



2020

Strategic Vision Outcomes Report

STRATEGIC VISION FOR 2030

In 2017 Arizona's community colleges embraced a Strategic Vision for 2030, which focuses college efforts around three major goals: expanding access to postsecondary credentials; increasing transfer and completion of associate degrees and certificates; and improving alignment between college programs and workforce needs.

The Strategic Vision for 2030 builds upon the colleges' previous long-term plan, published in 2011, and outlines how Arizona's ten community college districts will continue to improve student outcomes, as well as how the districts contribute to Arizona's broader economic and educational goals. **In particular, the Strategic Vision for 2030 creates a framework for reaching the Achieve60AZ goal that by 2030, 60% of the Arizona working-age population will hold a postsecondary credential.**

A major function of the Strategic Vision for 2030 is the collection, analysis, and publication of data pertaining to 33 short-term, mid-range, long-term, and follow-up metrics. The majority of these metrics have been in place for years, making it possible to evaluate trends in student progress and outcomes.

Statewide and district-level data 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, the Arizona Department of Education, and Arizona's workforce development and business communities in order to assist in the improvement of educational and economic pathways.

The Strategic Vision for 2030, as well as a Technical Guide that provides detailed definitions of each metric, can be found online at: www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org.

METRICS AND COHORTS

METRICS

The 2020 Strategic Vision Outcomes Report presents data related to 33 short-term, mid-range, long-term, and follow-up metrics. These data identify areas of strength, as well as places where Arizona's community colleges will need to focus their efforts in order to expand access, increase transfer and completion, and improve alignment with workforce needs.

Short-term metrics correspond to enrollment rates, cost measures, and training for high-demand occupations.

Mid-range metrics examine student persistence and success in the first two years of college.

Long-term metrics pertain to transfer and completion rates.

Follow-up metrics examine student success after departing the community college and may be affected by economic forces, as well as the actions of Arizona universities.

COHORTS

The 2020 Strategic Vision Outcomes Report tracks several cohorts of students.

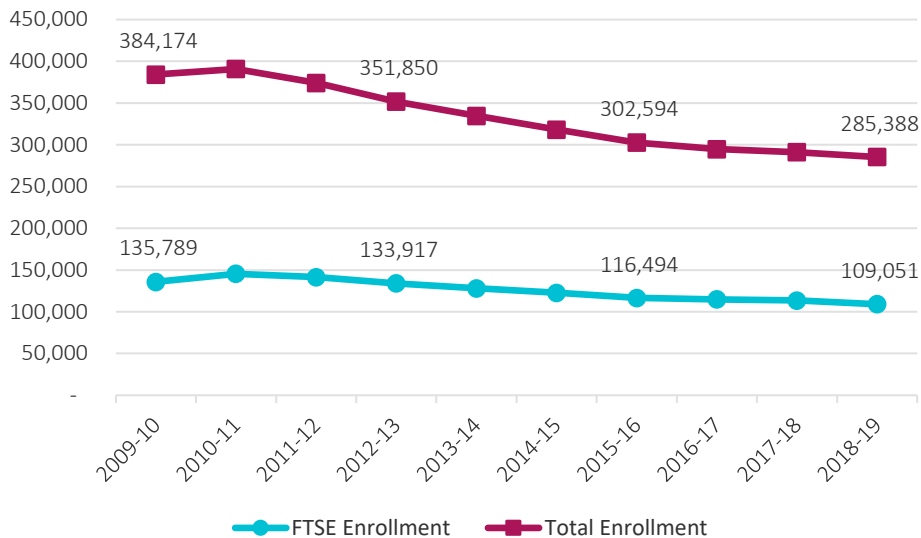
2017 and 2013 New Student Cohorts are used to examine student persistence and success after two and six years, respectively.

2017 and 2013 Credential-Seeking Sub-Cohorts, defined as cohort members who earned at least 12 credits by the end of their second year, are used for some retention, transfer, and completion measures. Credential-seeking sub-cohorts provide a more accurate gauge of student success, as they take into account learners' diverse education and training goals.

2016-17 Occupational Cohort, comprised of students who exited a community college in 2016-17 after completing a specified number of credits in an occupational pathway, is used in a follow-up metric related to earning industry-recognized credentials.

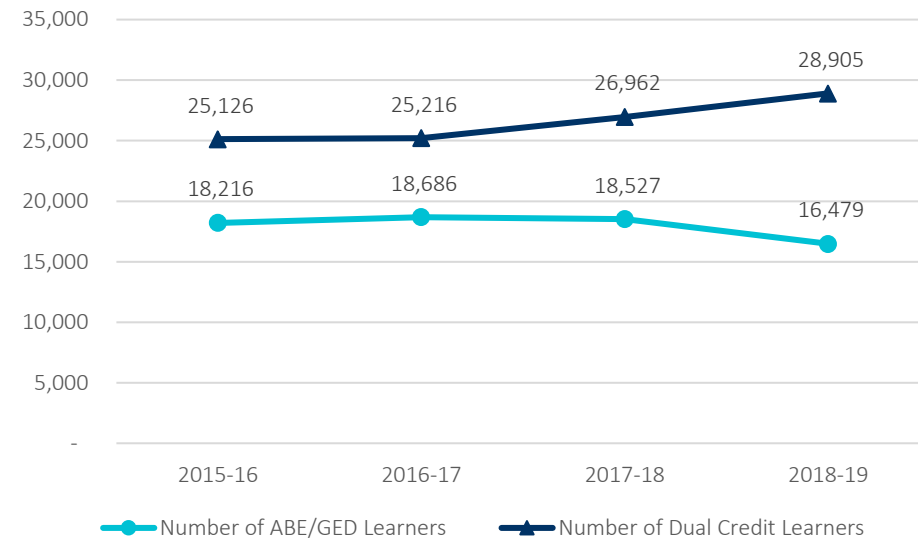
Expand Access: Short-Term Metrics

Metrics 1 and 2: FTSE and Total Enrollment



Statewide, total annual enrollment at Arizona's community colleges has declined from its recession-era high in 2010-11, although full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment is more stable. Despite this enrollment decline, which mirrors national trends, Arizona's community colleges have increased the percentage of students transferring and earning credentials.

