



College Education Matters!

According to a recent study from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of jobs for workers with a bachelor's or higher degree is projected to increase from 38 million in 2006, or about 25 percent of the workforce, to more than 43 million by 2016. That's a growth rate of nearly 15 percent—faster than the average growth for all occupations, and faster than the rate for jobs at other education levels. Enrolling in college and earning a postsecondary degree is more important than ever before!

It could be assumed that with the state's HOPE Scholarship program, Georgia would rank among the top states with a large proportion of residents holding a bachelor's degree. However, the likelihood of enrolling in college, either 2-year or 4-year, by age 19 is low in Georgia, primarily because the state has one of the lowest high school graduation rates in the country.

The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education invites local community leaders and influencers to join with a coalition of state agencies and organizations in sending the vital message that education beyond high school matters.

Why Does College Matter? Because Education is an Investment that Pays Off for Individuals, Families, and Communities!

Higher pay.

- Additional education after high school can increase your pay. In 2011, the median weekly earnings of a high school graduate (with no additional postsecondary training) are 41 percent higher than those of a non-graduate. The median weekly earnings of a college graduate obtaining a bachelor's degree are 133 percent higher than those of a high school non-graduate.¹
- In 2009, the median full-time year-round worker in the United States with a four-year college degree earned \$55,700, and the median worker with an associate degree earned \$42,000. An individual with only a high school diploma earned an annual average of \$33,800.²
- The typical bachelor's degree recipient can expect to earn about 66 percent more over a 40-year working life than the typical high school graduate earns over the same period.³

¹U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. Last updated March 23, 2012.

²College Board. (2010). *Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*. Washington, DC: Author.

³Ibid.

More job security.

- The more education you have, the more likely it is you will always have a job. In 2011, the unemployment rate for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher was 4.3 percent. For those with some college the unemployment rate was 8.7 percent, and for those with an associate degree, the rate was 6.8 percent. Workers that are high school graduates (without any college), had a rate of 9.4 percent.⁴

Enhanced career choices.

- Over the decade 2006-2016, a greater proportion of total job openings are projected to be filled by workers with at least some college rather than by those with a high school degree or less. An estimated 57.3 percent of job openings are expected to be filled by those with some college or a bachelor's or higher degree, whereas 42.7 percent of jobs are expected to be filled by those with only a high school degree or less.⁵
- Education after high school is much more important now that it was for previous generations. Eight of the 20 fastest growing occupations generally require a bachelor's degree or higher as their most significant source of education and training.⁶
- Over the coming years, occupations that require a bachelor's degree or higher for an entry-level position will grow faster than the average for all occupations. Occupations that typically require a bachelor's degree or higher are expected to increase by 15.3 percent, or about 5 million new jobs, by 2016.⁷

Economic and health benefits for communities

- Individuals with higher levels of education are less likely than others to live in households that participate in social support programs.
- In 2009, 21 percent of high school graduates, 16 percent of those with some college but no degree, 14 percent of those with an associate degree, and 7 percent of bachelor's degree recipients lived in households that participated in Medicaid.
- In 2008, 27 percent of people with only a high school diploma smoked. Among four-year college graduates, only 11 percent smoked and over half of those had made an effort to stop smoking in the past year.
- In 2009, 19 percent of high school graduates volunteered through an organization. Among college graduates, the volunteer rate was 43 percent. College graduates on average volunteered six hours longer than high school graduates.

⁴Bureau of Labor Statistics. Household Data, Annual Averages. (2011).

⁵College Board. (2007). *Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*. Washington, DC: Author.

⁶Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook. Publish Date: March 29, 2012.

⁷Arlene Dohm & Lynn Shniper "Occupational employment projections to 2016." Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Monthly Labor Review*. November 2007.

What Can You Do? Here Are Actions Steps that You Can Take Now to Make a Difference!

Your help matters! The support and assistance of business, community, and government leaders are needed to ensure that Georgia's youth have a bright future. Helping our students plan for and succeed in college will enable them in the future to find good jobs, increase their income, avoid poverty, and reduce dependence on government and society.

- The annual Georgia Apply to College Week will be held in November. Help strengthen this effort by supporting young people in your community and providing them assistance in applying to college. Visit www.usg.edu/apply-to-college/ for more information and to volunteer.
- Make sure students in your community know about GAcollge411, a powerful website that helps Georgia students plan, apply, and pay for college. Beginning in middle school, students can create a free GAcollge411 account to help them create a personalized college plan. Log on and sign up at www.gacollge411.org.
- Engage businesses, organizations, and communities in the support of a college-going culture in Georgia by recruiting individuals to:
 - Volunteer with schools and non-profits as a mentor for young people;
 - Create internships, job shadowing, and coop work programs for students in local schools;
 - Sponsor a FridayNightCollege Lights event at one of one of your community's upcoming football or basketball games. Visit http://www.usg.edu/apply-to-college/documents/friday_night_college_lights.pdf download a How To guide for adopting a home game to share the "college education matters" message.
- If you are a parent, concerned community member, or educator, communicate these messages to your youth:
 - Going to college will help you get a better paying job upon graduation and help you support yourself and your family.
 - Going to college will grant you many more choices in where you live and how you live.
 - It's never too early to start planning, dreaming, and saving for college. Planning for college takes work, but it's worth it!
 - There are many resources to help you plan for college – school counselors, teachers, librarians, family members, and the Internet.
- If you are serving as a mentor for middle-school and high-school students, help them by:
 - Asking about the careers they are interested in and helping them research the colleges that offer degrees or studies in that field;
 - Encouraging them to establish an account at www.gacollge411.org and helping them use the tools on the website;
 - Assisting them in establishing a timetable on when to apply to college and the steps they must take to apply.

For more information on engaging business and community members, contact Diane Hopkins, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 233 Peachtree Street, Suite 2000, Atlanta, GA 30303; dhopkins@gpee.org; 404-223-2460.