

Adult Learners in Nebraska

An “adult learner” is usually a student age 25 or older. At the undergraduate level, they typically do not follow the more traditional path to college, which is to enroll immediately after high school. Adult learners often go back to school to advance in the workplace or when they’re seeking a career change. They usually attend college on a part-time basis as they juggle family and work responsibilities. In Nebraska, like the rest of the country, educational attainment among adult learners is vital to the state’s economic future.

Degrees and Enrollment by Age Group

Sector/ Age Group	2021-2022 Degrees/Awards Conferred				2021 Fall Enrollment			
	Bachelor's or Below		Graduate Degree		Undergraduate		Graduate	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
University of Nebraska								
24 or Younger	6,555	80.0%	622	15.1%	33,224	88.8%	3,207	25.3%
25-39	1,419	17.3%	2,952	71.7%	3,489	9.3%	7,575	59.8%
40 or Older	222	2.7%	541	13.1%	681	1.8%	1,890	14.9%
Nebraska State College System								
24 or Younger	871	74.5%	58	9.9%	6,267	86.8%	256	16.4%
25-39	227	19.4%	386	66.0%	680	9.4%	907	58.0%
40 or Older	71	6.1%	141	24.1%	275	3.8%	402	25.7%
Community Colleges								
24 or Younger	4,231	62.4%	-	-	28,602	75.1%	-	-
25-39	1,847	27.2%	-	-	6,723	17.6%	-	-
40 or Older	704	10.4%	-	-	2,775	7.3%	-	-
Nonpublic Institutions								
24 or Younger	3,516	57.5%	289	8.0%	16,843	66.6%	2,471	19.2%
25-39	2,145	31.4%	2,701	66.2%	6,579	24.5%	5,904	57.7%
40 or Older	720	11.1%	1,074	25.8%	2,541	8.9%	2,401	23.1%
Total								
24 or Younger	15,173	67.4%	969	11.1%	84,936	78.2%	5,934	23.7%
25-39	5,638	25.0%	6,039	68.9%	17,471	16.1%	14,386	57.5%
40 or Older	1,717	7.6%	1,756	20.0%	6,272	5.8%	4,693	18.8%

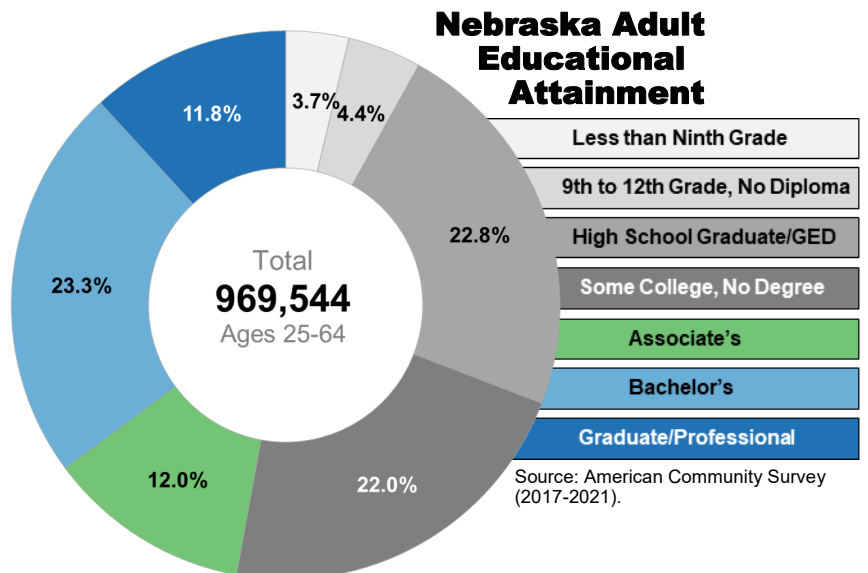
Note. Excludes students of unknown age. Age data for fall enrollment only collected for odd-numbered years. Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

3,776 Veteran student enrollment — all Nebraska institutions, undergraduate and graduate (2021-22)

