

Workers Ahead: Postsecondary Attainment in Rhode Island

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against the backdrop of a changing economy, Governor Gina Raimondo set the state's postsecondary attainment goal that 70% of working-age Rhode Islanders will hold a postsecondary degree or credential of value by 2025. With the current attainment level at 46%, Rhode Island's population is not yet ready to meet the workforce demands it will face in the next five to ten years. In order to spur and sustain economic growth and foster vibrant communities, we must ensure that all Rhode Islanders have the degrees and credentials they require to be successful in today's economy.

As the system office for public higher education, the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (RIOPC) is leading the development of a framework for action and success. With strong leadership from Governor Gina Raimondo, support from the state's General Assembly, and ongoing collaboration among the state's three public higher education institutions and private industry, Rhode Island is well-positioned to achieve its attainment goal.

In February 2018, RIOPC presented a roadmap that underscored the urgency associated with the state's need to achieve its ambitious attainment goal ([Roadmap to Attainment](#)). The report estimated that Rhode Island faces a sizeable gap--90,000 individuals--separating the current trajectory for degree and credential completion from the attainment goal. Given the state's demographics, almost two-thirds of these additional graduates will come from working-age adults with either no education beyond high school or who have some college but no degree. Since attainment rates are lowest for Latinx, Native American, and black Rhode Islanders, our efforts to reach the 70% attainment goal go hand-in-hand with eliminating racial/ethnic equity gaps.

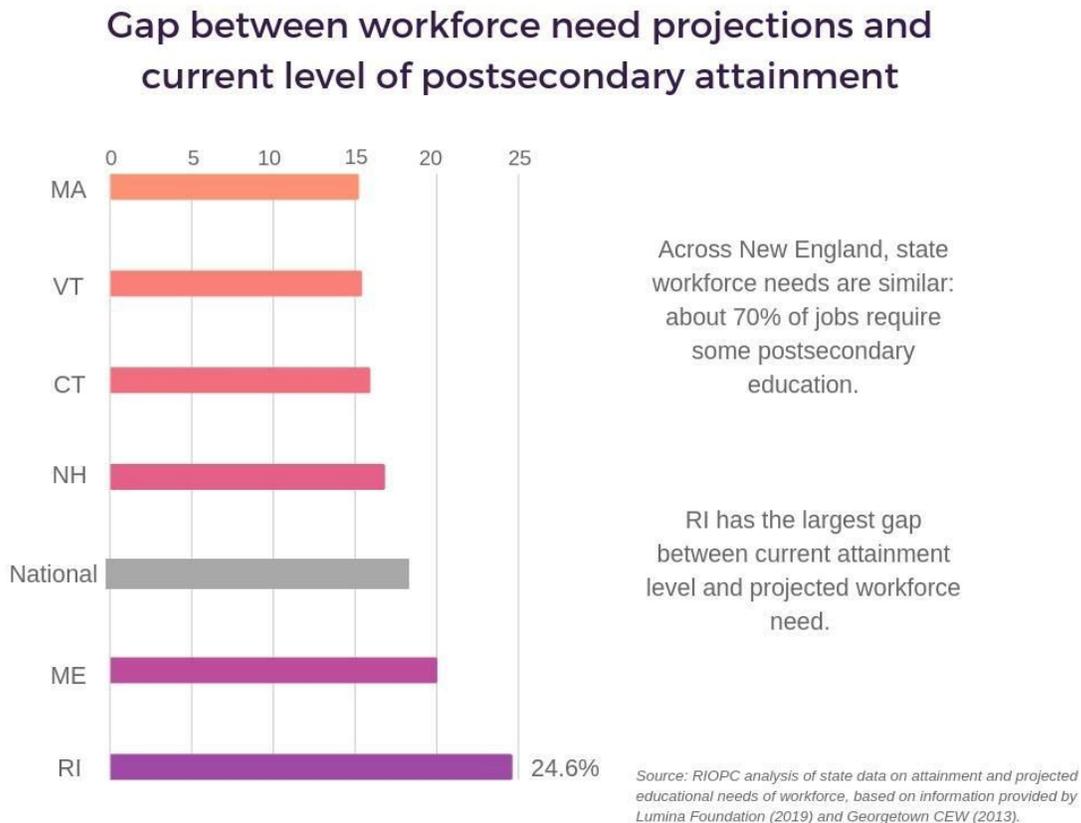
With 2025 only six years away, such dramatic growth in attainment will require collective and concerted effort, along with significant increases in capacity across the state's postsecondary institutions and education providers. In partnership with our institutions, state agencies, community organizations, and industry leaders, RIOPC is committed to five actions:

