
2024 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report



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Presented at the March 15, 2024, Commission Meeting

Background

- Coordinating Commission is required by statute to provide an annual report evaluating progress made toward achieving **three key priorities**:
 1. Increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska (Section 1)
 2. Increase the percentage of students who persist and successfully complete a degree (Section 2)
 3. Reduce, eliminate, and then reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment (Section 3)
- *Progress Report* is provided to the Governor, Legislature, the state's higher education institutions, the media, and other interested parties

Important Technical Notes

- Adjustments are occasionally made to improve data accuracy
 - e.g., Data sources may revise previous estimates
 - Therefore, it is generally advisable to reference the most current edition of this report
- Due to rounding...
 - Percentages may not sum to 100.0%
 - Totals may not equal the sum of their parts
- Throughout this presentation, you'll see a graphic like this in the lower left side of the screen. For more information about data presented on a particular slide, please refer to the corresponding page number in the *2024 Progress Report*.



What's New for 2024

- Added a graph with high school graduation rates by FRL eligibility
 - See Figure 1.1.a.8
- Effective with the 2021-2022 cohort for college continuation rates, students are classified as low income if they are eligible for FRL or if they graduate from a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
 - See Figures 1.1.c.5 through 1.1.c.9 and Table A5.4
- Added baseline comparison graph for college continuation rates by race/ethnicity, gender, and student income status
 - See Part A of Figure 1.1.c.9
- Subsidized Stafford Loans are now called Direct Subsidized Loans
 - See Tables 2.2.1, 2.2.2, A10.7, and A10.8

What's New for 2024

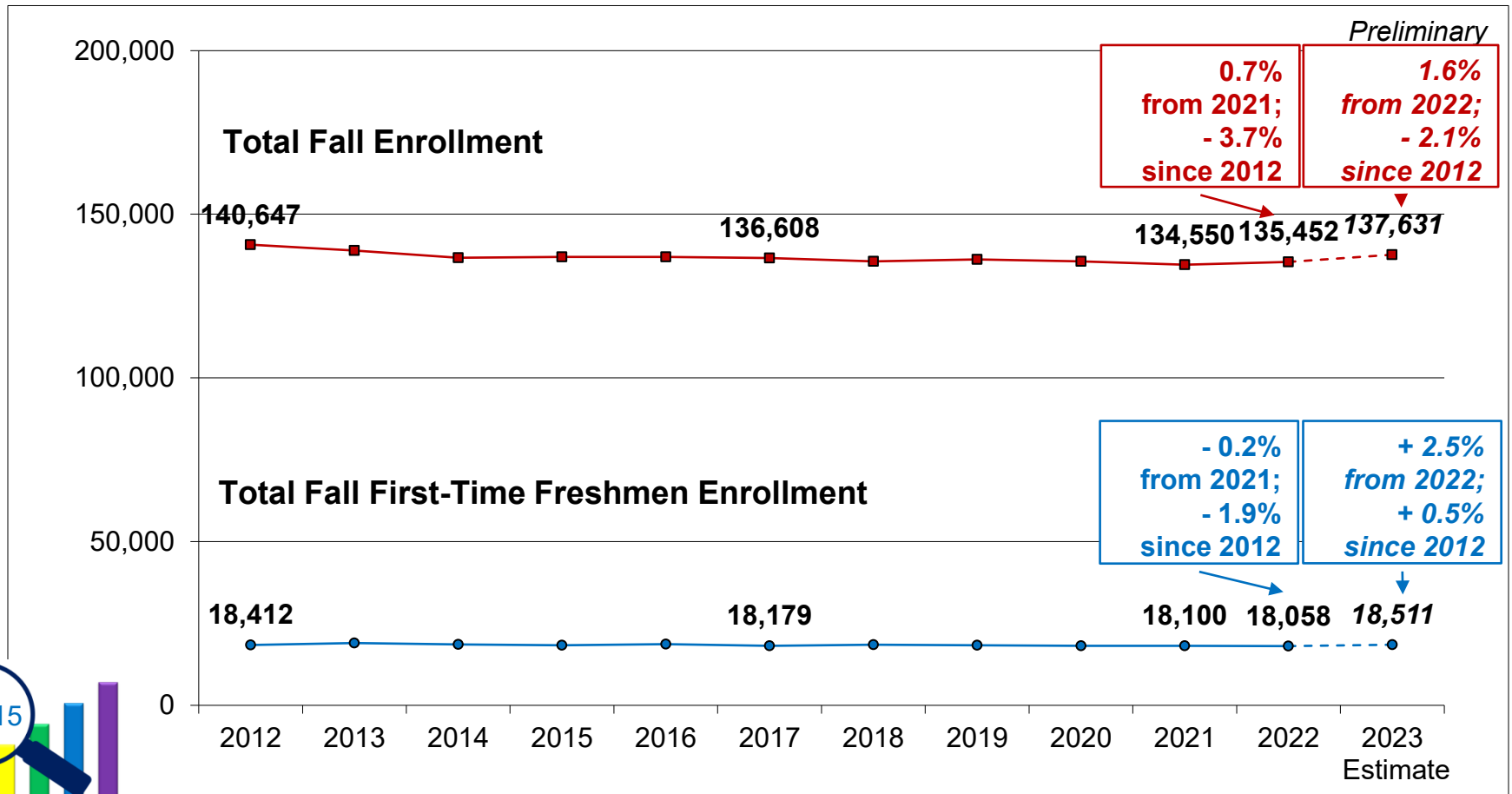
- Removed associate's+ attainment by race/ethnicity for 25- to 34-year olds (1-year ACS data processed by the Lumina Foundation)
 - Replaced with attainment by race/ethnicity for 22- to 64-year olds (5-year ACS data processed in house)
 - See Part B of Figure 3.4 and Table A13.3
- Added a graph with attainment by gender
 - See Part A of Figure 3.4
- Institution changes
 - Davines Professional Academy of Beauty and Business is now Entourage Institute of Beauty and Esthetics
 - Union College is now Union Adventist University
 - Xenon International Academy-Omaha is now Stephanie Moss Academy

PRIORITY 1

INCREASE POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

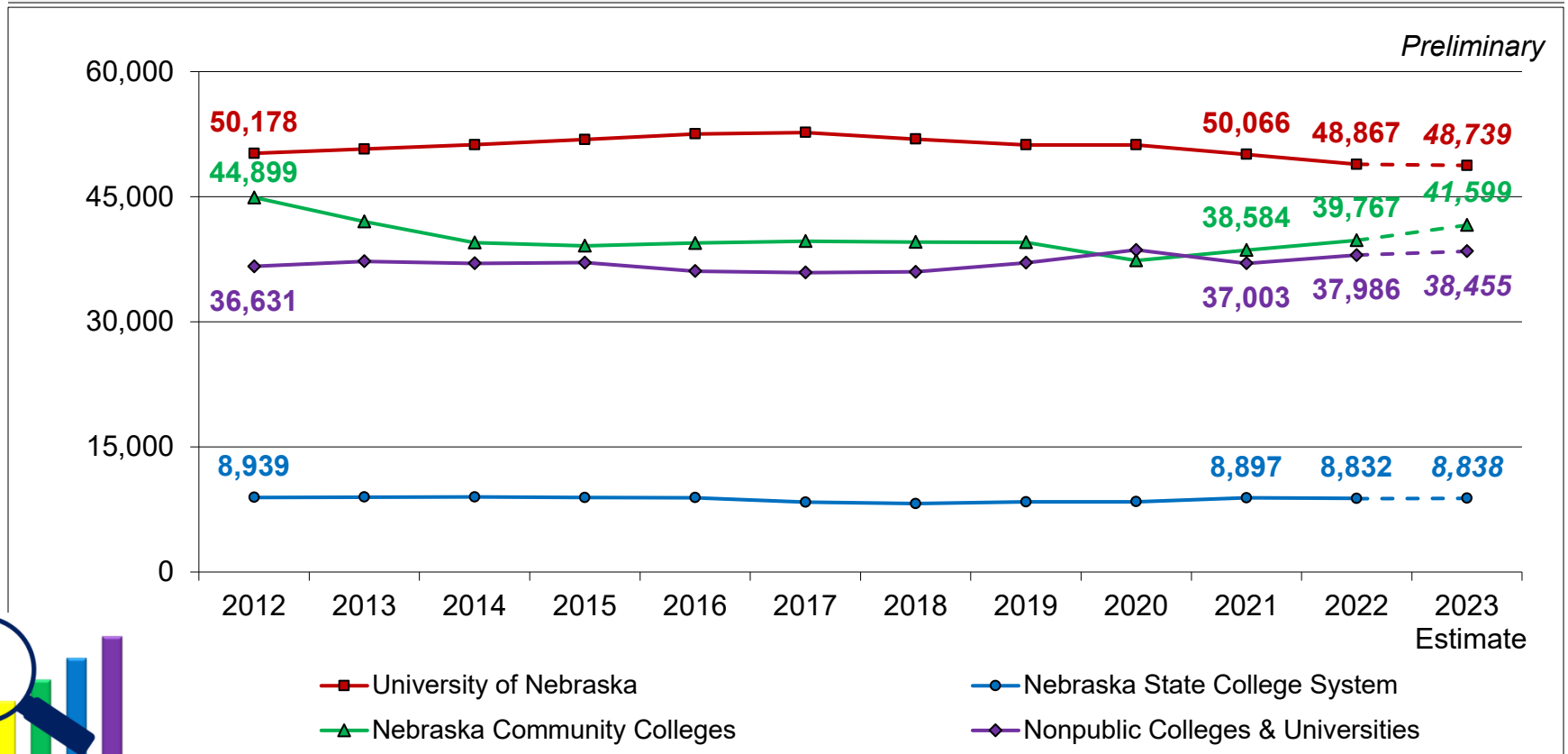
Fall Enrollment at Nebraska's Postsecondary Institutions

- **Total fall enrollment** increased an estimated **1.6%** over the last year for a total 11-year decrease of **2.1%**
- **Fall first-time freshmen enrollment** increased an estimated **2.5%** over the last year for a total 11-year increase of **0.5%**



Total Fall Enrollment by Sector

SECTOR	1-Year Change 2021 to 2022	Est. 1-Year Change 2022 to 2023	10-Year Change 2012 to 2022	Est. 11-Year Change 2012 to 2023
■ University of Nebraska	-2.4%	-0.3%	-2.6%	-2.9%
● Neb. State College System	-0.7%	0.1%	-1.2%	-1.1%
▲ Neb. Community Colleges	3.1%	4.6%	-11.4%	-7.3%
◆ Nonpublic Colleges & Univ.	2.7%	1.2%	3.7%	5.0%



High School Graduation Rates

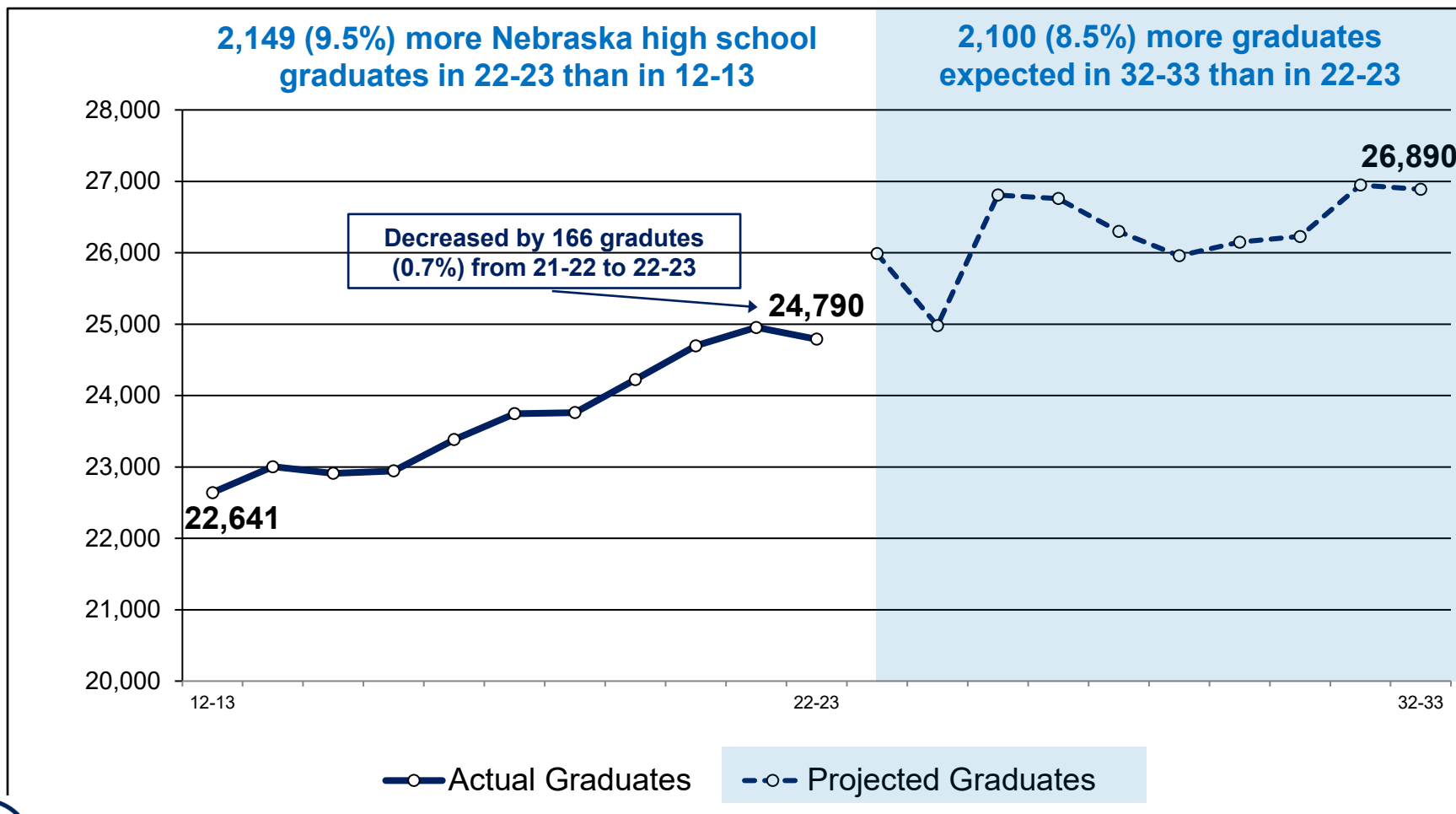
Section 1.1.a

Increase high school graduation rates, and in the process, increase the pool of high school students who could potentially attend college.



Total Number of Nebraska High School Graduates

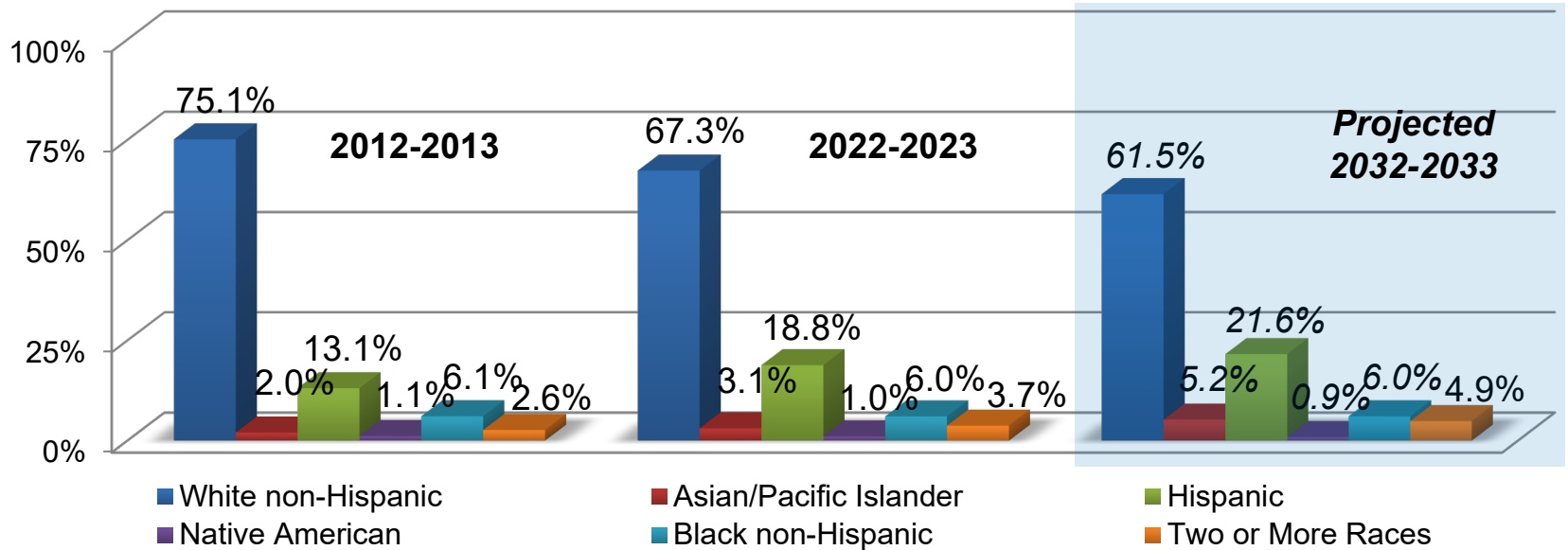
Actual (12-13 through 22-23) and Projected (23-24 through 32-33)



Note. Projections include students from educational service units and state-operated schools (estimated 100 per year). The latest projections released by WICHE are from 2020.



Actual and Projected Percentages of Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

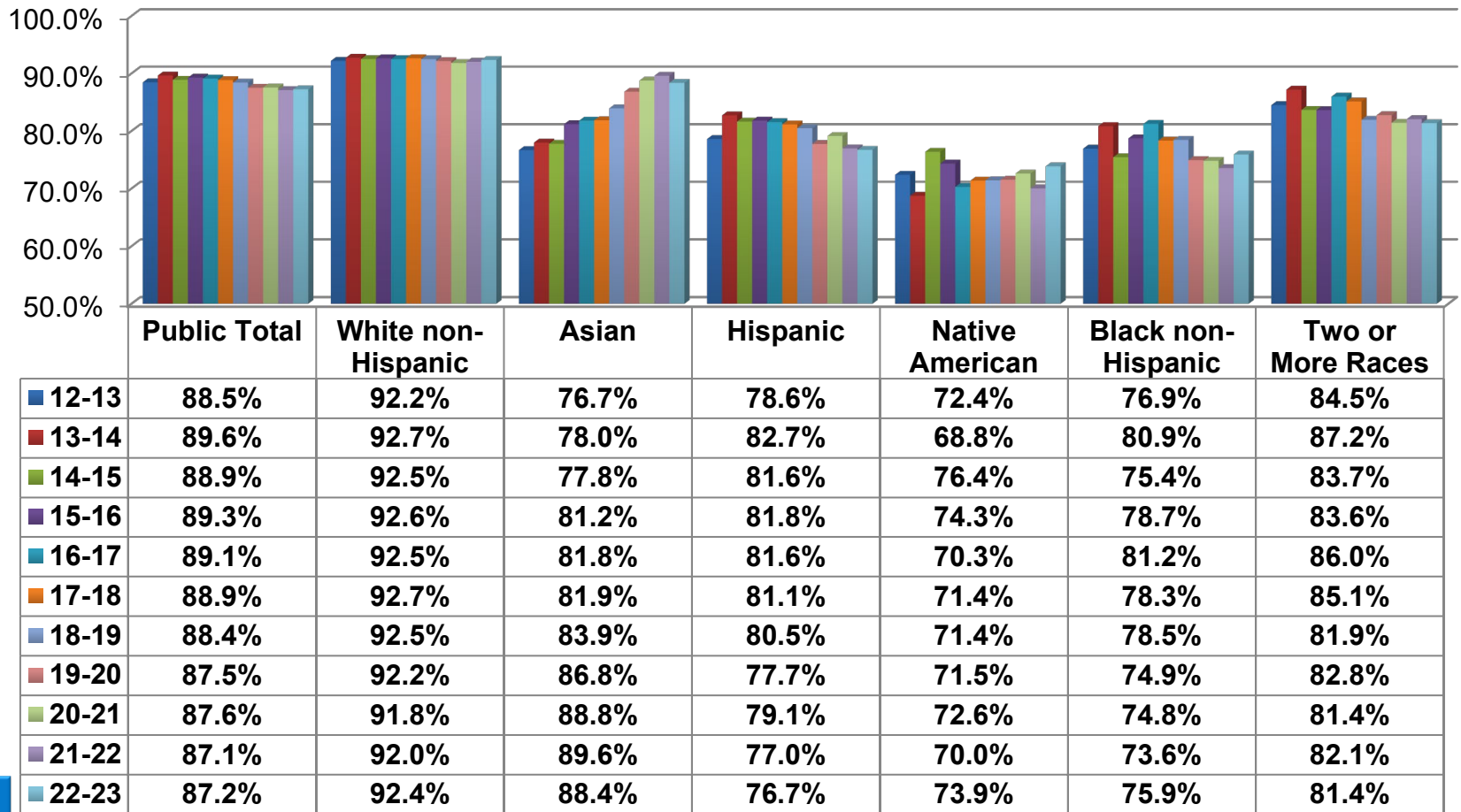


	2012-2013	2022-2023	Projected 2032-2033	10-Year Change 12-13 to 22-23	Projected 10-Year Change 22-23 to 32-33
White (non-Hispanic)	15,268	14,962	14,940	-2.0%	-0.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	408	684	1,270	67.6%	85.7%
Hispanic	2,654	4,179	5,240	57.5%	25.4%
Native American	227	233	210	2.6%	-9.9%
Black (non-Hispanic)	1,233	1,339	1,470	8.6%	9.8%
Two or More Races	536	827	1,180	54.3%	42.7%
Total	20,326	22,224	23,880	9.3%	7.5%



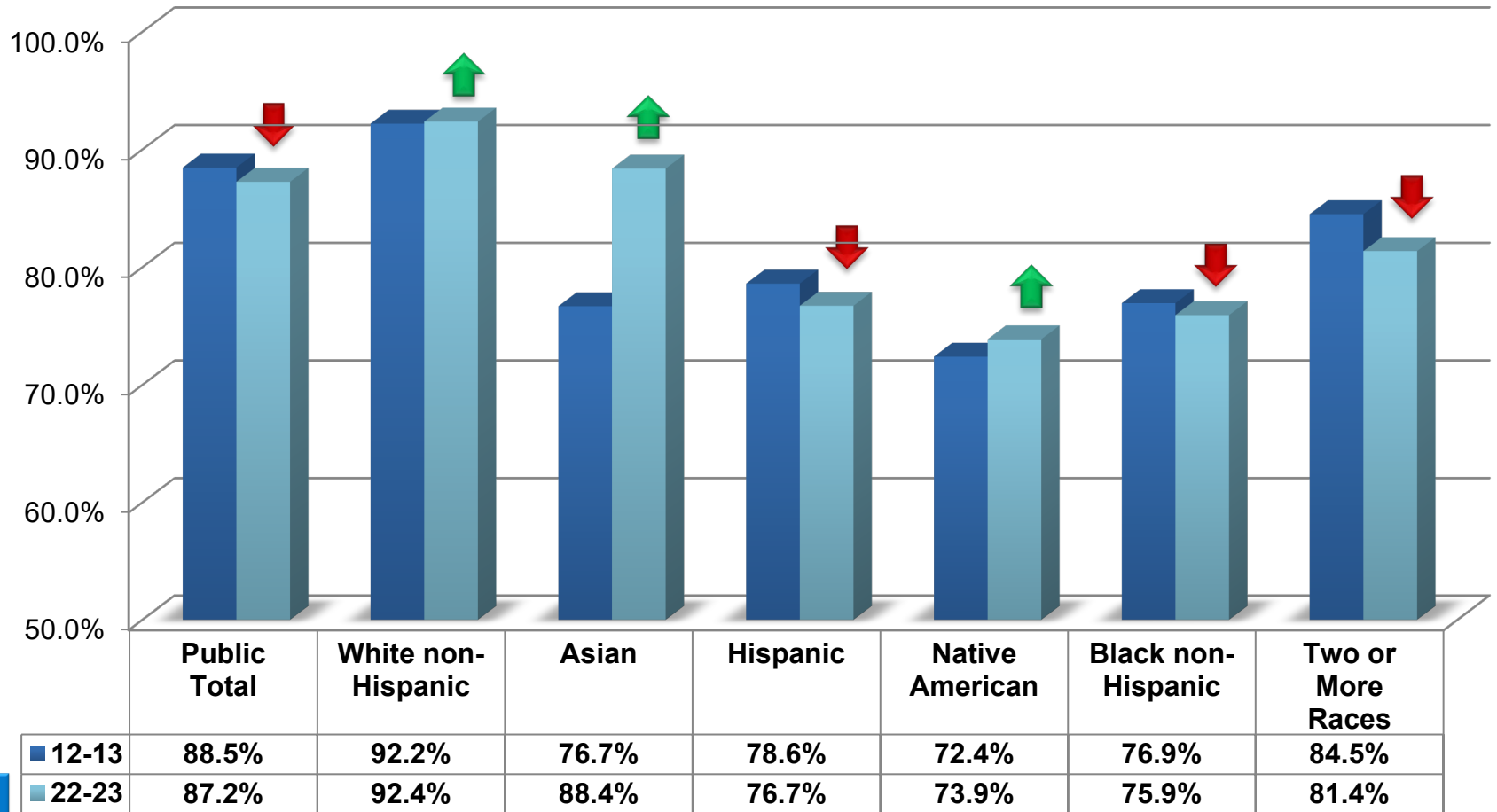
Nebraska Public High School Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

- In 2020, Nebraska was ranked **22nd highest** in the nation
- *(National data for 2021 has not been released for state-to-state comparisons)*



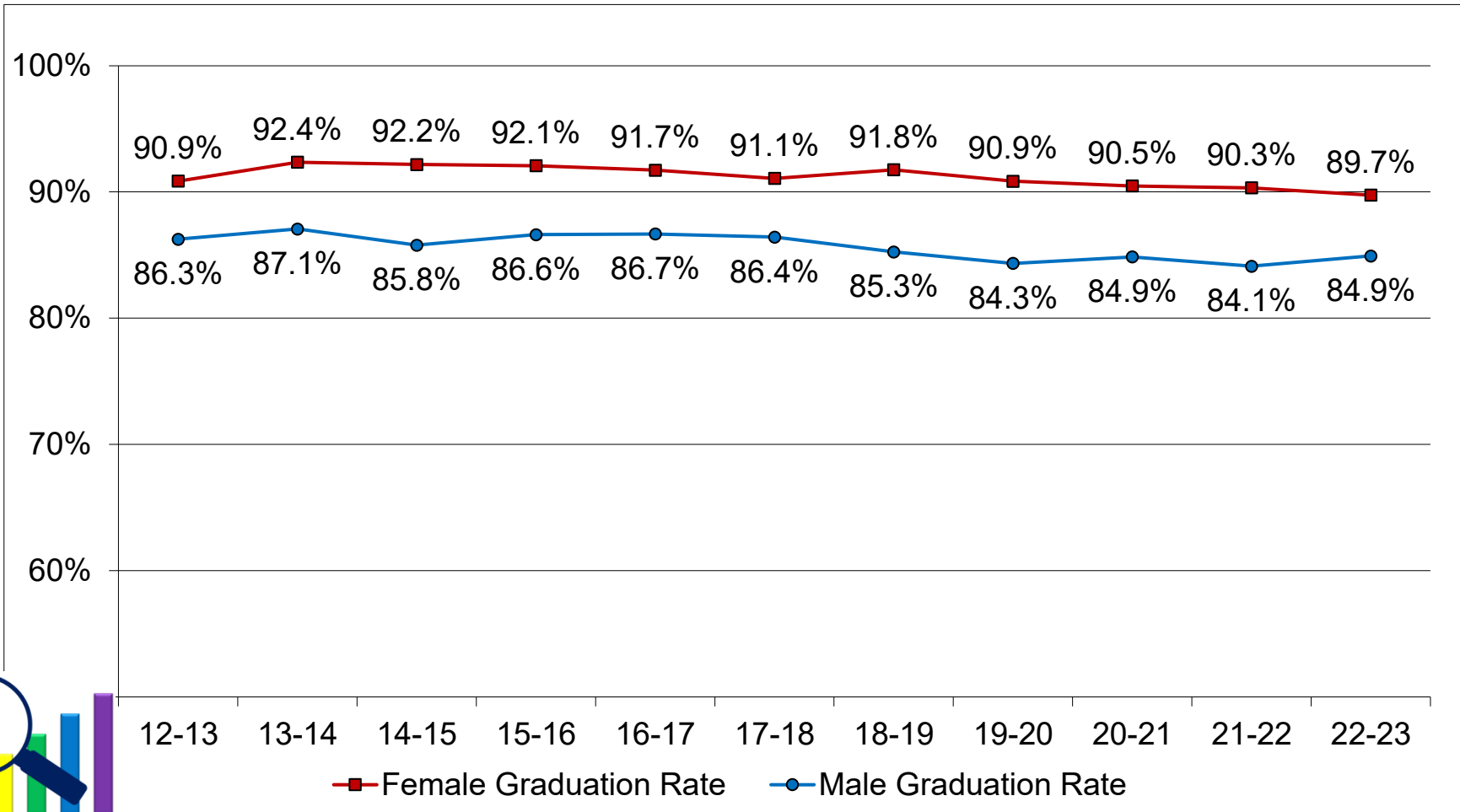
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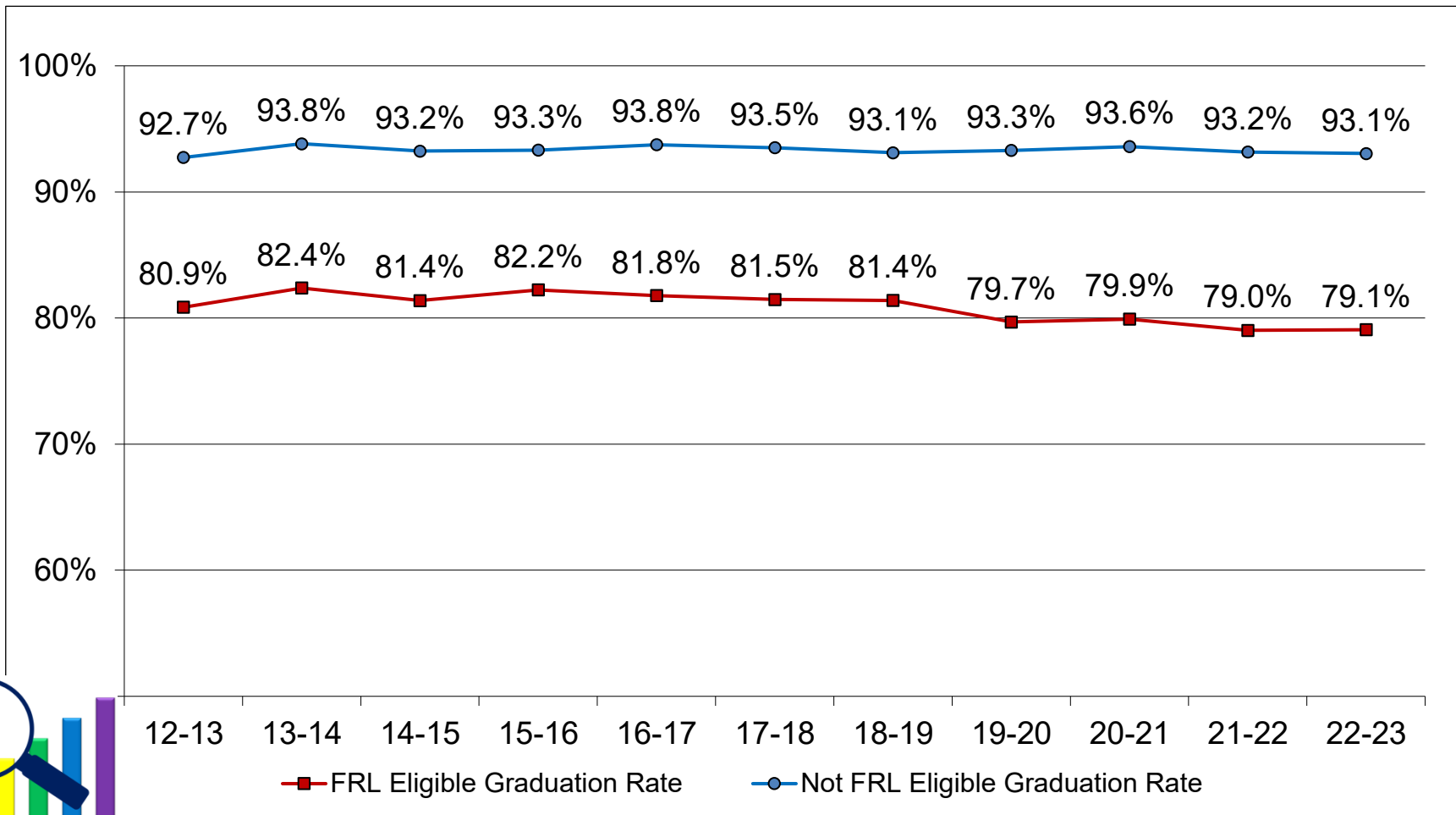
Nebraska Public High School Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rates by Gender

- Graduation rates for females have consistently been higher than for males
- Since 2013, graduation rates declined 1.2 percentage points for females and 1.4 percentage points for males



Nebraska Public High School Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rates by FRL Eligibility

- Graduation rates for non-FRL have consistently been higher than for FRL
- Since 2013, graduation rates increased 0.4 percentage points for students not eligible for FRL and decreased 1.8 percentage points for students eligible for FRL



Preparation for College

Section 1.1.b

Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who are adequately prepared to enroll in postsecondary education and proceed through degree completion.



The ACT Assessment

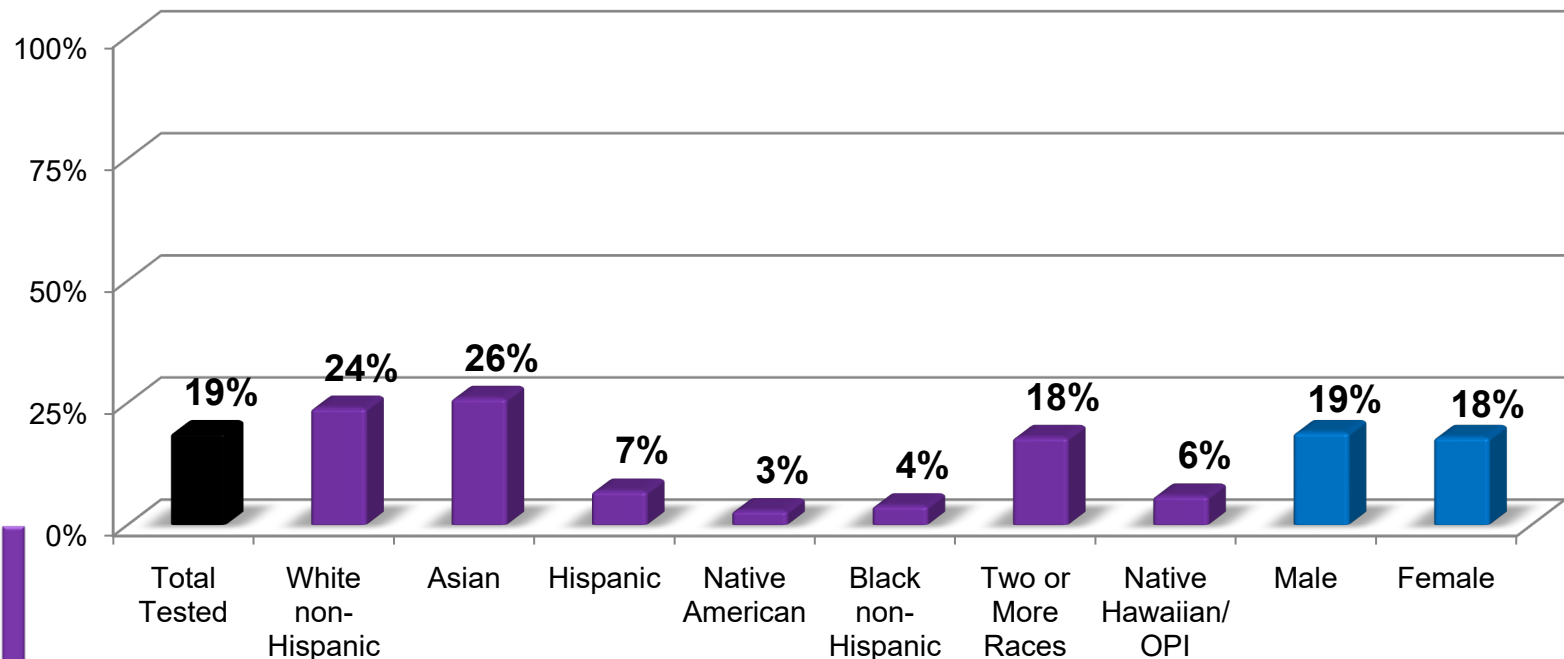
- In Nebraska, ACT is the predominant college entrance exam used to measure the extent to which Nebraska students are prepared for college
- Beginning with the class of 2018, all students take the ACT test in the cohort minus one year (typically, the student's junior year)
 - However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and extensive school closures, this requirement was waived for the graduating class of 2021 and not all 2022 graduates took the exam
 - ACT estimates that 86% of the 2021 graduating class, 94% of the 2022 graduating class, and 96% of the 2023 graduating class took the ACT test
 - In comparison, only 1.3% of high school graduates took the SAT Reasoning Test in 2023
- Therefore, this section focuses on the ACT Assessment
 - ACT Composite Scores:
 - 2013: Nebraska = 21.5 National = 20.9
 - 2023: Nebraska = 19.2 National = 19.5



Percent of ACT-Tested Students Who Meet or Exceed ACT Benchmark Scores in All Four Areas

Nebraska High School Graduating Class of 2023

- **Only 19% are sufficiently prepared** to earn B's or C's in entry-level college courses in English, algebra, biology, and social science
 - In comparison, 28% were sufficiently prepared in 2013 and 20% were sufficiently prepared in 2022
- Hispanics, Native Americans, Black non-Hispanics, multiracial, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders are less prepared for these courses than their White non-Hispanic or Asian classmates
- Females are less prepared than their male classmates



College Continuation Rates

Section 1.1.c

Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education.



Two Measures of Nebraska's College Continuation Rates

1. IPEDS

- Collected every two years
- Public and non-public high school graduates
- First-time freshmen (FTF) who go to college in the fall following graduation from high school
 - FTF enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term are also included
- Cannot be calculated for any subgroups (gender, race, etc.)
- Can be used for state-to-state comparisons

2. National Student Clearinghouse

- Calculated every year
- Nebraska's public high school graduates
- FTF who continue onto college in the summer, fall, winter, or spring term
- Comparisons by race/ethnicity, gender, and student income status can be calculated



College Continuation Rates

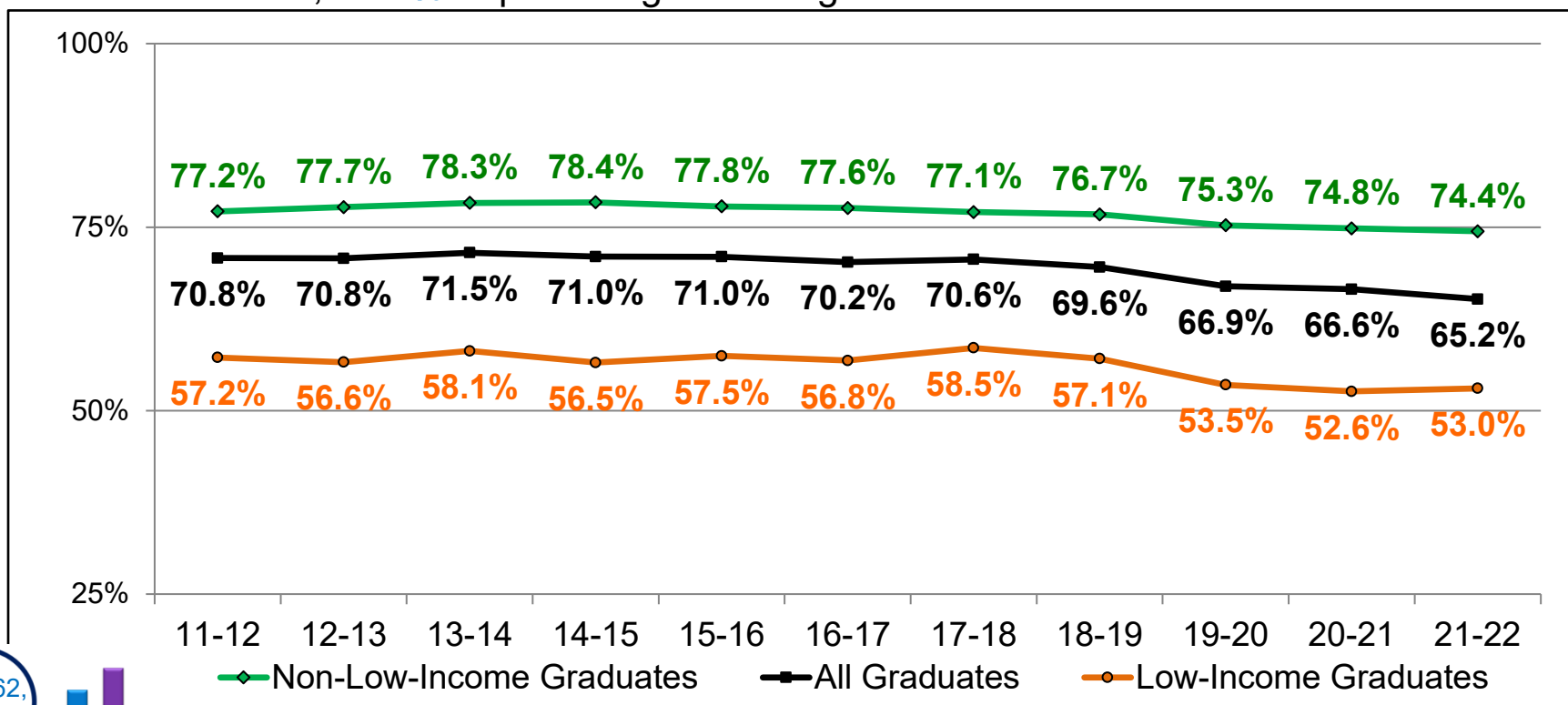
- IPEDS
 - Fall 2012 = 65.8%
 - Fall 2022 = 61.6%*
 - Up from 60.4% in fall 2020
 - Second lowest rate in the reporting period
 - Ranked 10th highest nationally in fall 2022
- National Student Clearinghouse
 - Graduating class of 2011-2012 = 70.8%
 - Graduating class of 2021-2022 = 65.2%
 - Down from 69.6% three years ago (2018-2019)
 - Lowest rate in the reporting period

Note. Does not include reported enrollments of Nebraska first-time freshmen (FTF) at Texas State Technical College (TSTC) for fall 2022. TSTC reported 403 NE FTF attended TSTC in fall 2022 within 12 months of high school graduation. Internal analysis of Clearinghouse data reveals that no on-time NE public high school graduates attended TSTC between June 2022 - May 2023. Furthermore, in the 10 years prior to 2022, TSTC did not report any Nebraska students attending within 12 months of high school graduation.



College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Student Income Status

- Non-low-income graduates have consistently continued on to college at higher rates than low-income graduates
- The proportion of students classified as low income has increased over the last decade
 - In 2012, **31.9%** of public high school graduates were low income
 - In 2022, **43.2%** of public high school graduates were low income



Note. Effective with the 2021-2022 cohort, students are classified as low income if they are eligible for FRL or if they graduate from a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).



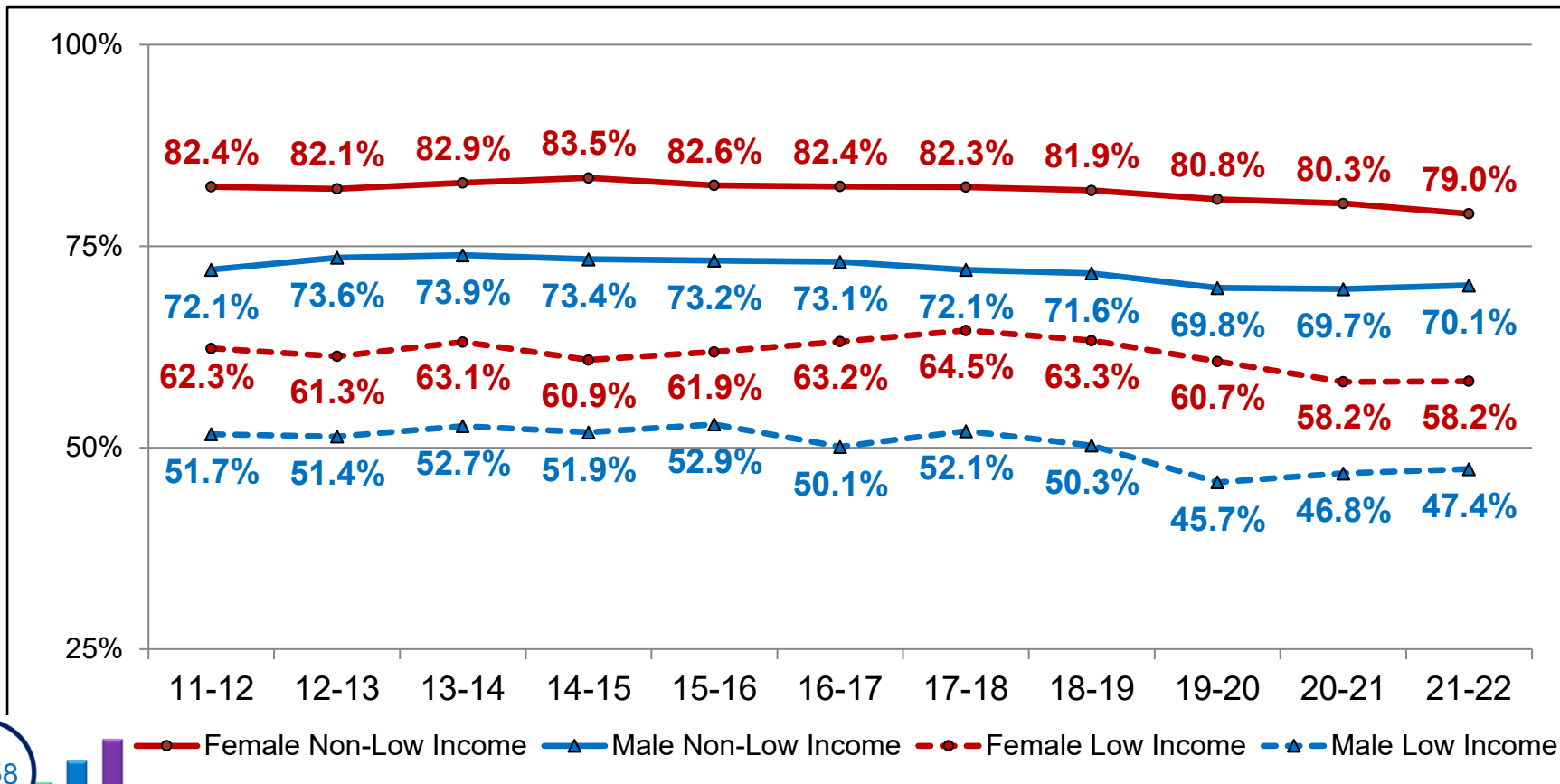
College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Student Income Status and Gender

- Female** college continuation rate:

- 11-12 = **75.7%**
- 21-22 = **69.7%**

- Male** college continuation rate:

- 11-12 = **65.8%**
- 21-22 = **60.7%**

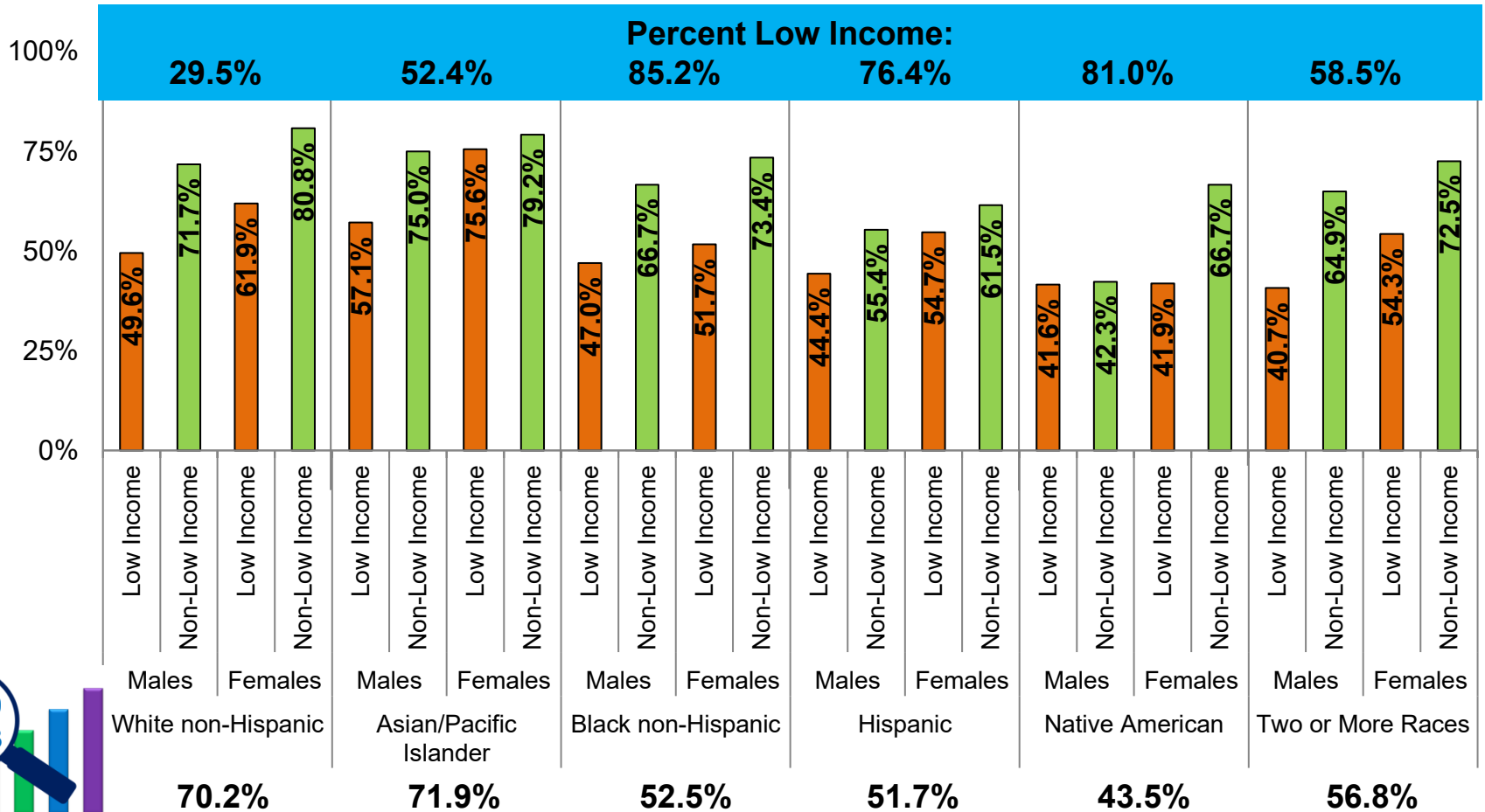


Note. Effective with the 2021-2022 cohort, students are classified as low income if they are eligible for FRL or if they graduate from a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).



College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Student Income Status 2021-22

- By race/ethnicity, college continuation rates ranged from 43.5% for Native Americans to 71.9% for Asian/Pacific Islanders
- The lowest college continuation rate among the 24 subgroups was for low-income, multiracial, male graduates (40.7%); the highest was for non-low-income, White non-Hispanic, female graduates (80.8%)



70.2%

71.9%

52.5%

51.7%

43.5%

56.8%

Nebraska High School Graduates Who Go to School in Nebraska

Section 1.2

Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who pursue their postsecondary education in Nebraska.



- Of Nebraska's high school graduates who go on to college, about 8 out of 10 go to college in Nebraska
 - Fall 2012 = 81.2%
 - Fall 2022 = 77.8%*
 - Dropped from 81.9% two years prior
- The recent decline is concerning and needs to be examined in greater detail and addressed
- However, it is difficult to increase Nebraska college enrollments only by increasing the percentage of Nebraska high school graduates who go to college in the state

Note. Does not include reported enrollments of Nebraska first-time freshmen (FTF) at Texas State Technical College (TSTC) for fall 2022. TSTC reported 403 NE FTF attended TSTC in fall 2022 within 12 months of high school graduation. Internal analysis of Clearinghouse data reveals that no on-time NE public high school graduates attended TSTC between June 2022 - May 2023. Furthermore, in the 10 years prior to 2022, TSTC did not report any Nebraska students attending within 12 months of high school graduation.



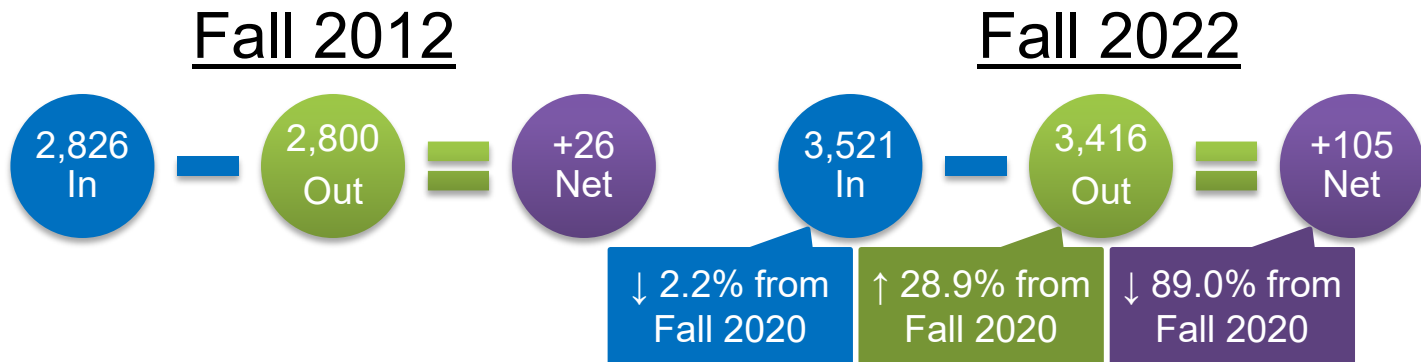
Non-Nebraska FTF Who Enroll at Nebraska Colleges and Net Migration

Section 1.3

Increase the number of non-Nebraska high school graduates who pursue postsecondary education in Nebraska.



- Out-of-state and foreign first-time freshmen enrolled at Nebraska’s colleges increased by 25.2% between fall 2012 and fall 2022:
 - Fall 2012 = 3,609
 - Fall 2022 = 4,518
 - Out-of-state FTF increased 27.7% while foreign FTF increased 3.0%
- Looking at non-foreign FTF who attended postsecondary institutions *within 12 months of high school graduation**:



Note. Does not include reported enrollments of Nebraska first-time freshmen (FTF) at Texas State Technical College (TSTC) for fall 2022.



