

## 1.5 Financial Aid

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

The 2003 LR 174 Higher Education Task Force recommended increasing need-based financial aid as a means of improving access to higher education for Nebraskans with limited financial resources. Since 2003, Nebraska has increased the amount of state funds allocated for need-based financial aid, thereby making progress toward the goal of improving access to higher education within the state.<sup>15</sup>

Financial aid is even more important today than it was in 2003 as increasing college costs make it more difficult for many Nebraskans to be educated beyond high school. While there are several sources of need-based financial aid available to students, the amount available has not kept up with increasing costs and the corresponding need for more financial aid. This can be illustrated in several ways.

#### **Number of Students Not Served by Nebraska's Opportunity Grant Program**

Nebraska allocates state General and lottery funds to a financial aid program called the Nebraska Opportunity Grant (NOG) program. Nebraska Opportunity Grants, also referred to as state grants, are awarded to students who are residents of Nebraska, have not earned a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree, have high financial need, and who are attending eligible Nebraska colleges and universities.<sup>16</sup>

As the following discussion illustrates, Nebraska has significantly increased the amount of funding available for state grants to college students. However, the amount of available funding for financial aid continues to be insufficient to meet the needs of an increasing number of students who are eligible to receive state assistance. As a result, only about a third of the students who are eligible for state-funded financial aid receive state grants.

Figure 1.5.1 illustrates how the amount of available funding for state grants has significantly increased since 2006-2007. For the 2006-2007 academic year, the state allocated \$9,717,065 for grant aid to students attending public and private institutions in Nebraska. For 2016-2017, the state allocated \$16,889,748 to assist students from low-income families attend higher education institutions in Nebraska, an increase of 73.8%. For the 2017-2018 academic year, the amount of available state funding for grant aid increased to \$17,448,302, or 3.3% above the amount allocated for 2016-2017. As a result, available state funding for state grants awarded in 2017-2018 is 79.6% higher than the state appropriated for student financial aid in 2006-2007.

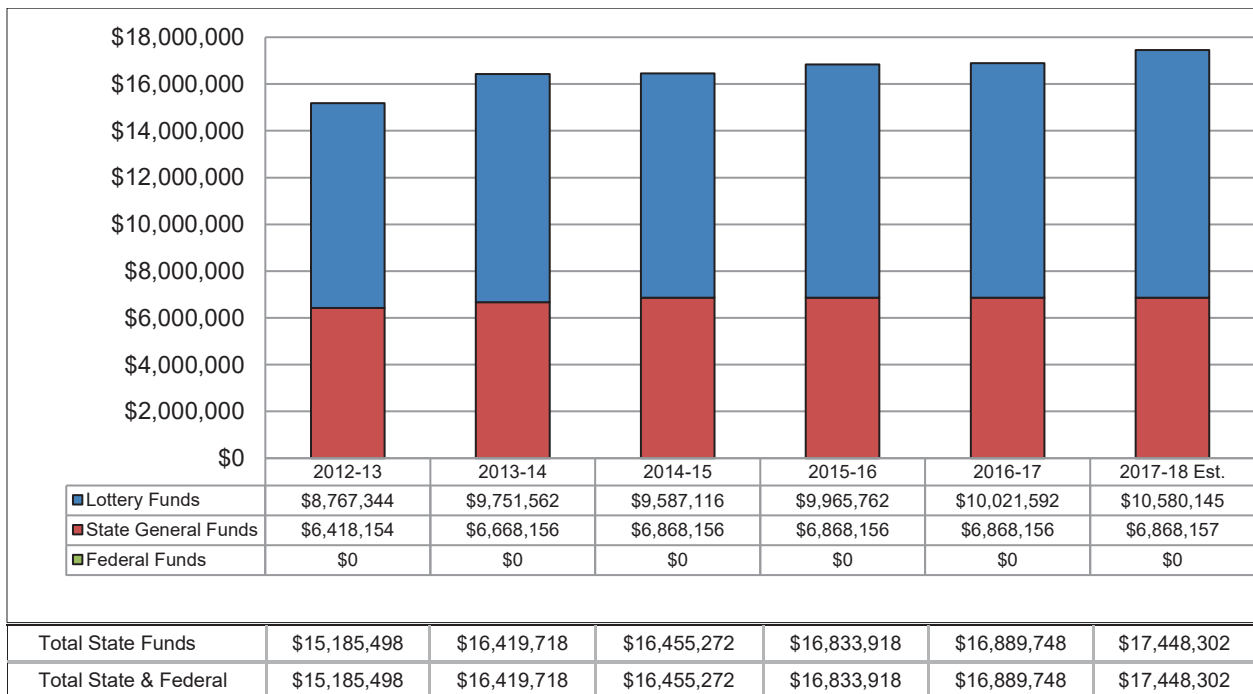
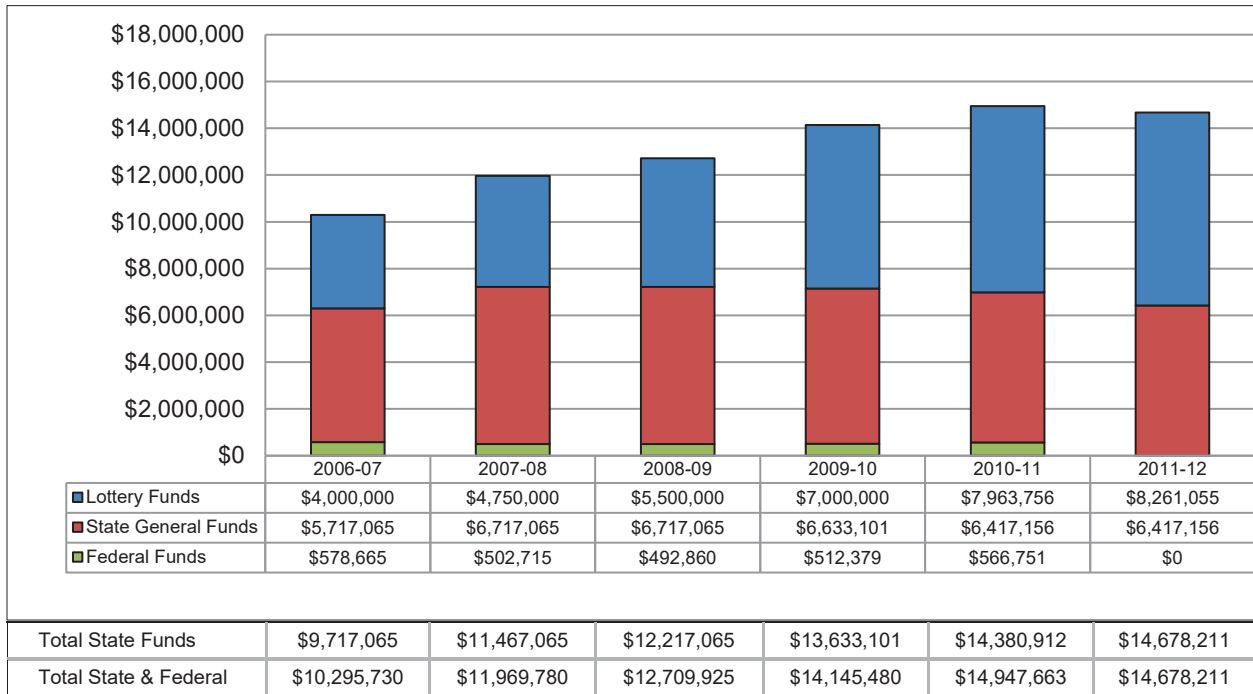
Between 2006-2007 and 2017-2018, allocation of lottery funds for state grants increased 164.5%, from \$4,000,000 in 2006-2007 to \$10,580,145 in 2017-2018. Over the same period, appropriations for state grants from the state's General Fund increased 20.1%, from \$5,717,065 to \$6,868,157. Meanwhile, federal funding decreased from \$578,665 in 2006-2007 to \$566,751 in 2010-2011 and was eliminated in 2011-2012.

