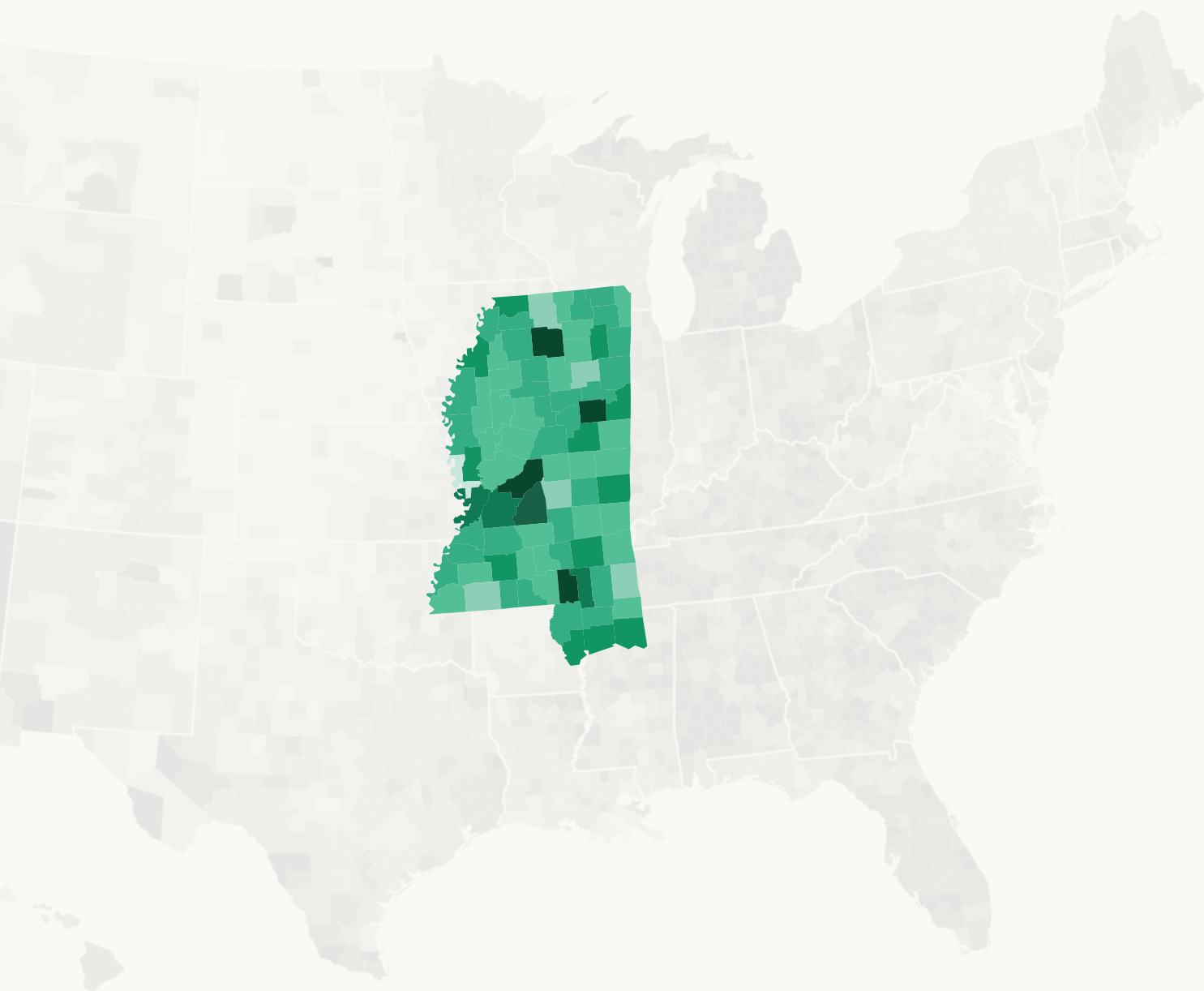


A STRONGER **MISSISSIPPI** *through* HIGHER EDUCATION



Efforts to boost college attainment in Mississippi are key to achieving Goal 2025

In Mississippi, 30.3 percent of the state's 1.5 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold a two- or four-year college degree, according to 2011 Census data. Mississippi's attainment rate is increasing slowly; last year, the rate was 29.9 percent. Also, Mississippi's rate of higher education attainment is well below 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.

