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# Adult Learning in Focus

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## Adult Learning in Focus: National and State-by-State Data

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- CAEL is the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
- Not-for-profit organization with 35 years of experience in Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development
- Mission to remove barriers so that adult learners can be successful in postsecondary education and training





# Adult Learning in Focus

- This 2008 report was produced with funding from Lumina Foundation for Higher Education and in partnership with NCHEMS
- The objective is to provide a comprehensive look at adult learners in America at the national and state levels and provide new data and tools for policy makers



# Adult Learning In Focus

- National report on current size and shape of adult learning, barriers to adult participation
- State measures and comparisons among 50 states
- State-by-state profiles
- Policy Framework for assessment and improvement



# Adult Learning In Focus

**Emerging issues of  
global competitiveness  
and  
demographics of the U.S. workforce  
have brought focus to this issue**



# Adult Learning in Focus

- A strong and growing argument for higher educational attainment in the United States population and workforce
- Jobs that are expected to support the economy in the coming years will depend on a skilled workforce that is able to learn and adapt quickly to new challenges



# Adult Learning in Focus

## **BUT...**

A significant portion of the adult U.S. population has never taken a single college class toward a degree

Of the population aged 25-64, approximately 43% (over 67 Million) have only a high school diploma or less

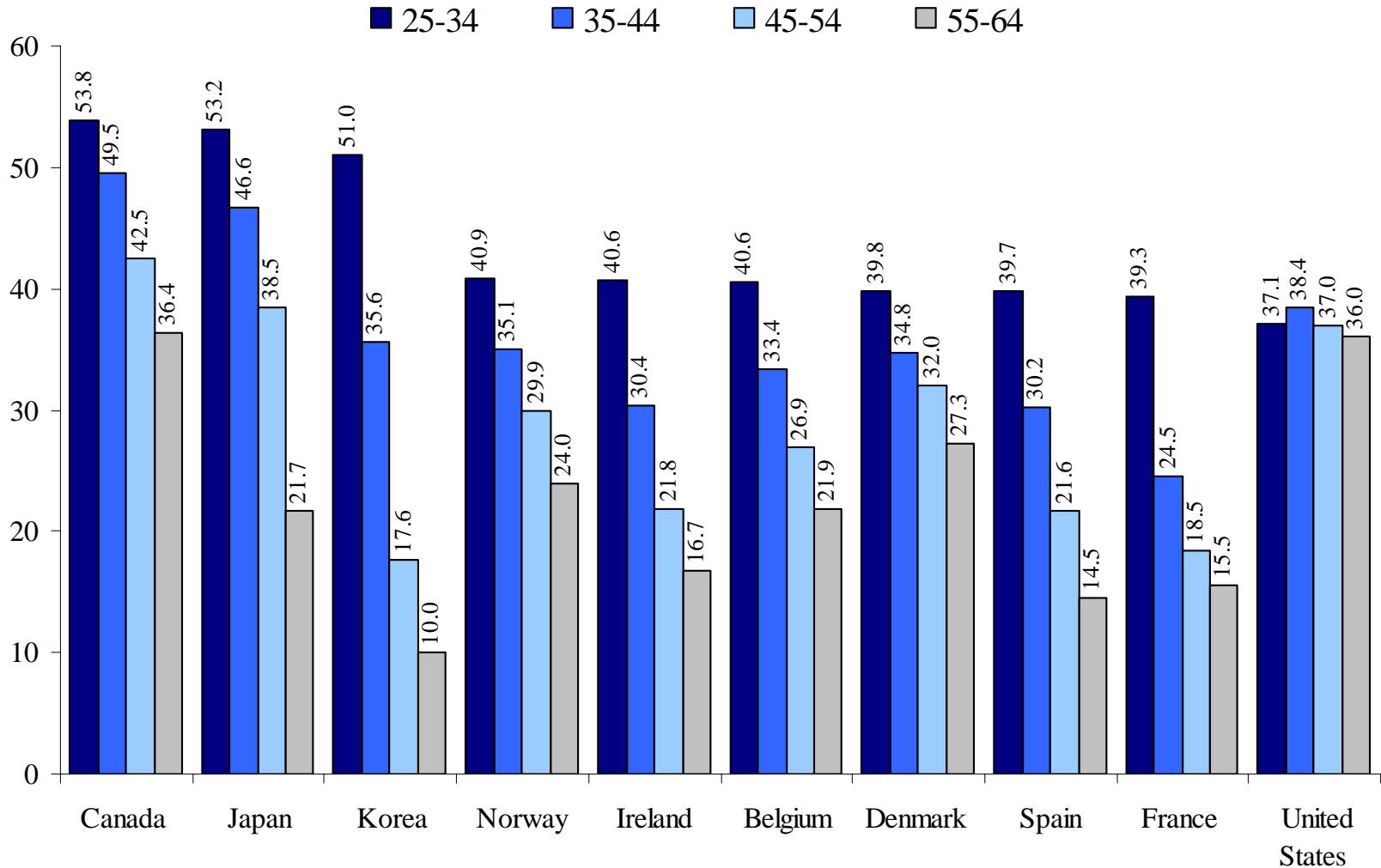


# Adult Learning in Focus

- Other nations are overcoming the historic lead that the United States has enjoyed in educational attainment levels
- This is not because the U.S. has declined, but because other nations have caught up with and surpassed us



# Percent of Adults with an Associates Degree or Higher by Age-Group – The U.S. and Leading OECD Countries (2005)



Source: Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2007*



# Adult Learning in Focus

- As baby boomers ‘retire’ from current jobs, knowledge and skills gaps grow
- Pipeline of young college graduates will not be enough to meet future workforce skills demands

