



# A STRONGER NATION

In Georgia, postsecondary learning builds the talent that helps us rise



A policy brief from Lumina Foundation

# Georgia



The need to increase postsecondary attainment — the number of Americans who hold degrees and other high-quality credentials — has never been clearer. State leaders are responding to the growing global demand for talent by setting goals and enacting policies to increase attainment. Like Lumina Foundation, states have come to understand the scope of the effort required. Much is left to be done, but real progress is being made through the efforts of those who are committed to assuring that millions more Americans benefit from postsecondary education.

Lumina began reporting the attainment rate (associate degree and higher) in 2008. That year, the rate in Georgia stood at 36.2 percent. In 2014, the most recent year for which data are available, the rate reached 38 percent.

However, the degree attainment rate doesn't tell the whole story. Lumina has always said that other postsecondary credentials — including certificates and certifications — should count toward national and state goals for attainment, with one important caveat. To count, non-degree credentials should be of high quality, which we define as having clear and transparent learning outcomes leading to further education and employment.

This year, for the first time, we have nationally representative data on the number of Americans who hold high-quality postsecondary certificates; we now feel confident we can count these credentials toward attainment goals. In states, we are able to use estimates from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce on the number of residents who hold high-quality certificates as their highest earned credential. In Georgia, 8 percent of residents between the ages of 25 and 64 hold a high-quality certificate. This brings the state's overall postsecondary attainment rate to 46 percent.

As the data in this report make clear, increasing overall attainment is not the only challenge Georgia faces. There are also significant gaps in attainment that must be closed. While current systems work very well for many students, more postsecondary credentials must be earned by Americans who, by definition, are *post-traditional* learners. Compared with current students, they will be older; more will be African-American, Hispanic and Native American; and they will have lower incomes. Most will be first-generation students. The data in this report show the extent of the attainment gaps in Georgia by race and ethnicity.

To date, 26 states have responded to the need to increase attainment by setting state attainment goals that meet Lumina's criteria for rigor and efficacy (i.e., the goal is quantifiable, challenging, long term, addresses gaps, and is in statute and/or a strategic plan). Georgia is one of those 26 states.

There is much more that states can do to increase attainment. It begins with assuring that all prospective students, including working adults, have access to affordable programs that lead to quality credentials. State policies such as outcomes-based funding can encourage colleges and universities to direct resources to approaches that increase student success. States can also help assure that students get full recognition for *all* of their learning — whether it was obtained in an institution, in the military or on the job — and can apply it to further education and credentials.

Lumina is working with state leaders from around the nation to expand postsecondary opportunity and success. More information on that work, including our full state policy agenda and additional data, is available on Lumina's Strategy Labs website (<http://strategylabs.luminafoundation.org/>).

## Tracking the trend

Percentage of the state's working-age population (25-64) with a quality postsecondary credential



