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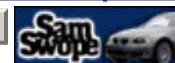
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A degree of progress

Study finds more local adults are getting better educated

By **David Goetz**
dgoetz@courier-journal.com
 The Courier-Journal

Louisville's drive to create a better-educated work force has gained some traction among young adults, a study released yesterday shows.

More local adults 25 to 34 years old are completing high school, attending college or getting their bachelor's degree, according to the study from KentuckianaWorks, the work-force development board for the seven-county area around Louisville.

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The board's annual Human Capital Scorecard measures the metropolitan area's educational achievements and compares them to 15 similar cities in the region, including Indianapolis, Nashville, Tenn., and Cincinnati.

Among the 16 cities, the



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An Indiana University Southeast student used her graduation cap to make a request. A study released yesterday said that while only 23.3 percent of Louisvillians have a college degree, more young adults are seeking higher education. (By Sam Upshaw Jr., The Courier-Journal)

MULTIMEDIA / DOCUMENTS

- [KentuckianaWorks Human Capital Scorecard \(.pdf\)](#)

KEY FINDINGS

Louisville's education attainment in 2005 compared with 15

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Louisville area still has the smallest percentage of college graduates in its population at 23.3 percent, but "we are gaining on the ones right in front of us," said University of Louisville economist Paul Coomes, who handles data for the report.

The gap between Louisville and No. 15 Memphis, Tenn., is within the margin of error, Coomes said.

similar cities.\

High school graduates

Louisville: 85.8%, up from 80.9% in 2000.

Rank: 12th in both periods.

Bachelor's degree or higher

Louisville: 23.3%, up from 21.2% in 2000.

Rank: 16th in both periods.

The results are encouraging because they show that Louisville young people are getting the message that education is a key to better jobs and a better local economy, said Michael Gritton, executive director for KentuckianaWorks.

But "you can't declare victory and go home," Gritton said. "We've got to keep the pressure on" if the area is going to achieve the development board's goal of measurable improvement compared to its peer group of cities by 2010.

In the last five years, Louisville has moved from 10th to fifth in the number of its young people with at least a high school diploma, fourth to second in those with some college or an associate degree, and from 13th to 12th in bachelor's degrees.

The area continued to make a strong showing in associate degrees and vocational certifications, helping it move from 12th to seventh in post-high-school degrees and certificates.

"We're improving -- not at the quantum rate we want, but it's progress," said KentuckianaWorks deputy director Eric Miller. "What we believe, what we hope, is it's a beginning for some of these folks."

Reporter David Goetz can be reached at (502) 582-4698.

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