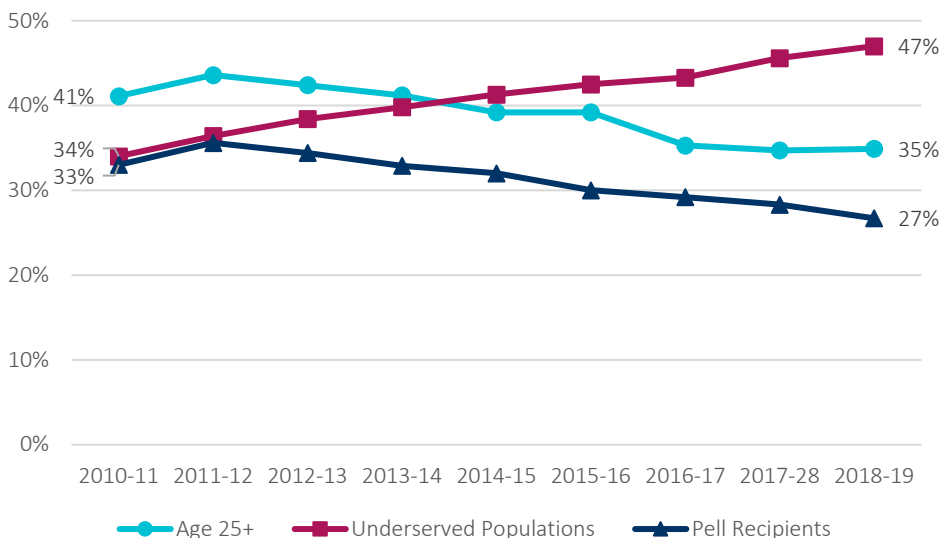
Metrics 3 and 4: Enrollment of ABE/GED and Dual Credit Learners



Across Arizona, total annual enrollment in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and/or General Educational Development (GED) courses was 16,479 in 2018-19. Total annual enrollment of high school learners in dual credit courses rose to 28,905. These programs are essential in expanding access to Arizona's community colleges.

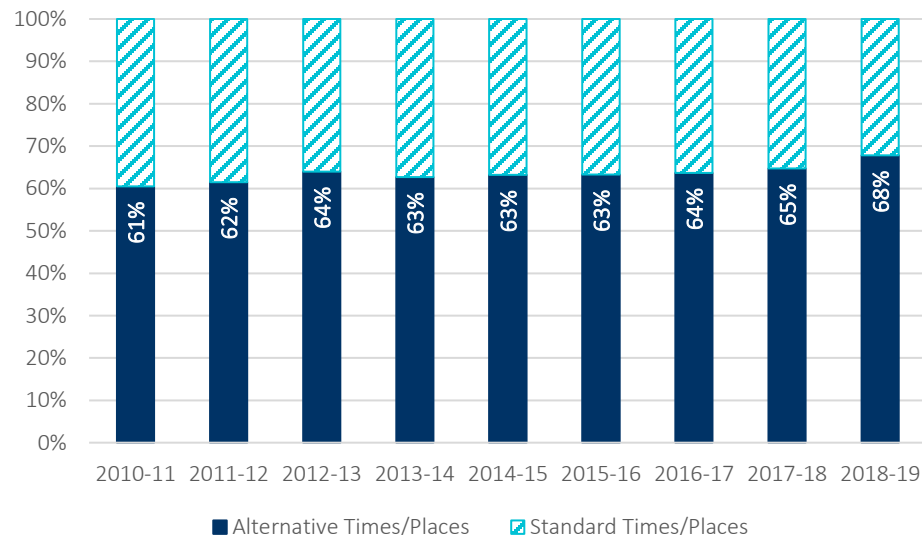
Expand Access: Short-Term Metrics

Metric 5: Enrollment of Underserved Populations



The percentage of Arizona community college students who are members of an historically underserved racial/ethnic group has increased substantially and now exceeds the percentage of the state belonging to an underserved population (44%).¹ Arizona’s colleges enroll more adult learners than the national average (33%), but fewer Pell recipients (34%).²

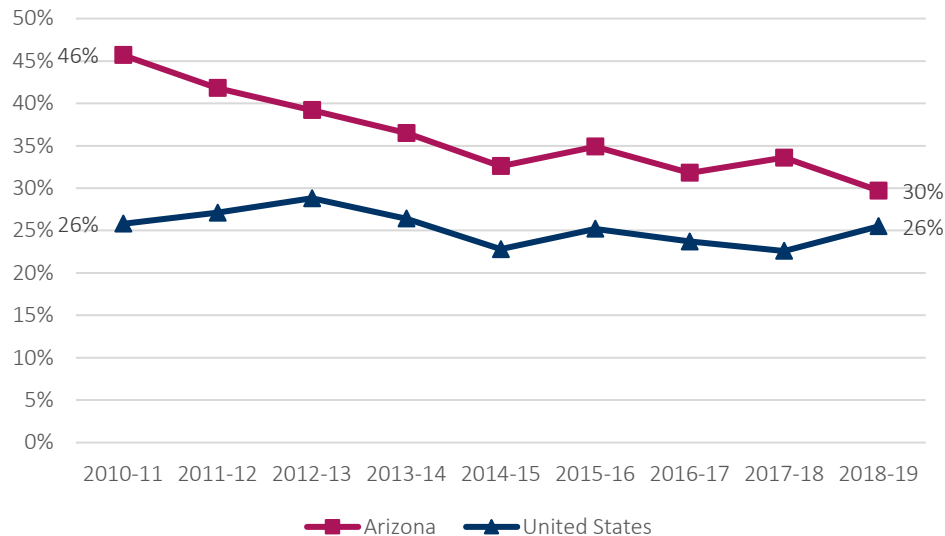
Metric 6: Percent of Credit Hours Earned Via Alternative Times or Places



At Arizona’s community colleges, only 32% of instruction in 2018-19 occurred in traditional semester-length courses held on campus Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm. Extending access to many diverse populations, 68% of all student credit hours were earned online, at night or on the weekends, at skill centers, or on land belonging to Indigenous Communities.

