



NEW ENGLAND BOARD  
of HIGHER EDUCATION 

# FALL 2019 LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Sept. 26, 2019 | Woodstock Inn – Woodstock, VT



# The Adult Student

A pair of glasses with a dark frame and thin temples is resting on a laptop keyboard. The keyboard is partially visible, showing keys like 'command', 'option', 'Z', 'X', 'C', 'V', 'B', 'S', and 'D'. The background is a solid, warm yellow color.

The population  
colleges—and the  
nation—can't afford  
to ignore

Goldie Blumenstyk, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*



## Who is the “adult student”?

A definition of adult students should center on their financial independence, commitments to family and work, and a personal identity “that is not predominantly anchored in the role of college student.”



In the United States, about 80 million people ages 25 through 65 have graduated from high school but don't have a college degree. Another 15 million have an associate degree but no bachelor's.

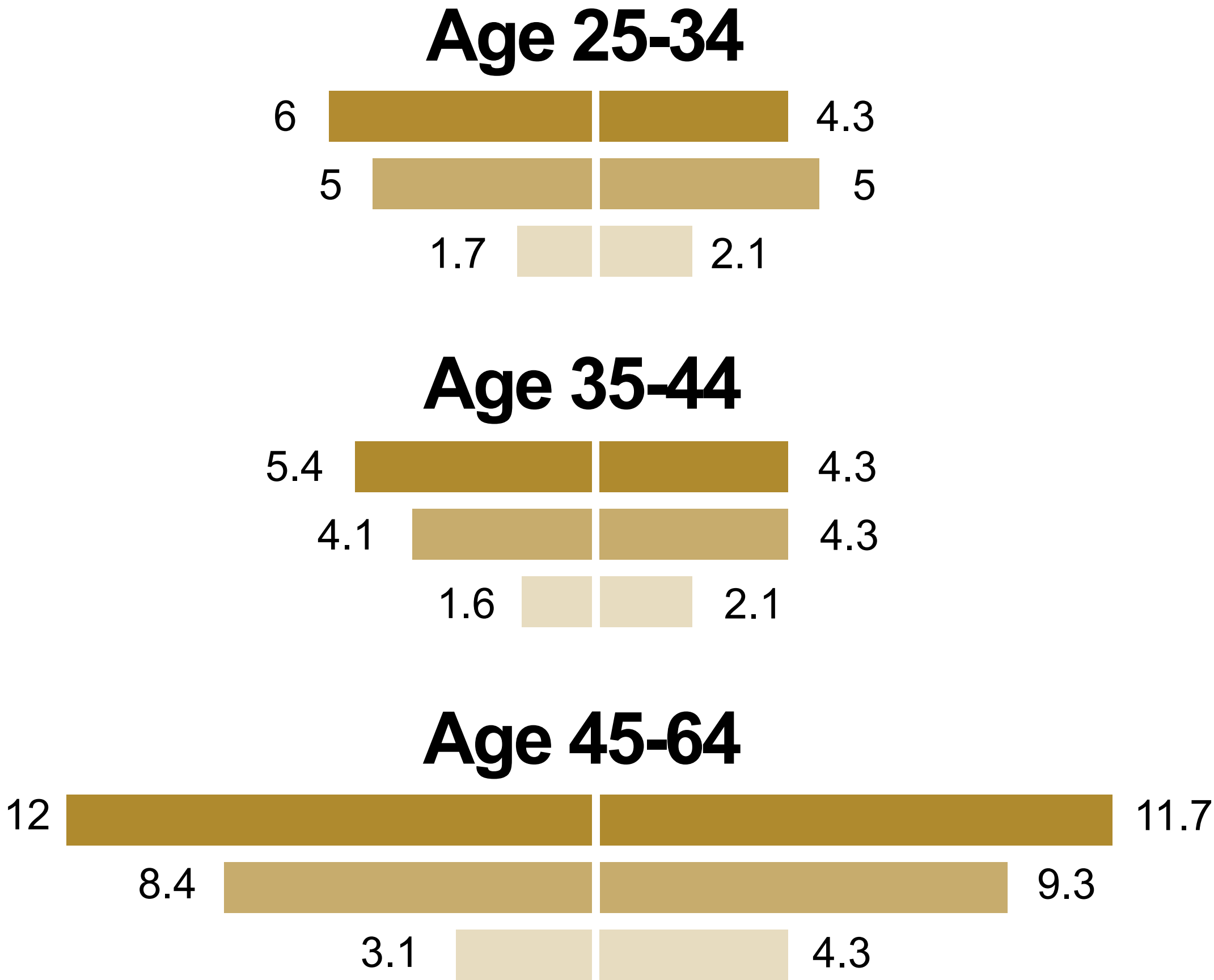


# The adult-student market

High School (includes equivalency)    Some college, no degree    Associate degree

MALE  
(millions)

FEMALE  
(millions)





By 2032, the country will have fewer students coming out of high school than it does today.



