



# NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE:

## STRATEGIC VISION STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT 2015

[www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org](http://www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org)



# NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE: 2015 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 2015 Strategic Vision Student Progress and Outcomes Report identify areas of strength, as well as places where Northland Pioneer College (NPC) will need to focus its 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 NPC'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 2015 outcomes presented in this report can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge.** However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making long-term projections difficult at best.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NPC'S 2015 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

### Access

- Forty-six percent of NPC learners are from races or ethnicities traditionally underserved in higher education.
- NPC delivers 70% of its courses via alternate delivery methods, times, or places in order to expand opportunities for learning across our large two-county service area.

### Retention

- NPC's course success rates in both developmental (61%) and college level courses (74%) are similar to corresponding statewide averages (61% and 76%, respectively).
- Ninety-one percent of learners in NPC's first college-level courses successfully pass, compared to a statewide average of 62%.

### Completion

- NPC has increased the number of credentials awarded to students by 38% over the past four years. In 2013-14, NPC awarded 586 degrees and certificates.
- Three out of every four NPC learners achieves a successful outcome within 6 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 fourth in a series of annual reports providing data related to student progress and outcomes at Northland Pioneer College (NPC). Where available, comparable national data are also shown.

**As 2015 represents the fourth full year of Strategic Vision data collection, the outcomes presented in this document can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge.** These trends will enable Northland Pioneer College to set reasonable benchmarks for attainment related to core metrics.

However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making longer-term projections difficult at best.

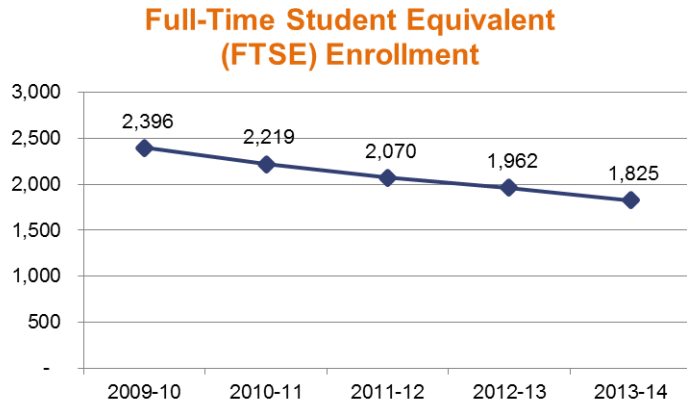
The Strategic Vision, as well as a Technical Guide that provides detailed definitions of each key indicator of progress, can be found online at: [www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org](http://www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org).

**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.**

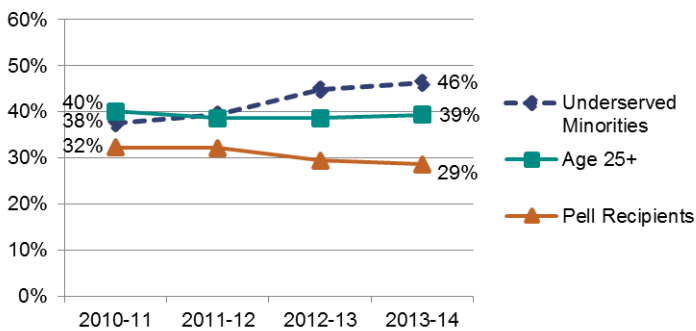
# ACCESS INDICATORS

## Indicator 1. Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment

Following the statewide trend, annual full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment at Northland Pioneer College has declined from its high of 2,396 in 2009-10 to 1,825 in 2013-14. These enrollment numbers likely reflect a greater number of students enrolling directly in the state's universities and/or private institutions, as well as an improved economy drawing more students into the workplace.



## Underserved Populations, as a Percentage of Enrollment



## Indicator 2. Enrollment of Underserved Populations

In 2013-14, 46% of NPC students were members of an underserved racial or ethnic group; 29% were Pell recipients, and 39% were over the age of 24. The proportion of underserved minorities enrolled in NPC is substantially higher than the statewide average (40%).

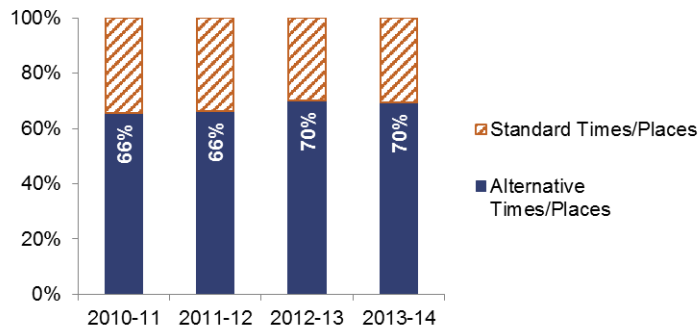
However, the 46% of NPC students who were members of an underserved racial or ethnic group is somewhat lower than the percentage of those populations in Navajo and Apache Counties (65%).<sup>1</sup>

## Indicator 3. Percent of Student Credit Hours Earned via Alternative Delivery Methods and/or at Alternative Times and Places

At NPC, only 30% of instruction in 2013-14 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, 70% 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



<sup>1</sup>U.S.. Bureau of the Census. (2015). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Washington, DC: Author.

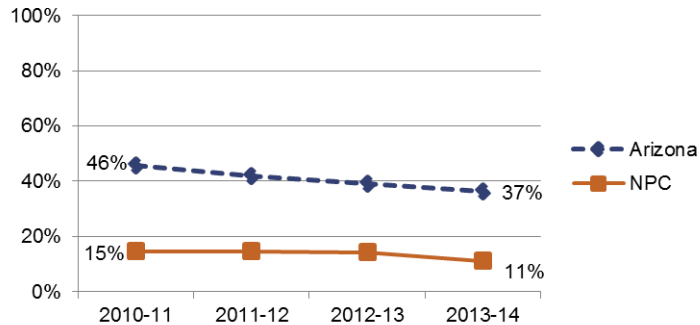
# ACCESS INDICATORS

## Indicators 4-5. Community College-Going Rate and Overall College-Going Rate

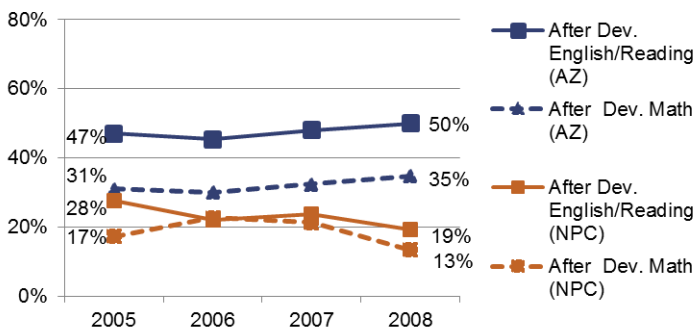
In 2013-14, NPC enrolled 11% of all recent high school graduates from the college's service area. The percentage of college-goers enrolling in community colleges has slightly decreased in recent years, both at NPC and across the state..

Although not shown on the graph, Arizona's community colleges and universities together enroll 58% of all recent high school graduates.<sup>2</sup>

## Service Area Community College-Going Rates



## Success After Remediation (2005-08 New Student Cohorts)



## Indicators 6-7. Success after Remediation

After six years, 19% of all developmental English or reading learners in NPC's 2008 New Student Cohort completed a college-level English course and 13% of developmental math learners in the same cohort successfully completed a college-level math course.

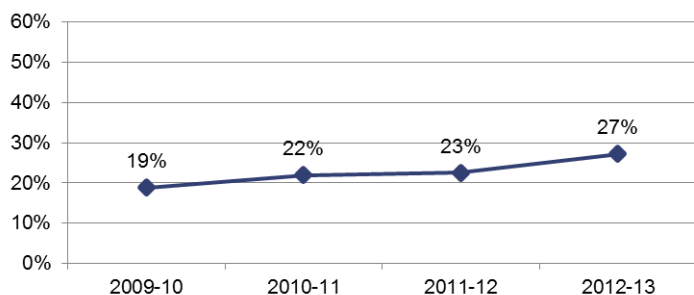
Both NPC's success after developmental math and developmental English/reading rates have varied in recent years and are somewhat below statewide averages.

## Indicator 8. Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of the Median Household Income in Navajo and Apache Counties

At just under \$9,800 per year, the net price of attending Northland Pioneer College is just 27% of the median household income in Navajo and Apache Counties, making the institution an excellent and affordable option for postsecondary education and training.

Northland Pioneer College's net price is reported by the National Center for Education Statistics and is based on new full-time students.

## Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Median Household Income in Navajo & Apache Counties



<sup>2</sup>Postsecondary 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.

# RETENTION INDICATORS

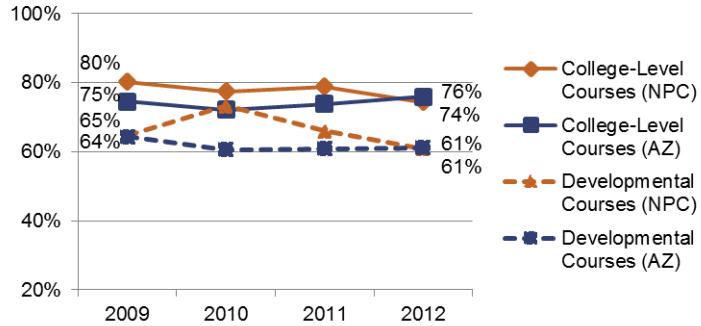
## Indicators 9-10. Course Success Rates

Over two years, 74% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by NPC's 2012 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

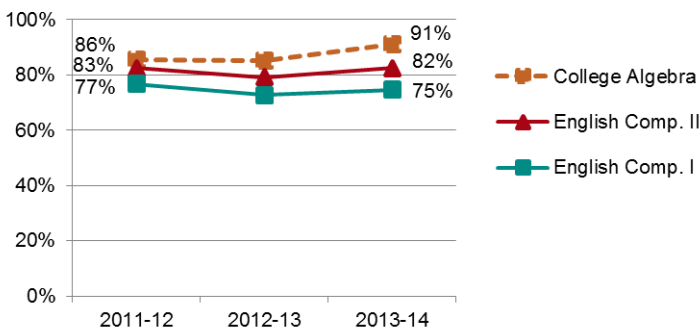
In that same time period, 61% of student credit hours attempted in developmental courses by NPC's 2012 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

These course success rates are similar to statewide averages.

**Course Success Rates  
(2009-12 New Student Cohorts)**



**Percent of Gateway Math and English  
Credit Hours Successfully Completed**



## Indicator 11. Percent of Gateway (First College-Level) Math and English Credit Hours Successfully Completed

In 2013-14, between 75% and 91% of student credit hours attempted in College Algebra and English Composition I and II were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

These rates are higher than corresponding statewide averages (62%, 73%, and 75% respectively). NPC's success in College Algebra is especially notable, as college-level math courses often pose the greatest challenge to students. NPC will continue working to improve the percentage of its learners successfully completing gateway (first college-level) courses.

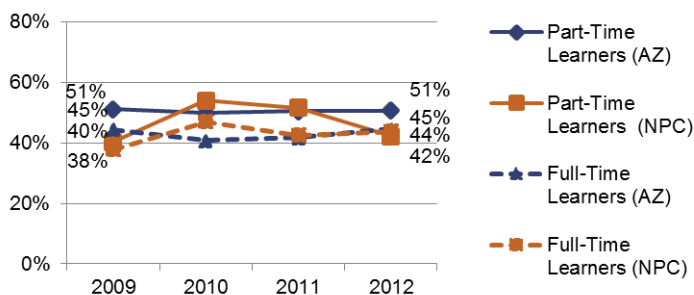
# RETENTION INDICATORS

## Indicator 12. Percent of Full-Time Learners Completing 42 Credits and Percent of Part-Time Learners Completing 24 Credits within Two Years

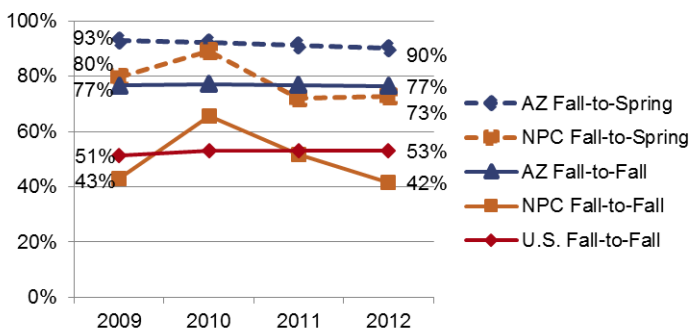
By the end of their second year, 42% of part-time learners in NPC's 2012 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 44% of full-time learners in the same cohort had completed 42 credits. While these rates have been somewhat variable, they are similar to statewide averages.

