

3.1 Educational Attainment

The Importance

Educational Attainment is one measure of a workforce’s skill level. As the American economy continues to move away from traditional low-skill manufacturing jobs, highly educated and flexible workers are essential to attracting high-wage jobs and keeping existing employers well staffed.

High levels of educational attainment also add to the creativity and culture of a metropolitan area, providing the stimulus for creating new industries locally. This creativity also extends outside of economic concerns and provides for a more varied cultural scene and stronger support for arts and entertainment.

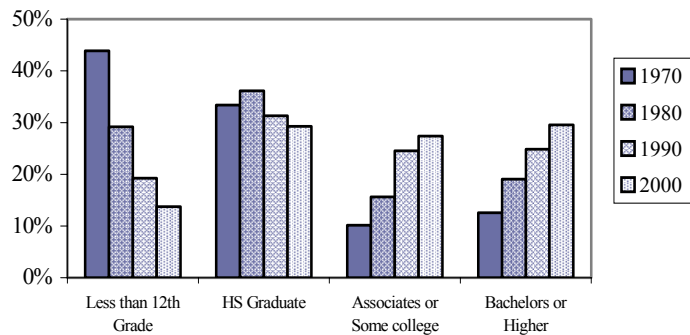
Sources for this Indicator

This indicator uses the data from the 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses.

Educational Attainment in the Capital District

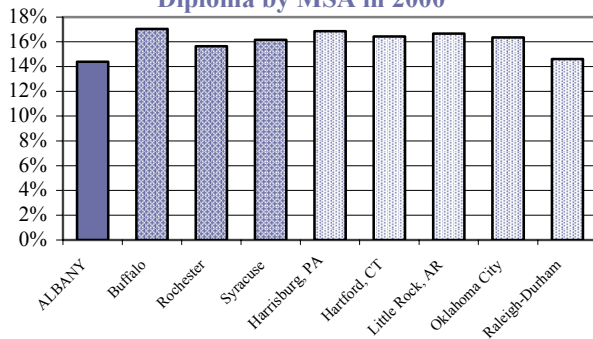
Over the past 30 years, the Capital District’s population has achieved a dramatically higher level of education. The percentage of Capital District residents who have not graduated from high school has dropped considerably since 1970 when nearly one out of two adults did not have a diploma. At the same time, the percentage of adults with college degrees has increased almost as radically. In 2000, 40% of Capital District adults had earned an Associates Degree or higher.

Capital District Adult Educational Attainment



During this shift towards a higher level of education, the number of people with their high school diploma but no college remained fairly constant.

Percent of Adults with No High School Diploma by MSA in 2000

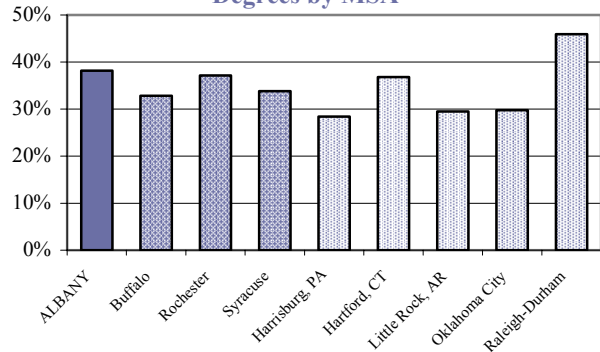


When compared with the other selected metropolitan areas, the Albany MSA has the lowest percentage of undereducated residents with 14.4% of adults lacking a high school diploma. Raleigh-Durham, NC is the second lowest with 14.6%. These two MSA’s also have the highest percentage of college and advanced degrees.

3.1 EDUCATION

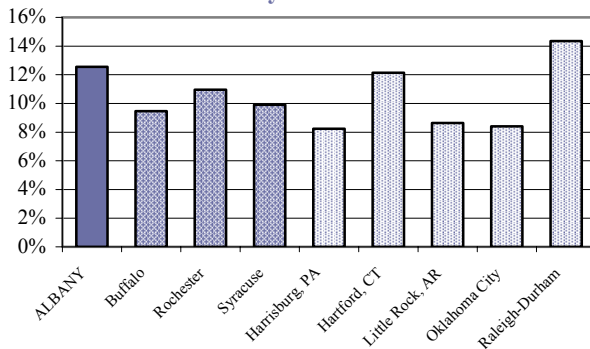
The Albany MSA has a higher percentage of adults with Associates and higher degrees than the other Upstate MSA's and all but one of the capital MSA's. The Region only lags well behind the Raleigh-Durham MSA with its strong technological and educational sectors. Hartford, with its strong finance and insurance sector and Rochester are close behind.

Percent of Adults with Associates or Higher Degrees by MSA



The Albany MSA also has the second highest percentage of adults with advanced degrees. The Region is much closer to Raleigh-Durham in advanced degrees. This is no doubt due to the large number of colleges and universities in the Capital District, as well as a number of technological ventures including GE's research laboratory.

Percent of Adults with Advanced Degrees by MSA



The Capital District has an attractive and well-educated workforce on the higher end of the spectrum. However, there is considerable room for improvement in educating the over 84,000 adults without a basic high school education. Significantly, African Americans in the Capital District are almost twice as likely than the overall population to lack a high school diploma. Not coincidentally, African Americans are also three times as likely to live in poverty.