



2021

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 2021 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 2021 Strategic Vision Outcomes Report tracks several cohorts of students.

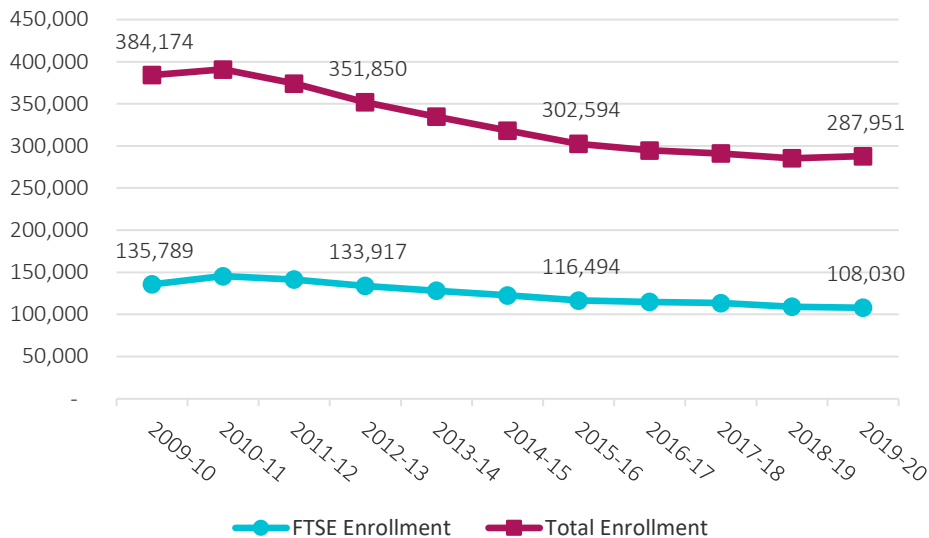
2018 and 2014 New Student Cohorts are used to examine student persistence and success after two and six years, respectively.

2018 and 2014 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.

2017-18 Occupational Cohort, comprised of students who exited a community college in 2017-18 after completing a specified number of credits in an occupational pathway, is used in a follow-up metric related to earning industry-recognized credentials.

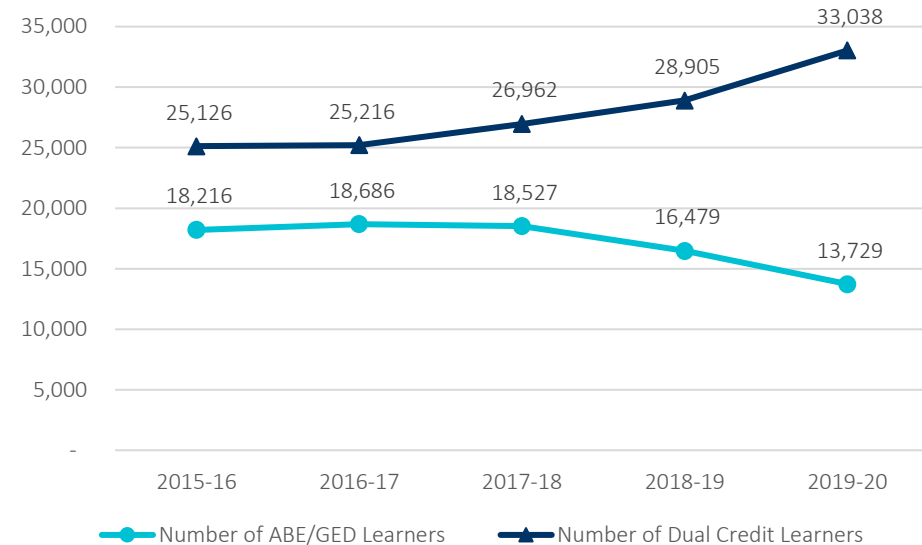
Expand Access: Short-Term Metrics

Metrics 1 and 2: FTSE and Total Enrollment



Statewide, total annual enrollment at Arizona's community colleges increased slightly for the first time since 2010-11, although full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment remained stable. Despite a decade of enrollment declines, Arizona's community colleges have increased the percentage of students transferring and earning credentials.

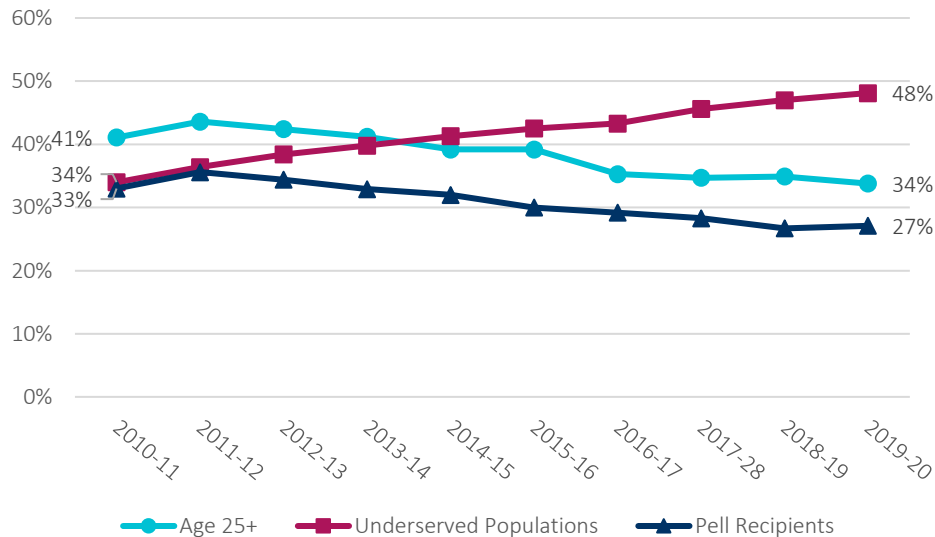
Metrics 3 and 4: Enrollment of ABE/GED and Dual Credit Learners



Across Arizona, total annual enrollment in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and/or General Educational Development (GED) courses dropped to 13,729 in 2019-20. Total annual enrollment of high school learners in dual credit courses rose to 33,038. These programs are essential in expanding access to Arizona's community colleges.

