



2020 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report Executive Summary



**Approved by the Coordinating Commission for
Postsecondary Education — March 12, 2020**

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Key Takeaways – 2020 Progress Report

In 2006, the Nebraska Legislature identified education as key to the state's economic future: "Increasing the number of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment is essential to support economic expansion and diversification." (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-1428) In 2020, it remains essential, as an estimated 71 percent of Nebraska jobs currently require at least some postsecondary education. This report provides detailed analysis of Nebraska's progress toward increasing its educational attainment. The *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*, produced by the Coordinating Commission, includes many of these same metrics within its "Measuring Accomplishments" section.

88.4

Nebraska's 2018-2019 public high school graduation rate. (See Figure 1.1.a.4, page 26.) However, ACT reports that only 22% of Nebraska's ACT-tested high school graduates are sufficiently prepared to succeed in all four common areas of entry-level college coursework in algebra, biology, English, and social sciences. (See Figure 1.1.b.3 on page 36.)

70.6

The college continuation rate for the 2017-2018 Nebraska public high school graduating class. (See Figure 1.1.c.5, page 51.)

83.0

The percentage of ACE Scholarship recipients from public high schools who have gone on to college. The comparable college continuation rates were 53.7% for low-income public high school graduates who did not receive ACE and 77.0% for non-low-income public high school graduates. (See Figure 1.5.8, page 86.)

40.5

68.1

The six-year completion rates for Nebraska public two-year institutions (40.5%) and four-year public institutions (68.1%), compared to national rates of 39.2% and 65.7%, respectively. (Fall 2012 cohort.) (See Figure 2.3.1, page 109.)

45.4

For every 10,000 working-age (22 to 64) Nebraskans with a bachelor's degree or higher, there was an average annual net *out*-migration of 45.4 people from 2014 to 2018, meaning that Nebraska continues to lose more residents with a bachelor's degree than it attracts from other states. (See page 121.)

32.9

The percentage of Nebraskans ages 22 to 64 who have a bachelor's degree or higher for the period 2014-2018, according to the American Community Survey. This is up from 30.8% for the period 2009-2013. The percentage of Nebraskans ages 22 to 64 who have some college or an associate's degree is 35.3%, down from 36.5%. (See Figure 3.1, page 119.)

25.7

The percentage difference in college attainment between whites and minorities ages 25 to 44, which ranks third worst in the country. (See page S19.)

Key Recommendations – 2020 Progress Report

Among the Commission's statutory duties are to "Encourage initiatives and collaboration between public institutions, public state and local entities, and private state and local entities to increase the contribution of postsecondary education in advancing Nebraska's economy." Among the initiatives and collaboration that may address the shortcomings identified in the *2020 Progress Report* are the following key recommendations.

At the High School Level:

- Increase the number of students who take dual enrollment courses that grant college credit and make sure opportunities to take such courses are equitable. This will require that districts have the resources and information to partner with postsecondary institutions, that interested high school teachers have the opportunity and incentives to meet faculty qualification standards, and that students are not denied the opportunity to participate as a result of financial resources.
- Increase counseling resources to improve students' awareness of careers, the range of higher education opportunities and their associated career pathways, possible employment outcomes, and financial aid availability to help students 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. If all high school graduates continued to college at the same rate or better than 2018 white non-Hispanic, non-low income graduates, an additional 1,600 students would enroll in college by the spring following high school graduation.
- Support and expand efforts, such as Transfer Nebraska and 2+2 agreements, to improve students' knowledge of how credits will transfer among Nebraska colleges and universities, allowing them to plan their path to a degree in the most efficient manner.
- Identify and reach out to adults with college credit but no certificates or degrees with degree completion initiatives. Identify what additional resources may be necessary to be successful.

At the State Government Level:

- Continue to support and increase funding for the Nebraska Opportunity Grant program so that more eligible students receive aid. Nebraska ranks 35th in the amount of need-based grant dollars per undergraduate FTE. Currently, only about one-third of students eligible for a NOG grant receive one, and the average award is only \$1,410. Nebraska must reduce the gap in college enrollment and graduation rates between low-income and non-low-income high school graduates to meet its workforce needs and attainment goals.
- Continue to support and increase funding for the ACE program so that scholarships are sufficient to allow all academically qualified low-income students to participate in dual credit courses. Low-income students who enroll in dual credit courses and receive ACE funding are over 30 percentage points more likely to attend college after graduating from high school than non-recipients.
- Implement and grow Governor Ricketts' proposed 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 employers through internship opportunities.

Executive Summary

This report provides the Nebraska Legislature with comparative statistics to monitor and evaluate progress toward achieving **three key priorities** for Nebraska's postsecondary education system:

- **Increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska.**
- **Increase the percentage of students who persist and successfully complete a degree.**
- **Reduce, eliminate, and then reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment.**

These priorities were developed by the 2003 LR 174 Higher Education Task Force and are incorporated in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-1428 (3).

This summary highlights the comparative analysis used to measure and evaluate performance with respect to each priority. Throughout this analysis, the latest available statistics are analyzed in the context of 10-year trends. See pages S20-S22 for recommendations based on the findings of this report. The complete report and its appendices, which are online at ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports, provide a detailed and fully documented analysis.

Overall Progress and Challenges Facing the State

- The research findings in the *2020 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* reflect modest annual changes in the state's postsecondary education system.
- Even though progress toward most of the state's higher-education goals is generally in the right direction, it is not aggressive enough to meet the state's long-term needs and goals.
 - Preliminary estimates indicate that Nebraska's total postsecondary enrollment increased a modest 3.2% between fall 2008 and fall 2019. While enrollments increased steadily from fall 2008 to fall 2010, they have since declined 4.7% across the state. However, this decrease is consistent with national trends and has been attributable to the countercyclical nature of enrollment and unemployment.
 - Since 2008-2009, the number of students graduating from Nebraska's high schools has increased 9.9%. The cohort four-year graduation rate has increased from 86.1% in 2010-2011 to 88.4% in 2018-2019. However, many students are taking more than four years to graduate from high school, which delays their entry into college or the workforce.
 - Nebraska's college continuation rate for public high school graduates has increased slightly from 69.0% in 2007-2008 to 70.6% in 2017-2018. However, analysis of this data by race/ethnicity, gender, and student income status reveals large gaps in continuation rates for different groups of students.
 - Nebraska has increased the amount of state funds allocated for need-based financial aid, but state funding has not kept pace with the number of students who are eligible for state grants. The Nebraska Opportunity Grant program has aided thousands of students, but more state-funded, need-based aid is needed to enable more of the state's low-income and moderately low-income students to go to college and earn degrees.
 - Since 2008, the overall freshmen retention rate has increased 2.1 percentage points. Meanwhile, the state's overall college graduation rate for public two-year institutions increased 0.9 percentage point while the state's overall college graduation rate for public four-year institutions has increased 3.0 percentage points.
 - Estimates of net migration—priority three—indicate that out-migration of highly educated working-age Nebraskans has not been reduced or eliminated.

Priority 1

Increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska

Decreasing enrollments are one of the most significant trends evidenced in this report on higher education in Nebraska. Since 2010, Nebraska’s total fall enrollment has decreased an estimated 6.8% to 135,986. Meanwhile, first-time freshmen (FTF) enrollment decreased to 18,726, a 4.7% decline since 2010. The decrease is consistent with national trends over the same period and has been attributable in part to the countercyclical nature of enrollment and unemployment.

It is estimated that fall 2019 statewide enrollment increased 0.3% since 2018, resulting in an 11-year increase of 3.2% since fall 2008.

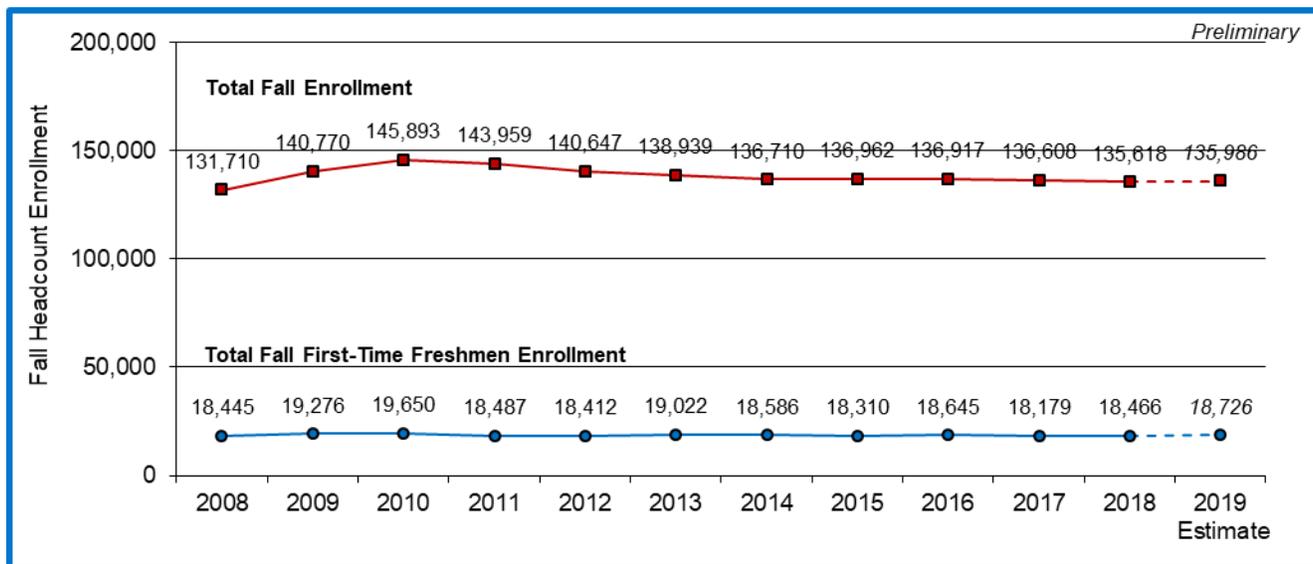
As shown on the next page, between 2008 and 2018, total fall enrollment increased 8.5% at the University of Nebraska and 11.7% at the nonpublic colleges and universities. Meanwhile, fall enrollment declined 4.1% at the state colleges and 8.3% at the community colleges.

Based on preliminary estimates, between 2018 and 2019, fall enrollments increased 2.6% at the state colleges and 2.9% at the nonpublic colleges and universities. During this same time, fall enrollments declined 1.4% at the University of Nebraska and 0.4% at the community colleges.

Total fall enrollments

Nebraska’s total postsecondary headcount enrollment increased steadily from 131,710 in fall 2008 to a high of 145,893 in fall 2010, an increase of 10.8%. However, fall enrollment decreased to 135,618 in fall 2018, for an overall 10-year increase of 3.0%.

**Fall Total Headcount Enrollment and First-Time Freshmen Enrollment
Fall 2008 through Fall 2019**



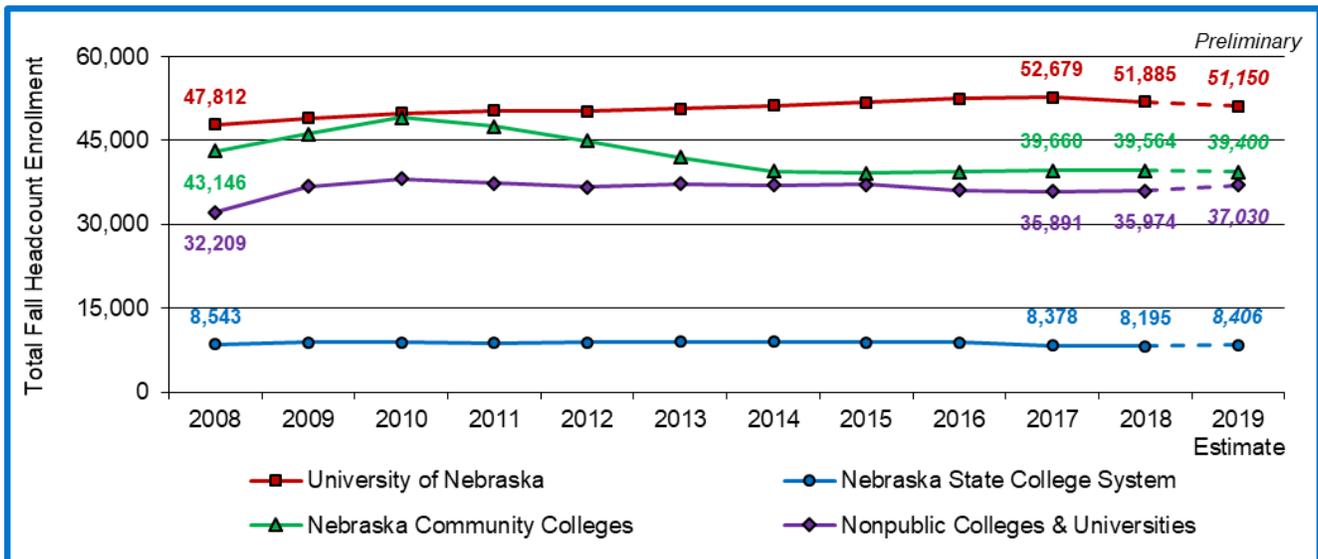
Note. See Figure 1.1 (page 3) and Figure 1.13 (page 15).