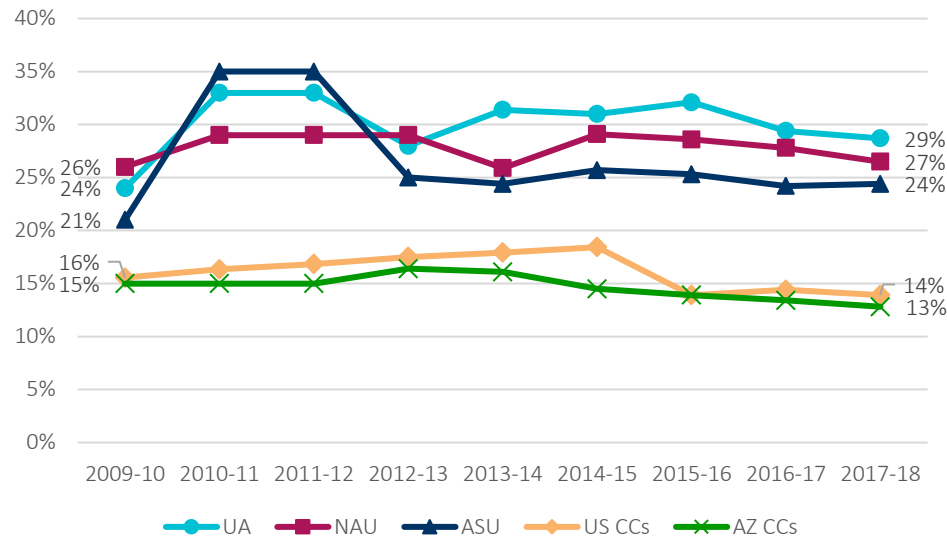
Expand Access: Short-Term Metrics

Metric 7: Community College-Going Rate



While the rate has declined since its recession-era high in 2010-11, Arizona's community colleges enroll a higher percentage of recent high school graduates than the national average (26%).² Arizona's community colleges will continue to work with the Arizona Board of Regents to improve college-going across the state.

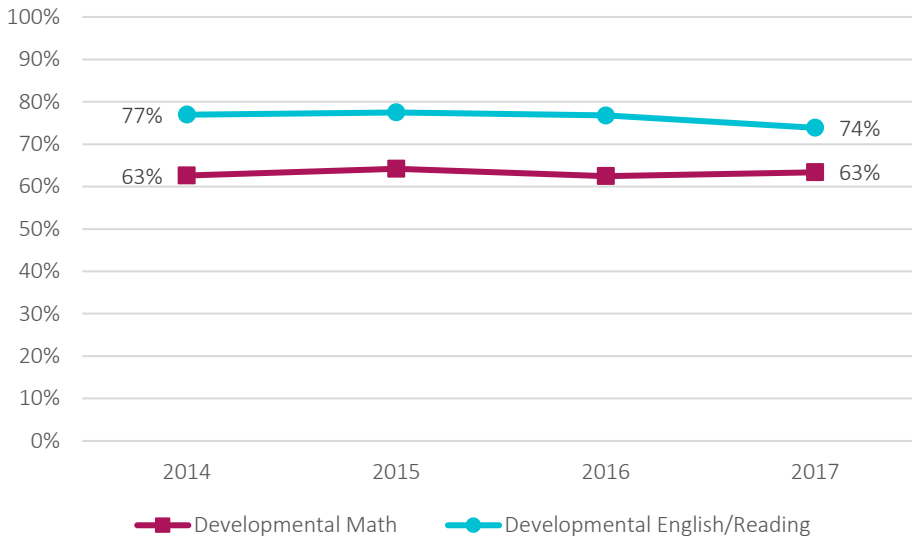
Metric 8: Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Median Household Income



At roughly \$7,200 per year, the median net price of attending Arizona's community colleges is just 13% of the state's median household income. This rate mirrors the national comparison (14%) and is substantially lower than Arizona's public universities (24-29%),³ making the community colleges excellent and affordable options for postsecondary education and training.

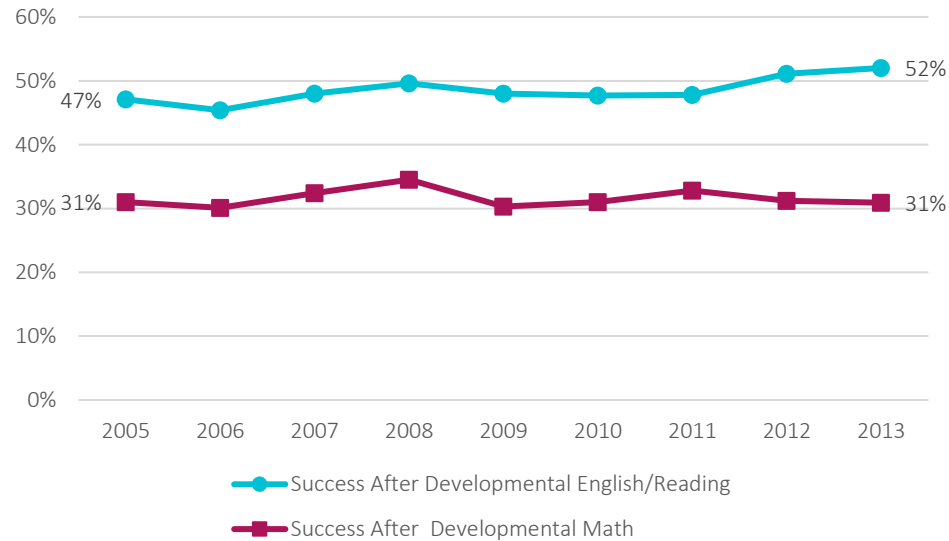
Expand Access: Mid-Range Metrics

Metrics 9 and 10: Developmental Course Success Rates



Over two years, 74% of student credit hours attempted in developmental English or reading by the 2017 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). In that same time period, 63% of student credit hours attempted by the same cohort in developmental math were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

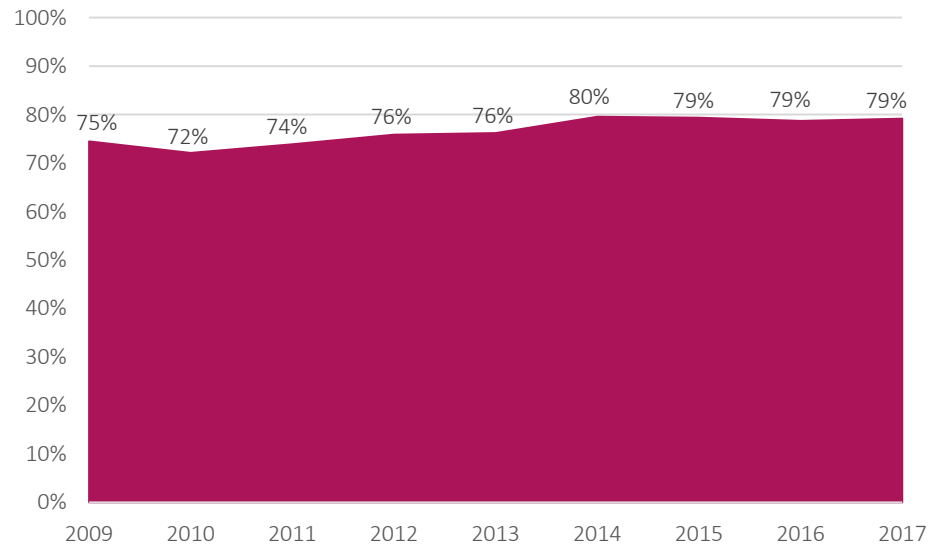
Metrics 11 and 12: Success After Developmental Education



