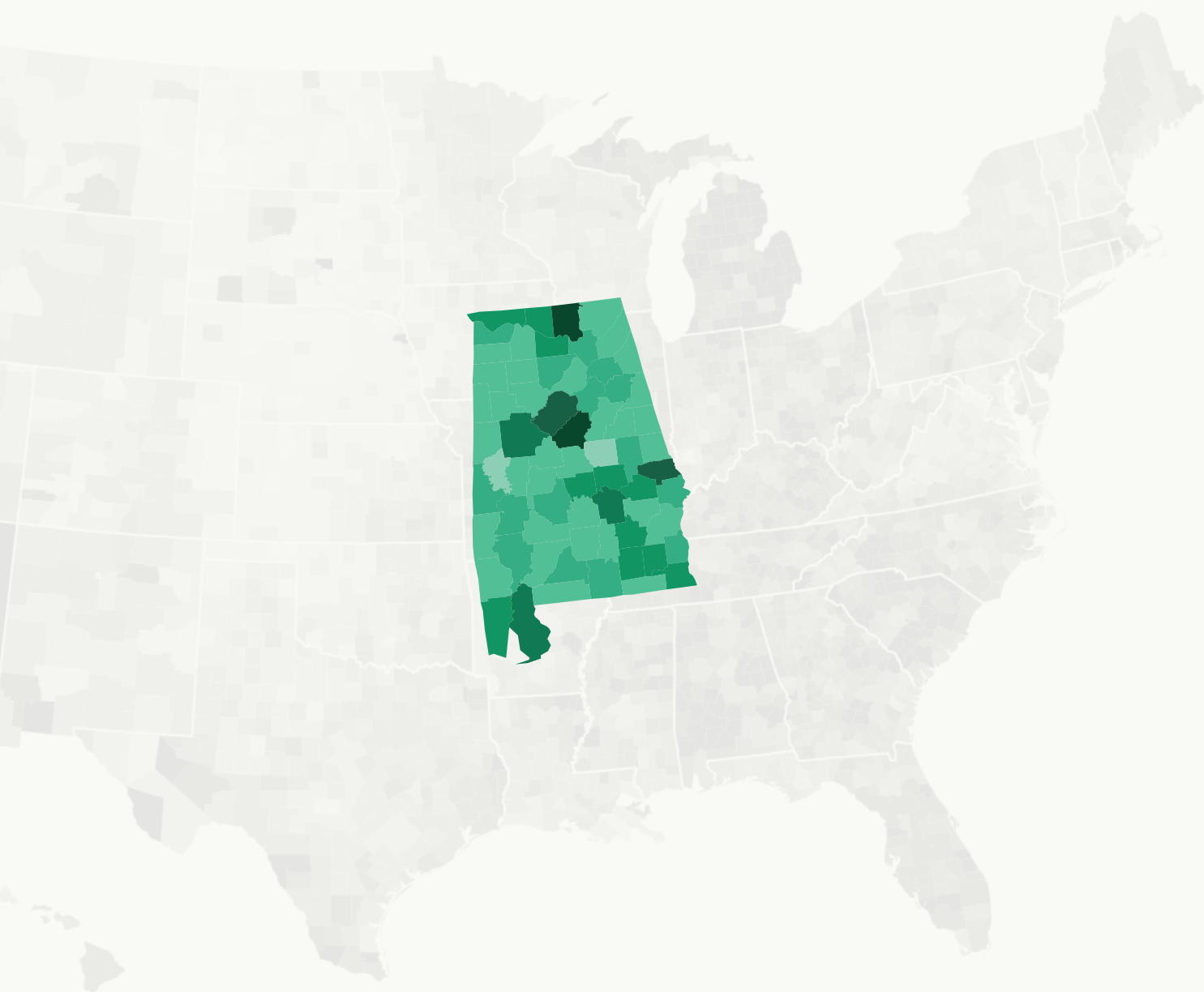


A STRONGER **ALABAMA** *through* HIGHER EDUCATION



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

In Alabama, 31.9 percent of the state's 2.5 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold a two- or four-year college degree, according to 2011 Census data. Alabama's attainment rate is essentially flat; last year, the rate was 31.5 percent. Also, Alabama'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 Alabama, 2011 Census data put the attainment rate of these young adults at 33.4 percent, higher than that of the adult population as a whole. This suggests that young people in Alabama are getting the message that higher education is important to their future. However, Alabama's attainment rate among young adults is still well below the national rate of 40.1 percent.