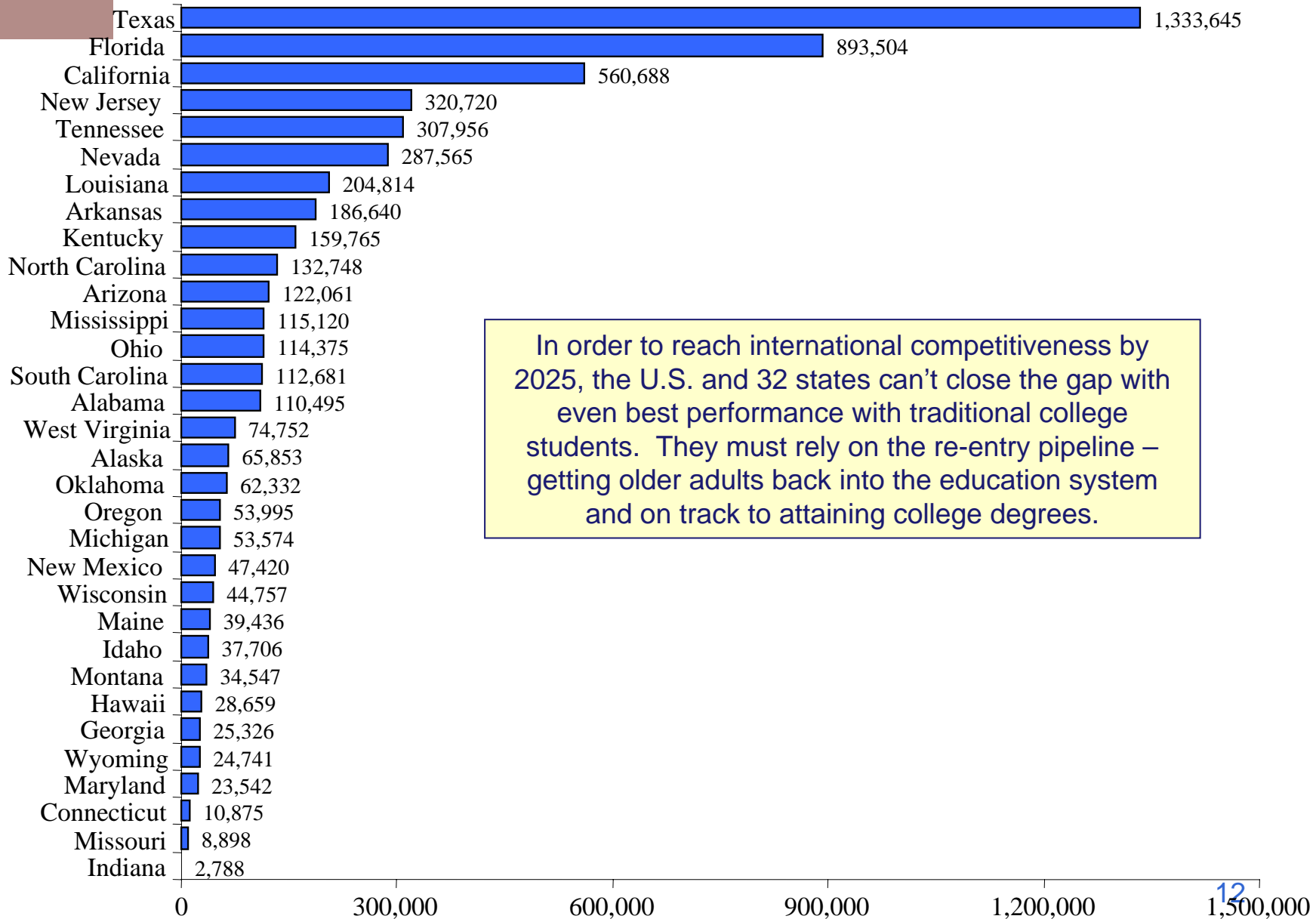


# Adult Learning in Focus

- At current levels of performance, nine states are ‘on track’ to meet the competitive benchmark of 55% of adults with college degrees
- 9 more states could meet the benchmark if they improved performance to match the best-performing states
- 32 states unable to meet the benchmark, even if they match the best state performance with traditional college-age students at each stage of the educational pipeline



# Even Best Performance with Traditional College-Aged Students at Each Stage of the Educational Pipeline Will Leave Gaps in More than 30 States



In order to reach international competitiveness by 2025, the U.S. and 32 states can't close the gap with even best performance with traditional college students. They must rely on the re-entry pipeline – getting older adults back into the education system and on track to attaining college degrees.



