

Section 1

Increasing Postsecondary Enrollment

Priority 1. Increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska.

The first priority recommended by the 2003 LR 174 Task Force was to increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska. To monitor progress toward achieving this goal, this section compares the latest available total student unduplicated headcounts and enrollments of first-time freshmen to fall 2012 within the context of 10-year trends and estimated 11-year trends.

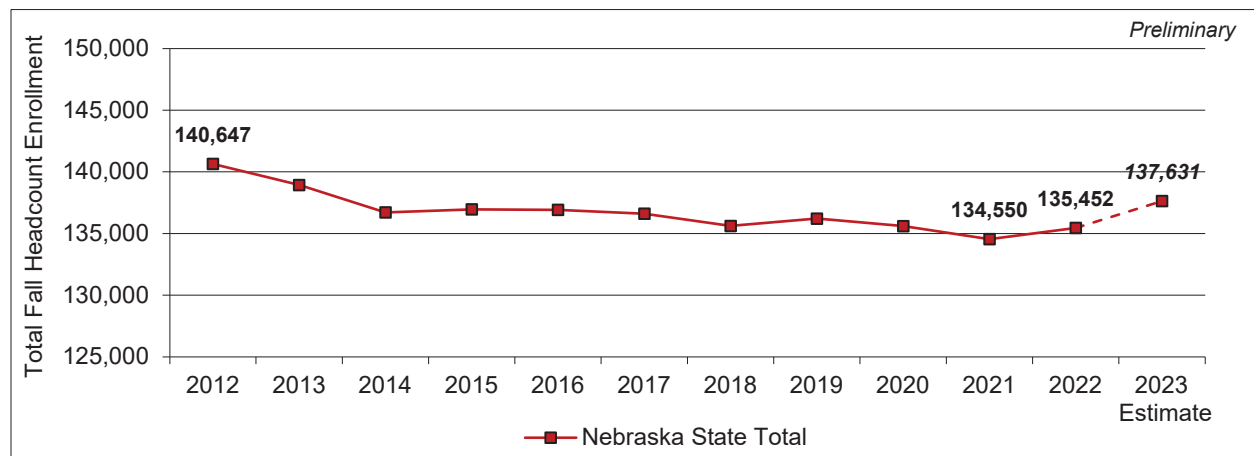
The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education is the official source of the enrollment data summarized for fall 2012 through fall 2022. Enrollments for fall 2023 are preliminary, based on estimates that institutions reported directly to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

Nebraska Total Fall Headcount Enrollment

- Total headcount—the count of all students taking courses for credit—at Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions decreased from 140,647 in fall 2012 to 135,452 in fall 2022, for a 10-year decrease of 3.7%, as shown in [Figure 1.1](#). It is estimated that enrollment increased 1.6% between fall 2022 and fall 2023. In the context of estimated 11-year trends, total fall enrollment decreased 2.1% between 2012 and 2023.
- In 2008, Nebraska’s fall enrollment totaled a record number of 131,710 students. Following the Great Recession of 2008, fall 2009 enrollment increased to 140,770 and peaked the next year at 145,893. Since 2010, fall enrollments have steadily declined but remain higher than pre-recession levels. Since this report generally examines 10- and 11-year trends, it is important to remember the impact of the recession on baseline calculations.

Figure 1.1

**Total Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023**



Note. See [Table A1.1](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

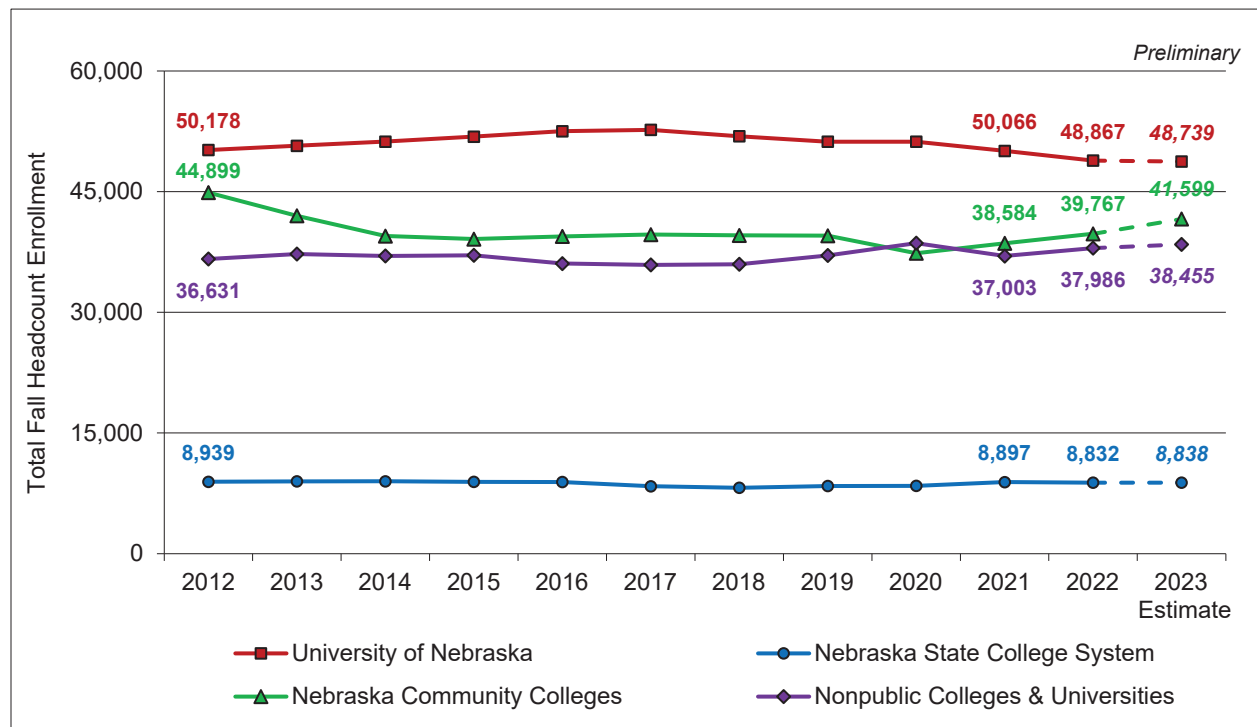
Nebraska Total Fall Headcount Enrollment by Sector

- The University of Nebraska continues to lead the state’s higher education system in terms of fall headcount enrollment. As shown in [Figure 1.2](#), Nebraska’s nonpublic institutions contributed positively to the state’s increased enrollment since 2012. However, based on preliminary data for fall 2023, enrollments at the University of Nebraska, the state colleges, and the community colleges declined between fall 2012 and fall 2023.
- By sector, Nebraska’s postsecondary enrollment has changed as follows:

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%
Nebraska State College System	-0.7%	0.1%	-1.2%	-1.1%
Nebraska Community Colleges	3.1%	4.6%	-11.4%	-7.3%
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	2.7%	1.2%	3.7%	5.0%
Total Nebraska	0.7%	1.6%	-3.7%	-2.1%

Figure 1.2

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023



Note. See Table A1.2 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

Nebraska Public Colleges and Universities: Fall Enrollment by Institution

Within all sectors, changes in enrollment vary from one institution to another. The charts in this section show the enrollment trends of the institutions in each public sector from fall 2012 to fall 2023.

