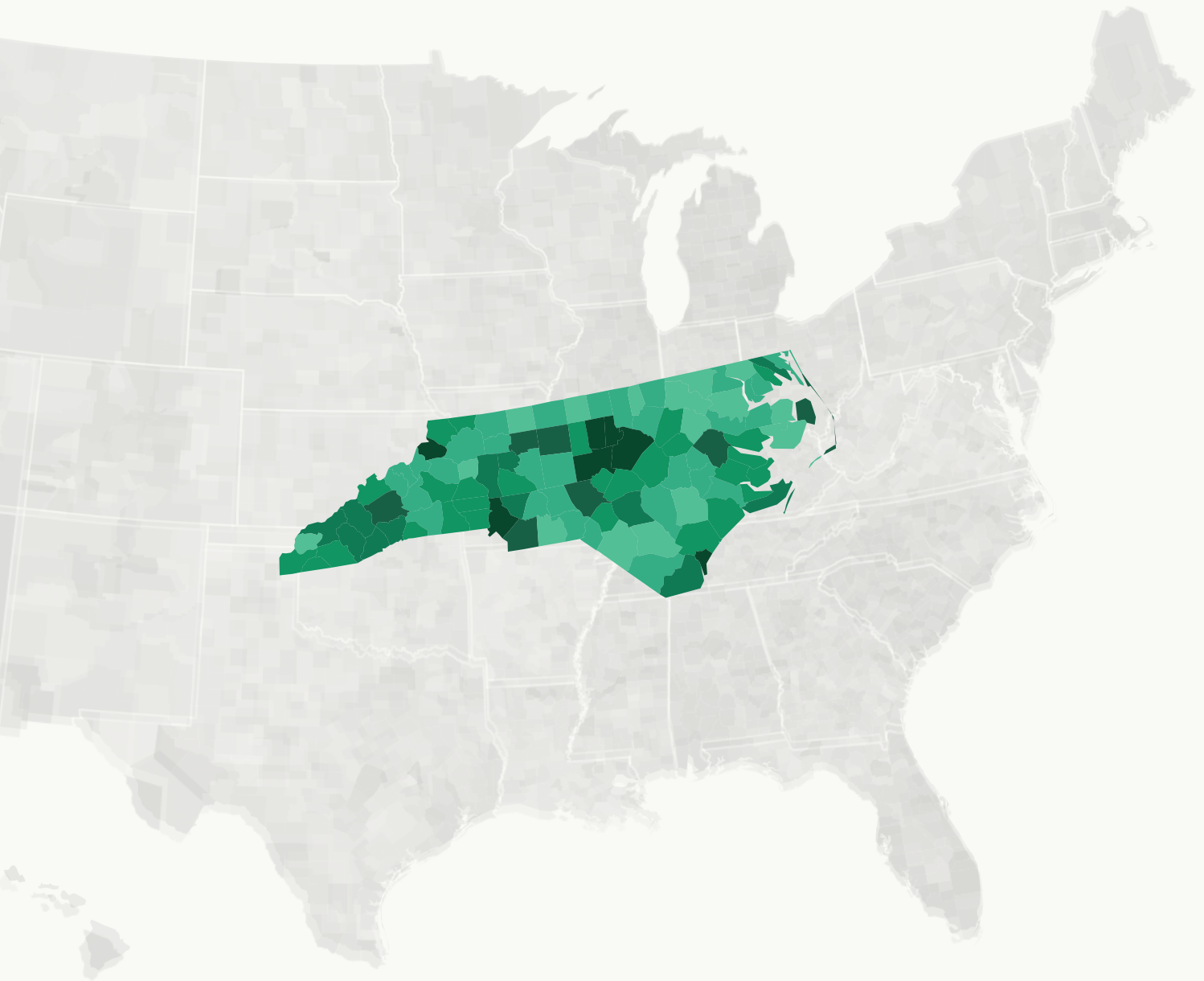


A STRONGER **NORTH CAROLINA** *through* HIGHER EDUCATION



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

In North Carolina, 38.2 percent of the state's 5.1 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold a two- or four-year college degree, according to 2011 Census data. North Carolina's attainment rate is increasing slowly; last year, the rate was 37.6 percent. North Carolina's rate of higher education attainment is slightly 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.

Also, there is reason for concern about the educational trends in North Carolina. The best indicator of where attainment rates are heading is the rate among young adults — those between the ages of 25 and 34. In North Carolina, 2011 Census data put the attainment rate of these young adults at 38.6 percent— only a bit higher than that of the adult population as a whole, and below the national rate of 40.1 percent.

Clearly, North Carolina has a long way to go. In this state and nationally, college attainment rates must increase rapidly to reach 60 percent by 2025. If the current rate of degree production continues, about 46 percent of North Carolina's adult population — 2.6 million people — will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent attainment among its projected 2025 population of 5,567,866, North Carolina will need to add more than 768,000 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, 833,000 of the expected 1.4 million

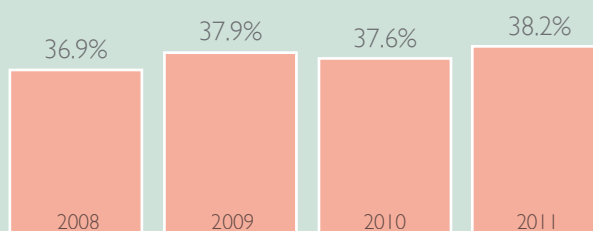
job vacancies in North Carolina will require postsecondary credentials. Indeed, 59 percent of all North Carolina jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018.

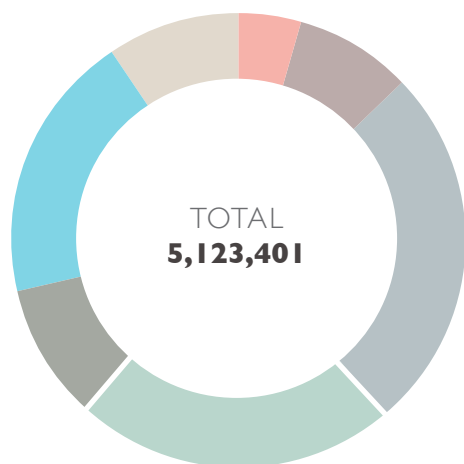
Clearly, the state's economic future depends on producing more college graduates — and an excellent place to begin is with those who have attended college but not earned a credential. In 2011, nearly 1.2 million North Carolina adults — 22.7 percent of the adult population — had gone to college but lacked either a two- or four-year degree. Encouraging and helping these adults to complete degrees would go a long way toward helping North Carolina 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 North Carolina 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. North Carolina 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 North Carolina'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





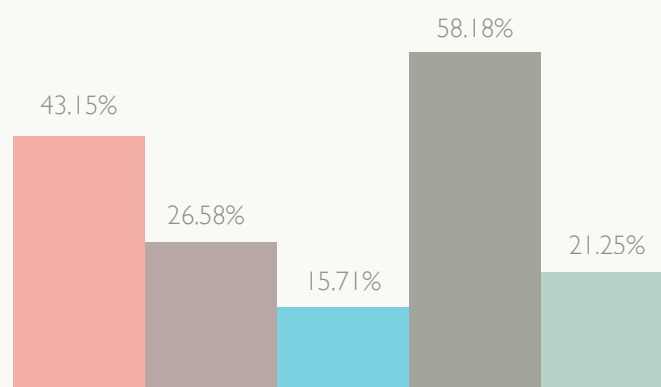
## Levels of education for North Carolina adults (ages 25-64)

Less than ninth grade	228,207	<b>4.45%</b>
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	434,372	<b>8.48%</b>
High school graduate (including equivalency)	1,339,297	<b>26.14%</b>
Some college, no degree	1,162,281	<b>22.69%</b>
Associate degree	498,121	<b>9.72%</b>
Bachelor's degree	981,908	<b>19.17%</b>
Graduate or professional degree	479,215	<b>9.35%</b>