Alabama is making some progress, but it has a long way to go. In Alabama 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 Alabama's adult population — 888,000 people — will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent attainment among its projected 2025 population of 2,338,088, Alabama will need to add more than 514,000 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, 373,000 of the expected 680,000 job

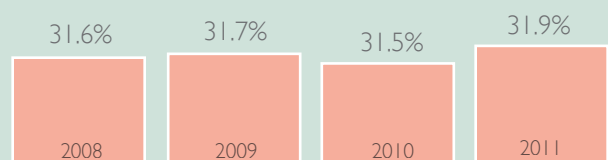
vacancies in Alabama will require postsecondary credentials. Indeed, 55 percent of all Alabama jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018.

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 590,000 Alabama adults — 23.4 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 Alabama reach the 60 percent goal.

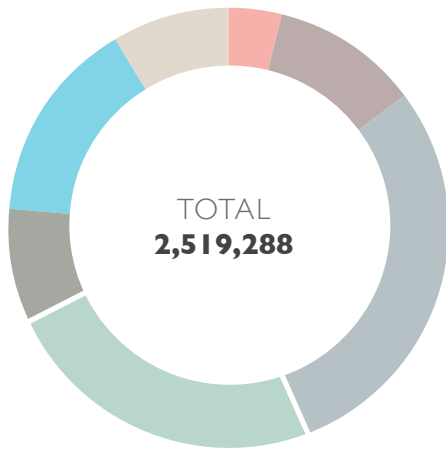
To increase attainment, states must work systematically to close achievement gaps based on race, income, geography and other factors. As in past years, this report lists an attainment rate for each Alabama county. The data show that increasing attainment is a particular challenge in rural counties, so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

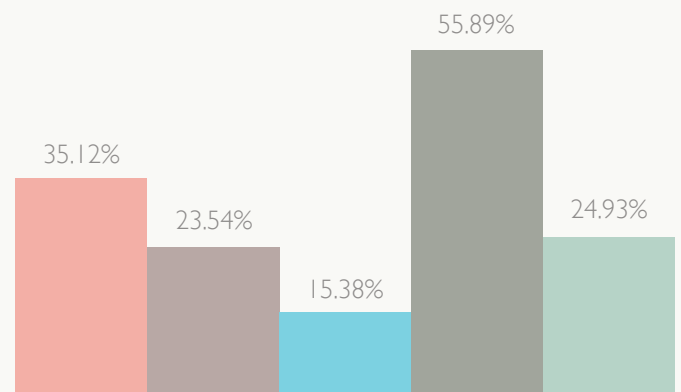


Less than ninth grade	102,359	<b>4.06%</b>
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	270,537	<b>10.74%</b>
High school graduate (including equivalency)	753,606	<b>29.91%</b>
Some college, no degree	588,997	<b>23.38%</b>
Associate degree	209,930	<b>8.33%</b>
Bachelor's degree	379,422	<b>15.06%</b>
Graduate or professional degree	214,437	<b>8.51%</b>