Enrollment of First-Time Freshmen by Gender and by Race/Ethnicity

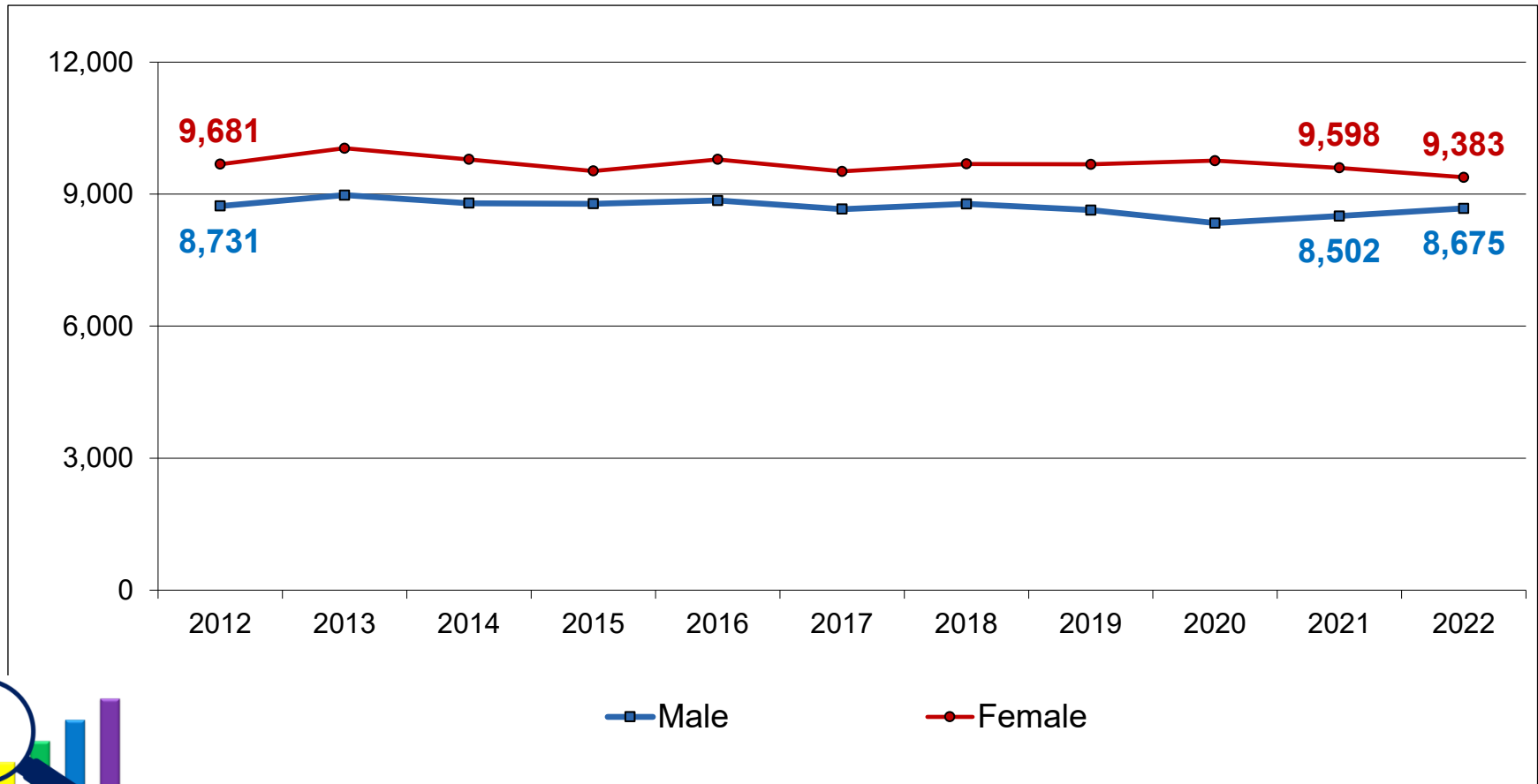
Section 1.4

Increase the number and proportion of Nebraska postsecondary students who have been underrepresented in the state's higher education system.



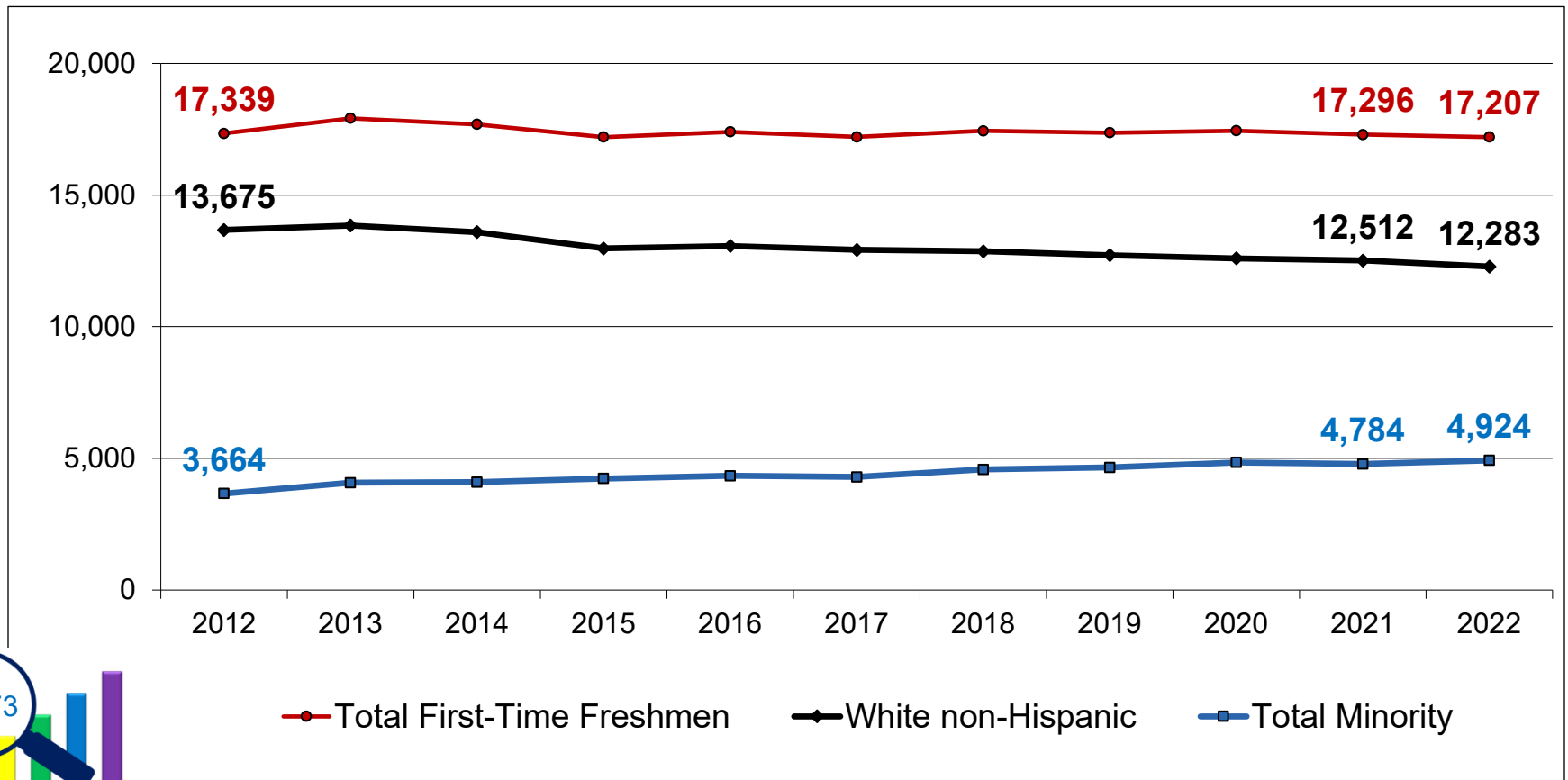
First-Time Freshmen by Gender

	1-YEAR CHANGE	10-YEAR CHANGE
■ Male	2.0%	-0.6%
● Female	-2.2%	-3.1%



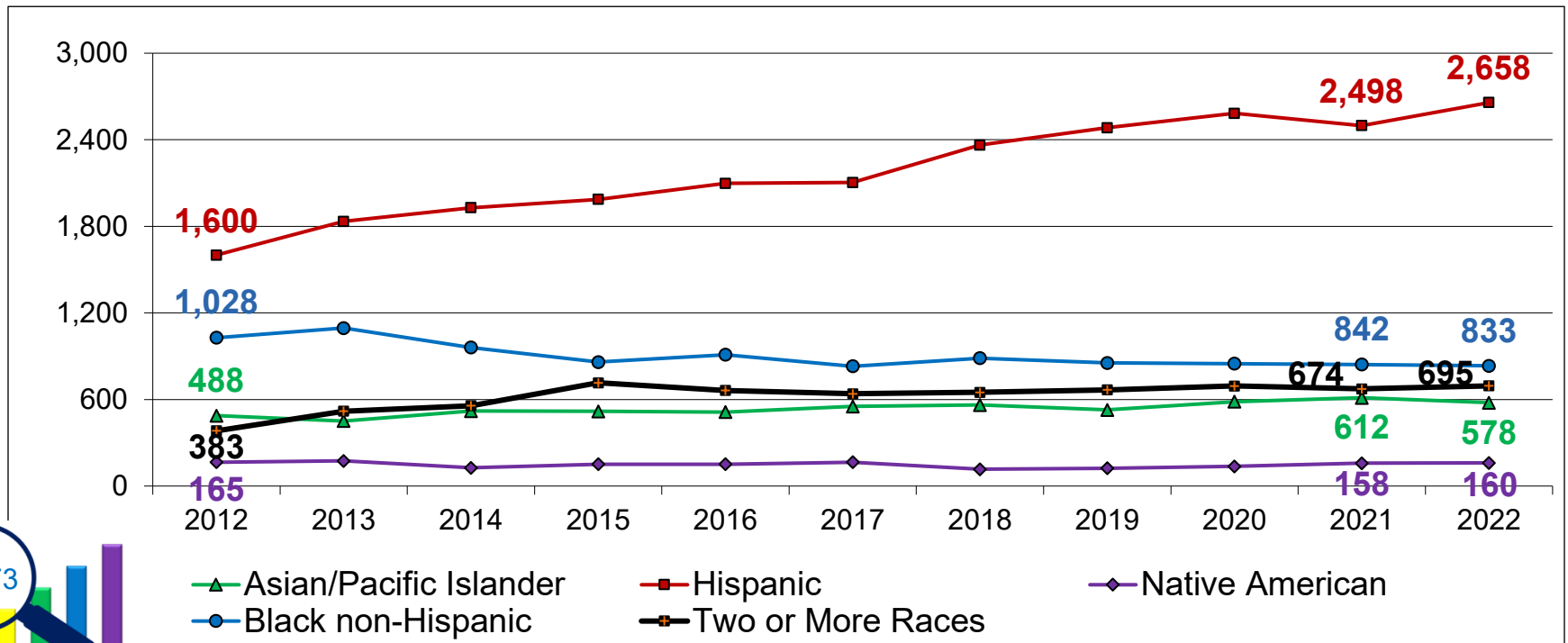
White Non-Hispanic and Minority First-Time Freshmen

	1-YEAR CHANGE	10-YEAR CHANGE
● Nebraska State Total (Known Race)	-0.5%	-0.8%
◆ White (non-Hispanic)	-1.8%	-10.2%
■ Total Minority	2.9%	34.4%



Minority First-Time Freshmen

	1-YEAR CHANGE	10-YEAR CHANGE
▲ Asian/Pacific Islander	-5.6%	18.4%
● Black (non-Hispanic)	-1.1%	-19.0%
■ Hispanic	6.4%	66.1%
◆ Native American	1.3%	-3.0%
⊕ Two or More Races	3.1%	81.5%



Financial Aid

Section 1.5

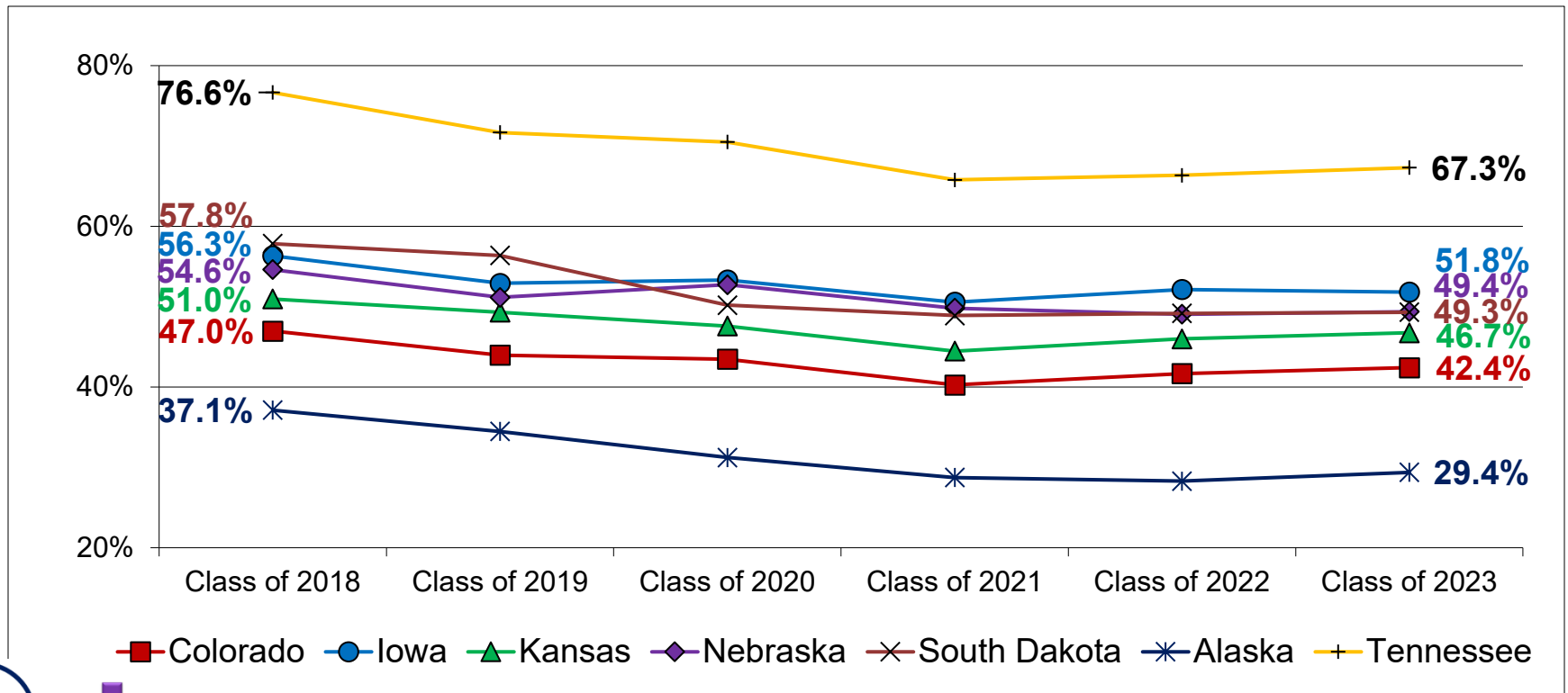
Increase need-based financial aid in order to improve access to higher education for Nebraskans with limited financial means.



- To improve access to higher education, Nebraska has:
 - Implemented CCPE’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion Project
 - Increased the amount of state funding for:
 - The Nebraska Opportunity Grant (NOG)
 - Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship
 - Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2025, made FAFSA completion or affirmatively opting-out a graduation requirement

FAFSA Completion Rates

- FAFSA is the first step to gaining access to federal and state student financial aid
- Nebraska ranked 29th in FAFSA completions for 2023
- 2023 Nebraska high school graduates missed out on over an estimated \$23.0 million in federal Pell grants by not completing the FAFSA
- Nationally, 53.4% of 2023 high school seniors completed the FAFSA



Note. Graph includes trend data for Nebraska, surrounding states, and the lowest (Alaska) and highest (Tennessee) performing states for the most recent year. Includes students who completed the FAFSA between October 1 and June 30 for each high school class. Includes students from public and private high schools.

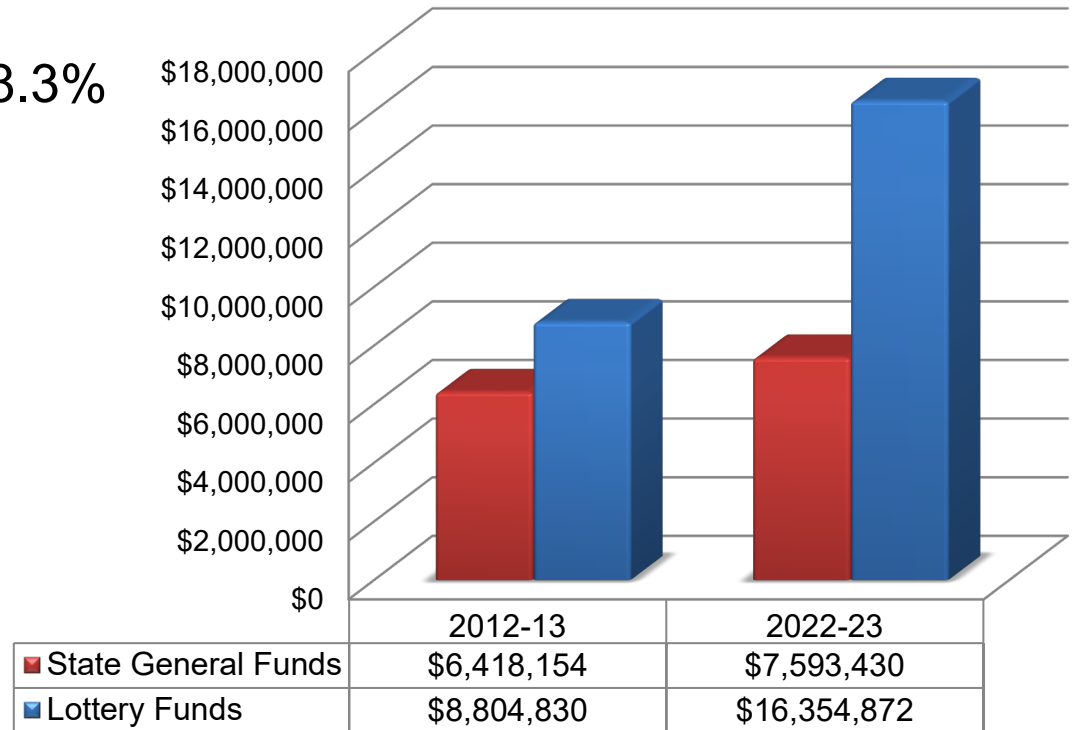


NOG Funding

Change in Funding:

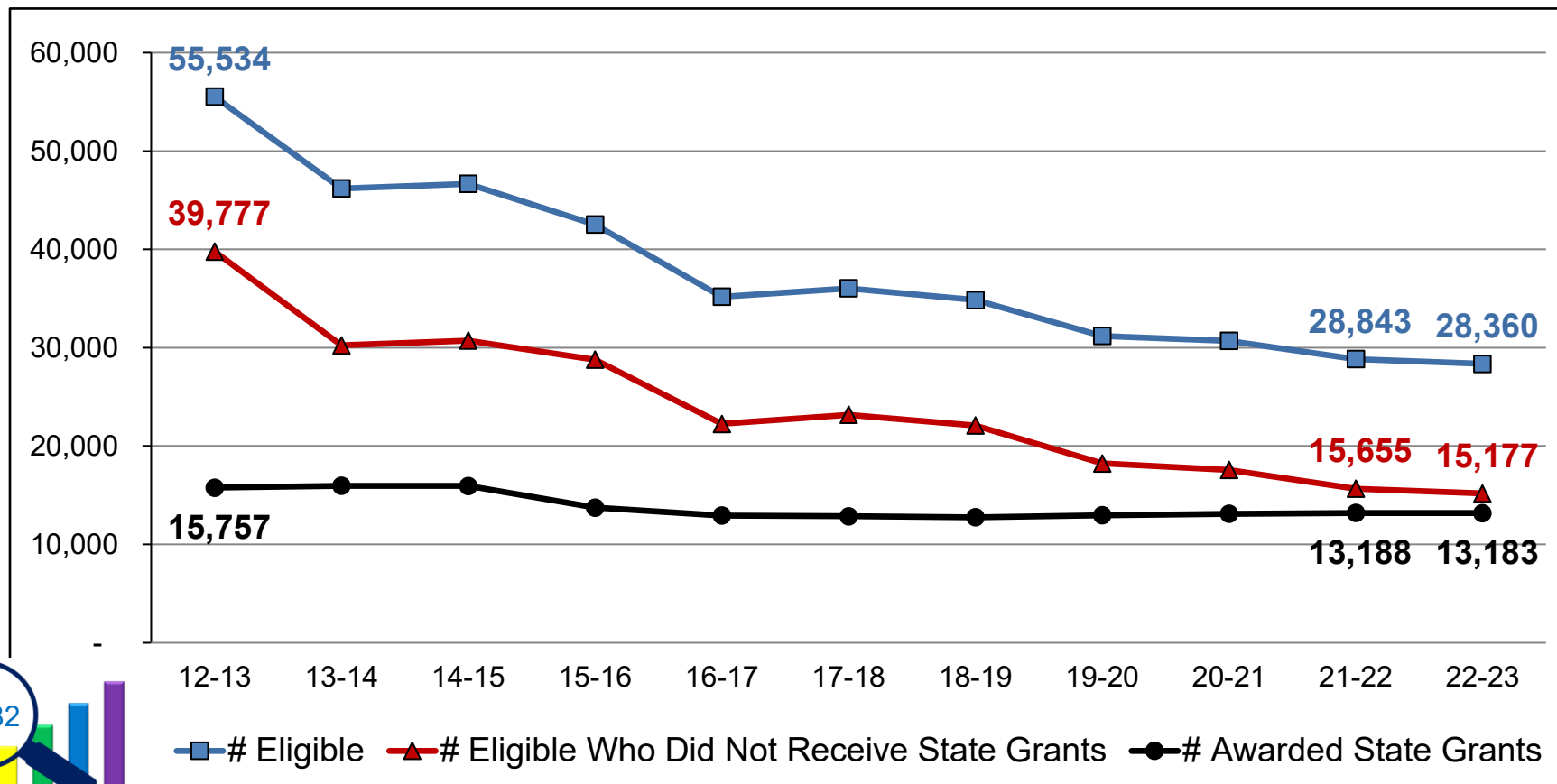
- State General Funds: 18.3%
- Lottery Funds: 85.7%
- **Total Funds: 57.3%**

