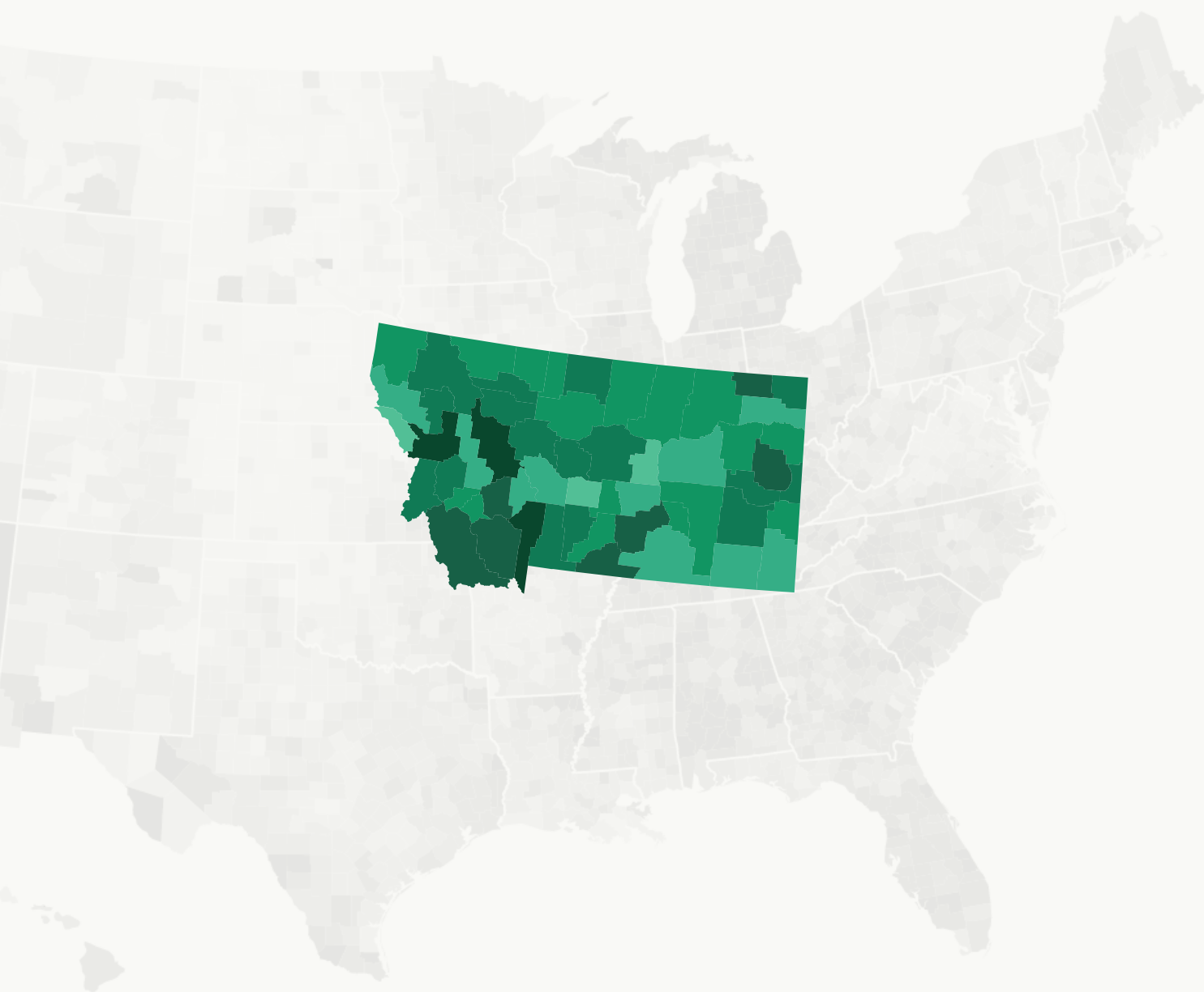


A STRONGER **MONTANA** *through* HIGHER EDUCATION



# Efforts to boost college attainment in Montana are key to achieving Goal 2025

In Montana, 39.2 percent of the state's 526,000 working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold a two- or four-year college degree, according to 2011 Census data. Montana's attainment rate is falling slightly; last year, the rate was 40 percent. Montana's rate of higher education attainment is roughly on par with the national average. This year, the percentage of Americans between age 25 and 64 who hold a two- or four-year degree is 38.7 percent. This rate is rising, but only slowly. In 2010, the rate was 38.3 percent; in 2009, it was 38.1.