After six years, 52% of developmental English or reading learners in the 2013 New Student Cohort successfully completed a college-level course in English, and 31% of developmental math learners in the same cohort completed a college-level math course. These success after developmental education rates are similar to national averages.⁴

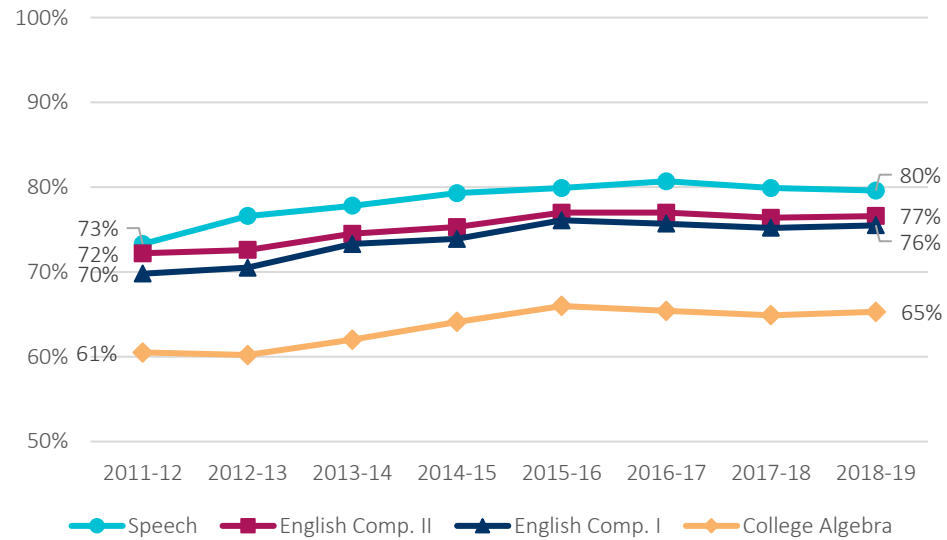
Increase Transfer and Completion: Mid-Range Metrics

**Metric 13:
College-Level Course Success Rate**



Over two years, 79% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by the 2017 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). This rate has remained steady over the past several years.

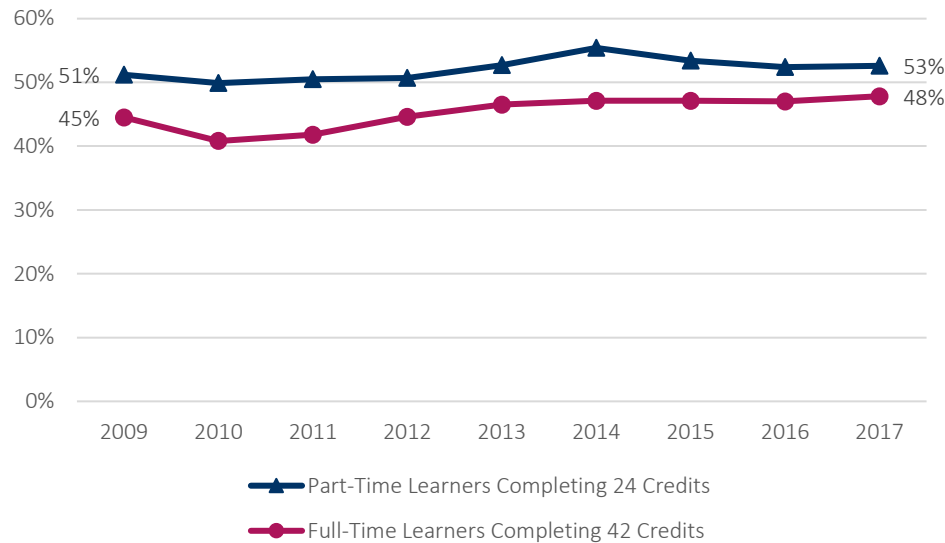
Metric 14: Percent of First College-Level Math and English Credit Hours Completed



The rates at which Arizona's community college students successfully complete College Algebra, English Composition I and II, and Speech (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass) have steadily increased since 2011-12. These rates mirror or exceed corresponding national averages (66-79%).⁵

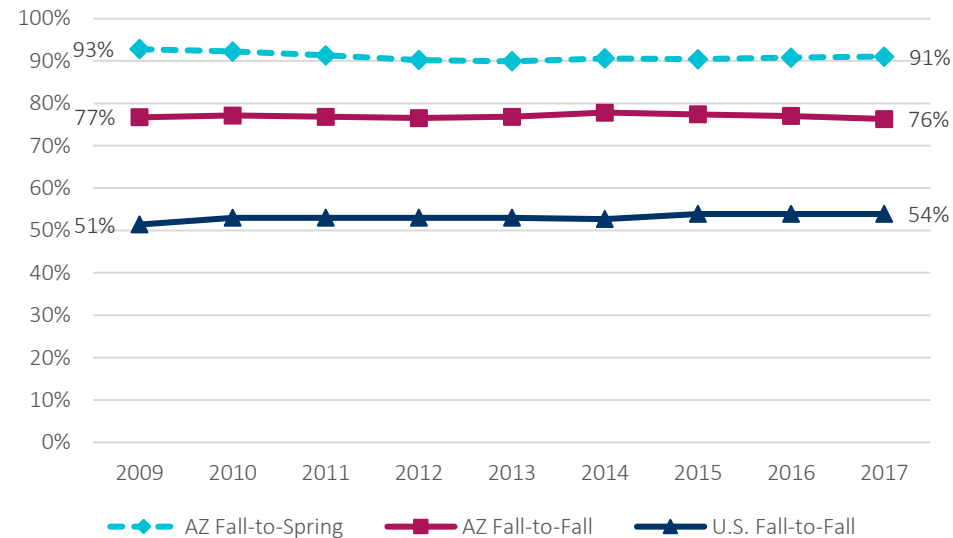
Increase Transfer and Completion: Mid-Range Metrics

Metrics 15 and 16: Percent of Learners Attaining Two-Year Credit Thresholds



By the end of their second year, 53% of part-time learners in the 2017 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 48% of full-time learners in the same cohort had completed 42 credits. These rates are notable, as students who attain these credit thresholds are more likely to persist and earn a degree or certificate.⁶