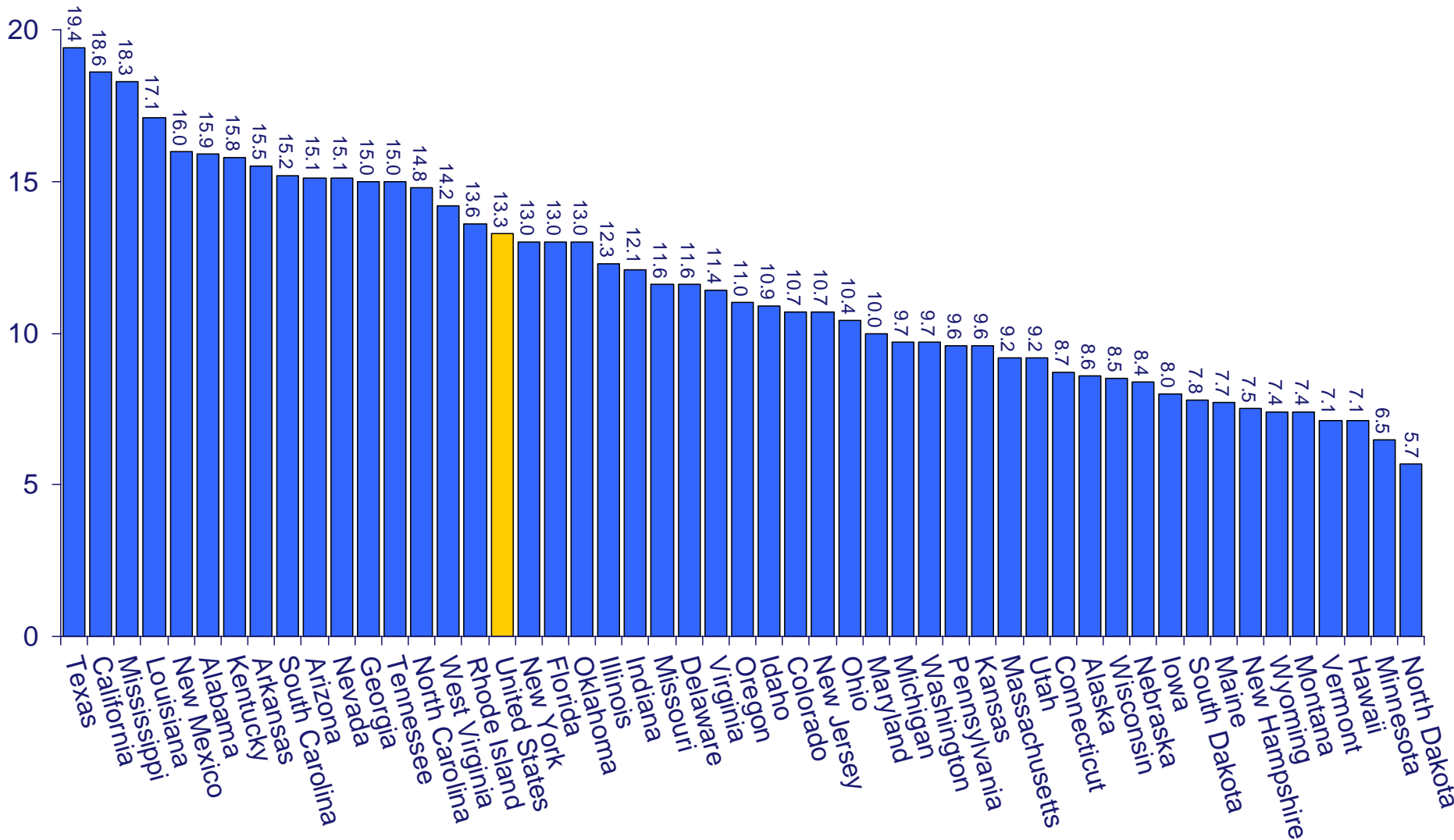
# Adult Learning in Focus

Main sources will have to be tapped to rectify this shortfall and meet the benchmark:

- Adults (25-64) who never completed high school – 21 million
- Adults with high school diplomas but no college—46 million
- Adults with some college but no degree—32 million



