

# SETTING LOCAL ATTAINMENT GOALS



One of the primary activities for [myFutureNC](#) is to develop, publish, and update state and local data dashboards that allow users to measure progress towards attainment milestones. During the 2020-21 academic year, myFutureNC and Carolina Demography staff worked to refine and update the [myFutureNC County Attainment Profiles](#) through conversations with thousands of local leaders and other stakeholders. During those discussions, we fielded a number of questions about setting local attainment goals aligned to the statewide goal. We calculated county level goals for all 100 counties.

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DEMOGRAPHY

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## Local Goals and Strategic Planning

County leaders should use these local goals as one part of a strategic planning process - a conversation starter about goals, priorities, target populations. Some discussion questions you might consider include the following:

1. Does the calculation for estimating local goals seem accurate/realistic?
2. How many additional people do we need to reach each year?
3. Should the goals be county specific or regional? If attainment goals are set regionally, how does that work in practice?
4. What degrees/credentials should count?
5. What resources do we need to identify locally or at the state level to help you track and measure progress?
6. What are our concerns about setting local attainment goals?
7. How can we break down our attainment goal by demographic group (i.e., race, gender)? What does the disaggregation tell us about populations we can target for attainment-focused initiatives?
8. How can we use our county attainment goal for strategic planning?
  - What is one focus area that we can address immediately to increase awareness/understanding? 90 days?
  - What is one focus area that is a short-range priority that will need more support but achievable in 3-6 months?
  - What is our BIG FOCUS AREA? This may take one year to achieve and more collaboration.

## myFutureNC Background

With support from the John M. Belk Endowment, Goodnight Educational Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, between November 2017 and December 2018, the UNC System Office brought together North Carolina's thought leaders in education, business, faith-based and nonprofit communities, and representatives from the North Carolina General Assembly and the Governor's Office. Together, these leaders became the [myFutureNC](#) Commission and launched a statewide conversation about economic competitiveness, workforce development and educational attainment. The commission conducted research and collected input from experts across the state to develop a vision—from preschool through postsecondary education and the workforce—for a stronger and more competitive North Carolina. The full commission convened five times in different locations across the state. Over the same period, in-state and national subject-matter experts in P-12 education, postsecondary education and workforce, along with many other myFutureNC partners, produced multiple policy briefs and fact sheets, conducted nine listening sessions across the state, commissioned a statewide Gallup survey, and created a webinar series, all with the goal of building a comprehensive plan, benchmarked against best practices nationwide, that promotes lifelong learning for all North Carolinians (all myFutureNC Commission resources are available [here](#)).

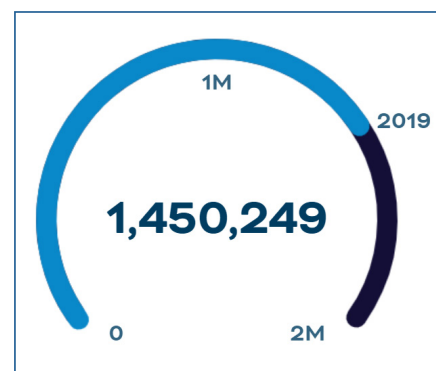
This multi-year initiative resulted in myFutureNC's [Call-to-Action report](#), released February 20, 2019, and the official launch of North Carolina's postsecondary attainment goal - 2 million North Carolinians between the ages of 25-44 to hold a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by the year 2030. In June 2019, with bipartisan support and a signature from the Governor, the North Carolina General Assembly codified the goal into law through [HB664/S.L.2015-55](#). With momentum building around myFutureNC and the statewide attainment goal, the organization transitioned from a commission to a nonprofit organization during the summer of 2019. As a nonprofit organization, myFutureNC builds on the work of the myFutureNC Commission and the Call-to-Action Report to move the goal into action, working across the business, education, and workforce sectors to realize the bold attainment goal.

In service of the 2 million by 2030 goal, myFutureNC has partnered with [Carolina Demography](#) to set the baseline for progress and implement the recommendation of the myFutureNC Commission to develop and track a dynamic set of evaluation criteria at the state and county-level. The result is an 18-indicator [State Attainment Dashboard](#) and an accompanying set of [100 County Attainment Profiles](#) with data unique to each county to empower and support educational attainment efforts at the local level.