Total Funds: \$15.2M Increased to \$23.9M



Number of Students Eligible to Receive NOGs Compared to the Number of Students Awarded NOGs

- In 2012-13, **28.4%** of eligible students received a state grant
- In 2022-23, **46.5%** of eligible students received a state grant



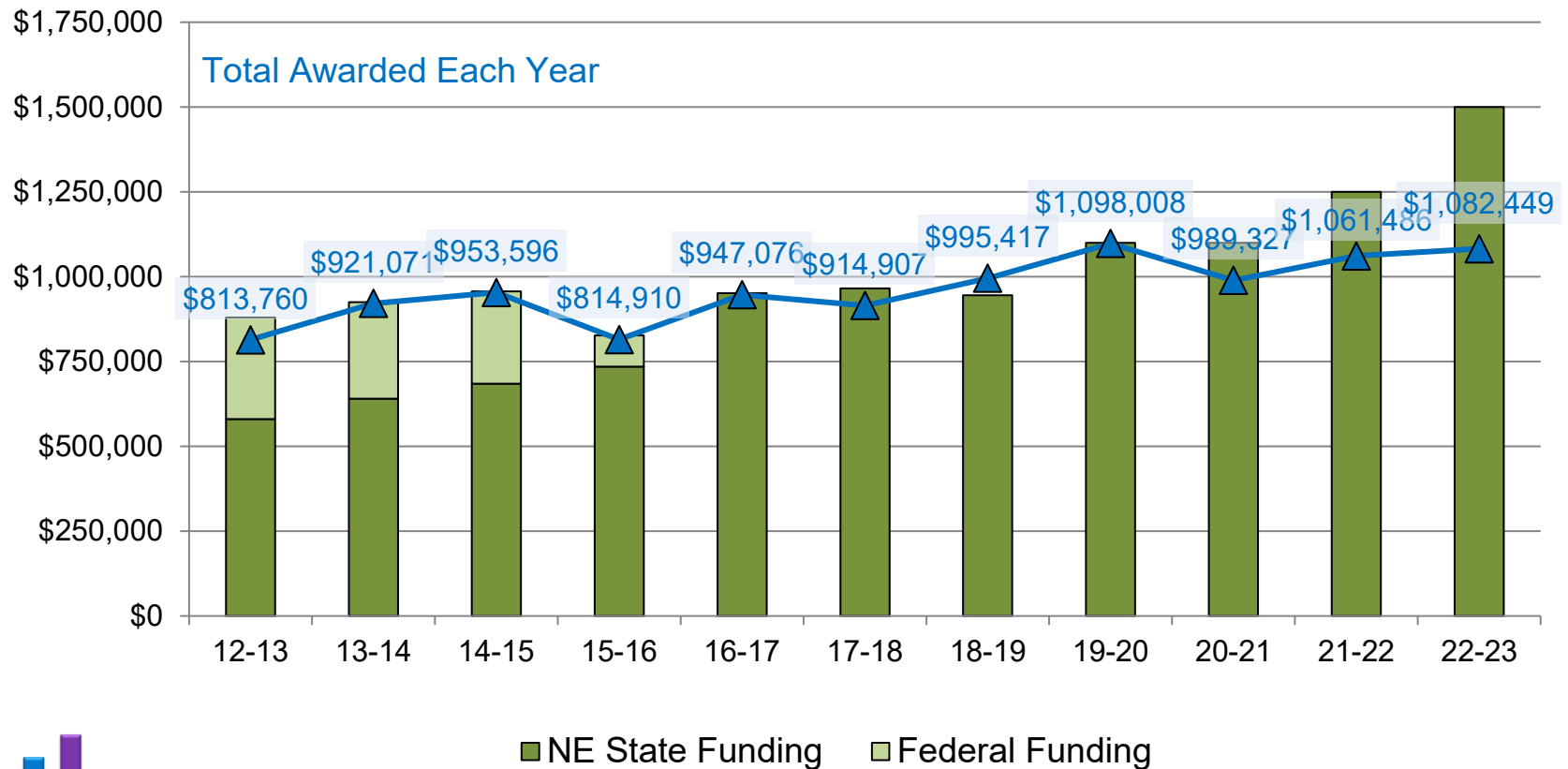
ACE Scholarships

- Another approach to expanding access to higher education is through the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program, initiated in 2007-2008
 - ACE Scholarships are awarded to eligible low-income Nebraska high school students who take college courses for credit while the students are in high school



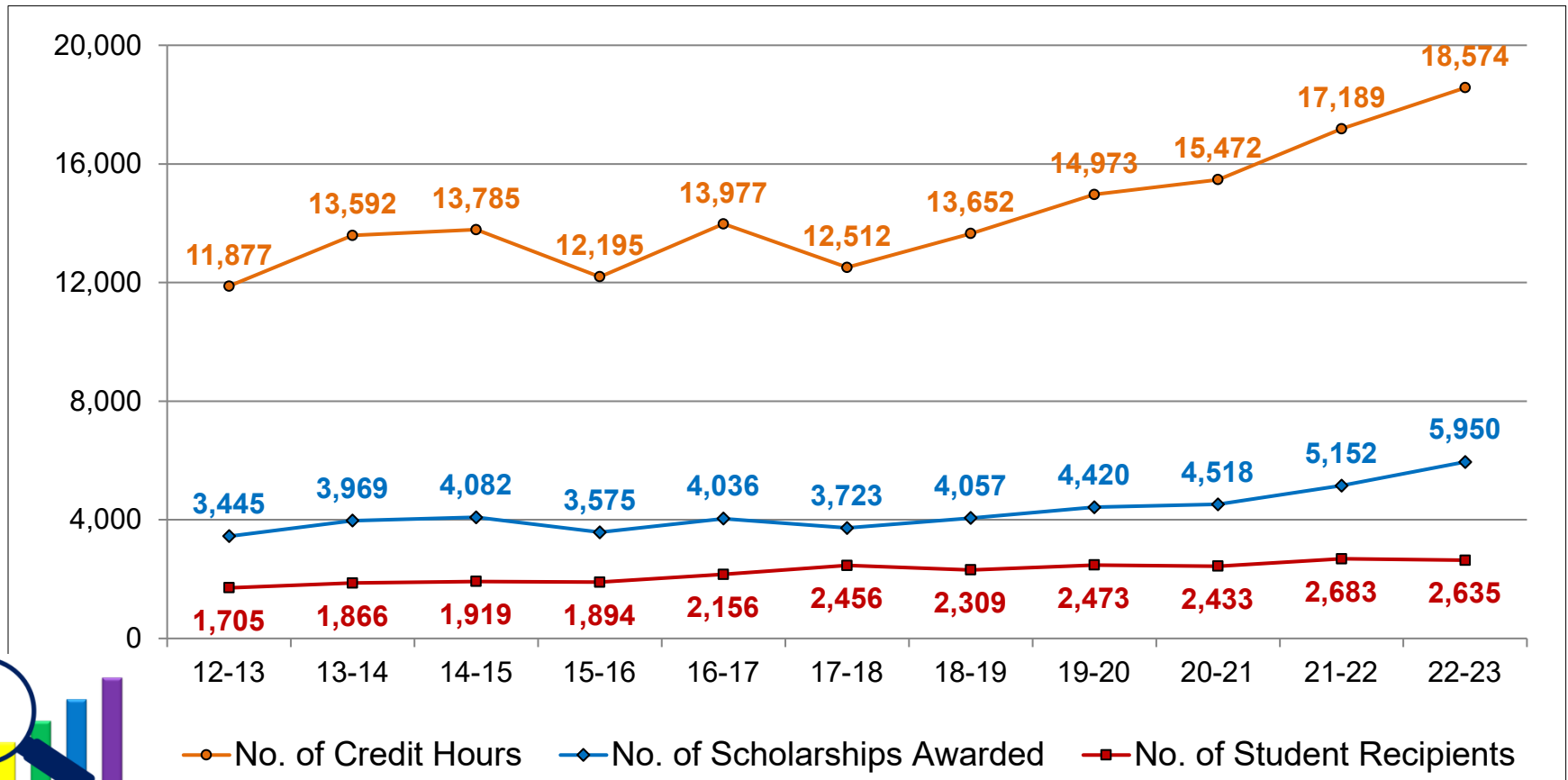
Growth of ACE Scholarship Program in Dollars Awarded

- Dollars awarded increased **33.0%** between 2012-13 and 2022-23



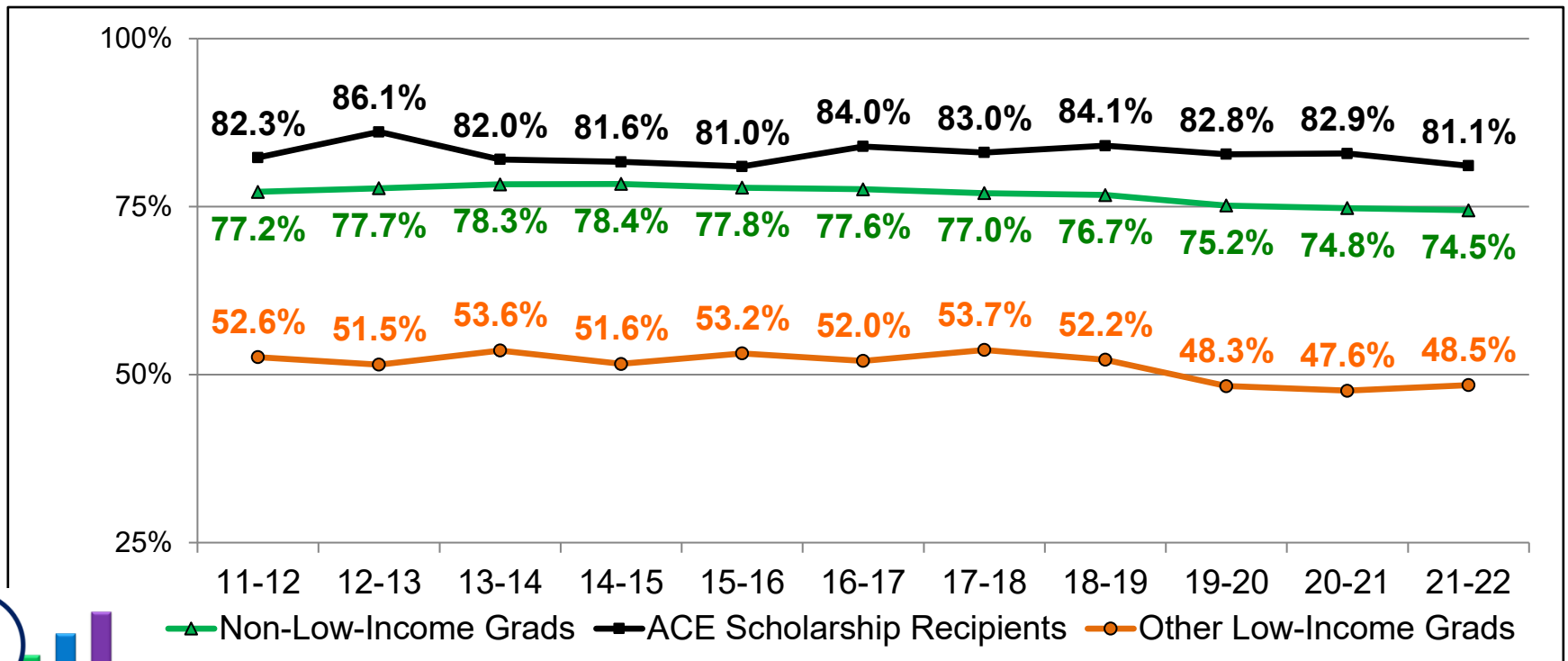
Growth of ACE Scholarship Program in Student Recipients, ACE Scholarships, and Credit Hours

- Number of students has increased **54.5%**
- Number of scholarships has increased **72.7%**
- Number of credit hours has increased **56.4%**



College Continuation Rates for Public High School Seniors Who Received ACE Scholarships and Other Graduates of Nebraska Public High Schools by Income Status

- College continuation rates of ACE scholarship recipients have been:
 - Higher than the rates for non-low-income graduates of the state's public high schools; and
 - Significantly higher than the college-going rates for other low-income students who graduated from Nebraska's public high schools



Note. Effective with the 2021-2022 cohort, students are classified as low income if they are eligible for FRL or if they graduate from a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).



PRIORITY 2

**INCREASE THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS
WHO ENROLL AND SUCCESSFULLY
COMPLETE A DEGREE**

Freshmen Retention Rates

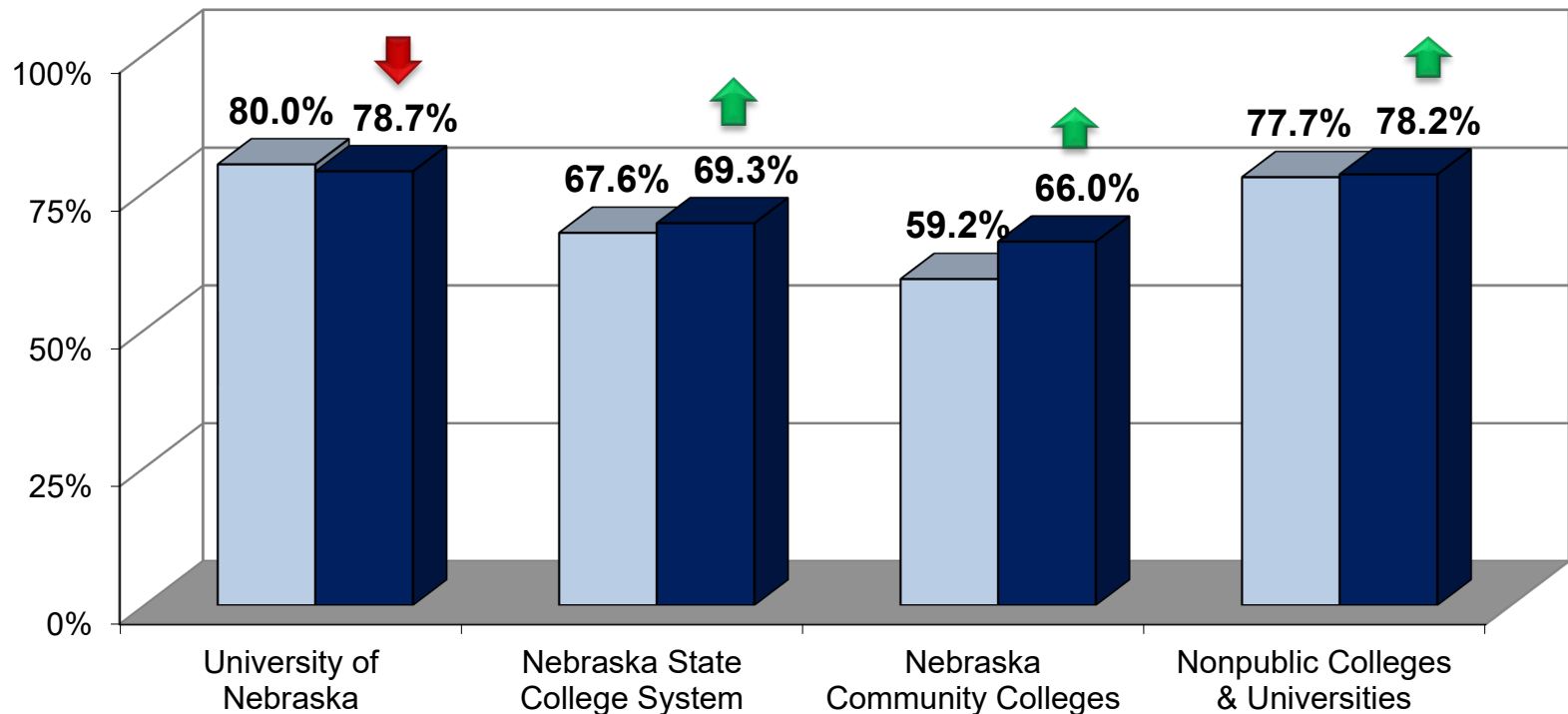
Section 2.1

Increase the percentage of students who persist beyond their first year(s) of enrollment.



