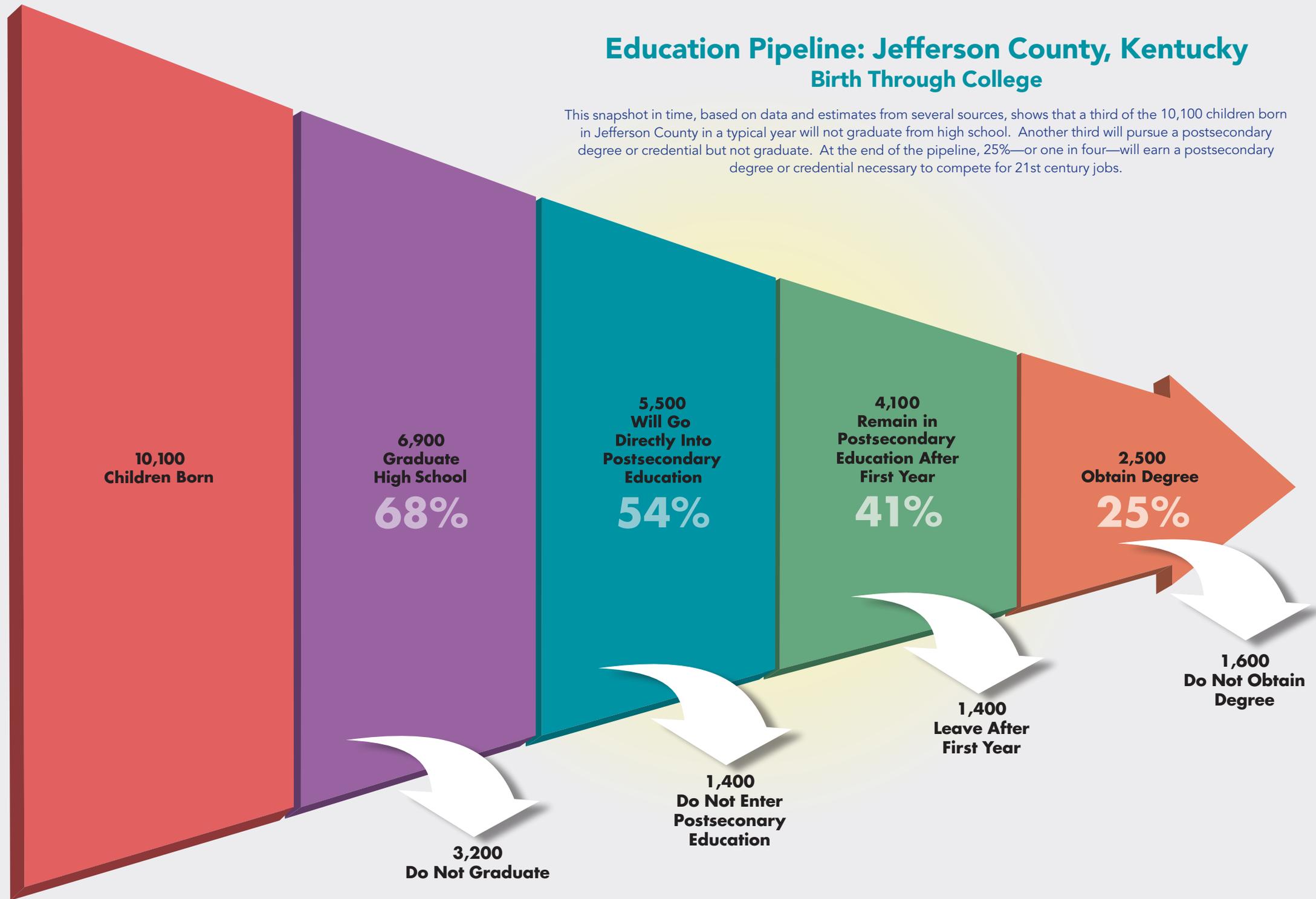


Education Pipeline: Jefferson County, Kentucky Birth Through College

This snapshot in time, based on data and estimates from several sources, shows that a third of the 10,100 children born in Jefferson County in a typical year will not graduate from high school. Another third will pursue a postsecondary degree or credential but not graduate. At the end of the pipeline, 25%—or one in four—will earn a postsecondary degree or credential necessary to compete for 21st century jobs.