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

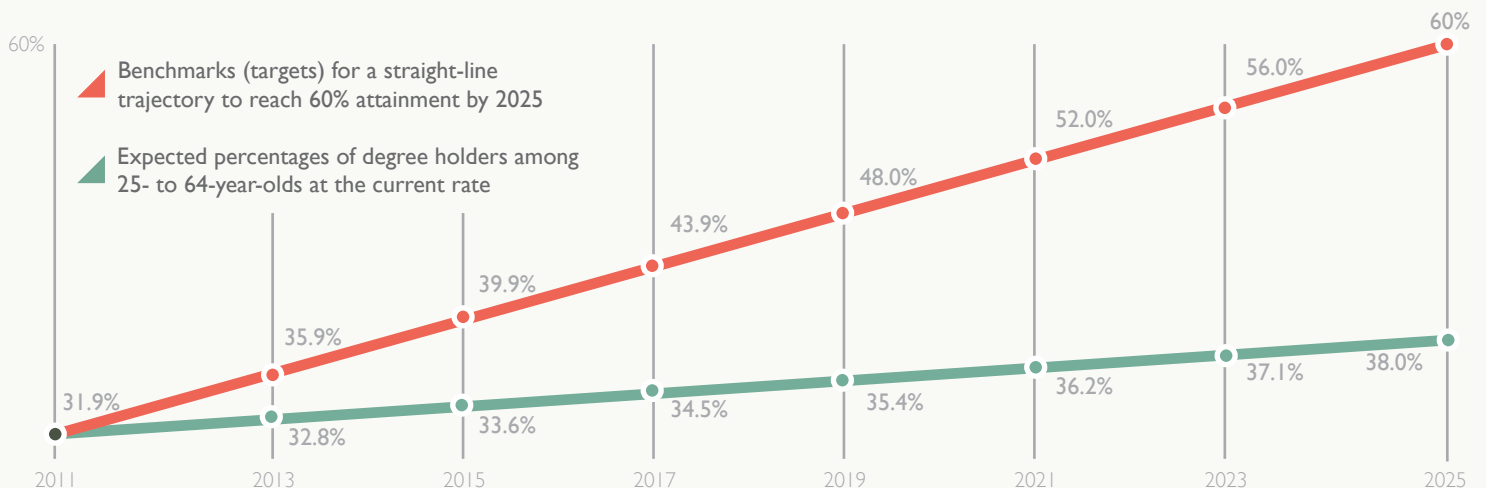
## Degree-attainment rates among Alabama adults (ages 25-64), by population group

White	<b>35.12%</b>
Black	<b>23.54%</b>
Hispanic	<b>15.38%</b>
Asian	<b>55.89%</b>
Native American	<b>24.93%</b>



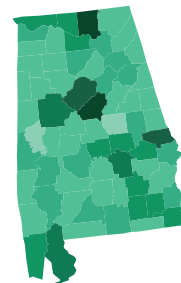
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-11 American Community Survey PUMS File

## The path to 60% degree attainment in Alabama



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

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



Autauga	32.34	Clarke	22.60	DeKalb	18.80	Jefferson	39.49	Mobile	29.56	Talladega	21.02
Baldwin	37.35	Clay	18.01	Elmore	29.27	Lamar	17.23	Monroe	17.54	Tallapoosa	27.19
Barbour	21.11	Cleburne	17.50	Escambia	22.17	Lauderdale	29.58	Montgomery	38.58	Tuscaloosa	34.02
Bibb	17.95	Coffee	33.29	Etowah	26.48	Lawrence	22.14	Morgan	27.92	Walker	19.20
Blount	19.59	Colbert	26.71	Fayette	20.24	Lee	40.51	Perry	20.64	Washington	16.77
Bullock	20.71	Conecuh	25.01	Franklin	19.76	Limestone	30.05	Pickens	17.80	Wilcox	19.89
Butler	22.04	Coosa	13.75	Geneva	19.46	Lowndes	19.67	Pike	28.55	Winston	19.69
Calhoun	24.12	Covington	23.31	Greene	13.89	Macon	27.86	Randolph	20.70		
Chambers	20.26	Crenshaw	19.83	Hale	17.88	Madison	46.77	Russell	22.32		
Cherokee	18.32	Cullman	25.71	Henry	23.28	Marengo	25.88	St. Clair	23.88		
Chilton	20.13	Dale	29.68	Houston	29.82	Marion	18.16	Shelby	50.37		
Choctaw	19.31	Dallas	22.58	Jackson	21.54	Marshall	24.54	Sumter	22.81		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-11 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.

