

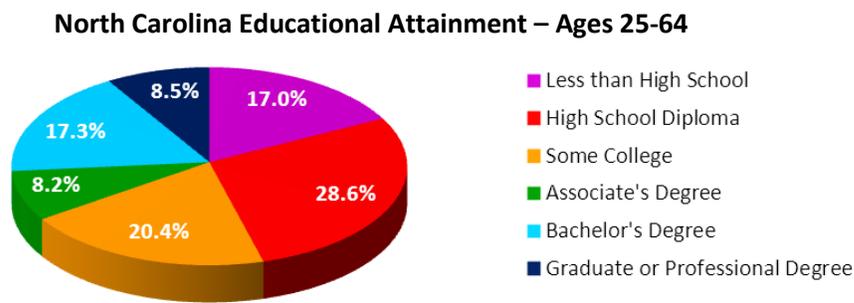


Only 34 percent of North Carolina residents 25 years and older have an associate's degree or higher.

Degree Attainment in North Carolina

According to recent estimates, by 2018, 59 percent of jobs in North Carolina will require some education beyond high school. If North Carolina is to remain economically competitive, the state must ensure more students complete a credential or degree. Despite North Carolina's focus on education, the state's population is not attaining postsecondary credentials at a high enough rate to meet this new economic imperative.

According to the US Census Bureau, 34 percent of North Carolina residents 25 years or older have an associate's degree or higher compared to 45.6 percent who have a high school diploma or less. The remaining 20.4 percent of North Carolina residents 25 years or older have attended some college but did not complete a degree.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Both the United States and North Carolina are facing a talent shortage

Based in part on the economic necessity of having a highly educated workforce, the [Lumina Foundation has set a goal](#) for the nation, and for each state, to achieve 60 percent of their population with at least a high-quality degree or credential by the year 2025. Recent projections suggest that there will be a tremendous shortage of workers with the appropriate training for the new economic demands.

- A [report](#) from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce estimates that the country will fall more than 3 million workers short of the demand for people with an associate's degree or higher by the year 2018.
- A [report](#) from the North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development, suggests that there will be a yearly shortage of more than 15,000 workers with a bachelor's degree or higher, and a yearly shortage of nearly 19,000 workers with a two-year degree or some college in the state between now and 2017.

In order for 60 percent of the population to obtain a high-quality degree or credential by 2025, Lumina [reports](#) that North Carolina must increase postsecondary degree attainment by 7.1 percent each year, or by more than 9,400 students. In the 2007-08 academic year, North Carolina's public postsecondary institutions produced almost 48,000 associate's and bachelor's degrees. An additional 9,400 graduates is almost 20 percent of that total.

While raising graduation rates above the current level is an obvious solution to the state and national shortage, even significantly improving postsecondary graduation rates will not provide enough workers to reach the new economic demand. North Carolina must also work with the 1.2 million residents, or more than 20 percent, who have some college but no credential or degree, to complete a credential or degree.