- 1) Scale on-ramps for working-age adults
- 2) Expand access and preparation in the PK-12 pipeline
- 3) Strengthen investments in retention and completion
- 4) Establish collective ownership of the postsecondary attainment goal
- 5) Eliminate racial/ethnic equity gaps in postsecondary attainment

ATTAINMENT IMPERATIVE

Within the next five to ten years, [nearly two-thirds of jobs nationwide](#) will require postsecondary education, and for New England states, the projected workforce demand for postsecondary education and training is even higher.

Figure 1



Georgetown’s Center for Education and the Workforce projects that by 2020, 71% of jobs in Rhode Island will require postsecondary education,¹ on par with Massachusetts and Connecticut. Along with other New England states, Rhode Island’s attainment level falls below what is required for the jobs of the future. With the largest attainment gap in the region, the Ocean State faces even more challenges than its neighboring states (see Figure 1 above). Lumina Foundation’s [Stronger Nation Report](#) (2019) places Rhode Island’s attainment rate for

¹ Carnevale, A., Smith, N., and Strohl, J. (2013). *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020, State Report*, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce: https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/StateProjections_6.1.15_agc_v2.pdf

working-age adults (25-64) at 46.4%, a figure that includes an estimated 3% of Rhode Islanders with high-quality industry credentials.² This figure is just below the national average of 47.6%, and marginally down from the prior year’s attainment level of 46.8%.

For the Ocean State, increasing attainment is not only an economic imperative. It is also about ensuring that large portions of the state’s population are not left behind. Significant racial/ethnic disparities exist within Rhode Island’s attainment rates.

Figure 2

Postsecondary attainment in RI by race/ethnicity



Source: Lumina Foundation, Stronger Nation Report (2019)

Nearly 50% of white Rhode Islanders have a postsecondary degree or credential, but just 32% of black Rhode Islanders, 20% of Latinx Rhode Islanders, and 23% of Native American Rhode Islanders hold a postsecondary degree or credential (see Figure 2 above). It is also important to note that the relatively high attainment rate for the Asian population (61.4%) masks much lower numbers for Southeast Asian Rhode Islanders (30.2%).³ Reports by The Education Trust

² Lumina’s definition for “postsecondary attainment” includes those working-age individuals with an associate’s degree or higher, as well the estimated 3% of Rhode Islanders with “high-value postsecondary certificates.” A brief overview of the sources and methods for estimating can be found at <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#page/sources>.

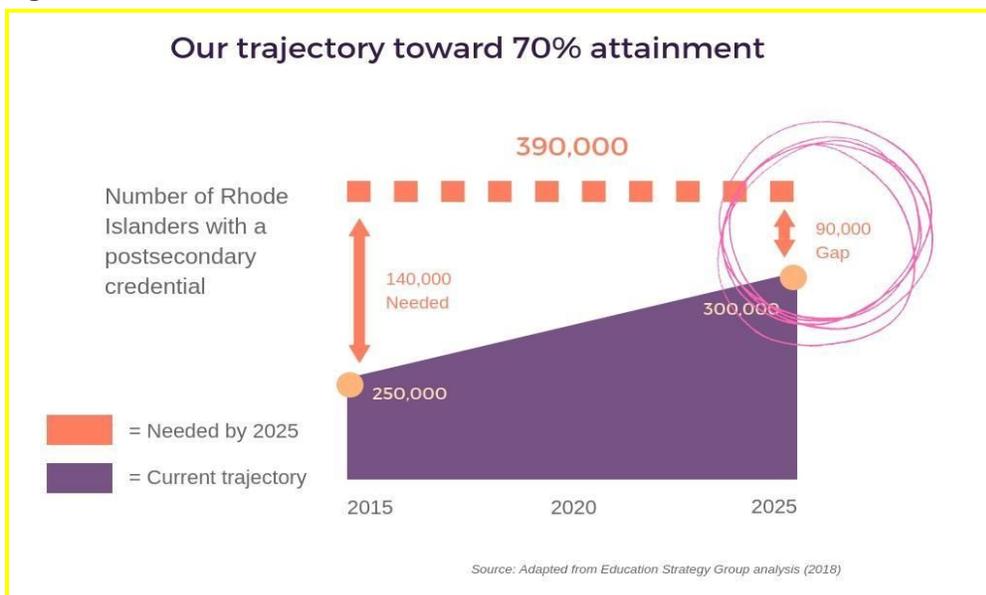
³ Attainment rate for Southeast Asian was calculated by RIOPC using 2016 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Set (PUMS). Southeast Asian includes Rhode Islanders of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai,

