

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

In Texas, 33 percent of the state's 12.6 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 Texas 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 Texas continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have a college-attainment rate of 39 percent in 2025 — far short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

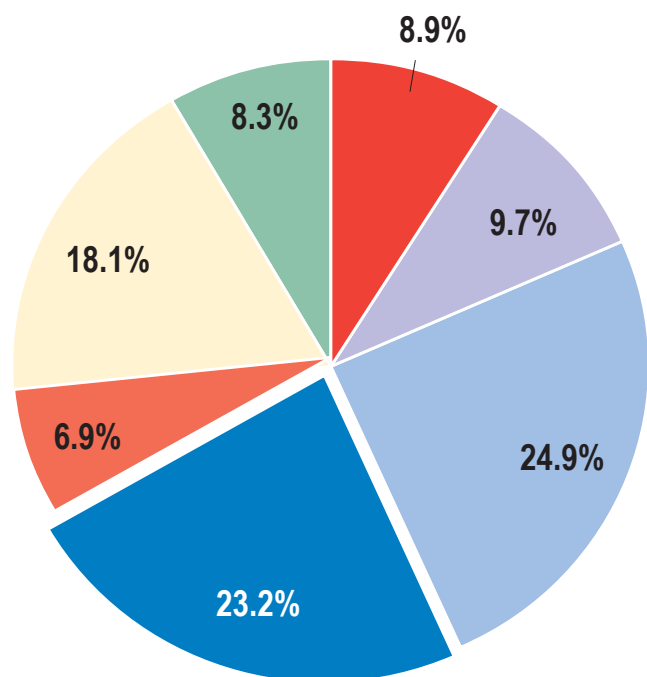
However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 29,185 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 8 percent — Texas will reach the Big Goal.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of Texas residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In 2008, nearly 3 million Texas residents fit into this category — representing more than 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 Texas 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 Texas' 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, 56 percent of Texas' jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Texas will need to fill about 4 million vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies, 2.2 million will require postsecondary credentials, while only about 1.8 million are expected to be filled by high school graduates or dropouts.



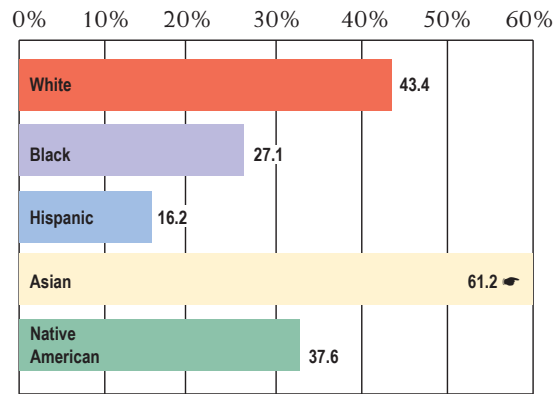
Levels of education for Texas residents, ages 25-64

● Less than ninth grade	1,130,922	8.9%
● Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	1,231,828	9.7%
● High school graduate (including equivalency)	3,146,389	24.9%
● <b>Some college, no degree</b>	<b>2,936,868</b>	<b>23.2%</b>
● Associate degree	869,061	6.9%
● Bachelor's degree	2,291,122	18.1%
● Graduate or professional degree	1,051,197	8.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,657,387</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

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 Texas, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in Texas are displayed in the accompanying bar graph.

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



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

education is available on Lumina Foundation's Web site. The site also provides specific information about Texas' 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

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 increase attainment. Information about successful strategies to increase the number of students who complete higher

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

Anderson	18.1	Cherokee	15.8	Grimes	17.9	Johnson	22.8	Nueces	28.3	Tyler	18.0
Angelina	23.6	Collin	56.9	Guadalupe	31.4	Kaufman	23.4	Orange	24.2	Upshur	24.5
Aransas	31.1	Colorado	25.7	Hale	20.4	Kendall	48.4	Palo Pinto	17.1	Uvalde	23.6
Atascosa	17.2	Comal	39.6	Hardin	24.8	Kerr	28.9	Panola	20.9	Val Verde	23.9
Austin	22.6	Cooke	29.0	Harris	33.7	Kleberg	26.7	Parker	28.6	Van Zandt	18.3
Bandera	34.5	Coryell	28.7	Harrison	23.4	Lamar	27.6	Polk	17.5	Victoria	25.1
Bastrop	23.8	Dallas	32.6	Hays	40.1	Lampasas	30.8	Potter	21.3	Walker	21.0
Bee	17.6	Denton	46.4	Henderson	21.9	Liberty	16.7	Randall	38.8	Waller	22.3
Bell	33.7	Ector	20.2	Hidalgo	20.8	Limestone	18.8	Rockwall	42.2	Washington	31.2
Bexar	32.4	Ellis	28.6	Hill	23.4	Lubbock	35.5	Rusk	23.3	Webb	24.9
Bowie	24.8	El Paso	27.9	Hockley	23.9	McLennan	30.3	San Jacinto	16.1	Wharton	25.2
Brazoria	34.7	Erath	33.8	Hood	30.3	Matagorda	24.9	San Patricio	22.6	Wichita	28.3
Brazos	45.8	Fannin	22.6	Hopkins	20.9	Maverick	20.5	Shelby	19.7	Willacy	16.1
Brown	20.4	Fayette	24.6	Houston	16.1	Medina	27.6	Smith	33.6	Williamson	45.4
Burnet	25.1	Fort Bend	47.6	Howard	17.7	Midland	32.3	Starr	14.8	Wilson	28.8
Caldwell	20.0	Galveston	36.2	Hunt	22.8	Milam	21.3	Tarrant	36.4	Wise	21.7
Calhoun	22.1	Gillespie	31.5	Hutchinson	20.2	Montgomery	36.9	Taylor	31.5	Wood	20.4
Cameron	22.9	Gray	17.0	Jasper	22.8	Moore	16.8	Titus	17.3	Other counties	20.4*
Cass	19.1	Grayson	28.7	Jefferson	26.4	Nacogdoches	33.3	Tom Green	30.0		
Chambers	26.4	Gregg	31.2	Jim Wells	17.6	Navarro	21.1	Travis	49.9		

\*This percentage is an average for the 137 Texas 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](http://www.luminafoundation.org).

