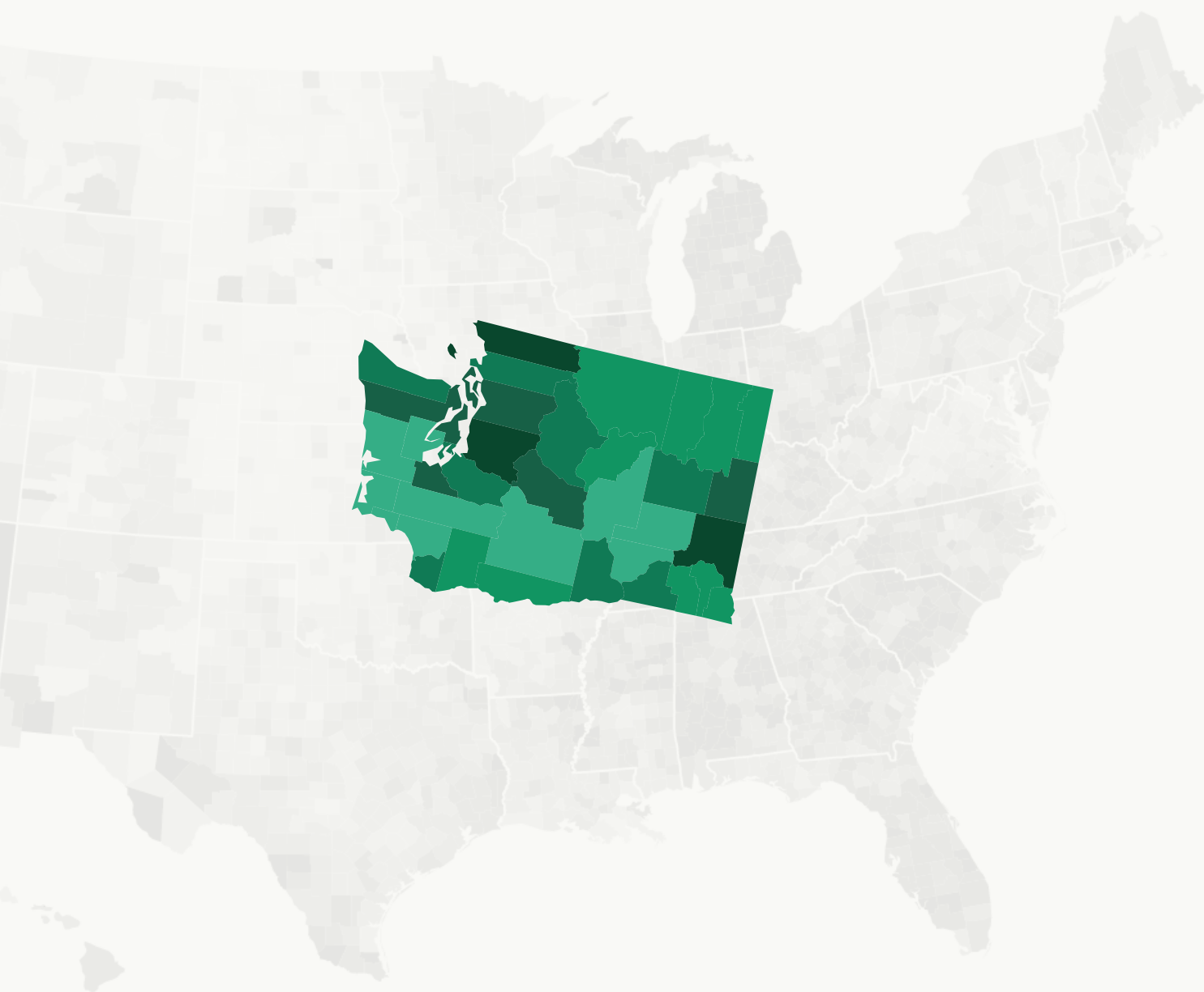


A STRONGER **WASHINGTON** *through* HIGHER EDUCATION



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

In Washington, 43.3 percent of the state's 3.7 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold a two- or four-year college degree, according to 2011 Census data. Washington's attainment rate is increasing slowly; last year, the rate was 42.5 percent. Still, Washington's rate of higher education attainment is well above 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.