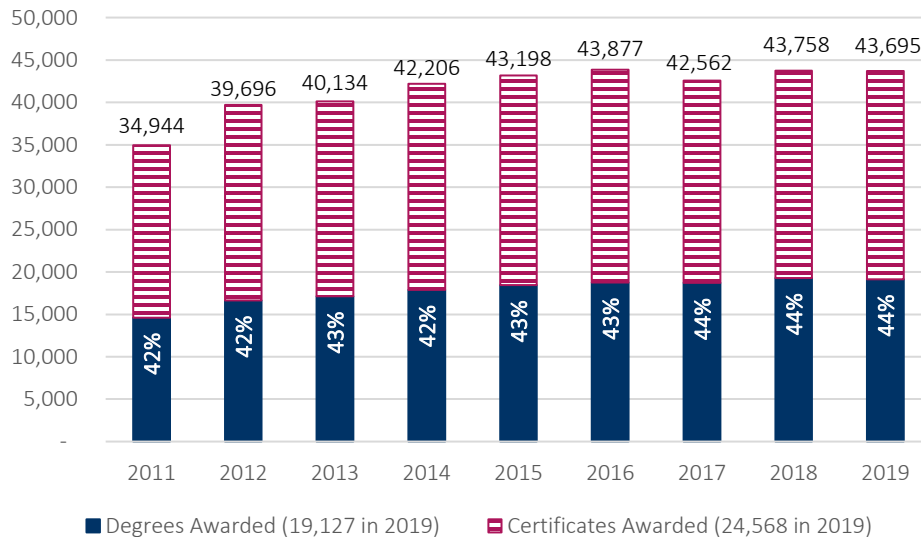
Metrics 17 and 18: Retention Rates



Ninety-one percent of the 2017 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted to spring 2018, and 76% of them returned the following fall. Arizona's retention rates are substantially higher than the 54%⁷ reported as a national comparison, likely because the national figure is not limited to credential-seekers.

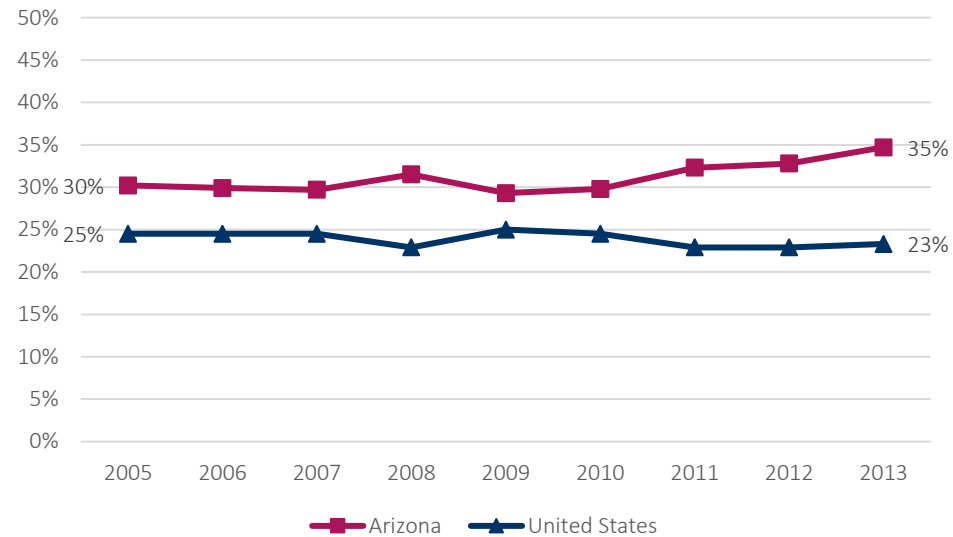
Increase Transfer and Completion: Long-Term Metrics

Metric 19:
Degrees and Certificates Awarded



Between 2011 and 2019, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Arizona's community colleges increased by 25% to 43,695, despite declining enrollments. Of the 2019 total, 44% were degrees and 56% were certificates. These data reflect a concerted effort by Arizona's community colleges to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials.

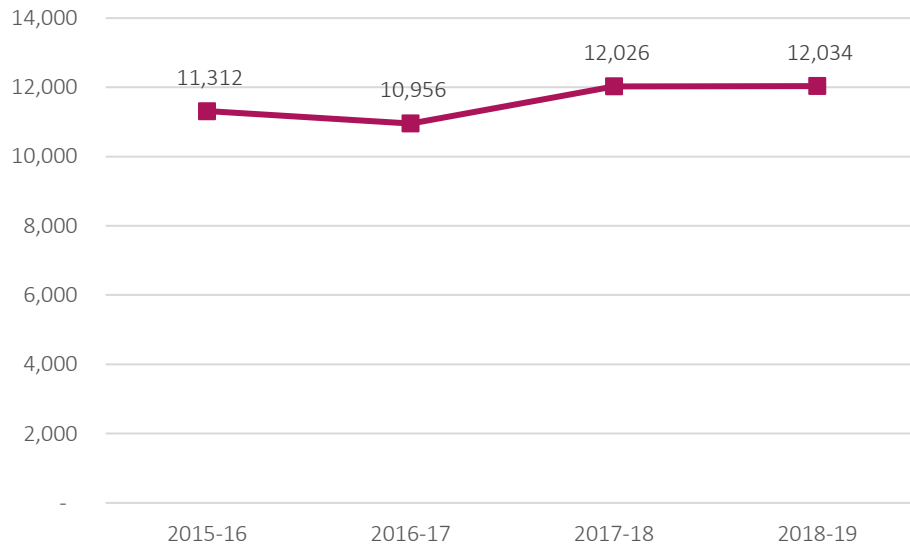
Metric 20: Graduation
(Degree/Certificate Completion) Rate



After six years, 35% of the 2013 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate. Arizona's graduation rate is substantially higher than the most recent national comparison (23%),² in part because the national number is not limited to credential-seekers.

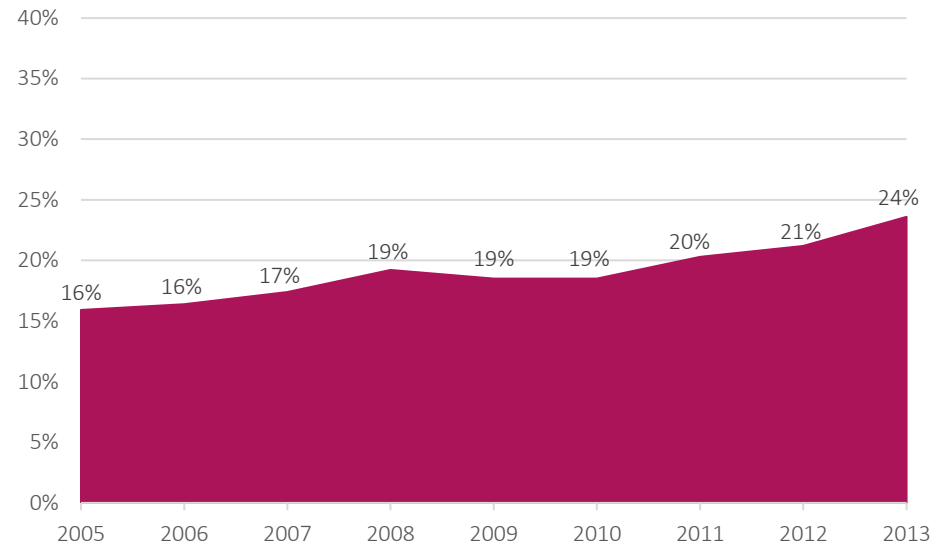
Increase Transfer and Completion: Long-Term Metrics