on the [State of Higher Education Equity](#) have called out the slow attainment growth for Rhode Island’s black population since 2000 (third lowest in the nation),⁴ as well as the consistently low attainment rate among our rapidly growing Latinx population.⁵ With Latinx Rhode Islanders projected to make up nearly 40% of the state’s labor market by 2040,⁶ eliminating these attainment gaps is crucial to our collective prosperity.

REACHING 70% ATTAINMENT

While Rhode Island’s overall attainment rate has grown five percentage points since 2008, the state continues to face a sizeable gap separating the current trajectory for degree and credential completion from its attainment goal.

Figure 3



Filipino, Indonesian, Malaysian, Singaporean, and Burmese descent. Together, Southeast Asian Rhode Islanders who make up approximately a third of the state’s working-age Asian population.

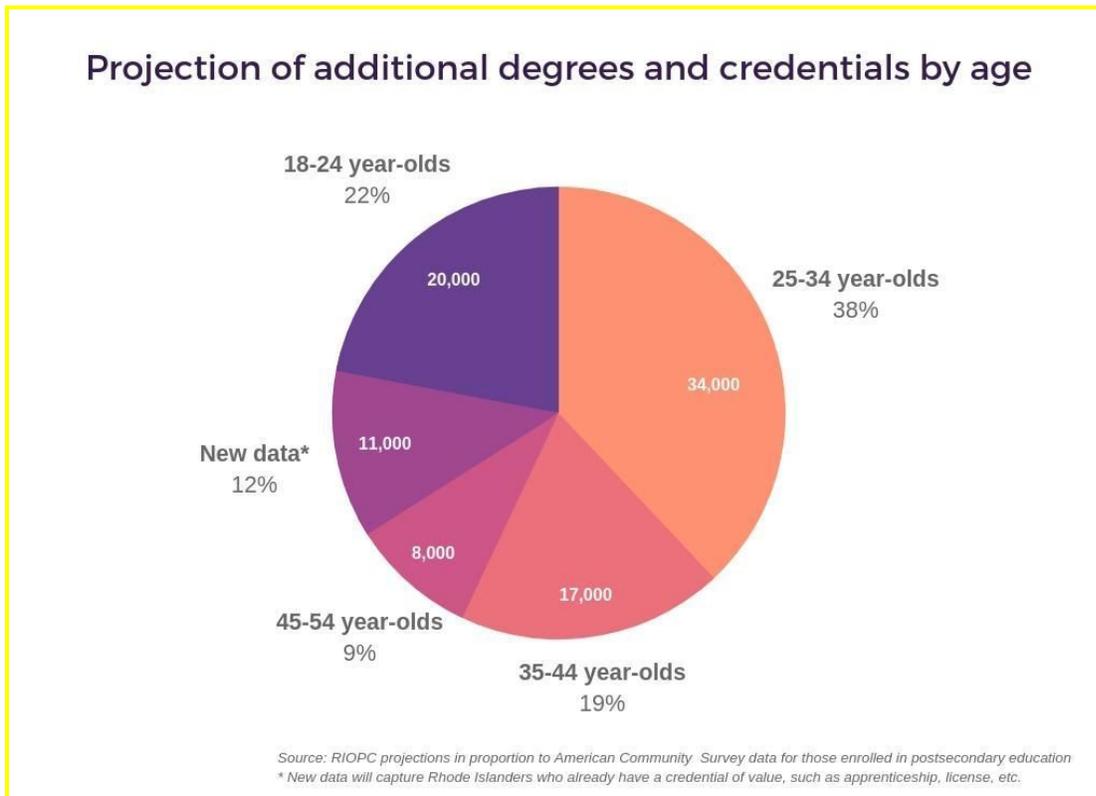
⁴ Nichols, A. and Schak, J. (2017) *Degree Attainment for Black Adults: National and State Trends*, The Education Trust: https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Black-Degree-Attainment_FINAL.pdf.