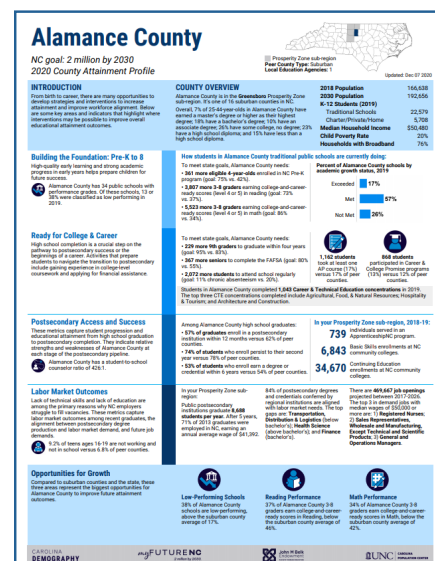
## House Bill 664 S.L. 2019-55

By the year 2030, **2 million** North Carolinians between the ages of 25 and 44 will have completed a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree.

## Statewide Dashboard



## Example County Attainment Profile

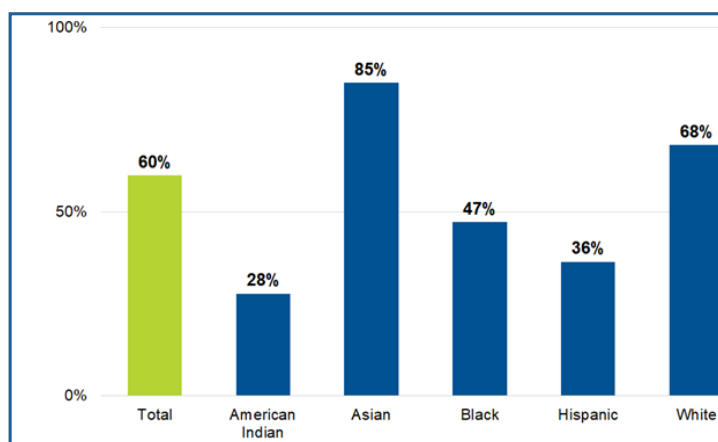


## Statewide Goal

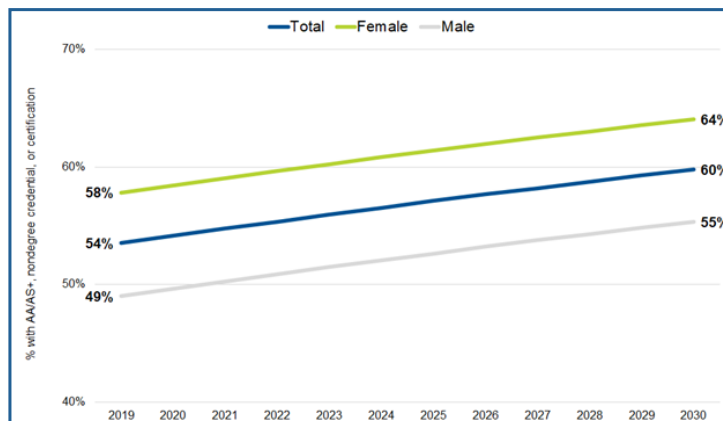
Research developed for the [myFutureNC Call to Action report](#) indicated that North Carolina was on track to have 1.6 million adults ages 25-44 with a postsecondary degree or credential in 2030—400,000 short of the 2 million goal.<sup>1</sup> According to recently released estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2019, there were 1.45 million North Carolinians ages 25-44 who had earned a postsecondary degree or high-quality credential.<sup>2</sup> Updated projections, accounting for new estimates of non-degree credentials and more current data, suggest that North Carolina is on track to have more than 1.8 million individuals with degrees or credentials by 2030, an attainment rate of 60%.

Subgroup analysis of the projected attainment rate highlights differences by race (see Figure 1.) and gender (see Figure 2.). The data shows much higher projected attainment rates for Asian (85%) and White (68%) North Carolinians as compared to Black (47%), Hispanic (36%), and American Indian (28%) for 2030; and higher projected attainment rates for females (64%) versus males (55%).

**Figure 1.** Disaggregation of projected 2030 attainment rate for North Carolina by race.



**Figure 2.** Disaggregation of projected attainment rate for North Carolina by gender.



These projections were made based on data collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data to fully quantify the impact of the pandemic is not yet available, but preliminary statistics suggest that the pandemic is exacerbating existing gaps in attainment. myFutureNC will continue to monitor and report on yearly changes in attainment.

<sup>1</sup> This report relied on American Community Survey data from 2016.

