



ACHIEVE60AZ
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Achieve60AZ Receives Lumina Foundation Attainment Challenge Grant *\$100,000 Grant Will Assist Arizona in Reaching College Degree and Certificate Attainment Goal*

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(April 20, 2017) Phoenix, AZ—Achieve60AZ has been selected as a recipient of the Lumina Foundation’s Attainment Challenge Grant. The \$100,000 grant will allow Achieve60AZ to develop and complete strategic, communication and business plans to ensure ongoing support for Arizona’s community effort to increase attainment rates of college degrees or certificates for all Arizonans to 60 percent by 2030.

“We are grateful for the support of the Lumina Foundation as we continue to build the Achieve60AZ initiative,” **said Christine Thompson, Achieve60AZ Project Manager.** “Achieve60AZ is starting a new conversation about Arizona’s future which includes the entire educational pipeline and focuses on our state’s workforce and economic needs. It is encouraging to see the excitement from national entities such as the Lumina Foundation about the unique initiative we have launched here in Arizona.”

Achieve60AZ is a grassroots initiative supported by Governor Doug Ducey and a statewide coalition of more than 70 business, philanthropic, community and education organizations. The initiative establishes a new statewide goal that at least 60 percent of Arizonans achieve a college degree or certificate by 2030. Studies show that a more educated workforce, with training and credentials past high school, is a critical indicator of a state’s economic health and long-term viability. If met, the state could see an additional \$3.5 billion added to its economy, improve business recruitment efforts by providing a better workforce; increase per-capita earnings and reduce poverty among Arizonans. Currently, just 42 percent of Arizonans complete their education after high school, a rate lower than the national average.

“We applaud Achieve60AZ 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 Arizona 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.”

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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. The Lumina Grant will be added to a \$100,000 grant from Helios Education Foundation, received in January, to support capacity building and fundraising.

The Lumina grant will also support efforts to increase the enrollment and graduation of Arizona's underrepresented populations, especially Hispanic students. Just over 20 percent of Hispanic adults in Arizona hold a two- or four-year degree, compared to 45.1 percent of white Arizonans. Closing this equity gap would double Arizona's annual economic growth rate.

"It is critical that Achieve60AZ develops strategies to encourage and support the postsecondary education success of Arizona's lower-income, first generation, and Latino students," **said Paul Luna, President and CEO, Helios Education Foundation.** "Given the coming demographic shift in our state, it will be impossible for Arizona to meet the 60 percent attainment goal without significant increases in Latino student attainment."

To learn more about the Achieve60AZ, visit <http://achieve60az.com/>.

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About Achieve60AZ: More than 60 organizations in Arizona form [Achieve60AZ](#) that is fueled by a community-based effort to ensure Arizona remains competitive through the power of education. Their collective goal is to generate greater awareness of the importance of increasing Arizona's level of educational attainment while building support to improve college entry and completion; boost adult education and training; and fuel a pipeline of competitive talent for Arizona's employers. Achieve60AZ promotes support for the long-term steps needed in college entry and completion, adult education and training, and identifying and closing skills gaps to better prepare our workforce and our state for the future when the majority of jobs in Arizona will require some type of higher education.

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.