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<sup>15</sup> For more information on tuition, fees, and financial aid, see the *2016 Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid Report*, available on the Commission's website at [ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports](http://ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports).

<sup>16</sup> For more information on the Nebraska Opportunity Grant, see the *Nebraska Opportunity Grant 2016-17 Year-End Report*, available on the Commission's website at [ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports](http://ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports).

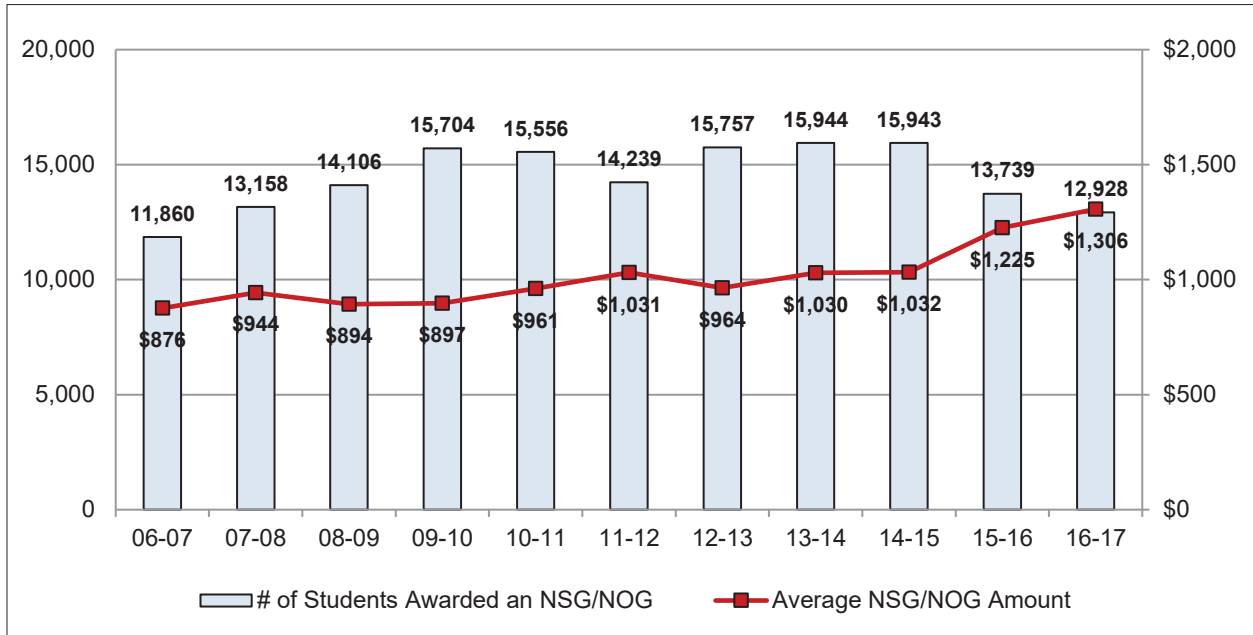
**Figure 1.5.1**  
**Sources and Amounts of Available Funding**  
**for the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program**  
**2006-2007 through 2017-2018**



Data source: Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, *2016 Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid Report*, supplemented with CCPE records, December 2017.

Between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017, as shown in [Figure 1.5.2](#), the number of students who received state grants increased 9.0%, from 11,860 to 12,928, and the average awarded grant increased 49.1%, from \$876 to \$1,306.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 1.5.2**  
**Number of Students Who Received**  
**Nebraska Opportunity Grants (NOGs) and the Average Grant Awarded**  
**2006-2007 through 2016-2017**



Data source: Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, *Nebraska Opportunity Grant Year-End Report*, 2007 through 2017.

Unfortunately, as shown in [Figure 1.5.3](#), many students who are eligible for state grants do not receive them. In 2016-2017, for example, 12,928 students received state grants. However, based upon expenditure reports submitted to the Commission by each institution, it is estimated that an additional 22,250 students qualified for state grants but did not receive them due to insufficient available funding.