Freshmen fall enrollments

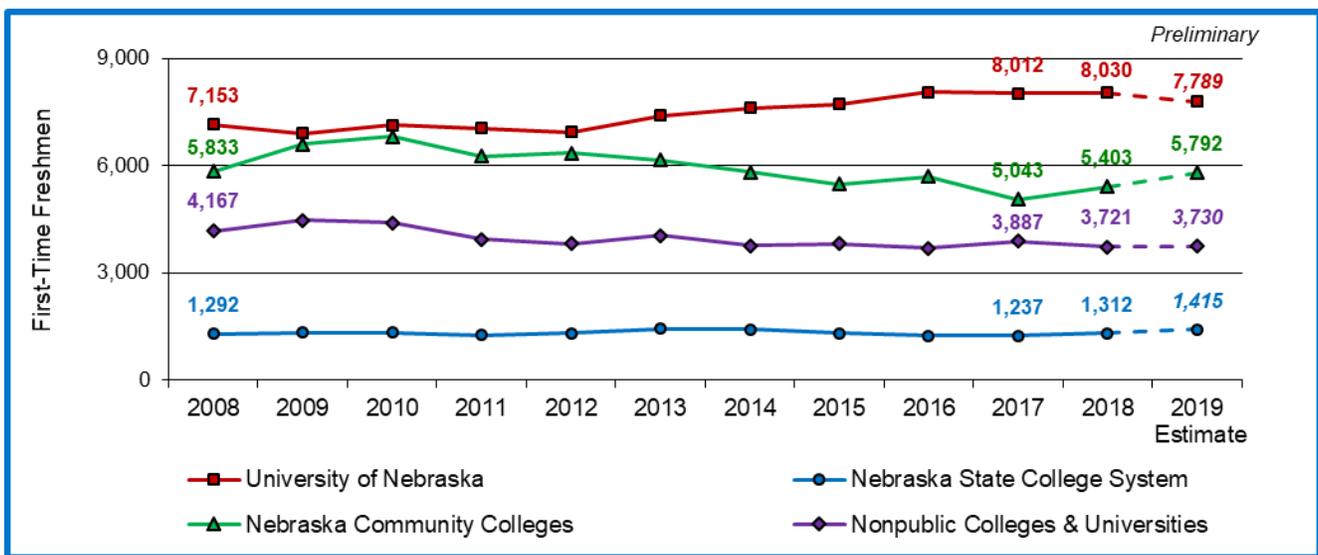
Total enrollment of first-time freshmen (FTF) at the state’s postsecondary institutions increased 0.1%, from 18,445 in fall 2008 to 18,466 in fall 2018. It is estimated that fall 2019 statewide FTF enrollment increased 1.4% over 2018, resulting in an 11-year increase of 1.5% since fall 2008.

Between fall 2008 and fall 2019, FTF enrollment decreased an estimated 0.7% at the community colleges and 10.5% at the non-public institutions. However, FTF enrollment increased 8.9% at the University of Nebraska and 9.5% at the state colleges.

**Fall Total Headcount Enrollment by Sector
Fall 2008 through Fall 2019**



**First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Sector
Fall 2008 through Fall 2019**



Note. See Figure 1.2 (page 4) and Figure 1.12 (page 14).

Strategic objectives to increase postsecondary enrollment

The 2003 LR 174 Task Force recommended the following strategic objectives to increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska:

- 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.
- Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who pursue their postsecondary education in Nebraska.
- Increase the number of non-Nebraska high school graduates who pursue postsecondary education in Nebraska.
- Increase the number and proportion of Nebraska postsecondary students who have been underrepresented in the state’s higher education system.
- Increase need-based financial aid in order to improve access to higher education for Nebraskans with limited financial means.

Nebraska high schools—Nebraska’s primary source of college students

Since 2008-2009, the number of students graduating annually from Nebraska high schools increased 9.9%, from 21,618 to 23,763 in 2018-

2019. Based on the latest projections, Nebraska high schools will graduate about 296 more students in 2028-2029 than in 2018-2019, an increase of 1.2%.

Shifting high school demographics

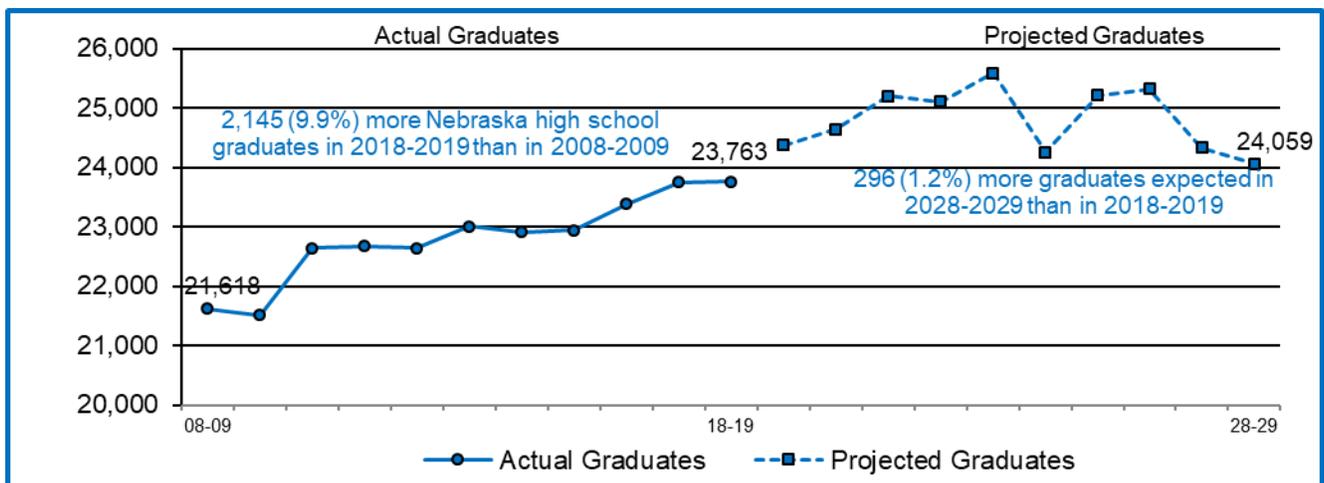
As shown on the next page, the demographic profile of Nebraska’s public high school graduates has changed considerably over the last decade and is forecast to continue to change over the next decade.

Since 2008-2009, the percentage of students who are white non-Hispanic has declined while the percentages of students who are minorities has increased. The overwhelming shift has been the increase in the number of Hispanic graduates.

Furthermore, Hispanic students are projected to account for 19.1% of Nebraska’s public high school graduates by 2028-2029, compared to 17.1% in 2018-2019. Asian/Pacific Islanders are also projected to account for a larger percentage of Nebraska’s public high school graduates in 2028-2029.

However, black non-Hispanics and Native Americans are projected to account for a smaller percentage of Nebraska’s public high school graduates in 2028-2029.

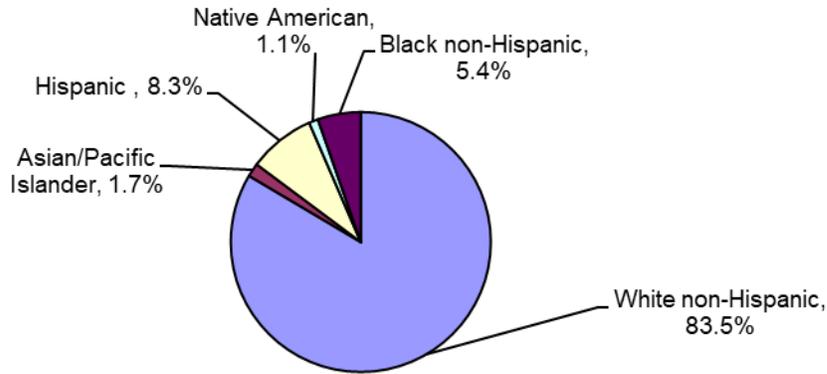
**Actual and Projected Number of Nebraska High School Graduates
2008-2009 through 2028-2029**



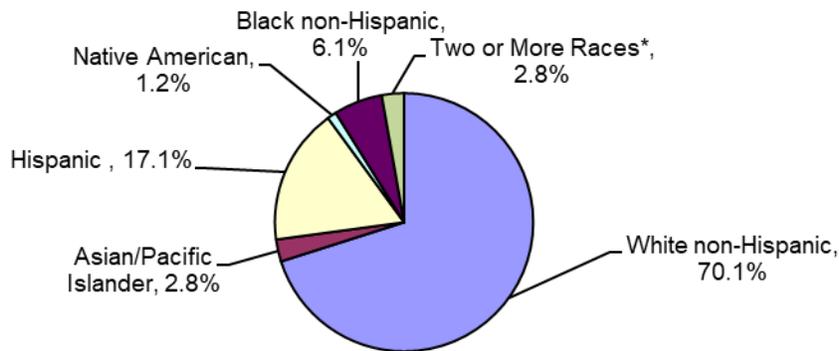
Note. The gap in the above line graph separates actual from projected graduates. See Figure 1.1.a.1 (page 21) and Figure 1.1.a.2 (page 23).

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

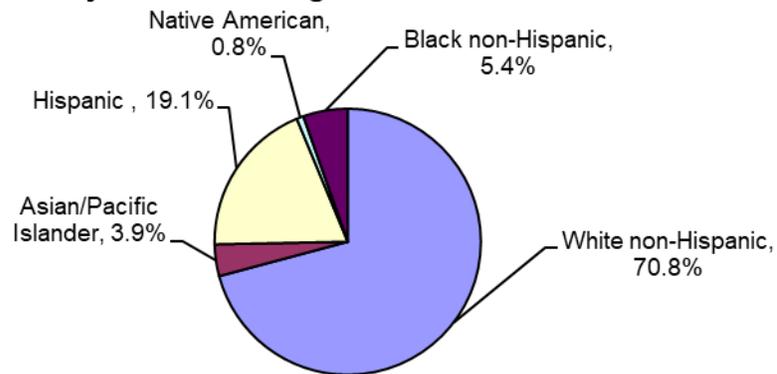
Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2008-2009



Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2018-2019



Projected Percentages of Graduates: 2028-2029



Note. See Figure 1.1.a.3 (page 24).

Public high school graduation rates

Nebraska's overall public high school cohort four-year graduation rate was 88.4% in 2018-2019, up from 86.1% eight years earlier in 2010-2011. In fact, in 2016-2017 (the latest year for which national data is available), Nebraska's cohort four-year graduation rate was ranked ninth highest in the nation. (See Figure 1.1.a.5 on page 27.)