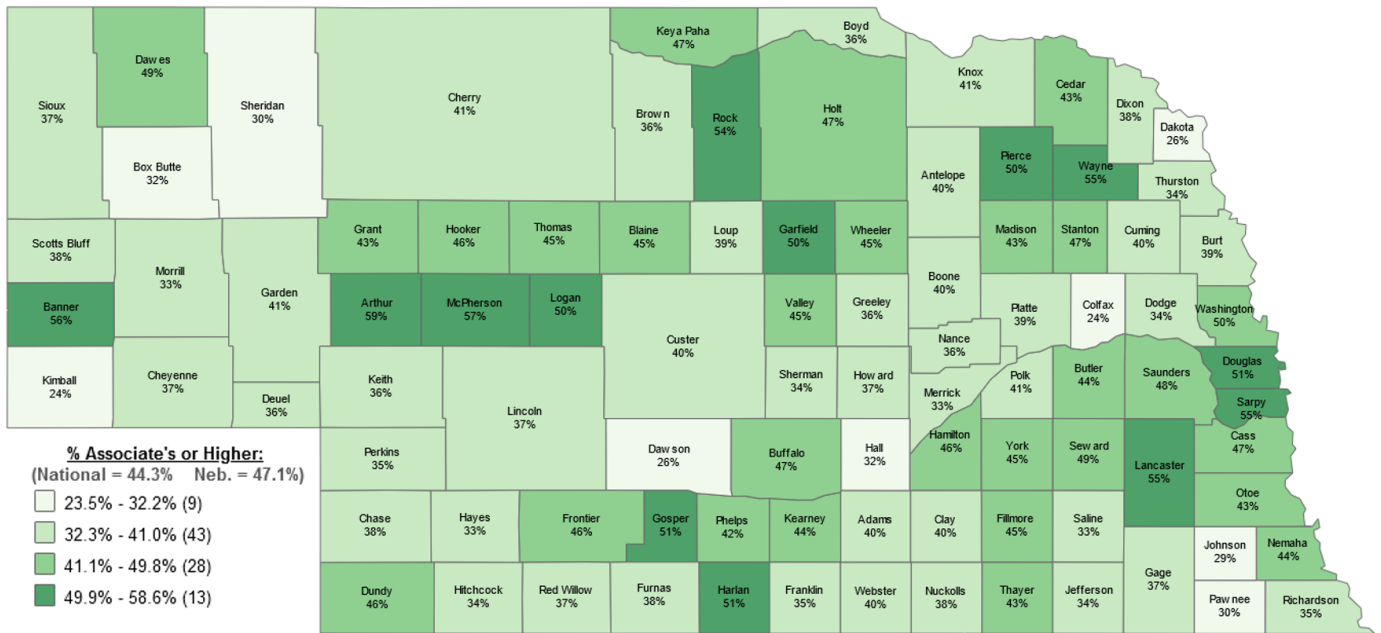
Top 5 institutions: veteran enrollment

- Bellevue University — 1,327
- University of Nebraska at Omaha — 663
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln — 445
- Metropolitan Community College — 359
- Creighton University — 208

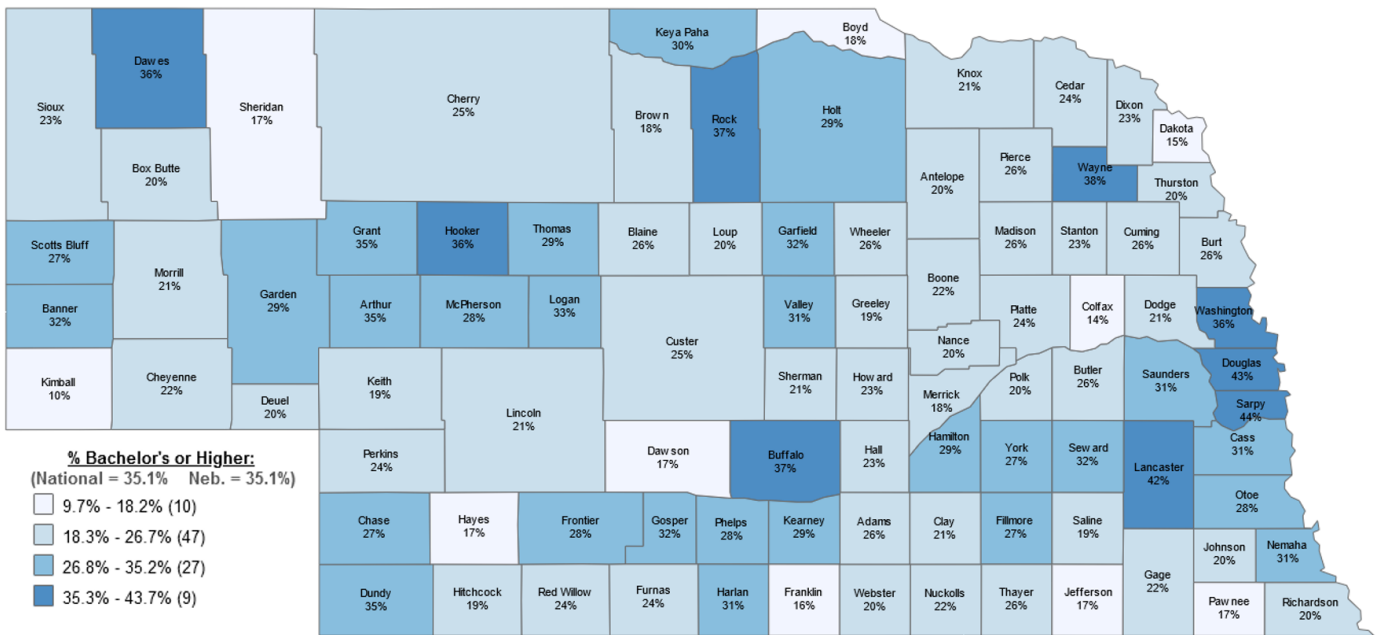
Note. Includes students who received benefits/assistance via the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program. May include dependents. Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.



Percent of Population Age 25 to 64 with an Associate's Degree or Higher, by County



Percent of Population Age 25 to 64 with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, by County



Source: American Community Survey (2017-2021).

Strategies: What states are doing to enroll, retain, and graduate adult learners

Nebraska – Gap Assistance – Pays tuition and related course and certification fees for low-income community college students taking non-credit courses and short-term for-credit courses that lead to certifications and jobs in high-need fields.

Indiana – The Adult Student Grant – Offers a grant of up to \$2,000 to assist returning adult students with financial need in starting or completing an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or certificate. The **Workforce Ready Grant** pays tuition and fees for qualifying high-value certificates in high-demand fields at Ivy Tech Community College or Vincennes University.

Iowa – Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship – Covers tuition and fees not paid by other sources for students in pro-

grams of study up to two-year degrees that lead to high-demand jobs in Iowa.

Tennessee – Reconnect – A "last-dollar" scholarship for adults to attend community college tuition-free. Among the requirements of students: must not already have an associate or bachelor degree and must participate in a partnering advising program.

Missouri – Fast Track – Covers tuition and fees not paid by other sources for adults pursuing a certificate, bachelor's degree, or an industry-recognized credential in a high-demand field and direct apprenticeship costs for apprentices.