Furthermore, the percentage of eligible students who receive state grants has decreased. In 2006-2007, 44.5% of the students who were eligible for state grants received them. In 2016-2017, only 36.8% of the eligible students received state grants. This decrease is due to state funding not keeping pace with the increases in the numbers of eligible students.<sup>18</sup>

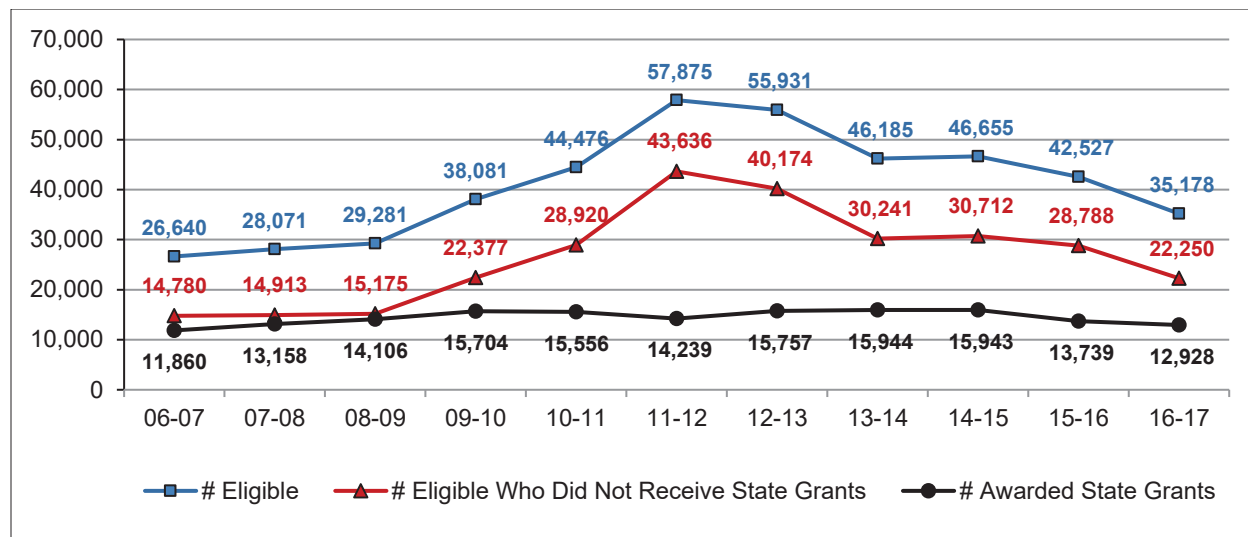
See [Table A8.1](#) and [Table A8.2](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for supporting data and for additional information about the numbers and amounts of Nebraska state grants awarded by sector.

<sup>17</sup> The maximum award a student could receive has been 25% or 50% of the tuition and mandatory fees charged by UNL to a full-time, Nebraska-resident undergraduate student, depending on the year. In 2006-2007, the maximum award was at the 50% level, or \$2,770. For 2016-2017, the maximum award was at the 50% level, or \$4,139.

<sup>18</sup> Part of the increase beginning in 2010-2011 in the number of students eligible to receive Nebraska Opportunity Grants is likely due to the expansion of Pell Grant eligibility.

Figure 1.5.3

**Number of Students Eligible to Receive Nebraska Opportunity Grants Compared to the Number of Students Awarded a Nebraska Opportunity Grant 2006-2007 through 2016-2017**



Data source: Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, *Nebraska Opportunity Grant Year-End Report and Unmet Need Report*, 2017.

**Other Evidence of Unmet Need for Financial Aid**

Although state funding of financial aid has increased significantly since 2006-2007, there is a substantial amount of unmet financial need in Nebraska, including the need not met by state grants. The Commission estimates the annual unmet financial need of all Nebraskans who are eligible for Pell Grants by subtracting the total amount of financial aid, excluding work-study or PLUS (parent loan for undergraduate students), from the total cost of attending Nebraska colleges and universities for all Pell-Grant-eligible students.<sup>19</sup> Using this formula, which includes subsidized and unsubsidized loans as financial aid, the Commission estimates the unmet need of Nebraskans was nearly \$153 million in 2009-2010 and over \$188 million in 2016-2017, as a result of the significant increase in the number of Nebraskans eligible for financial aid.<sup>20</sup> (The Commission estimates the unmet need of Nebraskans in 2006-2007 was over \$133 million.)

An indicator of the increased difficulty in meeting the financial needs of students is that students and their families are covering an increasing percentage of the costs of education for all sectors of Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions. For details, see pages 26-29 of the Commission's *2016 Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid Report*.

Finally, students are borrowing at higher levels. As illustrated in Figure 1.5.4, the amount students borrowed to attend Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions rose 30.4%, from \$249,136,795 in 2006-2007 to \$324,940,478 in 2016-2017.<sup>21</sup> The number of loan recipients increased 4.0%, from 58,806 in 2006-2007 to 61,169 in 2016-2017, while the number of originated loans increased 9.0%, from 64,561 to 70,387 in 2016-2017.