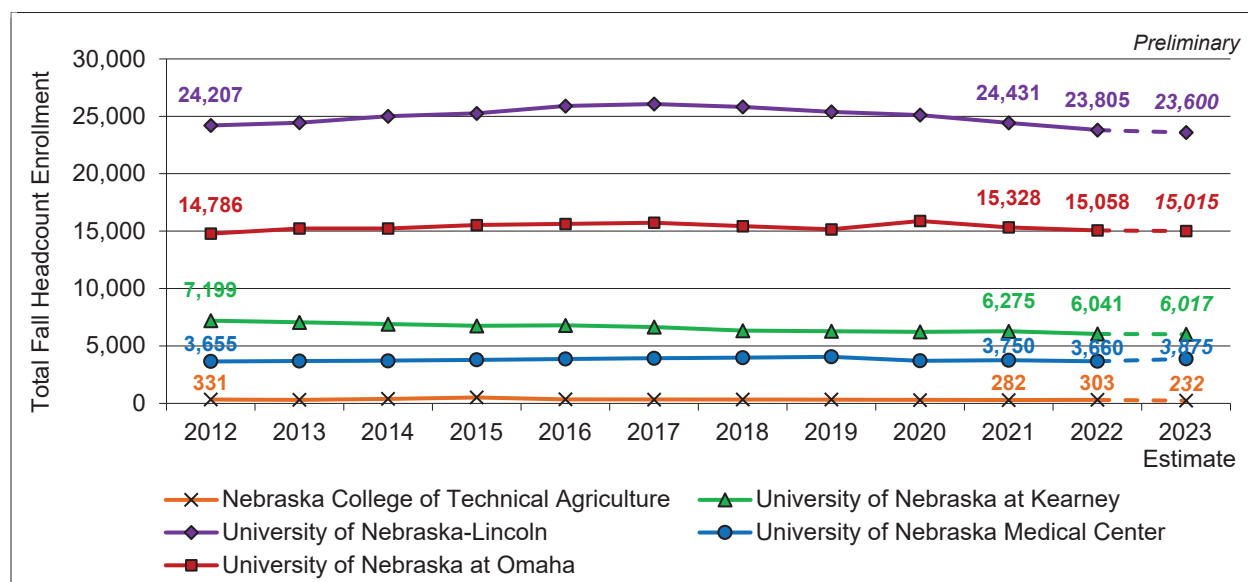
University of Nebraska

- From fall 2012 to fall 2023, fall enrollment decreased an estimated 2.9% at the University of Nebraska. While the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln experienced decreases during this 11-year period, fall enrollments increased at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2012 and fall 2023, at the institutions constituting the University of Nebraska:

Institution	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
Neb. College of Technical Agriculture	7.4%	-23.4%	-8.5%	-29.9%
University of Nebraska at Kearney	-3.7%	-0.4%	-16.1%	-16.4%
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	-2.6%	-0.9%	-1.7%	-2.5%
University of Neb. Medical Center	-2.4%	5.9%	0.1%	6.0%
University of Nebraska at Omaha	-1.8%	-0.3%	1.8%	1.5%

Figure 1.3

Fall Headcount Enrollment at the University of Nebraska by Institution
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023



Note. See Table A1.2 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

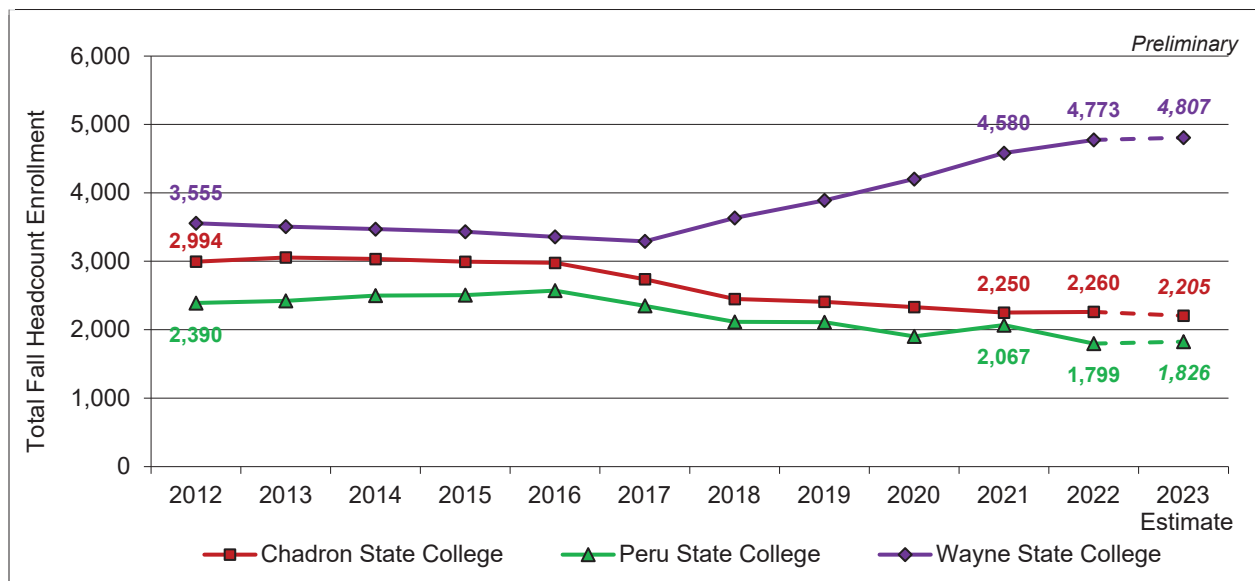
Nebraska State College System

- From fall 2012 to fall 2023, fall enrollment decreased an estimated 1.1% within the Nebraska State College System. While Wayne State College experienced a 35.2% increase during this 11-year period, Chadron State College and Peru State College experienced decreases of 26.4% and 23.6%, respectively.
- Notably, since fall 2016, Wayne State College increased an estimated 43.2% while Chadron State College and Peru State College reported decreases of 25.9% and 29.0%, respectively.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2012 and fall 2023, at the institutions constituting the Nebraska State College System:

Institution	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
Chadron State College	0.4%	-2.4%	-24.5%	-26.4%
Peru State College	-13.0%	1.5%	-24.7%	-23.6%
Wayne State College	4.2%	0.7%	34.3%	35.2%

Figure 1.4

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska State College System by Institution
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023



Note. See [Table A1.2](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

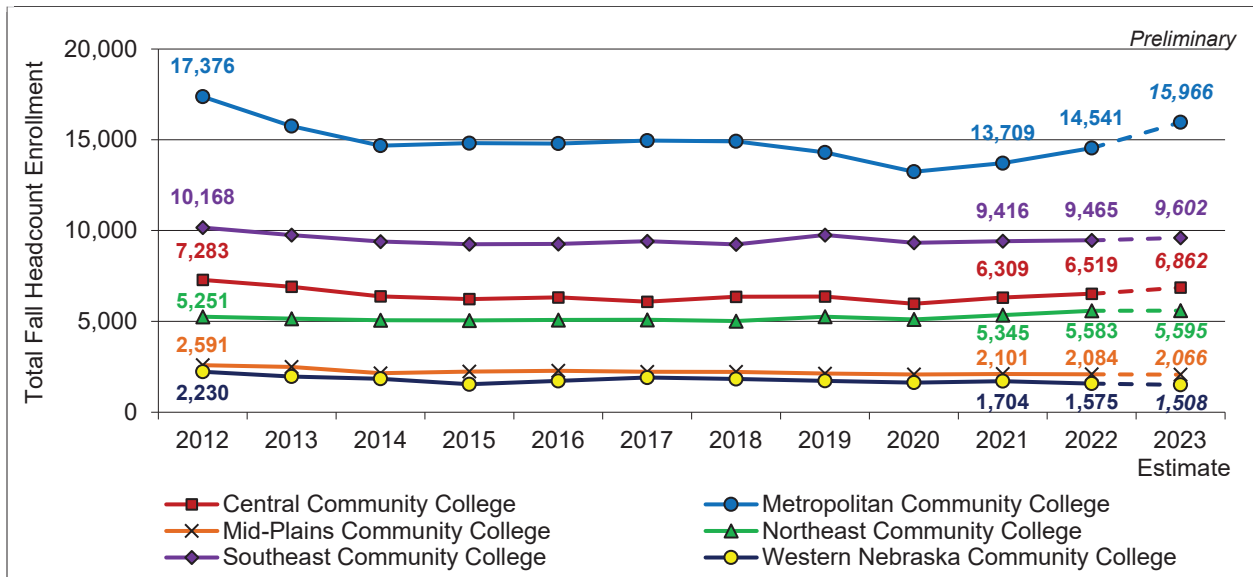
Nebraska Community Colleges

- From fall 2012 to fall 2023, total fall enrollment decreased an estimated 7.3% at the community colleges. While Northeast Community College increased 6.6% during this 11-year period, all other community colleges experienced decreases, ranging from a decrease of 5.6% at Southeast Community College to a decrease of 32.4% at Western Nebraska Community College.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2012 and fall 2023, at Nebraska's six community colleges:

Institution	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
Central Community College	3.3%	5.3%	-10.5%	-5.8%
Metropolitan Community College	6.1%	9.8%	-16.3%	-8.1%
Mid-Plains Community College	-0.8%	-0.9%	-19.6%	-20.3%
Northeast Community College	4.5%	0.2%	6.3%	6.6%
Southeast Community College	0.5%	1.4%	-6.9%	-5.6%
Western Neb. Community College	-7.6%	-4.3%	-29.4%	-32.4%

Figure 1.5

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Community Colleges by Institution
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023



Note. See Table A1.2 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

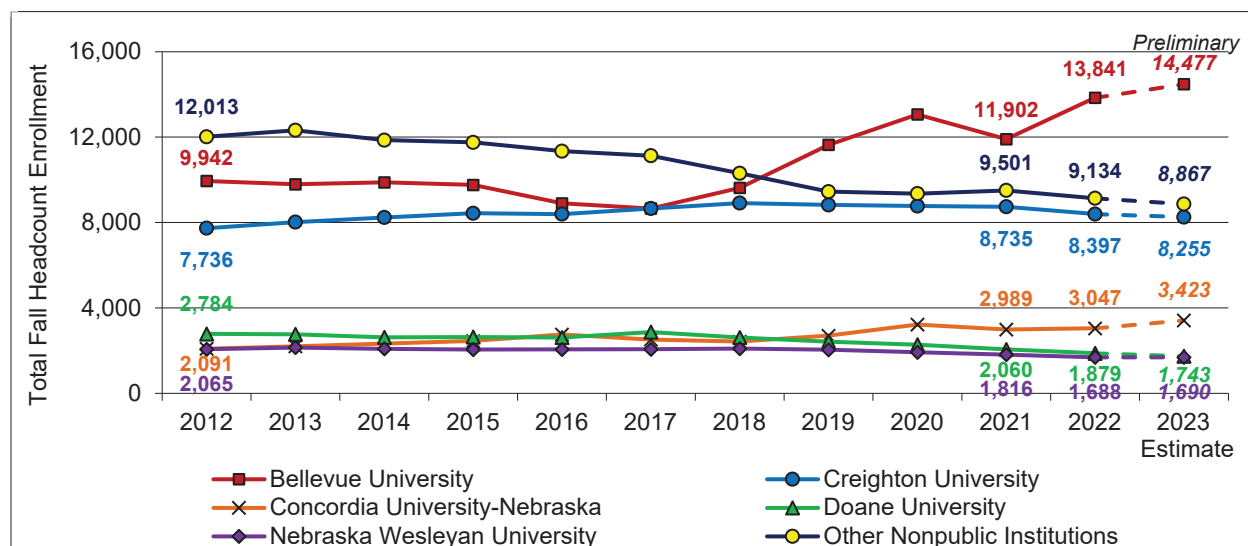
Nebraska Nonpublic Colleges and Universities: Fall Enrollment

- From fall 2012 to fall 2023, total fall enrollment increased an estimated 5.0% at Nebraska’s nonpublic colleges and universities.
- The following five nonpublic institutions are estimated to have enrolled the highest number of students within the nonpublic sector in fall 2023: Bellevue University, Creighton University, Concordia University-Nebraska, Doane University, and Nebraska Wesleyan University.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2012 and fall 2023, at Nebraska’s nonpublic institutions. (See [Table A1.2](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for more information on fall enrollments at Nebraska’s nonpublic institutions.)