Metric 21: AGECs Awarded



In 2018-19, Arizona’s community colleges awarded 12,034 Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) certificates, an increase from previous years. The AGEC is comprised of 35-37 credit hours of coursework that, upon completion, transfer to all public colleges and universities in the state and fulfill lower division, general education requirements.

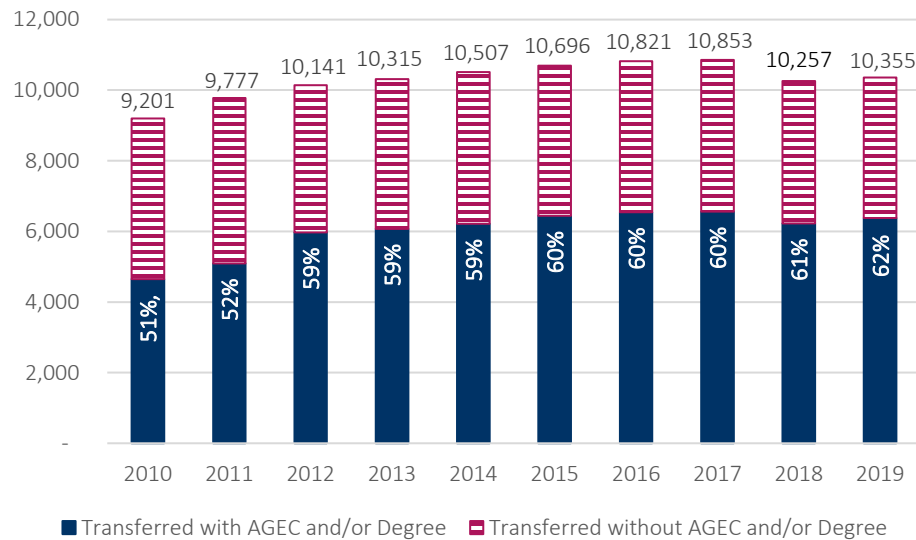
Metric 22: AGEC Completion Rate



Statewide, 24% of the 2013 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed an AGEC within 6 years, a 50% increase from the 2005 Cohort. Increasing the AGEC completion rate—a key priority for the state’s community colleges—will not only ease transfer to Arizona’s public universities but also help students earn bachelor’s degrees in less time and with fewer excess credits.⁸

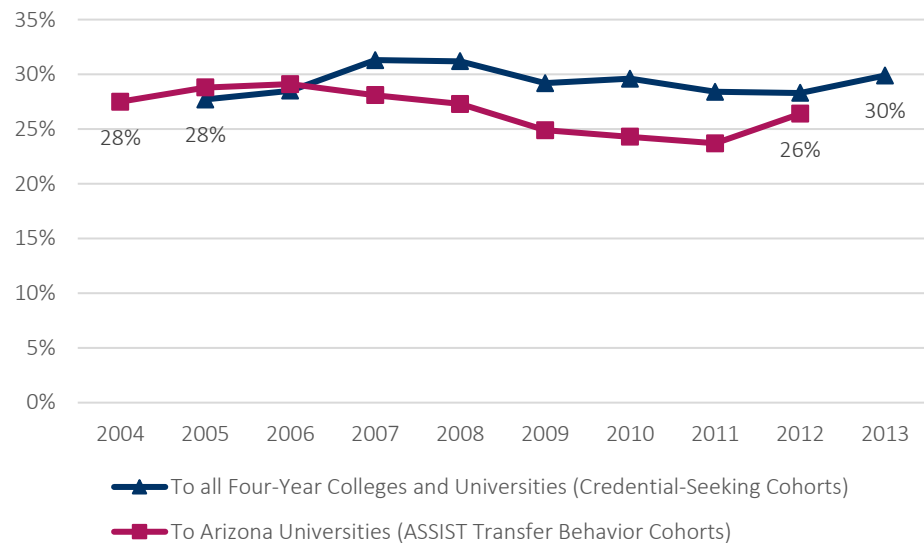
Increase Transfer and Completion: Long-Term Metrics

Metrics 23 and 24: In-State Transfers and Percent with AGEC and/or Degree



In 2019, the number of students transferring from Arizona's community colleges to an in-state, public university was 13% higher than in 2010, despite declining enrollments. As well, the percentage of transfers who earned an AGEC and/or degree prior to transferring has increased substantially, indicating that the transfer process is becoming more efficient and cost effective.

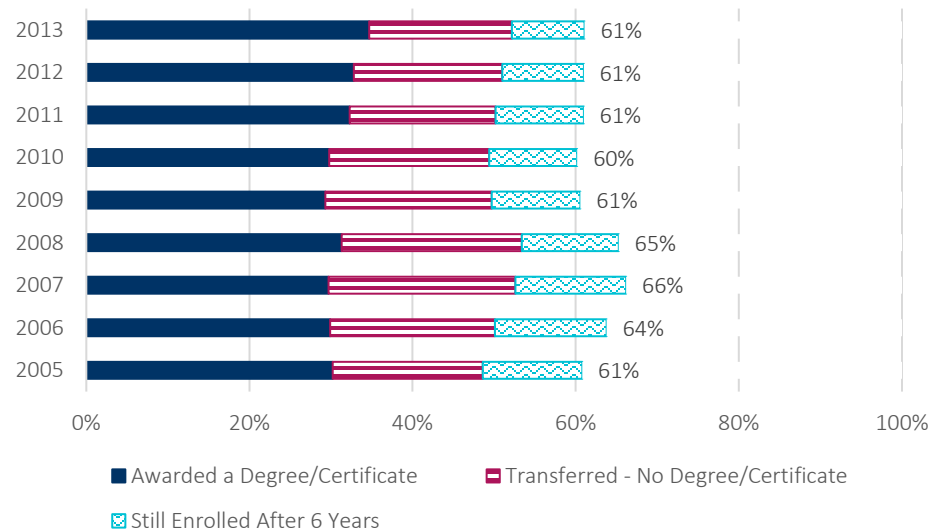
Metrics 25 and 26: Transfer Rates



The statewide transfer rate to public universities rose to 26% for the 2012 ASSIST Transfer Behavior Cohort, and the overall transfer rate (the percent of learners in credential-seeking cohorts who transfer to any four-year college or university within 6 years) increased to 30%. Both rates are higher than the most recent national average (25%).⁹