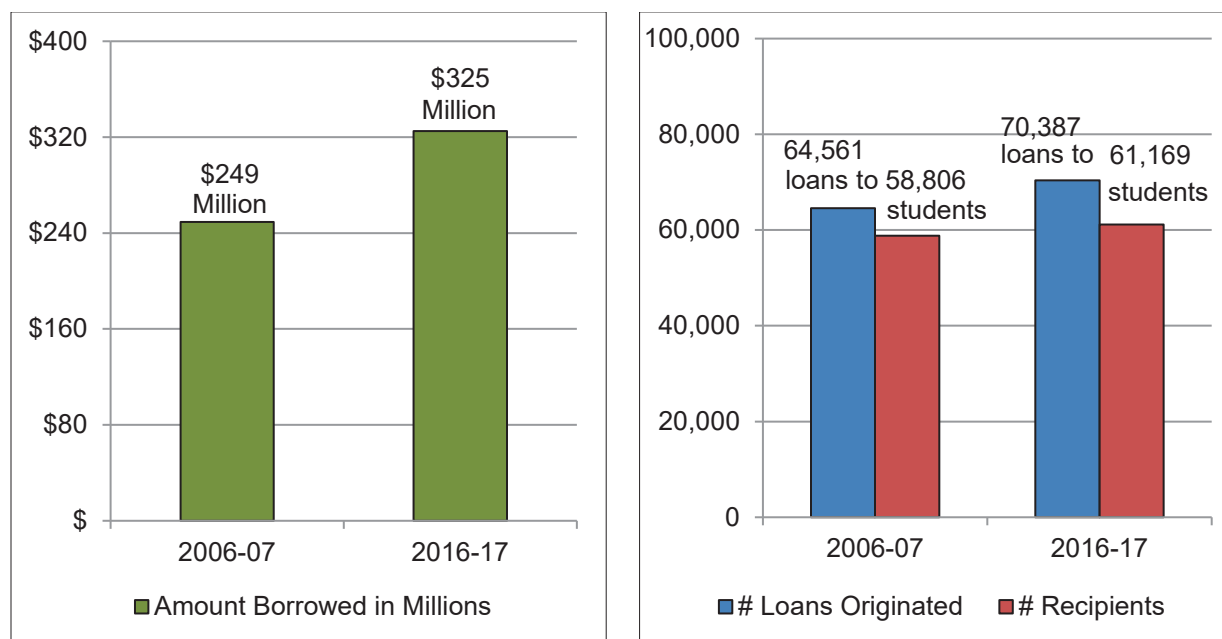
<sup>19</sup> Cost of attendance includes tuition and mandatory fees, room and board, and books and supplies.

<sup>20</sup> For details regarding these estimates, see the Commission's *2016 Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid Report*, available on the Commission's website at [ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports](http://ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports).

<sup>21</sup> Originated loans, including fees.

Figure 1.5.4

**Level of Student Borrowing to Attend Nebraska's Public Colleges and Universities  
2016-2017 Compared to 2006-2007**



Data sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, December 2017; Nebraska DAS Supplements, and Nebraska CCPE Supplementals, December 2017.

*Need-Based Financial Aid*

In addition to the Nebraska Opportunity Grant, financial aid is provided through a system of tuition waivers at Nebraska public institutions. However, tuition waivers may or may not be need-based, depending on how each institution decides to allocate them.

The State of Nebraska also funds the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program. Initiated in fall 2007, ACE scholarships are awarded to eligible low-income Nebraska high school students who take college courses for credit from qualified postsecondary institutions.

In fall 2011, the ACE Plus program was initiated. This program was fully funded by the federal College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) and was designed to provide financial aid to Nebraska college students who received ACE scholarships while they were in high school. Award year 2015-2016 was the final year of this program due to federal funding being discontinued.

Since Nebraska's state grant program has been the primary source of state-funded, need-based financial aid for Nebraska residents who are attending postsecondary institutions within the state, the analysis in this section focuses primarily on the changes in the funding of Nebraska's state grant program that occurred between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017. In the analysis of the Nebraska's state grant program, other sources of need-based aid also are discussed to present a complete picture of the amount of financial aid available to Nebraskans. The last part of this section focuses on the growth of the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program and the college continuation rates of ACE scholarship recipients.

## **Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program and Other Sources of Title IV Financial Aid**

The Nebraska Opportunity Grant program was one of several programs based on or administered under the guidelines of Title IV of the U.S. Higher Education Act between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017.<sup>22</sup> These programs provide financial aid to students attending postsecondary institutions in Nebraska and include the following federal programs (see [Explanatory Note A8.1](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for definitions of all of the financial aid programs listed below):

- Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Work-Study (FWS)
- Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant (IASG)
- National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant
- Perkins Loans
- PLUS Loans
- PLUS Loans for Graduate and Professional Degree Students (Grad PLUS)
- Subsidized (Sub) and Unsubsidized (Unsub) Stafford Loans
- Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant (TEACH)

Federal Pell Grants are awarded to undergraduates who have not yet earned bachelor's degrees and who demonstrate high financial need. Nebraska state grants are awarded to Nebraska-resident students who demonstrate high financial need and attend eligible Nebraska postsecondary institutions.

### **Funding of Awarded Nebraska Opportunity Grants**

- The majority of the funding for Nebraska Opportunity Grants has come from the state through the Nebraska Lottery and the state's General Fund. From 2006-2007 through 2010-2011, the remaining funding came from the federal government through its regular and special Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (S/LEAP) authorizations. In 2011-2012, the Nebraska state grant program became entirely dependent on state funding.
- As shown in [Table 1.5.1](#), \$9,809,558 in state General Funds accounted for 94.4% of the \$10,388,223 awarded through Nebraska state grants in 2006-2007.
- Between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017, state funding increased \$7,080,190, or 72.2%.
- In total, the amount of funding awarded through the state grant program increased 62.6%, from \$10,388,223 in 2006-2007 to \$16,889,748 in 2016-2017.

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<sup>22</sup> The Academic Competitiveness Grant and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant were eliminated after the 2010-2011 academic year.

**Table 1.5.1**  
**Amounts of Nebraska and Federal Funding**  
**Awarded through the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program**  
**2006-2007 through 2016-2017**

Academic Year	State Funding	% of Total	Federal Funding	% of Total	Total Funding
2006-2007	\$9,809,558	94.4%	\$578,665	5.6%	\$10,388,223
2007-2008	\$11,919,109	96.0%	\$502,715	4.0%	\$12,421,824
2008-2009	\$12,118,524	96.1%	\$492,860	3.9%	\$12,611,384
2009-2010	\$13,580,674	96.4%	\$512,379	3.6%	\$14,093,053
2010-2011	\$14,380,912	96.2%	\$566,751	3.8%	\$14,947,663
2011-2012	\$14,678,211	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$14,678,211
2012-2013	\$15,185,498	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$15,185,498
2013-2014	\$16,419,718	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$16,419,718
2014-2015	\$16,455,272	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$16,455,272
2015-2016	\$16,833,918	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$16,833,918
2016-2017	\$16,889,748	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$16,889,748
\$ Change Since 2006-2007	\$7,080,190		-\$578,665		\$6,501,525
% Change Since 2006-2007	72.2%		-100.0%		62.6%
Data source: Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, <i>2016 Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid Report</i> , supplemented with CCPE records, December 2017.					

