

A policy brief from Lumina Foundation

# A STRONGER NATION THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION



# ILLINOIS

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

In Illinois, 41.3 percent of the state's 6.8 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a two-year degree, according to 2010 Census data. Attainment rates in Illinois are essentially stable. The degree-attainment rate of young adults — 25-34 years old — is 44.4 percent, higher than that of the adult population as a whole.

In 2010, the percentage of Americans between the ages of 25 and 64 — working-age adults — who held a two- or four-year college degree was **38.3 percent**. The rate is going up slowly but steadily. In 2009, the rate was 38.1 percent, and in 2008 it was 37.9 percent. For young adults, the best leading indicator of future higher education attainment, the rate is 39.3 percent — a full percentage point higher than for all working-age adults.

In both Illinois and the U.S. as a whole, attainment rates must increase more rapidly to reach the Big Goal of 60 percent attainment by 2025. If the current rate of degree production continues, about 49 percent of Illinois' adult population — nearly 3.3 million people — will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent, Illinois will need to add slightly more than 710,000 degrees to that total. That's a tall order, but it is far from impossible.

*Help Wanted*, a report by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, explains why increasing higher education attainment is so important. According to the Center's analysis of occupation data and workforce trends, 64 percent of Illinois' jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018. Between now and 2018, Illinois will need to fill 2 million vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements and other factors. Of these job vacancies, 1.3 million will require postsecondary credentials.

Clearly, Illinois' economic future depends on producing more college graduates.

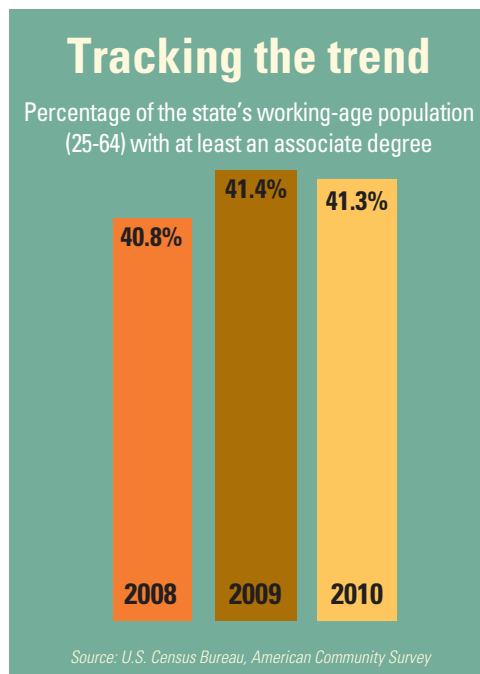
Illinois can produce a lot more graduates by helping its residents who have gone to college but haven't yet earned a credential. In 2010, 1.5 million Illinois adults had gone to college but did not have either a two- or four-year college degree. They represent 22 percent of the state's adult population. Encouraging and helping these adults to complete degrees would go a long way to helping Illinois reach the 60 percent goal.

To increase higher education attainment, states must work systematically to close achievement gaps. To help Illinois develop and implement these strategies, this document features a detailed breakdown of the attainment rate in each county. The data show that, while increasing attainment is a statewide need, it is a particular challenge in rural counties. Assuring that all Illinois communities have access to high-quality higher education is essential.

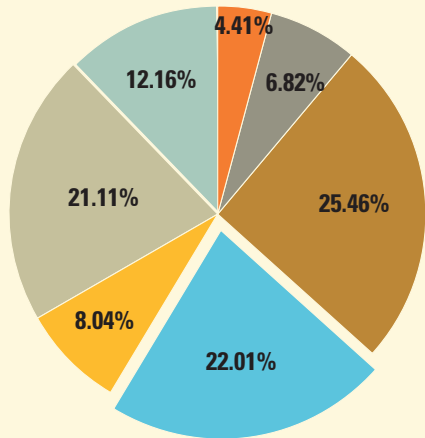
Finally, to reach the Big Goal, Illinois must increase college success among the fast-growing groups that will account

for a growing proportion of the state's population, including working adults, low-income and first-generation students, and students of color. Meeting the educational needs of these 21st century students will help build Illinois' economy and ensure a bright future for the state.