IPEDS Full-Time, First-Time Freshmen Retention Rates

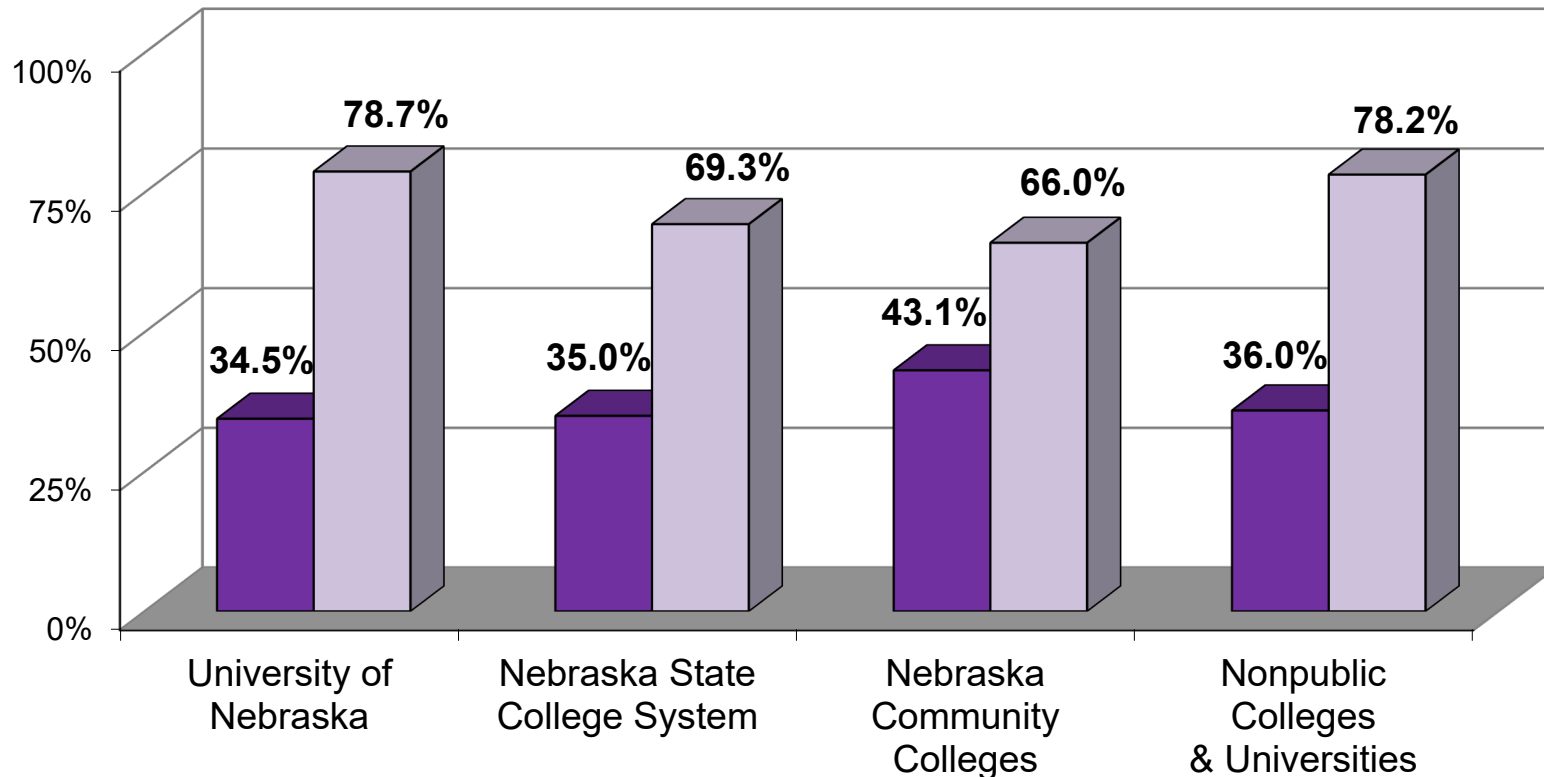
- Overall retention rate in fall 2012 = **72.6%**
- Overall retention rate in fall 2022 = **74.9%**
- As shown below, retention rates have increased at the state colleges, community colleges, and nonpublic institutions but declined at the University of Nebraska



□ 2012 Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rate ■ 2022 Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rate

IPEDS Full-Time and Part-Time First-Time Freshmen Retention Rates

- Students who start college full time are much more likely than part-time students to continue going to college beyond their freshmen year:



■ 2022 Part-Time Freshmen Retention Rate

■ 2022 Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rate

College Graduation and Transfer Rates

Section 2.2

Increase the percentage of students who complete associate degrees within three years and baccalaureate degrees within six years.



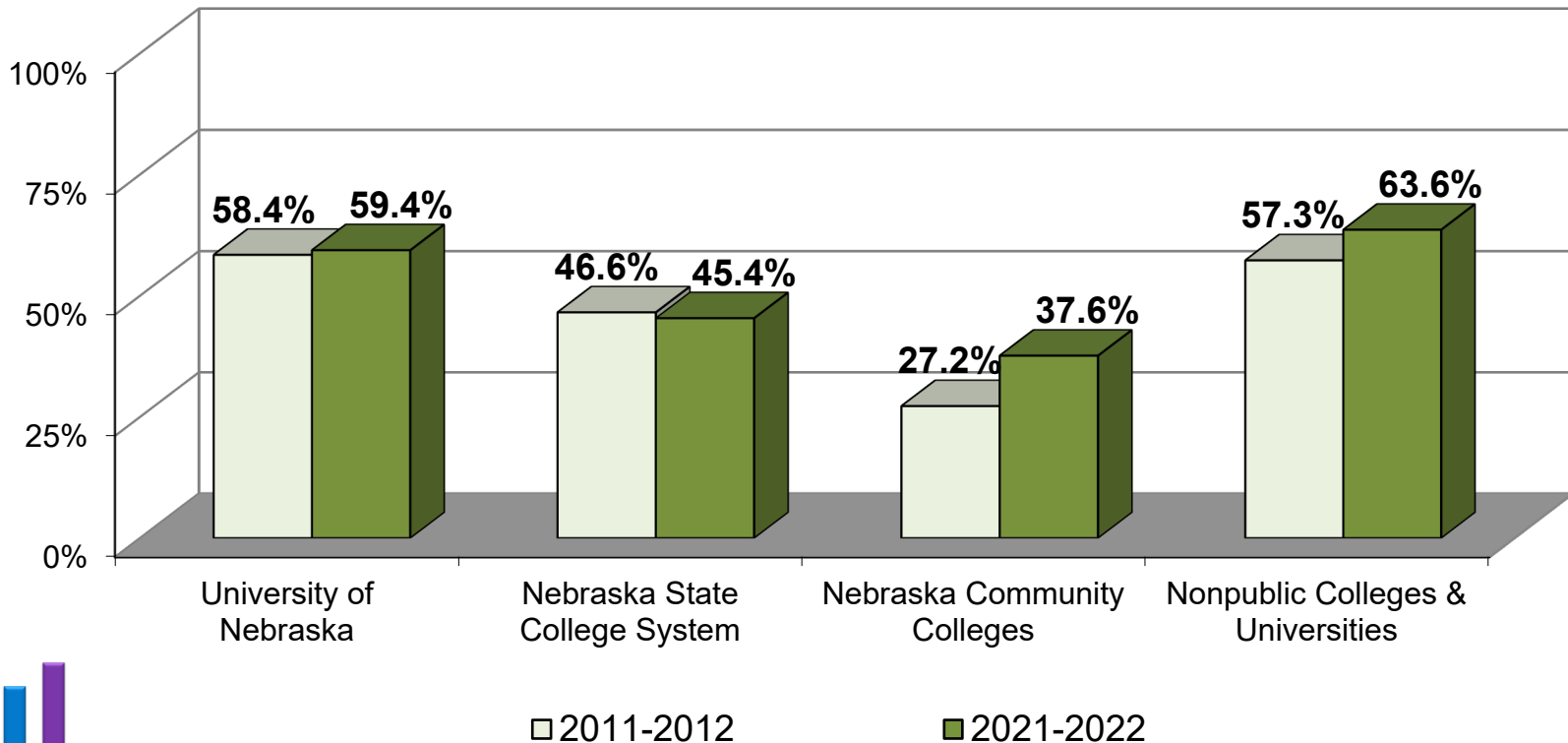
IPEDS Graduation Rates

Public 2-Year Graduation Rates:

- 2011-12 = **27.7%**
- 2021-22 = **37.7%**
 - **21-22 = 2nd highest rate during reporting period (20-21 was highest)**

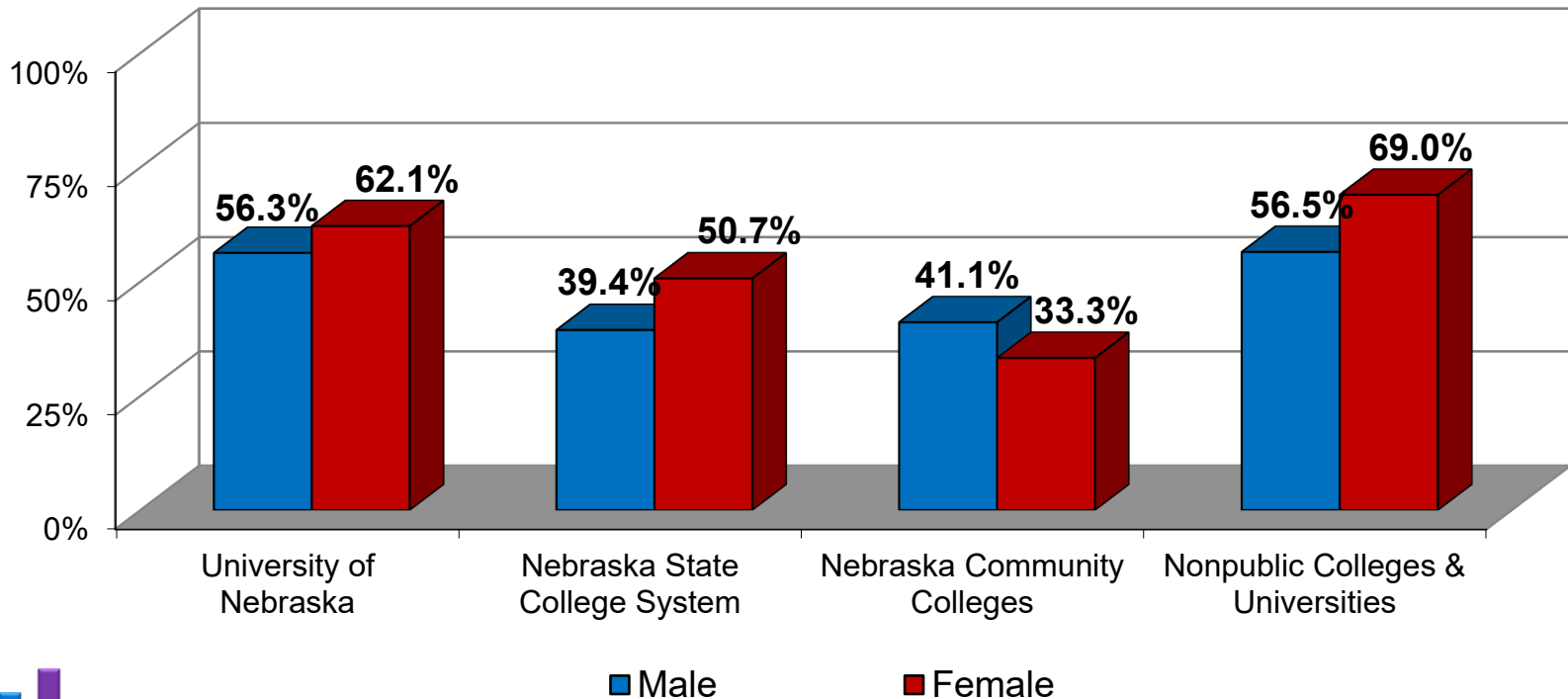
Public 4-Year Graduation Rates:

- 2011-12 = **56.8%**
- 2021-22 = **57.6%**



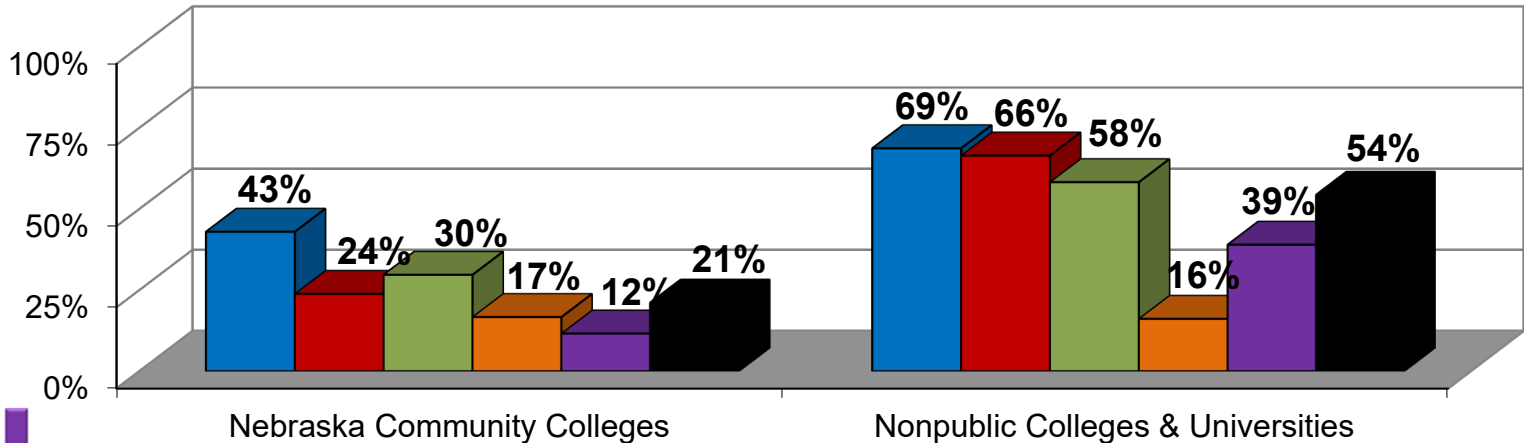
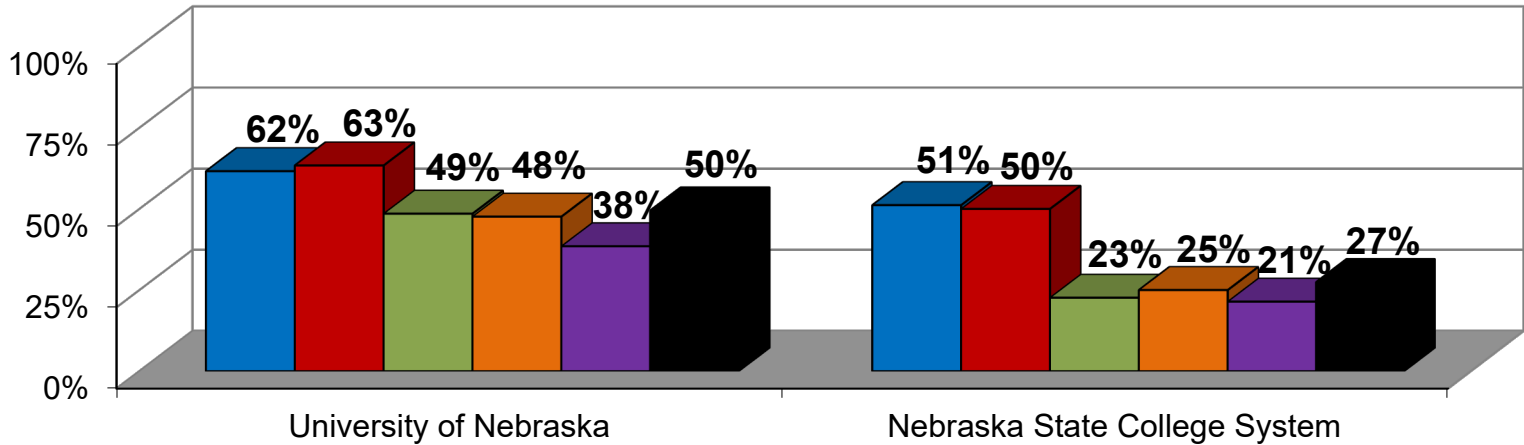
2021-2022 IPEDS Graduation Rates by Sector and by Gender

- Segmenting graduation rates by sector and by race/ethnicity results in graduation rates for 8 subgroups



2021-2022 IPEDS Graduation Rates by Sector and by Race/Ethnicity

- Segmenting graduation rates by sector and by race/ethnicity results in graduation rates for 24 subgroups

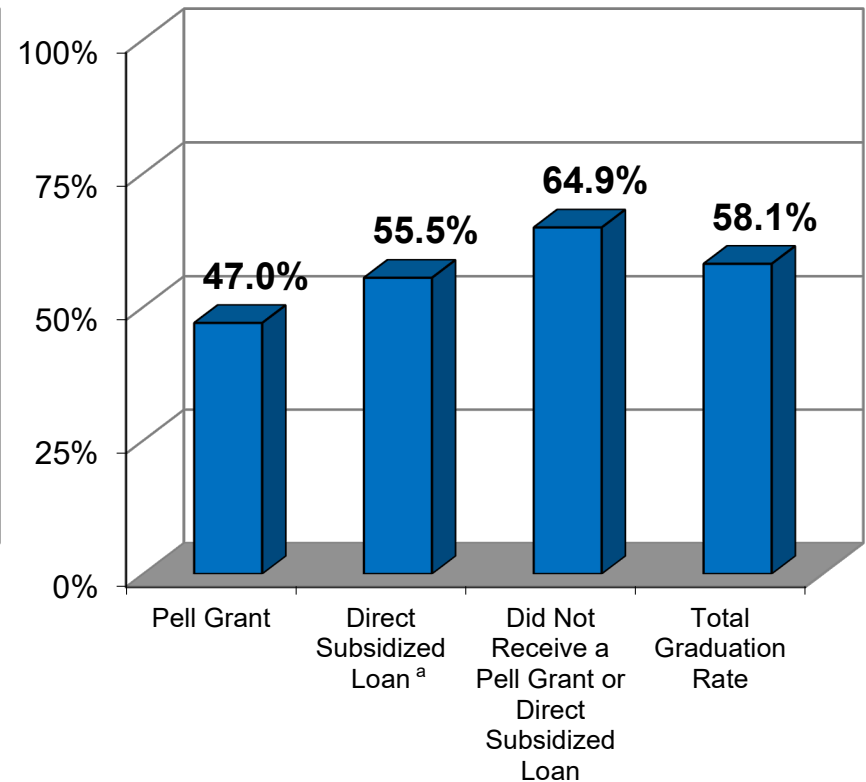
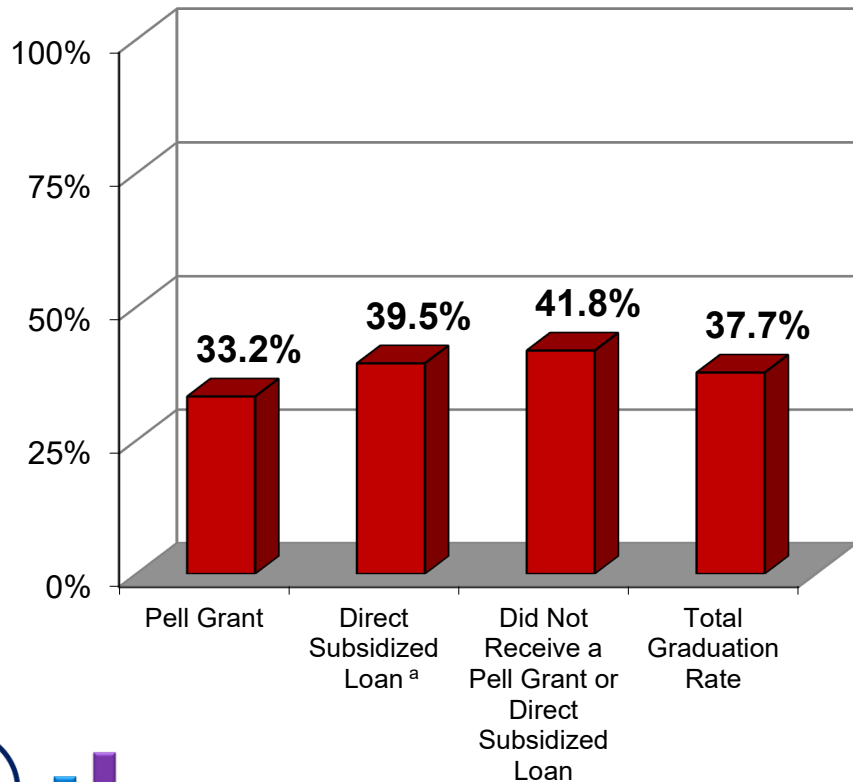


