DEFINING “COLLEGE”
Any form of high-quality education or training beyond high school. This includes certificate programs, workforce training, apprenticeship programs, two- and four-year degree programs, and military service.

THE GOAL
The goal is to ensure that at least 60 percent of Americans have some sort of degree, certificate, or other postsecondary credential by 2025. This is to keep up with changing workforce demands that require education or training beyond high school to fill positions.¹

![Graph showing the goal of 60% with current data at 45.8% and 30% for West Virginians and Americans with postsecondary credentials.]

COLLEGE READINESS
Four out of every ten first time college freshmen in Mason County are not college ready.² Students who are not college ready may be required to take supplemental courses that help them fill in the knowledge gap to successfully complete college-level coursework.

![Image of students with mortarboards.]

LARGEST EMPLOYERS
Below are the largest employers in the county⁴:
- Mason County Board of Education
- Pleasant Valley Hospital, Inc.
- American Electric Power
- Walmart
- Lakin State Hospital

Approximately 9,210 people in the county are employed.

WORKFORCE PARTNERS
These businesses are partnering with regional Workforce programs⁴:
- Hino Motors
- American Electric Power
- Core 10
- Orders Construction
- The Ross Foundation

EDUCATIONAL OUTLOOK
COLLEGE-GOING RATE
Mason County, Class of 2017⁵
91% of high school seniors in Mason County graduated from high school in 2017.

TOP COLLEGE CHOICES
Below are the top three college and university choices for students in this county⁶:
- Marshall University
- West Virginia University
- West Virginia University at Parkersburg

CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES AWARDED
to students from Mason County, for Fall 2016-Spring 2017 semesters⁷

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificates</th>
<th>Associate Degrees</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Lumina Foundation | ² HEPC data for developmental education enrollment for first-time freshmen, Fall 2016 | ³ HEPC data, earned by residents in the county | ⁴ Workforce data | ⁵ HEPC/Dept. of Education data, rounded | ⁶ HEPC data based on 2016 high school graduates enrolling in college in the 2016-17 academic year | ⁷ To learn more, visit wvhepc.edu or wvctcs.org.
IN WEST VIRGINIA, COLLEGE IS AFFORDABLE.

THE VALUE OF A DEGREE
Deciding to go to college is an investment in your future -- and in West Virginia’s future. Students who earn a college degree earn hundreds of thousands of dollars more over a lifetime than students who do not pursue postsecondary education, plus students who go to college experience more stable employment and are more likely to be civically engaged and contribute to their communities. And with West Virginia’s changing economy, it is predicted that by 2020, more than half of all jobs in the state will require a postsecondary credential.1

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS
Part of the college experience is figuring out the right college pathway for you. Below is an explanation of some of the most common forms of college:

Public two-year colleges: Offer two-year associate degree programs in a wide variety of areas as well as certificate programs that can usually be completed in six - 18 months.

Public four-year colleges: Offer bachelor’s degree programs that usually take four years to complete; many offer master’s and doctoral degree programs.

Private, non-profit schools: Offer a wide variety of degrees and programs; tuition and fees are usually higher than those at public colleges, but many offer large scholarships through donor funds.

Public career and technical education centers: Offer training to high school students, adults seeking high school equivalency or specialized licenses.

FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES
West Virginia students have a number of in-state and federal financial aid opportunities available to them, many of which are grants and scholarships, which do not need to be repaid.

Below is a list of some financial aid opportunities for West Virginia students along with possible award amounts2:

- **Federal Pell Grant**, up to $5,920 annually
- **PROMISE Scholarship**, up to $4,750 annually
- **Higher Education Grant Program**, up to $2,700 annually
- **Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student Grant Program**, awards vary
- **Engineering, Science, and Technology Scholarship Program**, up to $3,000 annually
- **Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program**, up to $5,000 annually
- **Nursing Scholarship Program**, up to $15,000

West Virginia consistently ranks among the top states for providing financial aid to students.

SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS AWARDED
for Fall 2016-Spring 2017 semesters to students who graduated in Mason County and enrolled in a public college or university3

- Federal Pell Grant: $1,288,899
- PROMISE Scholarship: $566,943
- WV Higher Education Grant: $508,007
- Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship: $0
- Engineering, Science and Technology Scholarship: $12,000

In total, 1,212 scholarships and grants were awarded to high school graduates from the county in 2016-2017, totaling $3,651,239.

WHERE WE STAND
In order for Mason County to reach the national attainment goal of 60 percent, we need 163 high school graduates to commit to education and training beyond high school, which we define as college4. Students in Mason County may want to consider attending one of the below nearby two- or four-year colleges and universities.

- 3. BridgeValley Community and Technical College
- 5. Mountwest Community and Technical College
- 10. West Virginia University at Parkersburg
- 15. Marshall University
- 19. West Virginia State University
- 27. Ohio Valley University
- 28. University of Charleston
- 1. Wheeling
- 2. Bethany
- 3. Fairmont State University
- 4. Glenville State College
- 6. Huntington State Community College
- 7. Institute Community and Technical College
- 8. Jackson State Community College
- 9. Marshall University
- 11. Potomac State College
- 12. Princeton
- 13. Point Pleasant State College
- 14. Rio Grande Community College
- 16. Robert C. Byrd State Community College
- 17. Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College
- 18. Stonewall Jackson College
- 20. West Virginia University
- 21. West Virginia Wesleyan College
- 22. West Virginia University at Institute
- 23. West Virginia University at Montgomery
- 24. West Virginia University at Parkersburg
- 25. West Virginia University at Wheeling
- 26. West Virginia University at Wellsburg
- 27. West Virginia University at Bridgeport
- 28. West Virginia University at Wheeling

To learn more about financial aid opportunities available for West Virginia students, visit cfwv.com.

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1 Georgetown University | 2 Based on 2017-18 maximum awards | 3 HEPC data, scholarship dollars awarded to county residents | 4 HEPC data, number of students who need to go to college to reach a 60% college-going rate based on the last graduating class

Updated 05/18