## Levels of education for Georgia residents, ages 25-64

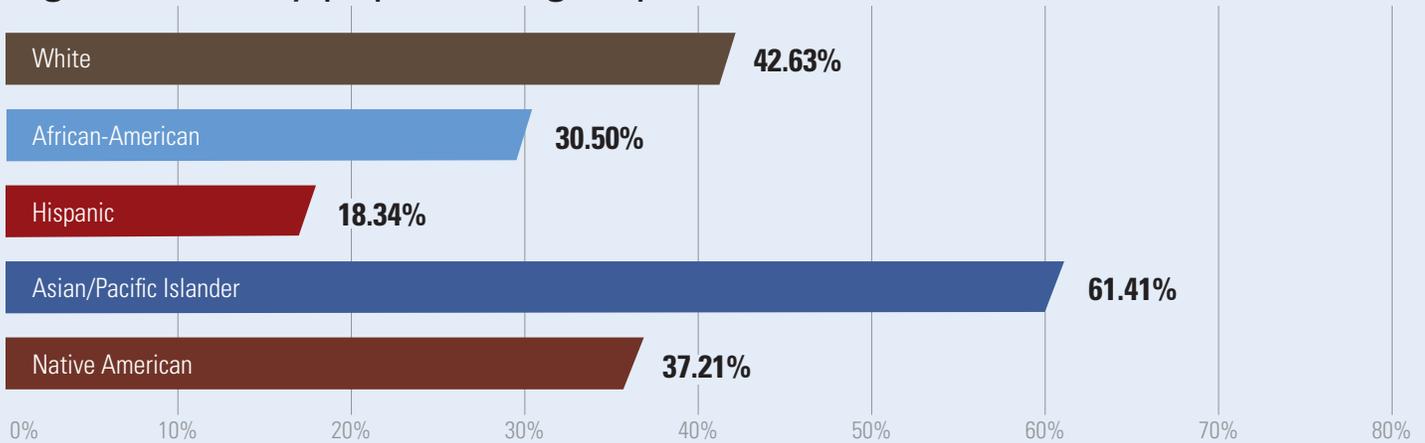


Estimated attainment of certificates: **8%**

**Note:** The accompanying pie chart does not account for residents who have earned high-value postsecondary certificates. The percentage above – admittedly, an **estimate** – aims to fill that gap. To calculate this percentage, labor market experts at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce used Survey of Income Program Participation 2008 Wave 12 data (2012) and data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2014.

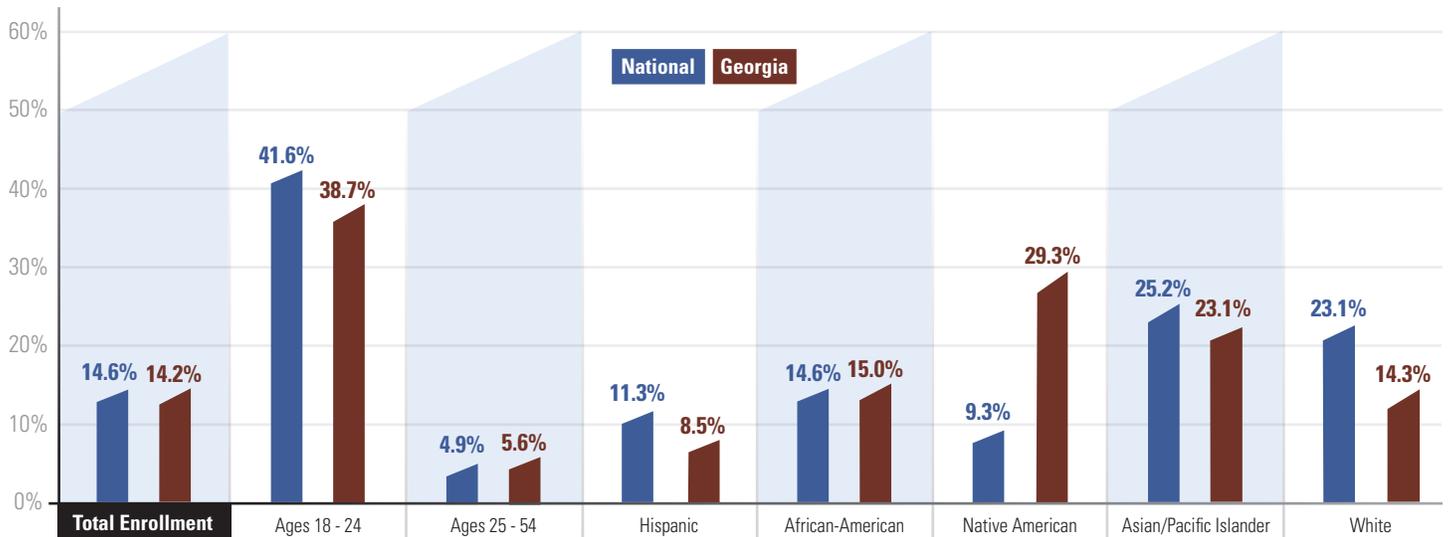
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

## Degree-attainment rates among Georgia residents (ages 25-64), by population group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, 2013, and 2014 American Community Survey One-Year PUMS Files

## College enrollment among Georgia residents, ages 18-54



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

Note: These percentages reflect the enrollment of non-degree-holding students, ages 18-54, at public and private, two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions

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

Appling	20.17	Cherokee	43.18	Fannin	22.83	Jenkins	22.91	Oglethorpe	26.68	Thomas	26.25
Atkinson	14.29	Clarke	45.32	Fayette	55.04	Johnson	17.82	Paulding	32.45	Tift	27.76
Bacon	19.63	Clay	12.25	Floyd	27.53	Jones	28.44	Peach	26.33	Toombs	22.74
Baker	18.97	Clayton	27.28	Forsyth	55.39	Lamar	23.14	Pickens	29.59	Towns	31.97
Baldwin	25.09	Clinch	20.28	Franklin	20.24	Lanier	25.73	Pierce	19.30	Treutlen	20.04
Banks	19.73	Cobb	53.35	Fulton	56.40	Laurens	22.52	Pike	26.84	Troup	25.46
Barrow	27.00	Coffee	20.74	Gilmer	23.32	Lee	32.91	Polk	18.60	Turner	19.75
Bartow	24.66	Colquitt	20.59	Glascocock	20.73	Liberty	30.10	Pulaski	20.27	Twiggs	15.22
Ben Hill	19.48	Columbia	47.13	Glynn	33.52	Lincoln	19.75	Putnam	28.20	Union	29.28
Berrien	26.56	Cook	21.74	Gordon	20.69	Long	26.32	Quitman	11.14	Upson	16.85
Bibb	30.70	Coweta	36.23	Grady	22.58	Lowndes	32.66	Rabun	27.20	Walker	22.64
Bleckley	22.55	Crawford	16.23	Greene	23.83	Lumpkin	33.95	Randolph	23.64	Walton	26.94
Brantley	13.53	Crisp	22.63	Gwinnett	45.17	McDuffie	23.98	Richmond	30.26	Ware	19.86
Brooks	17.61	Dade	25.31	Habersham	24.42	McIntosh	19.85	Rockdale	34.91	Warren	13.11
Bryan	43.12	Dawson	31.51	Hall	28.98	Macon	13.74	Schley	23.74	Washington	18.99
Bulloch	36.41	Decatur	23.46	Hancock	13.91	Madison	23.38	Screven	21.43	Wayne	20.63
Burke	17.14	DeKalb	48.39	Haralson	21.40	Marion	14.45	Seminole	21.84	Webster	17.35
Butts	14.31	Dodge	23.05	Harris	39.38	Meriwether	14.59	Spalding	21.97	Wheeler	13.56
Calhoun	13.66	Dooly	15.65	Hart	23.06	Miller	19.95	Stephens	26.78	White	29.18
Camden	32.46	Dougherty	23.94	Heard	18.22	Mitchell	16.18	Stewart	13.39	Whitfield	19.55
Candler	22.04	Douglas	34.70	Henry	37.41	Monroe	28.61	Sumter	25.85	Wilcox	12.36
Carroll	24.38	Early	23.66	Houston	34.53	Montgomery	22.93	Talbot	20.60	Wilkes	19.24
Catoosa	31.36	Echols	12.73	Irwin	21.14	Morgan	29.81	Taliaferro	12.94	Wilkinson	15.82
Charlton	16.23	Effingham	28.00	Jackson	28.38	Murray	14.21	Tattnall	18.21	Worth	17.63
Chatham	39.78	Elbert	15.27	Jasper	22.51	Muscogee	32.98	Taylor	15.69		
Chattahoochee	41.12	Emanuel	16.52	Jeff Davis	18.29	Newton	28.74	Telfair	15.83		
Chattooga	15.44	Evans	22.47	Jefferson	15.04	Oconee	55.90	Terrell	17.25		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-14 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with degrees, certificates and other high-quality credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina's outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an equitable, accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.