Institution	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
Bellevue University	16.3%	4.6%	39.2%	45.6%
Creighton University	-3.9%	-1.7%	8.5%	6.7%
Concordia University-Nebraska	1.9%	12.3%	45.7%	63.7%
Doane University	-8.8%	-7.2%	-32.5%	-37.4%
Nebraska Wesleyan University	-7.0%	0.1%	-18.3%	-18.2%
Other Nonpublic Institutions	-3.9%	-2.9%	-24.0%	-26.2%

Figure 1.6

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Nonpublic Colleges and Universities
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023



Note. See [Table A1.2](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

Nebraska Fall Headcount Enrollment Summary by Sector

- As shown in [Table 1.1](#), the net effect of the changes in enrollment that occurred between fall 2012 and fall 2023 is that enrollments at the community colleges accounted for a lower percentage of Nebraska’s total postsecondary enrollment in fall 2023 than they did in fall 2012 while enrollments at the nonpublic institutions accounted for a higher percentage total fall enrollment.

Table 1.1 Nebraska Total Fall Headcount Enrollment by Sector 2012 and 2023				
Enrollment Sector	Fall 2012		<i>Estimated Fall 2023</i>	
	Enrollment	% of Enrollment	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>% of Enrollment</i>
University of Nebraska	50,178	35.7%	<i>48,739</i>	<i>35.4%</i>
Nebraska State College System	8,939	6.4%	<i>8,838</i>	<i>6.4%</i>
Nebraska Community Colleges	44,899	31.9%	<i>41,599</i>	<i>30.2%</i>
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	36,631	26.0%	<i>38,455</i>	<i>27.9%</i>
Total Nebraska Postsecondary Headcount Enrollment	140,647	100.0%	<i>137,631</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Data sources: For 2012 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 survey. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.				

12-Month Unduplicated Headcounts at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions Compared to Fall Headcount Enrollment

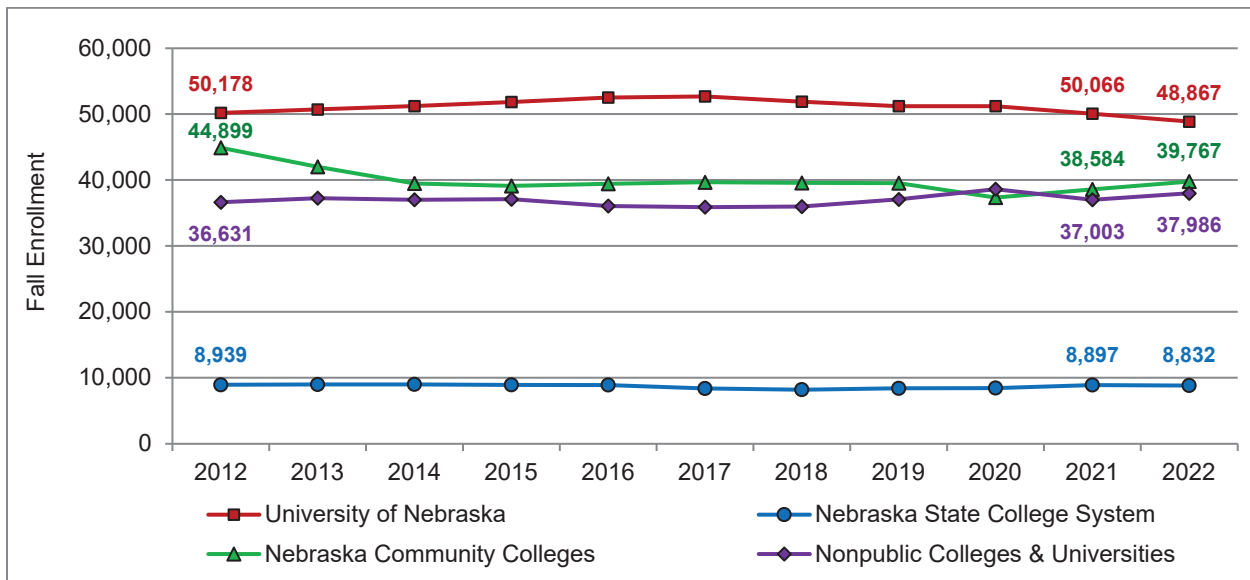
Fall headcount enrollment is the best available indicator of enrollment trends across all of the sectors of postsecondary education in Nebraska because it is reported by and can be analyzed by race/ethnicity, gender, enrollment status (part-time/full-time), level of study (undergraduate/ graduate), and distance enrollment status. However, fall enrollment totals provide only a snapshot of the number of students at an institution on a specific date during the fall of the academic year. As a result, fall enrollment totals do not include students who enrolled later in the fall or who were enrolled in college only during the spring or summer of the academic year.

Nebraska's postsecondary institutions also report 12-month unduplicated headcounts to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Also referred to as 12-month enrollment, a 12-month unduplicated headcount is the total number of students who were enrolled at an institution at any time during the academic year. Each student is counted only once per academic year. For example, if a student was enrolled in the fall and spring semester at Wayne State College, that student would be counted only once for the entire academic year. The advantage of this count is that it captures students who were enrolled any time during the year. In this way, 12-month enrollment is designed to capture the total number of students an institution serves throughout the academic year.

For some institutions, fall enrollment is about the same or only slightly lower than the school's 12-month unduplicated headcount. However, for other institutions, fall enrollment is considerably lower than the total number of students the school serves over the course of an academic year. This is particularly true for Nebraska's community colleges, where the percentage of students enrolled in the fall is about 53.1% to 70.4% of the students served over the course of an academic year. The following analysis compares fall and 12-month unduplicated headcounts for Nebraska's five sectors of higher education.

