

## Santa Ana gets higher education grant

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SANTA ANA – Santa Ana has been selected as one of the first 20 communities around the country to receive up to \$200,000 in the next three years to help increase the numbers of people with college degrees.

The funding was announced Wednesday by the Lumina Foundation, a private foundation committed to a goal of increasing the percentage of Americans with high-quality college degrees, certificates and credentials to 60 percent by 2025.

The funding will be funneled to the Santa Ana College Foundation. Santa Ana was selected because of its longtime focus on post-secondary education and collaborative efforts.

“It’s one of the communities that has stuck with it, and shown evidence of action and results,” said Haley Glover, strategy director for Lumina.

College officials noted the work that the college, Santa Ana Partnership, Santa Ana Unified, Cal State Fullerton, UCI and the city are doing to improve postsecondary attainment.

“Our vision in Santa Ana is to have a college degree in every home by 2025,” said Erlinda J. Martinez, president of Santa Ana College. “Our city, school district, university, parent, community, and business partners have joined forces to make our city a national model for collaboration and talent development — we are working together toward that exciting goal.”

According to census data, about 17 percent of Santa Ana adults from 25-64 hold some kind of college credential. To achieve the goal of one college degree in every home by 2025, about 2,777 additional higher education credentials per year need to be generated by Santa Ana residents, college officials said.

“Research shows a direct correlation between thriving cities and education beyond high school,” said Jamie Merisotis, president and CEO of Lumina. “Increased attainment delivers stronger local economies, greater individual earning power and better quality of life. Every community in America wants that, and we’ve designed this work to give civic leaders the tools they need to be successful.”

He said that two-thirds of jobs being created in the nation require some form of post-secondary credential, compared to about a quarter in the early 1970s. About 38 percent of the U.S. population holds at least an associate degree.

## Article Courtesy of the Orange County Register

“As you can see, we have a long way to go,” he said Wednesday. “It’s abundantly clear that we’re facing a tremendous gap in the necessary talent to power our economy.”

According to a community survey conducted in connection with Santa Ana’s development of a strategic plan, the category that included youth, education and recreation ranked second in importance among respondents, followed by business and job growth.

The Santa Ana college degree attainment initiative will include business and community partners providing Santa Ana College students with service-based internships; links with veteran support programs; college completion plans for incoming Santa Ana College students; involvement of Santa Ana Unified students and parents with high school plans that bridge to college; expansion of retention support at CSUF and UCI for freshmen and transfer students from Santa Ana; and city establishment of higher education one-stop centers in libraries, the WORK center and community centers.

Among the Santa Ana Partnership initiatives in collaboration with the two universities is Santa Ana Adelante!. It provides Santa Ana Unified high school graduates the opportunity to transfer from Santa Ana College to UCI or CSUF upon completing their academic requirements.

Lumina, which is based in Indianapolis, plans to invest about \$4 million into the first group of communities, with each receiving \$200,000 through three years tied to achievement of their goals. By 2015, Lumina plans to have as many as 75 communities in the program.

Lumina officials said the program will help Santa Ana and the other participating communities network and learn from each other, as well as provide them with access to the expertise of more than a dozen partners that include American Chamber of Commerce executives, Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, and the Brookings Institution. They’ll help the communities analyze such issues key economic drivers and education needs. Higher educational attainment helps with higher employment, income and civic participation, Lumina officials said.

“These 20 communities represent the leading edge of a movement we’re seeing in cities across the country, communities collaborating around or prioritizing post-secondary attainment,” said Glover.

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