Also, there is reason for concern about the educational trends in Montana. The best indicator of where attainment rates are heading is the rate among young adults — those between the ages of 25 and 34. In Montana, 2011 Census data put the attainment rate of these young adults at 40 percent, only a bit higher than that of the adult population as a whole, and a bit below the national rate of 40.1 percent.

Montana is making some progress, but it has a long way to go. In the state and nationally, college attainment rates must increase more rapidly to reach 60 percent by 2025. If the current rate of degree production continues, about 46 percent of Montana's adult population — 233,000 people — will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent attainment among its projected 2025 population of 502,693, Montana will need to add more than 68,000 degrees to that total.

By now, most people understand why increasing attainment is so important — both to themselves and their communities. Experts from the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University say that, by 2018, 96,000 of the expected 155,000 job

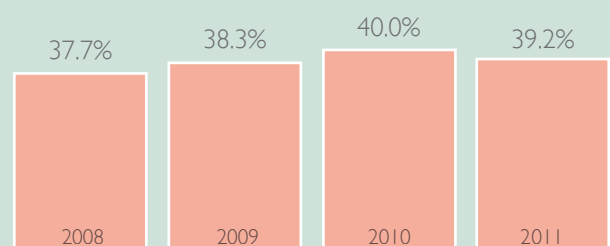
vacancies in Montana will require postsecondary credentials. Indeed, 62 percent of all Montana jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018.

Clearly, the state's economic future depends on producing more college graduates — and an excellent place to begin is with those who have attended college but not earned a credential. In 2011, more than 135,000 Montana adults — 25.7 percent of the adult population — had gone to college but lacked either a two- or four-year degree. Encouraging and helping these adults to complete degrees would go a long way toward helping Montana reach the 60 percent goal.

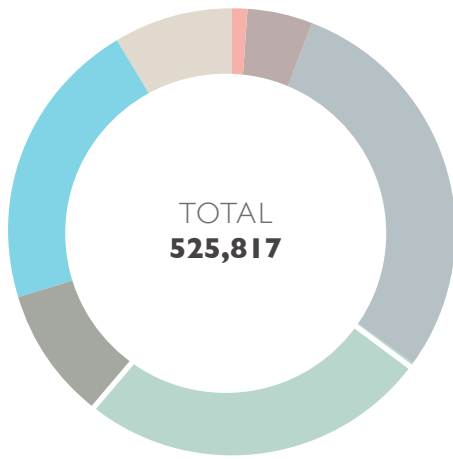
To increase attainment, states must work systematically to close achievement gaps based on race, income, geography and other factors. As in past years, this report lists an attainment rate for each Montana county. The data show that increasing attainment is a particular challenge in rural counties, so assuring that all communities have access to high-quality higher education is essential. Montana must also 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 Montana's economy and ensure a bright future for the state.

## Tracking the trend

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



## Levels of education for Montana adults (ages 25-64)

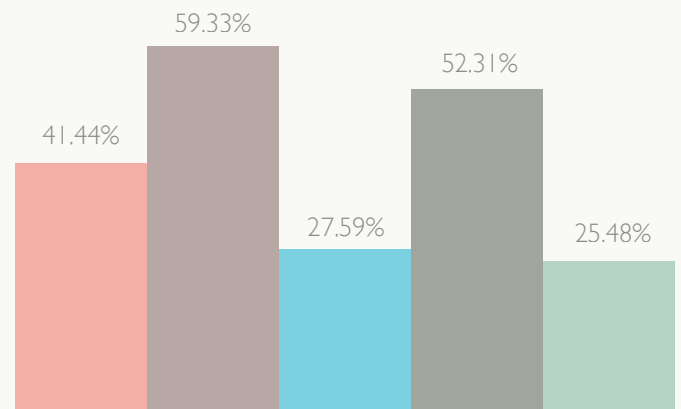


Less than ninth grade	6,227	<b>1.18%</b>
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	25,545	<b>4.86%</b>
High school graduate (including equivalency)	153,079	<b>29.11%</b>
Some college, no degree	135,033	<b>25.68%</b>
Associate degree	50,472	<b>9.60%</b>
Bachelor's degree	111,263	<b>21.16%</b>
Graduate or professional degree	44,198	<b>8.41%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