More detailed data on higher education attainment for the nation and all 50 states — as well as information on effective strategies to increase the number of college graduates — is available on Lumina Foundation's website ([www.luminafoundation.org](http://www.luminafoundation.org)).



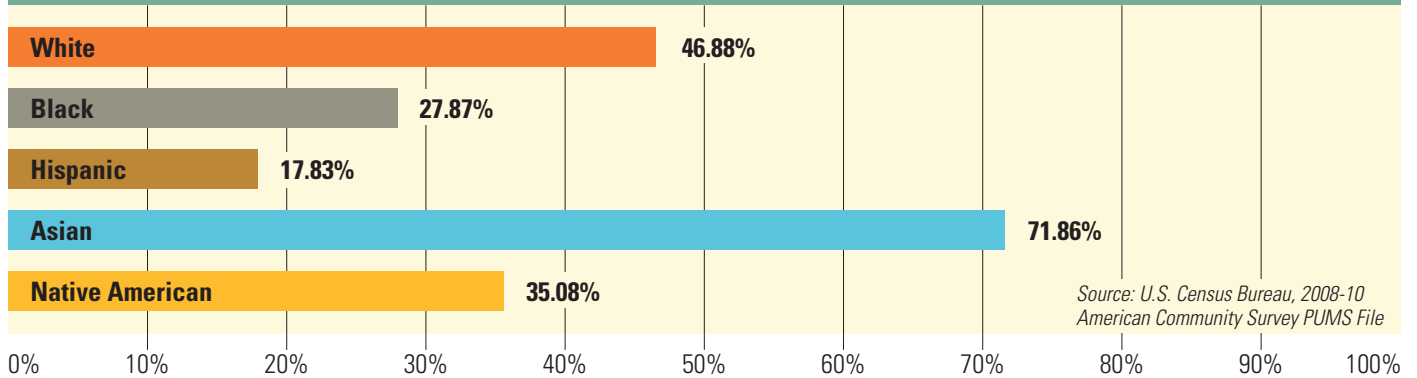
## Levels of education for Illinois residents, ages 25-64



|  |                  |               |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Less than ninth grade                        | 301,928          | 4.41%         |
| Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma              | 467,136          | 6.82%         |
| High school graduate (including equivalency) | 1,744,545        | 25.46%        |
| <b>Some college, no degree</b>               | <b>1,507,642</b> | <b>22.01%</b> |
| Associate degree                             | 550,984          | 8.04%         |
| Bachelor's degree                            | 1,445,933        | 21.11%        |
| Graduate or professional degree              | 832,772          | 12.16%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>6,850,940</b> | <b>100%</b>   |

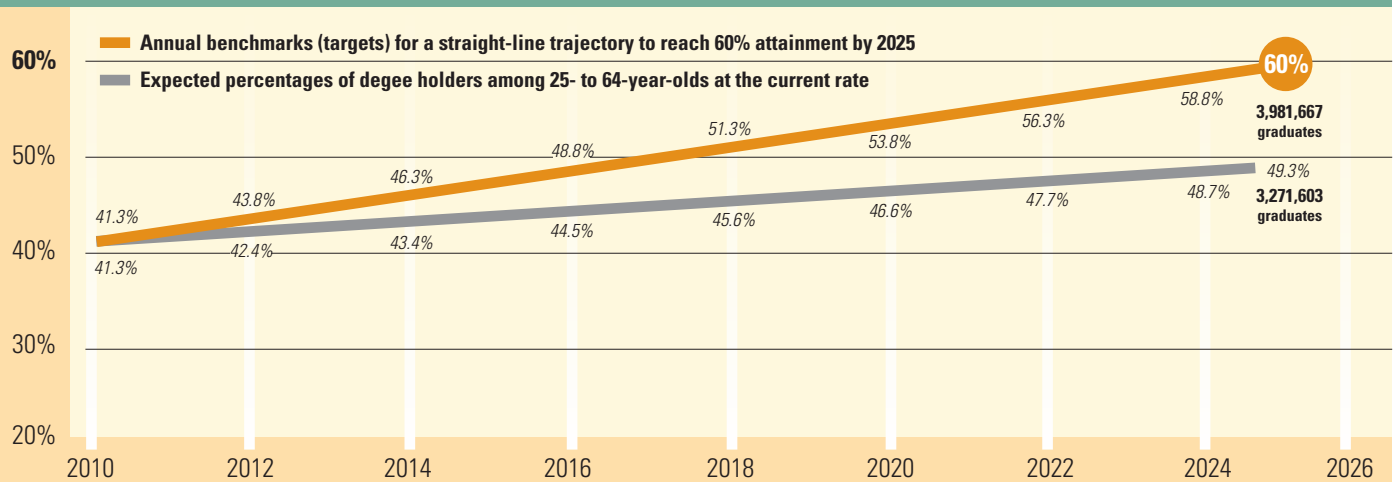
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey

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



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-10 American Community Survey PUMS File

## The path to 60% degree attainment in Illinois



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey

## Percentage of Illinois adults (ages 25-64) with at least an associate degree, by county

|           |       |            |       |            |       |            |       |             |       |            |       |
|-----------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|-------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Adams     | 33.45 | Cumberland | 28.12 | Hardin     | 22.86 | Lee        | 28.18 | Morgan      | 29.69 | Scott      | 28.18 |
| Alexander | 21.17 | DeKalb     | 40.06 | Henderson  | 26.55 | Livingston | 23.61 | Moultrie    | 28.08 | Shelby     | 29.49 |
| Bond      | 37.02 | De Witt    | 24.79 | Henry      | 34.51 | Logan      | 25.96 | Ogle        | 29.75 | Stark      | 30.31 |
| Boone     | 30.23 | Douglas    | 24.16 | Iroquois   | 25.31 | McDonough  | 45.21 | Peoria      | 40.39 | Stephenson | 29.80 |
| Brown     | 20.37 | DuPage     | 56.16 | Jackson    | 46.17 | McHenry    | 42.51 | Perry       | 27.07 | Tazewell   | 37.56 |
| Bureau    | 27.08 | Edgar      | 28.43 | Jasper     | 31.73 | McLean     | 50.89 | Piatt       | 37.82 | Union      | 29.71 |
| Calhoun   | 28.66 | Edwards    | 37.28 | Jefferson  | 25.98 | Macon      | 30.53 | Pike        | 23.80 | Vermilion  | 25.35 |
| Carroll   | 26.74 | Effingham  | 38.32 | Jersey     | 29.48 | Macoupin   | 26.77 | Pope        | 20.41 | Wabash     | 35.87 |
| Cass      | 18.64 | Fayette    | 26.77 | Jo Daviess | 34.14 | Madison    | 35.04 | Pulaski     | 26.37 | Warren     | 30.25 |
| Champaign | 53.15 | Ford       | 29.28 | Johnson    | 23.77 | Marion     | 27.75 | Putnam      | 30.59 | Washington | 34.38 |
| Christian | 22.22 | Franklin   | 27.26 | Kane       | 41.07 | Marshall   | 29.79 | Randolph    | 21.18 | Wayne      | 30.82 |
| Clark     | 32.72 | Fulton     | 26.78 | Kankakee   | 29.19 | Mason      | 27.47 | Richland    | 38.71 | White      | 31.21 |
| Clay      | 29.17 | Gallatin   | 20.73 | Kendall    | 43.26 | Massac     | 27.90 | Rock Island | 33.76 | Whiteside  | 28.85 |
| Clinton   | 35.09 | Greene     | 23.39 | Knox       | 28.66 | Menard     | 36.79 | St. Clair   | 36.98 | Will       | 41.63 |
| Coles     | 35.89 | Grundy     | 29.98 | Lake       | 49.82 | Mercer     | 29.65 | Saline      | 29.78 | Williamson | 34.63 |
| Cook      | 42.71 | Hamilton   | 28.79 | LaSalle    | 28.82 | Monroe     | 40.20 | Sangamon    | 43.30 | Winnebago  | 31.47 |
| Crawford  | 31.74 | Hancock    | 30.57 | Lawrence   | 28.66 | Montgomery | 24.02 | Schuyler    | 25.26 | Woodford   | 42.08 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Lumina Foundation, an Indianapolis-based private foundation, is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college — especially 21st century students: low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Lumina's goal is to increase the proportion 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.