



ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

STRATEGIC VISION

STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

2014

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ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: 2014 STRATEGIC VISION STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, Arizona's community colleges embarked upon a long-term Strategic Vision to significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university. **In order to measure progress toward the three major goals outlined in the Strategic Vision, the colleges have implemented a rigorous self-assessment and accountability process centered around the annual collection and distribution of data related to 30 key indicators.**

Data presented in the 2014 Strategic Vision Student Progress and Outcomes Report, some of which are highlighted below, identify areas of strength, as well as places where Arizona's community colleges will need to focus their efforts in order to improve student access, retention, and completion. **For some of the retention and completion measures, a specific group of students called the "Credential-Seeking Cohort" was tracked; this group is defined as full- and part-time learners who earned at least 12 credit hours by the end of their second year.** Tracking this sub-cohort aligns Arizona's data collection and accountability strategies with those of national community college initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA). Furthermore, analysis of retention and completion outcomes within this sub-cohort provides a more accurate gauge of community college student success, as it takes into account learners' diverse educational and training goals.

The 2014 outcomes presented in this report can be compared to those from 2012 and 2013. However, additional data points are necessary before definitive statements about trends in community college student progress and success can be made.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2014 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

Access

- Thirty-eight percent of Arizona community college students are from underserved minority groups, 42 percent are over age 24, and 34 percent receive Pell grants. These percentages are equal to or higher than the corresponding national averages, demonstrating the colleges' commitment to educating underserved populations.

Retention

- Arizona community colleges retain 91 percent of credential-seeking learners from fall to spring semesters, and 77 percent to the following fall.

Completion

- Arizona's community colleges awarded over 40,000 degrees and certificates in 2012-13.
- At 29 and 31 percent, respectively, Arizona's in-state and overall transfer rates both exceed the national average of 25 percent.
- Four out of five credential-seeking community college students achieve a successful outcome within six years.

BACKGROUND

ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION

In 2011 Arizona's community colleges published a long-term strategic plan, which has since been incorporated into strategic planning processes at community colleges across the state. This plan outlined a clear vision for Arizona's ten community college districts and identified 30 key indicators of progress toward 3 major goal areas: access, retention, and completion. **Many of these indicators are aligned with those included in the American Association for Community Colleges' Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) initiative, which will allow for comparisons with national norms in years to come.**

A major function of the Strategic Vision is the collection, analysis, and publication of data pertaining to the 30 key indicators of progress, as well as the sharing of best practices and successful program models across the state. This document is the third in a series of annual reports providing data related to student progress and outcomes in Arizona's community colleges. Where available, comparable national data are also shown.

2012 was the first full year of Strategic Vision data collection. As such, the 2014 outcomes presented in this document can be compared to those from the previous two years, although additional data points are necessary before definitive statements about trends in student progress and outcomes can be made. Nonetheless, these data provide a snapshot of areas where Arizona's community colleges are successfully serving students—in some cases much better than the national average—as well as those areas where further improvement is needed.

Statewide data, as well as district-level data on these same 30 indicators, will continue to be used to guide improvement efforts at community colleges across the state. Statewide data will also be shared with the Arizona Board of Regents and the Arizona Department of Education in order to assist in the improvement of P-20 educational pathways.

The Strategic Vision, as well as a Technical Guide that provides detailed definitions of each key indicator of progress, can be found online at: www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org.

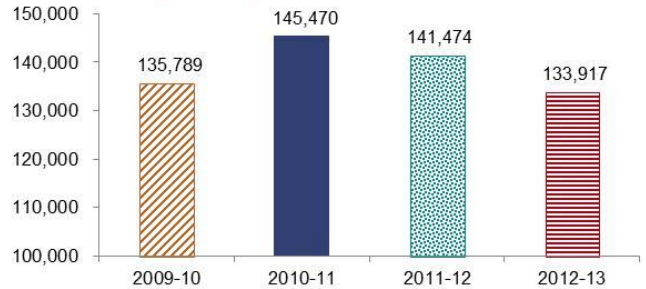
OUR VISION: Arizona's community colleges, through a collaborative effort with education, business, and community partners, will significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university.

