

Digging Deeper: Education Attainment, Louisville Metro

Fixing the leaks in Louisville’s education pipeline requires change all along its length. Digging deeper into the data illuminates the challenge.

In 1990, more than a quarter of Louisville’s adults had dropped out of high school, and there were many more of them than college graduates. Today the reverse is true: more than a quarter of Louisville’s adults are college graduates, and, the proportion with less than a high school education has fallen to 14%.

Too many young people still drop out of high school: one in four from the Jefferson County Public Schools, including a disproportionate number of boys and African Americans.

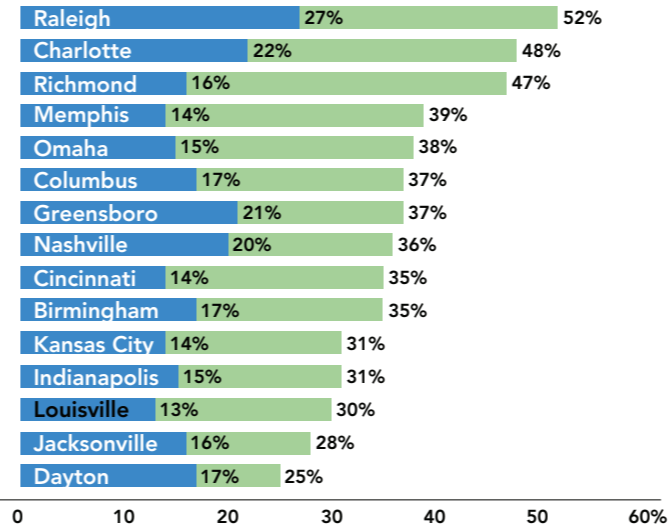
The rate of progress in postsecondary attainment has slowed in this decade, and Louisville’s education levels remain low compared to its peer cities. More than 40% of the 377,000 white adults age 25 and older and more than half of the 82,000 African Americans in Louisville lack any postsecondary education.

More alarming: Based on three years of data from the American Community Survey, 30% of white adults held a bachelor’s degree or higher, but only 13% of African Americans did – the lowest among Louisville’s 15 peer cities.

The racial gap in college attainment has widened since 1990, although the percentage of African Americans with either an associate’s degree or some college has increased.

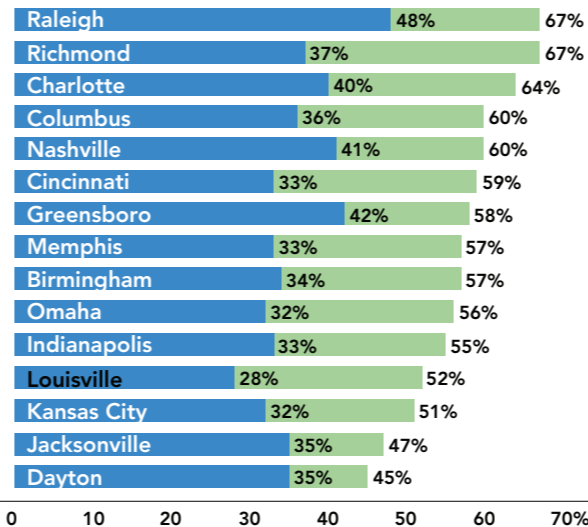
Overall, graduating appears to be more of a challenge for Louisville residents who enter college than their peer city counterparts: it ranked fourth from the bottom in the percentage of white residents who attended college and also graduated and last in the percentage among African American residents.

Bachelor’s Degree or Above as Highest Level of Education Attainment by Race
Age 25 and Older, 2005-2007



SOURCE: 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-year estimate.

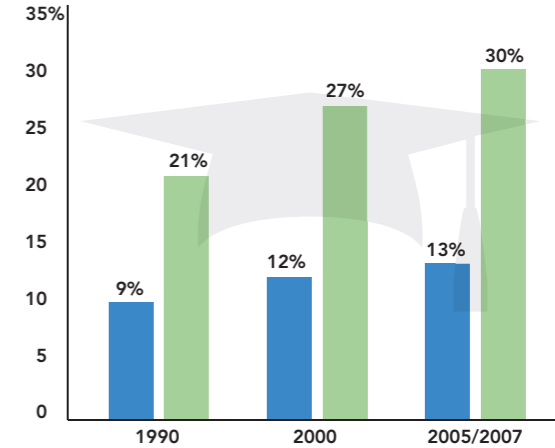
Percentage of Those Attending College that Graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree or Above by Race
Age 25 and Older, 2005-2007



SOURCE: 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-year estimate.

