

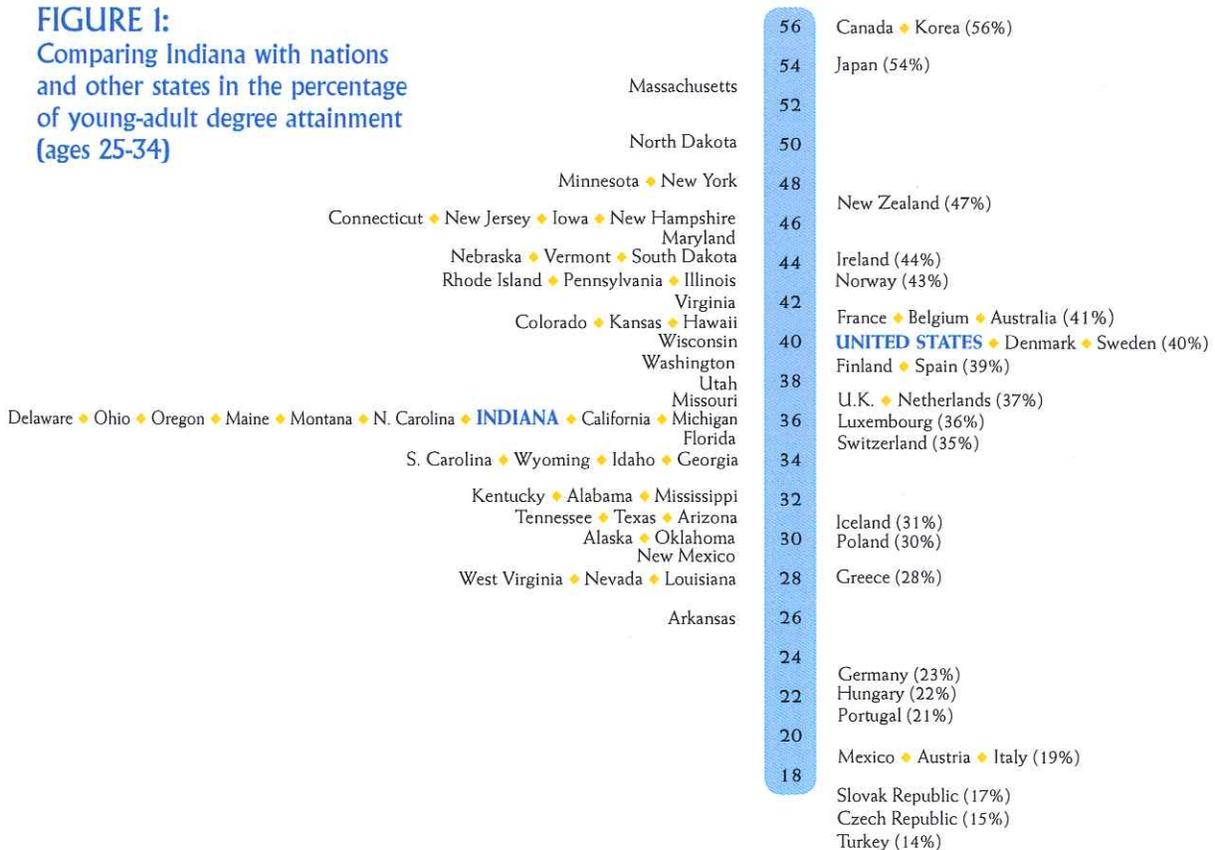
## A stronger nation through higher education — starting right here in Indiana

The United States has long been the world's most prosperous and successful nation, in part because our people have typically been the world's best educated. Roughly 40 percent of Americans hold a two-year or four-year degree. That attainment rate, which has held steady for four decades, led all other nations for much of that period.

No longer.

Our nation now ranks 10th among industrialized nations in the percentage of young adults (25- to 34-year-olds) with college degrees. Today, the leading countries boast young-adult populations in which more than half of the members are degree holders. Even more disturbing: Attainment rates in these other countries continue to climb while ours remains stagnant (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1:**  
Comparing Indiana with nations and other states in the percentage of young-adult degree attainment (ages 25-34)



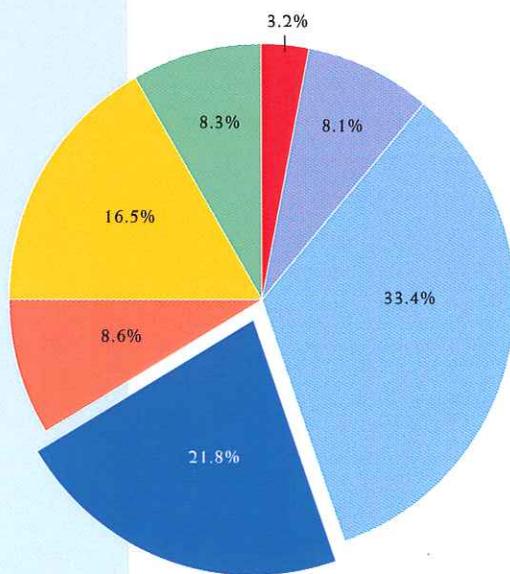
Dangerous stagnation is evident in another area as well: Rates of college attainment among our nation's underserved students — first-generation students, low-income students and students of color — are significantly lower than those of other students. These achievement gaps have endured for decades, and they're now *widening* — an ominous trend when one considers current demographic trends.

At Lumina Foundation for Education, we have embraced a single, specific goal that will help us address these problems. Our Big Goal is this: By 2025, we want 60 percent of Americans to hold high-quality postsecondary degrees or credentials.

We are under no illusions. We know this is an ambitious goal, one that will require concerted and consistent effort over a period of many years by a wide range of stakeholders, including the higher education community, foundations, business leaders and policymakers — both in Washington and here in Indiana.

We also feel very strongly that it is a goal we *must* meet. In fact, as ambitious as the Big Goal seems, we believe it is the minimum required to meet three compelling national needs:

- Closing attainment gaps for groups of students who have long been underrepresented in higher education.
- Reaching international benchmarks for college attainment and thus returning the United States to a world-class level of competitiveness.
- Meeting the ever-growing need for a well-prepared and adaptable workforce.



**FIGURE 2:**

Highest levels of education for Indiana residents 25-64 years old

● Less than ninth grade	108,812	3.2%
● Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	273,086	8.1%
● High school graduate (including equivalency)	1,125,166	33.4%
● <b>Some college, no degree</b>	<b>734,541</b>	<b>21.8%</b>
● Associate's degree	290,493	8.6%
● Bachelor's degree	554,593	16.5%
● Graduate or professional degree	277,639	8.3%
TOTAL	3,364,330	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

If we as a nation are to meet these critical needs, every state must do its part to increase college attainment among its residents. Here in Indiana, only 33 percent of the state's 3.4 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a two-year degree, according to 2008 Census data (Figure 2). The numbers are better for young adults, with 36 percent of Indiana's 25- to 34-year-olds holding degrees. Still, the overall percentage is far below our goal of 60 percent degree attainment. In fact, a 60 percent rate in Indiana today would represent more than 2 million degree holders — nearly twice the number reflected in the 2008 Census data (1.1 million). Without doubt, it will take a sustained, shared effort to reach the goal here in Indiana.

Still, though the challenge is significant, it's far from insurmountable — because we're not starting from zero. First of all, here in Indiana, more than 700,000 working-age adults — 22 percent of those in the workforce — have already earned some college credit. If we focus first on these residents — Hoosiers who have some college but have not yet earned a degree — we can begin to turn the tide fairly quickly.

Also, by looking geographically at attainment rates (see Figure 3), policymakers and other stakeholders can begin to work strategically and systematically to close the achievement gap. They can target the counties and regions that show the greatest need and then provide support in those specific areas. They can work directly in those communities and regions to foster effective partnerships among local businesses, K-12 systems and postsecondary institutions.

In short, there are concrete steps we can take here in Indiana to boost the number of Americans who earn college degrees. These are steps we must take, and we *must* take them together. Lumina's goal is far too ambitious for us to reach solely through our efforts. It will require broad-based strategies that address issues of college affordability, educational quality, student support and social equity. These strategies can only be successful if committed partners work in concert to improve both public policy and institutional practice.

One such partner, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), has created a Web-based resource that can be of great value to all who seek to help in this vital effort. The NCHEMS Information Center provides detailed comparative data for all states and counties as well as other contextual information that can help higher education policymakers and analysts make sound policy decisions. We urge you to visit the site ([www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org)).

We also invite you to visit our own Web site, where we offer more detailed information about Indiana's degree-attainment rates at [www.luminafoundation.org/research/state\\_data/indiana.html](http://www.luminafoundation.org/research/state_data/indiana.html), as well as links to corresponding data from other states.

We hope this information helps you in the crucial task of improving the nation's college-attainment rates. We at Lumina welcome your partnership in this effort, and we stand ready to help in any way we can.

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**FIGURE 3:**

Percentage of Indiana counties' young adults (ages 25-34) with a two- or four-year degree

Hamilton	64.2	Randolph	27.9
Monroe	56.2	Putnam	27.3
Tippecanoe	52.8	LaPorte	27.2
Hendricks	47.9	Wayne	26.9
Boone	45.5	Morgan	26.8
Bartholomew	42.7	Howard	26.7
Warrick	42.2	Jay	26.2
Hancock	41.7	Clinton	26.1
Porter	41.1	Greene	26.0
Johnson	40.8	Noble	26.0
Vanderburgh	39.5	Starke	25.7
Delaware	39.2	Jackson	25.6
Spencer	39.0	Randolph	25.0
Clay	38.8	Putnam	24.7
Marion	38.2	LaPorte	24.6
St. Joseph	38.0	Wayne	24.1
Allen	37.5	Morgan	24.0
Wells	37.2	Howard	24.0
Dubois	36.3	Jay	23.9
Floyd	36.0	Clinton	23.4
<b>INDIANA</b>	<b>35.0</b>	Greene	23.4
Whitley	34.8	<b>*Other Counties</b>	<b>23.1</b>
Vigo	34.7	Steuben	22.7
Huntington	34.7	Marshall	22.3
Knox	34.5	Elkhart	22.0
Grant	34.4	Decatur	21.9
Henry	33.3	Washington	21.8
Posey	32.9	Owen	20.2
Clark	32.4	Cass	19.6
Sullivan	32.2	Adams	18.9
DeKalb	31.9	Lawrence	18.4
Franklin	31.5	Fulton	17.7
Lake	31.1	Daviess	17.5
Dearborn	30.9	Jennings	17.5
Noble	29.5	Fayette	16.9
Starke	28.6	White	16.1
Jackson	28.5	LaGrange	12.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey

\*This percentage is an average for the 20 Indiana counties with fewer than 20,000 residents each.

Lumina Foundation for Education is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college — especially low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Our goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina pursues this goal in three ways: by identifying and supporting

effective practice, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change. For more details on the Foundation, visit our Web site at [www.luminafoundation.org](http://www.luminafoundation.org).

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