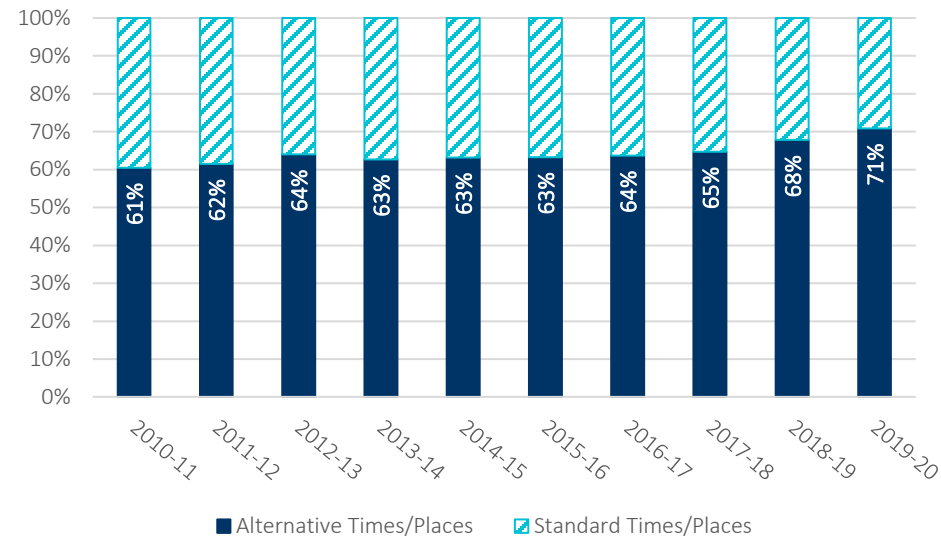
Expand Access: Short-Term Metrics

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 far exceeds the percentage of the state belonging to an underserved population (42%).¹ Arizona’s colleges enroll more adult learners than the national average (31%), but fewer Pell recipients (38%).²

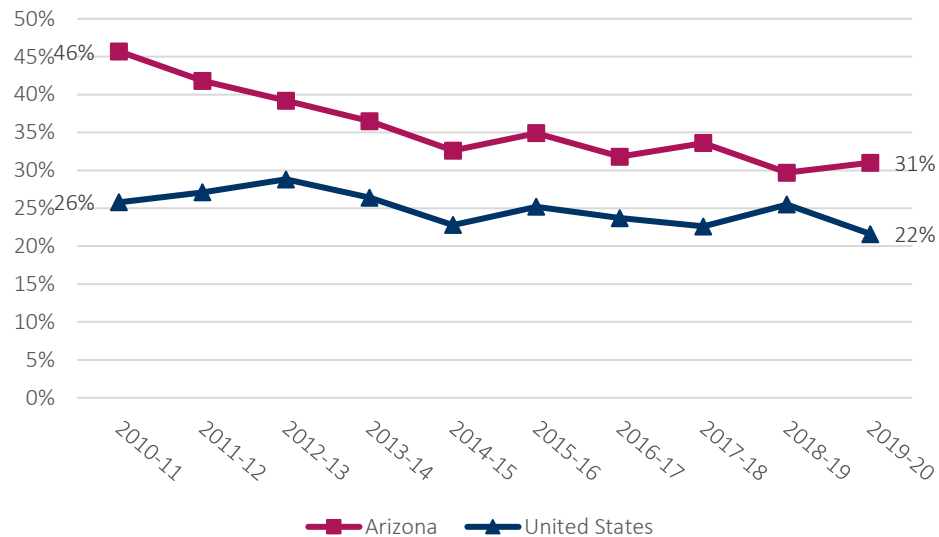
Metric 6: Percent of Credit Hours Earned Via Alternative Times or Places



At Arizona’s community colleges, only 29% of instruction in 2019–20 occurred in traditional semester-length courses held on campus Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm. Extending access to many diverse populations, 71% of all student credit hours were earned online, at night or on the weekends, at skill centers, or on land belonging to Indigenous Communities.

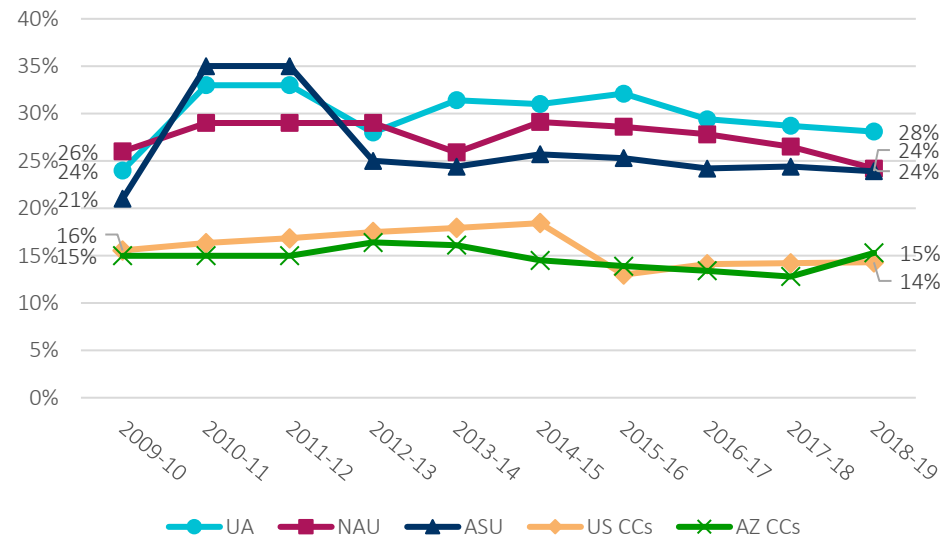
Expand Access: Short-Term Metrics

Metric 7: Community College-Going Rate



Although 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 (22%).² Arizona's community colleges will continue to work with the Arizona Board of Regents to improve college-going across the state.