However, there is reason for concern about the educational trends in Washington. The best indicator of where attainment rates are heading is the rate among young adults — those between the ages of 25 and 34. In Washington, 2011 Census data put the attainment rate of these young adults at 42.1 percent — lower than that of the adult population as a whole, though higher than the national rate of 40.1 percent.

Clearly, there is room for improvement in Washington. In this state and nationally, college attainment rates must increase rapidly and steadily to reach 60 percent by 2025. If the current rate of degree production continues, about 49 percent of Washington's adult population — 5.1 million people — will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent attainment among its projected 2025 population of 4,099,651, Washington will need to add nearly 435,000 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, 677,000 of the expected

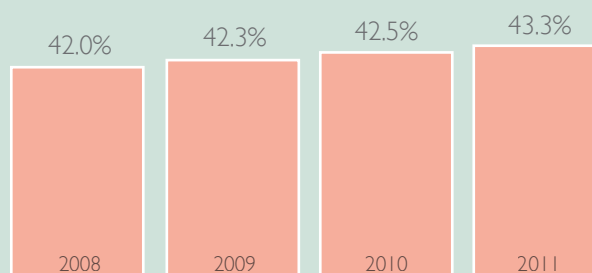
1 million job vacancies in Washington will require postsecondary credentials. Indeed, 67 percent of all Washington jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018.

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 926,000 Washington adults — 24.9 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 Washington reach the 60 percent goal.

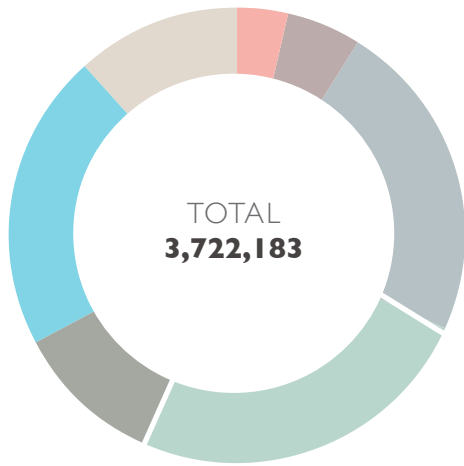
To increase attainment, states must work systematically to close achievement gaps based on race, income, geography and other factors. As in past years, this report lists an attainment rate for each Washington county. The data show that increasing attainment is a particular challenge in rural counties,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

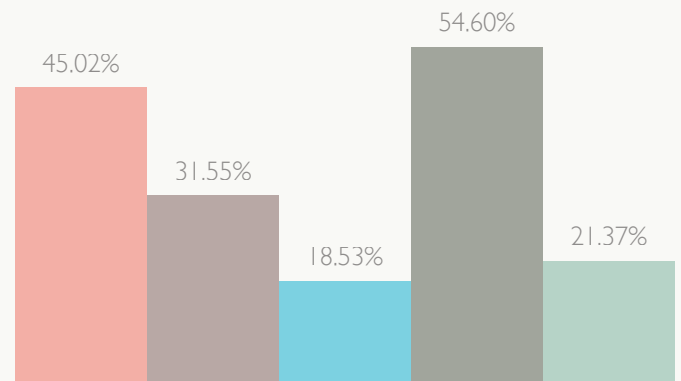


Less than ninth grade	139,562	3.75%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	196,909	5.29%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	848,605	22.80%
Some college, no degree	925,860	24.87%
Associate degree	396,194	10.64%
Bachelor's degree	782,846	21.03%
Graduate or professional degree	432,207	11.61%