# Adults Age 25-64 with Less than a High School Diploma, 2006

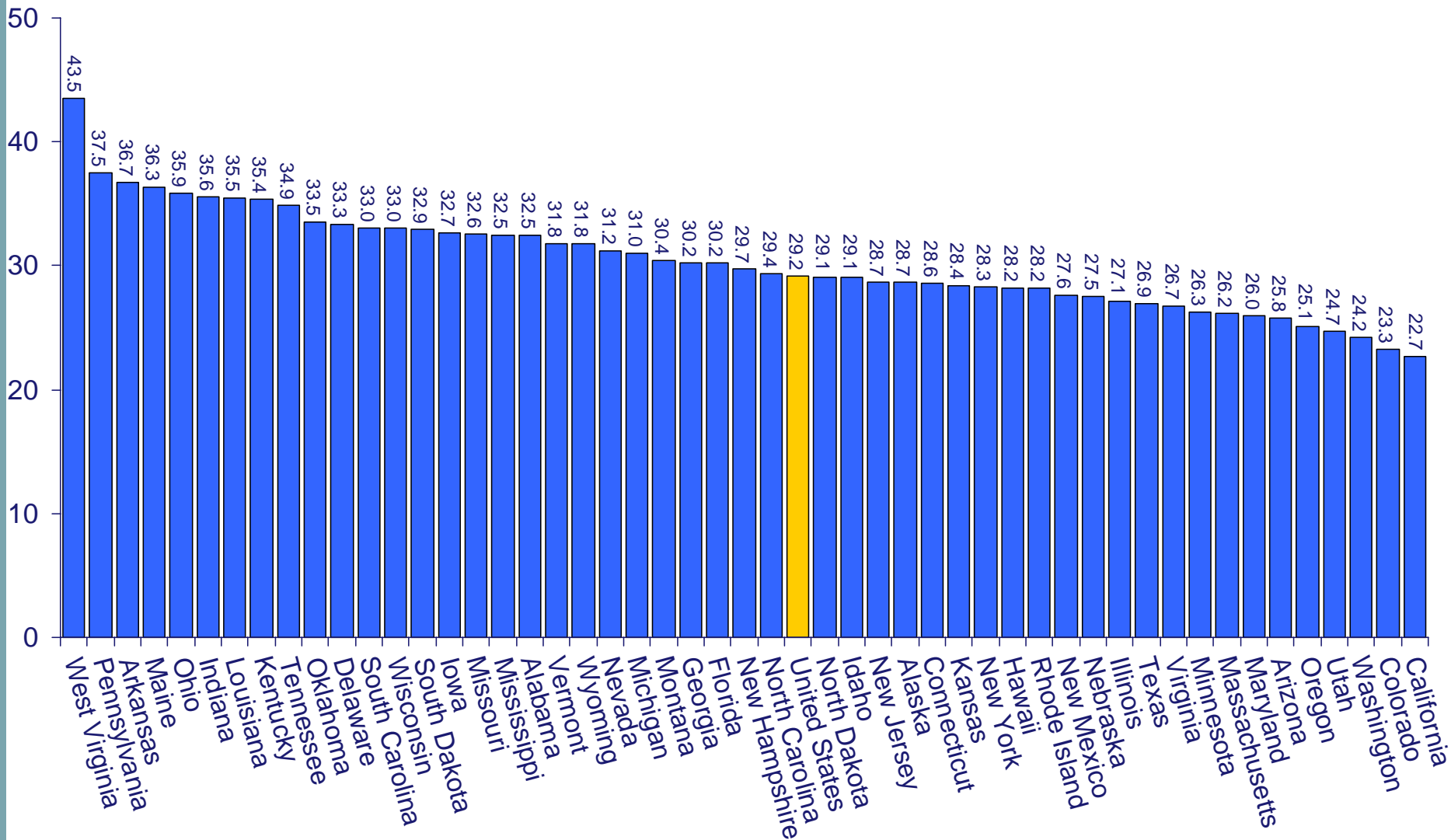


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

Puerto Rico 26.5



# Adults Age 25-64 with a High School Diploma but No College, 2006

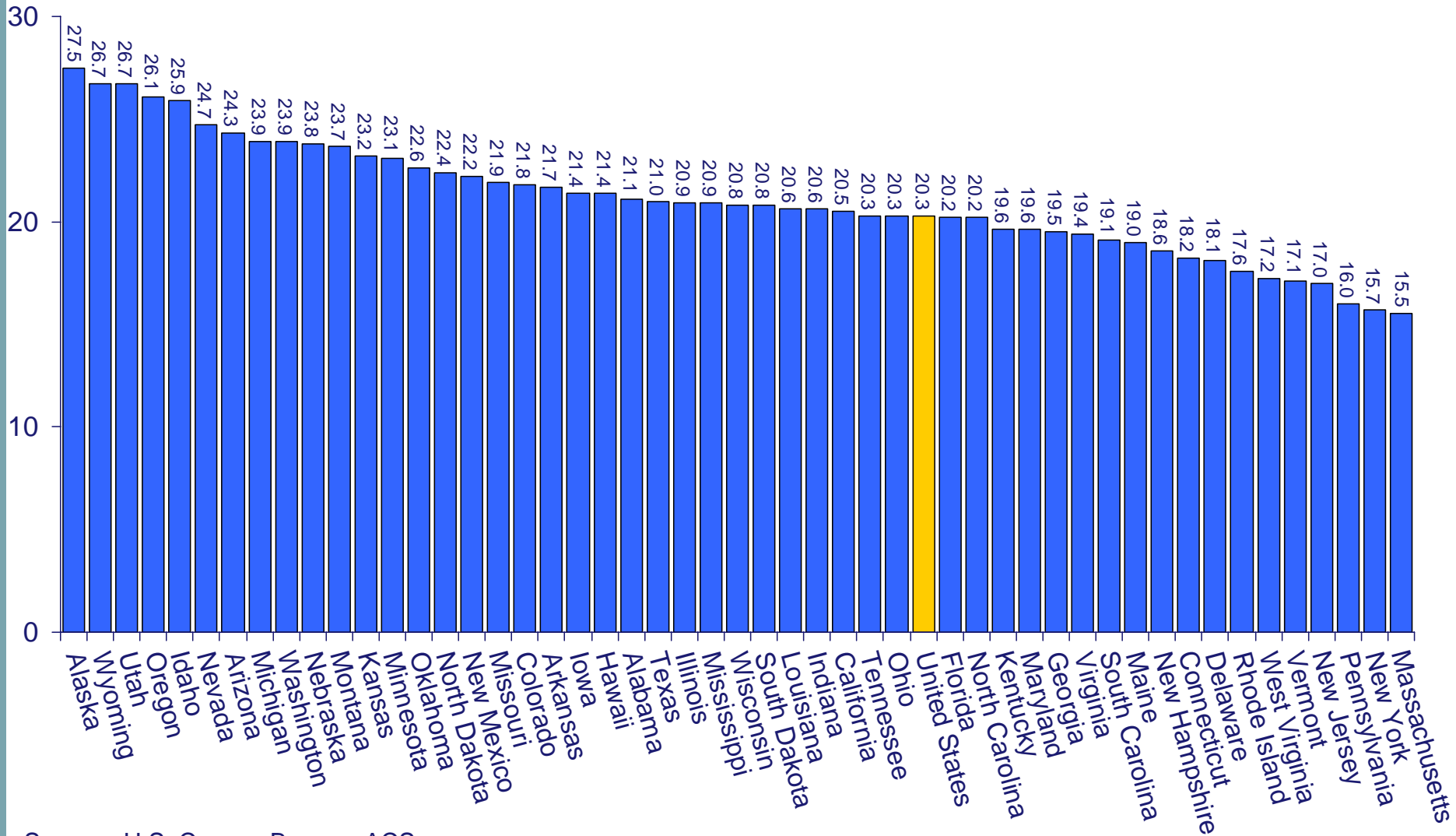


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

Puerto Rico 27.0



# Adults Age 25-64 with Some College but No Degree, 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

Puerto Rico 13.6



