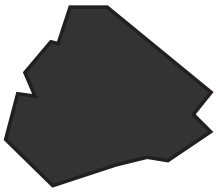


## Mercer County, WV



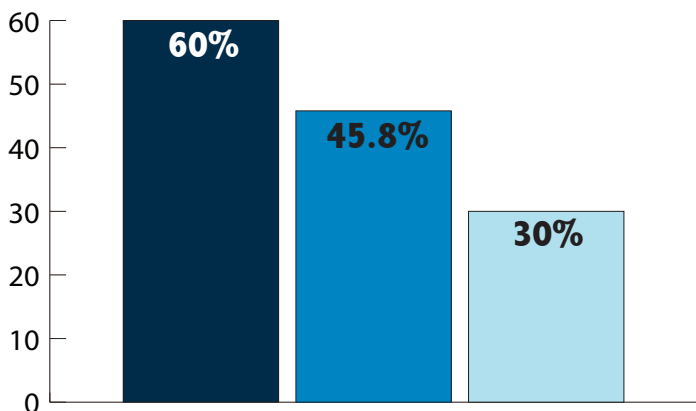
### DEFINING “COLLEGE”

Any form of high-quality education or training beyond high school.

This includes certificate programs, workforce training, apprenticeship programs, two- and four-year degree programs, and military service.

### THE GOAL

The goal is to ensure that at least 60 percent of Americans have some sort of degree, certificate, or other postsecondary credential by 2025. This is to keep up with changing workforce demands that require education or training beyond high school to fill positions.<sup>1</sup>



**National goal**  
**Americans currently with a postsecondary credential**  
**West Virginians currently with a postsecondary credential**

### COLLEGE READINESS

Three out of every ten first time college freshmen in Mercer County are **not college ready**.<sup>2</sup> Students who are not college ready may be required to take supplemental courses that help them fill in the knowledge gap to successfully complete college-level coursework.



### CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES AWARDED

to students from Mercer County, for Fall 2016-Spring 2017 semesters<sup>3</sup>



### JOB OUTLOOK

#### LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Below are the largest employers in the county<sup>4</sup>:

- ☑ Mercer County Board of Education
- ☑ Princeton Community Hospital Association, Inc.
- ☑ Echosphere, LLC
- ☑ Bluefield Regional Medical Center
- ☑ Walmart

Approximately 20,000 people in the county are employed.

#### WORKFORCE PARTNERS

These businesses are partnering with regional Workforce programs<sup>4</sup>:

- ☑ A Place to Heal, Inc.
- ☑ Athletic and Physical Therapy Services, Inc.
- ☑ Performance Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
- ☑ Pike Enterprises, LLC
- ☑ River City Construction Co.

### EDUCATIONAL OUTLOOK

#### COLLEGE-GOING RATE

# 46%

Mercer County, Class of 2017<sup>5</sup>



89% of high school seniors in Mercer County graduated from high school in 2017.

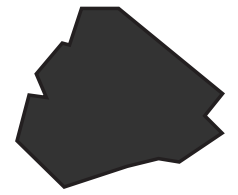
#### TOP COLLEGE CHOICES

Below are the top three college and university choices for students in this county<sup>6</sup>:

- ☑ Bluefield State College
- ☑ Concord University
- ☑ New River Community and Technical College

<sup>1</sup> Lumina Foundation | <sup>2</sup> HEPC data for developmental education enrollment for first-time freshmen, Fall 2016 | <sup>3</sup> HEPC data, earned by residents in the county | <sup>4</sup> Workforce To learn more, visit [whepc.edu](http://whepc.edu) or [wvctcs.org](http://wvctcs.org). data | <sup>5</sup> HEPC/Dept. of Education data, rounded | <sup>6</sup> HEPC data based on 2016 high school graduates enrolling in college in the 2016-17 academic year

# IN WEST VIRGINIA, COLLEGE IS AFFORDABLE.



## THE VALUE OF A DEGREE

Deciding to go to college is an investment in your future -- and in West Virginia's future. Students who earn a college degree earn hundreds of thousands of dollars more over a lifetime than students who do not pursue postsecondary education, plus students who go to college experience more stable employment and are more likely to be civically engaged and contribute to their communities. And with West Virginia's changing economy, it is predicted that by 2020, more than half of all jobs in the state will require a postsecondary credential.<sup>1</sup>

## TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

Part of the college experience is figuring out the right college pathway for you. Below is an explanation of some of the most common forms of college:

**Public two-year colleges:** Offer two-year associate degree programs in a wide variety of areas as well as certificate programs that can usually be completed in six - 18 months.