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

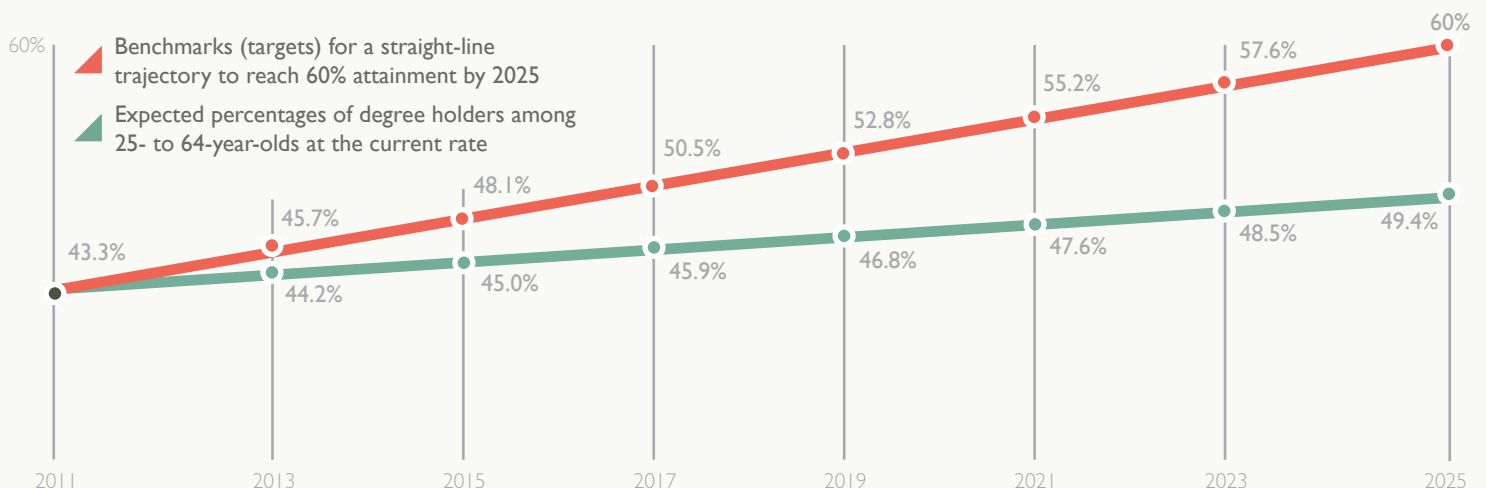
Degree-attainment rates among Washington adults (ages 25-64), by population group

White	45.02%
Black	31.55%
Hispanic	18.53%
Asian	54.60%
Native American	21.37%



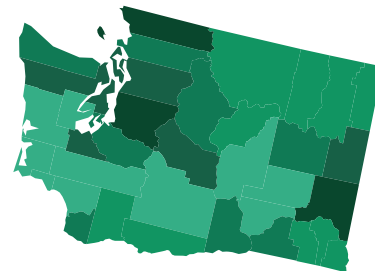
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-11 American Community Survey PUMS File

The path to 60% degree attainment in Washington



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

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



Adams	23.12	Cowlitz	27.19	Island	39.68	Lincoln	36.77	Skagit	36.08	Walla Walla	37.28
Asotin	28.80	Douglas	29.20	Jefferson	42.13	Mason	26.49	Skamania	32.42	Whatcom	45.03
Benton	38.74	Ferry	28.24	King	56.34	Okanogan	30.17	Snohomish	40.64	Whitman	61.63
Chelan	33.56	Franklin	22.99	Kitsap	40.51	Pacific	27.36	Spokane	42.94	Yakima	23.30
Clallam	34.41	Garfield	31.93	Kittitas	42.08	Pend Oreille	29.42	Stevens	33.12		
Clark	37.31	Grant	24.52	Klickitat	29.65	Pierce	34.89	Thurston	43.86		
Columbia	29.23	Grays Harbor	26.00	Lewis	26.33	San Juan	44.82	Wahkiakum	27.69		

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