# Factors Affecting Adult Participation

Affordability

Accessibility

Aspiration



## Affordability and the Role of Financial Assistance

- Current federal financial aid policies disadvantage working adults
- Many state policies follow federal eligibility rules
- Federal workforce development programs can sometimes pay for postsecondary study, but eligibility and program restrictions pose limitations



# Federal Financial Aid

- Pell Grants are technically available to less than half-time students, but do not allow these students to count living expenses as part of cost of education
- Pell Grants cannot be used for non-credit programs
- Federal loans are available only to students attending half-time or more



# State-Based Aid

## State financial aid policies

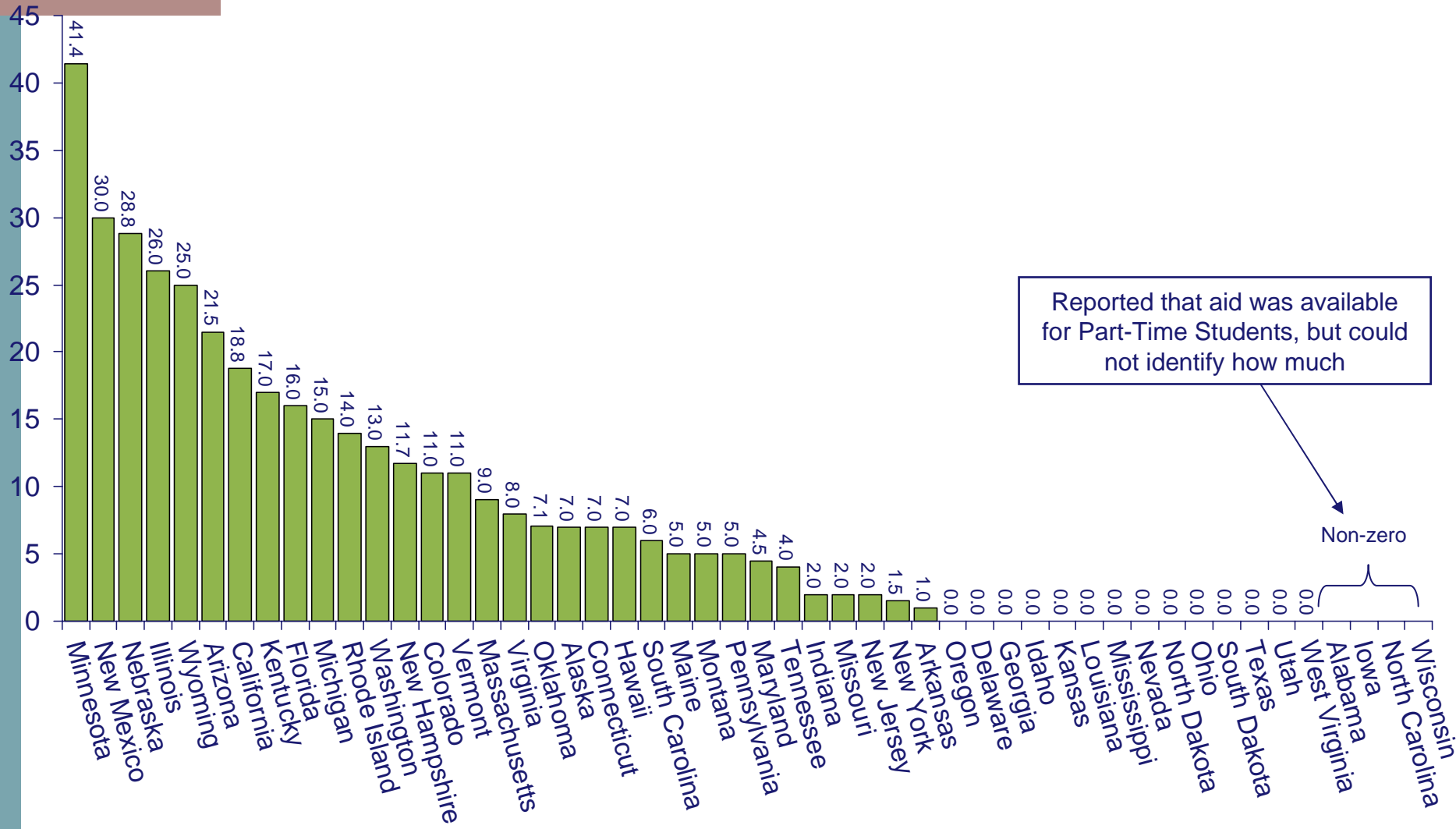
- 14 states do not provide *any* need-based aid to part-time students
- 17 states devote *less than 10 percent* of need-based aid funds to part-timers