ACCESS INDICATORS

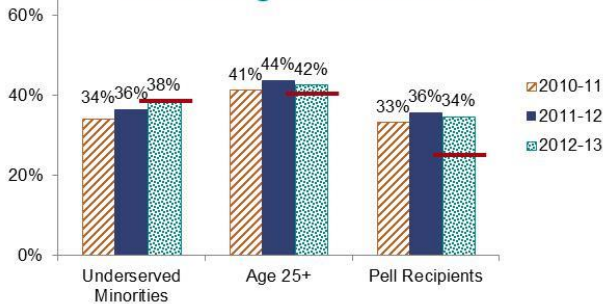
Indicator 1. Full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment

Statewide, annual full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment at Arizona's community colleges has declined from its high of 145,470 in 2010-11. Despite a robust community college-going rate (see indicator 4), these enrollment numbers likely reflect a greater number of students enrolling in universities and/or private colleges, as well as an improved economy drawing more students into the workplace.

Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment



Underserved Populations, as a Percentage of Enrollment



Indicator 2. Enrollment of underserved populations

Since 2010-11, the percentage of Arizona community college students who are members of an underserved racial or ethnic group has increased by 12 percent and is now close to the national average of 39 percent¹ (national averages in this figure are represented by horizontal red lines), as well as the percentage of the state's population that belongs to an underserved minority group (40 percent).²

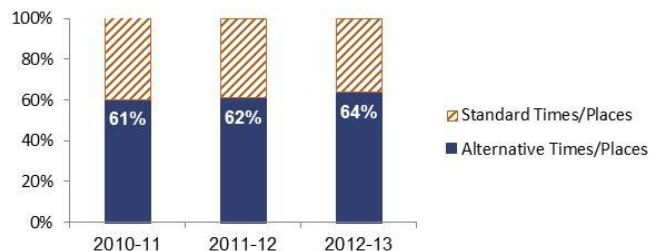
Further demonstrating the colleges' commitment to educating underserved groups, Arizona's community colleges also enroll (on a percentage basis) more Pell recipients and students over the age of 24 than the corresponding national averages.¹

Indicator 3. Percent of student credit hours earned via alternative delivery methods and/or at alternative times and places

At Arizona's community colleges, only 36 percent of instruction in 2012-13 occurred in traditional semester-length classes held on campus Monday through Friday between the hours of 8am and 5pm.

Extending access to many diverse populations, 64 percent of all student credit hours were earned online, at night or on the weekends, in short-term or open-entry/open-exit courses, and in skills centers, American Indian reservations, Army bases, or prisons.

Percent of SCH Earned at Standard and Alternative Times/Places



¹U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2014). *2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.

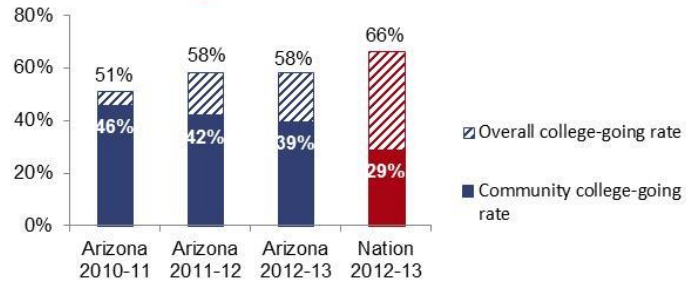
ACCESS INDICATORS

Indicators 4-5. Community college-going rate and overall college-going rate

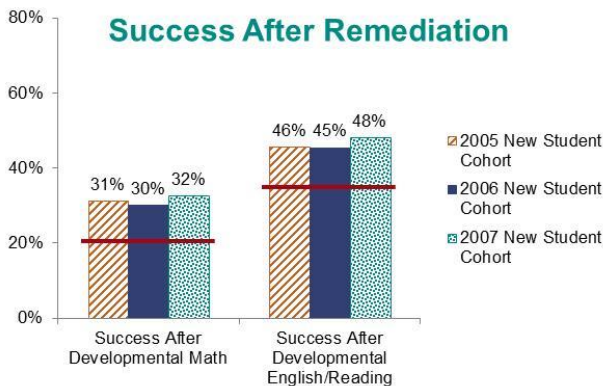
Arizona's community colleges enroll a much higher percentage of recent high school graduates than the national average.³ With only three public, four-year universities in the state, however, Arizona's overall college-going rate⁴ lags behind the national number.

