

A STRONGER

NATION



through higher education



In Mississippi, the ten-year time horizon
brings Goal 2025 into sharp focus

A policy brief from Lumina Foundation

Mississippi

The need to increase 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 well understood in Mississippi. As in other states, the economy of Mississippi is increasingly reliant on skills and knowledge that can only be obtained through postsecondary education. More than ever, the state's residents need those college-level skills and knowledge to realize their own dreams and aspirations.

What can states do to increase postsecondary attainment by their residents? Lumina believes the first step is to set an explicit and quantifiable state goal to focus everyone's attention on the need to act to increase attainment. Goals allow states to develop stronger plans that ensure their policies and resources are aligned with state needs. Measuring and reporting progress toward goals helps assure that strong, accountable and consistent leadership can support a change agenda to improve outcomes for students.

In 31 states, the imperative to increase attainment has led to the development of official state goals. Mississippi is one of those states. However, it is one of 15 states that — despite having set a statewide attainment goal or being in the process of developing one — still have work to do to strengthen that goal. Specifically, these states need to make sure that their attainment goals adequately address the critical need to close gaps in attainment for underrepresented students, such as minority students, low-income students and working adults.

Mississippi needs to make more progress on increasing attainment. The most recent Census data (2013) show that 30.5 percent of the state's 1.5 million working-age adults (those between the ages of 25 and 64) hold a two- or four-year college degree. This is a decrease from last year's rate of 31.1 percent. The state's rate of higher education attainment is below the

national rate of 40 percent. Clearly, much more needs to be done for the state to meet the national goal of 60 percent.

A good leading indicator of where higher education attainment rates are heading is the rate among young adults, those between the ages of 25 and 34. In 2013, this rate in Mississippi was 31.1 percent, higher than that of the adult population as a whole but below the national rate of 41.6 percent.

The steps that Mississippi and other states can take to increase attainment are laid out in Lumina's state policy agenda. They are built around three priorities that states must pursue:

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.

The details of Lumina's state policy agenda can be found at <http://strategylabs.luminafoundation.org/higher-education-state-policy-agenda/>. This site also contains extensive information about the progress states are making on the attainment agenda as well as resources that states can draw on to reach their own attainment goals.

Many groups and individuals must work together to increase attainment. The imperative for Mississippi to increase attainment is clear, and many educators, policymakers, employers and community leaders are stepping up to take action. Most important, students and the public increasingly understand the need to improve the level of their own education to prepare themselves, their community, and their state for a future in which postsecondary knowledge and skills are the keys to success.

Tracking the trend

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

29.3%

2008

28.9%

2009

29.9%

2010

30.3%

2011

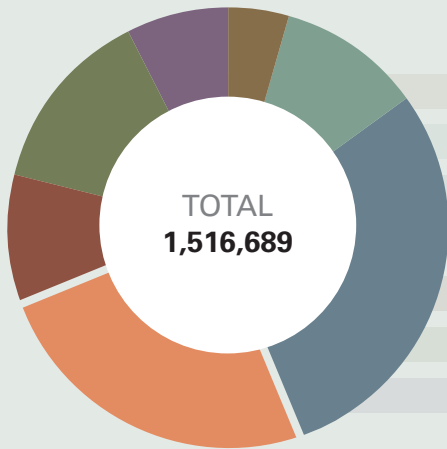
31.1%

2012

30.5%

2013

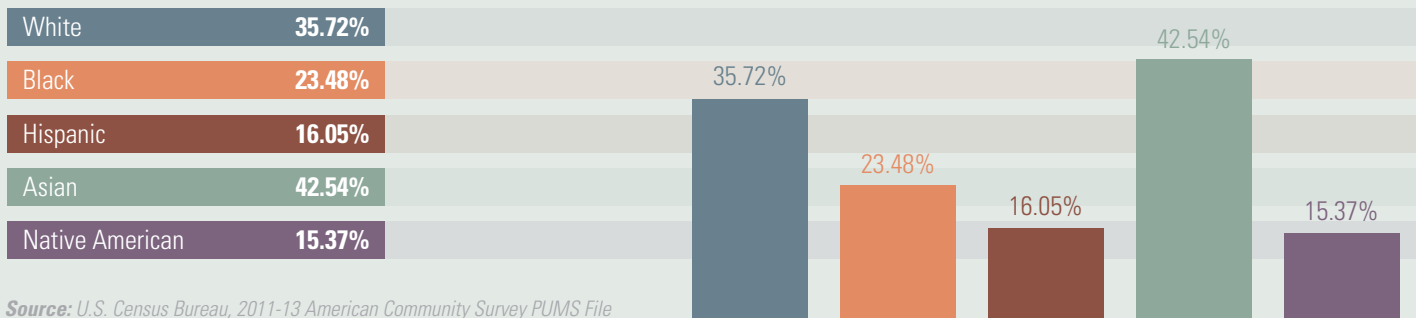
Levels of education for Mississippi residents, ages 25-64