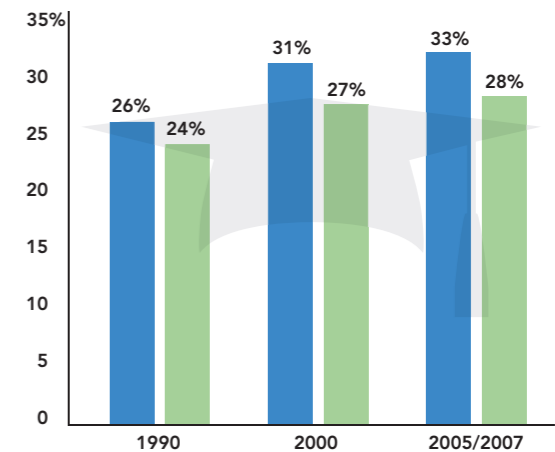
White
Black or African American

Percentage of Population with a Bachelor’s Degree or Above by Race
Age 25 and Older, Louisville Metro



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey

Some College or Associate’s Degree as Highest Level of Education Attainment by Race
Age 25 and Older, Louisville Metro



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey

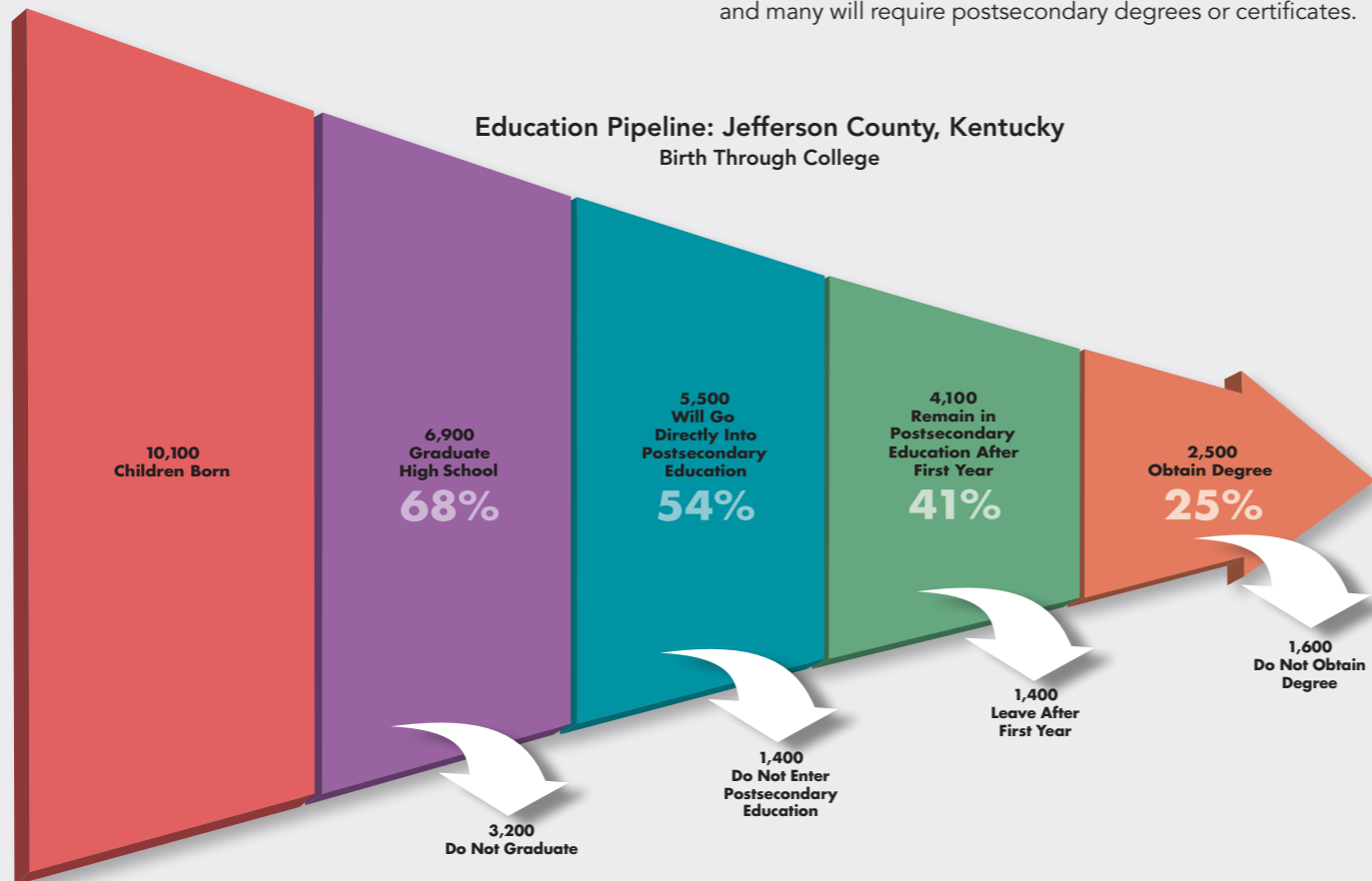
Education Attainment and Income

While closing the attainment gap between whites and African Americans represents a daunting challenge, the impact of the community-wide literacy initiative, Every1Reads, proves that change is possible.

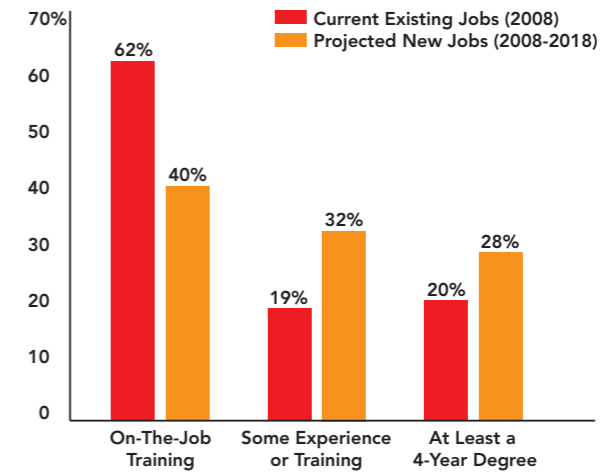
Over the four years of Every1Reads, the percentage of Jefferson County Public School students scoring in the lowest category on state tests was cut in half, from about 18,000 to 9,000. Among African American students, the decline in novice scores was even more dramatic, dropping from 29% to 15.8%, while the percentage of students scoring in the highest categories rose from 29% to 47.8%.

Improvements on that scale are needed all along the Education Pipeline. The correlation between higher education and higher incomes already is dramatic, with Louisville workers who hold bachelor's degrees earning an average of \$17,000 more a year than those with a high school diploma and almost \$24,000 more than those with less than a high school diploma.