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.<sup>3</sup>

## Percent of Learners Reaching Credit Thresholds within Two Years (2009-12 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## Retention Rates (2009-12 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## Indicators 13-14. Retention Rates

Seventy-three percent of learners in NPC's 2012 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who successfully transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted at their college to spring 2013, and 42% of them returned for classes the following fall.

NPC's retention rates lag behind both statewide and national averages<sup>4</sup>, even though the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. National community college accountability initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability are beginning to track and analyze retention among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, however, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

<sup>3</sup>Moore, C., Shulock, N., & Offenstien, 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.

<sup>4</sup>NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates – First-time college freshmen returning their second year*. Boulder, CO: Author.

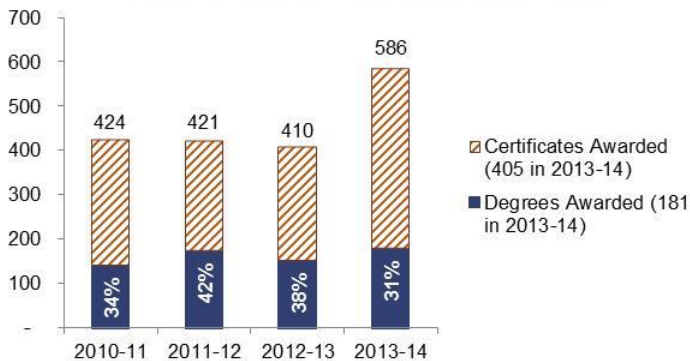


# COMPLETION INDICATORS

## 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 2013-14, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Northland Pioneer College increased by 38% to 586 in the latter year.

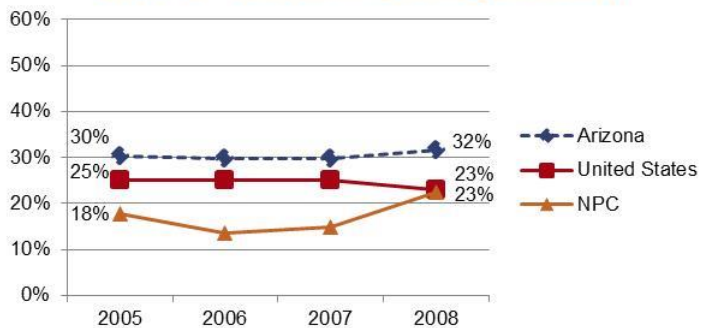
Of the 2013-14 total, 31% were degrees and 69% certificates. Northland Pioneer College is making a concerted effort to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials, especially in high-demand fields.

## Indicator 17. Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (Graduation Rate)

After six years, 23% of NPC's 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate.

NPC's graduation rate is somewhat lower than the statewide average of 32%, but is the same as the 23% reported as a national comparison,<sup>5</sup> although the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. Nonetheless, 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.

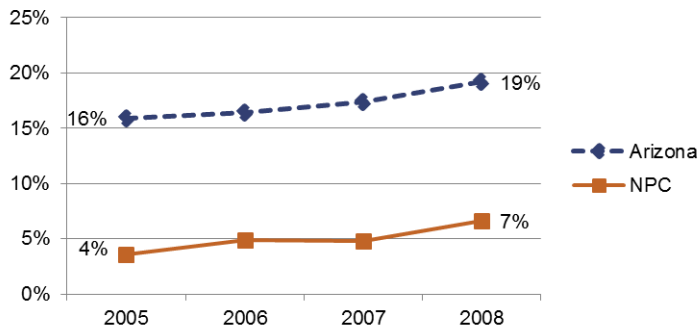
### Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (2005-08 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



