

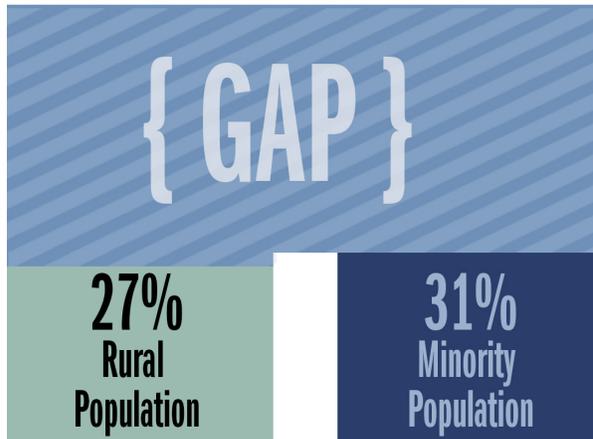
THE VIRGINIA PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION Update

Q: How can Virginia increase educational attainment rates?

A: By using multiple strategies to close the gaps.

51%

of Virginians
with a
postsecondary
credential
or degree



Note: Percentages provided for rural and minority individuals (non-Asian) are based on those with an associate degree or higher.

Growing Virginia's economy requires more people to have postsecondary education. More than half of Virginians hold a postsecondary credential or degree, but many rural, minority and low-income citizens do not. To increase the overall rate, the Commonwealth should focus on access to college and improving completion rates with an emphasis on closing these gaps.

Findings

DISPARITIES: Educational attainment rates are 27% in Virginia's rural areas and 31% for minority populations (non-Asian), compared to the statewide average of 51%.

COMPLETION GAPS: College-completion rates among underrepresented populations (those who are low-income, minority, 25 years of age or older, and from areas of the state with low educational-attainment rates) are on average 7 to 15 percentage points lower than that of traditional students.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS: Virginia's demographic profile is projected to shift, with 10% more of its citizens identifying as minorities by 2040.

Considerations

ENGAGE STUDENTS EARLIER: Raise awareness of and provide assistance for underrepresented populations to prepare for college in middle and high schools as part of the goal to support access to, and completion of, college.

PROMOTE TRANSITIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: Connecting pre-K-12 schools, colleges and universities through programs such as high-school dual enrollment, guaranteed admissions between two- and four-year institutions, and workforce credentials can reduce tuition cost for students and improve completion rates to meet job demand.

INCREASE COMPLETION RATES: Improving college completion efforts through

programs and strategies that support those at risk of dropping out can close the gaps. Virginia recently joined Complete College America, a national organization with 40 states, to focus on college completion efforts.

SUPPORT FINANCIAL AID: Underrepresented students are often first-generation and need financial aid. Efforts to support aid can reduce the risk of dropping out and make college more affordable — thereby closing the gaps in educational attainment.

Sources: Lumina Foundation, Stronger Nation 2016; SCHEV staff analysis.

ABOUT THIS SERIES A five-part series highlighting the Virginia Plan for Higher Education's Annual Report — a statewide plan for the Commonwealth to be the best-educated state by 2030. Learn more at www.schev.edu/VaPlanReport

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STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA