

Talent and Educational Attainment

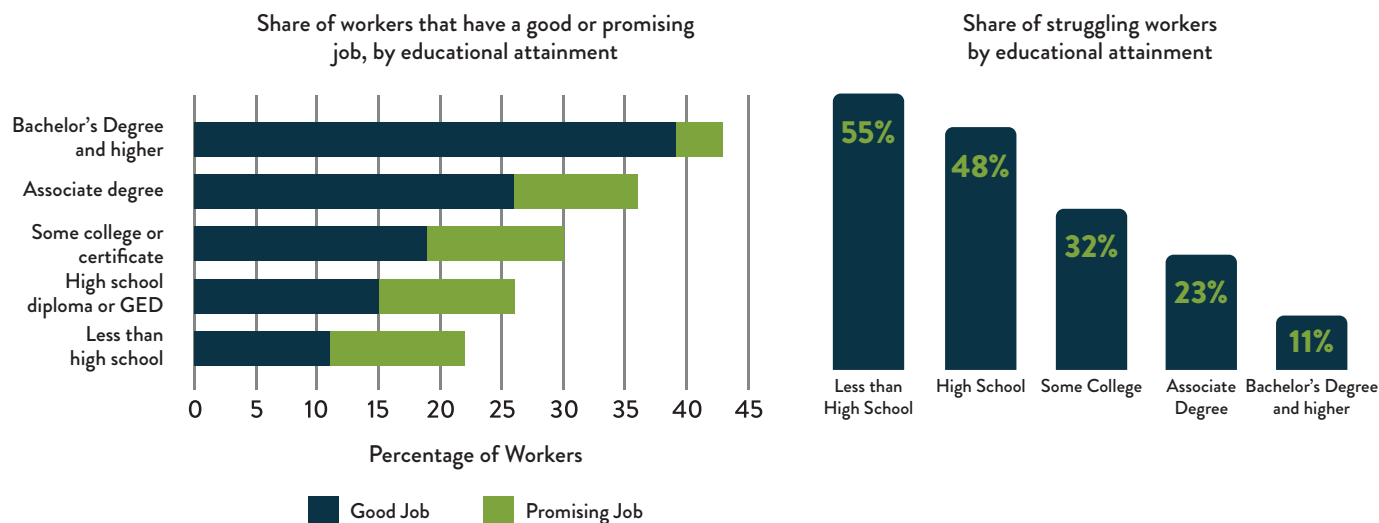
Growth & Competitiveness

In the modern economy, workforce capabilities are the most important single factor driving regional economic development. Regions grow when they nurture and provide employment opportunities that maximize their workers' full potential. When we lag behind our peer regions in worker knowledge, skills and expertise, it hampers our ability to compete.

We must address the Bakersfield/Kern region's low educational attainment and help workers advance their capabilities to achieve our goals for inclusive growth and deep prosperity.

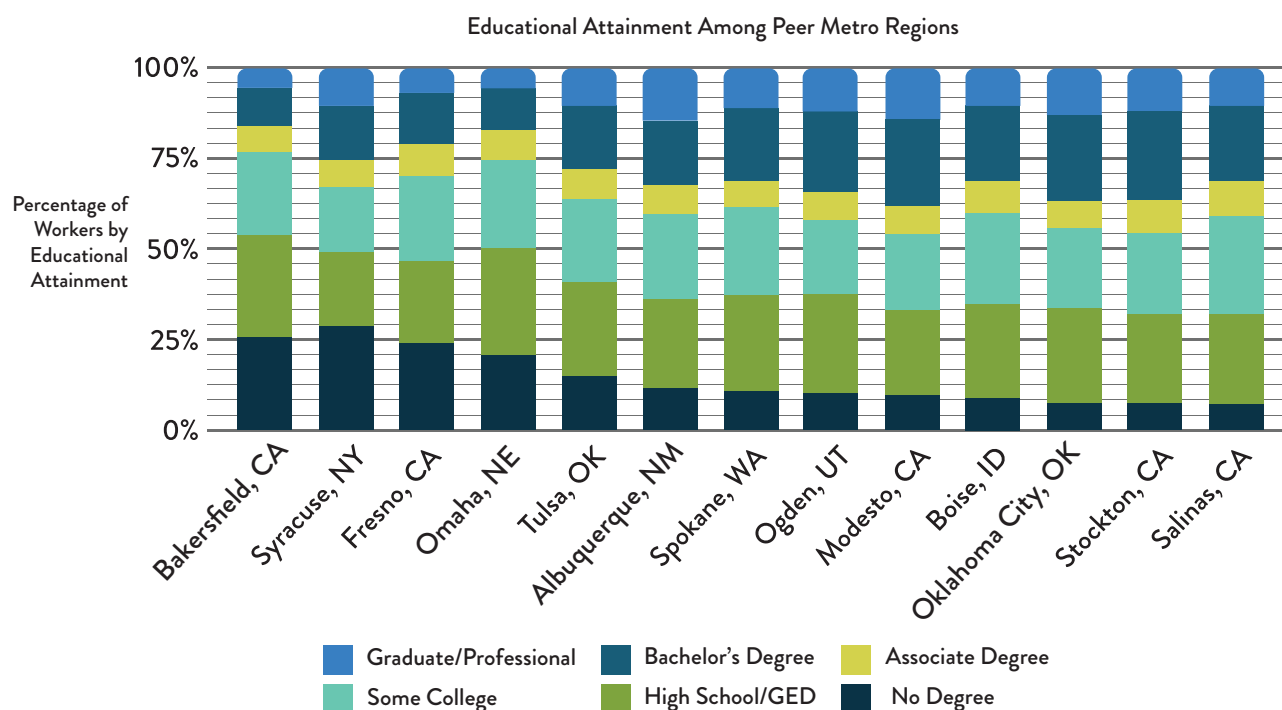
Education: A Key Attribute for Quality Jobs

Education is one of three attributes – along with experience and access – examined in the B3K Market Assessment that affect the type of job a worker is likely to have. Workers with a Bachelor's Degree or higher are more than twice as likely as those with only a high school diploma to have a job that allows them to achieve self-sufficiency and a middle-class lifestyle. Similarly, workers with less than a high school diploma are five times more likely to struggle to make ends meet.



Bakersfield/Kern Educational Attainment is a Competitive Disadvantage for Inclusive Growth

Educational attainment in the Bakersfield/Kern region lags behind our economic peers across the U.S. and within California. When stacked against peers, our region has among the largest share of residents lacking a high school degree or equivalent, and the smallest with a Bachelor's degree or above. This hurts our competitiveness and hinders the economic outcomes of our workers.



Moving Forward: Improving Educational Outcomes to Expand Prosperity

The economic success of individuals, families, businesses and entire regions correlates closely with educational attainment and the density of talent in a region. We will not be able to achieve inclusive growth or decrease the number of struggling families in the Bakersfield/Kern region without addressing our talent gaps. This includes improving educational attainment through certification programs, apprenticeships and traditional higher education. As we increase worker skills – combined with targeting support to industries that create higher quality jobs – more Bakersfield/Kern residents can help to both fuel inclusive growth and benefit from new opportunities for upward economic mobility across the region.