<sup>5</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

# COMPLETION INDICATORS

## AGEC Completion Rate (2005-08 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## Indicator 18. AGE C Completion Rate

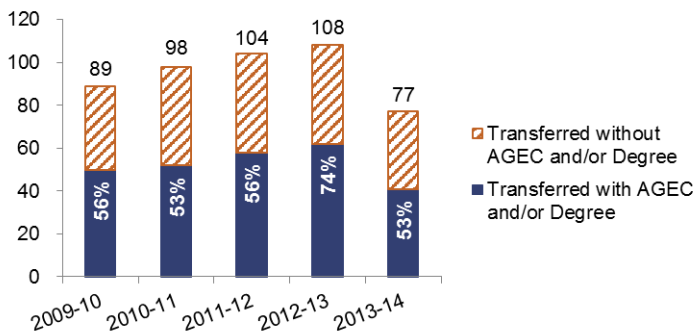
Seven percent of NPC's 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGE C) within 6 years. This rate has nearly doubled over the past four years but still lags behind the statewide average (19%).

Increasing AGE C completion rates—a key priority for all of Arizona's community colleges—will not only ease transfer to Arizona's public universities but should help to improve bachelor's degree completion in the state.

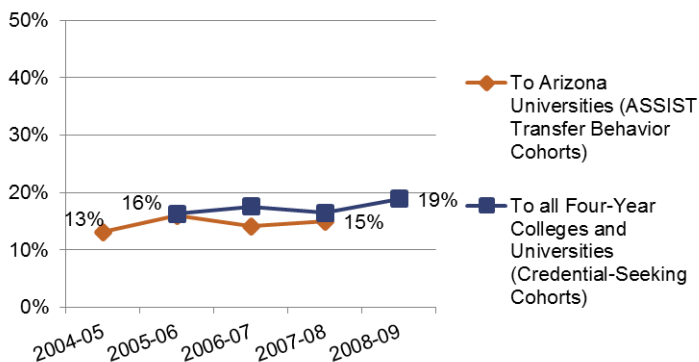
## Indicators 19-20. Number of In-State University Transfers, and Percent with an AGE C and/or Degree at Time of Transfer

Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, the number of students transferring from NPC to an in-state, public university increased substantially before dipping in the latter year. However, over half of all transfers had earned an AGE C and/or degree prior to transferring, a sign that the transfer process is relatively efficient and cost effective for both students and the state.

## Number of In-State University Transfers and Percent with AGE C and/or Degree



## Transfer Rates



## Indicators 21-22. In-State and Overall Transfer Rates

NPC's transfer rates among ASSIST Transfer Behavior Cohorts rose from 13% to 15% over the past four years. Additionally, the overall transfer rate (the percent of learners in Credential-Seeking Cohorts who transferred to any four-year college or university within 6 years) increased from 16% to 19%. Both rates, however, are somewhat lower than the most recent national transfer rate (25%) calculated by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges.<sup>6</sup>

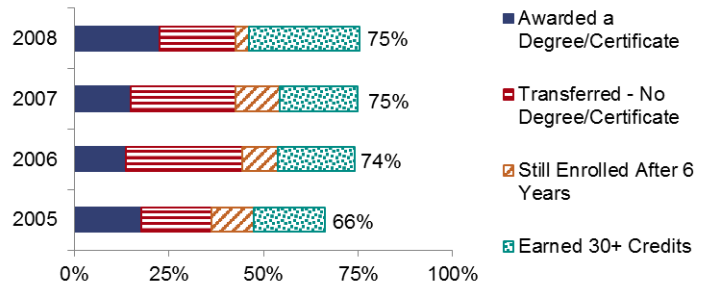
# COMPLETION INDICATORS

## Indicator 23. Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Community College Outcome

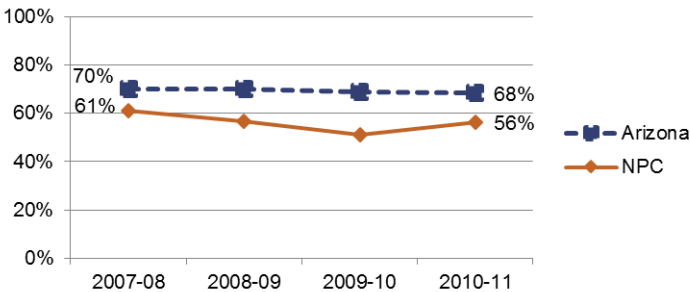
Three quarters of learners in NPC's 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within 6 years.