### **Nebraska Opportunity Grants as a Percentage of All Title IV Financial Aid**

Between 2006-2007 and 2015-2016, Nebraska's Opportunity Grants represented only a small percentage of the total Title IV financial aid awarded through all of the eligible postsecondary institutions in Nebraska. [Table 1.5.2](#) compares the total amount of financial aid awarded to students attending Nebraska colleges and universities in 2015-2016, the latest year for which federal data for all Nebraska institutions are available, to financial aid awarded in 2006-2007.<sup>23</sup>

- A total of \$797,040,724 Title IV financial aid was awarded to students at Nebraska's postsecondary institutions in 2015-2016, an increase of 47.4% from 2006-2007.
- Nebraska's state grants were equivalent to 2.1% of the total Title IV financial aid awarded to students attending Nebraska postsecondary institutions in 2015-2016, up from 1.9% in 2006-2007.

<sup>23</sup> The interest on a Perkins Loan or a subsidized loan is paid by the federal government while the student borrower is in college. Therefore, this interest is comparable to a grant in the sense that it does not have to be repaid. For the sake of clarification, the amounts reported in this section are for the actual amounts borrowed, *not including interest*.

**Table 1.5.2**  
**Total Title IV Federal and State Financial Aid**  
**Awarded at All Eligible Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions**  
**2015-2016 Compared to 2006-2007**

Type of Financial Aid Awarded	2006-2007		2015-2016		% Change
	\$ Awarded	% of Total	\$ Awarded	% of Total	
<b>Grants</b>					
Pell Grant	\$61,956,678	11.5%	\$126,762,585	15.9%	104.6%
FSEOG	\$6,162,618	1.1%	\$5,769,359	0.7%	-6.4%
IASG	\$0	0.0%	\$5,382	0.0%	
TEACH	\$0	0.0%	\$955,183	0.1%	
NOG	\$10,388,223	1.9%	\$16,833,918	2.1%	62.0%
FED Work-Study	\$5,697,591	1.1%	\$5,844,899	0.7%	2.6%
<b>Loans</b>					
Perkins Loans	\$16,923,947	3.1%	\$11,421,647	1.4%	-32.5%
Sub Loans	\$166,100,510	30.7%	\$134,221,242	16.8%	-19.2%
Unsub Loans	\$184,059,042	34.0%	\$350,109,711	43.9%	90.2%
Grad PLUS	\$23,300,791	4.3%	\$62,536,272	7.8%	168.4%
PLUS Loans	\$66,114,783	12.2%	\$82,580,526	10.4%	24.9%
<b>Total Grants and Loans</b>	<b>\$540,704,183</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$797,040,724</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>47.4%</b>
<p><i>Note.</i> FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; IASG = Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant; TEACH = Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants; NOG = Nebraska Opportunity Grant; Sub = subsidized loans; Unsub Loans = unsubsidized loans. IASG grants and TEACH grants were not available in 2006-2007. See <a href="#">Explanatory Note A8.1</a> in <a href="#">Appendix 8</a> for information about each of the programs included in this analysis. Data sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, December 2017; Nebraska DAS Supplements, and Nebraska CCPE Supplementals, December 2017.</p>					

**Nebraska Opportunity Grants as a Percentage of Title IV Financial Aid Awarded at Nebraska Public Institutions**

- The amounts of federal funding for all types of Title IV financial aid that were awarded to students at all of Nebraska’s eligible postsecondary institutions in 2016-2017 are not yet available. However, the amount of aid awarded through each Title IV program to students attending the state’s *public* institutions in 2016-2017 is available to compare to the amount awarded in 2006-2007.
- A total of \$436,844,762 Title IV financial aid was awarded to students at Nebraska’s *public* postsecondary institutions in 2016-2017, an increase of \$145,637,927 (50.0%) from 2006-2007.
- As shown in [Table 1.5.3](#), Nebraska state grants accounted for 2.9% of the total financial aid awarded by Nebraska’s public institutions in 2016-2017, up from 2.3% in 2006-2007.



**Table 1.5.3**  
**Total Title IV Federal and State Financial Aid**  
**Awarded at Nebraska Public Postsecondary Institutions**  
**2016-2017 Compared to 2006-2007**

Type of Financial Aid Awarded	2006-2007		2016-2017		% Change
	\$ Awarded	% of Total	\$ Awarded	% of Total	
<b>Grants</b>					
Pell Grant	\$44,543,134	15.3%	\$93,420,747	21.4%	109.7%
FSEOG	\$2,864,225	1.0%	\$2,455,736	0.6%	-14.3%
IASG	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	
TEACH	\$0	0.0%	\$323,469	0.1%	
NOG	\$6,557,086	2.3%	\$12,632,146	2.9%	92.6%
FED Work-Study	\$3,408,183	1.2%	\$3,072,186	0.7%	-9.9%
<b>Loans</b>					
Perkins Loans	\$7,543,677	2.6%	\$3,973,825	0.9%	-47.3%
Sub Loans	\$92,702,497	31.8%	\$82,404,861	18.9%	-11.1%
Unsub Loans	\$92,930,919	31.9%	\$167,858,531	38.4%	80.6%
Grad PLUS	\$2,466,956	0.8%	\$12,860,674	2.9%	421.3%
PLUS Loans	\$38,190,158	13.1%	\$57,842,587	13.2%	51.5%
<b>Total Grants and Loans</b>	<b>\$291,206,835</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$436,844,762</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
<p><i>Note.</i> FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; IASG = Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant; TEACH = Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants; NOG = Nebraska Opportunity Grant; Sub = subsidized loans; Unsub Loans = unsubsidized loans. IASG grants and TEACH grants were not available in 2006-2007. See <a href="#">Explanatory Note A8.1</a> in <a href="#">Appendix 8</a> for information about each of the programs included in this analysis. Data sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, December 2017; Nebraska DAS Supplements, and Nebraska CCPE Supplementals, December 2017.</p>					