**Public four-year colleges:** Offer bachelor's degree programs that usually take four years to complete; many offer master's and doctoral degree programs.








**Private, non-profit schools:** Offer a wide variety of degrees and programs; tuition and fees are usually higher than those at public colleges, but many offer large scholarships through donor funds.

**Public career and technical education centers:** Offer training to high school students, adults seeking high school equivalency or specialized licenses.

## FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES

West Virginia students have a number of in-state and federal financial aid opportunities available to them, many of which are grants and scholarships, which do not need to be repaid.

Below is a list of some financial aid opportunities for West Virginia students along with possible award amounts<sup>2</sup>:

-  Federal Pell Grant, up to \$5,920 annually
-  PROMISE Scholarship, up to \$4,750 annually
-  Higher Education Grant Program, up to \$2,700 annually
-  Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student Grant Program, awards vary
-  Engineering, Science, and Technology Scholarship Program, up to \$3,000 annually
-  Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program, up to \$5,000 annually
-  Nursing Scholarship Program, up to \$15,000

 **West Virginia consistently ranks among the top states for providing financial aid to students.**

## SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS AWARDED

for Fall 2016-Spring 2017 semesters to students who graduated in Mercer County and enrolled in a public college or university<sup>3</sup>



### Federal Pell Grant

\$4,080,554



### PROMISE Scholarship

\$1,227,945



### WV Higher Education Grant

\$1,514,857



### Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship

\$0



### Engineering, Science and Technology Scholarship

\$16,500

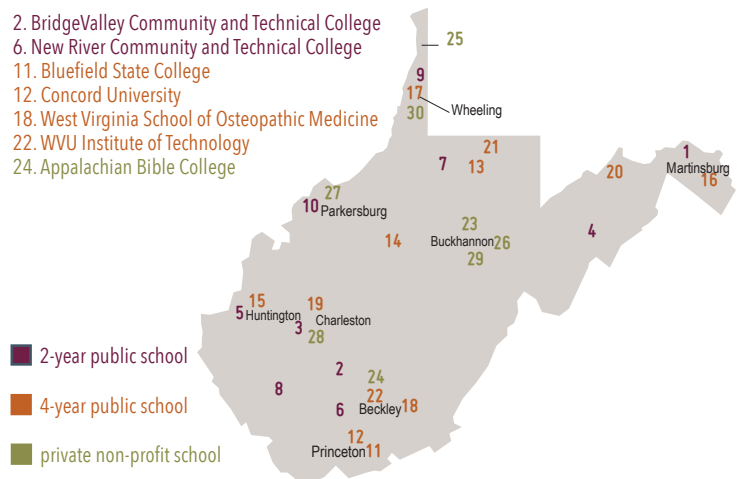


**In total, 2,720 scholarships and grants were awarded to high school graduates from the county in 2016-2017, totaling \$8,420,897.**

## WHERE WE STAND

In order for **Mercer County** to reach the national attainment goal of 60 percent, we need 331 high school graduates to commit to education and training beyond high school, which we define as college<sup>4</sup>. Students in **Mercer County** may want to consider attending one of the below nearby two- or four-year colleges and universities.

2. BridgeValley Community and Technical College
6. New River Community and Technical College
11. Bluefield State College
12. Concord University
18. West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
22. WVU Institute of Technology
24. Appalachian Bible College



<sup>1</sup> Georgetown University | <sup>2</sup> Based on 2017-18 maximum awards | <sup>3</sup> HEPC data, scholarship dollars awarded to county residents | <sup>4</sup> HEPC data, number of students who need to go to college to reach a 60% college-going rate based on the last graduating class