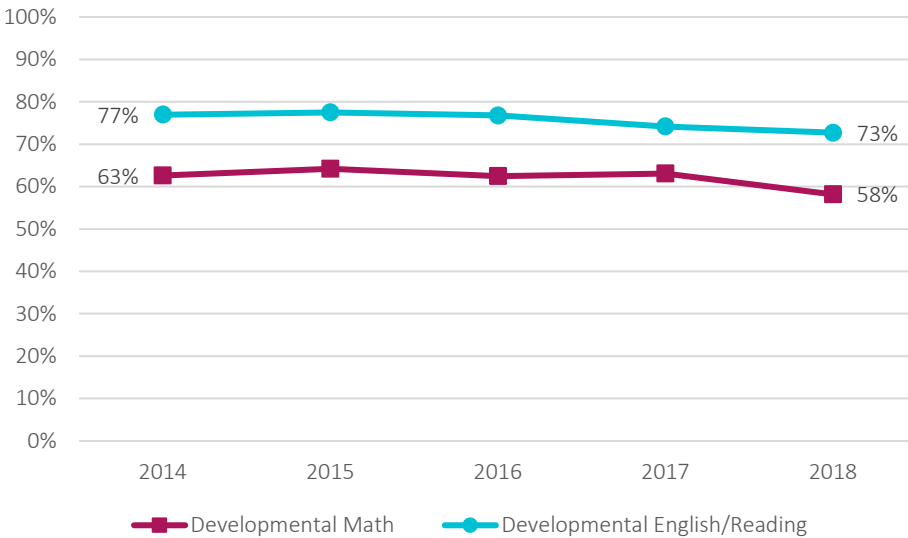
Metric 8: Cost of Attendance as a % of Median Household Income



At roughly \$9,000 per year, the median net price of attending Arizona's community colleges is just 15% of the state's median household income. This rate mirrors the national comparison (14%) and is substantially lower than Arizona's public universities (24-28%),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, 73% of student credit hours attempted in developmental English or reading by the 2018 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). In that same time period, 58% of student credit hours attempted by the same cohort in developmental math were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

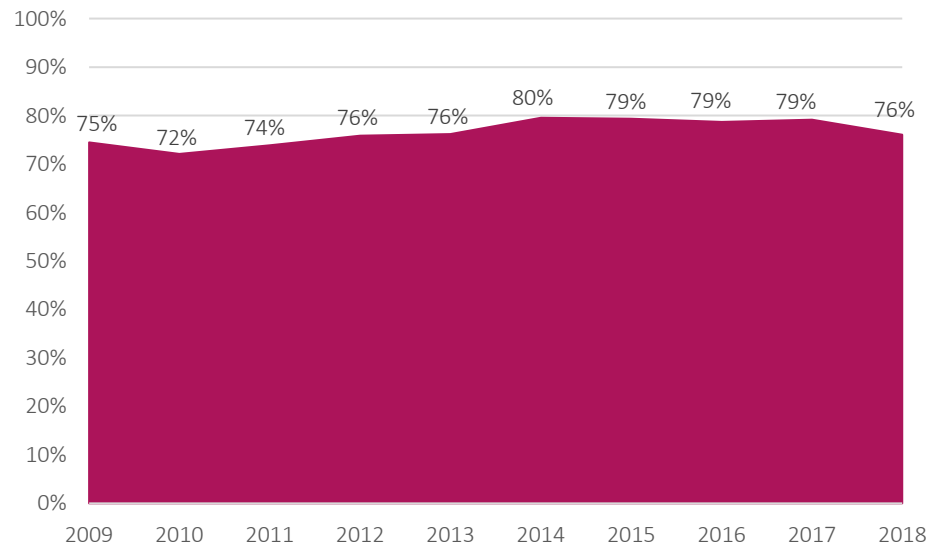
Metrics 11 and 12: Success After Developmental Education



After six years, 54% of developmental English or reading learners in the 2014 New Student Cohort successfully completed a college-level course in English, and 39% 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

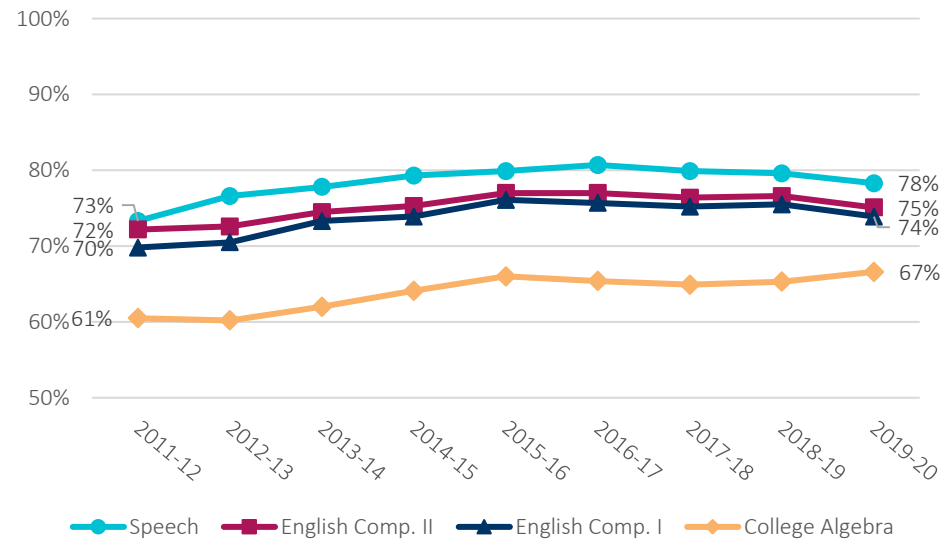
Increase Transfer & Completion: Mid-Range Metrics

Metric 13: College-Level Course Success Rate



Over two years, 76% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by the 2018 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). This slight dip from the previous years may reflect the disruption stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020.

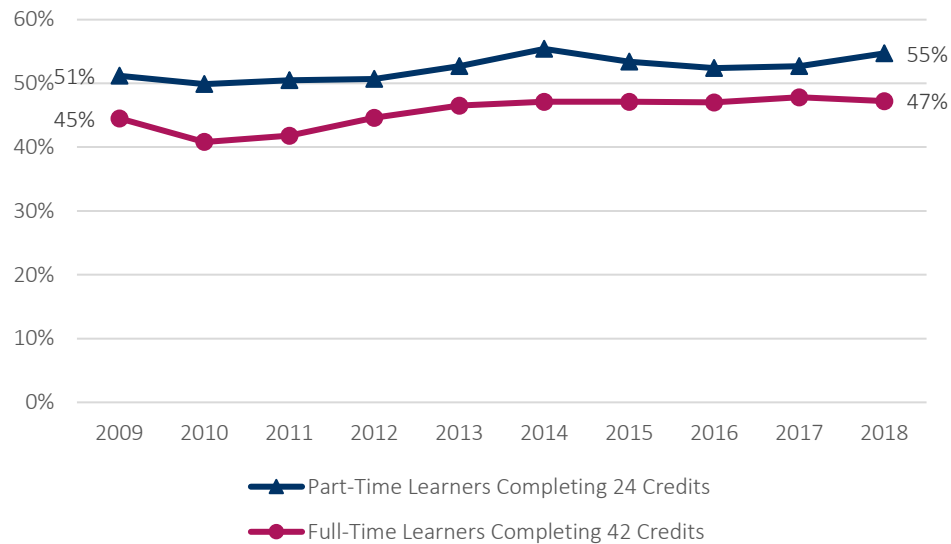
Metric 14: Percent of First College-Level Math and English Credit Hours Completed



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 remained relatively constant in recent years. These rates mirror or exceed corresponding national averages (66-79%).⁵

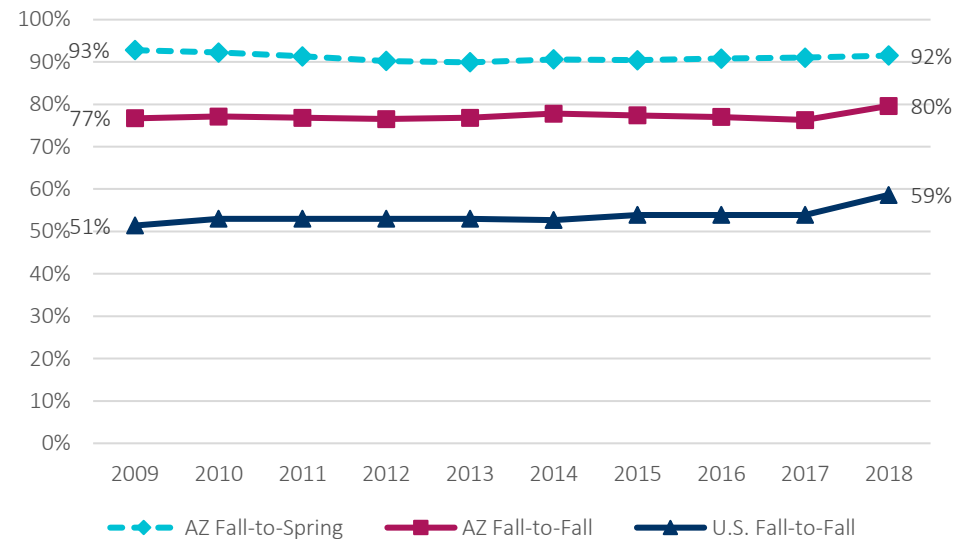
Increase Transfer & Completion: Mid-Range Metrics

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



By the end of their second year, 55% of part-time learners in the 2018 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 47% 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

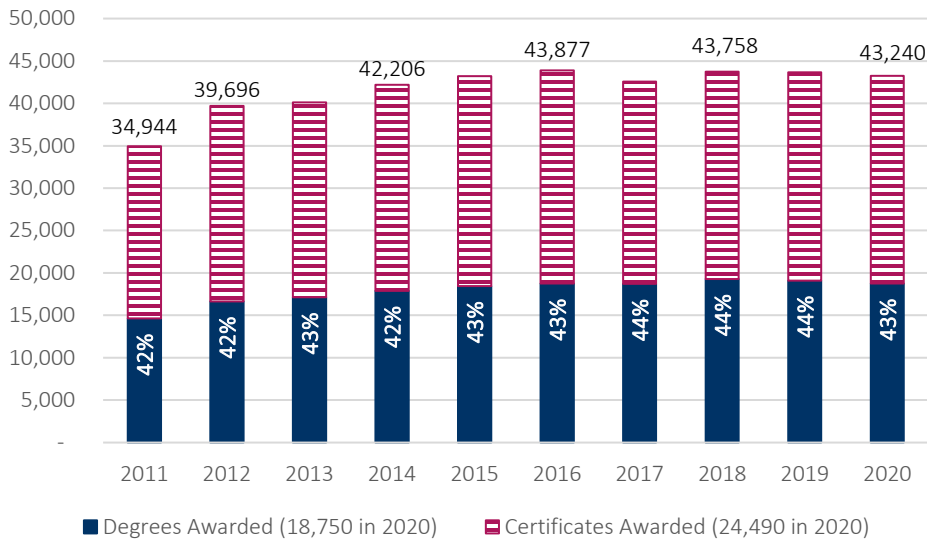
Metrics 17 and 18: Retention Rates



Ninety-two percent of the 2018 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted to spring 2019, and 80% of them returned the following fall. Arizona's retention rates are substantially higher than the 59%⁷ reported as a national comparison, likely because the national figure is not limited to credential-seekers.

