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ABOR Develops New Tool to Measure Educational Attainment

First-of-its-Kind Analysis Measures Residents Earning Certificates and Licenses

The Arizona Board of Regents is pleased to announce the development of a new, first-of-its-kind analytical tool that will enable Arizona and other states to more accurately gauge educational attainment among citizens.

Approximately half of all states, including Arizona, have set targets for the percentage of residents earning a degree, certificate or professional license. In 2016, as part of Arizona's "Achieve60AZ" initiative, the state established a 2030 goal that at least 60 percent of state residents attain some kind of post-secondary education.

The problem? States have traditionally struggled to identify an accurate methodology for estimating the number of residents earning a certificate or professional license.

Not anymore. The ABOR data team, making use of publicly available information via the American Community Survey and Current Population Survey, has created a breakthrough methodology enabling the team to accurately estimate the number of and percentage of people in all 50 states with bachelor's, associate, graduate and professional degrees, as well as certifications and professional licenses. [The resulting map](#) is easy to use and shows each state's educational progress relative to its attainment goal.

"This is a real game-changer for us," said ABOR President Eileen Klein. "Now, for the first time, we have a tool that provides a clear picture of the educational attainment level among Arizonans. This will be critical to measure our success as part of [Achieve60AZ](#) and make changes as needed."

Achieve60AZ is a grassroots initiative endorsed by Governor Ducey and made up of a statewide coalition of more than 60 community, business, philanthropic and education organizations. Serving as impetus for the effort is a forecast that, by 2020, at least two-thirds of domestic jobs will require some kind of education after high school.

"Ensuring we have accurate data is the first step in our journey to improve educational attainment among Arizonans," said Rachel Yanof, Executive Director of Achieve60AZ. "This new tool will be a significant help not only for Arizona, but also other states that have set achievement goals and need to measure their progress."

Research shows that a more educated workforce, with degrees and credentials, is a critical indicator of a state's economic health and long-term viability. It's projected that reaching the 60 percent attainment goal will increase tax revenues to the state by \$3.5 billion annually; improve business recruitment efforts by providing a better workforce for employers; increase per capita earnings; and reduce poverty among Arizonans.

"This new tool will help us understand our outcomes relative to other states and where we need to focus our efforts to contribute to an educated workforce. This is important to maintain state competitiveness," said Regent Larry Penley.

To view the new educational attainment map, visit <http://us-attainment.azregents.edu/>

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