

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

In Minnesota, 45 percent of the state's nearly 3 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 around 38 percent. Attainment rates in Minnesota 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 Minnesota continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have a college-attainment rate of 57 percent in 2025 — still short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

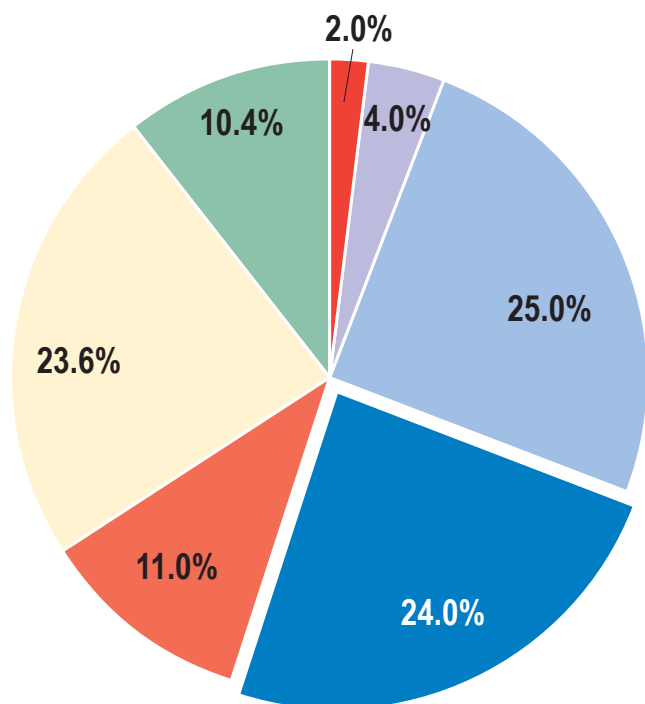
However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 3,361 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 4.7 percent — Minnesota will reach the Big Goal.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of Minnesota residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In 2008, more than 670,000 Minnesota residents fit into this

category — representing 24 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 Minnesota 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 Minnesota'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, 70 percent of Minnesota's jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Minnesota will need to fill about 902,000 vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these



Levels of education for Minnesota residents, ages 25-64

Less than ninth grade	55,607	2.0%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	112,740	4.0%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	701,881	25.0%
Some college, no degree	671,047	24.0%
Associate degree	308,905	11.0%
Bachelor's degree	662,083	23.6%
Graduate or professional degree	292,596	10.4%
TOTAL	2,804,859	100%

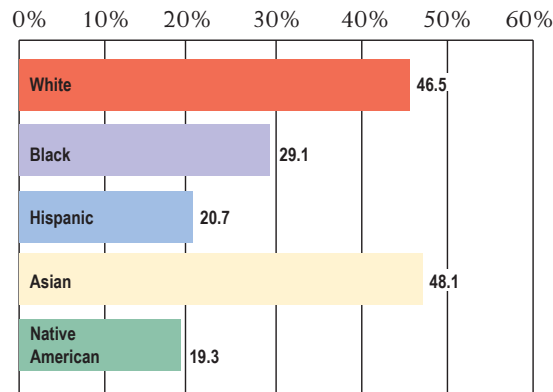
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

job vacancies, 620,000 will require postsecondary credentials, while only 282,000 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 Minnesota, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in Minnesota 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 Minnesota 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 Minnesota'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 Minnesota adults (25-64) with a two- or four-year degree, by county:

Anoka	38.0	Dakota	52.0	Martin	31.8	Rice	36.9
Becker	37.6	Douglas	40.1	Meeker	30.0	St. Louis	41.3
Beltrami	41.6	Fillmore	37.0	Mille Lacs	25.3	Scott	49.3
Benton	34.7	Freeborn	29.5	Morrison	25.6	Sherburne	37.0
Blue Earth	44.3	Goodhue	38.0	Mower	34.1	Stearns	38.3
Brown	31.4	Hennepin	53.9	Nicollet	47.8	Steele	34.4
Carlton	37.3	Isanti	27.7	Nobles	29.0	Todd	26.0
Carver	54.2	Itasca	36.2	Olmsted	54.1	Wabasha	32.9
Cass	34.8	Kandiyohi	38.2	Otter Tail	35.2	Washington	52.2
Chisago	28.7	Le Sueur	31.0	Pine	22.7	Winona	42.2
Clay	48.8	Lyon	43.1	Polk	35.7	Wright	37.6
Crow Wing	37.0	McLeod	36.8	Ramsey	50.0	Other counties	32.1*

*This percentage is an average for the 40 Minnesota 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.