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 VFA 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 (2005-08 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Universities Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



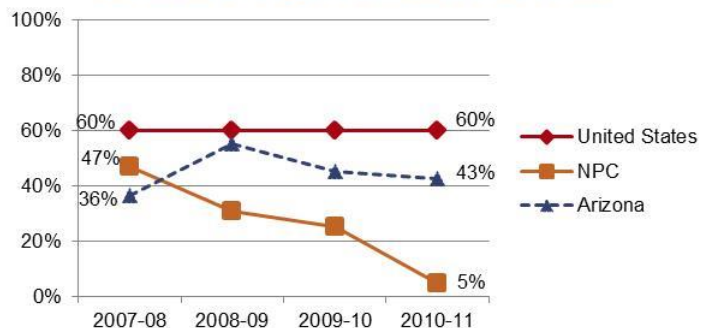
## Indicator 24. Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Public Universities who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

Fifty-six percent of all 2010-11 full-time transfers from Northland Pioneer College to in-state universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years. While lower than the statewide average (68%), this rate indicates that the majority of full-time transfers from NPC are graduating from the state's public universities in a timely manner.

## Indicator 25. Percent of all Transfers who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

Five percent of 2010-11 transfers from NPC to all four-year institutions—public and private, in-state and out—earned a bachelor's degree within four years. This rate is substantially lower than statewide (42%) and national (60%)<sup>7</sup> averages, and may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer. Moreover, the substantial variation in NPC's rates may be due to the smaller overall student population at the college.

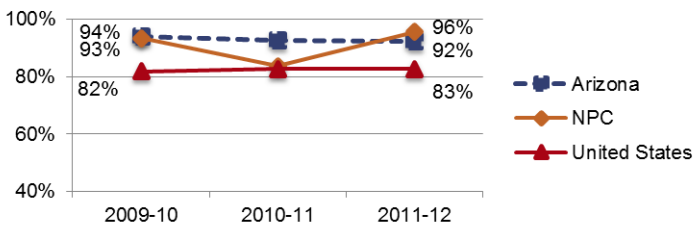
## Percent of all Transfers Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



<sup>7</sup>National Student Clearinghouse. (2012). *Snapshot report: transfer outcomes (four years after transfer)*. Herndon, VA: Author.

# COMPLETION INDICATORS

## Percent of Learners Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential (2009-12 Occupational Completers/Leavers)



## Indicator 26. Percent of Occupational Program Completers/Leavers Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential within One Year

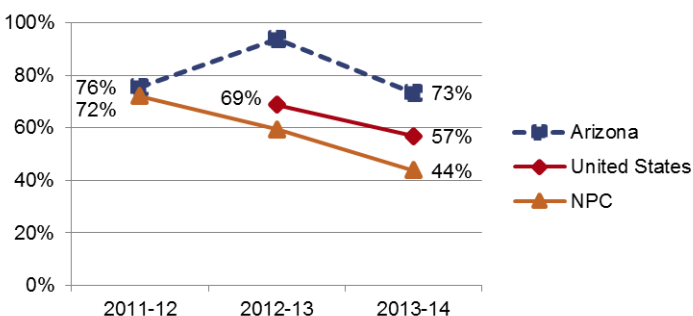
Out of all learners in NPC's 2011-12 Occupational Completers/Leavers Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment aligned with industry-recognized standards up to one year after college exit, 96% passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. This level of performance exceeds both the 2011-12 statewide (92%) and national (83%)<sup>8</sup> averages.

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. Wage Growth of Occupational Completers

This indicator will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision pending a statewide agreement for sharing wage data.

