ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

GOAL: All residents in Calhoun County will have opportunities for increased earning potential through education.

RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING INDICATOR: Education matters in economic development. Regions that cultivate an educated workforce are more likely to compete effectively in today’s demanding world economy. Moreover, educational attainment is strongly tied to personal income growth. Incomes increase significantly with higher educational attainment. A critical challenge facing any region is the ability to attract, retain and develop talented workers. A knowledge-based economy places more emphasis on skills and mental competencies than on physical strength and manual competencies. This is true across all sectors from manufacturing to health to business services. The educational attainment of area residents is increasingly important to the success of local businesses to traverse changing markets by adopting new technologies and practices, and to enter a promising emerging economy.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Education beyond high school remains relatively low as one out of every ten adult Calhoun County residents does not complete high school. A relatively small share of residents age 25 and over hold a bachelor’s degree or higher (20.1% compared to 27.0% statewide and 29.7% nationally). Educated young adults in Calhoun County appear to be highly mobile which reflects negatively on the county’s perceived quality of life. Many young adults could choose to take jobs in more attractive or larger metropolitan areas, or to live outside the county if they do work in the county. Significant income disparity by gender continues to be a concern across all educational levels.