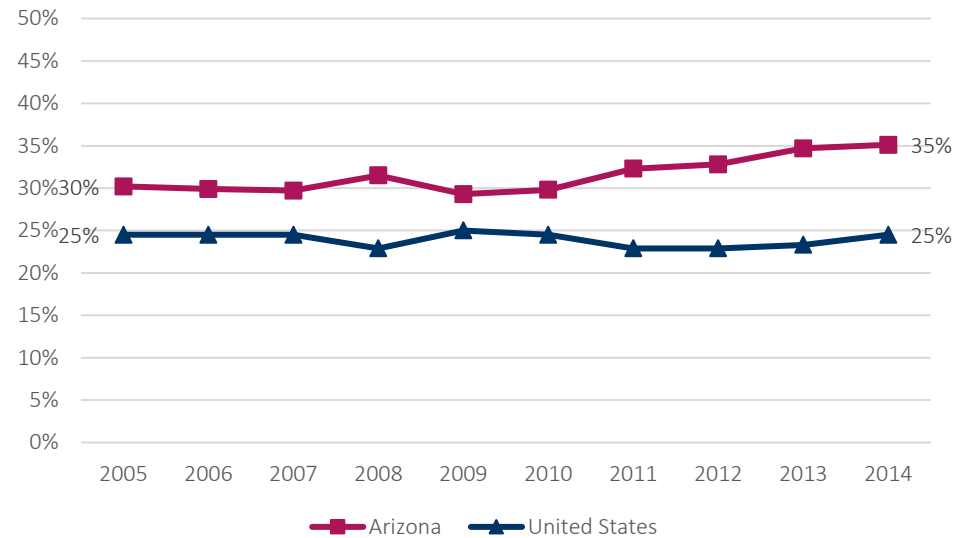
Increase Transfer & Completion: Long-Term Metrics

**Metric 19:
Degrees and Certificates Awarded**



Between 2011 and 2020, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Arizona's community colleges increased by 24% to 43,240, despite declining enrollments. Of the 2020 total, 43% were degrees and 57% 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**

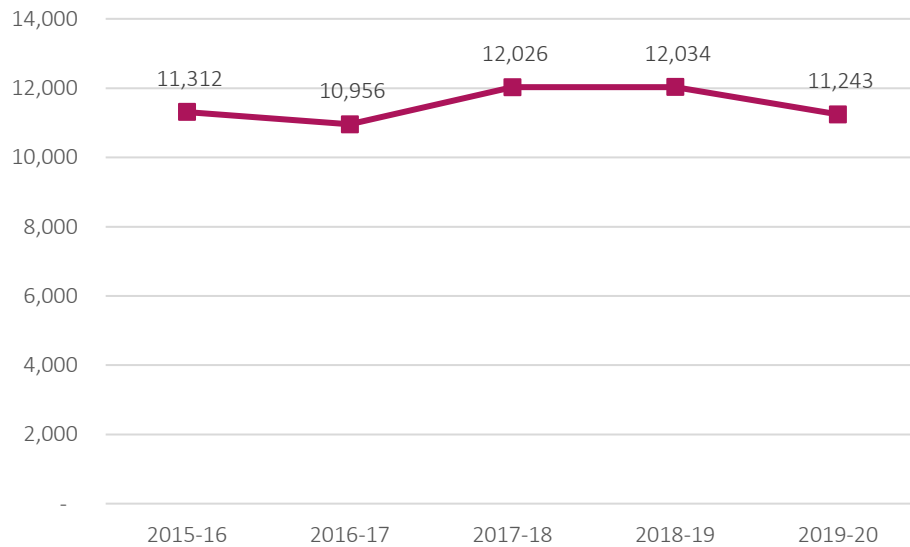


After six years, 35% of the 2014 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate, a 17% increase from the 2005 Cohort. Arizona's graduation rate is substantially higher than the most recent national comparison (25%),² in part because the national number is not limited to credential-seekers.

Increase Transfer & Completion: Long-Term Metrics

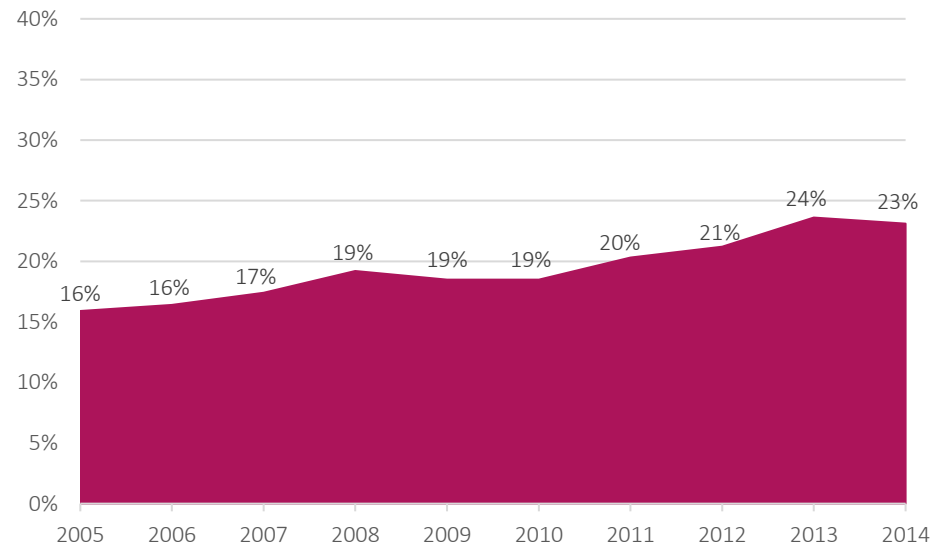
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**Metric 21:
AGECs Awarded**



In 2019-20, Arizona's community colleges awarded 11,243 Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) certificates, a slight drop 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.