Arizona's community colleges will continue to work with the Arizona Board of Regents to improve the state's overall college-going rate.

Enrollment of Recent High School Graduates



Success After Remediation



Indicators 6-7. Success after remediation

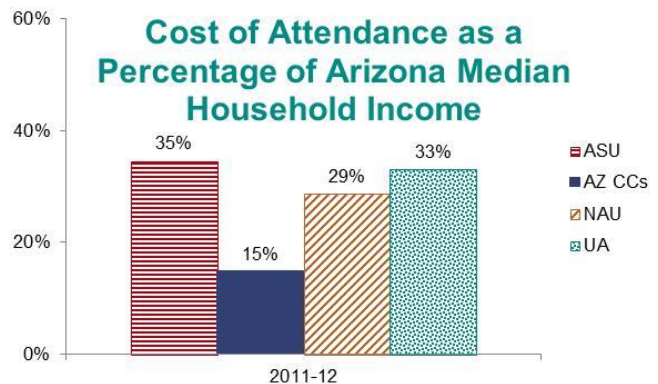
After six years, 32 percent of developmental math learners in the 2007 New Student Cohort successfully completed a college-level course in math, and 48 percent of all developmental English or reading learners in the same cohort completed a college-level English course.

These success after remediation rates appear higher than national comparisons (depicted in this figure by horizontal red lines) of 20 and 37 percent, respectively,⁵ but the rates are likely similar, as the national study evaluated success after only three years (compared to six in Arizona).

Indicator 8. Cost of attendance as a percentage of Arizona median household income

At less than \$7,500 per year, the median net price of attending Arizona's community colleges is just under 15 percent of the state's median household income, making the institutions excellent and affordable options for postsecondary education and training. (Cost of attendance for each of the institutions shown here reflects the 2011-12 average net price reported by the National Center for Education Statistics.)

Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Arizona Median Household Income



³U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2013). *College enrollment and work activity of 2012 high school graduates*. Washington, DC: Author.

⁴Postsecondary Education Opportunity. (2013). *Chance for college by age 19 by state, 1986-2012*. Oskaloosa, IA: The Mortenson Seminar on Public Policy Analysis and Opportunity for Postsecondary Education.

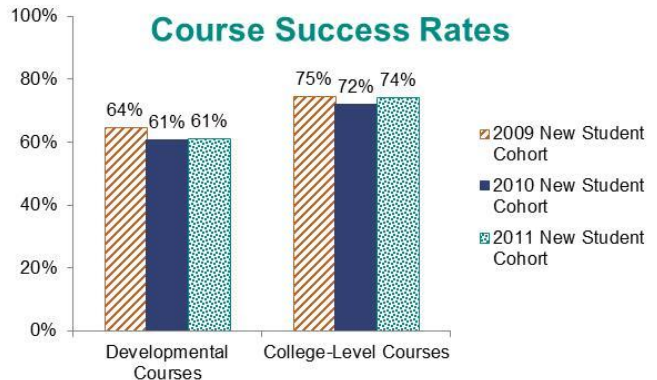
⁵Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. W. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review*, 29, 255-270.

RETENTION INDICATORS

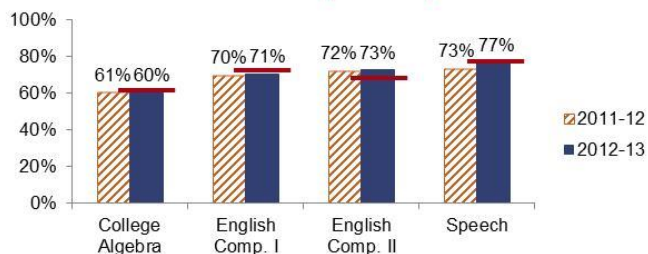
Indicators 9-10. Course success rates

Over two years, 61 percent of student credit hours attempted in developmental courses by the 2011 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

In that same time period, 74 percent of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by the 2011 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).