### **Need-Based Financial Aid (Excluding Loans) Awarded at Nebraska's Public Institutions**

#### *Title IV Aid (Excluding Loans):*

- As shown in [Table 1.5.4](#), of the \$111,904,284 awarded through grants or the work-study program in 2016-2017, 11.3% was awarded through the Nebraska state grant program, compared to 11.4% in 2006-2007.
- State funds accounted for 100% of the \$12,632,146 awarded in state grants to students enrolled at public institutions in 2016-2017. Since 2011-2012, no federal funds have been available for funding the state grant program.
- Total federal funding of grants and work-study increased by 74.1%, from \$57,009,835 in 2006-2007 to \$99,272,138 in 2016-2017.
- Between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017, state funding of state grants increased by 103.9%, from \$6,194,293 to \$12,632,146. The state funded portion of the Nebraska state grants

program increased from being equivalent to 10.8% of the total Title IV financial aid, excluding loans, awarded through Nebraska public institutions in 2006-2007 to equaling 11.3% in 2016-2017.

**Table 1.5.4  
Total Need-Based Financial Aid (Excluding Loans)  
Awarded at Nebraska Public Postsecondary Institutions  
2016-2017 Compared to 2006-2007**

Type of Need-Based Financial Aid	2006-2007		2016-2017		% Change
	\$ Awarded	% of Total	\$ Awarded	% of Total	
<b>Title IV Aid (Excluding Loans)</b>					
Nebraska Opportunity Grants					
State-Funded	\$6,194,293	8.4%	\$12,632,146	8.2%	103.9%
Federal-Funded	\$362,793	0.5%	\$0	0.0%	-100.0%
Total NE State Grant	\$6,557,086	8.9%	\$12,632,146	8.2%	92.6%
Federal Title IV					
Pell Grant	\$44,543,134	60.6%	\$93,420,747	60.4%	109.7%
FSEOG	\$2,864,225	3.9%	\$2,455,736	1.6%	-14.3%
IASG	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	
TEACH	\$0	0.0%	\$323,469	0.2%	
Federal Work Study	\$3,408,183	4.6%	\$3,072,186	2.0%	-9.9%
Total Federal Title IV	\$50,815,542	69.1%	\$99,272,138	64.2%	95.4%
<b>Total Title IV Aid (Excluding Loans)</b>	<b>\$57,372,628</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>\$111,904,284</b>	<b>72.4%</b>	<b>95.0%</b>
<b>Other Need-Based Aid (Excluding Loans)</b>					
University of Nebraska	\$12,227,756	16.6%	\$38,287,074	24.8%	213.1%
NE State College System	\$969,423	1.3%	\$1,454,535	0.9%	50.0%
NE Community Colleges	\$2,964,924	4.0%	\$2,899,050	1.9%	-2.2%
<b>Total Other Need-Based Aid (Excluding Loans)</b>	<b>\$16,162,103</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>\$42,640,659</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>163.8%</b>
<b>Total Need-Based Aid (Excluding Loans)</b>	<b>\$73,534,731</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$154,544,943</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>110.2%</b>
<p><i>Note.</i> FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; IASG = Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant; TEACH = Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants; Sub = subsidized loans; Unsub Loans = unsubsidized loans. IASG grants and TEACH grants were not available in 2006-2007. See Explanatory Note A8.1 in Appendix 8 for information about each of the programs included in this analysis. Data sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, December 2017; Nebraska DAS Supplements, and Nebraska CCPE Supplementals, December 2017.</p>					

*Other Need-Based Aid (Excluding Loans):*

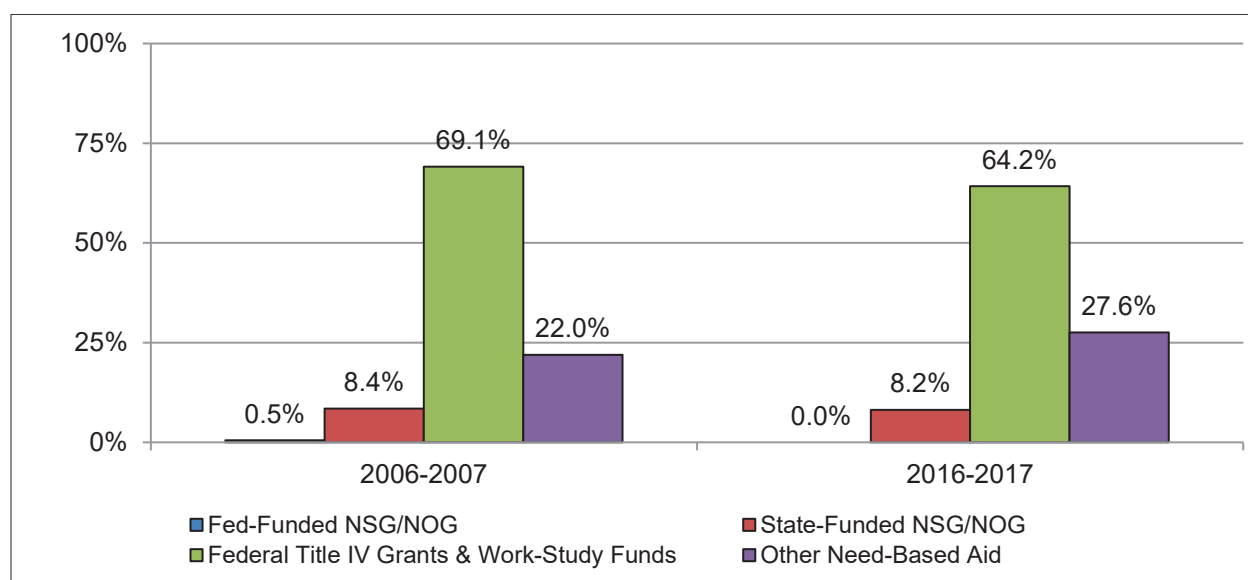
Although Title IV-related programs are the primary source of need-based financial aid, other institution-based programs are available to assist students. Programs available through the state's public institutions are funded by the institutions and private sources. In addition, state funding is provided through need-based tuition waivers offered by the Nebraska state colleges and the institutions constituting the University of Nebraska.

