

Docket Item: 8.3: Adult Attainment Goal Progress Brief (ORS 350.018)

Summary:

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission adopted the Adult Attainment Goal in 2018 to supplement the State's pipeline educational goal of 40-40-20. The Adult Attainment Goal calls for 300,000 adults ages 25 and up to earn postsecondary certificates or degrees by 2030, which is 100,000 more adults than would be expected to earn a credential at the rate prior to the goal's adoption. The goal of 300,000 was chosen to meet expected labor market demands for workers with postsecondary degrees and certificates over this decade. Because Oregon has substantial attainment gaps among people of color and among low-income and rural Oregonians, the goal includes sub-goals to reduce attainment gaps for these groups by at least half during the decade.

The goal officially began in 2020, allowing for two years to ramp up strategies to increase the number of adult learners earning postsecondary credentials and to increase equity for underserved communities of color, low-income communities, and those in rural areas. This research brief summarizes progress made toward the goal in the first year.

Key findings from the report include:

- In this first of the goal's ten years, Oregon has made only minimal progress. If we were to equally distribute the number of adult learners earning credentials for each year of the goal (2020-2030), 30,000 adults would earn credentials each year. In 2020-21, 20,898 adult learners earned postsecondary credentials. Because of declining enrollment during the pandemic, the number of adults earning credentials in the near future is likely to decline.
- Overall, educational attainment is increasing, but because the increases are among all groups, little or no narrowing of the equity gaps in educational attainment has occurred in the first year. The educational attainment gap by income status narrowed 0.5 percentage points toward a goal of ten percentage points, and the gaps by race/ethnicity and rural/urban status did not change.
- As the postsecondary community emerges from the pandemic crisis, implementing the newly adopted Strategic Roadmap with adult learners and underserved communities at the forefront will be essential to meeting the Adult Attainment goal.

Material:

Report: *Research Brief: Oregon's Adult Attainment Goal.*

Staff Recommendation:

Informational purposes only.