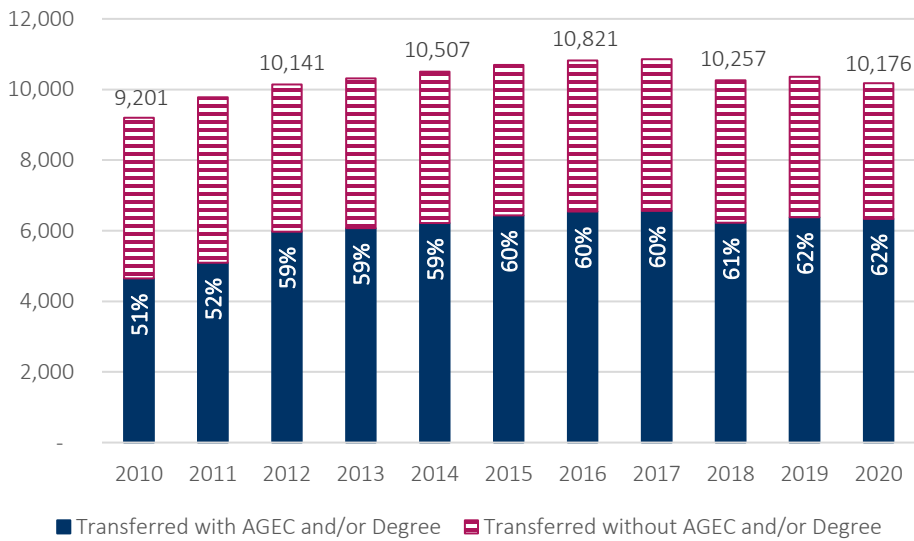
**Metric 22:
AGEC Completion Rate**



Statewide, 23% of the 2014 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed an AGEC within 6 years, a 44% 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

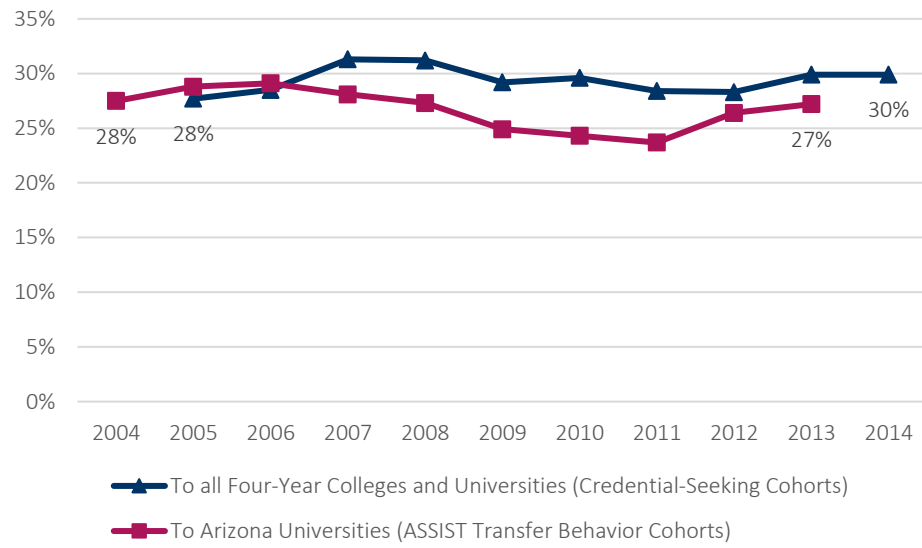
Increase Transfer & Completion: Long-Term Metrics

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



In 2020, the number of students transferring from Arizona’s community colleges to an in-state, public university was 11% 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 much more efficient and cost effective.

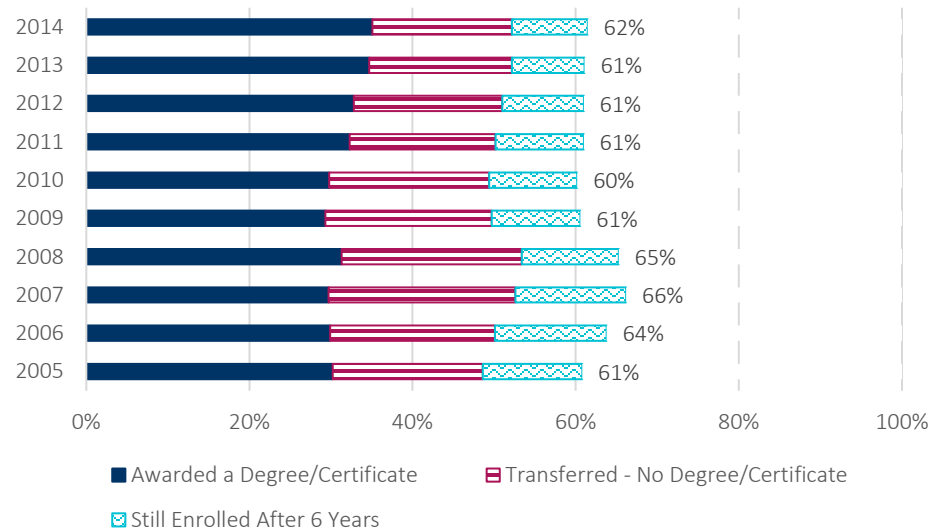
Metrics 25 and 26: Transfer Rates



The statewide transfer rate to public universities rose to 27% for the 2013 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) remained at 30%. Both rates are higher than the most recent national average (25%).⁹

