

# Education and Workforce Development

## 2015 Assessment of Needs and Priorities in Clark and Floyd Counties



The Community Foundation of Southern Indiana surveyed Clark and Floyd county residents, nonprofit community service organizations, business and community leaders, and our own fund holders to develop strategic community goals based on needs and priorities. Information from the needs assessment report will be used to guide the Community Foundation in its grant making to support the community's greatest needs and highest priorities. Basic human needs, education and workforce development, healthful living, economy, arts and culture, and community building were the areas highlighted in the report. While respondents shared that they are proud of this community, its history and culture and they feel safe and enjoy opportunities to engage in the community, they also recognize that more needs to be done to better meet the needs of local residents and build an educated workforce and a strong economy.

*Education and workforce development* looks at how education plays a role in many aspects of quality of life and community well-being. Improvements in educational attainment and the quality of education in a community can put a wide range of positive feedback loops in motion in all areas: from economy to healthful living, arts and culture.

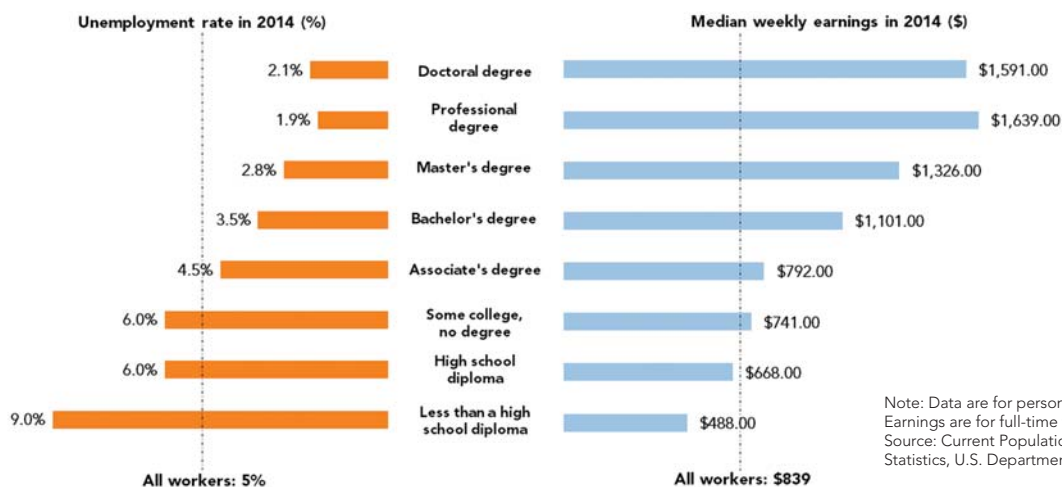
### Community Perceptions of Needs and Priorities

Priorities for Education and Workforce Development in Southern Indiana
1 – High school completion
2 – Early childhood education and care (birth to age five)
3 – Post high school certificates and associate's degree programs
4 – Educational opportunities targeting working adult learners
5 – College scholarships and financial assistance

Clark and Floyd counties are home to four public school districts, a community college, and a regional public university. In addition, the area has a number of private and charter school options for primary and secondary education. Educational attainment is a key leverage point for building a strong local economy, meeting basic needs, addressing health and wellness, supporting vibrant arts and cultural enrichment and building a strong and engaged community.

- 20.3% of Clark and Floyd County residents have attained a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 28.8% nationally
- Nearly 8 out of 10 Clark and Floyd County residents have an associate's degree or less compared to just over 7 out of 10 nationally.
- To bring local educational attainment rates up to national rates for 2009-2013, roughly 12,000 additional people need to complete a bachelor's degree and a portion of those (roughly half) need to go on for graduate or professional degrees.

### Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Education Attainment



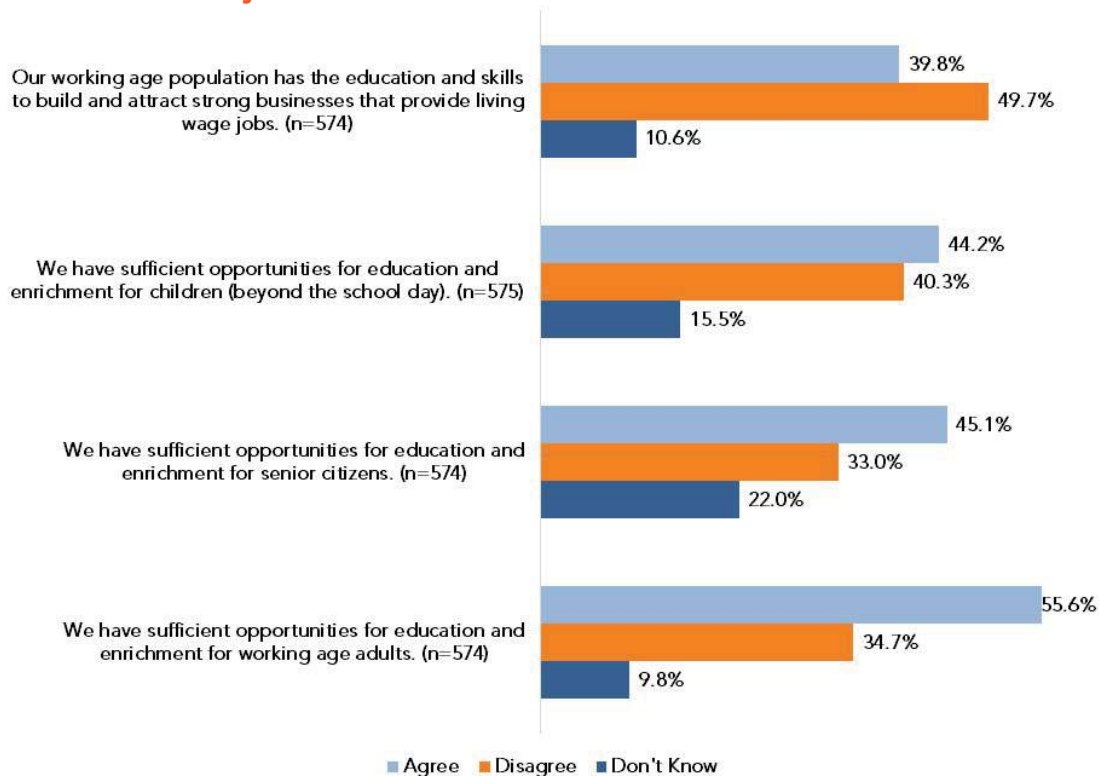
A potential response to low educational attainment in the area is to import a qualified workforce. Business and community leaders ranked, “Well-paid jobs”, as the number one factor for attracting a qualified workforce, but the area struggles to attract well-paid jobs because of the lack of a highly qualified labor force. “A qualified workforce” was the number one factor for building, attracting and retaining businesses that provide good jobs.

Respondents place high school completion and early childhood education and care at the top of their priority list. Post-high school certificates, associate’s degree programs and opportunities for working adult learners are next with college scholarships and financial assistance rounding out the top five priorities. Only 39.8% of respondents agreed that our working age population has the education and skills to build and attract strong businesses that provide living wage jobs.

Public data on both the economy and education suggest that, in fact, all of these areas should be priorities for the region. High school completion is essential to furthering educational attainment, and drop-out prevention has tremendous costsaving benefits. Increasing the portion of high school students who complete their degree should, over time, reduce the need for high school level adult education, allowing those resources to be directed to reskilling to meet the needs of changing technologies and serve those making mid-career shifts.

Post-high school certificates and opportunities for working age adults are an important way to mitigate the low educational attainment of our working age population. Rapid changes in technology mean that even skilled laborers may need access to additional training and reskilling throughout their careers.

### Perceptions of Community Performance in Education Enrichment



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