According to the Lumina Foundation, which has been tracking educational attainment since 2009, just under 47 percent of adults in the United States ages 25 to 64 have a postsecondary credential of value.



# Who are adult undergraduates

		Age 25-64	Age 18-24
SEX	Female	59.4%	54.2%
	Male	40.6%	45.8%
ATTENDANCE	Full time	39.7%	76.5%
	Part time	60.3%	23.5%
FINANCIAL AID	Receive Pell Grant	45.4%	38.7%
	Do not receive Pell Grant	54.6%	61.3%



## Racial disparity

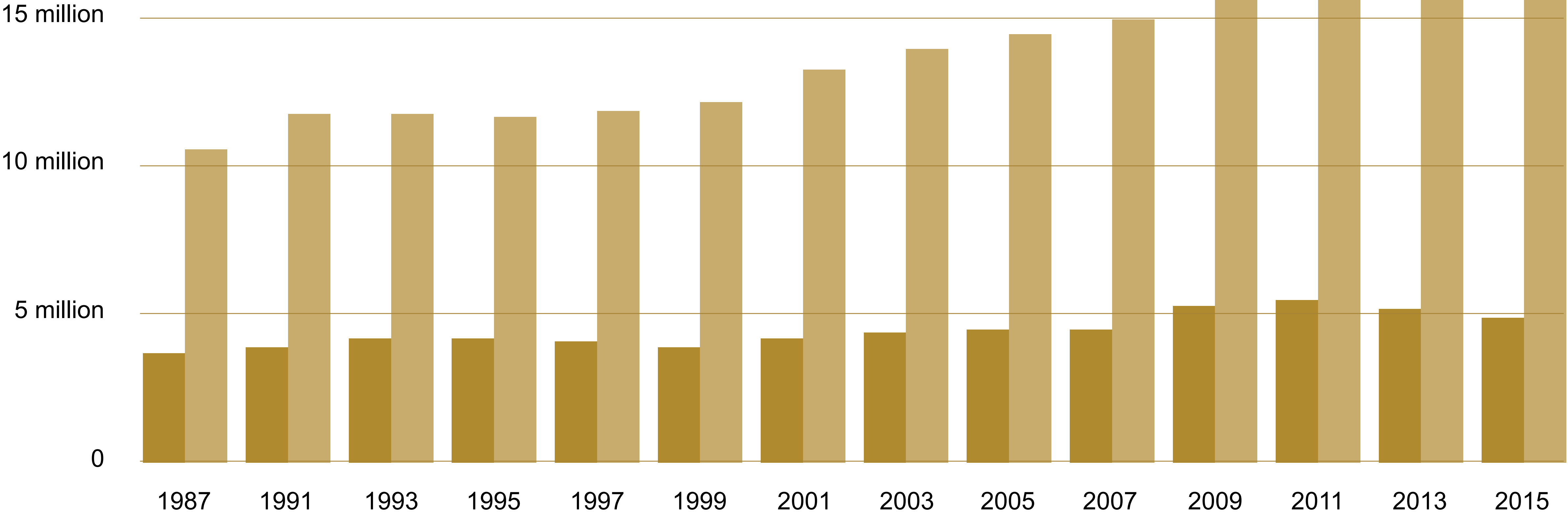
Among African-American adults who entered college in 2011, just 32 percent had finished six years later. The completion rate for Hispanic adults was 34 percent. That's compared with 44 percent for white adults and 58 percent for Asian adults.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center



# Undergraduate adult enrollment over time

Age 25 and older      Total





## The need

Experts forecast more than 3.5 million new jobs in advanced manufacturing nationally over the next decade. But shortages of workers with the necessary expertise mean some 2 million of them may not be filled.