<sup>2</sup> This is based on the share of adults reporting an associate degree or higher in the 2019 ACS, plus an estimated 7.5% of adults with a high-quality non-degree credential, based on research from Georgetown University for the Lumina Foundation. The projections presented here were developed in November 2020. At this time, the most current data was the 2019 ACS (statewide) and the 2018 5-Year ACS for all counties.

## Setting Local Goals Sessions

One of the primary activities for [myFutureNC](#) is to develop, publish, and update state and local data dashboards that allow users to measure progress towards attainment milestones. During the 2020-21 academic year, myFutureNC and Carolina Demography staff worked to refine and update the [myFutureNC County Attainment Profiles](#) through conversations with thousands of local leaders and other stakeholders. During those discussions, we fielded a number of questions about setting local attainment goals aligned to the statewide goal.

In response, we scheduled 10 “Setting Locals Goals” sessions with leaders from North Carolina counties including Alleghany, Ashe, Beaufort, Cumberland, Caldwell, Granville, Guilford, Davie, Davidson, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Vance, and Wilkes. These sessions focused on collecting input on the best process for setting local 2030 attainment goals to inform when and how local attainment goals are set. Stakeholder input is critical not only for establishing and measuring local progress, but also to understanding the challenges associated with the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 on the local community.

### Session participants included representatives from:

- early learning (e.g., Partnership for Children, NCPReK)
- K-12 (e.g., superintendent/school board)
- postsecondary (e.g., community college leadership/board of trustees, university leadership/board of trustees)
- elected officials (e.g., county commissioner, city council, legislators)
- workforce (e.g., workforce development board, economic development board, chamber, business/industry)

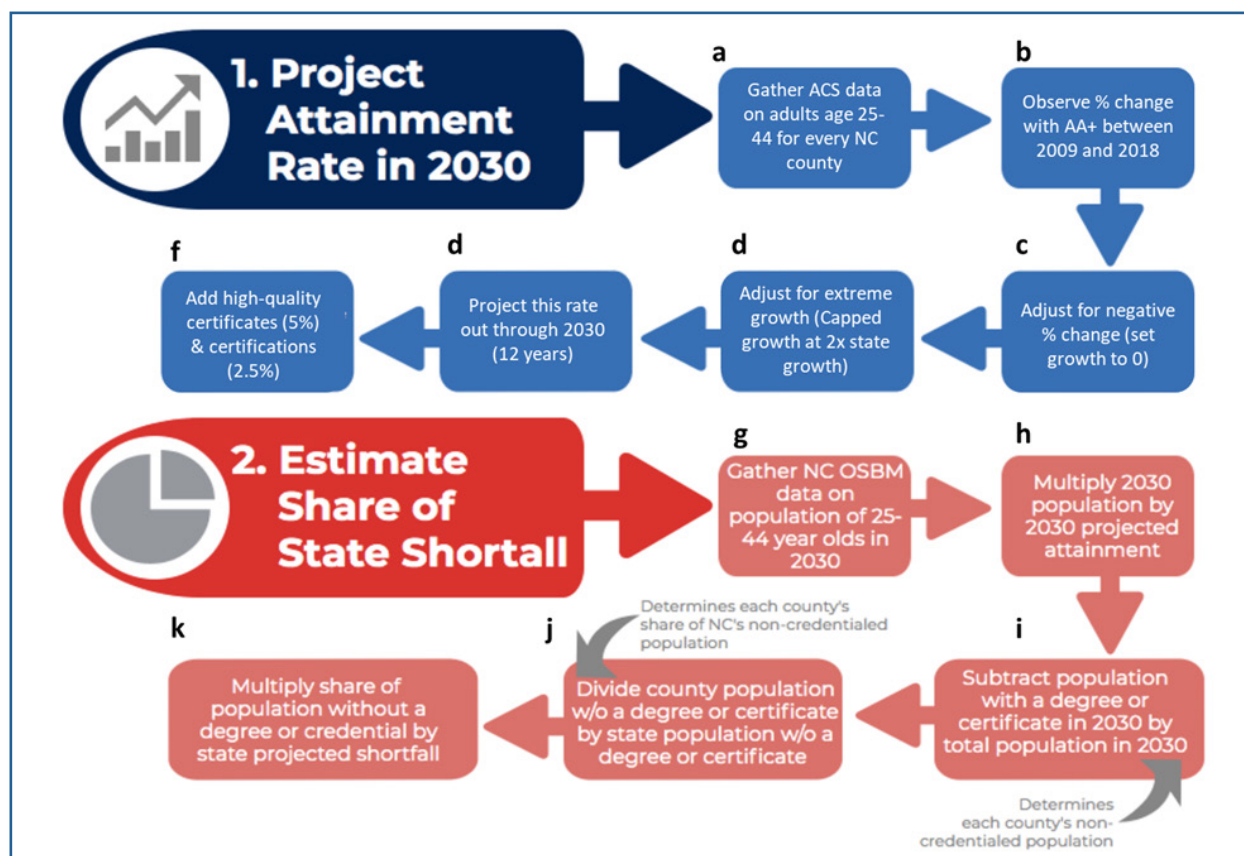
We provided the following overview on how the local goals were calculated and considerations for using the county attainment goals to facilitate strategic planning and determine local priorities.