■ White non-Hispanic
 ■ Asian/Pacific Islander
 ■ Hispanic
■ Native American
 ■ Black non-Hispanic
 ■ Two or More Races



2021-2022 IPEDS Graduation Rates by Financial Aid Received

- Federal Pell Grant recipients and Direct Subsidized Loan recipients have demonstrated financial need and serve as a proxy for low-income students



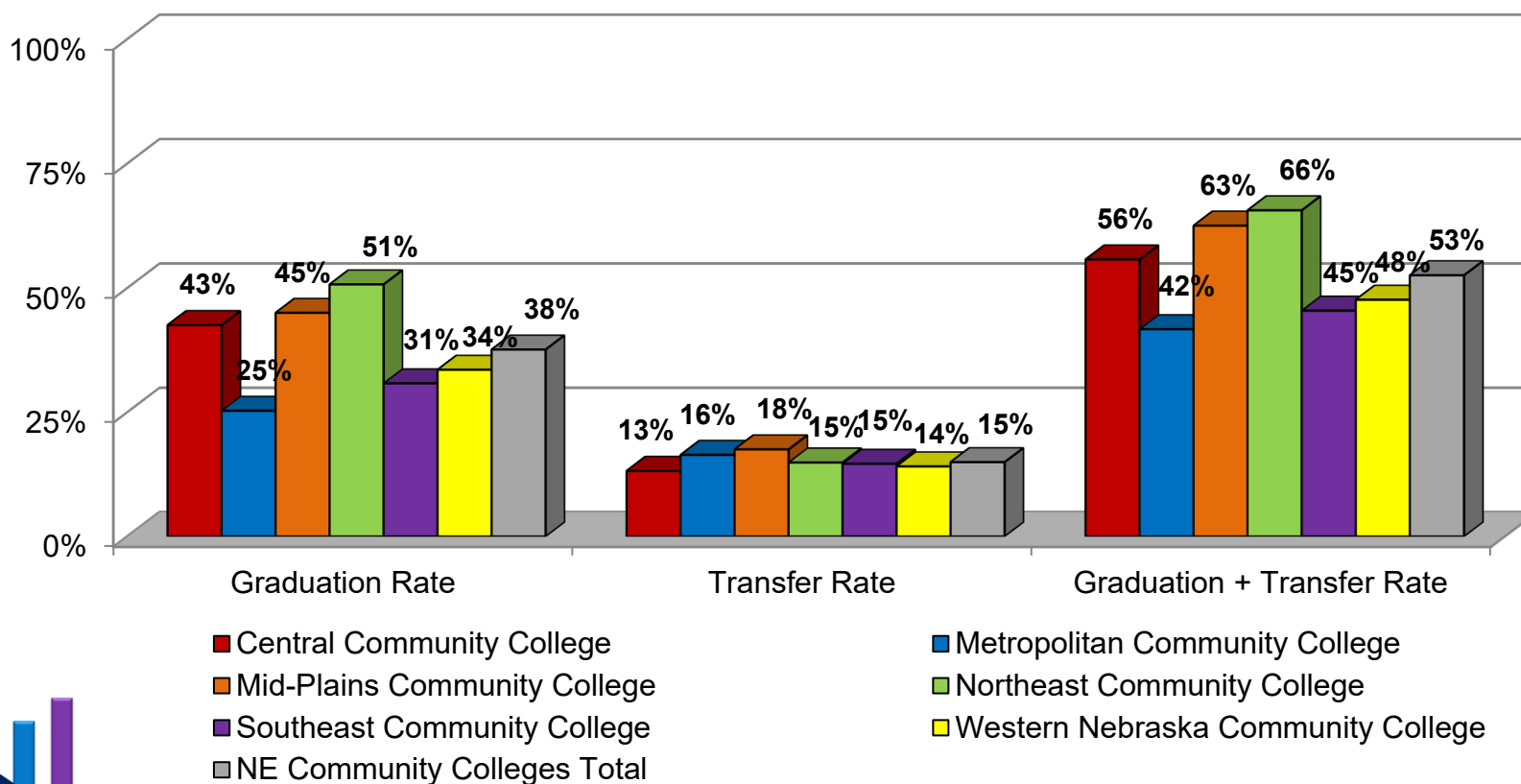
■ Total Two-Year Public Institutions

■ Total Four-Year Public Institutions

^a Only includes recipients that did not receive a Pell Grant.

2021-2022 Transfer Rates for Nebraska Community Colleges

- The overall transfer rate for the community colleges was **15%**
- Transfer rates ranged from **13% at Central** to **18% at Mid-Plains**
- The rates produced by combining each institution's graduation rates and transfer rates ranged from **42% at Metro** to **66% at Northeast**



Graduation and Persistence Rates

Section 2.3

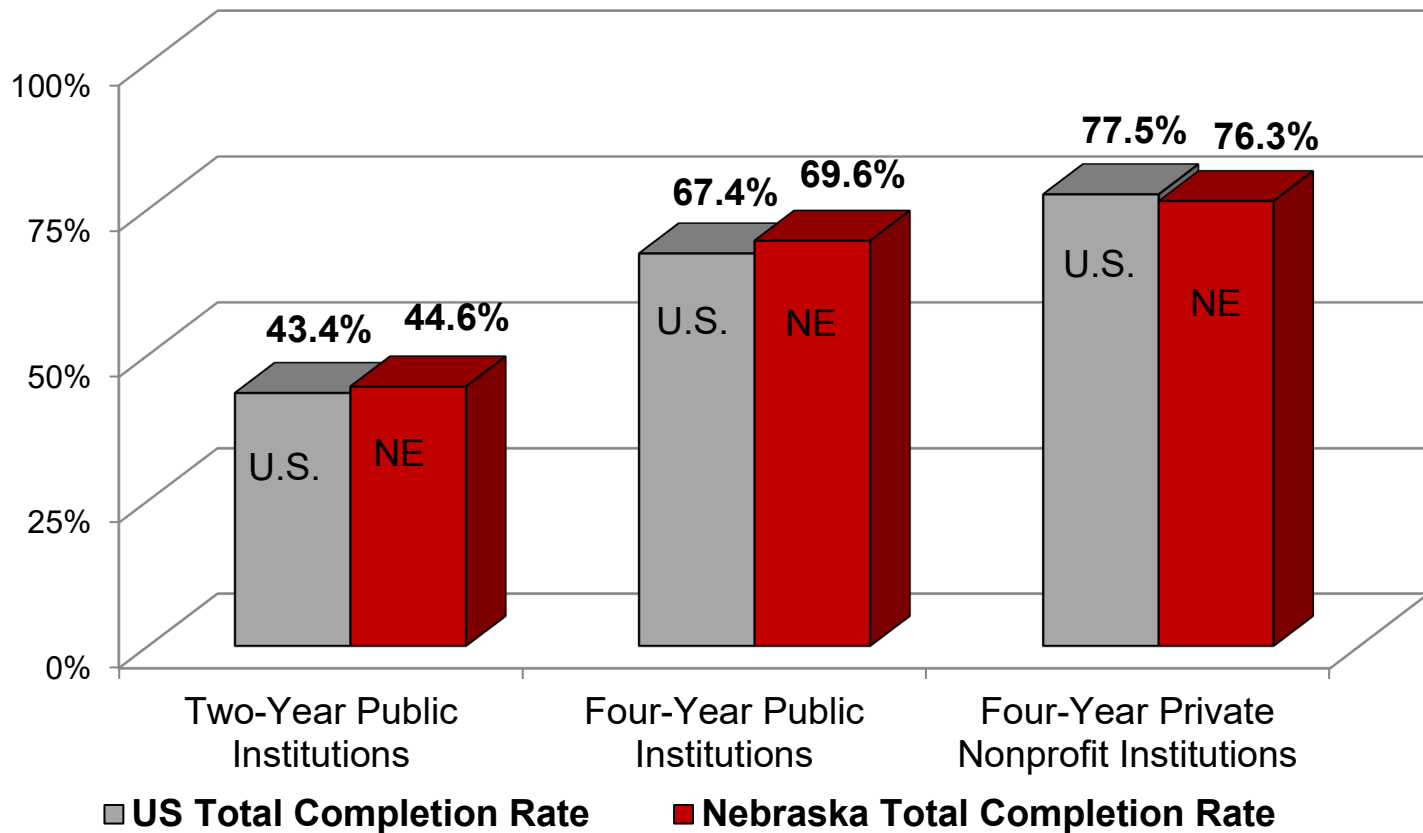
Research by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (*Completing College: National and State Report with Longitudinal Data Dashboard on Six- and Eight-Year Completion Rates*) provides important information about the completion and persistence rates of students who start college at Nebraska's public and private institutions.



- Historically, IPEDS graduation rates are only for **first-time, full-time** students who graduate from the **same campus** where they began as first-time, full-time students
- In comparison, the NSC graduation rates are for **all first-time students**, regardless of full-time status, and they **include students who graduate from campuses other than the campus of initial enrollment**



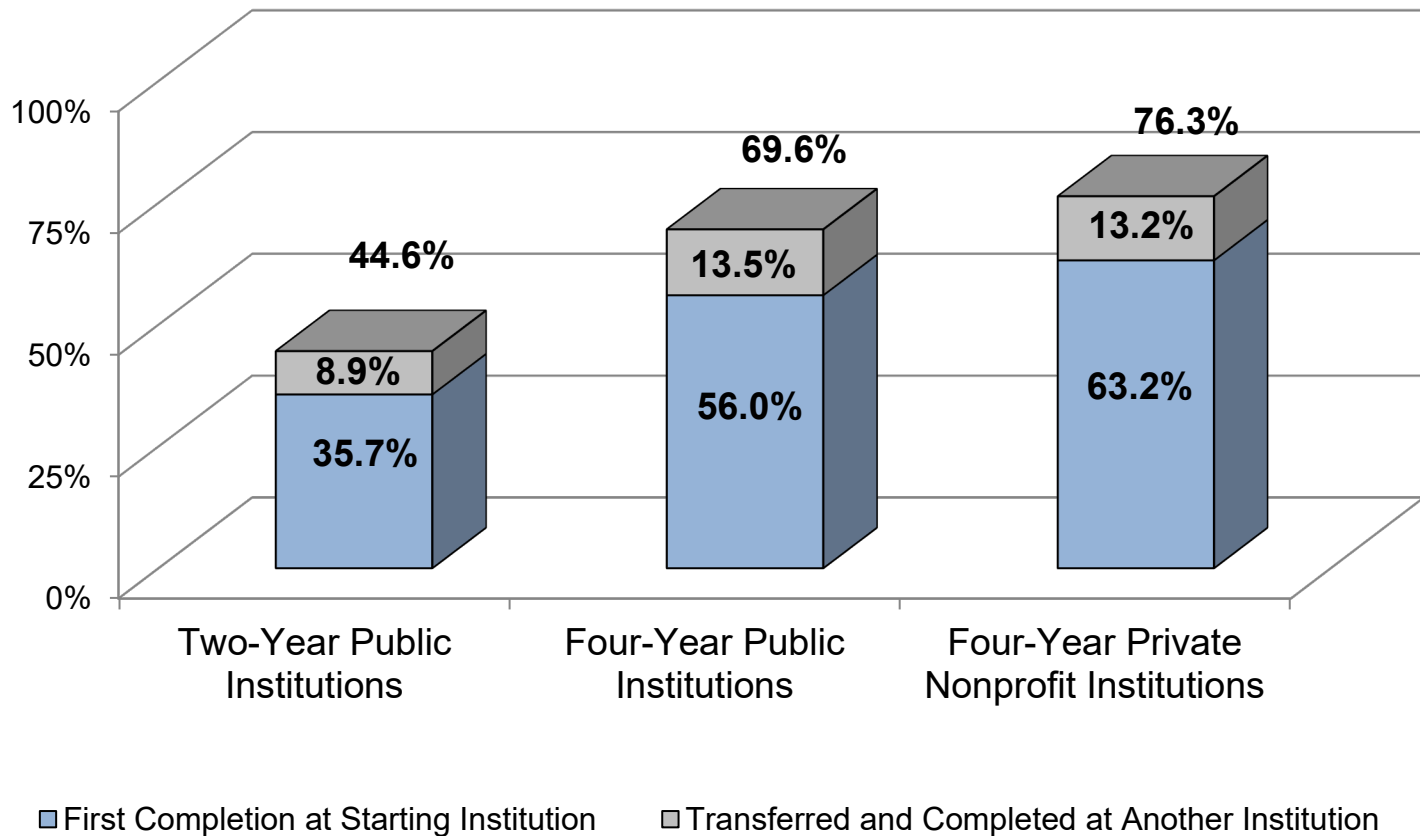
Six-Year Total Completion Rates for Nebraska and the United States for First-Time Degree-Seeking Freshmen Fall 2017 Cohort



Six-Year Completion Rates for Nebraska for First-Time Degree-Seeking Freshmen

Fall 2017 Cohort

- Completion rates for starting institutions range from 35.7% - 63.2%
- Roughly 9% to 14% of students received their first completion at an institution in the U.S. other than their starting institution, no matter the sector of first enrollment



■ First Completion at Starting Institution ■ Transferred and Completed at Another Institution

Completing College: National and State Report with Longitudinal Data Dashboard on Six- and Eight-Year Completion Rates

Fall 2017 Beginning Cohort Summary

- Students are most likely to earn degrees or certificates if they:
 - Attend college full time
 - Start college at a four-year institution
 - Start college before they are 20 years old
- Students who enroll part-time are:
 - Less likely to persist in their studies
 - Less likely to earn degrees or certificates
 - More likely to drop out of college
- Importantly, for the Nebraska community colleges
 - By June 30, 2023, 44.6% of students had completed degrees
 - 35.7% earned degrees at their starting institution
 - 3.2% at a different two-year school in U.S.
 - 5.7% at a four-year school in U.S.
 - And 8.6% were still enrolled (at any institution)



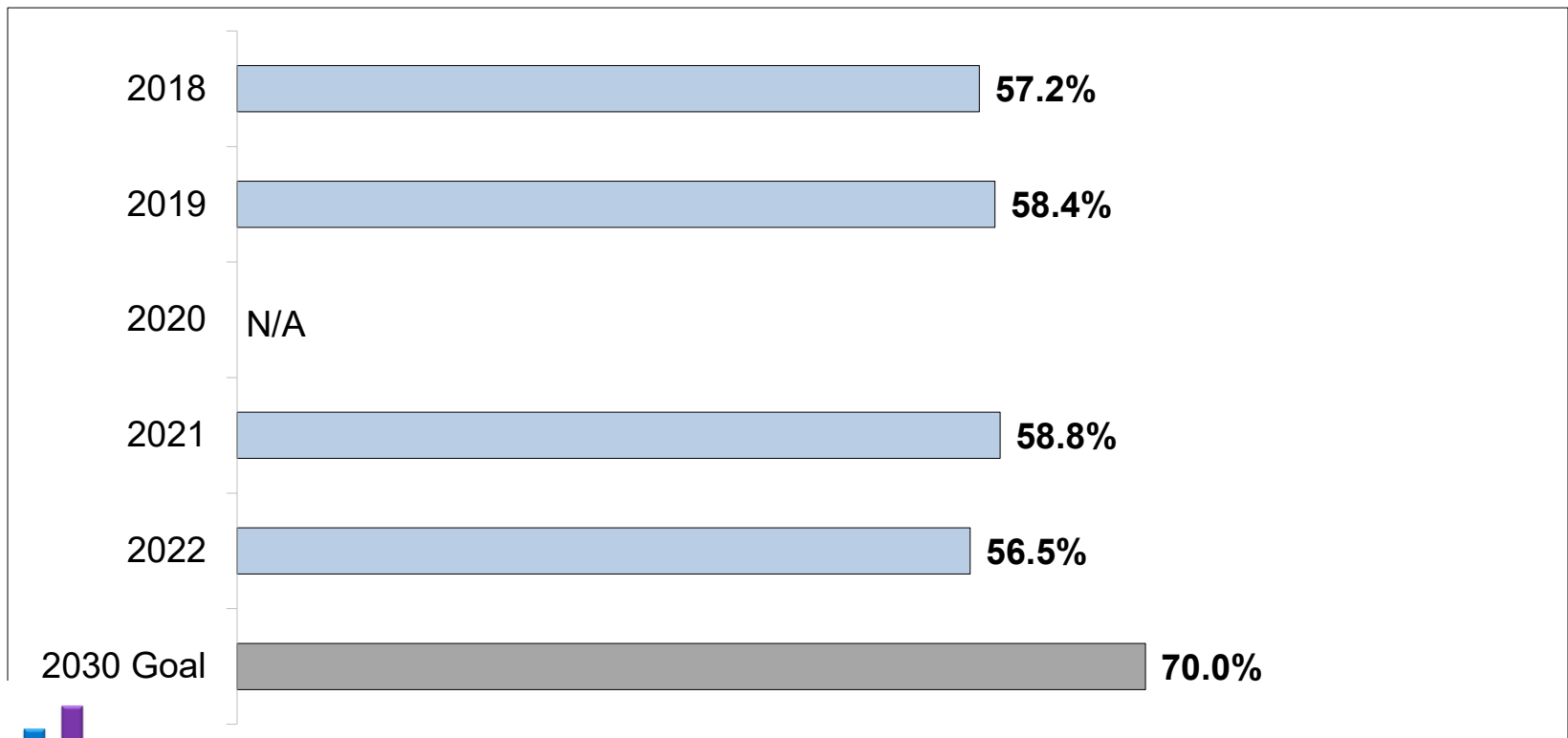
PRIORITY 3

**REDUCE, ELIMINATE, AND THEN REVERSE THE
NET OUT-MIGRATION OF NEBRASKANS WITH
HIGH LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

- Data for this section comes from
 - The Lumina Foundation
 - The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey's (ACS) 5-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files

Credential Attainment for 25- to 34-Year-Olds

- It is the goal of the State of Nebraska that at least 70% of 25- to 34-year-old Nebraskans will have a degree, certificate, diploma, or other postsecondary or industry-recognized credential with economic value by 2030
- Lumina estimates that 56.5% of Nebraskans aged 25 to 34 have obtained a credential or higher as of 2022, down from 58.8% in 2021
 - Certificate = 6.5%, Associate's = 11.3%, Bachelor's+ = 38.7%