# The economic case for adults to enroll

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

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Less than high-school graduate	<b>11.2%</b>
High-school graduate	<b>8.0%</b>
Some college or associate degree	<b>6.2%</b>
Bachelor's degree or higher	<b>3.4%</b>

## ANNUAL EARNINGS

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Less than high-school graduate	<b>\$27,040</b>
High-school graduate	<b>37,024</b>
Some college or associate degree	<b>41,496</b>
Bachelor's degree only	<b>60,996</b>
Bachelor's degree or higher	<b>66,508</b>

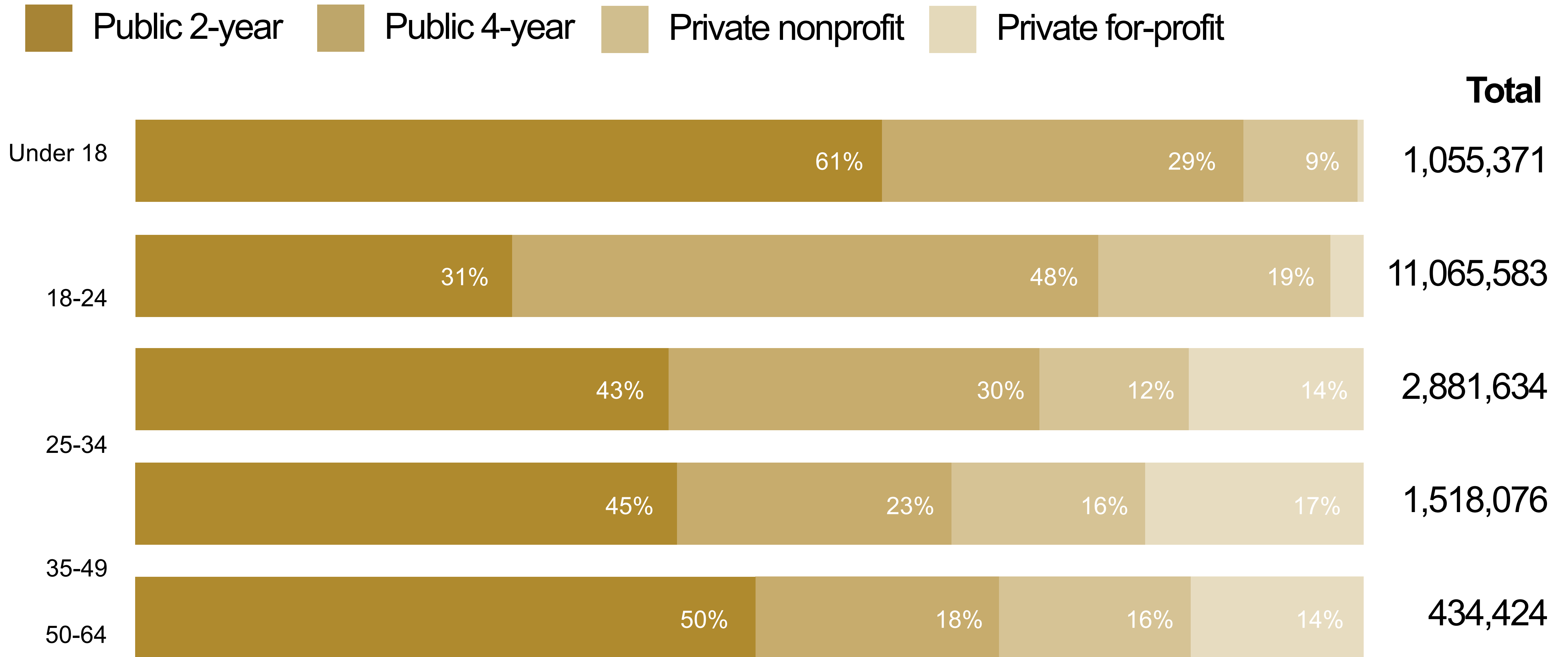


## Sector divide

The pattern of adult enrollment is markedly uneven. While adults make up 27 percent of all undergraduates nationally, only one-third of private-four-year colleges enroll adults at that rate or higher. Among public four-year colleges, less than one-third do. The for-profit sector, meanwhile, still attracts mainly adults.



# Adult enrollment by sector





# Which institutions draw the most adults?

Share of undergraduates age 25 and over at four-year colleges

## PUBLIC COLLEGES

U. of Maryland-University College	<b>79%</b>
Miami Dade College	<b>32%</b>
Santa Ana College	<b>57%</b>
St. Petersburg College	<b>50%</b>
Broward College	<b>36%</b>

## PRIVATE COLLEGES

<b>93%</b>	Western Governors U.
<b>91%</b>	Excelsior College
<b>73%</b>	Southern New Hampshire U.
<b>61%</b>	Liberty U.
<b>45%</b>	Brigham Young U.-Idaho



## Tools and strategies for colleges

- Colleges should offer prior learning assessment options.
- Services like advising and career planning should be available on nights and weekends, and via online options.
- Courses should be available in hybrid formats and compressed schedules.