Increase Transfer & Completion: Long-Term Metrics

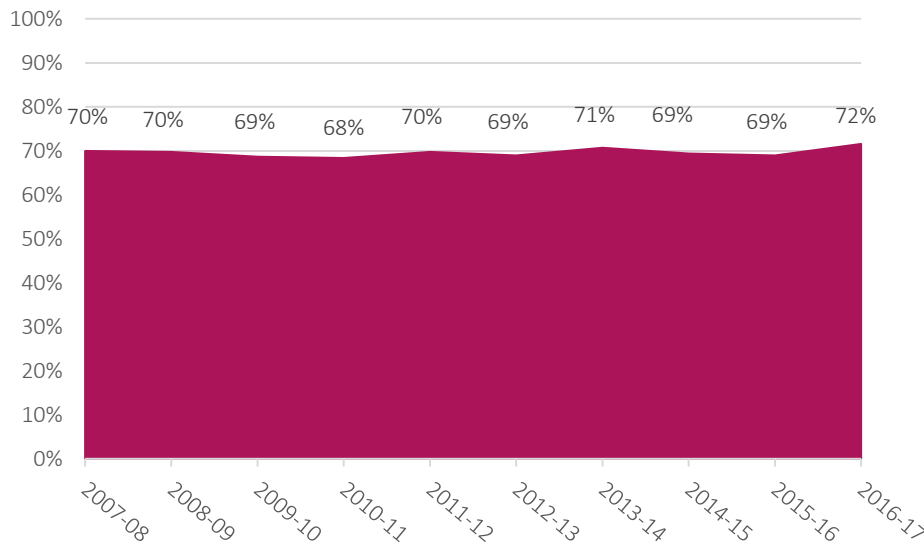
Metric 27 : Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Outcome



Statewide, 62% 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, 56% of all community college students (64% of full-timers and 52% of part-timers) achieve one of these successful outcomes within 6 years.¹⁰

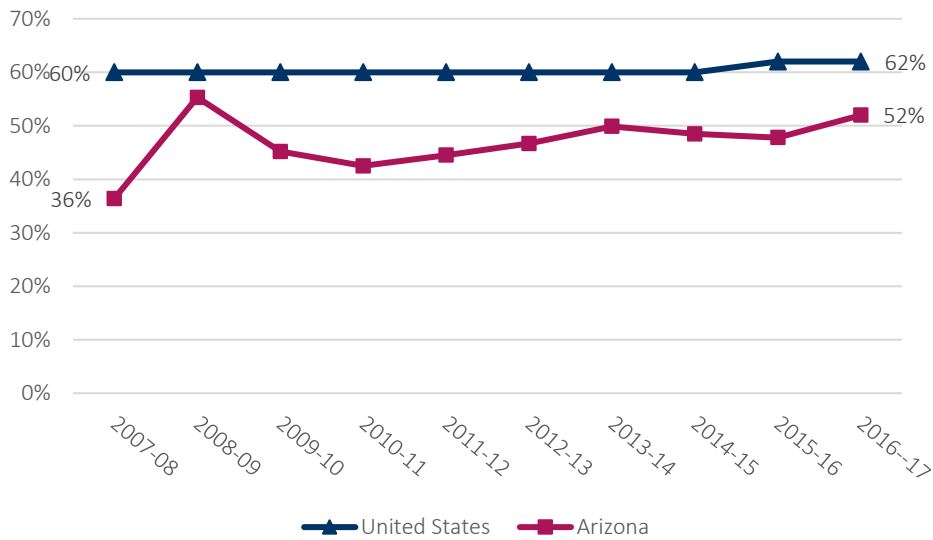
Increase Transfer & Completion: Follow-Up Metrics

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



Seventy-two percent of all 2016-17 full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges to in-state, public universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years. This represents an increase from recent years and indicates that most full-time transfers are graduating from the state's public universities in a timely manner.

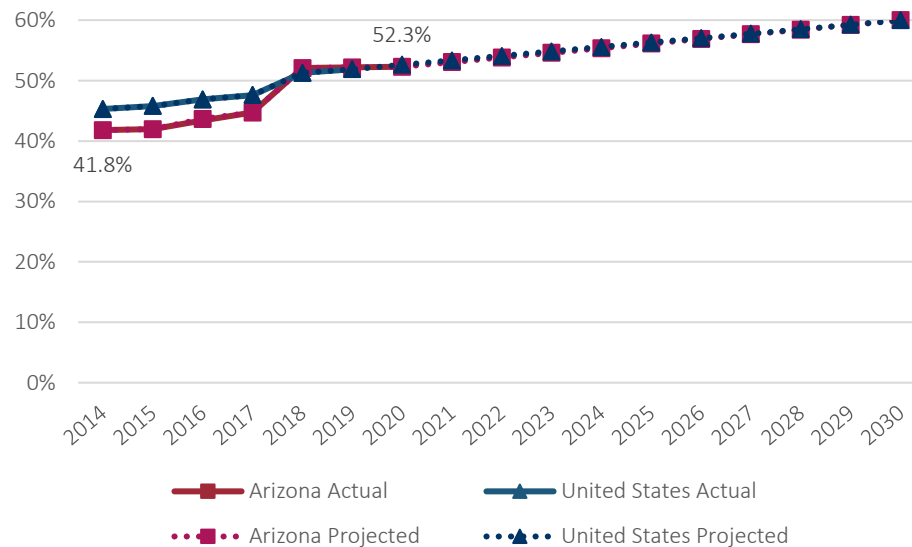
Metric 29: Percent of All Transfers Earning Bachelor's Degrees within Four Years



Statewide, 52% of 2016-17 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. While it remains lower than the national average (62%),⁹ this rate has increased substantially in recent years.