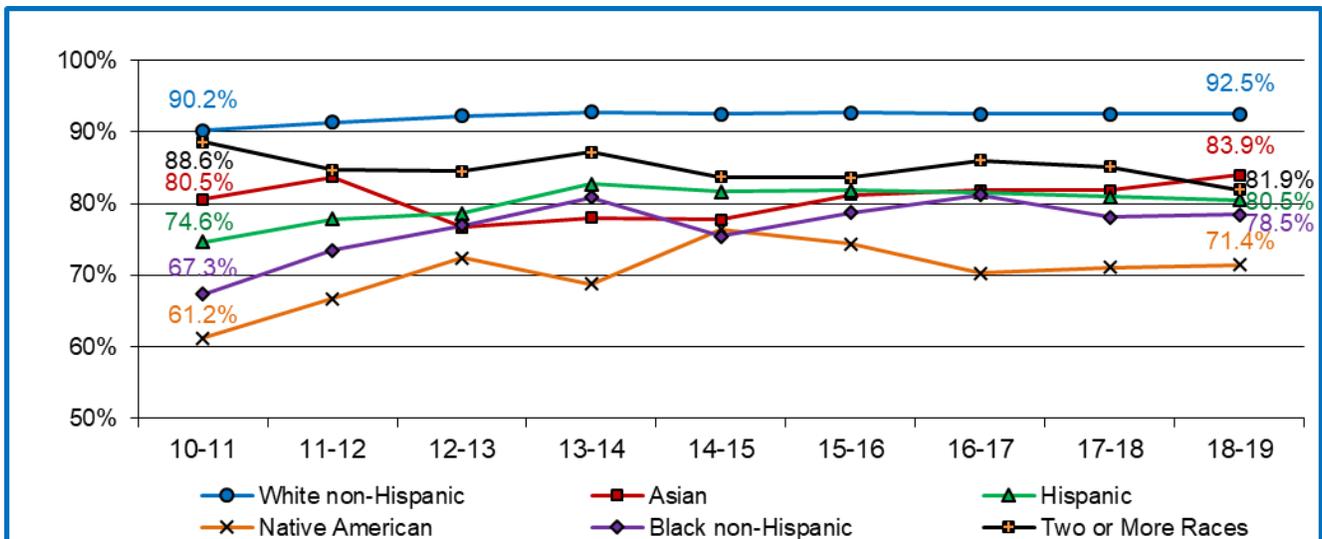
The cohort four-year graduation rates for females were higher than the rates for males from 2010-2011 to 2018-2019. In 2010-2011, the graduation rate for females was 89.0%, compared to 83.4% for males. By 2018-2019, the graduation rate for males increased to 85.3%, compared to 91.8% for their female classmates. (See Figure 1.1.a.6 on page 28.)

As shown below, between 2010-2011 and 2018-2019, cohort four-year graduation rates decreased 6.7 percentage points for multiracial individuals. During this same time, cohort four-year graduation rates increased for all other racial/ethnic groups, ranging from a 2.3 percentage point increase for white non-Hispanics to a 11.2 percentage point increase for black non-Hispanics.

For some students, particularly minorities, it takes longer than four years to graduate from high school. Extending cohort graduation rates out to six years increases the overall public high school graduation rates by about three percentage points and helps to narrow the gaps between graduation rates for various racial/ethnic groups. (See Figure 1.1.a.8 on page 32.)

While Nebraska's overall public high school graduation rate has been increasing, disparities still exist for various groups of students. Consequently, Nebraska needs to continue to strengthen efforts to reduce and eliminate these disparities.

Nebraska Public High School Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity 2010-2011 through 2018-2019



Note. See Figure 1.1.a.7 (page 29).

Preparation for college

Beginning with the graduating class of 2018, all Nebraska students take the ACT test in the cohort minus one year. The precise effects of this change on ACT scores is unknown; however, it is reasonable to postulate that students who normally would not have taken the ACT test unless required would perform lower than students who planned to take the ACT test.

The average ACT composite score for Nebraska high school students was 20.0 in 2019, compared to 22.1 in 2009. Nebraska's 2019 ACT composite score was lower than the 2019 national average of 20.7. (See Figure 1.1.b.1 on page 34.)

Using ACT college readiness standards, data for the class of 2019 suggest that only 22% of Nebraska's ACT-tested high school graduates are sufficiently prepared to succeed in all four common areas of entry-level college coursework: algebra, biology, English, and social science. (See Figure 1.1.b.3 on page 36.)

Furthermore, as shown below, compared to their white non-Hispanic and Asian classmates, even lower percentages of the state's Hispanic, Native American, black non-Hispanic, and multiracial high school graduates are adequately prepared for entry-level college coursework.

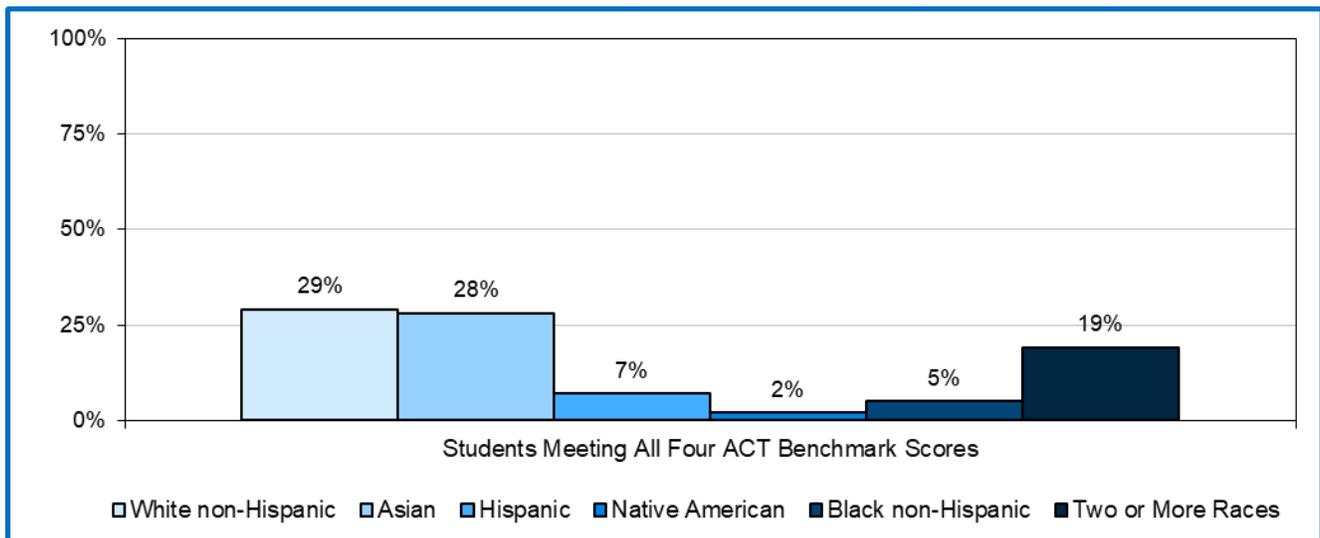
Public high school college continuation rates based on National Student Clearinghouse data

One approach to calculating Nebraska's college-going rate is to annually use data obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). An advantage of this approach is that college-going rates can be calculated every year and compared by student income level, gender, and race/ethnicity. A disadvantage is that interstate comparisons are not possible currently.

Data from the NDE matched with the NSC show that overall, 70.6% of 2017-2018 Nebraska public high school graduates continued onto college within one year of high school graduation. 75.9% of female graduates continued on to college, compared to 65.4% of their male classmates. (See Figure 1.1.c.7 on page 53.)

The charts on the following two pages illustrate, the college continuation rates for low-income graduates of Nebraska's public high schools are significantly lower than the comparable rate for graduates from non-low income households, regardless of gender. However, female public high school graduates have consistently higher college-going rates than their male classmates, and the lowest college-going rates are for male

Percentages of 2019 ACT-Tested Nebraska High School Students Who Met or Exceeded ACT College Readiness Scores by Race/Ethnicity

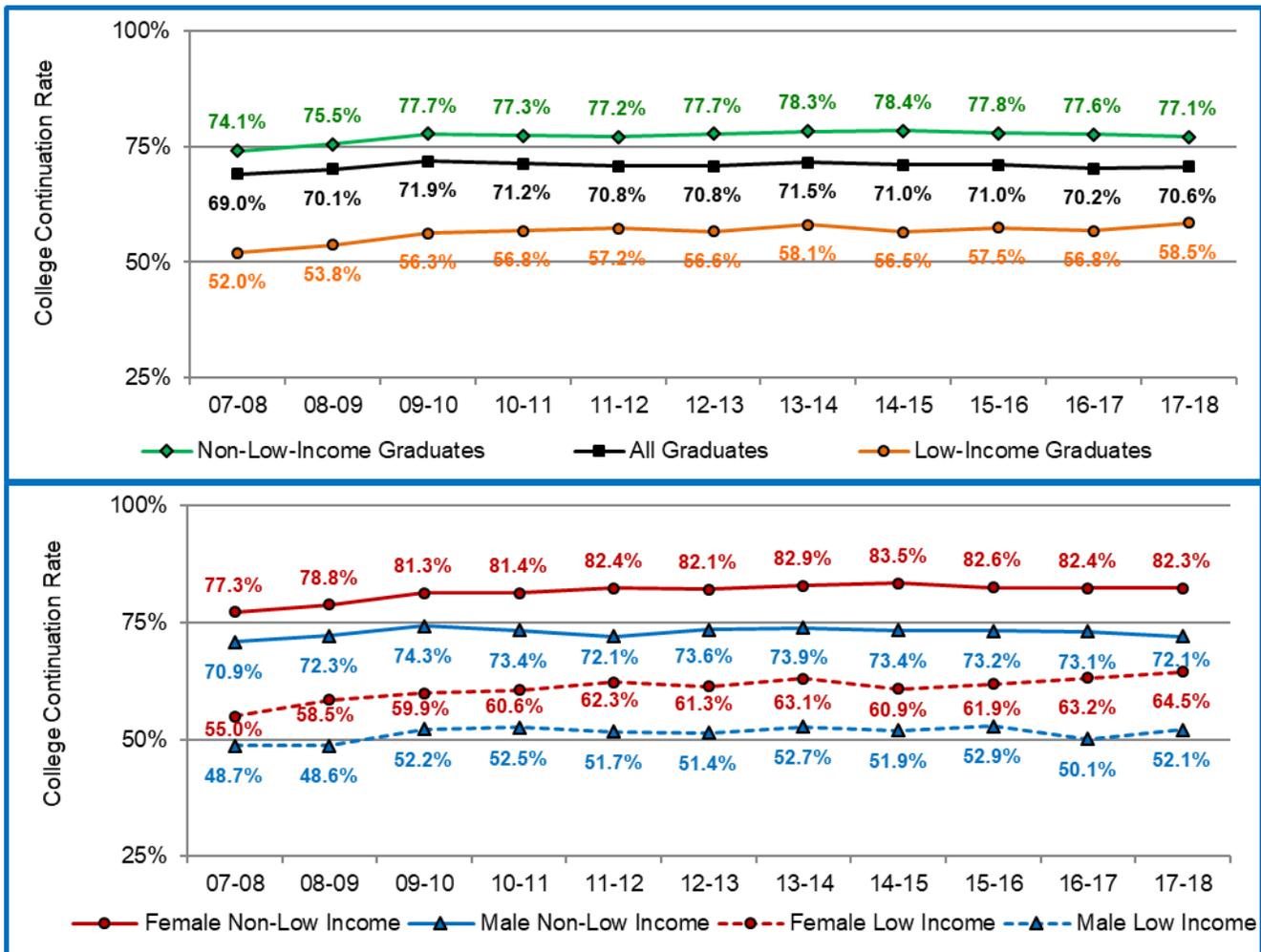


public high school graduates from low-income households.

An important recent addition to this report is the inclusion of college continuation rates by race/ethnicity. Segmenting college continuation rates by race/ethnicity, gender, and student income status results in college continuation rates for 24 subgroups.