## Calculating Local County Attainment Goals

Calculating the local county attainment goals is a multi-step process that begins after the state attainment has been projected for 2030. The method outlined below projects county attainment in 2030 by using past data on county attainment changes to predict likely future changes (cf. [Nettles 2017](#)). This approach allows us to capture the net impacts of local population change from migration (people moving in and out) and generational change (younger adults replacing older adults in the 25-44 year-old age group). Population projections also account for anticipated growth (or declines) in the county population ages 25-44 due to migration.



## Calculating Local County Attainment Goals (continued)



### Project County Attainment Rate in 2030

- a. Gather data on attainment of adults 25-44 for every NC county.** The county attainment data is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). These data are updated annually. To obtain data for all counties, we use the 5-year ACS files, meaning that the estimate is based on five years of collected data.

$$\text{County attainment rate} = \frac{\text{25-44 year-olds with at least an associate degree}}{\text{Total 25-44-year-old population}}$$

- b. Observe the change in the share of the county population with an associate degree or higher.** To calculate average changes in attainment rates each year, the current degree-attainment rate was subtracted from the starting rate and divided by the number of years between the estimates. We calculated how much the attainment rate had changed between the 2018 5-Year ACS and the 2009 5-Year ACS.

$$\text{Average change in attainment rate} = \frac{\text{attainment}_{2018} - \text{attainment}_{2009}}{2018 - 2009} = \frac{\text{attainment}_{2018} - \text{attainment}_{2009}}{9}$$

- c. Adjust for outliers: negative change.** Some counties had an estimated decrease in educational attainment between 2009 and 2018. We set future growth to zero, meaning that these counties are expected to hold current attainment levels in the future.

## Project County Attainment Rate in 2030 (continued)

- d. Adjust for outliers: extreme growth.** Some counties had large increases in educational attainment between 2009 and 2018 that may be unsustainable for the next decade. We capped future growth to twice the state average growth rate.
- e. Project this rate through 2030.** Multiply the average change in attainment, after adjustments, by 12 to obtain the projected increase in attainment between 2018 and 2030. This increase is added to the current attainment rate.

$$attainment_{2030} = ([adjusted\ average\ change\ in\ attainment] \times 12) + attainment_{2018}$$

- f. Add estimate of high-quality certificates (5%) and certifications (2.5%).** Non-degree certificates and certifications are not directly measured by the ACS, but are a critical component of educational attainment and meeting the statewide goal. The [Lumina Foundation](#), in partnership with Georgetown's Center for Education and Workforce, have recently developed estimates of the share of adults with high-quality certificates and certifications based on the Current Population Survey. In North Carolina, this is 7.5% -- 5% with a high-quality certificate and 2.5% with a high-quality certification. Note: this definition is limited to non-degree awards that confer a wage premium.

$$attainment_{2030} = attainment_{2030} + 7.5\%$$

The data to estimate certificates and certifications is currently limited to the state-level, but we are working to evaluate methods of estimating county-level differences in non-degree awards.

## Estimate share of state shortfall

- g. Gather data on projected population of 25-44-year-olds for every county.** We use projections from the [state demographer](#) at the NC Office of State Budget and Management.
- h. Calculate number of county residents with postsecondary attainment in 2030.** Multiply the projected 2030 population by the 2030 projected attainment.

$$attainmentpop_{2030} = pop_{2030} \times attainment_{2030}$$

- i. Determine each county's non-credentialed population by subtracting the population with a degree or certificate in 2030 from total population in 2030.**

$$noncredent_{2030} = pop_{2030} - attainmentpop_{2030}$$

- j. Determine each county's share of NC's non-credentialed population** by dividing the county population without a degree or certificate by state population without a degree or certificate.

$$sharenoncred_{2030} = \frac{noncredent_{2030}}{NCnoncredent_{2030}}$$

- k. Determine additional county attainment needed to meet the 2M goal** by multiplying the county's share of the population without a degree or credential by the state projected shortfall.

