

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



In Maine, about 37 percent of the state's nearly 730,000 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 Maine 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 Maine continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have college-attainment rate of 44 percent in 2025 — far short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

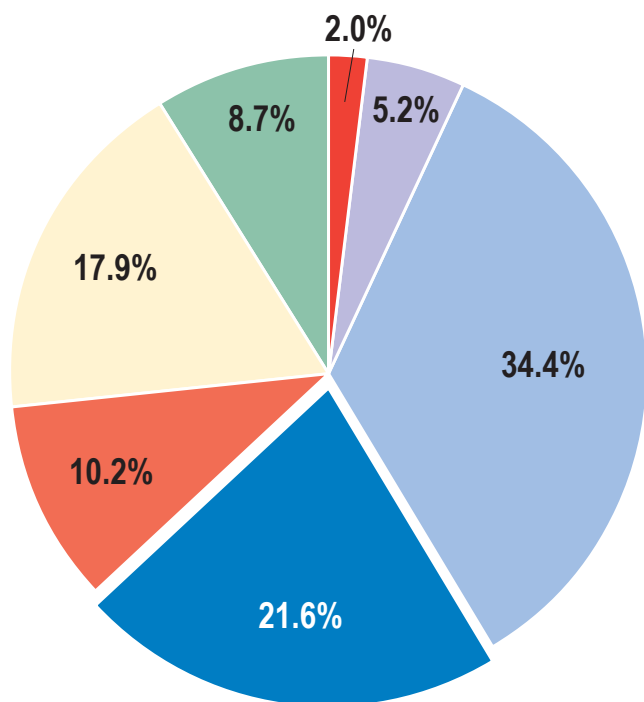
However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 1,235 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 6.5 percent — Maine will reach the Big Goal.

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

2008, 157,000 Maine 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 Maine 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 Maine'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, 59 percent of Maine's jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Maine will need to fill about 196,000 vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies,



Levels of education for Maine residents, ages 25-64

Less than ninth grade	14,778	2.0%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	37,954	5.2%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	250,930	34.4%
Some college, no degree	157,193	21.6%
Associate degree	74,513	10.2%
Bachelor's degree	130,787	17.9%
Graduate or professional degree	63,274	8.7%
TOTAL	729,429	100%

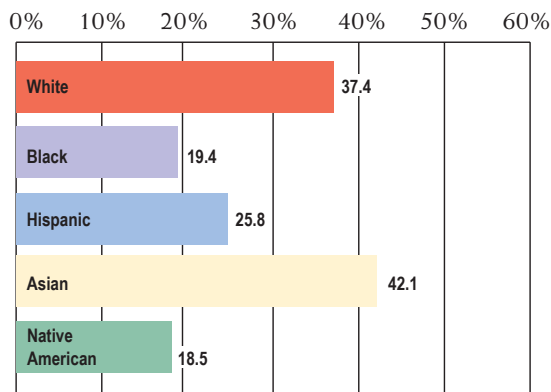
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

115,000 will require postsecondary credentials, while only 81,000 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 Maine, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in Maine 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 Maine 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 Maine'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 Maine adults (25-64) with a two- or four-year degree, by county:

Androscoggin	29.0	Hancock	39.3	Oxford	28.2	Waldo	31.0
Aroostook	28.7	Kennebec	36.0	Penobscot	34.9	Washington	28.2
Cumberland	51.1	Knox	38.0	Sagadahoc	38.2	York	37.3
Franklin	36.8	Lincoln	40.4	Somerset	25.4		

Note: Data unavailable for Piscataquis County, which has 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.

