



Vermont's Postsecondary Attainment Goal

What is a postsecondary attainment goal?

Education and training are critical workforce and economic development tools. Postsecondary attainment goals, shaped by labor market data and projections, recognize that link by setting a target for the number of people who should complete an education and training credential after high school (certificate, industry-recognized credential, apprenticeship, college degree etc.).

Establishment of Goal

In 2019, the legislature passed H. 533 which included language to codify Vermont's goal that "70 percent of working age (25-64 years old) Vermonters possess a degree or credential of value by 2025." The goal was set in 2016 by a cross-sector group of leaders representing pk-12 education, postsecondary education and training, employers, government, non-profits, and philanthropy. A legislatively endorsed goal formally establishes a shared agenda among stakeholders and, as seen across the country, help to advance critical education and workforce development policies and change institutional behaviors of education and business.

From H. 533:

Sec. 5. 10 V.S.A. § 546 is added to read:

§ 546. STATE POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT GOAL

(a) It shall be the goal of the State of Vermont that not less than 70 percent of working age Vermonters will hold a credential of value, as defined by the State Workforce Development Board, by the year 2025.

(b) It is the policy of the State of Vermont to:

(1) promote awareness of career pathways and the value of postsecondary education and training;

(2) expand access to postsecondary education and training to students of all ages;

(3) increase completion of postsecondary education and training programs by ensuring that Vermonters have the supports they need to succeed; and

(4) maximize partnerships across and within sectors to achieve State workforce development and education goals.

(c) In its annual report required in section 540 of this section, the Department shall include the number of postsecondary credentials awarded and the data sets that are used to inform the report.

Why 70 percent by the year 2025?

Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce reports that by 2020, 65 percent of all jobs in Vermont will require a credential or degree. The McClure Foundation predicts that 80 percent of Vermont's high-growth, high-wage jobs in the next ten years (2018-2028) will require a credential or degree. The Vermont Business Roundtable Workforce Conditions Survey consistently reports that CEOs indicate difficulty hiring skilled workers.

Furthermore, individuals with education and training after high school are more likely to be financially secure and less reliant on government programs, have healthy families, vote, and be active within their communities.

Considering those facts, urgent action is needed. Seventy percent by 2025 is an ambitious yet pragmatic goal.

History

Vermont

Over the last 10 years, there have been a number of efforts and a number of goals aimed at increasing postsecondary attainment in Vermont.

- **2009:** Government and higher education leaders signed compact to increase college attainment to 60 percent by 2019
- **2010:** Act 133 established the PreK-16 Council with responsibility to coordinate efforts between the preK-12 and higher education communities to reach a new statewide goal that “at least 60 percent of the adult population will have earned an associate’s or higher-level degree by 2020.”
- **2016:** Cross-sector convening selects 70 percent by 2025 goal; is inclusive of credentials and college degrees
- **2017:** Governor Phil Scott endorses 70 by 2025 goal at Advance Vermont launch event

Nationally

The Lumina Foundation set a goal that “60% of Americans hold degrees, certificates or other high-quality postsecondary credentials by 2025.” The Obama administration made the goal a policy priority.

By last count, 42 states have set an attainment goal. They have been set in several different ways, including:

- Legislation
- Executive order
- State agency policy
- Cross-sector stakeholder agreement (like Vermont)

About Advance Vermont

Advance Vermont is a statewide initiative, rallying educational institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations, philanthropic entities, and private and public sector employers to collaborate on ways to help Vermonters get a postsecondary credential, resulting in a good job.

Learn more about Advance Vermont by visiting advancevermont.org.