Percent of First College-Level Math and English Credit Hours Successfully Completed



Indicator 11. Percent of gateway (first college-level) math and English credit hours successfully completed

In 2012-13, between 60 and 77 percent of student credit hours attempted in College Algebra, English Composition I and II, and Speech were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

The rate at which Arizona's community college students successfully complete these gateway courses matches or exceeds the corresponding national averages.⁶ College-level math courses continue to pose the biggest challenge for many community college students, both in Arizona and across the nation.

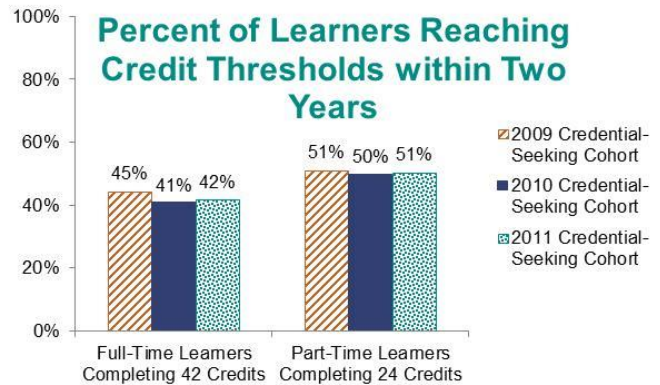
⁶National Community College Benchmark Project . (2013). *Report of national aggregate data*. Overland Park, KS: Author.

RETENTION INDICATORS

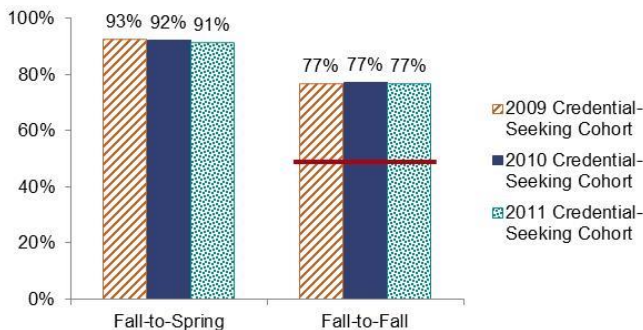
Indicator 12. Percent of full-time learners completing 42 credits and percent of part-time learners completing 24 credits within two years

By the end of their second year, 42 percent of full-time learners in the 2011 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 42 credits, and 51 percent of all part-time learners in the same cohort had completed 24 credits. These rates are up slightly from the previous year.

Although there is room for improvement, these rates are notable, as research has linked attainment of credit thresholds (roughly equivalent to 20 credits per year for full-time students) to higher retention and completion rates.⁷



Retention Rates



Indicators 13-14. Retention rates

Ninety-one percent of learners in the 2011 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who successfully transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted at their college to spring 2012, and 77 percent of them returned for classes the following fall. As this figure shows, Arizona's community colleges are retaining the vast majority of credential-seeking students.

Arizona's retention figures are higher than the 53 percent fall-to-fall retention rate reported as a national comparison⁸ (depicted in this figure as a horizontal red line), as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, national community college accountability initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability are beginning to track and analyze retention among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

⁷Moore, C., Shulock, N., & Offenstein, J. (2009). *Steps to success: Analyzing milestone achievement to improve community college student outcomes*. Sacramento: California State University, Sacramento, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy.

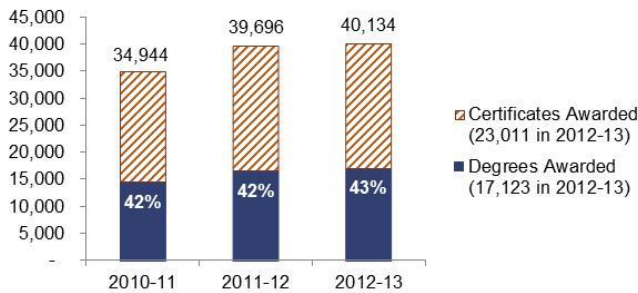
⁸NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates – First-time college freshmen returning their second year*. Boulder, CO: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

Indicator 15. Percent of learners achieving their stated education or training goals

This indicator is in development. It will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision once enough time has passed to link intent to completion data.