⁵ Nichols, A. and Schak, J. (2017) *Degree Attainment for Latino Adults: National and State Trends*, The Education Trust: https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Latino-Degree-Attainment_FINAL_4-1.pdf.

⁶ See Economic Progress Institute, *State of Working RI 2017: Paving the Way to Good Jobs*, pp. 11-12: <http://www.economicprogressri.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SOW2017-Full-Updated-Report-for-web-FINAL.pdf>.

With around 560,000 individuals in Rhode Island’s working-age population,⁷ the Ocean State needs an estimated 390,000 certificate and degree holders to reach 70% attainment -- 140,000 more than the current number (see Figure 3 above). The Attainment Roadmap (2018) projected that natural demographic growth would result in as many as 50,000 additional working-age Rhode Islanders with postsecondary degrees and credentials by 2025. Even with these important gains, reaching the 70% attainment goal will require an additional 90,000 Rhode Islanders to earn postsecondary degrees and credentials by 2025.

Figure 4



Working-age adults will make up the majority of these gains, which requires the state to develop intentional strategies to understand and reach these individuals, as well as to identify and put into place the policies and services that respond to their needs. Based on the state’s demographics, nearly 60,000 of the additional degrees and credentials will be earned by working-age adults (ages 25-64), and another 20,000 by young adults (ages 18-24), with the remainder coming from new data on the number of Rhode Islanders who hold credentials of value (see Figure 4 above).

⁷ For more information, see appendix table “Rhode Island Population by Education Level, Age, and Race/Ethnicity.”

POPULATION PROFILES

A deeper analysis of Rhode Island’s census data provides valuable insights into the target populations we are trying to reach, and can inform the policy and program strategies to support them in earning postsecondary degrees and credentials.

Target Population Profile: Working-Age Rhode Islanders⁸

Nearly 250,000 working-age Rhode Islanders hold at least a high school diploma or equivalency but no postsecondary credential. Of those, just under 100,000 have some college experience. A sobering statistic is the more than 57,000 working age adults who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent (Table 1).

Table 1: Rhode Island Working-Age Population by Education Level and Age

Working-age Rhode Islanders Educational Attainment	Total	
Less than GR 9 (Total 25-64)	22,382	
Between 25 and 34	3,500	
Between 35 and 44	5,035	
Between 45 and 64	13,847	
GR 9 - 12, no diploma (Total 25-64)	35,082	
Between 25 and 34	8,276	
Between 35 and 44	7,053	
Between 45 and 64	19,753	
HS grad, incl equivalency (Total 25-64)	148,304	} 248,211
Between 25 and 34	32,502	
Between 35 and 44	31,798	
Between 45 and 64	84,004	
Some college, no degree, not enrolled (Total 25-64)	99,907	} Target working-age population
Between 25 and 34	25,549	
Between 35 and 44	22,188	
Between 45 and 64	52,170	
Enrolled in college (Total 25-64)	10,596	} Trying to attain
Between 25 and 34	6,514	
Between 35 and 44	2,605	
Between 45 and 64	1,477	

Source: 2017 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Set (5-year estimates). See appendix for full table.

⁸ More details on this target population are included in the appendix tables “Working-age Rhode Islanders with high school education, no college degree, not enrolled.”

Another 11,000 working-age Rhode Islanders are currently enrolled in postsecondary education and trying to attain degrees. Rhode Islanders between the ages of 25 and 34 are enrolled at double the rate of their counterparts who are between the ages of 35 and 44, and four times the rate of their counterparts between the ages of 45 and 54. These differences suggest that those between 25 and 34 are the most likely to (re)engage in postsecondary education, and therefore efforts to increase postsecondary enrollment among working-age adults should concentrate foremost on those between the ages of 25 and 34, followed by those between 35 and 44.