## Percent of ABE/GED Learners Entering Employment



## Indicator 28. Percent of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) Learners Entering Employment

In 2013-14, 44% of NPC's ABE/GED learners who were not employed at the time of entry—and who were surveyed by the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS)—entered employment within three months of exiting the program.

Although NPC's rate has decreased in recent years, it may be a result of low NRS survey response rates. NPC will continue to work hard to more effectively move ABE/GED students into the workforce.

<sup>8</sup> Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. (2014). *Core indicator report :1P1 Technical Skill Attainment , 2011-12*. Washington, DC: Author.

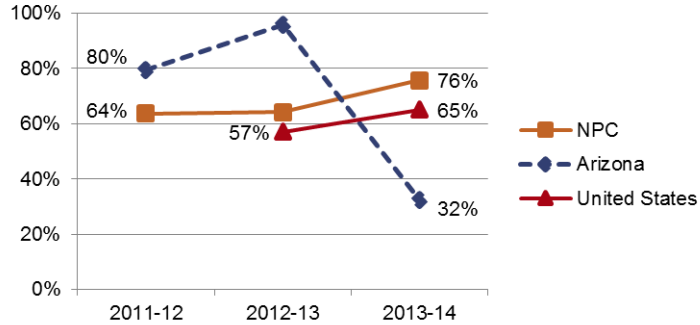
<sup>9</sup>U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2015). *Core Follow-Up Outcomes Measures, 2013-2014*. Washington, DC: Author.

# COMPLETION INDICATORS

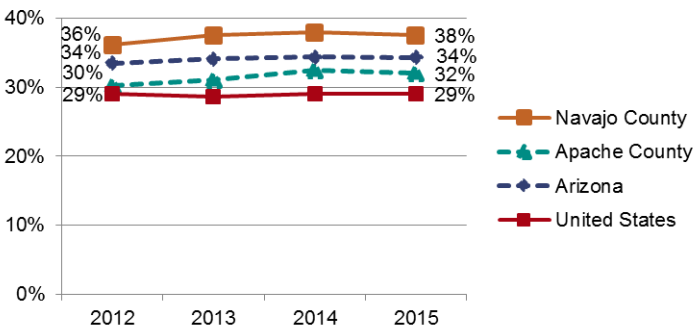
## Indicator 29. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) Learner Outcomes

In 2013-14, 76% of NPC's ABE/GED completers who held a GED or high school diploma subsequently enrolled in further education within one year of program exit. This number is substantially higher than statewide (32%) and national (65%)<sup>10</sup> averages.

## Percent of ABE/GED Completers Enrolled in Postsecondary Education



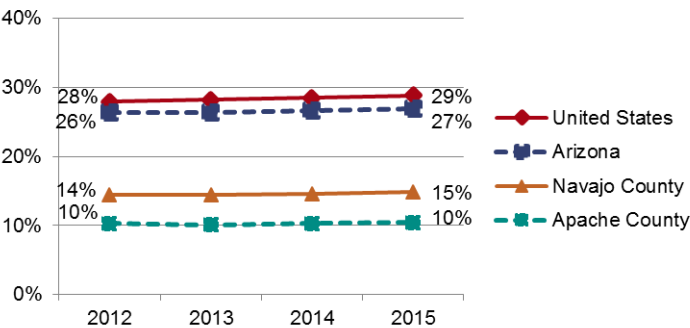
## Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree



## Indicator 30. Percent of Adults with Postsecondary Experience and/or Degrees

Thirty-eight percent of Navajo County and 32% of Apache County adults age 25 and older have attended some college and/or have earned an associate degree. In the case of Navajo County this rate exceeds the statewide average (34%) and in both counties the rates are substantially higher than the national number (29%).<sup>10</sup>

## Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree



However, only 10% and 15% of adults in Apache and Navajo Counties, respectively, hold a bachelor's or higher degree. By continuing to provide education leading to transfer and bachelor's degrees, and by partnering with the state's public universities, NPC and other community colleges across the state will endeavor to help the Arizona Board of Regents reach their goal of raising the percentage of Arizona adults holding a bachelor's degree to 28% by 2017.

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2015). *Core Follow-Up Outcomes Measures, 2013-2014*. Washington, DC: Author.

<sup>10</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2015). *Educational attainment: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.