Degrees and Certificates Awarded



Indicator 16. Number of degrees and certificates awarded

Between 2010-11 and 2012-13, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Arizona's community colleges increased by 15 percent to 40,134.

Of the 2012-13 total, 43 percent were degrees, and 58 percent were certificates. These data reflect a concerted effort by Arizona's community colleges to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials, especially in high-demand fields.

Indicator 17. Degree/certificate completion rate (graduation rate)

After six years, 30 percent of the 2007 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate (this percentage has been consistent over the past three years).

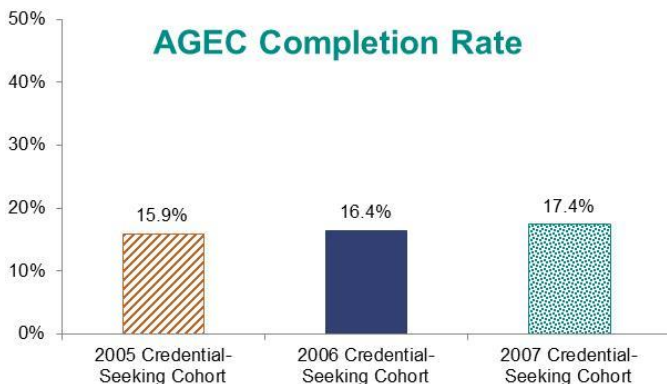
Arizona's graduation rate is somewhat higher than the 25 percent reported as a national comparison⁹ (depicted in this figure as a horizontal red line), as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, the Voluntary Framework of Accountability is beginning to track and analyze completion among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.



⁹U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

AGEC Completion Rate



Indicator 18. AGEC completion rate

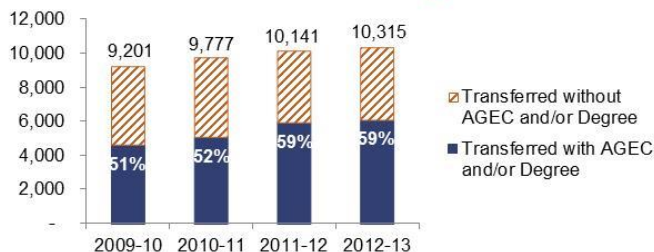
Statewide, 17.4 percent of the 2007 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) within 6 years, a 9 percent increase from the 2005 Cohort.

Increasing the statewide AGEC completion rate—a key priority for the state’s community colleges—will not only ease transfer to Arizona’s public universities but should help to improve bachelor’s degree completion in Arizona.

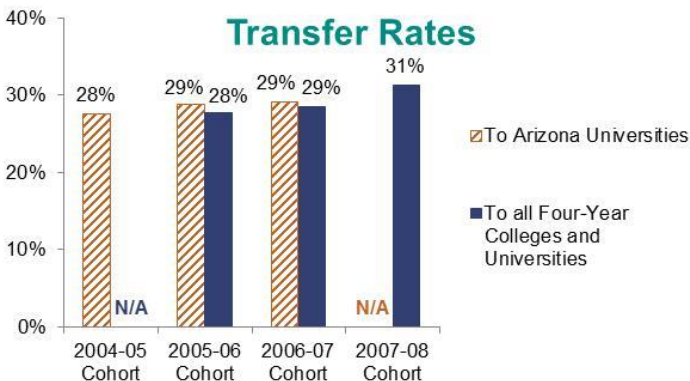
Indicators 19-20. Number of in-state university transfers, and percent with an AGEC and/or degree at time of transfer

Between 2009-10 and 2012-13, the number of students transferring from Arizona’s community colleges to an in-state, public university increased by 12 percent. In addition, the percentage of those transfers who had earned an AGEC and/or degree prior to transfer increased by 16 percent during this time period. These data indicate that the transfer process is becoming more efficient and cost effective for both students and the state.

