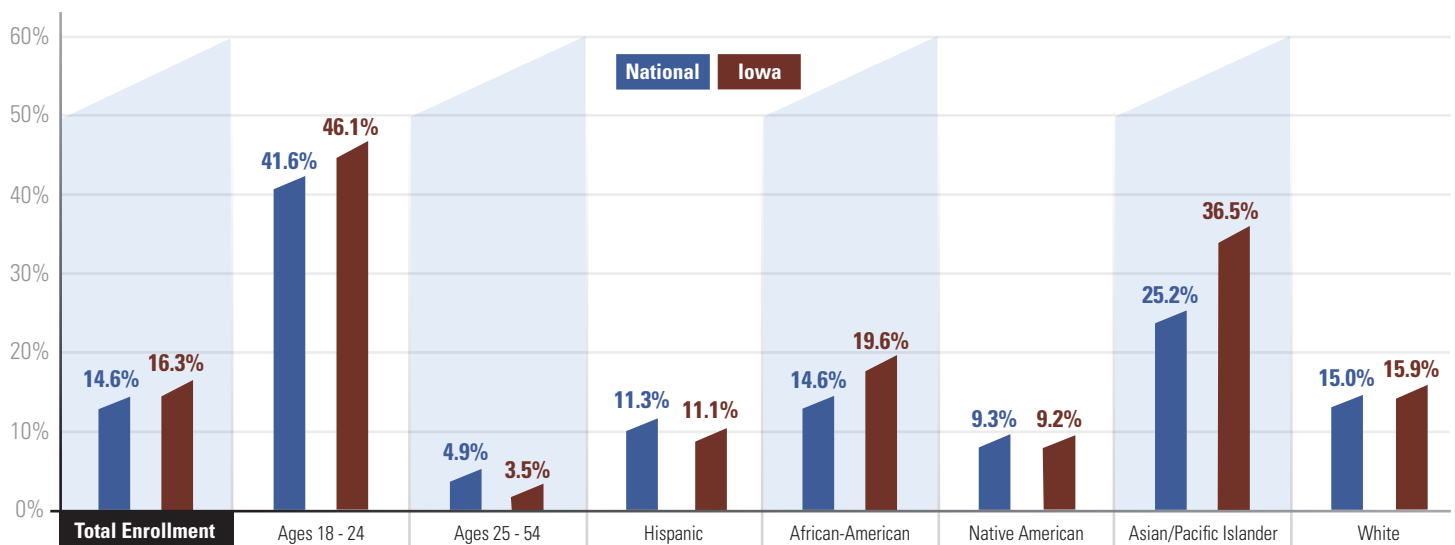
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

Degree-attainment rates among Iowa residents (ages 25-64), by population group



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

College enrollment among Iowa residents, ages 18-54



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 Iowa residents (ages 25-64) with at least an associate degree, by county

Adair	32.27	Cherokee	35.67	Franklin	34.05	Johnson	63.27	Montgomery	33.58	Tama	34.46
Adams	35.68	Chickasaw	31.74	Fremont	34.06	Jones	32.16	Muscatine	31.52	Taylor	31.58
Allamakee	30.24	Clarke	29.82	Greene	35.08	Keokuk	33.35	O'Brien	36.33	Union	32.14
Appanoose	33.69	Clay	37.38	Grundy	41.47	Kossuth	41.12	Osceola	29.15	Van Buren	27.93
Audubon	35.86	Clayton	29.41	Guthrie	32.66	Lee	29.44	Page	34.87	Wapello	28.28
Benton	37.39	Clinton	35.16	Hamilton	33.61	Linn	47.84	Palo Alto	41.66	Warren	44.21
Black Hawk	40.56	Crawford	26.51	Hancock	38.84	Louisa	25.20	Plymouth	37.62	Washington	36.03
Boone	38.07	Dallas	58.95	Hardin	38.18	Lucas	28.21	Pocahontas	36.89	Wayne	31.00
Bremer	47.21	Davis	31.84	Harrison	32.70	Lyon	37.74	Polk	48.55	Webster	37.57
Buchanan	33.71	Decatur	29.37	Henry	34.75	Madison	37.88	Pottawattamie	33.68	Winnebago	38.59
Buena Vista	29.49	Delaware	29.27	Howard	26.63	Mahaska	35.63	Poweshiek	38.09	Winnesheik	42.51
Butler	34.37	Des Moines	35.06	Humboldt	34.12	Marion	41.12	Ringgold	38.87	Woodbury	32.73
Calhoun	36.85	Dickinson	43.12	Ida	35.40	Marshall	32.10	Sac	34.79	Worth	35.34
Carroll	36.35	Dubuque	41.07	Iowa	38.60	Mills	37.29	Scott	46.66	Wright	33.94
Cass	31.16	Emmet	31.24	Jackson	28.75	Mitchell	33.25	Shelby	38.91		
Cedar	39.79	Fayette	35.35	Jasper	31.97	Monona	27.58	Sioux	42.02		
Cerro Gordo	42.10	Floyd	35.98	Jefferson	46.29	Monroe	34.27	Story	61.23		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-14 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with degrees, certificates and other high-quality credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina's outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an equitable, accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.