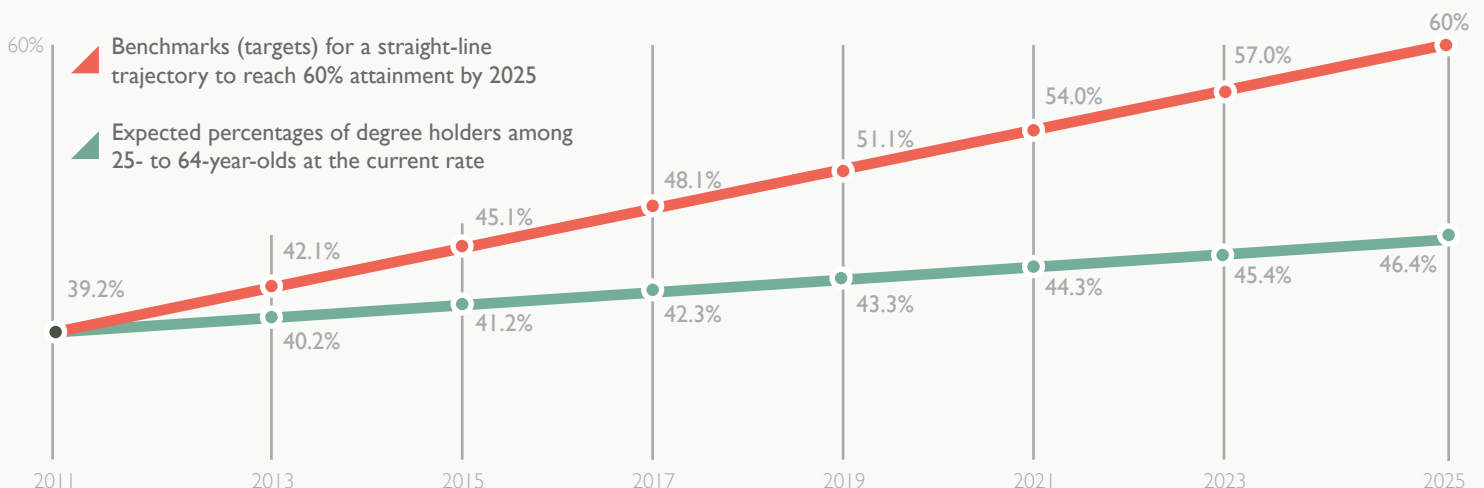
## Degree-attainment rates among Montana adults (ages 25-64), by population group

White	<b>41.44%</b>
Black	<b>59.33%</b>
Hispanic	<b>27.59%</b>
Asian	<b>52.31%</b>
Native American	<b>25.48%</b>



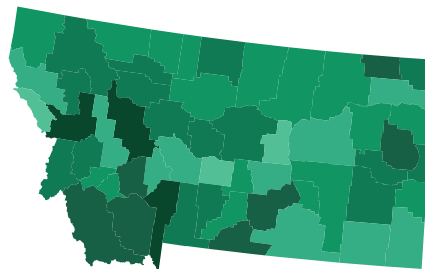
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-11 American Community Survey PUMS File

## The path to 60% degree attainment in Montana



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

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



Beaverhead	41.06	Dawson	40.72	Hill	34.92	Mineral	19.25	Ravalli	33.80	Toole	28.43
Big Horn	22.41	Deer Lodge	29.45	Jefferson	42.99	Missoula	47.87	Richland	28.68	Treasure	31.65
Blaine	28.82	Fallon	27.90	Judith Basin	36.46	Musselshell	23.09	Roosevelt	26.31	Valley	30.24
Broadwater	25.67	Fergus	36.61	Lake	34.01	Park	37.36	Rosebud	28.81	Wheatland	22.09
Carbon	40.76	Flathead	37.50	Lewis and Clark	47.91	Petroleum	17.67	Sanders	23.86	Wibaux	36.94
Carter	23.90	Gallatin	53.48	Liberty	28.79	Phillips	30.16	Sheridan	34.34	Yellowstone	39.86
Cascade	35.24	Garfield	26.73	Lincoln	29.15	Pondera	34.96	Silver Bow	33.18		
Chouteau	33.21	Glacier	31.48	McCone	32.80	Powder River	26.16	Stillwater	31.29		
Custer	34.91	Golden Valley	31.88	Madison	40.90	Powell	26.96	Sweet Grass	33.77		
Daniels	39.46	Granite	38.29	Meagher	23.55	Prairie	37.43	Teton	37.73		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-11 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates