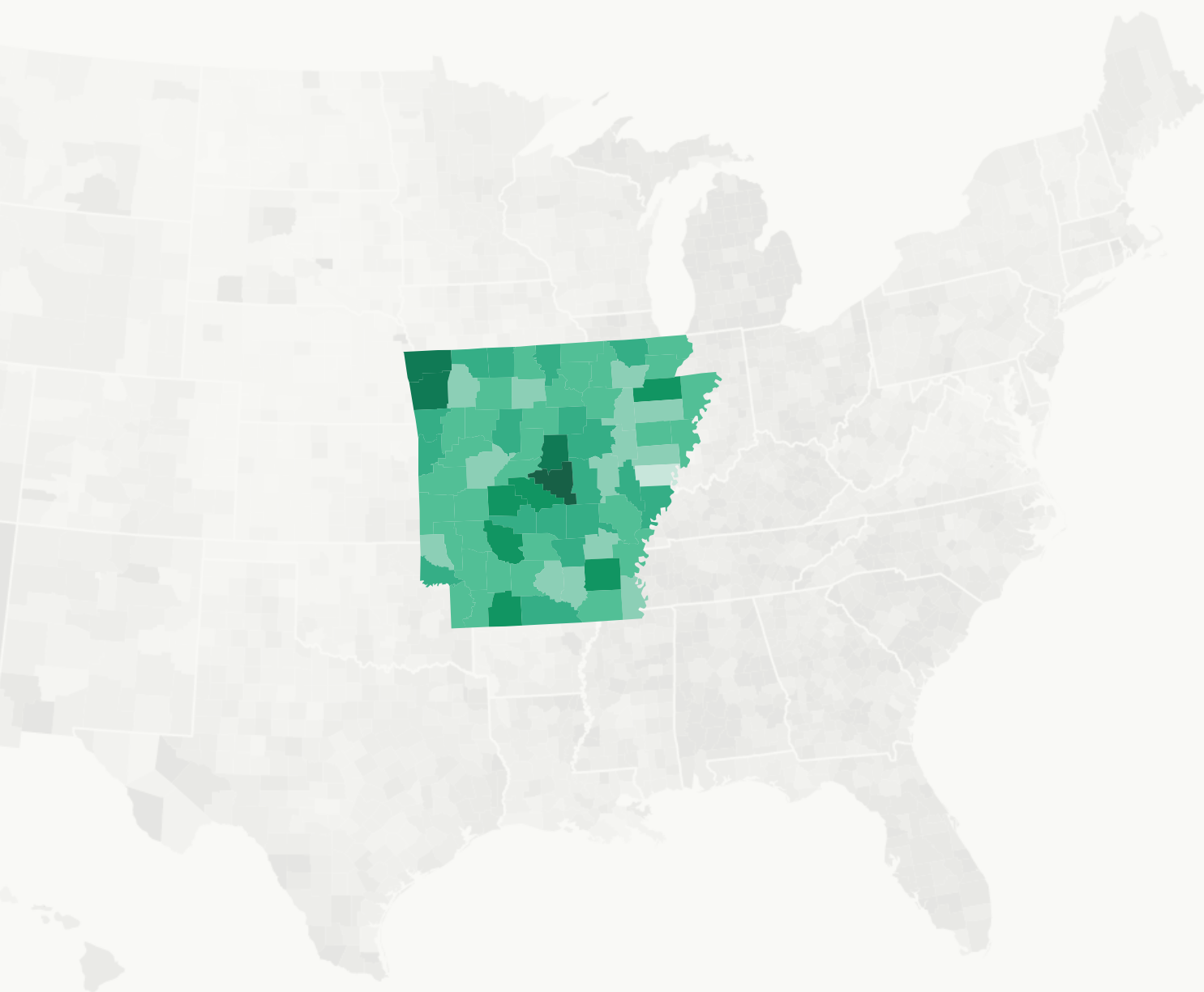


A STRONGER **ARKANSAS** *through* HIGHER EDUCATION



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

In Arkansas, 28.2 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. Arkansas' attainment rate is increasing slowly; last year, the rate was 27.9 percent. Also, Arkansas' 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 also rising, but again, 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 rate among young adults — those between the ages of 25 and 34. In Arkansas, 2011 Census data put the attainment rate of these young adults at 30 percent, higher than that of the adult population as a whole. This suggests that young people in Arkansas are getting the message that higher education is important to their future. However, Arkansas' attainment rate among young adults is still well below the national rate of 40.1 percent.

Arkansas is making some progress, but it has a long way to go. In Arkansas and nationally, college attainment rates must increase more rapidly to reach 60 percent by 2025. If the current rate of degree production continues, about 35 percent of Arkansas' adult population — roughly 529,000 people — will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent attainment among its projected 2025 population of 1,518,793, Arkansas will need to add nearly 383,000 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, 217,000 of the expected 419,000 job

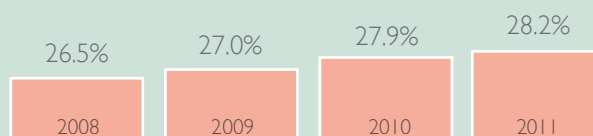
vacancies in Arkansas will require postsecondary credentials. Indeed, 52 percent of all Arkansas jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018.

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 351,000 Arkansas adults — 23.2 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 Arkansas reach the 60 percent goal.

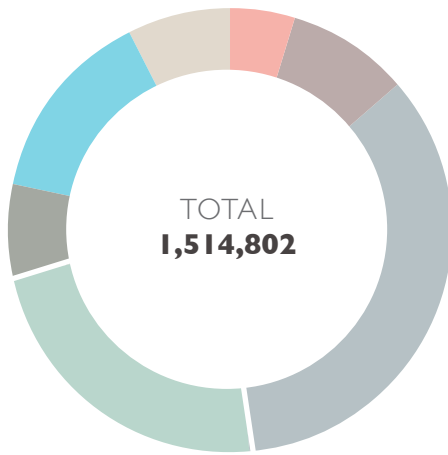
To increase attainment, states must work systematically to close achievement gaps based on race, income, geography and other factors. As in past years, this report lists an attainment rate for each Arkansas county. The data show that increasing attainment is a particular challenge in rural counties,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

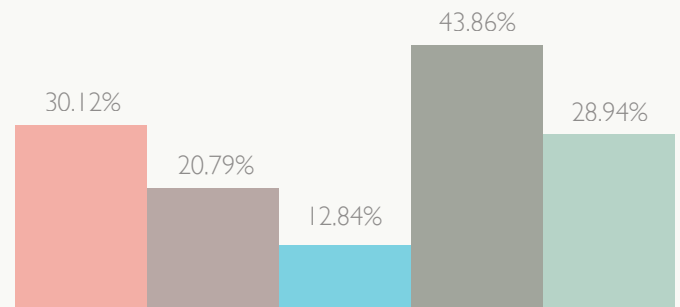


Less than ninth grade	72,849	4.81%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	135,585	8.95%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	528,075	34.86%
Some college, no degree	351,411	23.20%
Associate degree	100,128	6.61%
Bachelor's degree	217,035	14.33%
Graduate or professional degree	109,719	7.24%

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

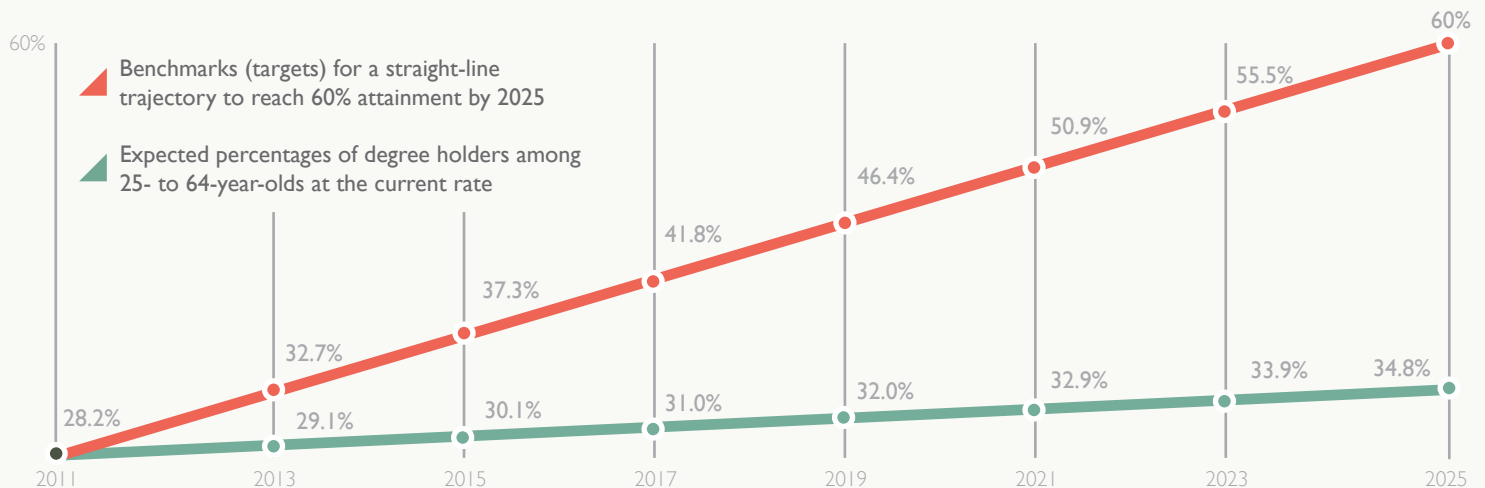
Degree-attainment rates among Arkansas adults (ages 25-64), by population group

White	30.12%
Black	20.79%
Hispanic	12.84%
Asian	43.86%
Native American	28.94%



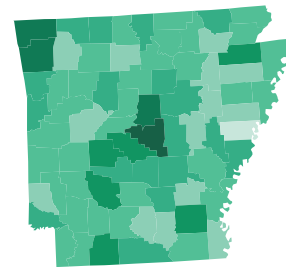
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-11 American Community Survey PUMS File

The path to 60% degree attainment in Arkansas



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

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



Arkansas	22.03	Columbia	31.70	Grant	23.92	Lincoln	13.25	Perry	16.81	Sebastian	27.69
Ashley	17.81	Conway	20.38	Greene	17.61	Little River	22.40	Phillips	25.32	Sevier	15.25
Baxter	24.21	Craighead	30.70	Hempstead	19.58	Logan	18.87	Pike	20.06	Sharp	19.68
Benton	35.63	Crawford	23.88	Hot Spring	23.35	Lonoke	27.36	Poinsett	15.06	Stone	20.95
Boone	23.03	Crittenden	19.45	Howard	17.18	Madison	16.29	Polk	19.70	Union	26.75
Bradley	15.93	Cross	20.23	Independence	20.41	Marion	21.32	Pope	27.57	Van Buren	19.41
Calhoun	15.31	Dallas	19.49	Izard	18.65	Miller	18.99	Prairie	15.69	Washington	34.26
Carroll	23.13	Desha	20.10	Jackson	15.00	Mississippi	19.19	Pulaski	40.01	White	26.57
Chicot	16.38	Drew	28.43	Jefferson	23.29	Monroe	26.21	Randolph	22.96	Woodruff	14.30
Clark	31.93	Faulkner	34.62	Johnson	20.95	Montgomery	21.96	St. Francis	16.30	Yell	13.92
Clay	17.32	Franklin	19.03	Lafayette	18.34	Nevada	19.77	Saline	31.41		
Cleburne	24.09	Fulton	19.09	Lawrence	16.33	Newton	19.91	Scott	17.67		
Cleveland	22.93	Garland	29.20	Lee	9.73	Ouachita	21.08	Searcy	16.21		

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