Looking more closely at the nearly 250,000 who have completed their high school education, but do not have a college degree (and are not currently pursuing one), we see that their demographic characteristics closely correspond with the overall working-age population in Rhode Island. The population is fairly evenly split between male and female (51% versus 49%). In terms of race/ ethnicity, the majority identify as white (74%), followed by Latinx (15%), black (6%), other race (2%), Southeast Asian (1%), Asian—all other (1%), and American Indian (.4%).

A significant percentage of the target working-age population is currently employed (71%), and on average they earn approximately \$39,000, working full-time at 40 hours per week. Just over 7% have served in the military. With regard to household characteristics, close to 40% live with children (their own or related children), and 21% use public assistance programs such as SNAP. A significant percentage (27%) speak a language other than English at home, primarily Spanish.

Table 2. Target Working-Age Population Summary

Target Working-Age Population in Rhode Island (248,211 individuals with high school diploma/ equivalency or some college, no degree)	
Demographic Characteristics	
Gender	51% Male 49% Female
Race/ ethnicity	0.5% American Indian/ Native American 1% Asian—all other 1% Southeast Asian 6% Black/ African American 15% Latinx/ Hispanic 2% Other race 74% White
Employment Characteristics	

Percentage employed	71%
Average annual wages	\$39,000
Average hours worked per week	40 hours
Percentage with military service	7%
Household characteristics	
Percentage who speak a language other than English at home	27%
Percentage living with related children (Females with own children)	38% (34%)
Percentage using public assistance such as SNAP	21%

Source: 2017 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Set (5-year estimates). See appendix tables on “Working-age Rhode Islanders with high school education, no college degree, not enrolled.”

Within the target population, there are important differences by gender, especially regarding employment. Men who are employed make higher annual wages on average than women who are employed (\$45,000 compared with \$32,000), and they work an average of 42 hours per week versus 36 hours for women. Men are also more likely to have served in the military (15% of men compared with 1% of women). Like men, the majority of women are employed (66%), but a significantly higher number are not in the labor force (28% of women compared with 18% of men). One contributing factor may be children, as 41% of women in the target group live in households with at least one child, while only 34% of men do.

The target working-age population also shows significant differences by race/ ethnicity, particularly in household characteristics. The difference is most pronounced in language spoken at home. For white and American Indian Rhode Islanders, over 90% speak only English at home, but for Latinx and Southeast Asian Rhode Islanders, almost 90% speak a language other than English at home. For black Rhode Islanders and those who identify as another race, just under 40% speak a language other than English at home. There are also differences in whether there are children in the household. Around 30% of white and American Indian Rhode Islanders live with children (either their own or related children), while the percentage is higher among black Rhode Islanders (46%), Asian (47%), Southeast Asian (49%), and Latinx (56%) Rhode Islanders.

Target Population Profile: Young Adult Rhode Islanders⁹

⁹ More details on this target population are included in the appendix tables “Young Adults without college degree, not enrolled.”

The profile for RI's young adults (ages 18-24) looks very different. Young adults make up the traditional college-age population, and approximately two-thirds of Rhode Islanders between the ages of 18 and 24 are currently enrolled in postsecondary education or have completed a degree already. This leaves only one-third (41,000) in the target group who have completed some high school education but did not enroll in college or dropped out before finishing (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Rhode Island Young Adult Population by Education Level and Age

Young Adult Rhode Islanders Educational Attainment	Total	
Less than GR 9 Between 18 and 24	1,164	
GR 9 - 12, no diploma Between 18 and 24	10,287	41,044 Target young adult pop
HS grad, incl equivalency, not enrolled Between 18 and 24	20,243	
Some college, no degree, not enrolled Between 18 and 24	10,514	
Enrolled in college Between 18 and 24	53,910	Trying to attain
Associate's degree Between 18 and 24	5,324	Degree already attained
Bachelor's degree Between 18 and 24	13,749	
Grad or prof degree Between 18 and 24	1,195	

Source: 2017 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Set (5-year estimates). See appendix for full table.