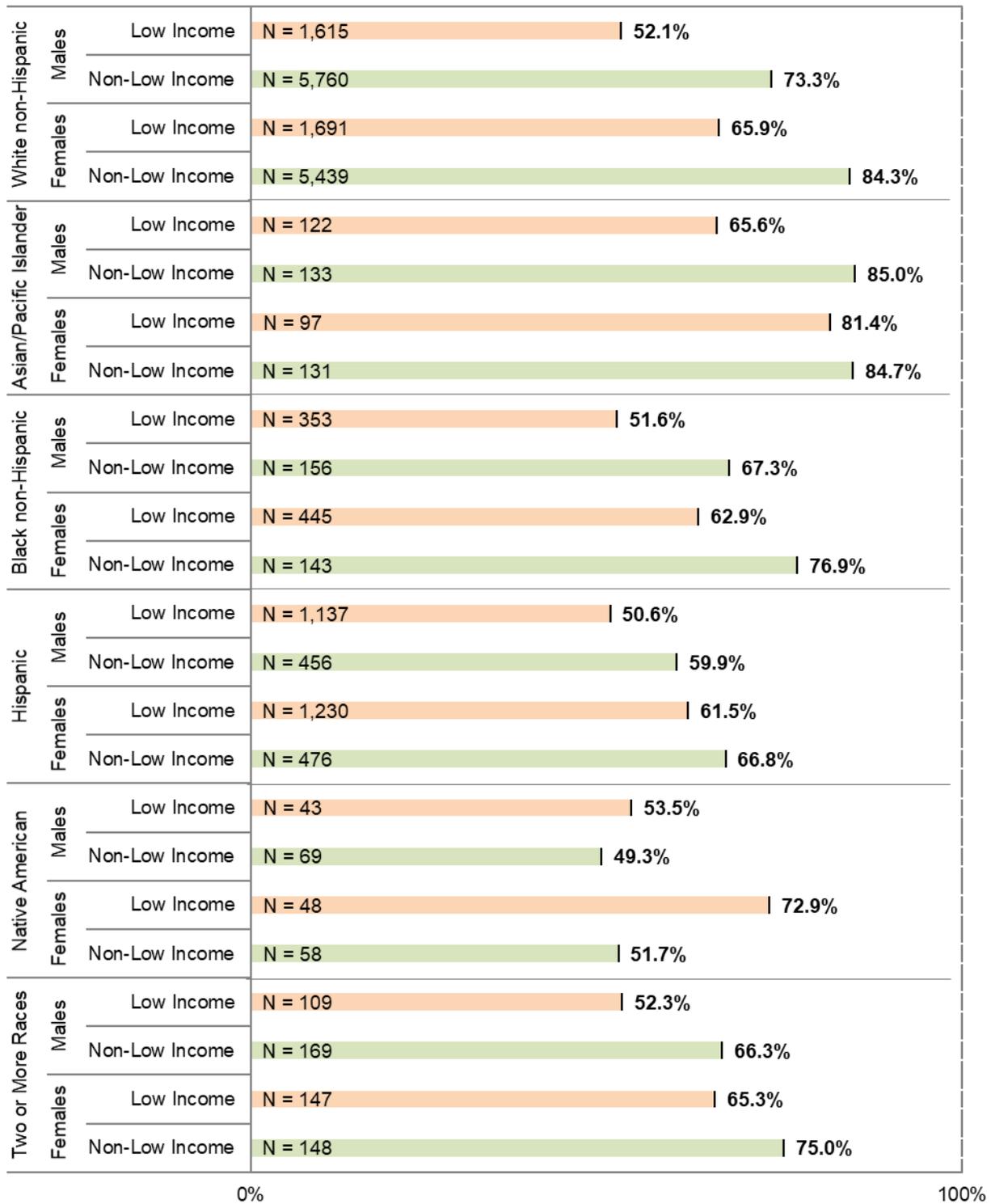
Among graduates in 2017-2018, the highest college continuation rate among these 24 subgroups was for non-low-income, Asian/Pacific Islander, male graduates (85.0%), while the lowest college continuation rate was for non-low-income, Native American, male graduates (49.3%).

College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Graduates Based on NSC Data 2008-2009 through 2017-2018



Note. See Figure 1.1.c.6 (page 52) and Figure 1.1.c.8 (page 54).

**College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Graduates Based on NSC Data
By Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Student Income Status: 2017-2018**



Note. See Figure 1.1.c.9 (page 55).

Net-migration of Nebraska and non-Nebraska first-time freshmen within 12 months of high school graduation

As shown in the table below, more first-time freshmen came to Nebraska to attend college within 12 months of high school graduation than left Nebraska to go to school out of state.

Using IPEDS data collected every other year, the Commission monitors the enrollment and residency of first-time freshmen. This data can be used to calculation the in-migration of non-Nebraska, non-foreign students who enrolled at Nebraska colleges as well as the out-migration of Nebraska residents who enrolled at out-of-state institutions.

Net Migration of First-Time Freshmen Who Attended Postsecondary Institutions Within 12 Months of High School Graduation Fall 2008 through Fall 2018

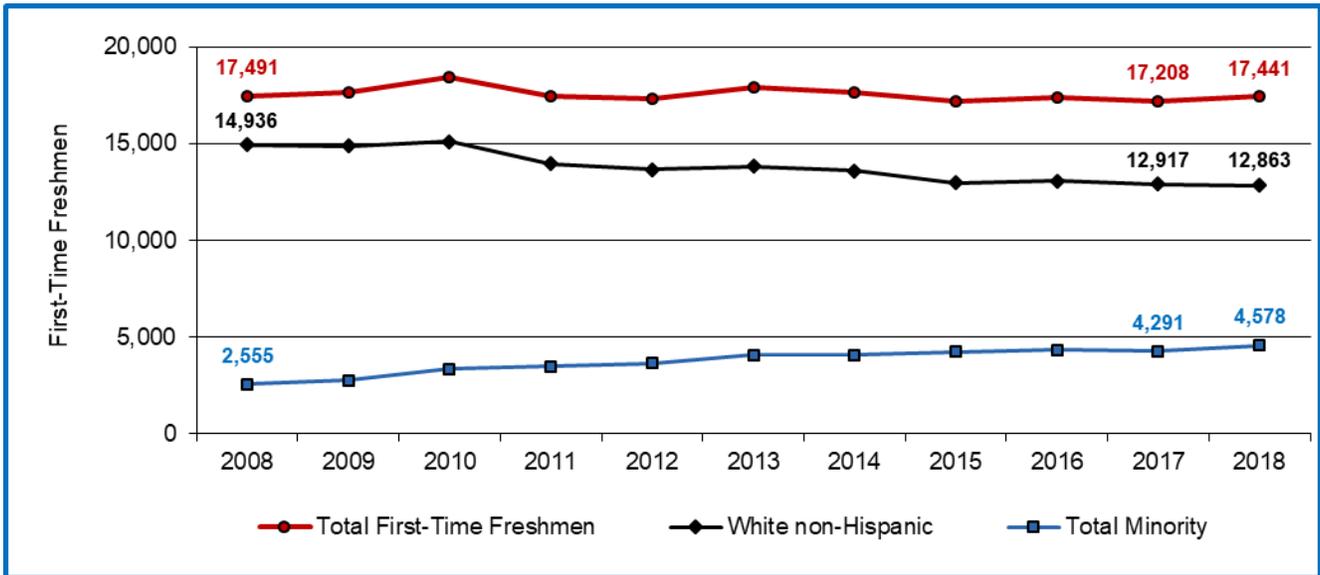
Student Residency and Where They Attended College	Fall 2008	Fall 2010	Fall 2012	Fall 2014	Fall 2016	Fall 2018	Δ Since Fall 2008	
							N	%
<u>In-Migration</u> Non-Nebraska, Non-Foreign Students Enrolled at Nebraska Colleges and Universities	2,883	2,846	2,826	3,294	3,621	3,772	889	30.8%
<u>Out-Migration</u> Resident Nebraska Students Enrolled at Out-of-State Colleges and Universities	2,665	2,421	2,800	2,692	2,725	2,753	88	3.3%
Net Migration	218	425	26	602	896	1,019		
<i>Note.</i> Includes full-time and part-time students. Does not include students with foreign residency, reported unknown states of residence, or students for whom no residence information was reported. Δ = change. See Table 1.3.2 (page 66).								

First-time freshmen enrollments by race/ethnicity

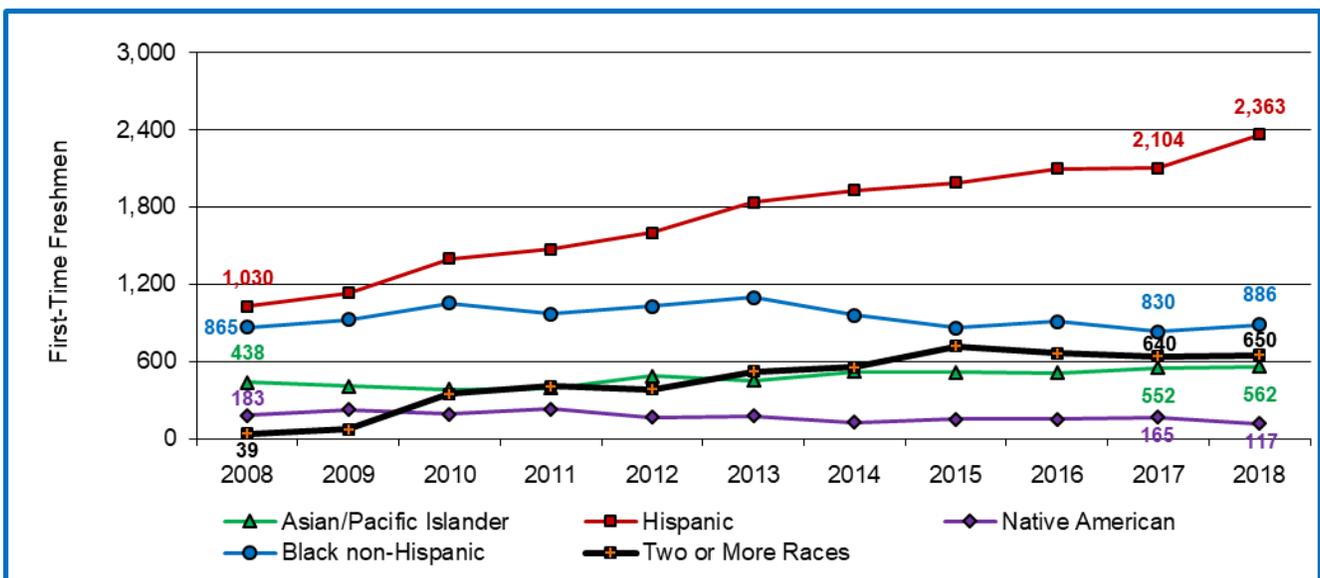
Based on IPEDS data collected annually, first-time freshmen enrollments are becoming more racially/ethnically diverse. In fall 2008, white non-Hispanics accounted for 85.4% of first-time freshmen enrollments while minorities accounted for 14.6%. Of the first-time freshmen enrolled in fall 2018, 73.8% were white non-Hispanics, while 26.2% were minorities.

There were 2,023 more minority students attending Nebraska colleges as first-time freshmen in fall 2018 than in fall 2008, an increase of 79.2%. (Hispanic enrollments accounted for 65.9% of this increase.) In comparison, there were 2,073 fewer white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen in fall 2018 than in fall 2008, a decrease of 13.9%.

**Numbers of White Non-Hispanic and Minority First-Time Freshmen
Fall 2008 through Fall 2018**



**Numbers of Minority Students Enrolled as First-Time Freshmen
Fall 2008 through Fall 2018**



Note. See Figure 1.4.1 and Figure 1.4.2 (page 68).

The importance of state-funded financial aid

Over the last decade, Nebraska has made progress toward the goal of improving access to higher education by increasing the amount of state funds allocated for need-based financial aid. However, additional financial aid is needed to enable more of Nebraska’s low-income and moderately low-income students to go to college, stay enrolled, and complete degrees.

Nebraska currently provides need-based financial aid to college students through the Nebraska Opportunity Grant (NOG) Program.

Including state, lottery, and federal funds, total dollars available for the NOG program increased from \$12,709,925 in 2008-2009 to \$18,004,374 in 2018-2019.

Meanwhile, the number of low-income students served by the NOG program decreased 9.6%, from 14,106 in 2008-2009 to 12,753 in 2018-2019, and the average award increased 57.7%, from \$894 to \$1,410. (See Figure 1.5.2 on page 75.)

The success of the ACE Scholarship Program

The state-funded Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program, which was initiated in 2007-2008, enables eligible low-income

students to take college courses while they are still enrolled in high school.

Using state and federal funds, appropriations for ACE scholarships increased from \$216,754 in 2008-2009 to \$945,600 in 2018-2019. For 2019-2020, \$1,100,000 of state funds is appropriated for ACE scholarships.