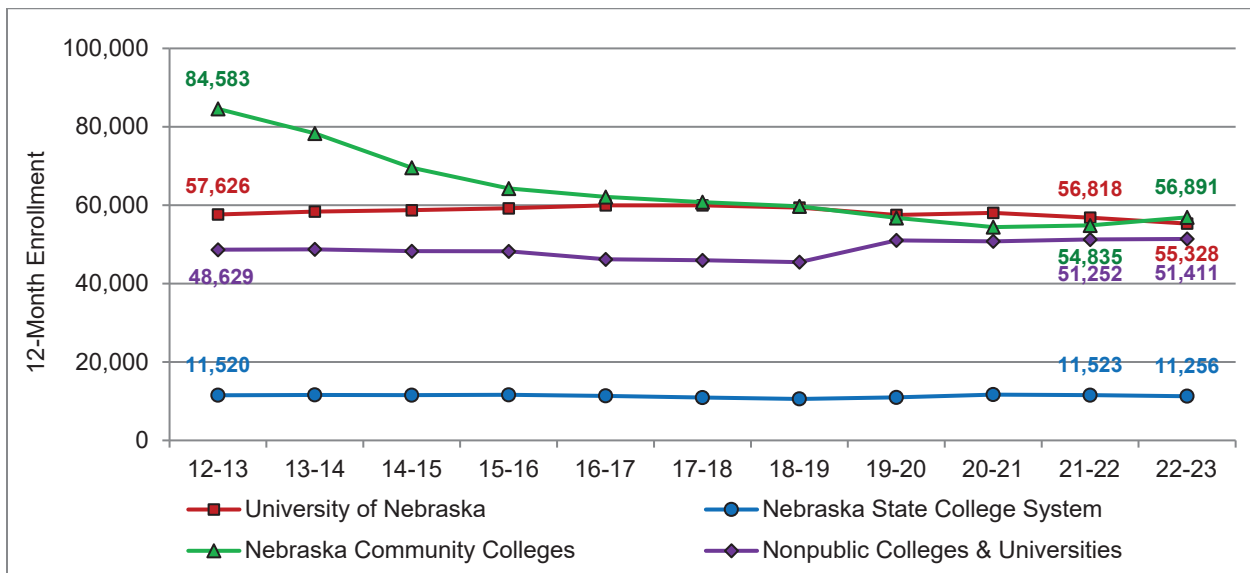
- Figure 1.8 shows total fall enrollment by sector from fall 2012 through fall 2022, the latest period for which official data are available from the NCES. Figure 1.9 shows the comparable 12-month enrollments reported to the NCES for the 2012-2013 academic year through the 2022-2023 academic year.
- The fall and 12-month enrollments shown in Figure 1.8 and Figure 1.9 are both valid measures for determining whether sector enrollments are generally increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same. However, the two headcounts provide different information about sector enrollments.
- Based on the fall enrollments charted in Figure 1.8, the University of Nebraska enrolls a higher number of students than Nebraska's six community colleges. In fall 2022, for example, the University of Nebraska enrolled 48,867 students compared to enrollment of 39,767 students at the community colleges.
- The 12-month enrollments summarized in Figure 1.9 show that while Nebraska's community colleges enrolled more students in 2022-2023 than the University of Nebraska. In 2022-2023, the University of Nebraska served 55,328 students over the course of the academic year, the community colleges served 56,891 students.

Figure 1.8
Fall Headcount Enrollment
at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector
Fall 2012 through Fall 2022



Note. See Table A1.1 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys.

Figure 1.9
12-Month Unduplicated Headcount
at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector
2012-2013 Academic Year through 2022-2023 Academic Year

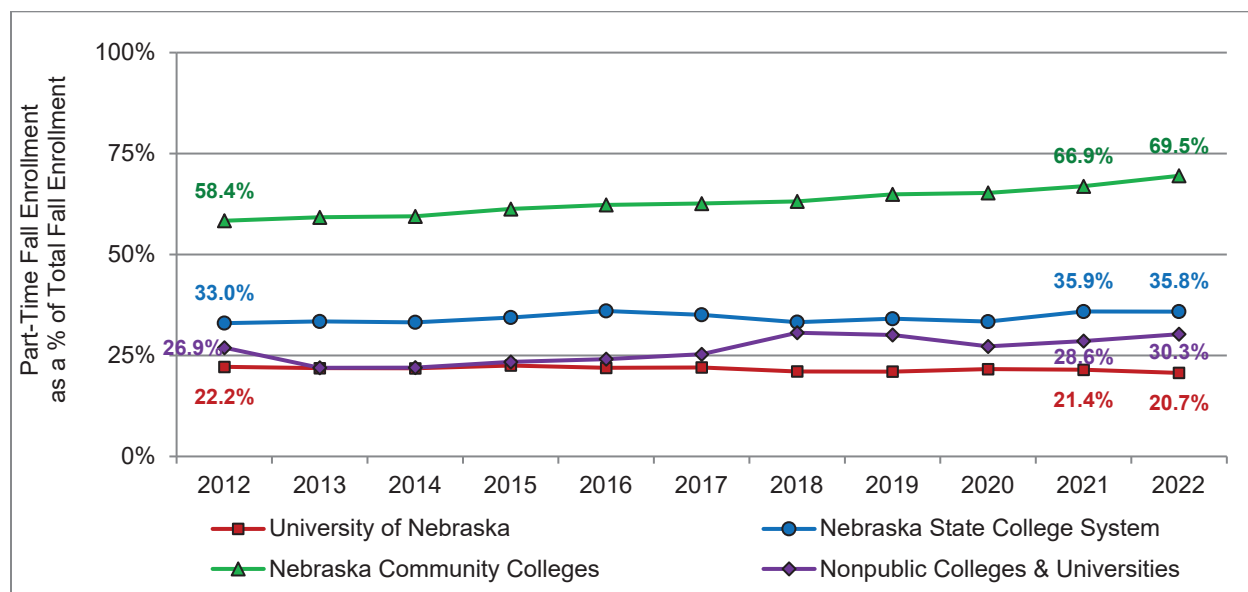


Note. See Table A1.3 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS 2013 through 2023 surveys.

- The historically higher 12-month headcount of the community colleges reflects the fact that these colleges serve many students who take courses only one semester or quarter of the academic year. Furthermore, the community colleges enroll more part-time students than the University of Nebraska, Nebraska state colleges, and nonpublic colleges and universities. As shown in [Figure 1.10](#), part-time students accounted for 69.5% of total fall enrollment at the community colleges in fall 2022. In comparison, part-time students accounted for 20.7% of the University of Nebraska’s fall 2022 enrollment, 30.3% of the fall enrollment at the nonpublic institutions, and 35.8% at the state colleges.²

Figure 1.10

Part-Time Fall Enrollment as a Percentage of Total Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector Fall 2012 through Fall 2022



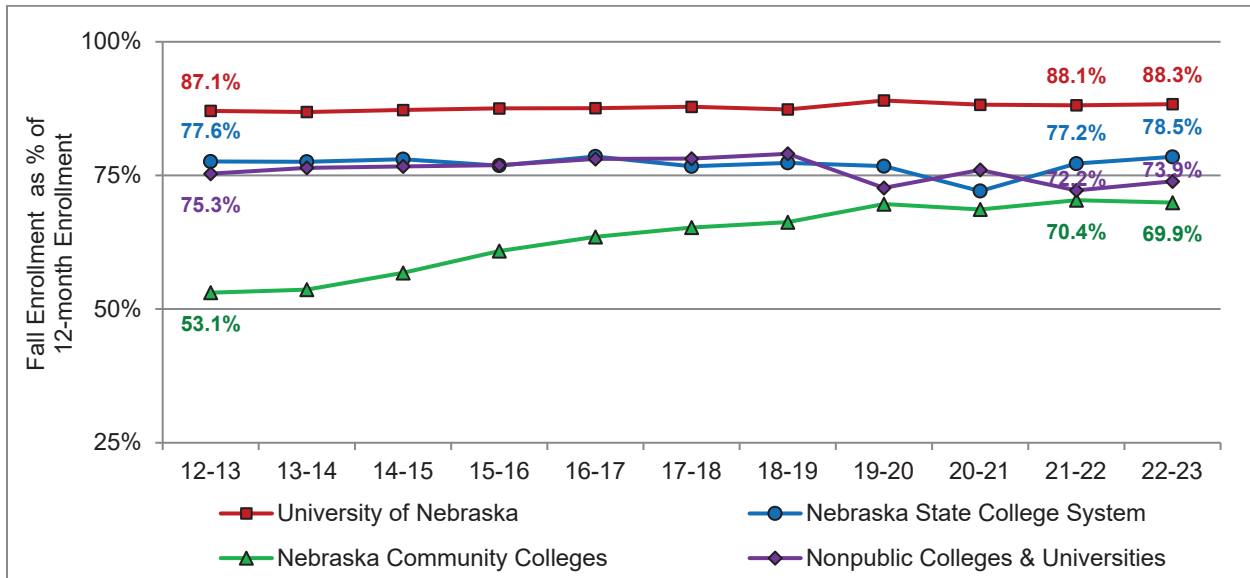
Note. For more information, see the *2023 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska – Enrollment* on the Commission’s website at ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys.

- [Figure 1.11](#) shows fall enrollment as a percentage of 12-month enrollment as a means of directly comparing these two headcounts. As shown in this chart, fall enrollment in 2022 accounted for 88.3% of 12-month enrollment during the 2022-2023 academic year at the University of Nebraska. Meanwhile, fall enrollments accounted for 78.5%, 73.9% and 69.6% of the students served annually by the state colleges, nonpublic institutions, and community colleges, respectively.
- The Commission will continue to use fall unduplicated headcounts as the primary measure of the number of students enrolled at colleges and universities in Nebraska. However, fall headcount enrollments should be interpreted with the understanding that there are many more students who are served by Nebraska’s postsecondary education system over the course of any given academic year, and this is especially true in the case of the state’s community colleges and nonpublic institutions.

² The NCES does not ask institutions to report 12-month unduplicated headcounts by full-time/part-time enrollment status for both undergraduate and graduate students. Consequently, the historical numbers and percentages of students who attend any institution on a part-time basis are available only for fall headcount enrollments. Beginning with academic year 2019-20, the NCES collects 12-month headcounts by full-time/part-time status; however, this data is only collected for undergraduate students.

Figure 1.11

Fall Headcount Enrollment as a Percentage of 12-Month Unduplicated Headcount at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector 2012-2013 Academic Year through 2022-2023 Academic Year



Note. See Table A1.1 and Table A1.3 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS 2012 through 2023 surveys.

First-Time Freshmen Enrollments at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions

First-time freshmen enrollments are indicators of the general direction undergraduate enrollments are headed as well as general measures of the numbers of high school graduates who go on to college in Nebraska. Consequently, this section compares fall 2012 enrollments of first-time freshmen to estimated first-time freshmen enrollment in fall 2023. Enrollments for fall 2023 are preliminary, based on estimates that institutions report directly to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

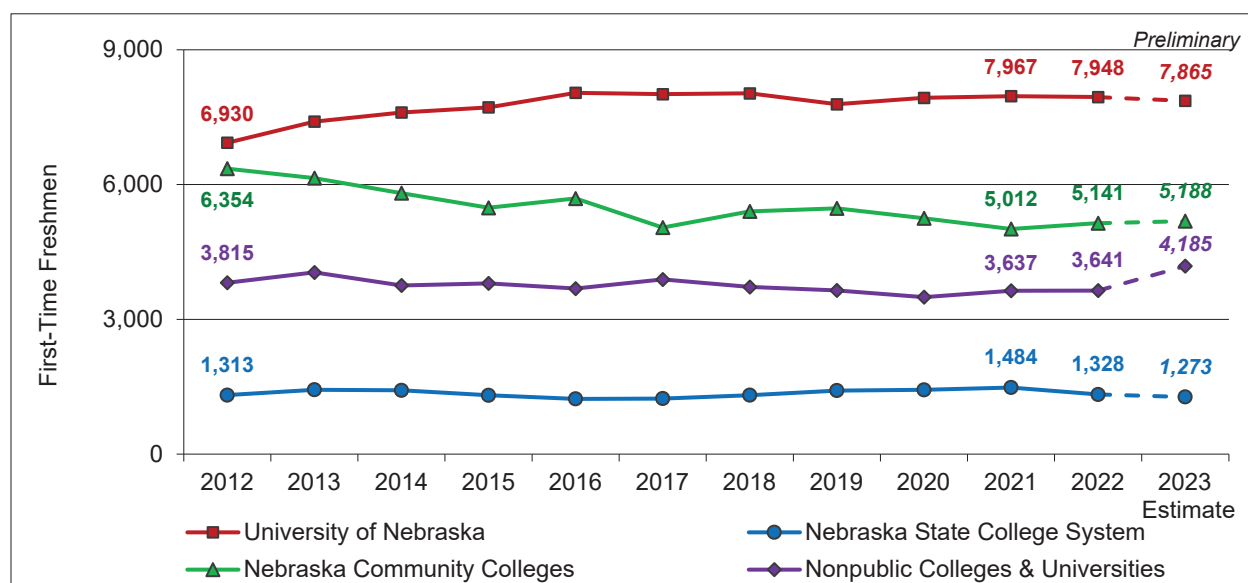
Total Enrollment of First-Time Freshmen by Sector

- As shown in [Figure 1.12](#), the University of Nebraska has enrolled more first-time freshmen than any other sector since fall 2012.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in first-time freshmen enrollments, as well as the total changes in first-time freshmen enrollments, between fall 2012 and fall 2023:

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	-0.2%	-1.0%	14.7%	13.5%
Nebraska State College System	-10.5%	-4.1%	1.1%	-3.0%
Nebraska Community Colleges	2.6%	0.9%	-19.1%	-18.4%
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	0.1%	14.9%	-4.6%	9.7%
Total Nebraska	-0.2%	2.5%	-1.9%	0.5%

Figure 1.12

Total First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Sector Fall 2012 through Fall 2023

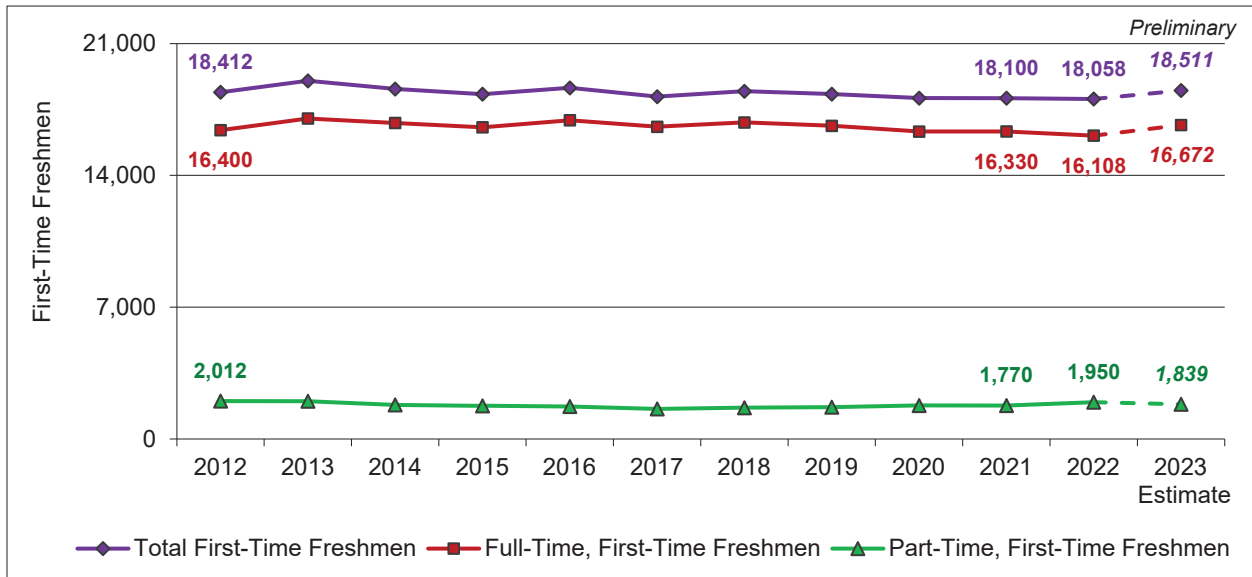


Note. See [Part C of Table A1.4 in Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

Total Enrollment of Full- and Part-Time, First-Time Freshmen

- As shown in [Figure 1.13](#), total enrollment of first-time freshmen at Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions increased an estimated 0.5% between fall 2012 and fall 2023.
- Full-time first-time freshmen accounted for an estimated 90.1% of the first-time freshmen attending postsecondary institutions in Nebraska in fall 2023, up from 89.1% in fall 2012.
- Full-time first-time freshmen enrollment increased an estimated 1.7% over the 11-year period between fall 2012 and fall 2023. Meanwhile, part-time first-time freshmen enrollment decreased an estimated 8.6% over the 11-year period.
- Analyzing the actual changes in fall enrollment between 2012 and 2022 reveals that Nebraska’s total first-time freshmen enrollment decreased 1.9%. Full-time first-time freshmen enrollment decreased 1.8% while part-time first-time freshmen enrollment decreased 3.1%.

Figure 1.13
Total First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Full- and Part-Time Student Status
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023



Note. See [Table A1.4](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

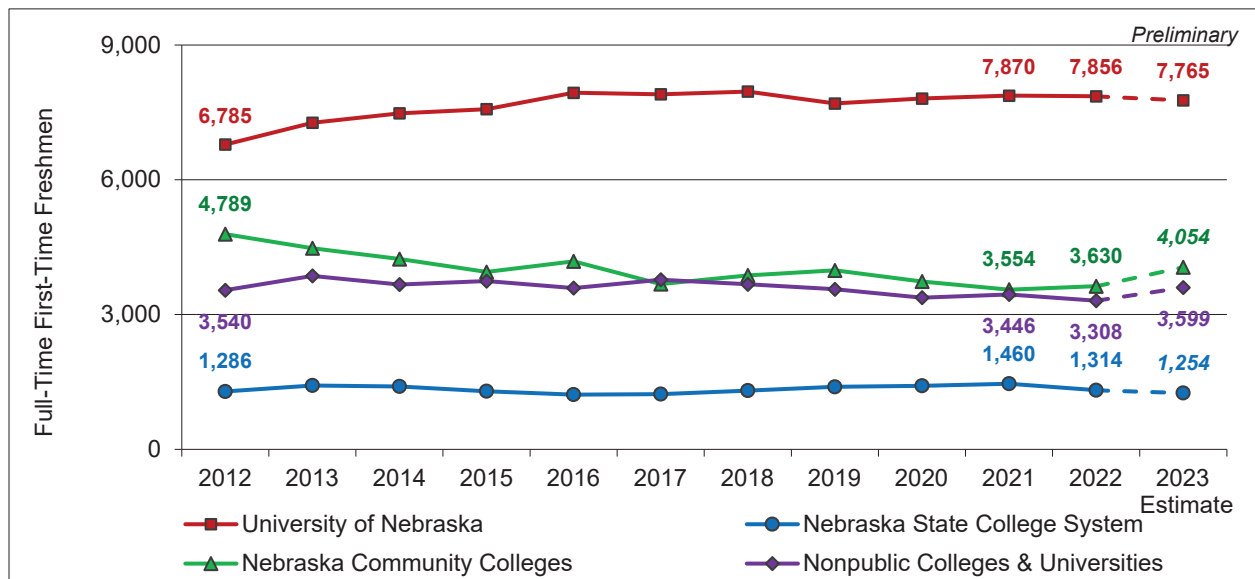
Enrollment of Full- and Part-Time, First-Time Freshmen by Sector

- From fall 2012 to fall 2023, full-time first-time freshmen enrollment increased an estimated 1.7%. As illustrated in [Figure 1.14](#), full-time first-time freshmen enrollments varied by sector.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in full-time first-time freshmen enrollments, as well as the total changes in full-time first-time freshmen enrollments, between fall 2012 and fall 2023:

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	-0.2%	-1.2%	15.8%	14.4%
Nebraska State College System	-10.0%	-4.6%	2.2%	-2.5%
Nebraska Community Colleges	2.1%	11.7%	-24.2%	-15.3%
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	-4.0%	8.8%	-6.6%	1.7%
Total Nebraska Full-Time First-Time	-1.4%	3.5%	-1.8%	1.7%

Figure 1.14

Total Full-Time, First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Sector Fall 2012 through Fall 2023

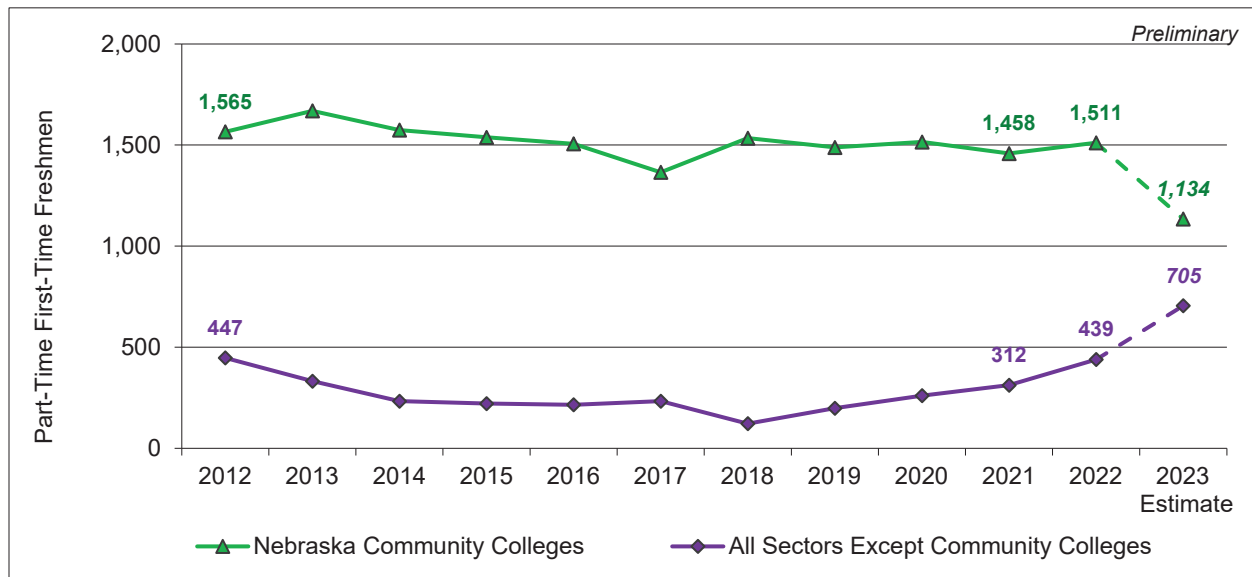


Note. See [Part A of Table A1.4 in Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

- As shown in [Figure 1.15](#), Nebraska’s community colleges account for the majority of first-time freshmen who attend school part-time (77.8% of the state total in fall 2012 and an estimated 61.7% in fall 2023).
- From fall 2012 to fall 2023, part-time first-time freshmen enrollment decreased an estimated 8.6%.

- Enrollment of part-time first-time freshmen at Nebraska’s community colleges decreased an estimated 25.0% from fall 2022 to fall 2023, resulting in an estimated 11-year decrease of 27.5%.
- Between fall 2022 and fall 2023, Metropolitan Community College reported an estimated decrease of 70.1% for part-time first-time freshmen (from 556 to 166). The institution has verified their data and believes the reason for this decrease may be because of their Guided Pathways implementation, with more students opting to enroll full time rather than part time. (Metro’s full-time first-time enrollment increased an estimated 54.4% during this same time, from 561 to 866 students.)
- The number of part-time first-time freshmen enrolled at other types of institutions increased an estimated 60.6% from fall 2022 to fall 2023, resulting in an estimated increase of 57.7% over the 11-year period.
- Between fall 2022 and fall 2023, Nebraska Indian Community College reported an estimated increase of 1,391.7% for part-time first-time freshmen (from 12 to 179). The institution did not provide a reason for this increase.

Figure 1.15
Total Part-Time, First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Sector
Fall 2012 through Fall 2023



Note. See Part B of Table A1.4 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data sources: For 2012 through 2022 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2012 through fall 2022 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2023 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2023.

Strategic Objectives to Increase Postsecondary Enrollment Recommended by the 2003 LR 174 Task Force

Given the first priority **to increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska**, the 2003 LR 174 Task Force recommended a series of strategic objectives to increase college enrollments. For the purposes of establishing baseline statistical indicators and monitoring progress toward achieving these objectives, they are stated as follows:

- 1.1 Increase the proportion of PK-12 students who graduate from high school, enroll in postsecondary education and are adequately prepared to proceed through postsecondary degree completion.**
- 1.2 Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who pursue their postsecondary education in Nebraska.**
- 1.3 Increase the number of non-Nebraska high school graduates who pursue postsecondary education in Nebraska.**
- 1.4 Increase the number and proportion of Nebraska postsecondary students who have been underrepresented in the state's higher education system.**
- 1.5 Increase need-based financial aid in order to improve access to higher education for Nebraskans with limited financial means.**

Following this outline, the remainder of this section focuses on the extent to which each of these measurable objectives is being achieved.