

## **Lumina's Community-Based Attainment Network Expands to 75 Cities**

Centralina Partnership for Attainment and Career Pathways Joins National Network to Increase Post-High School Attainment

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CHARLOTTE— Efforts in the Charlotte region to increase educational attainment received a boost with the announcement that Lumina Foundation has invited the Centralina Partnership for Attainment and Career Pathways (CPACP) to join its Community-Based Network of 75 similar efforts across the nation. Lumina is providing the CPACP collaborative with \$120,000 over two years to foster greater resource investments and promote development of long-range programs to help reach the national goal of 60% post-high-school credentialed attainment of the population by 2025.

“We are very proud that the work we and our partners in the CPACP initiative have been doing to enhance linkages between our region’s educational systems and the workforce needs of businesses is receiving this recognition and support,” said Mike Manis, President of the Centralina Economic Development Commission based at Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG). “ Working with Lumina will help us address a critical gap in 21<sup>st</sup> century career pathways awareness impacting the region’s growing talent needs within our targeted industry clusters and other sectors of the economy.” This effort continues CCOG’s mission to grow our region, create and sustain jobs, and provide opportunities for individuals and economic vitality for our communities.

The current challenge is an “interest gap” barrier among students, their parents, and adult career-changers. This barrier perpetuates and reinforces a lack of societal and cultural awareness of the region’s career pathways and post-secondary educational opportunities in emerging and growing industry sectors. This is the region’s primary concern, as previous efforts over the past several years have addressed other pressing needs for aligning the talent pipeline with local job demand and economic growth. The support of Lumina’s Community Partnership for Attainment network will further the local initiative to increase overall postsecondary attainment in the region toward the national 60% goal and also accelerate postsecondary attainment for occupations in the region’s high-demand, high-growth industry sectors that require a variety of postsecondary credentials. The CPACP strategy will help address the critical interest gap barrier by reengineering communications and messaging avenues around current career pathway alignment activities.

Selection was competitive and access to the competition was by invitation only from Lumina Foundation. CCOG was invited to participate in the competition for the final cohort of metros, in part, due to recognition of the Jobs, Workforce & Education Alignment strategy that was a component of the regional comprehensive economic plan, [Prosperity for Greater Charlotte](#). The report included strategic recommendations on the alignment of the region’s existing workforce skills and career pathways toward target industries and competencies that will generate new jobs in the future. This award is both a confirmation and challenge to continue CCOG’s good work and cutting edge pursuits to grow career pathways and support our region’s growing workforce needs across our economy.

Charlotte was included as Lumina Foundation announced the final 20 cities in its 75-city community-based attainment network. This work is designed to help communities and regions dramatically increase the number of local residents with postsecondary credentials. Lumina’s focus on community-based attainment began because of the Foundation’s recognition that community-based networks are well-suited to play a role in institutional planning and can provide the implementation and coordination that is necessary to create impact at state and federal levels in order to improve the nation’s higher education system so that it better serves students.

“Two-thirds of Americans live in or near cities. Our nation cannot meet its growing demand for citizens who have earned a postsecondary credential without meaningful community-based efforts that are tightly focused on increasing educational attainment,” said Jamie Merisotis, Lumina’s president and CEO. “We are very pleased with the way this work has unfolded. With 75 communities across the nation working to align the work of business, civic and education efforts in their local communities, greater coordination will occur, resulting in tangible benefits for students of all ages. These students in turn will become graduates who form the backbone of the future economic, social and cultural success of those communities.”

These communities work closely with Lumina and national thought leaders to develop a customized action plan focused on reaching attainment goals to increase the percentage of high-quality credentials held by community residents. The collaborative effort connects participating cities with significant technical and planning assistance, data tools, flexible funding, and the ability to customize attainment plans that will best suit each community’s needs and the well-being of its residents. Local leaders heading up this work represent a range of sectors from higher education, to K-12, employers, human services, religious and a variety of other community-based organizations.

“Lumina Foundation’s leadership nationally to help coordinate and organize cross-sector partners to improve higher education attainment rates is an invaluable example in education philanthropy,” said Jeff Edmondson, Managing Director of StriveTogether. “They are encouraging local leaders and stakeholders to be thoughtful about how they align resources to scale local practices that get results and innovate in targeted ways as opposed to reinventing the wheel. As a result, we are learning from these cities and vice versa. We feel confident that this will lead to more sustainable solutions over the long-term and improve the quality of life for entire communities.”

The overall effort connects to Goal 2025, Lumina’s national goal to increase the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. Progress toward the goal will be measured by credentials earned after high school, including certificates, associate degrees and bachelor’s degrees held by local residents. The cities selected will work with Lumina through 2016 to expand and deepen the work they have demonstrated in advancing postsecondary attainment agendas.

The third and final cohort of communities include: Atlanta, Ga.; Birmingham, Ala.; Boise, Idaho; Charleston, S.C.; Charlotte, N.C.; Durham, N.C.; Fresno, Calif.; Miami, Fla.; Mobile, Ala.; Monterey Bay, Calif.; Racine, Wis.; Rockford, Ill.; Shasta County, Calif.; Southern Indiana; Springfield, Mo.; St. Louis, Mo.; Tampa, Fla.; Tulsa, Okla.; Twin Cities, Minn.; Tyler, Texas. To view a complete list of cities participating in this work, national thought leaders assisting these cities, and to learn more about this work please visit <http://www.luminafoundation.org/strategy-2-community-partnerships>.

**About Lumina Foundation:** Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina’s outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025. For more information, log on to: [www.luminafoundation.org](http://www.luminafoundation.org)

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