Number of In-State University Transfers, and Percent with AGEC and/or Degree



Transfer Rates



Indicators 21-22. In-state and overall transfer rates

Statewide, transfer rates among ASSIST “transfer behavior cohorts” have steadily increased to 29 percent for the 2006-07 cohort (the latest for which ASSIST data are available). The overall transfer rate (the percent of learners in the 2007 Credential-Seeking Cohort who transferred to any four-year college or university within 6 years) is somewhat higher at 31 percent. Both rates are higher than the most recent national transfer rate (25 percent) calculated by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges.¹⁰

¹⁰Center for the Study of Community Colleges. (2002). *National transfer rates are up! Results of the 2001 Transfer Assembly Project*. Los Angeles: Author.

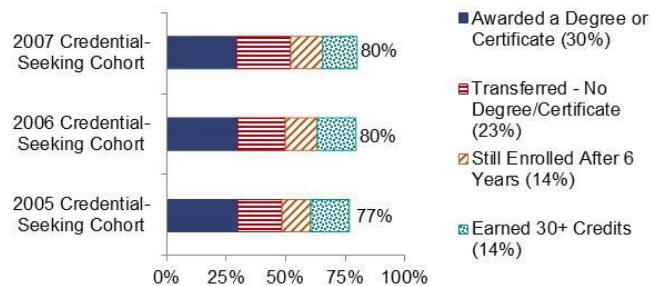
COMPLETION INDICATORS

Indicator 23. Percent of learners achieving a successful community college outcome

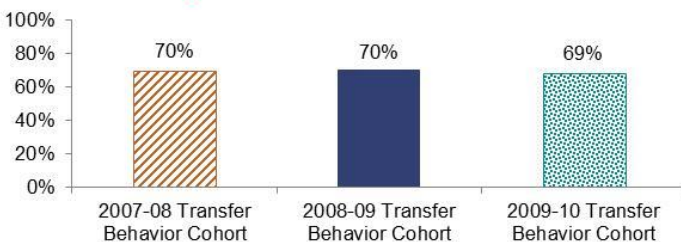
Statewide, four out of five learners in the 2007 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within 6 years, a 3 percentage point increase from the 2005 Cohort.

Because community college learners enter college with diverse education and training goals, and because they often attend part-time and/or earn credits from more than one community college, the Voluntary Framework of Accountability and other national accountability initiatives have broadened the definition of a successful community college outcome to include: earning a degree or certificate; transferring to another two- or four-year college or university; continued enrollment; and/or leaving the institution after earning 30 or more credits.

Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Outcome



Percent of In-State, Full-Time Transfers Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



Indicator 24. Percent of full-time transfers to Arizona public universities who earn a bachelor's degree within four years

Sixty-nine percent of all 2009-10 full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges to in-state universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years.

This rate indicates that most full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges are graduating from the state's public universities in a timely manner.

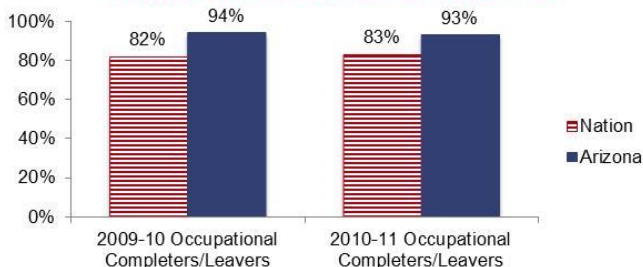
COMPLETION INDICATORS

Indicator 25. Percent of all transfers who earn a bachelor's degree within 4 years

Statewide, 45 percent of 2009-10 transfers from Arizona community colleges to all four-year institutions—public and private, in-state and out—earned a bachelor's degree within four years. Somewhat lower than the national average of 60 percent,¹¹ this percentage may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer.