Demographic characteristics within the target young adult population reveal critical equity issues that must be addressed as part of Rhode Island's overall attainment efforts. In comparison with the overall young adult population, males are strongly overrepresented within the target population (57% compared with 50% males in the overall young adult population), as are Latinx young adults (27% compared with 18% Latinx within the overall young adult population).

In terms of employment characteristics, only 61% of young adults who dropped out or did not enroll in postsecondary education are currently working, compared with 71% of working-age adults. The average wage for the target group is \$16,000 per year for individuals working

between 30 and 35 hours per week, less than half the average annual wage for working-age adults (\$39,000). Just over 1% have served in the military.

There are also important differences in household characteristics between young adults and working-age adults. Almost 40% of young adults in the target population speak a language other than English at home, compared with 27% of the working-age target group. Interestingly, a greater percentage of young adults live in households with children (45% compared with 38% of working-age), but only 21% of young women in the target group have a child of their own, as compared with 34% of working-age women. This pattern suggests that many young adults in the target group are living in households with siblings or other relatives. Just over 30% use public assistance programs such as SNAP.

Table 4. Target Young Adult Population Summary

Target Young Adult Population in Rhode Island (41,044 individuals with some high school education, not pursuing postsecondary education)	
Demographic Characteristics	
Gender	57% Male 43% Female
Race/ ethnicity	1.3% American Indian/ Native American 2% Asian—all other 0.3% Southeast Asian 7% Black/ African American 27% Latinx/ Hispanic 5% Other race 57% White
Employment Characteristics	
Percentage employed	61%
Average annual wages	\$16,000
Average hours worked per week	33 hours
Percentage with military service	1%
Household characteristics	
Percentage who speak a language other than English at home	38%
Percentage living with related children	45%

(Females with own children)	(21%)
Percentage using public assistance, such as SNAP	31%

Source: 2017 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Set (5-year estimates). See appendix tables on “Young adult Rhode Islanders without college degree, not enrolled.”

Important for both of these target populations, research recently published by the [Migration Policy Institute](#) highlights immigrant-origin status as a key demographic factor to consider in education and economic policy.¹⁰ Researchers found that across the country, immigrant-origin adults (first and second-generation) are experiencing much higher population growth than third-generation+ adults, and that immigrant-origin adults are overrepresented among those without postsecondary degrees or credentials. These findings are particularly important for Rhode Island, where increased numbers of first-and second-generation adults account for all of the state’s population growth, and where immigrant-origin individuals make up a significant share of those without postsecondary credentials (39%), well above the national average of 30% and on par with several of our New England neighbors.¹¹ As the analysis points out, nearly all of the labor-force growth expected over the next 20 years will come from first- or second-generation immigrants, and therefore supporting immigrant-origin adults in increasing skill and education levels will not only be crucial to reaching state attainment goals, but also to growing the economy locally, regionally, and nationally.

¹⁰ Batalova, J. and Fix, M. (2019) *Credentials for the Future: Mapping the Potential for Immigrant-Origin Adults in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute Report: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/MPI-ImmigrantOriginAdultsPSC_FinalWeb.pdf. Findings are based on data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), collected by the US Census Bureau on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a survey that uses a smaller sample to collect more detailed information on immigrant-origin status and non-degree credential attainment than is available through the American Community Survey.

¹¹ Batalova, J. and Fix, M. (2019) *Immigrant-Origin Adults without Postsecondary Credentials: A 50-State Profile*, Migration Policy Institute Fact Sheet: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/MPI-PostsecondaryCredentials-FactSheet-Final.pdf>.

ACTION STRATEGIES

Supporting 90,000 additional Rhode Islanders in postsecondary education and eliminating equity gaps will require concerted and collective effort from key stakeholders across the state, including our postsecondary institutions, state agencies, policymakers, community leaders, and employer partners. RIOPC has identified the five action areas that will enable us to demonstrate the greatest impact by 2025:

- 1) Scale on-ramps for working-age adults
- 2) Expand access and preparation in the PK-12 pipeline
- 3) Strengthen investments in retention and completion
- 4) Establish collective ownership of the postsecondary attainment goal
- 5) Eliminate racial/ethnic equity gaps in postsecondary attainment

Scale On-Ramps for Working-Age Adults

To reach nearly 60,000 additional working-age adults and support their success in postsecondary education, Rhode Island will need to increase enrollments and completions for working-age adults by 10,000 students per year over the next six years. This will require us to dramatically increase capacity and recruitment efforts, as well as awareness and alignment of programs and services.

