

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

In California, more than 38 percent of the state's nearly 20 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a two-year degree, according to 2008 Census data. This slightly exceeds the national average.

Attainment rates in California 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 California 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.

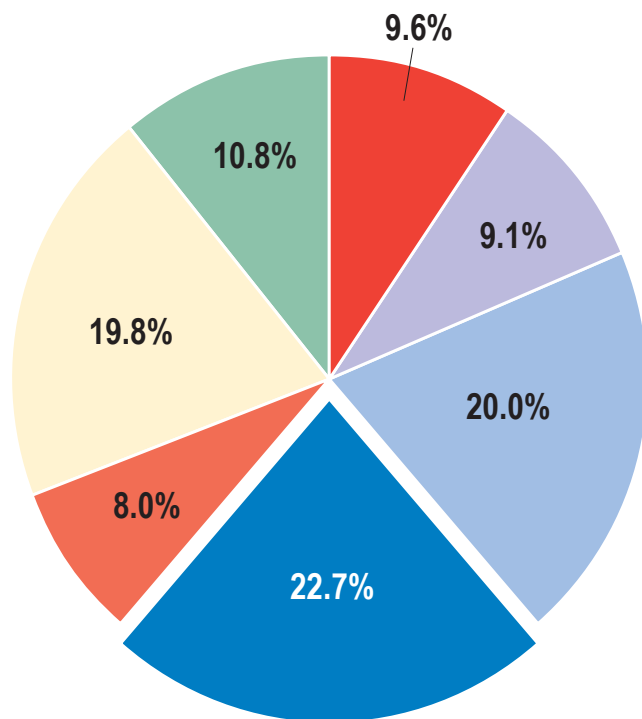
However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 34,893 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 6.7 percent — California will reach the Big Goal.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of California residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In 2008, 4.4 million California residents fit into this category

— representing nearly 23 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 California 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 California'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, 61 percent of California's jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, California will need to fill about 5.5 million vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies, 3.3 million will require postsecondary



Levels of education for California residents, ages 25-64

● Less than ninth grade	1,872,036	9.6%
● Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	1,763,059	9.1%
● High school graduate (including equivalency)	3,888,163	20.0%
● Some college, no degree	4,400,015	22.7%
● Associate degree	1,546,283	8.0%
● Bachelor's degree	3,836,853	19.8%
● Graduate or professional degree	2,106,243	10.8%
TOTAL	19,412,652	100%

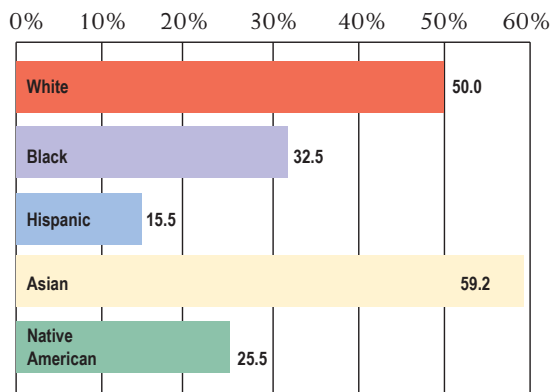
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

credentials, while only 2.2 million 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 California, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in California are displayed in the accompanying bar graph.

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

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



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

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 California'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 California adults (25-64) with a two- or four-year degree, by county:

Alameda	49.1	Kings	19.3	Plumas	31.7	Shasta	29.8
Amador	26.5	Lake	24.6	Riverside	27.5	Siskiyou	31.4
Butte	35.6	Lassen	22.9	Sacramento	38.3	Solano	35.9
Calaveras	32.9	Los Angeles	36.3	San Benito	30.1	Sonoma	39.6
Colusa	18.4	Madera	19.5	San Bernardino	27.1	Stanislaus	23.1
Contra Costa	48.1	Marin	61.7	San Diego	43.6	Sutter	30.6
Del Norte	24.1	Mendocino	32.7	San Francisco	61.2	Tehama	21.4
El Dorado	43.1	Merced	19.9	San Joaquin	25.5	Tulare	20.3
Fresno	27.8	Monterey	29.7	San Luis Obispo	42.0	Tuolumne	26.9
Glenn	19.5	Napa	38.6	San Mateo	54.1	Ventura	40.3
Humboldt	36.7	Nevada	42.2	Santa Barbara	40.7	Yolo	48.6
Imperial	18.8	Orange	44.5	Santa Clara	54.2	Yuba	22.2
Kern	21.6	Placer	46.9	Santa Cruz	48.2	Other counties	29.6*

*This percentage is an average for the seven California 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.