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

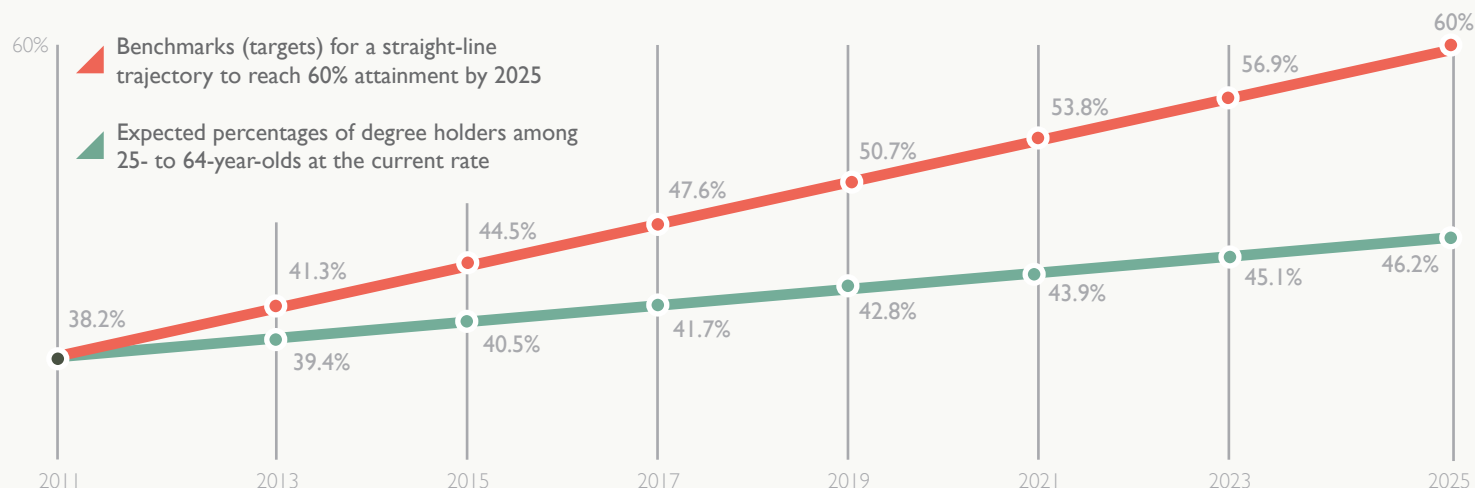
## Degree-attainment rates among North Carolina adults (ages 25-64), by population group

White	<b>43.15%</b>
Black	<b>26.58%</b>
Hispanic	<b>15.71%</b>
Asian	<b>58.18%</b>
Native American	<b>21.25%</b>



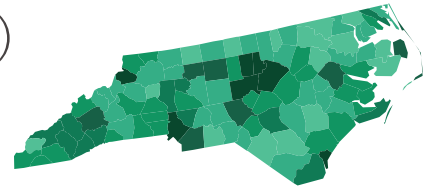
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-11 American Community Survey PUMS File

## The path to 60% degree attainment in North Carolina



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

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



Alamance	32.53	Catawba	31.00	Franklin	26.43	Jones	24.77	Pamlico	32.71	Surry	27.06
Alexander	21.67	Chatham	44.52	Gaston	29.31	Lee	30.36	Pasquotank	30.23	Swain	34.17
Alleghany	27.89	Cherokee	28.61	Gates	21.96	Lenoir	26.08	Pender	30.32	Transylvania	36.91
Anson	18.47	Chowan	25.17	Graham	20.32	Lincoln	30.31	Perquimans	25.96	Tyrrell	17.28
Ashe	28.13	Clay	29.66	Granville	25.88	McDowell	27.33	Person	26.94	Union	41.03
Avery	26.97	Cleveland	28.05	Greene	22.83	Macon	27.95	Pitt	40.22	Vance	19.48
Beaufort	30.15	Columbus	23.49	Guilford	42.35	Madison	28.04	Polk	32.33	Wake	58.54
Bertie	19.42	Craven	32.15	Halifax	20.48	Martin	25.85	Randolph	24.26	Warren	24.13
Bladen	20.02	Cumberland	34.25	Harnett	29.51	Mecklenburg	50.41	Richmond	22.42	Washington	22.29
Brunswick	33.44	Currituck	25.16	Haywood	35.44	Mitchell	24.19	Robeson	19.77	Watauga	49.72
Buncombe	43.60	Dare	39.57	Henderson	37.73	Montgomery	25.31	Rockingham	23.03	Wayne	27.59
Burke	28.38	Davidson	27.57	Hertford	25.66	Moore	42.50	Rowan	27.90	Wilkes	22.81
Cabarrus	37.57	Davie	34.92	Hoke	29.53	Nash	29.01	Rutherford	27.65	Wilson	28.95
Caldwell	25.05	Duplin	20.88	Hyde	16.81	New Hanover	48.56	Sampson	22.66	Yadkin	25.84
Camden	34.17	Durham	53.20	Iredell	35.09	Northampton	20.03	Scotland	22.76	Yancey	26.89
Carteret	34.53	Edgecombe	20.08	Jackson	37.45	Onslow	29.44	Stanly	26.78		
Caswell	18.18	Forsyth	41.51	Johnston	32.31	Orange	62.59	Stokes	19.60		

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