## Academic quality and value

A delicate balance: Programs should be appealing and accessible to adults while including academic rigor. They should incorporate high-impact educational practices that take advantage of the experience and context adults bring to the classroom.

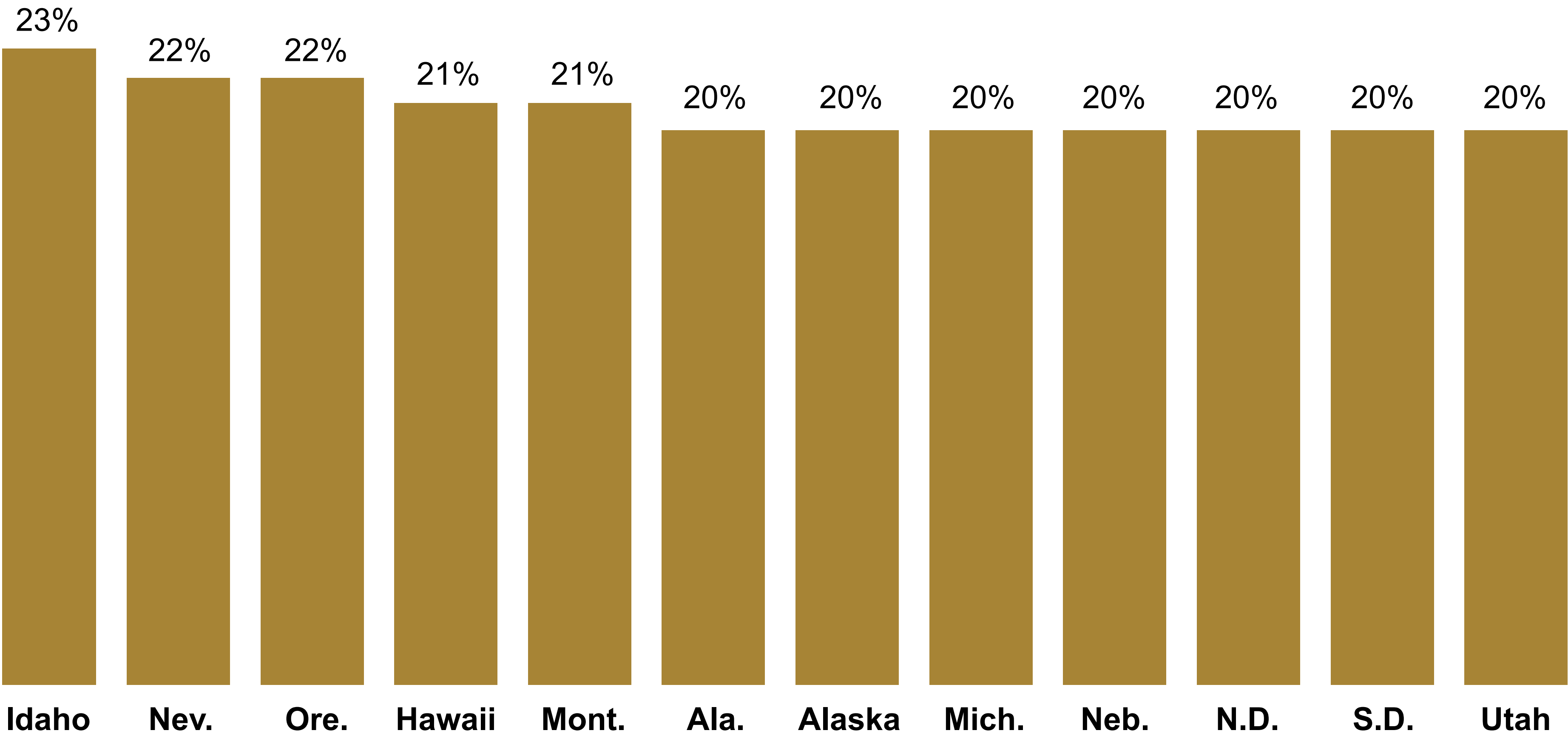


## Building networks

States, employers and community-based groups are linchpins. Collaborations with companies can be vital to scalability. Groups like the Graduate! Network help connect students with college opportunities.



# States with a significant share of students with some college no credential





# Tuition assistance from employers

Fewer are providing education benefits to their employees





## The future

As the numbers of traditional-age students decline, institutions in hard-hit regions will have to broaden their notions of their market and their product, even though they may not embrace such corporate terminology.



## The future

One thing is certain: With automation and other technology-driven innovations continuing to devour lower-skill jobs, over time the economy will grow even more unforgiving toward those with less education. The urgency for educating more adults beyond the high-school level will only increase.



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