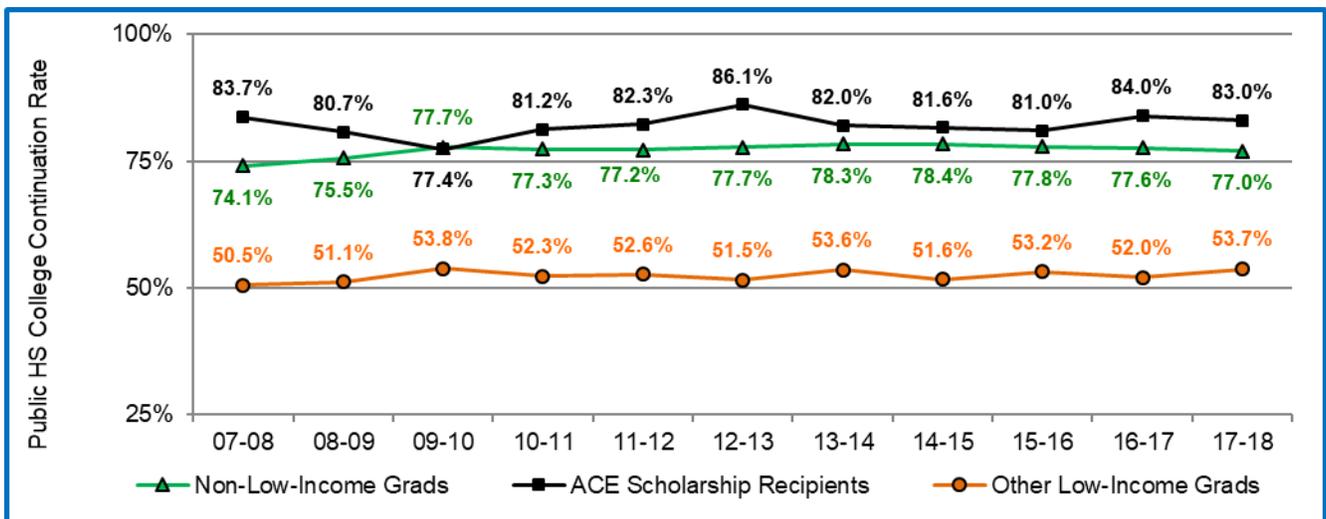
In 2008-2009, 643 Nebraska high school students took 3,050 credit hours of college coursework paid for by their ACE scholarships. With increased funding, 2,309 low-income Nebraska high school students were able to take 13,652 credit hours of college coursework in 2018-2019. (See Figure 1.5.6 on page 83.)

College continuation rates of ACE Scholarship recipients

As illustrated in the chart on the following page, the college continuation rates of ACE scholarship recipients are significantly higher than the college continuation rates of other low-income public high school graduates.

Since inception, the college-going rates of ACE scholarship recipients have been higher than, or about equal to, the college-going rates of non-low-income graduates of the state’s public high schools.

College Continuation Rates for Public High School Seniors who Received ACE Scholarships Compared to the College Continuation Rates of Other Public High School Graduates 2007-2008 through 2017-2018



Note. See Figure 1.5.8 (page 86).

Priority 2

Increase the percentage of students who enroll and successfully complete a degree

Success is measured not only by the number of freshmen who enroll in college, but by those who stay in college beyond their freshmen year and earn degrees or other awards.

Based on IPEDS data that are collected annually, freshmen retention rates and graduation rates are improving slowly in most sectors of higher education in Nebraska, although there are significant racial/ethnic disparities in graduation rates across the sectors of higher education.¹

In cross-state comparisons, analysis of records at the National Student Clearinghouse provides evidence that notable percentages of students who start college at Nebraska's postsecondary institutions transfer to other schools where they persist in their studies and earn degrees or certificates. This study also reveals that students who attend college part time are far less likely to

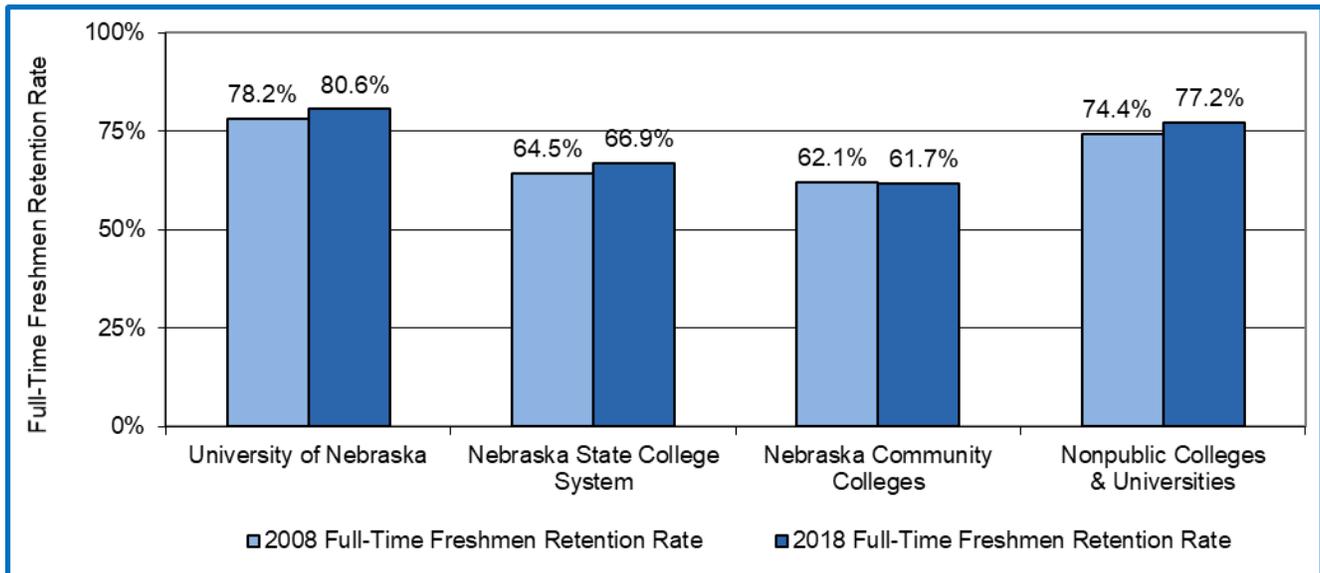
complete degree or certificate programs than students who attend college full time.

Freshmen retention rates

As shown in the chart below, full-time freshmen retention rates for the University of Nebraska, the state colleges, and the nonpublic colleges and universities were higher in fall 2018 than they were in fall 2008. For the community colleges, the full-time retention rate was slightly lower in fall 2018 than in fall 2008.

Retention rates for full-time students in fall 2018 varied between the sectors, ranging from 61.7% at the community colleges to 80.6% at the University of Nebraska.

**Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rates of Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector
Fall 2018 Compared to Fall 2008**



Note. See Figure 2.1.1 (page 89).

¹ The freshmen retention rate is the number of freshmen who are enrolled at the same college one year later. The IPEDS definition of a college graduation rate is the percentage of full-time, first-time freshmen who complete their degree programs at the same college within 150% of the time specified for the programs. For example, the specified time frame for four-year programs is six years, while the time frame for two-year programs is three years.

Full-time and part-time retention rates compared

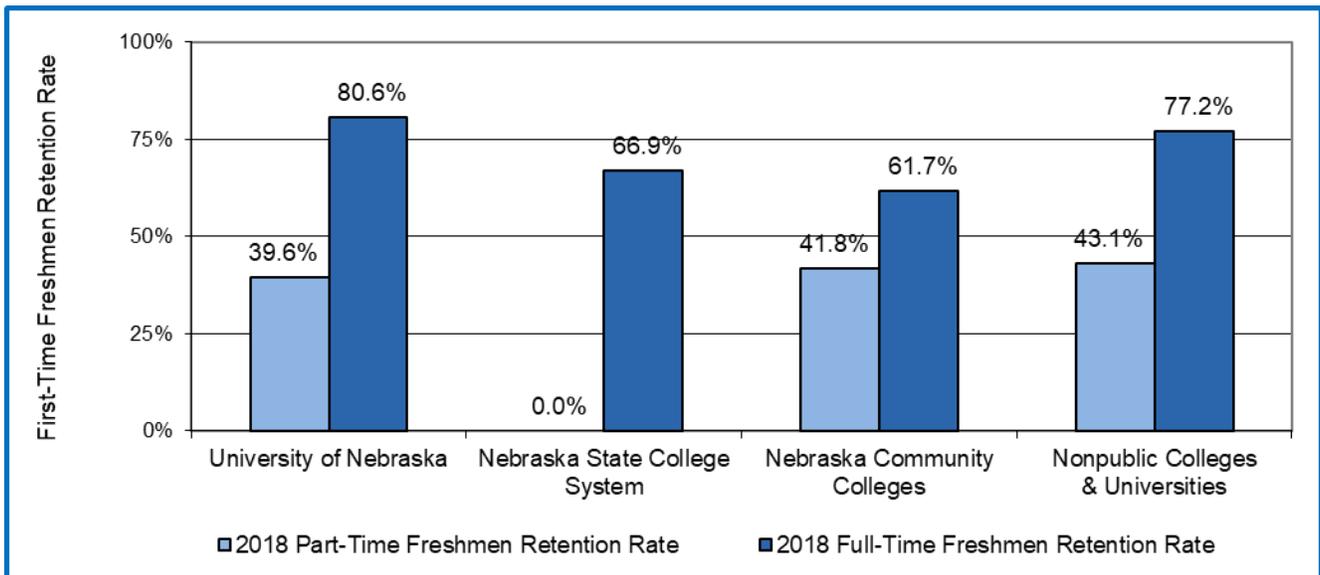
Freshmen retention rates for full-time and part-time students at the state’s postsecondary institutions are compared in the chart below. This comparison clearly indicates that students who start college full time are much more likely than part-time students to continue going to college beyond their freshmen year. Conversely, freshmen who attend college only part time are less likely to continue their studies and, therefore, are less likely to earn degrees.

nationally). For two-year public institutions, Nebraska’s full-time retention rate was 61.5% and its part-time rate was 41.8% (compared to 61.9% and 44.7% nationally). (See Figure 2.1.3, Figure 2.1.4, Figure 2.1.5, and Figure 2.1.6 on pages 92-95.) Some of these differences may result from the propensity of Nebraska students to transfer after their first year compared to students in other states.

Nebraska freshmen retention rates for public institutions compared to those of other states

Nebraska’s retention rates for 2018 were lower than corresponding national rates. For four-year public institutions, Nebraska’s full-time retention rate was 79.0% and its part-time retention rate was 36.4% (compared to 81.2% and 54.8%

Fall 2018 Full-Time and Part-Time Freshmen Retention Rates of Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector



Note. See Figure 2.1.1 (page 89) and Figure 2.1.2 (page 90).

College graduation rates based on IPEDS data

Historically, graduation rates based on IPEDS data have been calculated only for full-time students who graduate within 150% of normal time from the same college where they started as first-time freshmen. Because transfer students are not tracked into subsequent institutions, IPEDS graduation rates underestimate the percentage of first-time full-time freshmen who complete degree, certificate, or diploma programs.²

Based on IPEDS data, the statewide graduation rate for Nebraska’s public four-year institutions increased from 55.7% in 2007-2008 to 58.7% in 2017-2018. Meanwhile, the statewide graduation rate for Nebraska’s public two-year institutions increased from 33.2% in 2007-2008 to 34.1% in 2017-2018. (See Figure 2.2.1 on page 97.)

In 2017-2018, sector graduation rates ranged from 33.6% at Nebraska’s community colleges to 64.0% at the nonpublic institutions. The lower graduation rates at the community colleges are due in part to the number of students who begin their studies at a community college and transfer to another institution. In 2017-2018, Nebraska’s six community colleges had an overall transfer rate of 17.2%. (See Figure 2.2.9 on page 106.)

Racial/ethnic disparities in graduation rates

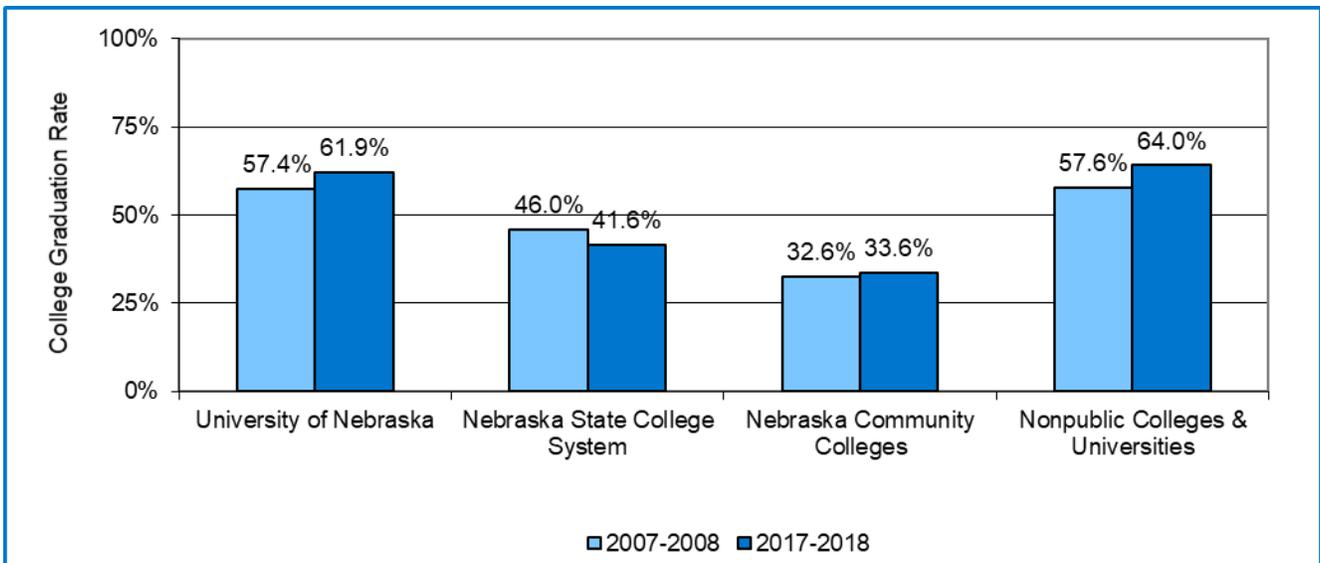
Segmenting college graduation rates by sector and race/ethnicity results in graduation rates for 24 subgroups. As shown in the chart on the next page, these rates vary quite dramatically.

At the University of Nebraska, 2017-2018 graduation rates ranged from 35.4% for black non-Hispanics to 65.1% for white non-Hispanics. Since 2007-2008, rates have increased for all racial/ethnic groups except for Native Americans. (See Figure 2.2.3 on page 100.)

At the state colleges, 2017-2018 graduation rates ranged from 13.3% for black non-Hispanics to 46.6% for white non-Hispanics. Since 2007-2008, rates increased for Native Americans but decreased or remained the same for all other racial/ethnic groups. (See Figure 2.2.4 on page 100.)

At the community colleges, 2017-2018 graduation rates ranged from 14.8% for Native Americans to 37.9% for white non-Hispanics. Since 2007-2008, rates increased for white non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and Native Americans but decreased for Asian/Pacific Islanders and black non-Hispanics. (See Figure 2.2.5 on page 101.)

Graduation Rates within 150% of Normal Time for Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector 2017-2018 Compared to 2007-2008



Note. 150% of expected time is equivalent to six years for a bachelor’s degree and three years for an associate’s degree. See Figure 2.2.2 (page 98).

² The recent addition of the IPEDS Outcome Measures Survey may yield usable data in the future for calculating the graduation rates over time for non-first-time students and part-time students.

Meanwhile, 2017-2018 graduation rates at the nonpublic institutions ranged from 21.6% for Native Americans to 70.3% for Asian/Pacific Islanders. Since 2007-2008, rates increased for all racial/ethnic groups except for Native Americans. (See Figure 2.2.6 on page 101.)

The 2017-2018 graduation rate for Pell Grant recipients at four-year public institutions was 48.4% while the graduation rate for Subsidized Stafford Loan recipients was 56.7%. Students at four-year public institutions who did not receive these grants or loans had an overall graduation rate of 66.1%. (See Table 2.2.2 on page 103.)

College graduation rates by financial aid received

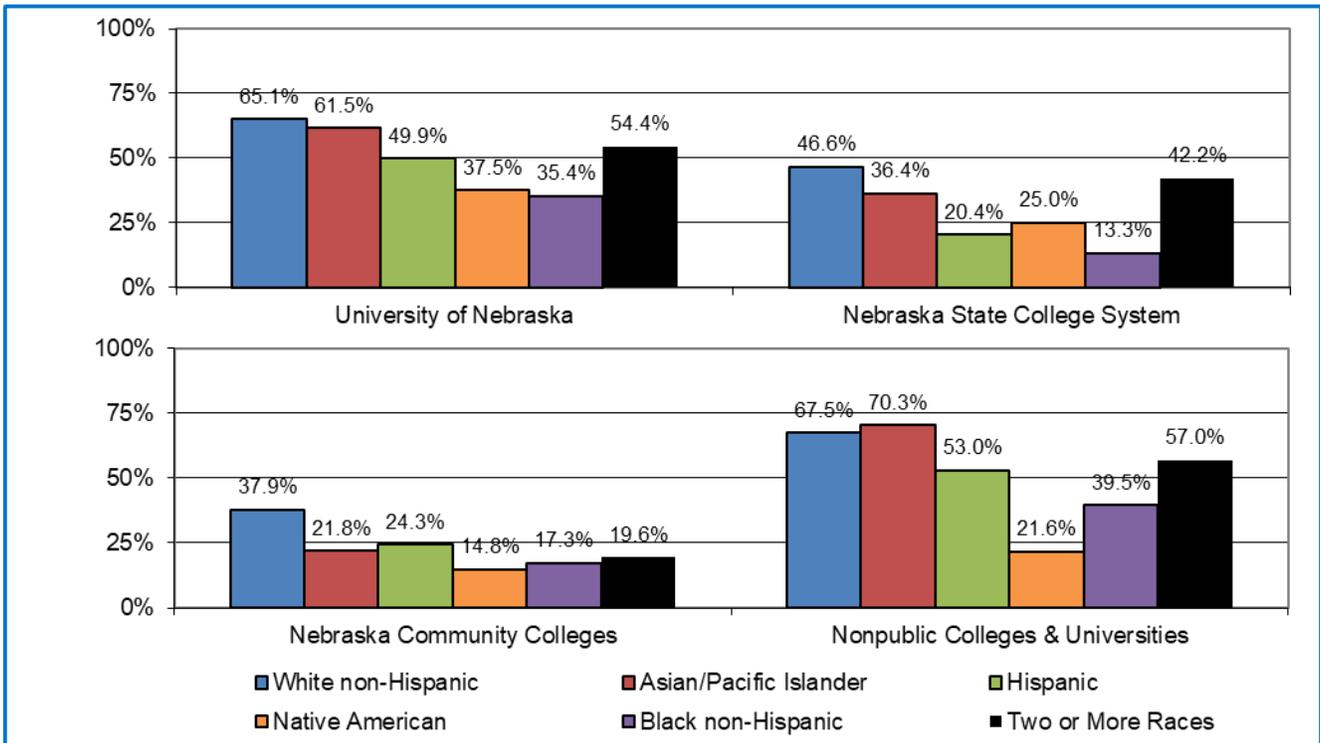
IPEDS college graduation rates are also reported for Pell Grant recipients, Subsidized Stafford Loan recipients that did not receive Pell Grants, and students that did not receive Pell Grants or Subsidized Stafford Loans. Pell Grants and Subsidized Stafford Loans are awarded to students who have demonstrated financial need, and they serve as a proxy for low-income students.

Nebraska graduation rates compared to those of other states

Nebraska’s 2017-2018 graduation rate for four-year public institutions was 58.7%, compared to 57.0% nationally. For two-year public institutions, Nebraska’s graduation rate was 34.1%, compared to 27.0% nationally. (See Figure 2.2.7 and Figure 2.2.8 on pages 104 and 105.)

The 2017-2018 graduation rate for Pell Grant recipients at two-year public institutions was 30.2% while the graduation rate for Subsidized Stafford Loan recipients was 39.3%. Students at two-year public institutions who did not receive these grants or loans had an overall graduation rate of 36.9%. (See Table 2.2.1 on page 102.)

2017-2018 Graduation Rates within 150% of Normal Time by Sector and by Race/Ethnicity



Note. See Figure 2.2.3 through Figure 2.2.6 (pages 100-101).

Graduation and persistence rates based on National Student Clearinghouse data

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center recently conducted a study of six-year student outcomes based on a national cohort of degree-seeking, first-time freshmen who started college in fall 2012, analyzed by state as well as for the United States as a whole.

For the study, students were classified by the state of the institution where they first started college and by type of institution. Based on Clearinghouse enrollment and completion records, comparable six-year completion and persistence rates were calculated for the students who started college at (a) two-year public colleges, (b) four-year public colleges and universities, and (c) four-year private nonprofit institutions. Additionally, completion and persistence rates were calculated by enrollment intensity (full time, part time, mixed enrollment) and by age group.

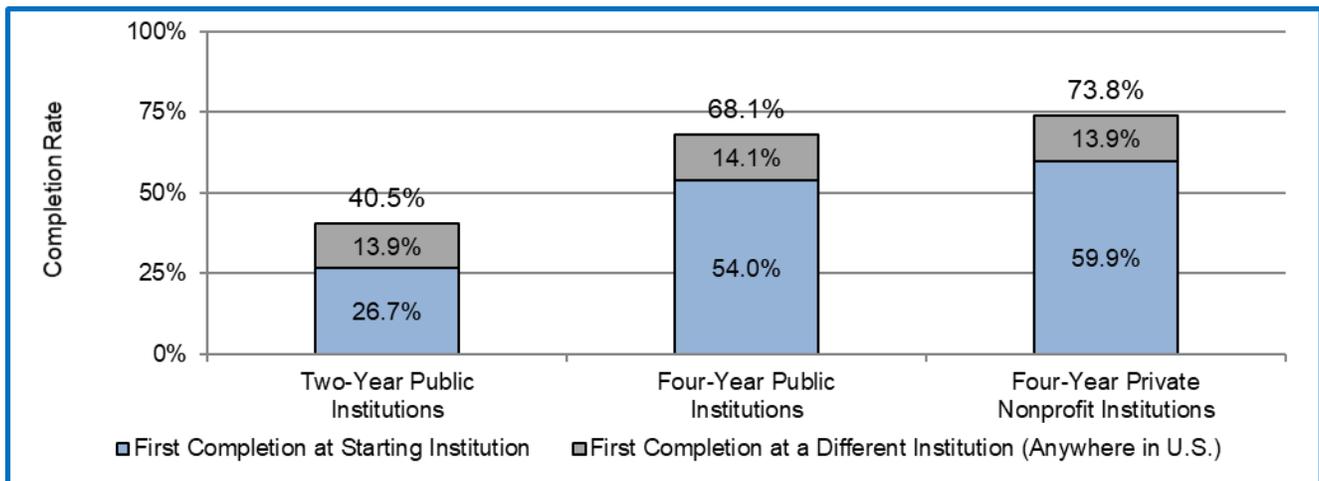
As shown below, completion rates for starting institutions ranged from 26.7% at Nebraska’s two-year public institutions to 59.9% at the state’s

four-year private nonprofit institutions. However, approximately 14% of students actually received their first completion at an institution in the United States *other* than their starting institution, no matter the sector of first enrollment. The total completion rate was 40.5% for students who started at Nebraska’s two-year public institutions, 68.1% for those who started at the state’s four-year public institutions, and 73.8% for students who began their studies at Nebraska’s four-year private nonprofit institutions.

This study also revealed that students who are able to attend college full time—exclusively or at least sometime during the course of their studies—are much more likely to earn degrees or certificates and less likely to drop out of college than students who go to college only part time. (See Figure 2.3.5 on page 112.)

Another finding of interest is that 11.6% of the students who initially enrolled at Nebraska’s two-year public colleges graduated from four-year institutions over the course of the next six years. (See Table A12.2 on page 288.)

Six-Year Total Completion Rates for Nebraska and the United States for Degree-Seeking, First-Time Freshmen (Fall 2012)



Note. See Figure 2.3.1 through Figure 2.3.3 (pages 109-110.)

Priority 3

Reduce, eliminate, and then reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment

Since 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau has collected data annually through the American Community Survey (ACS) to estimate net migration by education level for each state. Because the ACS estimates for Nebraska are based on very small sample sizes, the migration estimates for 22- to 64-year-olds developed from ACS data can vary dramatically from one year to another, not because any significant changes in migration patterns have occurred, but because estimates based on small samples commonly fluctuate as a result of sampling error.

Theoretically, by calculating migration estimates based on the combined data collected through five consecutive ACS surveys, these limitations may be reduced. Therefore, average annual migration estimates are calculated using five-year ACS PUMS files. In addition, to help provide context to the average annual migration estimates, the educational attainment of 22- to 64-year-olds is also discussed.

Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds

Between 2009-2013 and 2014-2018, Nebraska's estimated population of 22- to 64-year-olds increased 1.6%. As shown below by education level, Nebraska's estimated population of 22- to 64-year-olds decreased 1.1 percentage points for high school graduates or below, decreased 1.2 percentage points for those with some college or an associate's degree, and increased 2.1 percentage points for those with a bachelor's degree or higher. The result of these increases

and decreases is that overall, educational attainment in Nebraska is increasing.

Migration Estimates for 22- to 64-Year-Olds

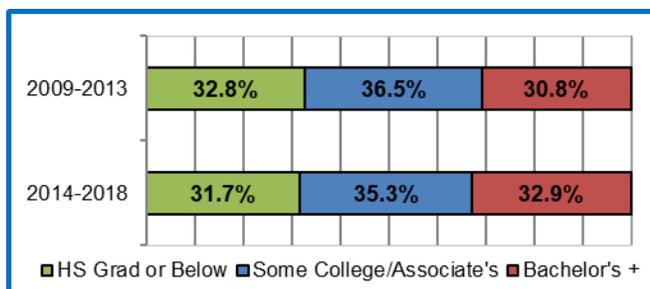
Between 2009-2013, Nebraska had an average annual net out-migration of 2,276 working-age adults with a bachelor's degree or higher. Additionally, between 2014-2018, Nebraska had an average annual net out-migration of 1,548 working-age adults with a bachelor's degree or higher. Combining these estimates, Nebraska had a total net out-migration of 19,120 highly educated, working-age adults over the last decade. (See Figure 3.2 on page 120.)

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

As shown below, for every 10,000 people in Nebraska with a bachelor's degree or higher, there was an average annual net out-migration of 45.4 people for 2014-2018, compared to an average annual net out-migration of 72.6 people for 2009-2013.

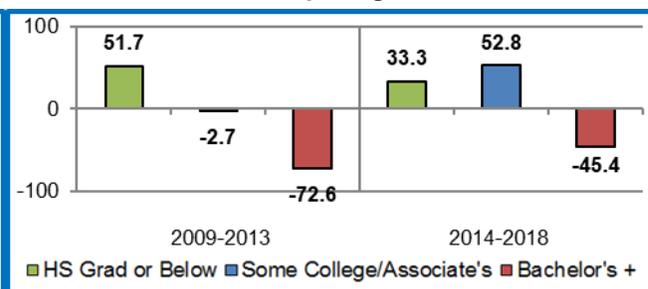
While out-migration of Nebraskans with at least a bachelor's degree continues to be a serious issue that Nebraska must address, it is worth noting that the educational attainment of 22- to 64-year-olds continues to increase, albeit less than it would have if out-migration were curtailed.

Nebraska Educational Attainment of 22- to 64-Year Olds



Note. See Figure 3.1 (page 119).

Nebraska Net Migration by Education Level per 10,000 People Age 22 to 64



Note. See page 121.

2020 Progress Report Conclusion

Achieving State Goals by Addressing the Attainment Gap

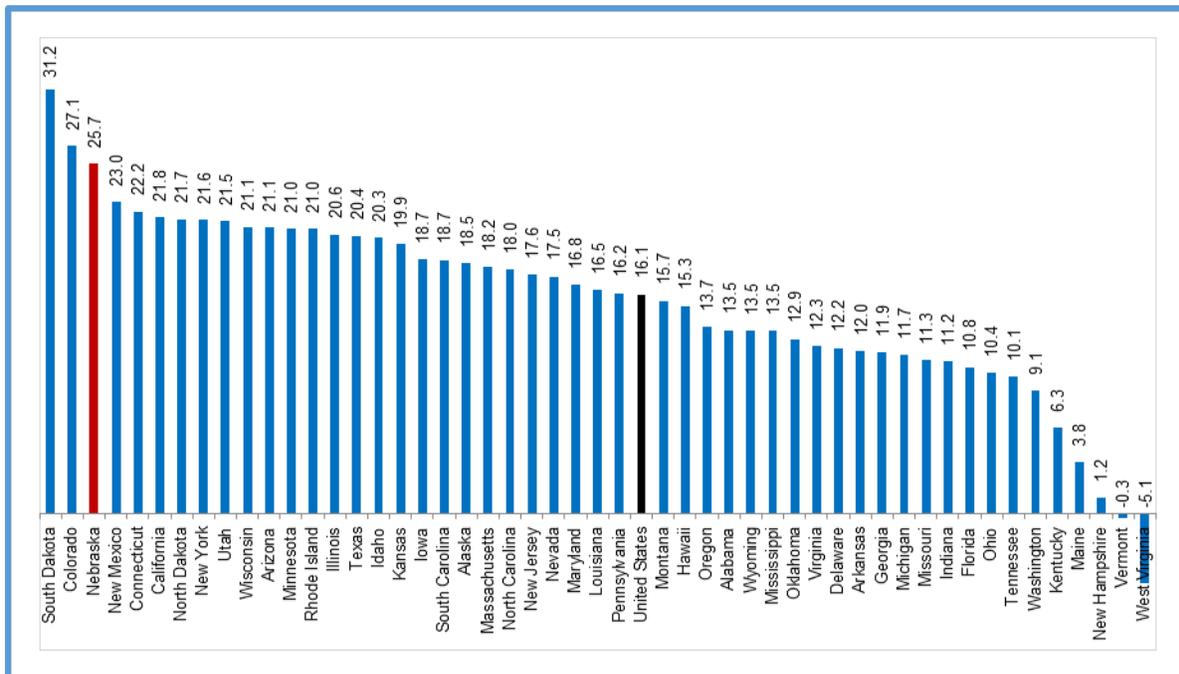
In 2006, the Nebraska Legislature stated that increasing the number of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment is essential to support Nebraska’s economic expansion and diversification. In 2016, the Coordinating Commission added a goal to its *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education* that the state’s adult population would rank among the top 10 states for educational attainment. For 2013-2017, Nebraska ranked 13th in the percentage of adults aged 25 to 64 with an associate’s degree or higher and 19th in the percentage with a bachelor’s degree or higher.

To reach the top 10 states, Nebraska needs 23,000 additional residents with associate’s degrees or higher and nearly 36,000 more residents with bachelor’s degrees or higher among its approximately 950,000 adults aged 25 to 64. Nebraska institutions currently award

about 27,000 associate’s degrees or higher each year and about 23,000 bachelor’s degrees or higher each year, so moving into the top 10 is not a small task. There is, however, some clarity on where to focus resources and efforts.

The *2020 Progress Report* concludes that progress is being made and educational attainment is increasing, but alongside many successes, it also demonstrates systemic leaks and disparities. A consequence of the disparities in high school graduation rates, college continuation rates, and college graduation rates is that Nebraska’s gap in educational attainment between whites and minorities (i.e., not white non-Hispanic) is the third largest in the nation. In Nebraska, 55.6% of 25- to 44-year old, white non-Hispanics have completed an associate’s degree or higher. In comparison, only 29.9% of 25- to 44-year-old minorities have completed an associate’s degree or higher. As shown below, the net difference is an attainment gap of 25.7 percentage points.

**Estimated Difference in College Attainment Between Whites and Minorities
Ages 25 to 44 by State
Based on the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS)**



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey five-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files, 2014-2018. Compiled and prepared by: David Drozd, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska Omaha.

2020 Progress Report Recommendations

Among the Commission's statutory duties are to "Encourage initiatives and collaboration between public institutions, public state and local entities, and private state and local entities to increase the contribution of postsecondary education in advancing Nebraska's economy." The findings evidenced in the *2020 Progress Report* indicate that more work needs to be done in order for Nebraskans to enroll in college and successfully complete degrees. Among the initiatives and collaboration that may address the shortcomings identified in the *2020 Progress Report* are the following recommendations.

At the High School Level:

- Increase the percentage of students who stay in school and earn diplomas. Nebraska's 2016-2017 public high school cohort four-year graduation rate is one of the best in the nation (89.1%), but disparities continue to be seen. Nebraska's 2018-2019 data reveal that while 91.8% of females graduate in four years, only 85.3% of males do. Disparities are even more pronounced between racial/ethnic groups, with only 71.4% (Native American) to 81.9% (two or more races) of minorities earning diplomas in four years.
- Increase the percentage of students who are prepared academically for college. According to ACT, only 22% of Nebraska's ACT-tested high school graduates are sufficiently prepared to succeed in college. School districts and community colleges should continue to support and develop programs like the Nebraska Math Readiness Project, which identifies students who are unlikely to be ready for college math while still in high school and addresses deficiencies during the students' senior year, saving them time, money, and financial aid eligibility when they enroll in college.
- Increase the number of students who take dual and concurrent enrollment courses that grant college credit and make sure opportunities to take such courses are equitable. This will require that districts have the resources and information to partner with postsecondary institutions, that interested high school teachers have the opportunity and incentives to meet faculty qualification standards, and that students are not denied the opportunity to participate as a result of financial resources.
- For males, minorities, and low-income students especially, more effort needs to be exerted to increase:
 - The percentage who are prepared for college academically
 - The number who take dual enrollment courses
 - High school graduation rates
 - Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
 - College-going rates
- Increase opportunities for high school students to connect to career pathways of interest to them that lead to employment and additional education, such as through the continuing development of career academies and internship programs. Consider innovative partnership models, such as the Pathways to Tomorrow consortium in northeastern Nebraska, to address the unique needs of rural school districts.
- Increase counseling resources to improve students' awareness of careers, the range of higher education opportunities and their associated career pathways, possible employment outcomes, and financial aid availability to help students 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. If all high school graduates continued to college at the same rate or better than 2018 white non-Hispanic, non-low income graduates, an additional 1,600 students would enroll in college by the spring following high school graduation.

- Encourage as many students as possible to enroll full time and not delay enrollment. About 70.6% of Nebraska public high school graduates go on to college, but National Student Clearinghouse research shows that those who attend school full-time are much more likely to earn degrees than those who attend part-time.
- Increase efforts to improve retention and persistence rates, such as implementation of guided pathways and integrated planning and advising systems. Full-time retention rates vary by sector, ranging from 61.7% at the community colleges to 80.6% at the University of Nebraska.
- Support and expand efforts, such as Transfer Nebraska and 2+2 agreements, to improve students' knowledge of how credits will transfer among Nebraska colleges and universities, allowing them to plan their path to a degree in the most efficient manner.
- Increase efforts to improve graduation rates for all students across all sectors of higher education in Nebraska, especially at the community colleges and for minority students at all institutions. While graduation rates are generally increasing for minority students, they continue to lag behind their white non-Hispanic and Asian classmates.
- Identify and reach out to adults with college credit but no earned certificates or degrees with degree completion initiatives. Identify what additional resources may be necessary to be successful.
- Reach out to adults who have not attained a high school diploma to enroll them in adult education programs that result in a GED and prepare them for the workforce and additional postsecondary education.
- Partner with other colleges and universities and state departments to use longitudinal data to study the employment patterns of recent graduates so that strategies to reduce brain-drain can be developed and implemented in a targeted fashion.

At the State Government Level:

- 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 so that more eligible students receive aid. Nebraska ranks 35th in the amount of need-based grant dollars per undergraduate FTE. Currently, only about one-third of students eligible for a NOG grant receive one, and the average award is only \$1,410. Nebraska must reduce the gap in college enrollment and graduation rates between low-income and non-low-income high school graduates to meet its workforce needs and attainment goals.
- Continue to support and increase funding for the ACE program so that scholarships are sufficient to allow all academically qualified low-income students to participate in dual enrollment courses. Low-income students who enroll in dual credit courses and receive ACE funding are over 30 percentage points more likely to attend college after graduating from high school than non-recipients.
- Consider new programs, such as Tennessee Reconnect and Indiana Adult Student Grants, that are aimed at adults without degrees to determine the costs and benefits of adopting similar programs in Nebraska. The Tennessee and Indiana programs have had great success in attracting adults students into or back into college.
- Implement and grow Governor Ricketts' proposed 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 the students to employers through internship opportunities.

-
- Initiate incentives for the state's public colleges and universities to improve graduation rates and increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded, particularly in programs that are essential to Nebraska's economic growth.
 - 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.
 - Encourage the growth of high-wage, high-skill jobs that keep Nebraska graduates in Nebraska and inspire students to pursue postsecondary credentials.
 - Annually measure progress toward the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education's* goal that Nebraska be among the top 10 states in educational attainment.

Institutions Reporting to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

University of Nebraska

Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture
University of Nebraska at Kearney
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Nebraska Medical Center
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Nebraska State College System

Chadron State College
Peru State College
Wayne State College

Nebraska Community Colleges

Central Community College
Metropolitan Community College
Mid-Plains Community College
Northeast Community College
Southeast Community College
Western Nebraska Community College

Nonpublic College & Universities

Bellevue University
Bryan College of Health Sciences
Capitol School of Hairstyling and Esthetics
CHI Health School of Radiologic Technology
Clarkson College
College of Hair Design-Downtown
College of Hair Design-East Campus
College of Saint Mary
Concordia University-Nebraska
Creighton University
Dana College (Closed Fall 2010)
Doane University
Fullen School of Hair Design (No longer an IPEDS reporting institution Fall 2016)
Grace University (Closed Fall 2018)
Hastings College
ITT Technical Institute-Omaha (Closed Fall 2016)
Joseph's College Cosmetology
La'James International College
Little Priest Tribal College

Nonpublic Colleges & Universities (Continued)

Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital School of Radiologic Technology (No longer an IPEDS reporting institution Fall 2011)
Midland University
Myotherapy Institute
National American University-Bellevue (Closed Fall 2019)
Nebraska Christian College of Hope International University
Nebraska Indian Community College
Nebraska Methodist College of Nursing & Allied Health
Nebraska Wesleyan University
Omaha School of Massage and Healthcare of Herzing University (Closed Fall 2018)
Paul Mitchell the School Lincoln
Purdue University Global-Lincoln (No longer an IPEDS reporting institution Fall 2019)
Purdue University Global-Omaha (Closed Fall 2019)
Regional West Medical Center School of Radiologic Technology (No longer an IPEDS reporting institution Fall 2016)
Summit Christian College
The Creative Center
Union College
Universal College of Healing Arts
University of Phoenix-Omaha Campus (Closed Fall 2015)
Vatterott College-Spring Valley (Closed Fall 2015)
Xenon International Academy-Omaha
York College

Note. See page 124 for a detailed listing of institutional changes that have occurred during the reporting period.

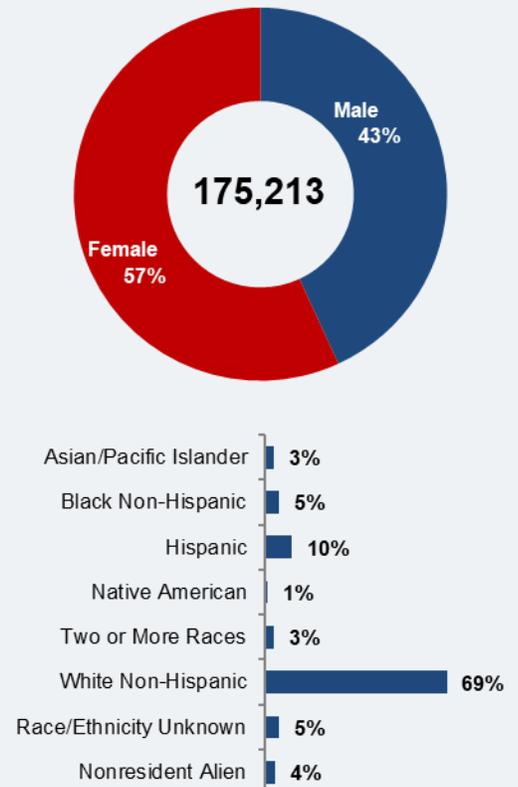
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Nebraska Postsecondary Enrollment and Degrees

March 2020

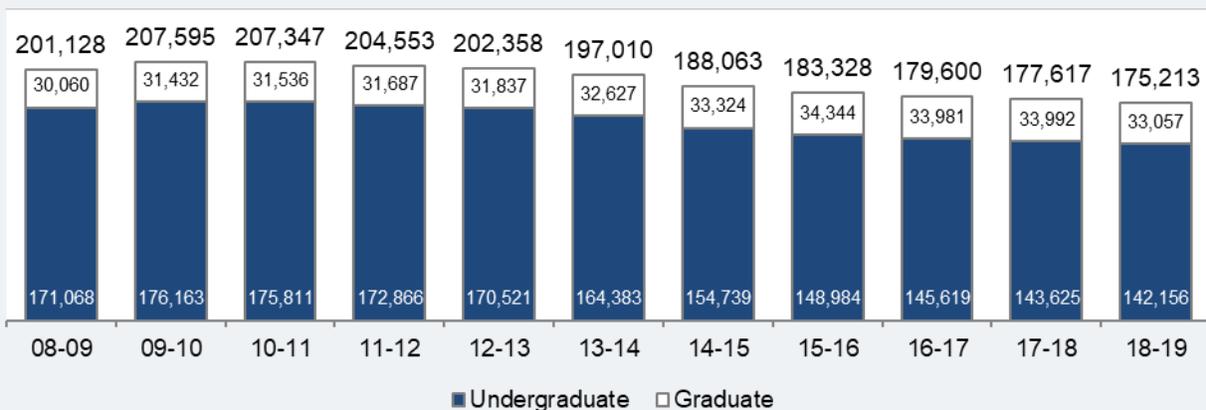
2018-2019 12-Month Enrollment

Sector/Institution	Undergrad	Graduate	Total
University of Nebraska	43,256	16,145	59,401
NCTA	428	-	428
UNK	5,148	2,711	7,859
UNL	22,433	6,253	28,686
UNMC	1,046	3,200	4,246
UNO	14,201	3,981	18,182
State Colleges	8,218	2,377	10,595
Chadron	2,365	787	3,152
Peru	2,427	493	2,920
Wayne	3,426	1,097	4,523
Community Colleges	59,720	-	59,720
Central	9,241	-	9,241
Metropolitan	24,321	-	24,321
Mid-Plains	3,095	-	3,095
Northeast	6,294	-	6,294
Southeast	14,457	-	14,457
Western	2,312	-	2,312
Total Publics	111,194	18,522	129,716
Nonpublic Institutions	30,962	14,535	45,497
Grand Total	142,156	33,057	175,213



12-Month Enrollment Trends

Between 2008-09 and 2018-19, **undergraduate enrollment decreased 16.9%**, while **graduate enrollment increased 10.0%**. Overall, enrollment decreased 12.9%.

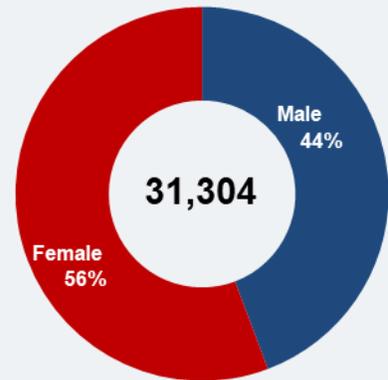


Note. 12-month enrollment is the total, unduplicated headcount of students enrolled during the academic year.

2018-2019 Degrees/Awards

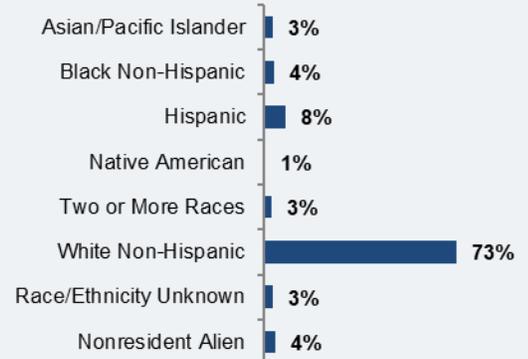
Top 10 Fields - Undergraduate Degrees

Field Category	#	Rank
Business, Management, Marketing	4,695	1
Health Professions	3,641	2
Liberal Arts & Sciences/General Studies	1,631	3
Education	1,451	4
Computer & Information Sciences	1,127	5
Mechanic & Repair Technologies	1,045	6
Agriculture, Agriculture Operations	933	7
Biological & Biomedical Sciences	903	8
Psychology	720	9
Homeland Security/Law Enforce/Firefighting	694	10
All Other CIP Codes*	7,047	-
Total Undergraduate	23,887	-



Top 10 Fields - Graduate Degrees

Field Category	#	Rank
Health Professions	2,065	1
Education	1,745	2
Business, Management, Marketing	1,249	3
Computer & Information Sciences	325	4
Biological & Biomedical Sciences	225	5
Legal Professions & Studies	216	6
Social Sciences	216	7
Public Administration & Social Service	181	8
Engineering	157	9
Psychology	121	10
All Other CIP Codes*	917	-
Total Graduate	7,417	-

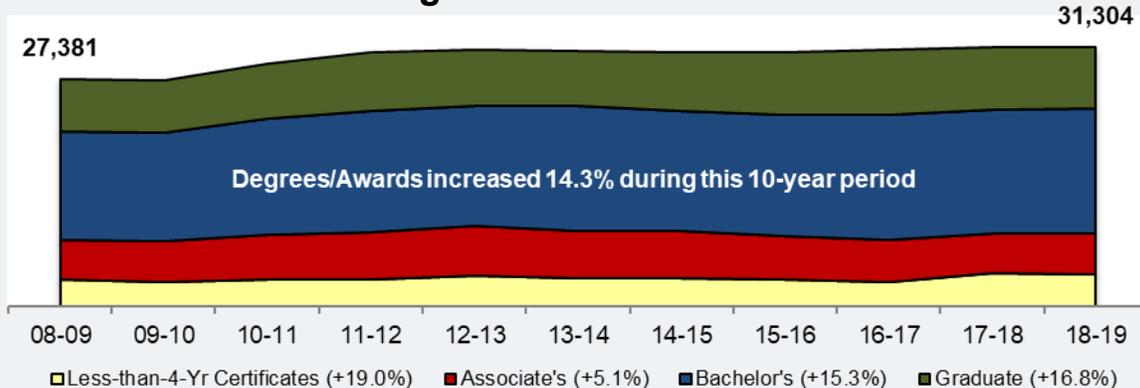


* The National Center for Education Statistics designed the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code to provide a means of accurately tracking, assessing and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity.

Level	University of Nebraska	State Colleges	Community Colleges	Nonpublic Institutions	Grand Total
Less-than-4-Year Certificates	65	-	3,259	544	3,868
Associate's	91	-	4,691	225	5,007
Bachelor's*	8,271	1,200	-	5,541	15,012
Graduate	3,587	452	-	3,378	7,417
Sector Total	12,014	1,652	7,677	9,688	31,304

* Includes postbaccalaureate certificates.

Degrees/Awards Trends





NEBRASKA'S COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

FACT SHEET

Coordinating Commission BY THE NUMBERS:

83

Percentage of 2017-18 Access
College Early scholarship
recipients who went to
college after high school -
compared to 54% of other
low-income, public school
students. The Commission
administers this program.

12,753

The number of low-income
Nebraska college students who
received a Nebraska
Opportunity Grant in 2018-19.
The Commission administers
this program.

VIII-14

Article in the
Nebraska constitution that
created the current
Coordinating Commission

11

Commissioners, appointed by
the Governor and confirmed
by the Legislature, who serve
as voting members of the
Commission

Originally formed in 1976, Nebraskans amended the state constitution in 1990 to create a new **Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education** with increased duties and responsibilities. Those duties and responsibilities now include:

- Creating and putting into action a **comprehensive statewide plan** to guide Nebraska's higher education system
- Partnering with Legislators to develop **innovative and results-driven higher education policy**
- **Helping low-income Nebraska students** attend college by awarding nearly \$20 million in need-based financial aid programs and developing state financial aid strategy
- Administering the **Community College Gap Assistance Program**, which offers financial aid to students who want to work in high-need fields
- Ensuring the **efficient use of taxpayer funds** by approving or disapproving postsecondary construction projects that rely on tax funds and reviewing institutional biennial budget requests
- **Approving or disapproving academic programs based on specific criteria:** need, demand, unnecessary duplication, resources, and cost
- **Reviewing and verifying information submitted by institutions** to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System at the U.S. Department of Education
- Assembling and analyzing **statewide data** and publishing reports **tied to the state's higher education goals**. The Coordinating Commission is the only Nebraska entity that does this kind of work on a statewide level
- Administering roughly **\$100 million** in annual State appropriations to **Nebraska's six community colleges**
- **Saving Nebraska colleges and universities thousands of dollars** through the administration of a nationwide distance learning agreement
- **Protecting Nebraska students** who attend for-profit institutions in the state by administering the Guaranty Recovery Cash Fund

Contact us if you want to know more about: Graduation rates • Enrollment • Degrees and certificate programs • Remedial education • Assessment • Online education • Dual enrollment • Higher ed funding • Postsecondary construction projects • Financial aid • College affordability and student debt • Workforce development • Tuition and fees

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

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Promoting high quality, ready access, and efficient use of resources in Nebraska higher education.