Less than ninth grade	68,891	4.54%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	159,311	10.50%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	458,528	30.23%
Some college, no degree	367,029	24.20%
Associate degree	144,779	9.55%
Bachelor's degree	207,529	13.68%
Graduate or professional degree	110,622	7.29%

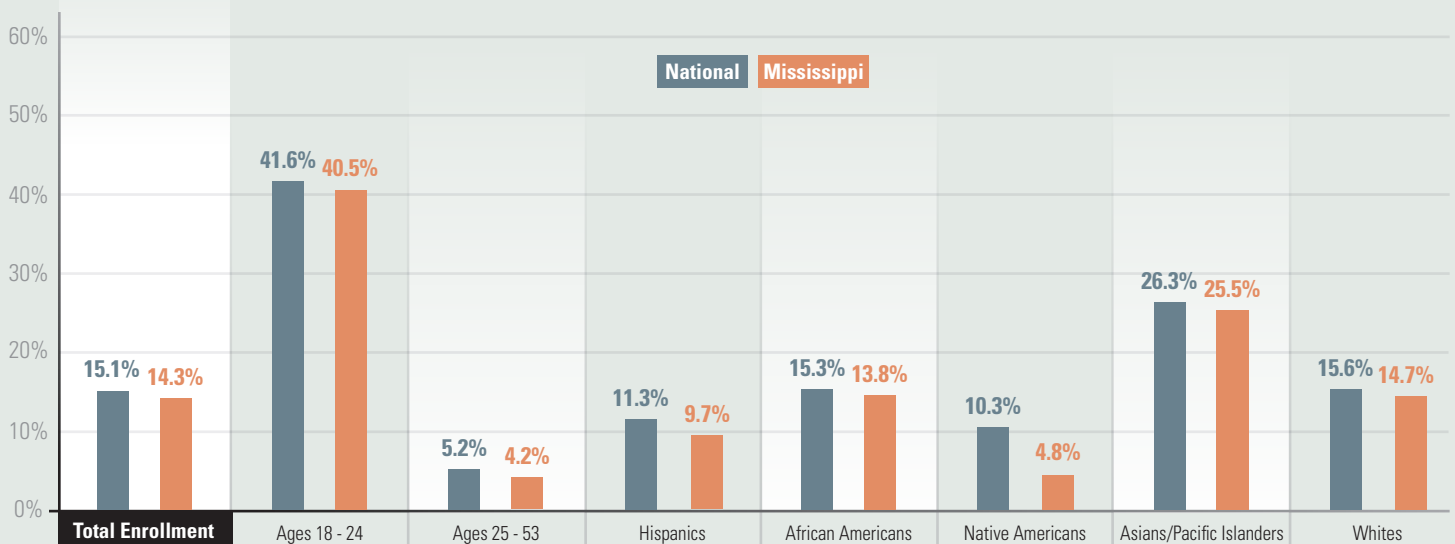
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey

Degree-attainment rates among Mississippi residents (ages 25-64), by population group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-13 American Community Survey PUMS File

College enrollment among Mississippi residents, ages 18-53



Note: These percentages reflect the enrollment of non-degree-holding students, ages 18-53, at public and private, two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

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

Adams	27.52	Copiah	23.65	Itawamba	25.45	Lincoln	30.67	Pike	24.03	Tishomingo	22.97
Alcorn	29.13	Covington	22.87	Jackson	31.56	Lowndes	31.85	Pontotoc	22.95	Tunica	26.64
Amite	18.78	DeSoto	33.37	Jasper	22.57	Madison	55.41	Prentiss	24.04	Union	23.86
Attala	26.50	Forrest	35.55	Jefferson	27.68	Marion	22.47	Quitman	23.48	Walthall	24.08
Benton	17.30	Franklin	20.32	Jefferson Davis	20.92	Marshall	15.97	Rankin	40.96	Warren	35.16
Bolivar	28.05	George	19.62	Jones	28.58	Monroe	22.83	Scott	16.91	Washington	26.39
Calhoun	16.30	Greene	16.28	Kemper	19.03	Montgomery	19.29	Sharkey	31.51	Wayne	16.34
Carroll	20.13	Grenada	24.16	Lafayette	46.53	Neshoba	24.60	Simpson	24.27	Webster	27.53
Chickasaw	15.19	Hancock	29.71	Lamar	44.41	Newton	28.21	Smith	21.89	Wilkinson	17.56
Choctaw	23.83	Harrison	31.60	Lauderdale	30.35	Noxubee	20.31	Stone	26.06	Winston	28.13
Claiborne	28.06	Hinds	35.96	Lawrence	22.07	Oktibbeha	51.14	Sunflower	18.70	Yalobusha	22.55
Clarke	20.76	Holmes	19.06	Leake	20.86	Panola	25.35	Tallahatchie	18.64	Yazoo	18.21
Clay	25.69	Humphreys	16.36	Lee	32.61	Pearl River	25.78	Tate	26.38		
Coahoma	27.59	Issaquena	7.77	Leflore	26.00	Perry	20.72	Tippah	19.67		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-13 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.