



State of New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education

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New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education Receives Lumina Foundation Grant for '65 by '25' Campaign

Currently, 50.2 Percent of Adults Have Training beyond High School; Number Needs to Increase to 65 Percent Holding a Post-Secondary Credential by 2025

TRENTON – Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks today announced New Jersey has been selected to receive a \$100,000 attainment challenge grant from the Lumina Foundation to support strategic initiatives to increase the state's post-secondary attainment rate to 65 percent by 2025.

According to the 2017 issue of *A Stronger Nation*, Lumina's annual report on postsecondary attainment, New Jersey's attainment rate was 50.2 percent in 2015, the most recent year for which data is available. That's above the national rate of 45.8 percent, but still well short of the 65 percent labor economists say will be needed to meet the growing demand for a skilled workforce equipped with high-quality, industry-valued post-secondary credentials.

"By increasing the number of skilled people in our workforce, we will provide access to greater opportunity across our State," said Secretary Hendricks. "Our commitment to improving the quality of life for all our citizens means ensuring that far more of them hold post-secondary credentials."

The grant will enable New Jersey to enhance data and demographic analysis; research evidence-based policies and build collaborations with industry to increase the number of women and minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)-related careers.

The Lumina grant will also support efforts to increase attainment among New Jersey's underrepresented and non-traditional populations. To more effectively address diverse groups, the State will increase collaboration with partners to improve and expand equity programs.

"We applaud the State of New Jersey for its commitment to increasing education attainment beyond high school," said Jamie Merisotis, Lumina's president and CEO. "Today's workplace demands a greater breadth and depth of talent and New Jersey is wise to pursue a strategy focused on ensuring its residents possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in our rapidly changing labor market."

Hendricks noted that, earlier this year, the Governor's Higher Education Council, the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the State Employment and Training Commission endorsed resolutions supporting the '65 by '25 campaign, which, she said, "showed strong support for our shared efforts."

Lumina launched its Attainment Challenge Grant program last fall and committed to support states with up to \$100,000 for developing and implementing evidence-based policies to improve student success, close equity gaps, and help their states reach a robust postsecondary attainment goal.

About Lumina Foundation: Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. Lumina envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation's need for talent through a broad range of credentials. The Foundation's goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy.

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