Increase Transfer and Completion: Long-Term Metrics

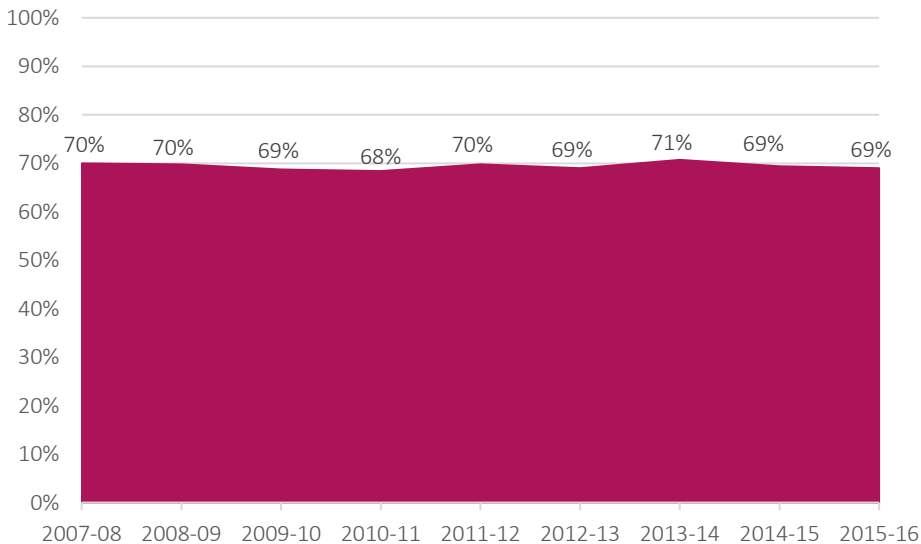
Metric 27 : Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Outcome



Statewide, roughly 61% of learners achieve a successful outcome within six 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 institution, several national accountability initiatives—including the Student Achievement Measure—have broadened the definition of a successful outcome to include earning a degree or certificate, transferring to another two- or four-year college or university, or continued enrollment. Nationally, 58% of all community college students (62% of full-timers and 55% of part-timers) achieve one of these successful outcomes within 6 years.¹⁰

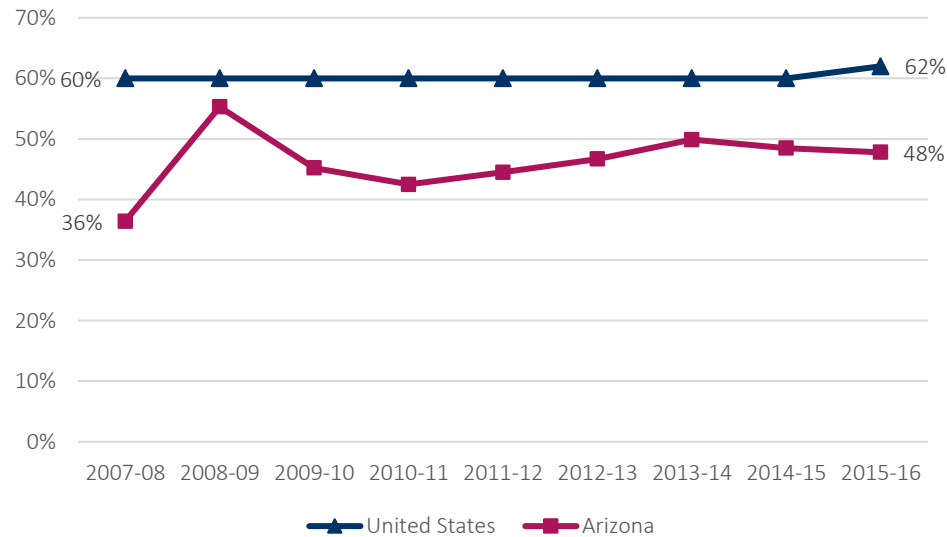
Increase Transfer and Completion: Follow-Up Metrics

Metric 28: Percent of Full-Time Transfers to AZ Universities Earning Bachelor's Degrees within Four Years



Sixty-nine percent of all 2015-16 full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges to in-state, public universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years. This rate has remained relatively steady in recent years and indicates that most full-time transfers are graduating from the state's public universities in a timely manner.

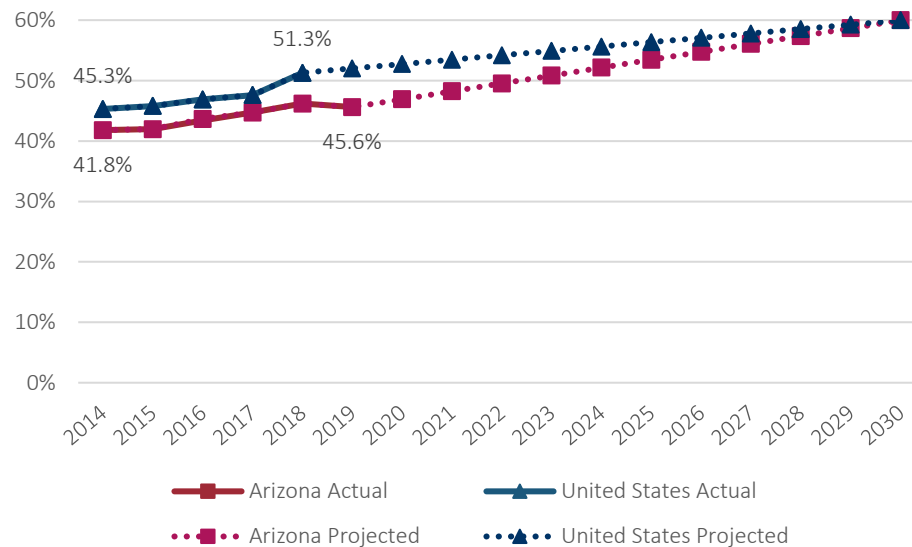
Metric 29: Percent of All Transfers Earning Bachelor's Degrees within Four Years



Statewide, 48% of 2015-16 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 (62%),⁹ this percentage may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer.