- As shown in [Table 1.5.4](#), the total amount of need-based financial aid, not including Title IV aid, provided to students by Nebraska's public institutions increased 163.8% from \$16,162,103 in 2006-2007 to \$42,640,659 in 2016-2017.
- Between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017, the amount of other need-based aid provided by the University of Nebraska increased 213.1%, while the amount of other need-based aid provided by the Nebraska State College System increased 50.0%. Meanwhile, the amount of other need-based aid awarded by Nebraska's six community colleges decreased 2.2%.

*Total Need-Based Aid (Excluding Loans):*

- The total amount of need-based financial aid provided to students attending Nebraska's public institutions, including Title IV programs and other need-based aid, but excluding loans, increased 110.2% from \$73,534,731 in 2006-2007 to \$154,544,943 in 2016-2017.
- As illustrated in [Figure 1.5.5](#), the state-funded portion of the Nebraska state grants program accounted for 8.4% of all of the need-based aid awarded by Nebraska public institutions in 2006-2007, excluding loans, compared to 8.2% in 2016-2017.

**Figure 1.5.5**  
**Total Need-Based Financial Aid (Excluding Loans)**  
**Awarded by Public Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions**  
**2016-2017 Compared to 2006-2007**



*Note.* Data sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, December 2017; Nebraska DAS Supplements, and Nebraska CCPE Supplementals, December 2017.

## Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program

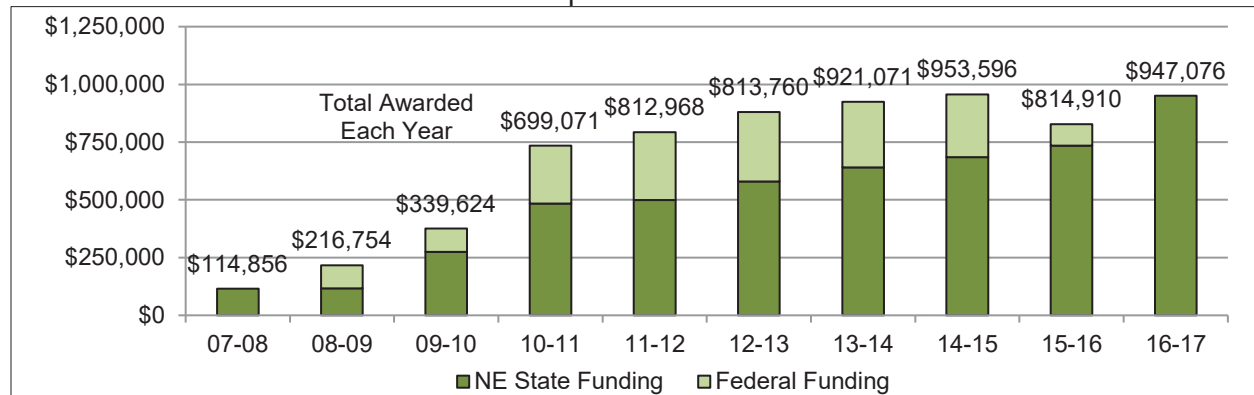
Started in fall 2007, the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program is funded by the State of Nebraska. ACE scholarships are awarded to eligible low-income Nebraska high school students who take courses for credit from postsecondary institutions while the students are in high school. These courses are typically dual enrollment courses, which are offered for both high school and college credit, but some are college courses offered only for college credit.<sup>24</sup> Figure 1.5.6 illustrates the growth of the ACE Scholarship Program.

- In 2007-2008, 363 ACE scholarships totaling \$114,856 were awarded to 294 Nebraska high school students from 110 high schools. These students registered for 1,698 credit hours at 11 Nebraska colleges and universities.

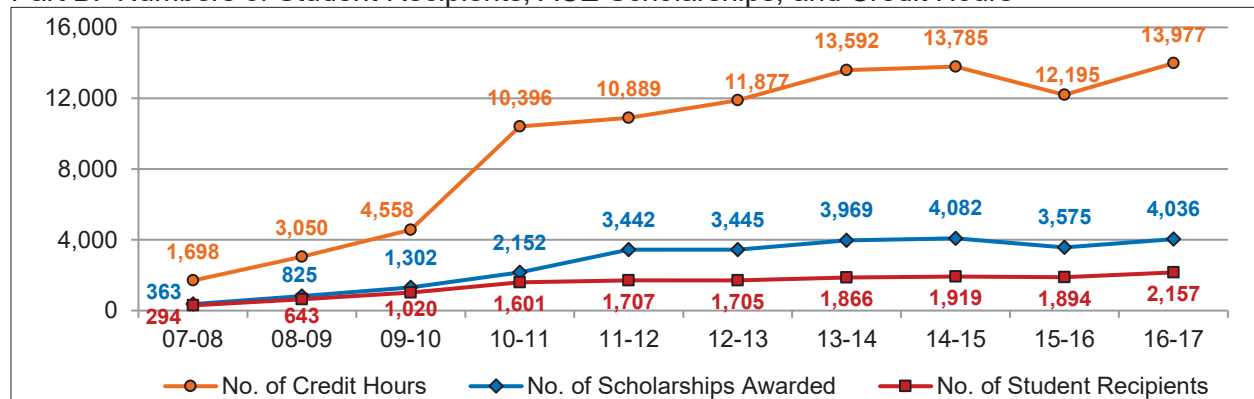
Figure 1.5.6

### Growth of the Nebraska Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program 2007-2008 through 2016-2017

#### Part A: Sources and Amount of Scholarships Awarded



#### Part B: Numbers of Student Recipients, ACE Scholarships, and Credit Hours



Note. In academic years 2007-2008 and 2010-2011 through 2014-2015, eligible students were allowed to apply for scholarships for as many courses as they wanted to take. In 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, scholarships were limited to funding only one course per term per eligible student, so that a student could receive scholarships for a maximum of two or three courses during the school year, depending on whether courses were taken on a semester or quarter basis. Since 2015-2016, eligible students have been limited to two courses per term. See Table A8.3 in Appendix 8 for supporting data. Data source: Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2017.

