

a **STRONGER ILLINOIS** through **HIGHER EDUCATION**

A policy brief from Lumina Foundation



Illinois

I ncreasing higher education attainment — the percentage of the population that holds a two-year or four-year college degree or other high-quality postsecondary credential — is an imperative in Illinois, as it is in other states. Increasingly, the skills and knowledge of a state's residents are key to that state's economy and jobs, just as completion of some form of postsecondary education is key to an individual's success and social mobility. Of course, state leaders are well aware of these trends, and 38 states have set their own goals for increased higher education attainment.

According to the most recent Census figures (2012), 42.5 percent of Illinois' 6.9 million working-age adults (ages 25-64) hold a two- or four-year college degree, an increase from last year's rate of 41.7 percent. The state's rate of higher education attainment is above the national average of 39.4 percent. This national rate is rising slowly but steadily; in 2008, the U.S. attainment rate was 37.9 percent.

When considering higher education attainment rates, it is very important to track the rate among young adults — those between the ages of 25 and 34 — because that figure is the best indicator of a state's future attainment rates. In 2012, this rate in Illinois was 46.4 percent, higher than that of the adult population as a whole and above the national rate of 40.9 percent.

How can Illinois and other states increase attainment to the levels they need? Lumina has identified three steps that states can and should take to produce real increases in attainment:

1. Improve the quality of student outcomes in terms of completion, learning and employment.
2. Align investments with state priorities and student needs.
3. Create smarter pathways for students.

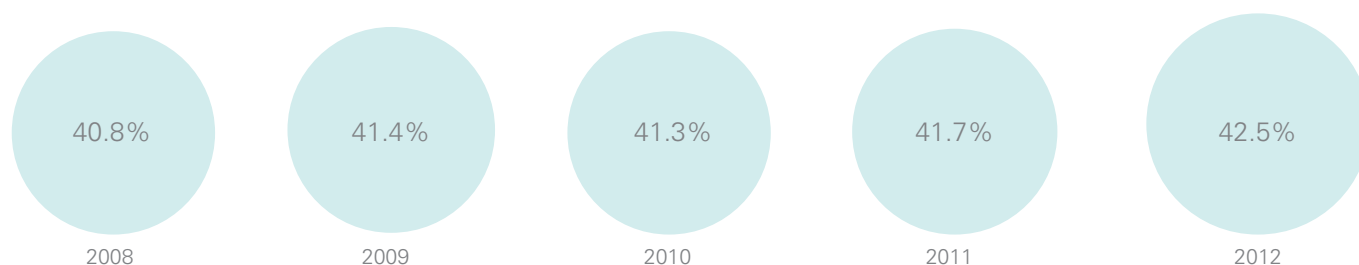
More information on this agenda to increase attainment can be found at <http://strategylabs.luminafoundation.org/higher-education-state-policy-agenda/>, including concrete action steps based on evidence and experience about what works in states.

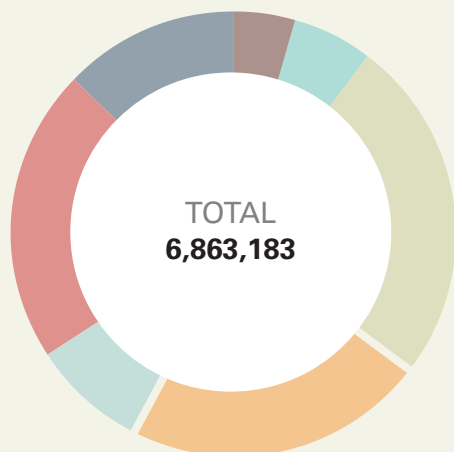
A wide range of entities need to take action to increase attainment, including policymakers, higher education leadership, faculty, business leaders and employers, community leaders, youth-serving organizations, and — perhaps most important of all — students and their families. Lumina believes states are the best place to engage and mobilize these individuals and organizations around a common goal and plan.

There is a lot of work to do, but the path forward has become clear. Now is the time for action in Illinois.

Tracking the trend

Percentage of the state's working-age population (25-64) with at least an associate degree





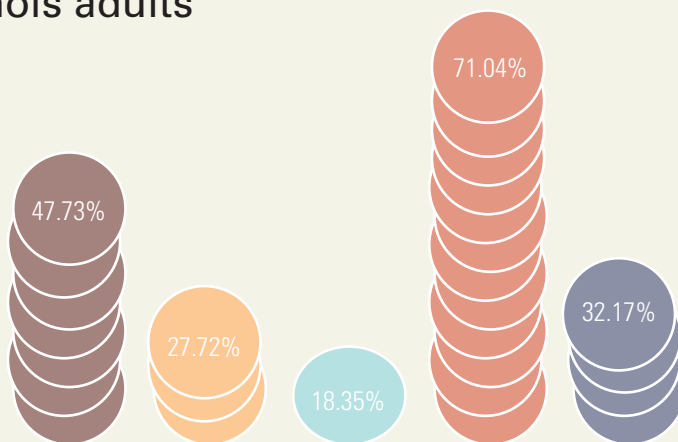
Levels of education for Illinois residents, ages 25-64

Less than ninth grade	307,194	4.48%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	416,639	6.07%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	1,711,321	24.93%
Some college, no degree	1,509,719	22.00%
Associate degree	576,024	8.39%
Bachelor's degree	1,483,173	21.61%
Graduate or professional degree	859,113	12.52%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey

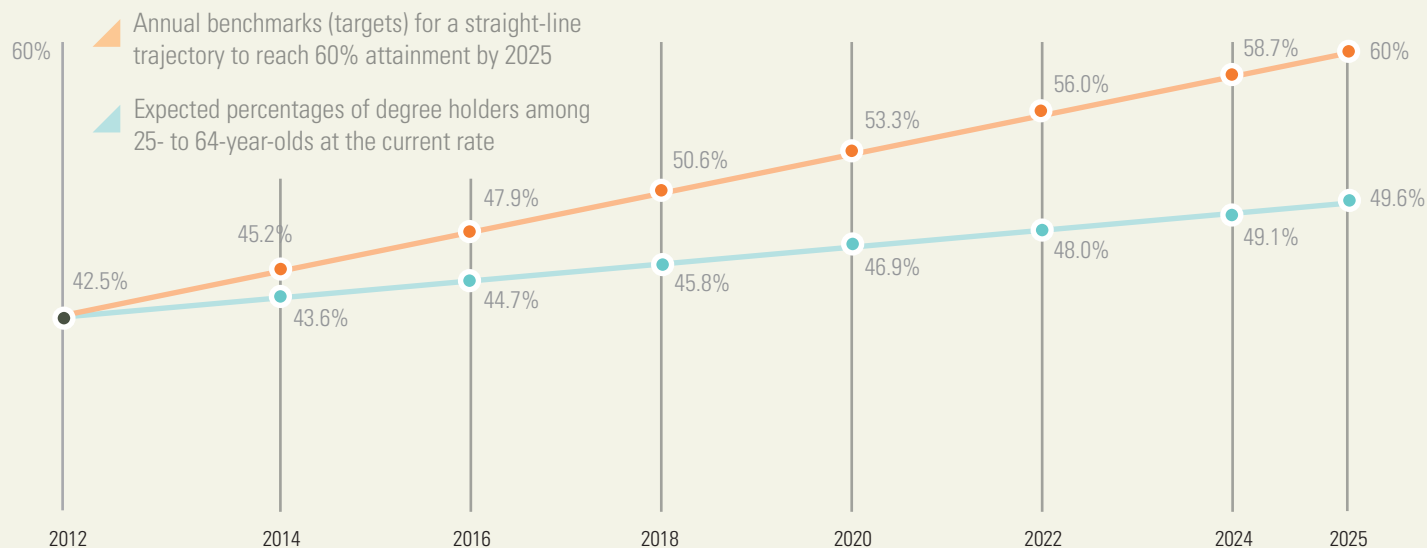
Degree-attainment rates among Illinois adults (ages 25-64), by population group

White	47.73%
Black	27.72%
Hispanic	18.35%
Asian	71.04%
Native American	32.17%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-12 American Community Survey PUMS File

The path to 60% degree attainment in Illinois



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010, 2011, and 2012 American Community Survey

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

Adams	34.43	Cumberland	30.85	Hardin	25.60	Lee	27.55	Morgan	30.79	Scott	24.97
Alexander	15.39	DeKalb	41.18	Henderson	27.83	Livingston	23.80	Moultrie	26.59	Shelby	29.99
Bond	34.89	De Witt	27.37	Henry	33.80	Logan	26.23	Ogle	31.39	Stark	29.99
Boone	30.11	Douglas	25.44	Iroquois	26.75	McDonough	45.12	Peoria	41.56	Stephenson	30.38
Brown	22.62	DuPage	56.60	Jackson	47.67	McHenry	43.39	Perry	29.78	Tazewell	38.42
Bureau	27.90	Edgar	27.66	Jasper	32.73	McLean	51.90	Piatt	39.04	Union	33.10
Calhoun	31.67	Edwards	33.98	Jefferson	28.41	Macon	32.62	Pike	21.60	Vermilion	26.09
Carroll	27.24	Effingham	38.07	Jersey	30.81	Macoupin	27.72	Pope	24.98	Wabash	38.61
Cass	16.94	Fayette	26.02	Jo Daviess	34.13	Madison	36.11	Pulaski	26.89	Warren	28.97
Champaign	53.68	Ford	31.48	Johnson	28.26	Marion	29.10	Putnam	29.03	Washington	37.57
Christian	22.89	Franklin	28.50	Kane	40.85	Marshall	29.88	Randolph	20.70	Wayne	29.83
Clark	33.44	Fulton	26.94	Kankakee	28.67	Mason	25.53	Richland	40.81	White	31.46
Clay	30.07	Gallatin	22.38	Kendall	44.82	Massac	30.36	Rock Island	34.26	Whiteside	27.96
Clinton	38.06	Greene	22.26	Knox	30.97	Menard	34.27	St. Clair	38.52	Will	42.93
Coles	38.44	Grundy	29.23	Lake	50.32	Mercer	28.07	Saline	29.24	Williamson	35.27
Cook	43.67	Hamilton	25.98	LaSalle	28.43	Monroe	40.85	Sangamon	44.15	Winnebago	30.49
Crawford	33.98	Hancock	30.65	Lawrence	23.03	Montgomery	23.03	Schuyler	27.76	Woodford	42.08

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-12 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina's outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.