Increase Transfer and Completion: Follow-Up Metrics

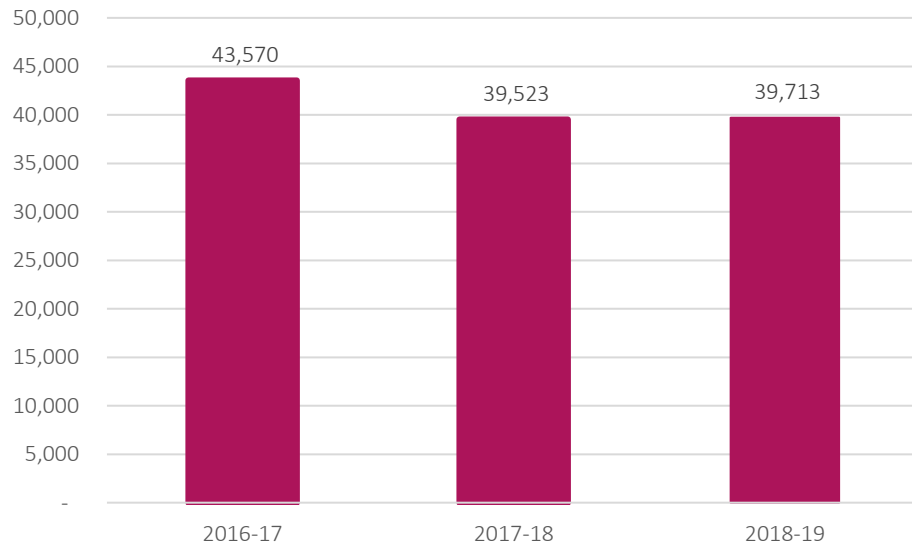
Metric 30: Estimated Percent of the Arizona Working-Age Population with a Postsecondary Credential



In 2019, an estimated 45.6% of the Arizona working-age population (residents aged 25-64) held a workforce certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's or higher degree (down from 46.2% in 2018). Arizona's community colleges are working closely with the Arizona Board of Regents and other postsecondary institutions across the state to reach the Achieve60AZ goal that by 2030, 60% of the Arizona working-age population will hold a postsecondary credential.

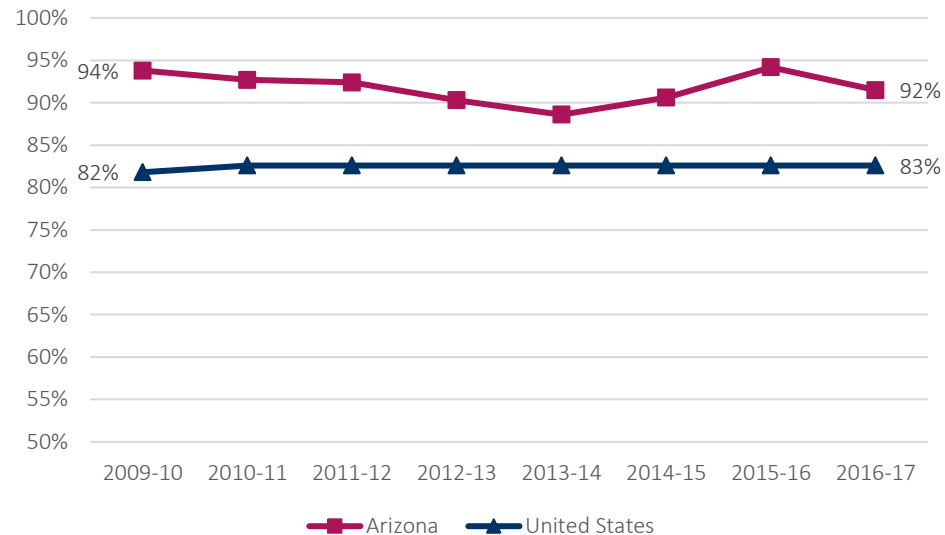
Improve Alignment: Short-Term and Follow-Up Metrics

Metric 31:
FTSE Enrollment in Occupational Courses



Over the past year, FTSE enrollment in occupational courses increased slightly across Arizona. Many of these enrollments were in degree or certificate programs associated with the highest-demand occupations in the state, including (among others) nurses, preschool teachers, computer support specialists, web developers, and medical or dental assistants.

Metric 32: Percent Earning Industry-Recognized Credentials



Out of all learners in the 2016-17 Occupational Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment up to one year after college exit, 92% passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. Examples of occupational programs leading to industry-recognized credentials include nursing, EMT, construction, solar technologies, fire science.

Improve Alignment: Short-Term and Follow-Up Metrics

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Metric 33: Percent of the 25 Highest-Demand Occupations in Arizona requiring more than a High School Diploma but less than a Bachelor's Degree for which Community Colleges offer Degrees or Certificates

- √ Medical Assistants
- √ Nursing Assistants
- √ Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- √ Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
- √ Computer User Support Specialists
- √ Teacher Assistants
- √ Dental Assistants
- √ Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
- √ Medical Records and Health Information Technicians
- √ Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
- √ Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
- √ Health Technologists and Technicians
- √ Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
- √ Radiologic Technologists
- √ Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- √ Respiratory Therapists
- √ Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists
- √ Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians
- √ Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics
- √ Computer Network Support Specialists
- √ Dental Hygienists
- √ Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
- √ Massage Therapists
- √ Psychiatric Technicians
- √ Surgical Technologists

Arizona's community colleges offer degree and/or certificate programs that train workers for 24 of the 25 highest-demand occupations in the state. For many of the fastest-growing sectors of the workforce, (e.g., medical and nursing assistants, computer support specialists, EMTs and paramedics, teacher assistants, and preschool teachers), nearly every community college district in the state offers a program.

Strategic Vision Data: Sources and Attributions

- ¹U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2019). *American Community Survey, 2014-18 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ²U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ³U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2019). *American Community Survey, 2014-18 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). *College navigator*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ⁴Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. W. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review, 29*, 155-270.
- ⁵National Community College Benchmark Project. (2018). *Report of national aggregate data*. Overland Park, KS: Author.
- ⁶Moore, C., Shulock, N., & Offenstein, J. (2009). *Steps to success: Analyzing milestone achievement to improve community college student outcomes*. Sacramento: California State University, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy.
- ⁷NCHEMS. (2015). *Retention rates - First-time college freshmen returning their second year (two-year public institutions)*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- ⁸Kisker, C. B., & Wagoner, R. L. (2013). *Implementing transfer associate degrees. Perspectives from the states*. New directions for community colleges, no. 160. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- ⁹Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. (2015). *What we know about transfer. Research overview*. New York: Author.
- ¹⁰National Student Clearinghouse. (2018). *Snapshot report: Yearly success and progress rates (two-year publics, first-time, full-time and first-time, part-time)*. Herndon, VA: Author.