Expand Access and Preparation in the PK-12 Pipeline

Targeted strategies are needed to engage an additional 20,000 youth and young adults by 2025 and ensure they remain on the path to succeed in postsecondary education. Over the next six years, we will need to increase enrollments and completions by approximately 3,000 students per year to reach our goal.

Strengthen Investments in Retention and Completion

Nearly 30,000 undergraduate students are currently enrolled in Rhode Island's public postsecondary institutions. Over the next six years, we must ensure that these students persist and complete their degrees.

Establish Collective Ownership of the Postsecondary Attainment Goal

Reaching the 70% attainment goal cannot be accomplished by any single agency or institution. In addition to our public institutions and state agencies, we must gain support from private institutions, community organizations, municipal leaders, employers, and the general public.

Eliminate Racial/ Ethnic Equity Gaps in Postsecondary Attainment

Our collective prosperity depends upon increasing the overall attainment levels for all Rhode Islanders, and in particular for Latinx, Black, Southeast Asian, and Native American Rhode Islanders, whose current attainment levels fall well below the state average. We will not meet our 70% attainment goal without addressing the structural and cultural barriers to attainment for Rhode Islanders of color.

MEASURING PROGRESS

RIOPC has identified a series of indicators that can be used to track and monitor Rhode Island's progress toward the attainment goal. The indicators should enable policymakers to disaggregate postsecondary data by race/ethnicity, age, gender, income status, and other factors, so that we can determine the success of our efforts to eliminate equity gaps.

RIOPC has identified four key indicators to track overall attainment growth and demonstrate incremental progress:

- 1) Postsecondary attainment at the population level;
- 2) New entries into Rhode Island's public postsecondary institutions;
- 3) Continuing enrollment in Rhode Island's public postsecondary institutions; and
- 4) Completions of postsecondary degrees and certificates from Rhode Island's public postsecondary institutions.

Indicator 1: Postsecondary Attainment at the Population Level

Postsecondary attainment measures the percentage of the working-age population (ages 25-64) with a postsecondary degree or credential. Rhode Island's current attainment level of 46.4% is just below the national average, but well below the state's attainment goal of 70% by 2025.

Importantly, Rhode Island's attainment level masks significant disparities by race/ethnicity, and reaching the attainment goal must go hand-in-hand with eliminating equity gaps.

In reporting the overall attainment rate for the state, Rhode Island can rely on Lumina Foundation's *Stronger Nation* report, which includes an estimate of the percentage of Rhode Islanders with degrees as well as high-value postsecondary-level credentials. Rhode Island's postsecondary attainment should further disaggregate data, using the most recent information from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS), five-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). Based on the ACS attainment categories, working-age adults (ages 25-64) with an

associate's, bachelor's, or graduate/professional degree are considered "attained," while those with some college/no degree, high school diploma or equivalent, or below are considered "not attained." Current ACS categories do not easily allow high-quality industry credentials to be counted toward attainment, and therefore, the disaggregated data may differ from what is reflected in the *Stronger Nation* report.

Because of the strong connections with employment, postsecondary attainment focuses on working-age adults and does not consider attainment for individuals aged 65+, who show lower rates of employment. Likewise, postsecondary attainment does not consider the 18-24 year-old population, many of whom are still pursuing their education and therefore also show lower rates of employment.

Indicator 2: New Entries into Rhode Island's Public Postsecondary Institutions

New entries show the number of individuals entering Rhode Island's public higher education system, regardless of their status as full-time or part-time students.

Each year, around 10,000 new students enroll in undergraduate degree-seeking programs at one of Rhode Island's public higher education institutions. In order to reach our postsecondary attainment goals, Rhode Island must attract significantly more individuals into postsecondary education, which is the focus of our efforts to scale on-ramps for adults and expand access and preparation in the PK-12 pipeline. An increase in new entries over current levels will be the earliest indicator of progress toward the attainment goal.

