

## A stronger nation through higher education — and New York’s role in that effort

In New York, about 44 percent of the state’s nearly 10.5 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 New York 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 New York continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have a college-attainment rate of 55 percent in 2025 — still short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

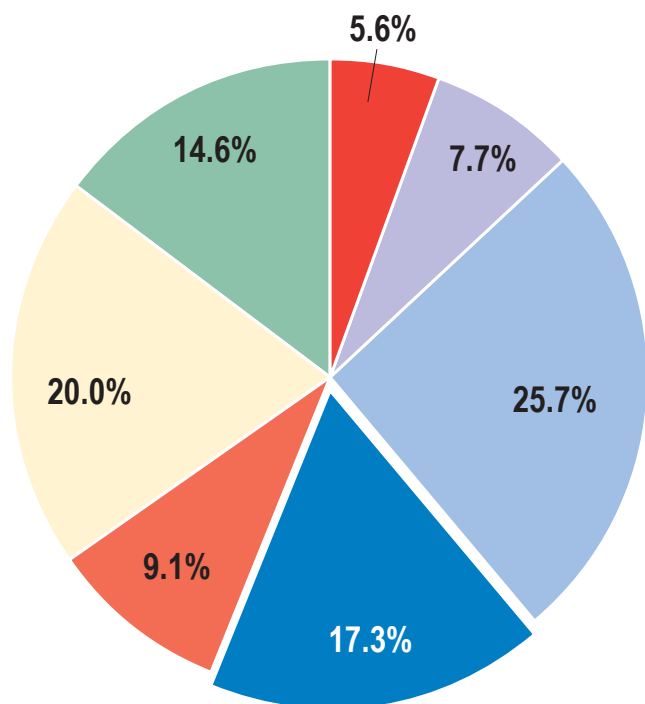
However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 11,797 associate or bachelor’s degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 4.4 percent — New York will reach the Big Goal.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of New York residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In 2008, 1.8 million New York residents fit into this category

— representing more than 17 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 New York 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 New York’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, 63 percent of New York’s jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, New York will need to fill about 2.8 million vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job



Levels of education for New York residents, ages 25-64

<span style="color: red;">●</span> Less than ninth grade	585,119	5.6%
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	801,356	7.7%
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> High school graduate (including equivalency)	2,688,539	25.7%
<span style="color: darkblue;">●</span> <b>Some college, no degree</b>	<b>1,813,303</b>	<b>17.3%</b>
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Associate degree	954,385	9.1%
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Bachelor's degree	2,093,876	20.0%
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Graduate or professional degree	1,530,980	14.6%
TOTAL	10,467,558	100%

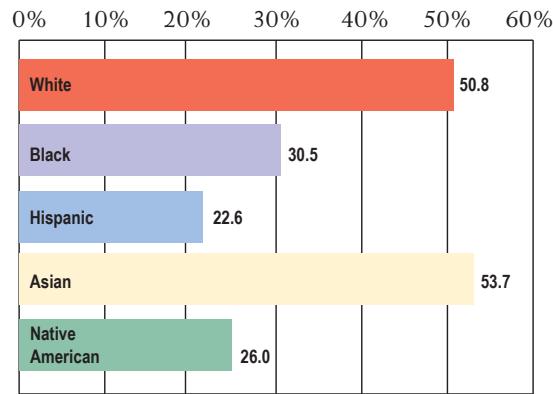
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

vacancies, 1.8 million will require postsecondary credentials, while only 1 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 New York, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in New York 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 New York 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 New York's 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 New York adults (25-64) with a two- or four-year degree, by county:

Albany	52.7	Essex	36.8	Niagara	36.5	Schenectady	45.9
Allegany	34.3	Franklin	30.0	Oneida	35.0	Schoharie	34.6
Bronx	25.9	Fulton	27.5	Onondaga	47.6	Seneca	32.9
Broome	42.3	Genesee	34.5	Ontario	46.8	Steuben	36.0
Cattaraugus	31.6	Greene	31.5	Orange	38.7	Suffolk	43.6
Cayuga	32.5	Herkimer	36.3	Orleans	25.4	Sullivan	33.3
Chautauqua	33.4	Jefferson	32.1	Oswego	28.1	Tioga	37.3
Chemung	34.9	Kings	37.4	Otsego	39.0	Tompkins	63.4
Chenango	30.4	Lewis	26.6	Putnam	48.5	Ulster	41.9
Clinton	34.4	Livingston	37.6	Queens	38.7	Warren	40.1
Columbia	43.8	Madison	37.8	Rensselaer	42.4	Washington	29.8
Cortland	38.7	Monroe	48.6	Richmond	38.6	Wayne	35.4
Delaware	31.1	Montgomery	30.6	Rockland	52.6	Westchester	54.9
Dutchess	45.1	Nassau	53.1	St. Lawrence	33.1	Wyoming	28.1
Erie	44.2	New York	64.4	Saratoga	48.9	Yates	32.0
						Other counties	33.4*

\*This percentage is an average for Hamilton and Schuyler counties, each of 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](http://www.luminafoundation.org).

