

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

In Virginia, 43 percent of the state's 4.2 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 Virginia 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 Virginia continues to increase attainment at the rate it did over the last decade (2000-2008), the state will have a college-attainment rate of about 55 percent in 2025 — short of the Big Goal of 60 percent.

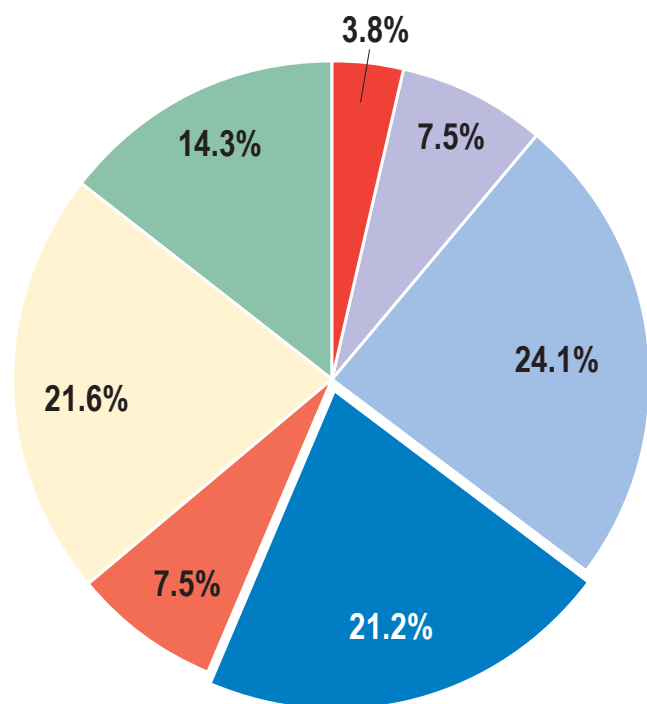
However, this gap *can* be closed. The key is to begin increasing degree production, and to continue to increase it each year until 2025. By increasing production by 5,631 associate or bachelor's degrees each year between now and 2025 — an annual increase of 5.6 percent — Virginia will reach the Big Goal.

One excellent place to begin looking for these additional graduates is in the ranks of Virginia residents who have completed some college without earning a degree. In 2008, nearly 900,000 Virginia residents fit into this category

— representing more than 21 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 Virginia 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 Virginia'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, 64 percent of Virginia's jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Virginia will need to fill more than 1.3 million vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies, 820,000 will require postsecondary



Levels of education for Virginia residents, ages 25-64

● Less than ninth grade	161,609	3.8%
● Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	315,365	7.5%
● High school graduate (including equivalency)	1,017,181	24.1%
● Some college, no degree	892,761	21.2%
● Associate degree	317,050	7.5%
● Bachelor's degree	910,832	21.6%
● Graduate or professional degree	604,552	14.3%
TOTAL	4,219,350	100%

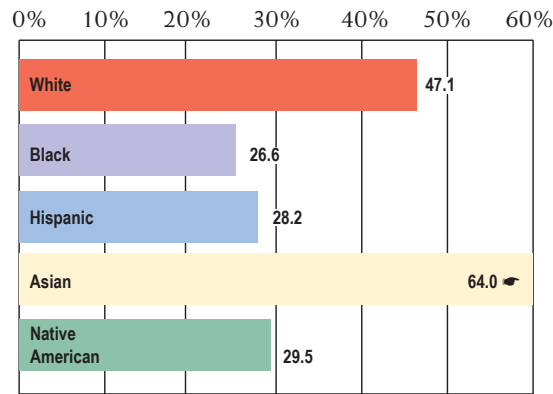
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

credentials, while only 494,000 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 Virginia, as in other states. The current higher education attainment rates in Virginia 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 Virginia 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 Virginia'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 Virginia adults (25-64) with a two- or four-year degree, by county:

Accomack	24.4	Danville ‡	27.3	Henry	21.8	Petersburg ‡	20.6	Shenandoah	23.7
Albemarle	60.0	Dinwiddie	22.4	Hopewell ‡	16.0	Pittsylvania	24.6	Smyth	23.9
Alexandria ‡	67.0	Fairfax ‡	66.1	Isle of Wight	36.0	Portsmouth ‡	28.7	Spotsylvania	38.3
Amherst	25.8	Fairfax City	58.9	James City	52.4	Powhatan	26.7	Stafford	46.0
Arlington	75.0	Fauquier	35.4	King George	38.7	Prince Edward	25.4	Staunton ‡	36.6
Augusta	26.0	Fluvanna	40.7	Lee	24.7	Prince George	26.9	Suffolk ‡	33.9
Bedford	33.8	Franklin	23.3	Loudoun	64.5	Prince William	45.6	Tazewell	25.1
Botetourt	36.2	Frederick	32.8	Louisa	23.5	Pulaski	24.6	Virginia Beach ‡	43.1
Buchanan	16.7	Fredericksburg ‡	39.9	Lynchburg ‡	36.4	Richmond ‡	40.4	Warren	25.8
Campbell	25.4	Gloucester	26.2	Manassas ‡	31.6	Roanoke	44.9	Washington	32.7
Caroline	22.7	Goochland	35.8	Mecklenburg	21.7	Roanoke City ‡	31.4	Waynesboro ‡	25.9
Carroll	21.7	Halifax	21.5	Montgomery	51.6	Rockbridge	32.2	Winchester ‡	35.6
Charlottesville ‡	57.0	Hampton ‡	31.1	Newport News ‡	35.0	Rockingham	26.8	Wise	17.2
Chesapeake ‡	38.5	Hanover	41.9	Norfolk ‡	32.2	Russell	18.2	Wythe	26.8
Chesterfield	45.3	Harrisonburg ‡	38.9	Orange	26.3	Salem ‡	37.3	York	54.9
Culpeper	28.9	Henrico	47.3	Page	14.4	Scott	22.5	Other counties	26.6*

* This percentage is an average for the 56 Virginia counties with fewer than 20,000 residents.

‡ One of 23 cities treated as counties for Census purposes.

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.