### But

- 9 states devote *between 10 percent and 20 percent* of need-based aid to part-time students
- 6 devote *more than 20 percent* of need-based aid funds to part-timers



# Proportion of Need-Based Aid Distributed to Part-Time Students 2004-05



Source: NCHEMS Student Financial Aid Survey



# State-Based Aid

- Most states do not provide grant aid to less than half-time students
- Some states provide grants to students in short-term, intensive, non-degree programs that do not qualify for federal aid
- Almost all states have early aid application deadlines that may disadvantage adults with multiple obligations



# Sources of Financial Aid

	<b>% Part Time</b>	<b>Average Award</b>
■ Pell Grants	20.3	\$1,953
■ Veterans Assistance	41.9	\$2,414
■ College Work Study	16.0	\$3,019
■ Loan	17.7	\$4,694
■ Employer Assistance	84.1	\$1,693
■ Scholarship/Tuition Red.	17.4	\$1,765
■ <u>Other Aid</u>	24.5	\$1,812
■ All Aid	33.2	\$2,429

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2003; Survey of Income Program Participants (SIPP), 2001–2002



# Affordability Solutions

Some recommendations include ensuring sufficient resources for part-time study, promoting and supporting new financing strategies such as Lifelong Learning Accounts, and encouraging higher education institutions to offer flexible payment plans and other financial help to adult learners.

# Accessibility Solutions



States can:

- provide incentive funding to encourage institutions to improve their services and programs for adult learners
- change reimbursement formulas for public institutions so that there are no disincentives to serving adult and other nontraditional learners



# Accessibility Solutions

- encourage better transfer processes between noncredit and for-credit learning
- create better pathways between two- and four-year institutions



# Aspiration Solutions

States can potentially improve college going rates of adults by raising awareness of the importance of a skilled workforce and the benefits of education for individuals' long-term employability and earnings



# State-Level Data Gaps

Greater federal, state, and organizational attention to filling gaps in the data will enhance further national understanding of adult learning and how it might be improved



# Some Data Gaps

- Degrees and certificates granted to adults
- Enrollment by adults in noncredit programs as a proportion of all adults in the population
- College going rates of GED recipients
- Percentage of employees participating in any form of postsecondary training receiving partial or full support from employers



# State Policies Affecting Adult Learners

- Many state policies influence adult educational participation and success
- Statewide assessments of the impact of policies and procedures on adult learning would likely lead to enhanced data and documentation
- The 2007 CAEL/SREB Adult Learning Policy Review Framework can help address this important gap in documentation

# Policies and Practices That Help Adult Learners



- Raise **Awareness** about the need for adult learning
- Address **Affordability**: reduce the cost of postsecondary learning for adults
- Address **Accessibility**: Put postsecondary learning within reach of adults
- Make the Right **Connections**: advising, career pathways, education pathways, articulation and credentialing