There is, however, some reason for optimism. The best indicator of where attainment rates are heading is the attainment rate of young adults — those between the ages of 25 and 34. In Mississippi, 2011 Census data put the attainment rate of these young adults at 31.5 percent, higher than that of the adult population as a whole. This suggests that young people in Mississippi are getting the message that higher education is important to their future. However, Mississippi's attainment rate among young adults is well below the national rate of 40.1 percent.

Mississippi 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 38 percent of Mississippi's adult population — 558,000 people — will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent attainment among its projected 2025 population of 1,500,207, Mississippi will need to add more than 342,000 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, 214,000 of the expected 398,000

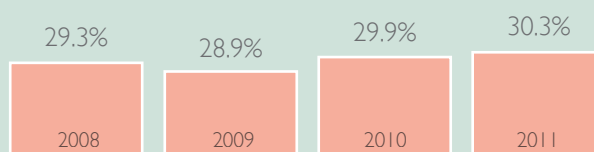
job vacancies in Mississippi will require postsecondary credentials. Indeed, 54 percent of all Mississippi jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018.

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 367,000 Mississippi adults — 24.1 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 Mississippi reach the 60 percent goal.

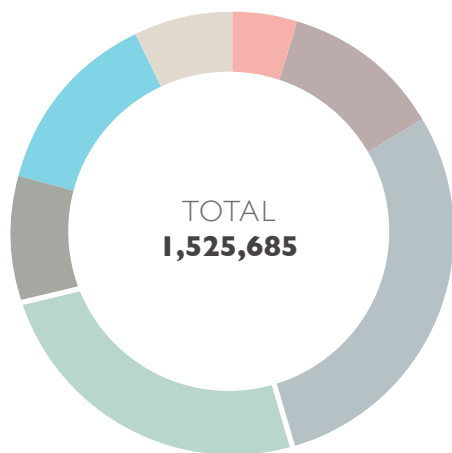
To increase attainment, states must work systematically to close achievement gaps based on race, income, geography and other factors. As in past years, this report lists an attainment rate for each Mississippi county. The data show that increasing attainment is a particular challenge in rural counties, so assuring that all communities have access to high-quality higher education is essential. Mississippi 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 Mississippi'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 Mississippi adults (ages 25-64)

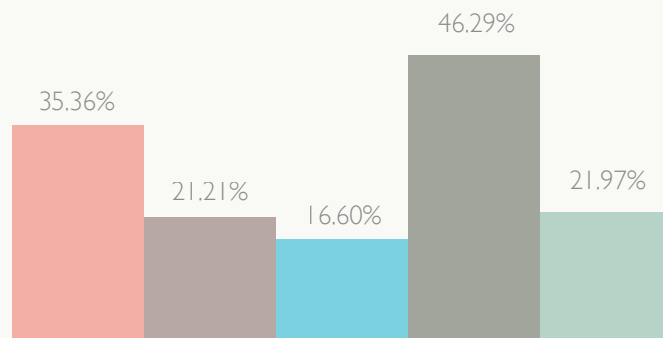


Less than ninth grade	72,538	4.75%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	180,282	11.82%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	443,936	29.10%
Some college, no degree	367,037	24.06%
Associate degree	144,020	9.44%
Bachelor's degree	208,134	13.64%
Graduate or professional degree	109,738	7.19%

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

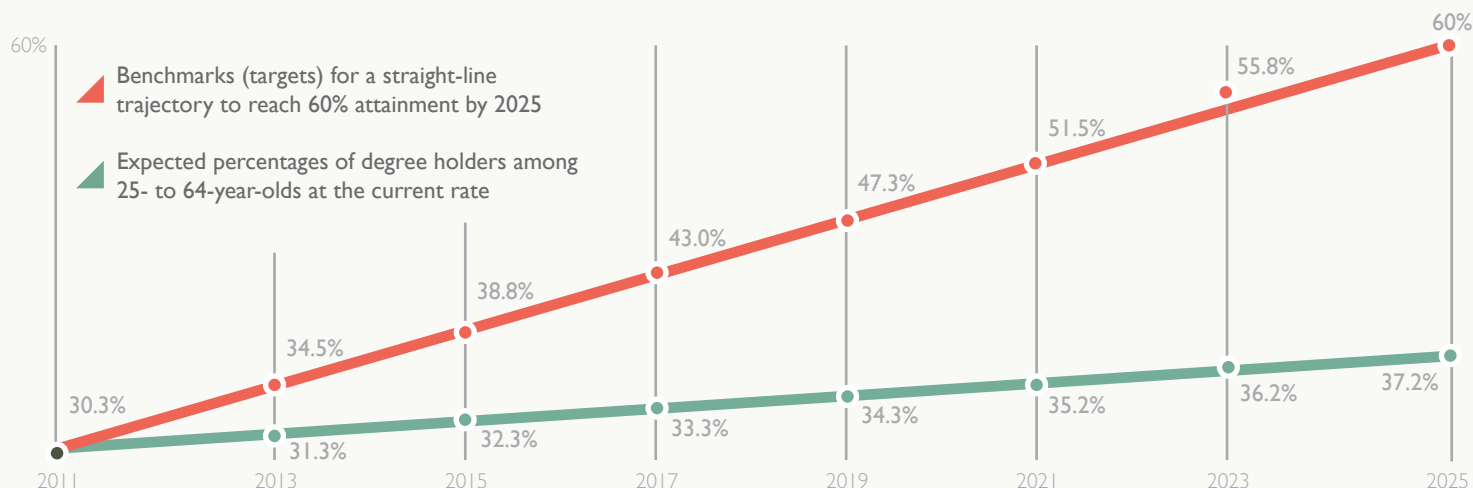
Degree-attainment rates among Mississippi adults (ages 25-64), by population group

White	35.36%
Black	21.21%
Hispanic	16.60%
Asian	46.29%
Native American	21.97%



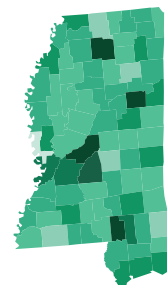
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-11 American Community Survey PUMS File

The path to 60% degree attainment in Mississippi



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

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



Adams	26.97	Copiah	25.92	Itawamba	23.07	Lincoln	29.09	Pike	25.25	Tishomingo	21.70
Alcorn	26.73	Covington	24.34	Jackson	29.46	Lowndes	29.28	Pontotoc	21.08	Tunica	26.09
Amite	16.15	DeSoto	32.79	Jasper	20.34	Madison	54.55	Prentiss	24.67	Union	21.74
Attala	23.79	Forrest	35.14	Jefferson	22.31	Marion	21.23	Quitman	19.86	Walthall	24.93
Benton	18.78	Franklin	20.89	Jefferson Davis	20.13	Marshall	16.23	Rankin	39.69	Warren	33.90
Bolivar	26.99	George	19.05	Jones	28.14	Monroe	22.38	Scott	15.78	Washington	25.43
Calhoun	17.43	Greene	15.17	Kemper	19.38	Montgomery	22.64	Sharkey	30.80	Wayne	18.99
Carroll	20.85	Grenada	26.75	Lafayette	49.02	Neshoba	22.07	Simpson	20.83	Webster	22.73
Chickasaw	16.13	Hancock	32.19	Lamar	45.26	Newton	26.14	Smith	22.43	Wilkinson	16.89
Choctaw	22.91	Harrison	30.72	Lauderdale	28.80	Noxubee	19.99	Stone	25.60	Winston	28.64
Claiborne	24.41	Hinds	36.97	Lawrence	21.93	Oktibbeha	49.02	Sunflower	19.31	Yalobusha	22.88
Clarke	17.75	Holmes	17.52	Leake	19.67	Panola	25.03	Tallahatchie	18.07	Yazoo	18.78
Clay	25.20	Humphreys	17.08	Lee	31.80	Pearl River	26.66	Tate	26.72		
Coahoma	28.76	Issaquena	6.05	Leflore	20.69	Perry	22.49	Tippah	22.40		

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