Deep Driver of Change: Education

Goal: Improve education attainment at all levels, including high school graduation rates, associate degrees and technical certificates, and double the projected growth in the number of young adults with a Bachelor's Degree by the end of the decade.

Insights from the Education Pipeline

Early Education

Substantial evidence shows that early education makes a critical difference for at-risk children. Studies have found that a dollar invested in early development returns up to \$17 as a result of higher education attainment. While local schools have expanded programs for 3- and 4-year olds and added full-day kindergarten, access to high-quality early childhood education still falls short of the need.

Of the 10,100 children born in Jefferson County in a typical year, about 2,100 are born into poverty, but more than twice that many qualify for free or reduced-price lunches based on family income when they enter first grade.

Middle School

In Louisville, as throughout the nation, academic performance suffers among early adolescents. The percentage of public school students scoring at least "proficient" on state assessments drops from 66% to 61% in reading and from 59% to 48% in math between elementary school and middle school.

In a typical year, JCPS identifies about a thousand eighth graders at serious risk for dropping out as they head off to high school.

High School

Calculations of high school graduation rates are inconsistent and vary widely across the nation and among local high schools. Best estimates are that Jefferson County Public Schools graduate about three-quarters of students who enter 9th grade. Another 200 will go on to earn a diploma after a fifth or sixth year, and, by age 24, 830 more will earn a GED.

A small number of the 10,100 children born each year do not make it to high school: a few actually drop out of school earlier, and a small number die before age 18. But the largest number of drop-outs occurs

during the first two years of high school. A map plotting addresses for young people who dropped out during one recent year found that they came from every area of the community but clustered in the most challenged neighborhoods. Young men and minority students were disproportionately represented.

Among the 6,900 students who graduate each year, approximately 5,000 come from Jefferson County Public Schools, 1,500 from Catholic schools, 400 from independent schools, and 30 from home schools.

Postsecondary

The 80% of local high school graduates who enter postsecondary school is roughly comparable to the college-going rate in cities with higher education attainment. But the proportion that succeeds in earning a bachelor's degree is lower.

Of the 1,400 high school graduates who do not directly enter postsecondary school, 1,200 go straight to work, with about 300 of them employed in a field for which they earned a vocational credential.

Jefferson Community and Technical College enrolls almost two-thirds of the 1,400 graduates who enter two-year programs, and the best estimate for a graduation rate among those students is 30%. The University of Louisville enrolls almost 30% of local students who enter four-year colleges, and its graduation rate has risen to 46% for the most recent students.

Overall, about one in four of the 10,100 children born each year will earn a postsecondary degree, although some will return later, as adults, to finish. About 2,050 will earn a Bachelor's Degree and 430 will complete a community college degree. The latest Census data showed that more than a hundred thousand residents of Jefferson County have some college credit but no degree.

The Greater Louisville Project is a non-partisan civic initiative organized by The Community Foundation of Louisville and supported by a consortium of philanthropic foundations. It acts as a catalyst for civic action, providing research, data, and analytic tools in support of the agenda for long-term progress outlined in the 2002 Brookings Institution Report, "Beyond Merger: A Competitive Vision for the Regional City of Louisville."

The education pipeline was created by the staff of The Greater Louisville Project: Carolyn Gatz, director, and Elisabeth Alkire. Researchers from the Kentucky Council on Post Secondary Education, Jefferson Community and Technical College, Jefferson County Public Schools, Kentucky KIDS COUNT, and The Urban Studies Center at the University of Louisville provided data and assisted in developing the pipeline. For additional information about data and methodology, see www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org.

Call to Action: Good to Greater Louisville

Civic leaders and institutions from across the region are organizing to attain the Deep Drivers of Change in Education, 21st Century Jobs, and Balanced Regional Growth.

Go to www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org to learn more and to become part of the Action Network focused on lifting Louisville into the top tier of American cities.