Those disparities will become more dramatic as the region grows more 21st Century jobs. The study that's the basis for a new regional economic development strategy projected skill shortages through the next decade. Ten years from now, the analysis found, almost two-thirds of jobs in the 26-county region anchored by Louisville will require training or experience beyond high school, and many will require postsecondary degrees or certificates.

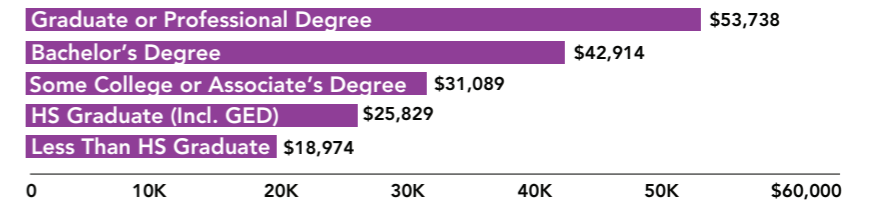


Louisville Region Skill Requirements of Existing Jobs vs. Projected New Jobs by Skill/Training Level, 2008-2018



SOURCE: EMSI; TIP Strategies, Inc. Excludes military employment.

Median Earnings by Education Attainment, Louisville Metro



SOURCE: 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-year estimate, in 2007 inflation-estimated dollars.

The Greater Louisville Project is an independent, non-partisan, civic initiative organized by The Community Foundation of Louisville and supported by a consortium of philanthropic foundations that includes The James Graham Brown Foundation, Brown-Forman, The C. E. & S. Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Gheens Foundation, and the Humana Foundation. Its mission is to act as a catalyst for civic action, providing research, data analysis, and civic dialogue to engage the community in a shared agenda for long-term progress. This report was prepared by the staff of The Greater Louisville Project.