$$need = sharenoncred_{2030} \times state\ shortfall_{2030}$$

# 100 County Attainment Goals for 2030

This spreadsheet provides the results of this process for all 100 counties. Specifically:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	<b>2030: Projected county attainment (25-44) and share of state gap to goal</b>											
2	Projections are based on county share 25-44 with an associate degree or higher plus estimates of high-quality certificates and certifications											
3	Updated: November 17, 2020											
4		% Postsecondary Attainment		2030 Population 25-44			How many additional people with degrees/credentials needed?	2030 Local Attainment Goal		Stretch 2030 Local Attainment Goal (+10%)		
5	County	2018 ACS (+ 7.5% credentials estimate)	2030 Projected	Total Population	Projected with Postsecondary (C*D)	Projected Without Postsecondary (D-E)	Total Additional Needed by 2030	Number with Postsecondary (E+G)	% with Postsecondary (H/D)	Total Additional Needed by 2030 (G * 1.1)	Number with Postsecondary (E+J)	% with Postsecondary (K/D)
6	Alamance	43%	46%	48,030	22,042	25,988	3,883	25,925	54%	4,271	26,313	55%
7	Alexander	33%	39%	9,820	3,863	5,957	890	4,753	48%	979	4,842	49%
8	Alleghany	27%	27%	2,839	754	2,085	312	1,066	38%	343	1,097	39%
9	Anson	28%	37%	6,891	2,534	4,357	651	3,185	46%	716	3,250	47%
10	Ashe	41%	55%	6,661	3,689	2,972	444	4,133	62%	488	4,177	63%
11	Avery	31%	31%	4,318	1,336	2,982	446	1,782	41%	491	1,827	42%
12	Beaufort	40%	45%	10,501	4,725	5,776	863	5,588	53%	949	5,674	54%
13	Bertie	29%	38%	5,003	1,910	3,093	462	2,372	47%	508	2,418	48%
14	Bladen	35%	42%	8,873	3,733	5,140	768	4,501	51%	845	4,578	52%
15	Brunswick	43%	55%	36,057	19,969	16,088	2,404	22,373	62%	2,644	22,613	63%
16	Buncombe	58%	70%	77,112	53,941	23,171	3,462	57,403	74%	3,808	57,749	75%

- Column B (**2018 ACS**) provides the current estimate of postsecondary attainment based on the ACS plus an estimate of 7.5% high-quality certificates and certifications.
- Column C (**2030 Projected**) provides the projected attainment rate for the county in 2030, based on trends observed between 2009-2018. Note: This assumes that migration patterns that influenced the county in the 2010s will continue to influence the county through 2030.
- Column D (**Total Population**) provides the total population ages 25-44 in 2030, as projected by the state demographer. This further accounts for the impact of migration on the county.
- Column E (**Projected with Postsecondary**) is the result of multiplying the 2030 projected attainment rate (column C) by the 2030 projected population (column D).
- Column F (**Projected without Postsecondary**) is the result of subtracting the projected population with postsecondary (column E) from the total population in 2030 (column D).
- Column G (**Total Additional Needed by 2030**) is the additional individuals in the county that need to attain postsecondary to meet the state goal of 2 million. Note: this is above and beyond any projected gains from population growth and general attainment trends.
- Column H (**Number with Postsecondary**) presents the county goal number with postsecondary needed to meet the state goal of 2 million by 2030. This represents the projected population with postsecondary (column E) plus the additional needed by 2030 (column G)
- Column I (**% with postsecondary**) presents the 2030 county attainment rate goal. This is the goal number with postsecondary (column H) divided by the total population in 2030 (column D).
- Column J-L contain **Stretch Goals** (+10% above the additional needed by 2030 in Column G):

This approach ensures that all counties have a part to play in reaching the state goal of 2 million by 2030 in a way that accounts for their current attainment rate, past trends, and population size and projected growth. Counties with lower attainment rates are asked to show an increase relative to their current levels. In Alleghany County, for example, the projected attainment rate in 2030 is 27%; the attainment goal for Alleghany County is 38%, representing about 300 more individuals with postsecondary than currently projected.

Similarly, large counties with high attainment rates are also asked to contribute to the goal. In Wake County, for example, the projected attainment rate in 2030 is 79% -- this still leaves nearly 80,000 individuals without postsecondary attainment in Wake County. To help the state meet its goal, Wake needs an additional 11,765 individuals with postsecondary. This would increase Wake's attainment rate to 82%.