



ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

STRATEGIC VISION

STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

2015

www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org

ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: 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 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 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 THE 2015 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

Access

- Forty percent of Arizona community college students are from underserved minority groups and 41% are over age 24. These percentages are equal to or higher than the corresponding national averages, demonstrating the colleges' commitment to the education and training of underserved populations.

Retention

- Arizona community colleges retain 90% of credential-seeking learners from fall to spring semesters, and 77% to the following fall.

Completion

- Arizona's community colleges awarded over 42,000 degrees and certificates in 2013-14.
- At 28% and 32%, respectively, Arizona's in-state and overall transfer rates both exceed the national average of 25%.
- Eighty-one percent of 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 fourth 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.

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. 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.

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.

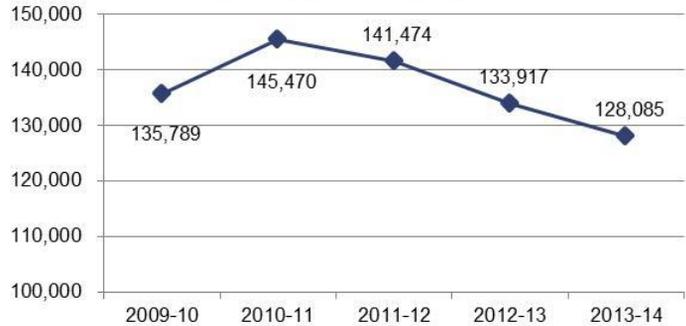
OUR VISION: Arizona's community colleges, through a collaborative effort with education, business, and community partners, will significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university.

ACCESS INDICATORS

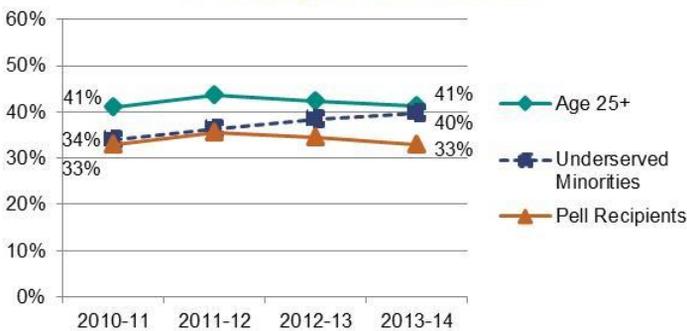
Indicator 1. Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment

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 16% and is now equal to the national average (40%).¹ As well, the percentage of underserved minorities in the state's community college exceeds the percentage of the state's population that belongs to an underserved minority group (39%).²

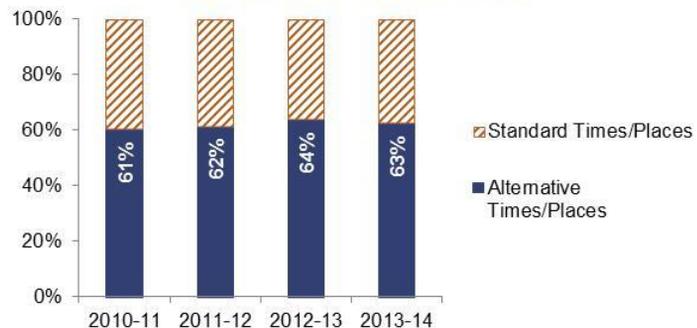
Arizona's community colleges also enroll (on a percentage basis) slightly more learners over the age of 24 than the national average (40%), although at 33%, the percentage of Arizona community college students receiving Pell grants is somewhat lower than the national average (38%).¹

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 37% 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, 63% 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. (2015). *2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.

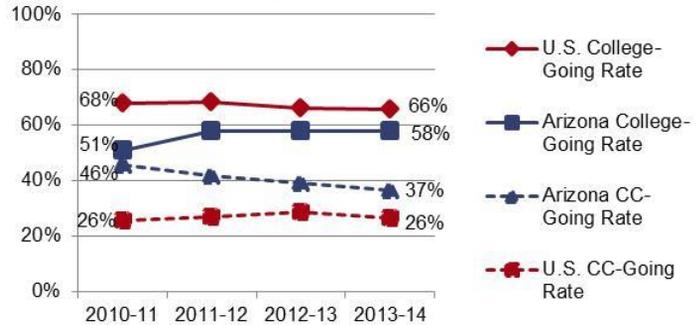
ACCESS INDICATORS

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

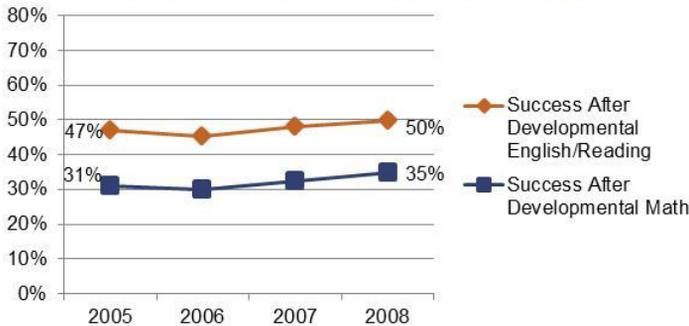
Arizona's community colleges enroll a much higher percentage (37%) of recent high school graduates than the national average (26%).³ As well, Arizona's overall college-going rate has increased nearly 14% in recent years (to 58%), although it still lags behind the national number (66%).⁴

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

Arizona & U.S. College-Going and Community College-Going Rates



Success After Remediation (2005-08 New Student Cohorts)



Indicators 6-7. Success after Remediation

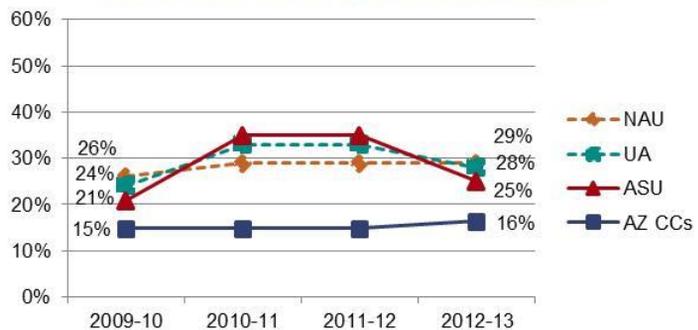
After six years, half of developmental English or reading learners in the 2008 New Student Cohort successfully completed a college-level course in English, and 35 percent of all developmental math learners in the same cohort completed a college-level math course.

These success after remediation rates have improved over the past four years and are similar to national comparisons.⁵ (Because the national numbers were derived from a somewhat different methodology, they are not depicted here.)

Indicator 8. Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Arizona Median Household Income

At just over \$8,000 per year, the median net price of attending Arizona's community colleges is 16% 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 2012-13 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. (2014). *College enrollment and work activity of 2013 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.

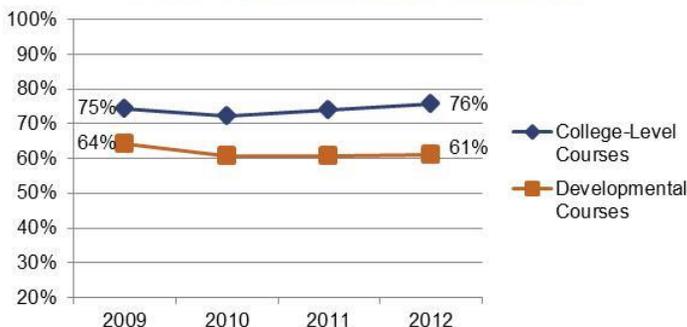
RETENTION INDICATORS

Indicators 9-10. Course Success Rates

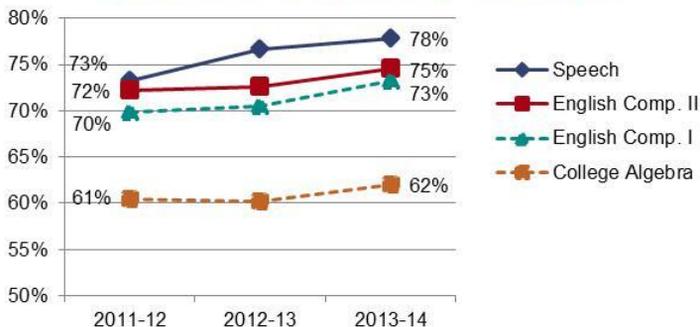
Over two years, 76 percent of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by the 2012 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

In that same time period, 61 percent of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by the 2012 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

**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 62% and 78% 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 or first college-level courses matches or exceeds the corresponding national averages.⁶ College-level math continues to pose the biggest challenge for many community college students, both in Arizona and across the nation.

⁶National Community College Benchmark Project . (2014). *Report of national aggregate data*. Overland Park, KS: Author.

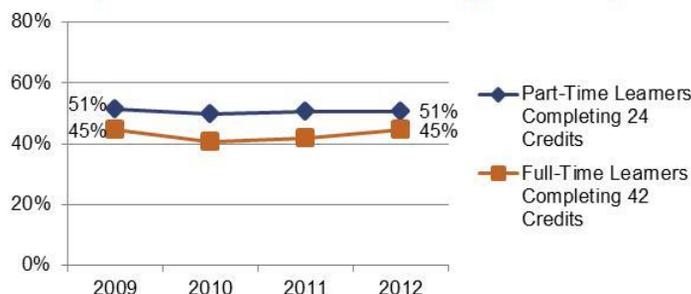
RETENTION INDICATORS

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

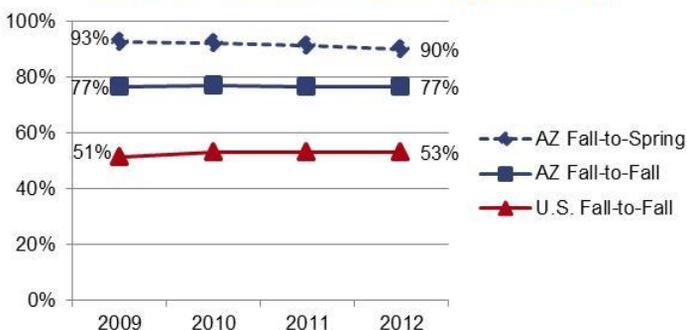
By the end of their second year, 51% of part-time learners in the 2012 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 45% of full-time learners in the same cohort had completed 42 credits. These rates have remained steady over the past four years.

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

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

Ninety percent of learners in the 2012 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 comparison,⁸ 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., & 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.

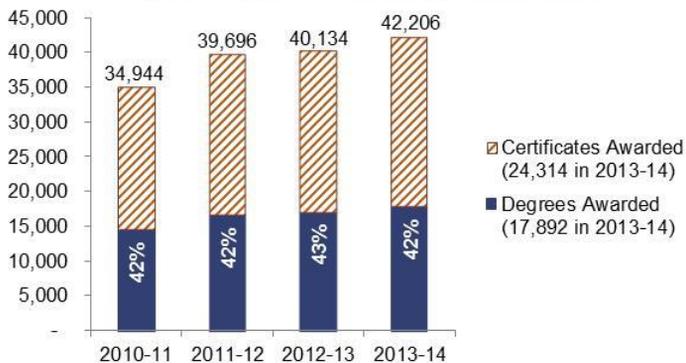
⁸NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates – First-time college freshmen returning their second year*. Boulder, CO: Author.

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 2013-14, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Arizona's community colleges increased by 21% to 42,206.

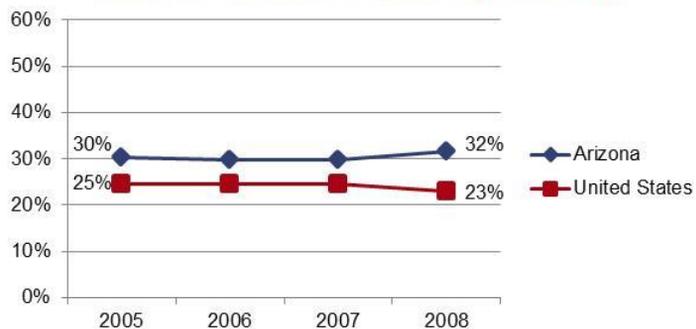
Of the 2013-14 total, 42% were degrees, and 58% were certificates. These data reflect a concerted effort by Arizona's community colleges to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials, especially in high-demand fields.

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

After six years, 32% of the 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate (this percentage has been relatively consistent over the past four years).

Arizona's graduation rate is somewhat higher than the most recent national comparison (23%),⁹ 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.

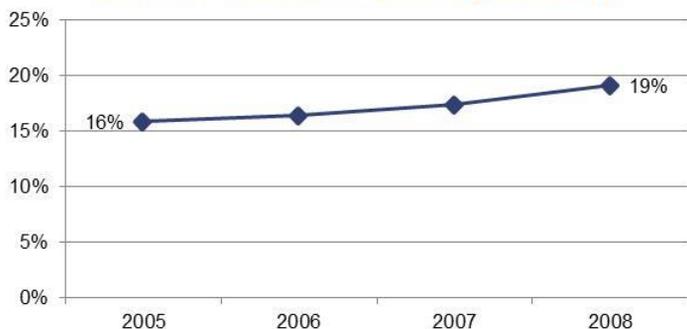
Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (2005-08 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



⁹U.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. AGEC Completion Rate

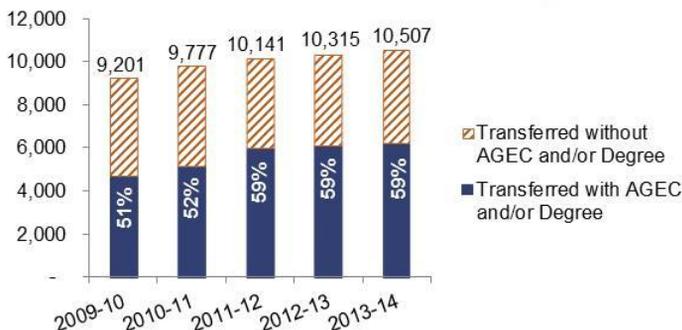
Statewide, 19% of the 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) within 6 years, a 21% increase from the 2005 Cohort.

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.

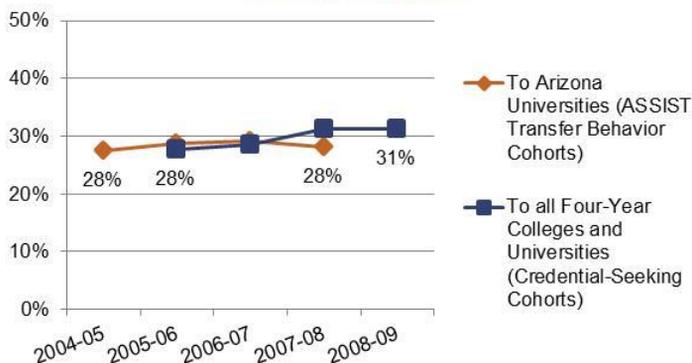
Indicators 19-20. Number of In-State University Transfers, and Percent with an AGEC and/or Degree at Time of Transfer

Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, the number of students transferring from Arizona’s community colleges to an in-state, public university increased by 14% to 10,507. In addition, the percentage of those transfers who had earned an AGEC and/or degree prior to transfer increased by 16% during this time period (to 59%). 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 remained around 28%. However, the overall transfer rate (the percent of learners in Credential-Seeking Cohorts who transferred to any four-year college or university within 6 years) has risen substantially, from 28% to 31%. Both rates are higher than the most recent national transfer rate (25%) calculated by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges.¹⁰

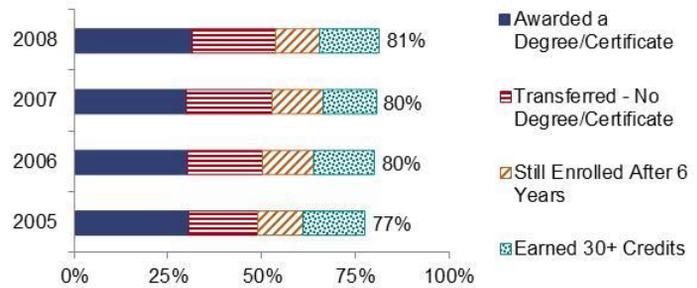
COMPLETION INDICATORS

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

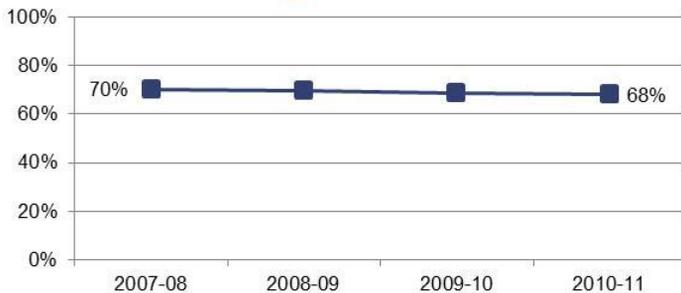
Statewide, eighty-one percent of learners in the 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within 6 years, a 5% increase from the 2005 Cohort.

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 (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

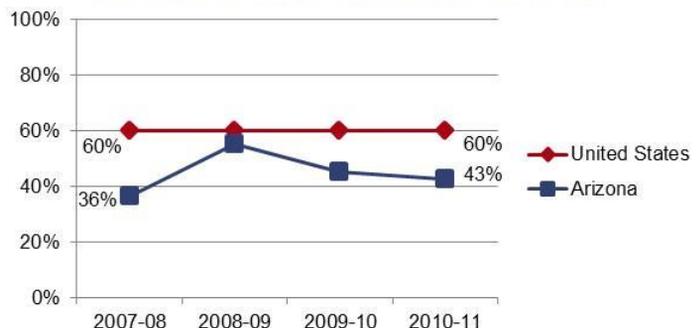
Sixty-eight percent of all 2010-11 full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges to in-state universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years.

Although this rate has decreased slightly in recent years, it indicates that most full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges 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

Statewide, 43% of 2010-11 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 (60%),¹¹ this percentage may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer.

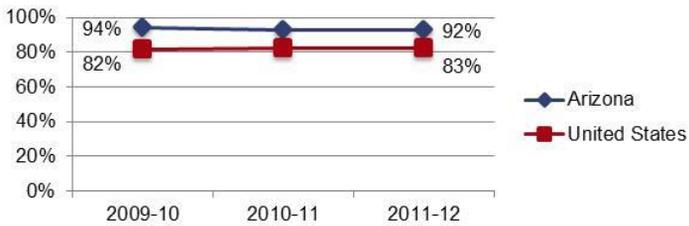
Percent of all Transfers Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



¹¹National 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

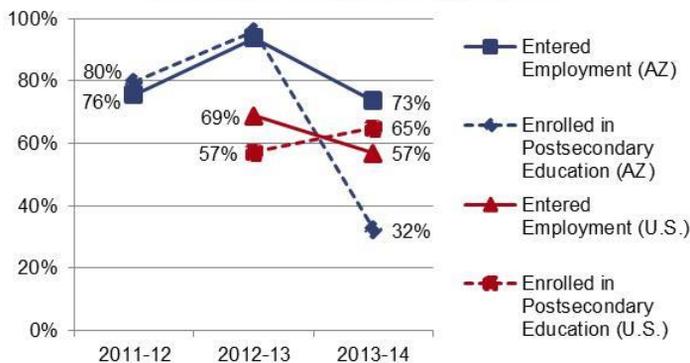
Out of all learners in the 2011-12 Occupational Completers/Leavers Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment aligned with industry-recognized standards up to one year after college exit, 92% passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. This level of performance exceeds the 2011-12 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. Wage Growth of Occupational Completers

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

ABE/GED Learner Outcomes



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

Seventy-three percent of 2013-14 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 this rate has been variable over time, Arizona's ABE/GED learners have consistently performed higher than the national average (57%).¹³

However, only 32% of 2013-14 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 lower than both the national average (65%)¹³ and results from previous years and may be a result of low NRS survey response rates and/or an indication that more ABE/GED students are choosing to enter the job market instead of higher education.

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

¹³U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2015). *Core Follow-Up Outcomes Measures, 2013-2014*. Washington, DC: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

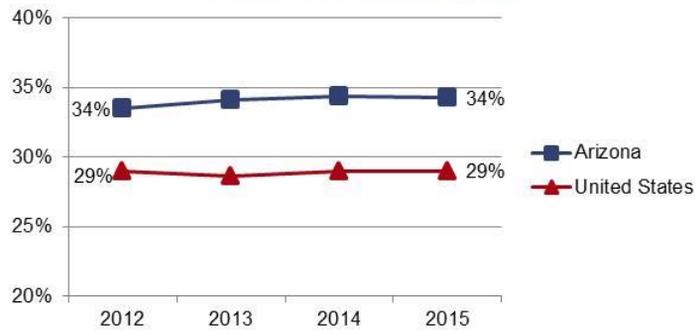
Indicator 30. Percent of Adults with Postsecondary Experience and/or Degrees

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

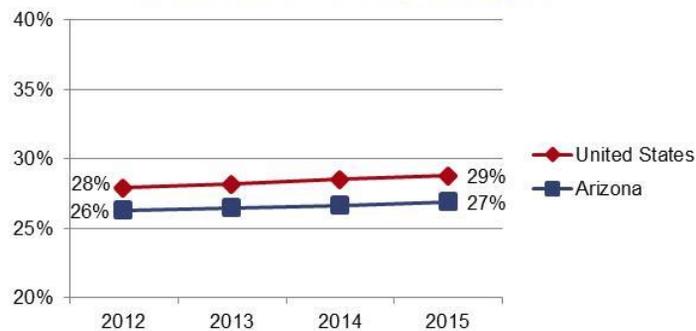
As well, 27 percent of Arizona adults hold a bachelor's or higher degree. This number is somewhat lower than the national average of 29 percent¹⁴ but has increased slightly over the past few years.

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.

Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree



Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree



¹⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2015). *Educational attainment: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.