

## A stronger nation through higher education — and Kansas' role in that effort

In Kansas, 40.5 percent of the state's 1.4 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 38 percent.

Attainment rates in Kansas 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 Kansas continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have a college-attainment of 51 percent in 2025 — still short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

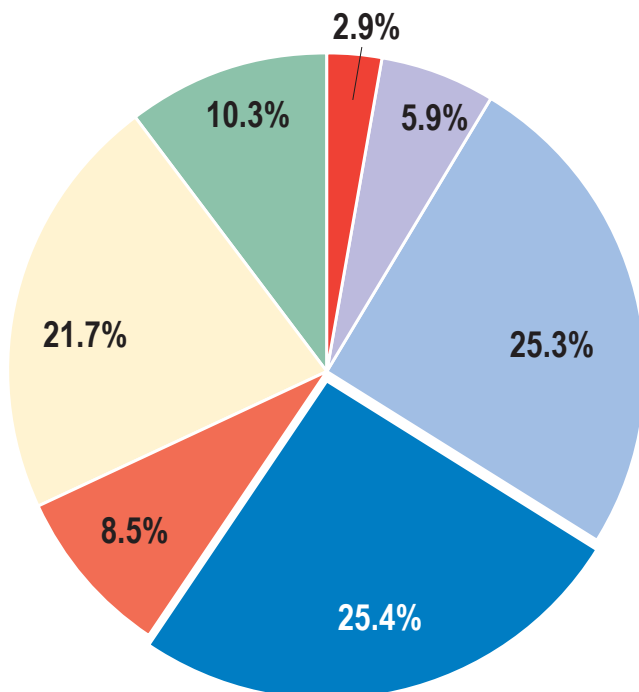
However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 2,001 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 5 percent — Kansas will reach the Big Goal.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of Kansas residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In

2008, nearly 370,000 Kansas residents fit into this category — representing more than 25 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 Kansas 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 Kansas' 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, 64 percent of Kansas' jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Kansas will need to fill about 482,000 vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies,



Levels of education for Kansas residents, ages 25-64

Less than ninth grade	41,034	2.9%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	84,777	5.9%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	364,210	25.3%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	<b>366,060</b>	<b>25.4%</b>
Associate degree	122,664	8.5%
Bachelor's degree	312,172	21.7%
Graduate or professional degree	148,674	10.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,439,591</b>	<b>100%</b>

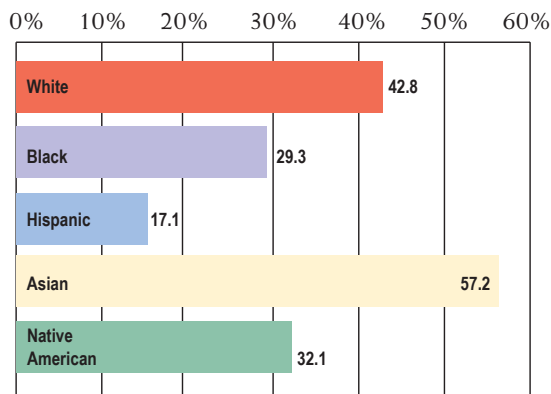
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

301,000 will require postsecondary credentials, while only 181,000 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 Kansas, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in Kansas 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

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



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

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 Kansas' degree-attainment rates at [www.luminafoundation.org/state\\_data/](http://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](http://www.higheredinfo.org)).

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

Barton	33.3	Finney	29.1	Leavenworth	37.4	Saline	33.2
Butler	39.1	Ford	24.1	Lyon	30.9	Sedgwick	36.1
Cherokee	23.4	Franklin	25.8	McPherson	32.4	Seward	24.8
Cowley	34.8	Geary	31.3	Miami	31.4	Shawnee	38.0
Crawford	37.0	Harvey	38.5	Montgomery	32.2	Sumner	32.0
Douglas	56.6	Johnson	60.8	Reno	30.2	Wyandotte	22.6
Ellis	46.6	Labette	25.2	Riley	50.3	Other counties	30.7*

\*This percentage is an average for the 78 Kansas counties with fewer than 20,000 residents.

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](http://www.luminafoundation.org).

