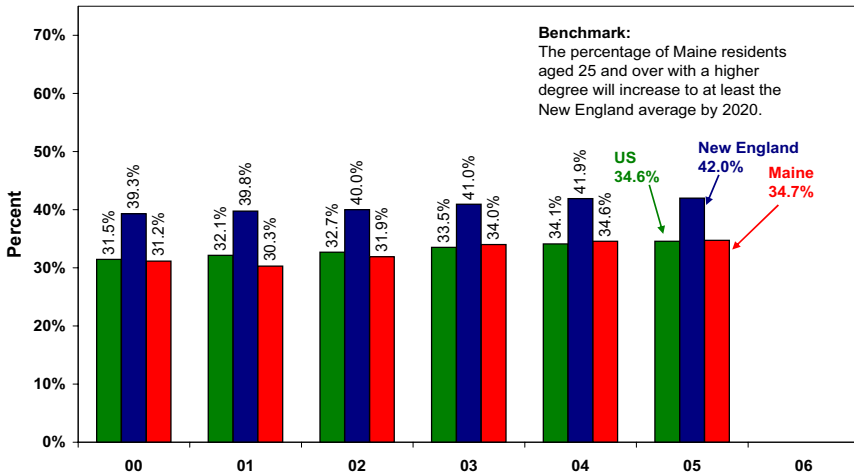


## 10. Higher Degree Attainment

- ⊞ **Benchmark:** The percentage of Maine residents age 25 and over with a higher education degree will increase to at least the New England average by 2020.

**Higher Degree Attainment Among Residents  
Aged 25 and Over  
U.S., New England and Maine 2000 - 2005**



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

### More Maine People Have Higher Degrees

In 2005, 34.7 percent of people in Maine age 25 and over held an associate's, bachelors or advanced degree. By comparison, 42 percent of people in New England held a degree, while the percentage nationwide was 34.6.

In that same year, 14 percent of New Englanders had graduate or professional degrees, while 8.6 percent in Maine held advanced degrees. New England's bachelor degree rate was 20.1 percent last year, whereas Maine's was 17 percent. Finally, in 2005, New England's proportion of associate's degree holders was 7.9 percent, compared to 9.1 percent in Maine.

Maine has made steady progress in recent years in increasing its degree attainment levels. However, as the graph illustrates, so have New England and the U.S. While Maine outpaces the nation slightly in degree attainment, a substantial gap remains between Maine and the rest of the region.

Higher education has become an increasingly critical factor in Maine's economic development, given today's "knowledge economy." Each of Maine's degree attainment levels needs to grow in order for the state to attract business investment and create better jobs. A more educated workforce is central to Maine's competitiveness in an era of rapid knowledge advancement around the globe.

The benchmark for this measure is set to the goal of the Maine Compact for Higher Education, which is to reach the New England level of degree holders by 2020.