Data for this indicator can be drawn from Rhode Island's public postsecondary data warehouse and can be based on enrollment data from the three public institutions of higher education (the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island). Included in new entries are students with no prior enrollment at any postsecondary institution, as well as those students who transferred into one of Rhode Island's public institutions for the first time.

Indicator 3: Continuing Enrollment in Rhode Island's Public Postsecondary Institutions

Continuing enrollment represents the number of individuals in a given year who were previously enrolled in one of Rhode Island's public postsecondary institutions. Factoring out graduates and transfers, around 77% of Rhode Island's public higher education students remain enrolled from one year to the next, and reducing the number of stop-outs and drop-outs will

have significant cumulative impact on improving completions and attainment.¹² Many factors contribute to a student's ability to persist through each academic term, including employment and dependent care commitments, financial obligations, and academic momentum.

Data on continuing enrollments can be drawn from Rhode Island's public postsecondary data warehouse and can be based on enrollment data from the three public institutions of higher education. In addition to students who continued at the same institution, this number can include those who re-enrolled in postsecondary education after a period of stopping out, as well as those who attended more than one institution or transferred to another public institution.

Importantly, by comparing data from the current year to prior years, we can also identify students who did not continue in their studies, either because they "stopped-out" and later returned, or because they "dropped-out" altogether. Strategies to improve persistence and completion should reduce the total number of drop-outs, and also shorten or eliminate stop-out periods. Moreover, the ability to disaggregate by race/ethnicity, gender, income status, and age will enable us to ensure that we are implementing policies, programs, and services that support the success of all students.

Indicator 4: Completions of Postsecondary Degrees and Certificates from Rhode Island's Public Postsecondary Institutions

Increasing the total number of completions is the best indicator for how Rhode Island is tracking toward reaching the 70% attainment goal. Our public institutions of higher education graduate approximately 5,500 students per year, of which nearly 75% are resident students who are more likely to stay in Rhode Island and contribute to our state's economic growth.

Data on completions can be drawn from Rhode Island's public postsecondary data warehouse and measure the number of degrees and credit-bearing certificates conferred by Rhode Island's three public institutions of higher education. A more complete picture of overall degree production would include figures from private institutions as well.

Reaching the 70% attainment goal will require us to support 90,000 additional Rhode Islanders in completing degrees or credentials, beyond the current levels of degree production. Divided evenly over six years, this amounts to 15,000 *additional* degrees and credentials per year. It is important to acknowledge that such dramatic growth will not only require additional completion data across all of Rhode Island's institutions, but it will also require us to serve dramatically more students.

¹² Stop-outs include those who left postsecondary education and subsequently re-entered. Drop-outs include those who left postsecondary education and have not yet re-entered.

REFINING OUR APPROACH

RIOPC will continue to refine its strategies and consider additional measures to assess the state's progress, like Rhode Island Promise, dual/concurrent enrollment, and reverse transfer. In addition, RIOPC is working to expand the postsecondary data ecosystem. In partnership with the RI Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (AICU), RIOPC is pursuing data sharing relationships with Rhode Island's eight private higher education institutions.

Perhaps the most important addition to assessing the state's progress will come from measuring credentials of value. Establishing a comprehensive system for ascertaining and counting credentials of value toward the state's postsecondary attainment goal will significantly increase the capacity of the system and will also expand offerings in high-demand, high-wage areas.¹³ To pave the way to including credentials of value in the state's attainment plan, RIOPC has initiated a pilot study to identify the credentials of value that are contributed by Rhode Island's proprietary schools. This information complements other data provided by postsecondary institutions and state agencies, to ensure that a full understanding emerges of the pathways for working adults that lead to family-sustaining wages and to a strong state economy for Rhode Island as a whole.

¹³ Rhode Island is among the many states whose state longitudinal data system (SLDS) does not yet include information on licenses, non-credit credentials, apprenticeship certificates, or industry certifications. See Leventoff, J. (2018) *Measuring Non-Degree Credential Attainment: 50-State Scan*, National Skills Coalition, Workforce Data Quality Campaign: <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/Measuring-Non-Degree-Credential-Attainment-50-State-Scan.pdf>.