Percent of Occupational Completers/Leavers Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential



Indicator 26. Percent of occupational program completers/leavers earning an industry-recognized credential within one year

Out of all learners in the 2010-11 Occupational Completers/Leavers Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment aligned with industry-recognized standards up to one year after college exit, 93 percent passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. This level of performance exceeds the 2010-11 national average of 83 percent.¹²

Examples of occupational programs leading to industry-recognized credentials include, among others, aviation technology, building and construction, dental hygiene, education, emergency medical technician, fashion, fire science, nursing, solar technologies, and veterinary technologies.

Indicator 27. Percent of occupational program completers employed with a livable wage and/or enrolled in further education within one year

This indicator is in development. It will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision once adjustments have been made to account for disparities in wages across various community college service areas.

¹¹National Student Clearinghouse. (2012). *Snapshot report: transfer outcomes (four years after transfer)*. Herndon, VA: Author.

¹²Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. (2014). *Core indicator report : 1P1 Technical Skill Attainment , 2011-12*. Washington, DC: Author.

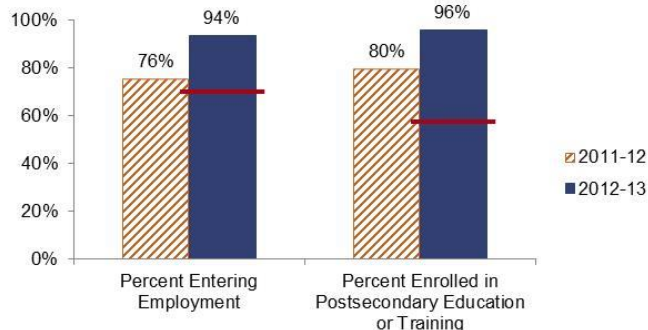
COMPLETION INDICATORS

Indicators 28-29. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) Learner Outcomes

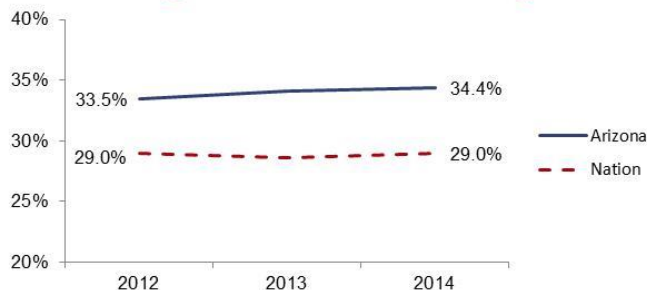
Ninety-four percent of 2012-13 ABE/GED learners who were not employed at the time of entry entered employment within three months of exiting the program. As well, 96 percent of 2012-13 ABE/GED learners who held a GED or high school diploma subsequently enrolled in further education within one year of program exit.

These numbers are substantially higher than the national averages¹³ (indicated by horizontal red lines) and indicate that Arizona's community colleges are effectively moving ABE/GED learners into higher education and employment.

ABE/GED Learner Outcomes



Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree

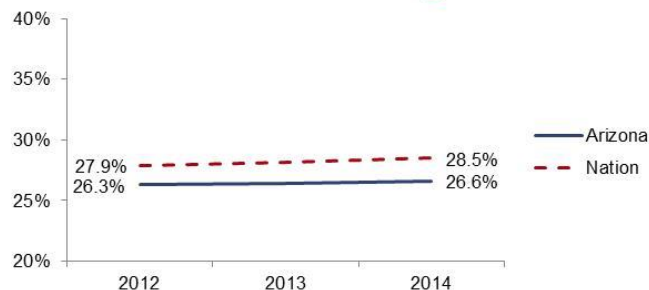


Indicator 30. Percent of adults with postsecondary experience and/or degrees

Thirty-four percent of Arizona adults age 25 and older have attended some college and/or have earned an associate degree. This rate is substantially higher than the national average of 29 percent.¹⁴

As well, 27 percent of Arizona adults hold a bachelor's or higher degree. This number is somewhat lower than the national average of 29 percent.¹⁴ but has slightly increased over the past few years.

Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's Degree



Arizona's community colleges will continue to work with the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) to reach ABOR's goal of meeting or exceeding the national rate by 2017.

¹³U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2014). *Core Follow-Up Outcomes Measures, 2012-2013*. Washington, DC: Author.

¹⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2014). *Educational attainment: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.