Increase Transfer & Completion: Follow-Up Metrics

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



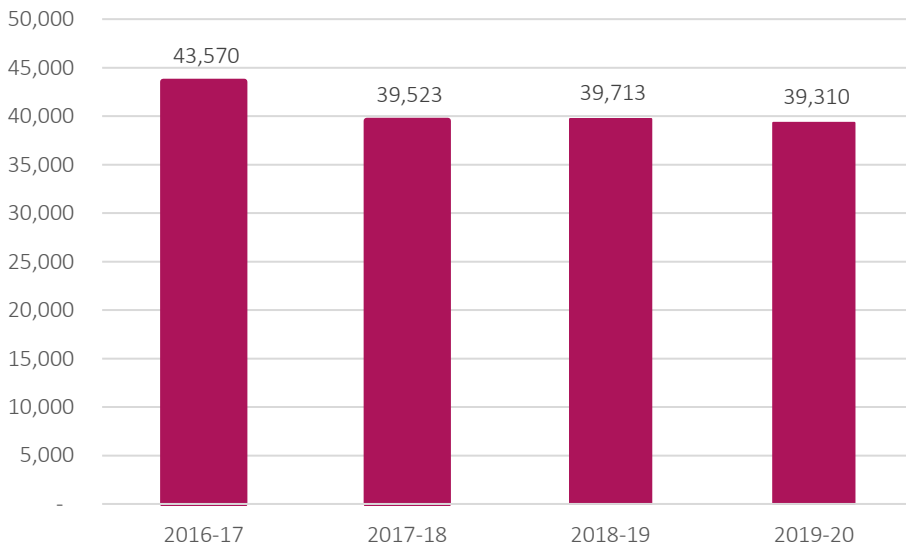
In 2020, an estimated 52.3% of the Arizona working-age population (residents aged 25–64) held a workforce certificate, associate degree, or bachelor’s or higher degree (up from 52.2% in 2019). Arizona’s community colleges are working closely with the Arizona Board of Regents and other postsecondary institutions across the state to reach the Achieve60AZ goal that by 2030, 60% of the Arizona working-age population will hold a postsecondary credential.

Note: In 2018 Arizona’s Community Colleges began using data from the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey instead of its American Community Survey to illustrate progress toward the 60% goal. This change accounts for much of the apparent increase between 2017 and 2018.

Improve Alignment: Short-Term & Follow-Up Metrics

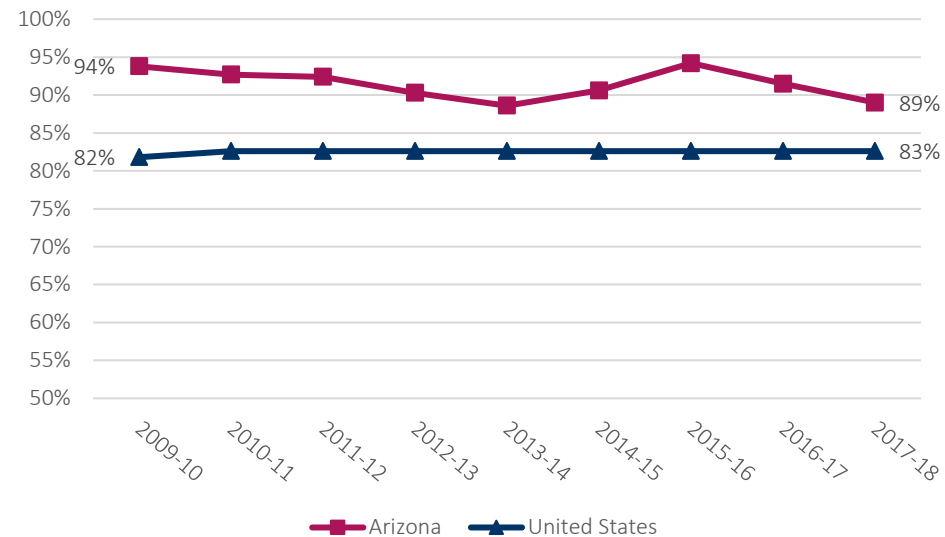
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Metric 31: FTSE Enrollment in Occupational Courses



Mirroring the overall drop in enrollment across Arizona, FTSE enrollment in occupational courses has dipped slightly in recent years. Many of these enrollments are in degree or certificate programs associated with the highest-demand occupations in the state, including nurses, preschool teachers, computer specialists, web developers, and medical or dental assistants.

Metric 32: Percent Earning Industry-Recognized Credentials



Out of all learners in the 2017-18 Occupational Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment up to one year after college exit, 89% 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 & 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
- ✓ Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
- ✓ Physical Therapist Assistants
- ✓ Massage Therapists
- ✓ Computer User Support Specialists
- ✓ Psychiatric Technicians
- ✓ Dental Assistants
- ✓ Respiratory Therapists
- ✓ Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists
- ✓ Ophthalmic Medical Technicians
- ✓ Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- ✓ Computer Network Support Specialists
- ✓ Medical Dosimetrists, Medical Records Specialists, and Health Technologists and Technicians
- ✓ Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
- ✓ Veterinary Technologists and Technicians
- ✓ Occupational Therapy Assistants
- ✓ Skincare Specialists
- ✓ Nursing Assistants
- ✓ Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
- ✓ Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
- ✓ Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- ✓ Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
- ✓ Insurance Appraisers, Auto Damage
- ✓ Manicurists and Pedicurists
- ✓ Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians

Arizona's community colleges offer degree and/or certificate programs that train workers for every single one 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. (2021). *American Community Survey, 2015-19 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ²U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ³U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2021). *American Community Survey, 2015-19 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). *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., & Offenstien, 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.
- ⁷National Student Clearinghouse. (2021). Persistence and retention: Fall 2019 beginning cohort. Herndon, VA: 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. (2021). Yearly success and progress rates (two-year publics, first-time, full-time and first-time, part-time). Herndon, VA: Author.