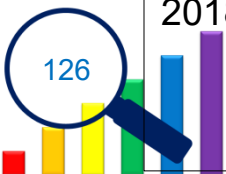
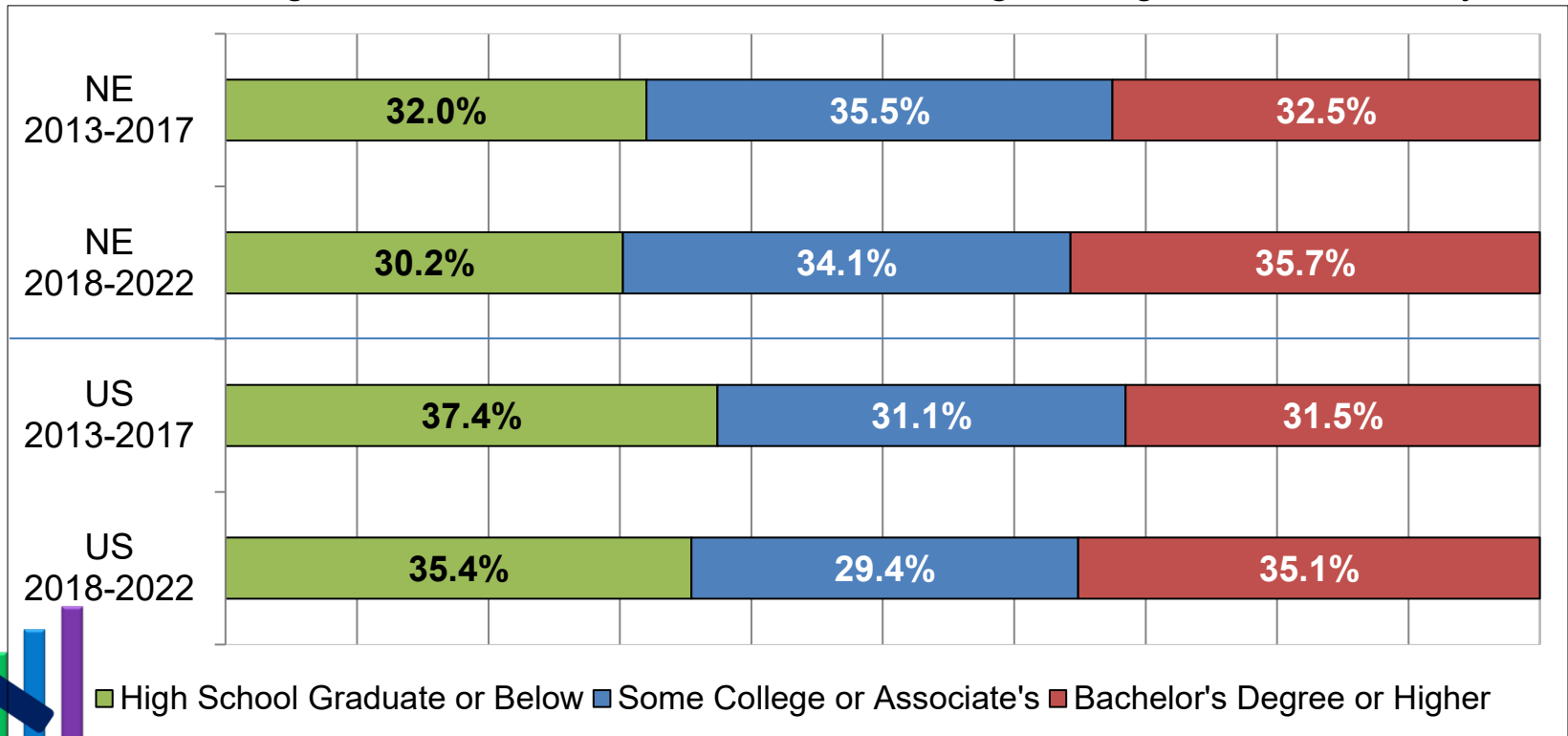


Note. Data for 2020 is excluded due to quality concerns.



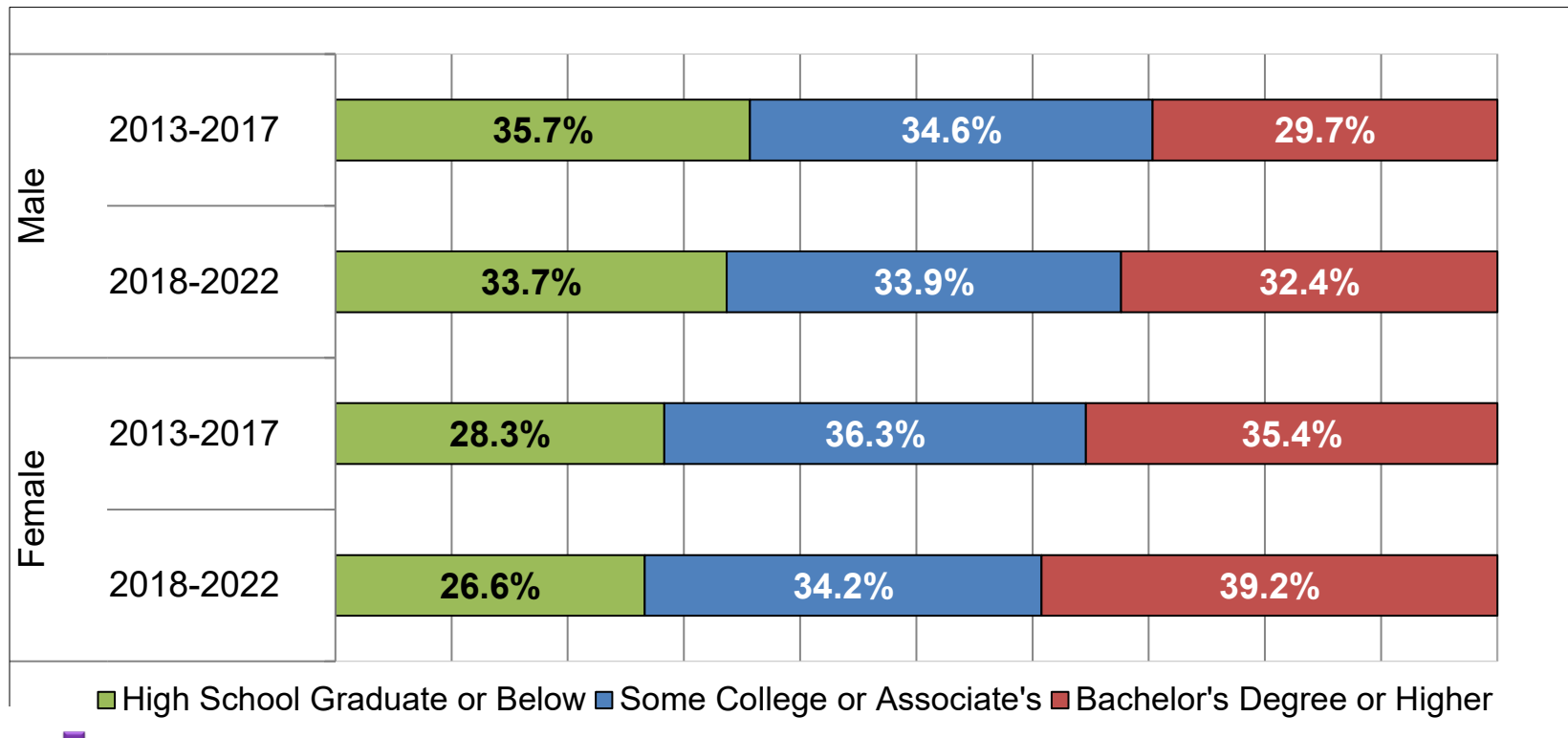
Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds

- Nebraska’s estimated population of 22- to 64-year olds increased 1.5% between 2013-2017 and 2018-2022
- **By education level, Nebraska’s estimated percent of the population:**
 - **High school graduates or below: Decreased 1.8 percentage points**
 - **Some college or associate’s: Decreased 1.4 percentage points**
 - **Bachelor’s degree or higher: Increased 3.2 percentage points**
- Compared to the US, Nebraska has higher percentages of some college/associate’s and bachelor’s or higher; however, bachelor’s+ is increasing at a higher rate nationally.



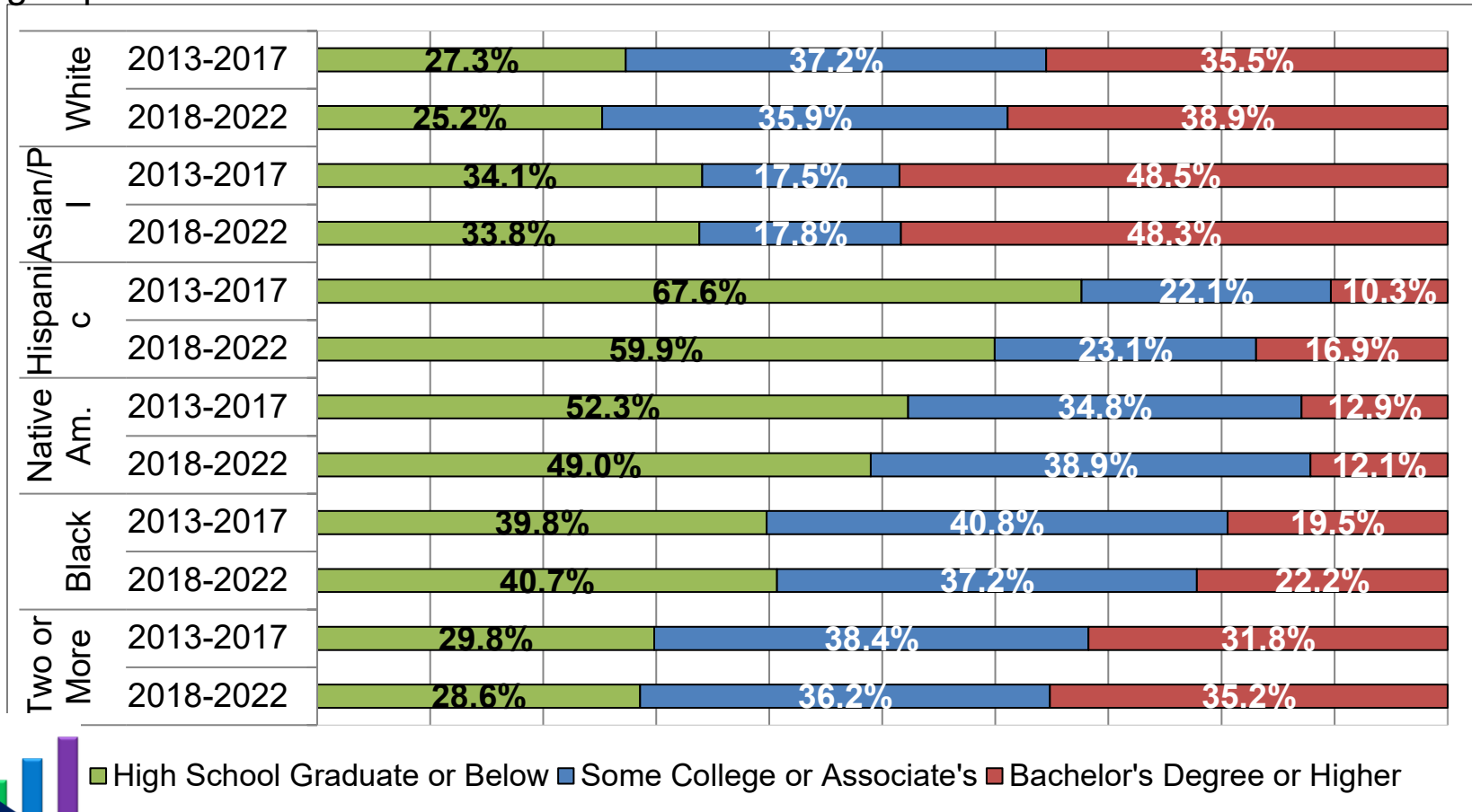
Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds by Gender

- The percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 2.7 percentage points for males and 3.8 percentage points for females
- For both five-year periods, females had higher attainment rates than males



Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds by Race/Ethnicity

- While educational attainment is increasing for most racial/ethnic groups, large attainment gaps remain
- Nebraska has lower attainment levels when analyzed by race/ethnicity for all racial/ethnic groups



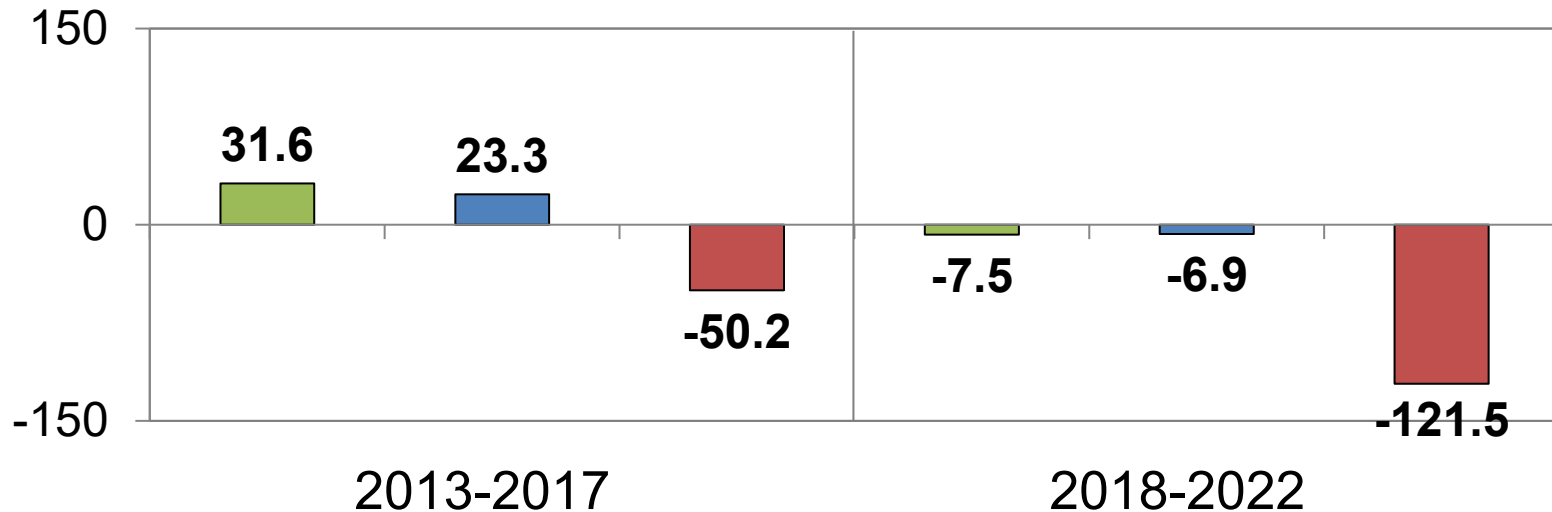
Migration Estimates Compared to Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds

2013-2017

- For every 10,000 people in Nebraska age 22 to 64, with a bachelor's degree or higher, there was an average annual net out-migration of 50.2 people with a bachelor's or higher
 - Estimated annual net out-migration of 1,687 people, or 8,435 over the five-year period, with a bachelor's or higher**

2018-2022

- For every 10,000 people in Nebraska age 22 to 64, with a bachelor's degree or higher, there was an average annual net out-migration of 121.5 people with a bachelor's or higher
 - Estimated annual net out-migration of 4,555 people, or 22,775 over the five-year period, with a bachelor's or higher**



■ HS Grad or Below ■ Some College/Associate's ■ Bachelor's +

CONCLUSION

Nebraska Key Takeaways

- **2022-2023 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE:** **87.2%**
- **2021-2022 COLLEGE CONTINUATION RATES**
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS: **65.2%**
ACE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS: **81.1%**
- **6-YEAR COMPLETION RATE, FALL 2017 COHORT:** **44.6% (PUBLIC 2-YR)**
69.6% (PUBLIC 4-YR)
- **AVERAGE ANNUAL NET MIGRATION FOR EVERY 10,000 WORKING-AGE NEBRASKA'S WITH A BACHELOR'S +:** **-121.5**
- **BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER 22 TO 64 YEARS:** **35.7%**
- **CREDENTIAL WITH VALUE IN THE WORKPLACE+ 25 TO 34 YEARS:** **56.5%**



- Given the findings of the *2024 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*, more work needs to be done in order for Nebraskans to enroll in college and complete degrees.
- So, what do we need to do?

- At the high school level:
 - **Increase high school graduation rates and close attainment gaps**
 - Increase the percentage of students who are prepared academically for college
 - **Increase the number of students who take dual and concurrent enrollment courses**
 - For males, historically underrepresented, and low-income students especially, creative and holistic approaches are needed to increase:
 - The percentage who are prepared for college academically,
 - The number who take dual enrollment courses,
 - High school graduation rates, and
 - College-going rates
 - **Increase opportunities for students to connect to career pathways of interest to them that lead to employment and additional education**
 - **Increase high school counseling/advising resources to:**
 - Address mental health issues that may slow or prevent high school completion
 - Improve students' awareness of careers and the range of higher ed opportunities and their associated career pathways, and
 - Implement new universal FAFSA completion and help students understand financial aid opportunities and plan the most direct pathway to their educational goals



- At the postsecondary level:
 - **Increase the percentage of high school graduates who go on to college, particularly among low-income Black, Hispanic, Native American, and White males**
 - Encourage students to enroll full time and not delay enrollment
 - Increase efforts to improve retention and persistence rates
 - **Support and expand efforts (ex., Transfer Nebraska and 2+2 agreements) to improve students' knowledge of how credits will transfer**
 - Make formal connections to communities outside of/in addition to Omaha and Lincoln for mentorships and internships
 - **Identify and reach out to adults with college credit but no earned credential with completion initiatives, including stackable microcredentials and badges that are recognized by employers**
 - Reach out to adults who have basic education needs and enroll them in adult basic education and workforce preparation, such as the Integrated Education and Training Program at Metro CC
 - Continue to build out and publicize the capabilities of NSWERS, the state's workforce and educational reporting system, to study the P-16 employment pipeline, including employment trajectories of recent graduates, to develop strategies to reduce brain-drain



- At the state government level:
 - Monitor and work toward the statewide attainment goal that 70% of 25–34-year-old Nebraskans will have a degree or short-term credential with value in the workforce by 2030
 - **Adequately fund public colleges and universities to maintain affordable tuition and fees, provide adequate student support services and timely course offerings, and ensure that a full range of programs connected to Nebraska’s statewide and regional economic needs is available**
 - **Continue to support and increase funding for the Nebraska Opportunity Grant program**
 - Set a statewide goal for dual credit participation and ensure that funding is available to institutions and students to make it achievable
 - Provide resources to ensure the new FAFSA completion high school graduation requirement can be implemented successfully
 - Consider implementing a direct admissions program with Nebraska postsecondary institutions, whereby high school students are notified by institutions that they meet admission requirements before they apply
 - Consider new programs that are aimed at adults without degrees or credentials (ex., Tennessee Reconnect and Missouri’s Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant)
 - Ensure that high-speed broadband is available to all Nebraska families at an affordable cost
 - **Continue the expansion of the Nebraska Career Scholarship Program to attract students to programs leading to occupations identified as high wage, high demand, and high skill in Nebraska and to connect students to Nebraska employers through internship opportunities**
 - Consider tax incentives for graduates with student loan debt who remain in or come to Nebraska to work and/or employers who assist employees with student loan payments
 - Alternatively, create or expand loan forgiveness programs for targeted high-need occupations



Questions?

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The full report is available online at ccpe.nebraska.gov