<sup>24</sup> For more information on the Access College Early Scholarship, see the *Access College Early Scholarship 2016-17 Year-End Report*, available on the Commission's website at [ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports](http://ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports).

- In 2016-2017, 4,036 ACE scholarships totaling \$947,076 were awarded to 2,157 Nebraska high school students from 209 high schools. These students registered for 13,977 credit hours at 18 Nebraska colleges and universities. A total of \$985,000 is appropriated for ACE scholarships for 2017-2018.

### **College Continuation Rates of ACE Scholarship Recipients**

Since 2009, the Coordinating Commission has conducted research to determine how many of the high school seniors who receive ACE scholarships continue on to college compared to other low-income and non-low-income graduates of Nebraska's public high schools.

For this research, a college continuation rate is defined as the percentage of high school graduates who were enrolled in college within one year of their high school graduation. For example, for the high school seniors who received ACE scholarships during 2015-2016, the college continuation rate is the percentage of these students who were enrolled in college any time between June 1, 2016, and May 31, 2017. Throughout this summary, the terms college continuation rate and college-going rate are used interchangeably.

Using student records and summary reports from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and enrollment records from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the Commission calculates the college continuation rates by gender for the high school seniors who were ACE scholarship recipients.

The Commission then compares the college continuation rates for the seniors who received ACE scholarships while attending public high schools to the college continuation rates for other low-income and non-low-income graduates of Nebraska's public high schools.

Low-income students are defined as students who are approved to receive free or reduced-price school lunches.

Non-low-income students are students who are not approved for free or reduced-price school lunches.<sup>25</sup>

Since the Commission relies on college enrollment records from the NSC, students who continue on to college at non-NSC-reporting institutions are classified as not continuing on to college. As a result, college continuation rates reported here are underestimated to some degree. (See Section 1.1.c of this report for further information on college continuation rates.)

Students who were home-schooled or attended nonpublic (private) high schools are not included in this phase of the research because the NDE does not have sufficient records for the Commission to compute college continuation rates for nonpublic high school students by income status.

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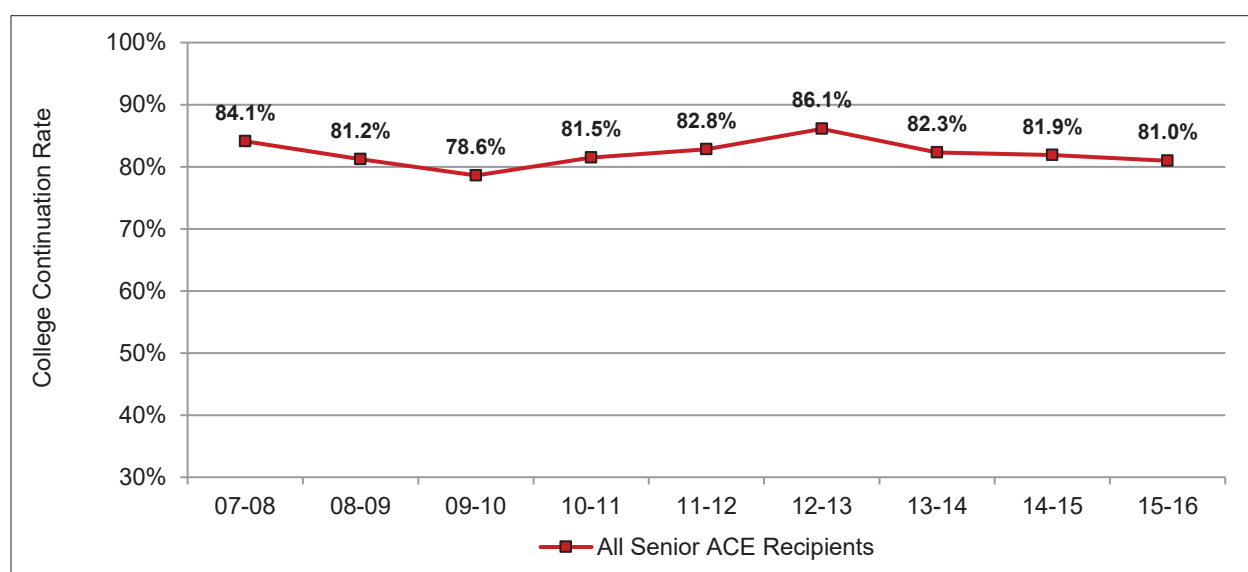
<sup>25</sup> Non-low-income students for this study include at least some students who live in low-income households but who did not apply for free or reduced-price school lunches. Since participation in the free or reduced-price school lunch program is the only indicant of household income in the student records maintained by the Nebraska Department of Education, low-income students in the non-low-income category cannot be identified and excluded for the purposes of analysis.

### College Continuation Rates for Nebraska ACE Scholarship Recipients

- From the first year of the program in 2007-2008 to the third year in 2009-2010, the college continuation rates of ACE scholarship recipients decreased as the number of awarded ACE scholarships increased. As shown in [Figure 1.5.7](#), the college continuation rate for *all seniors* who received ACE scholarships decreased from 84.1% for students who graduated in 2007-2008 to 78.6% for those who finished high school in 2009-2010.
- Since 2009-2010, the college-going rate for ACE scholarship recipients steadily increased to a high of 86.1% in 2012-2013 and has since decreased to 81.0% for 2015-2016 graduates.

**Figure 1.5.7**

#### **College Continuation Rates for All High School Seniors Who Received Access College Early (ACE) Scholarships 2007-2008 through 2015-2016**



Note. See [Tables A8.4.a, A8.4.b, A8.4.c, A8.4.d, A8.4.e, A8.4.f, A8.4.g, A8.4.h, and A8.4.i](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for supporting data. Data sources: Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (numbers of ACE recipients), May 2017; National Student Clearinghouse (college continuation data), May 2017.

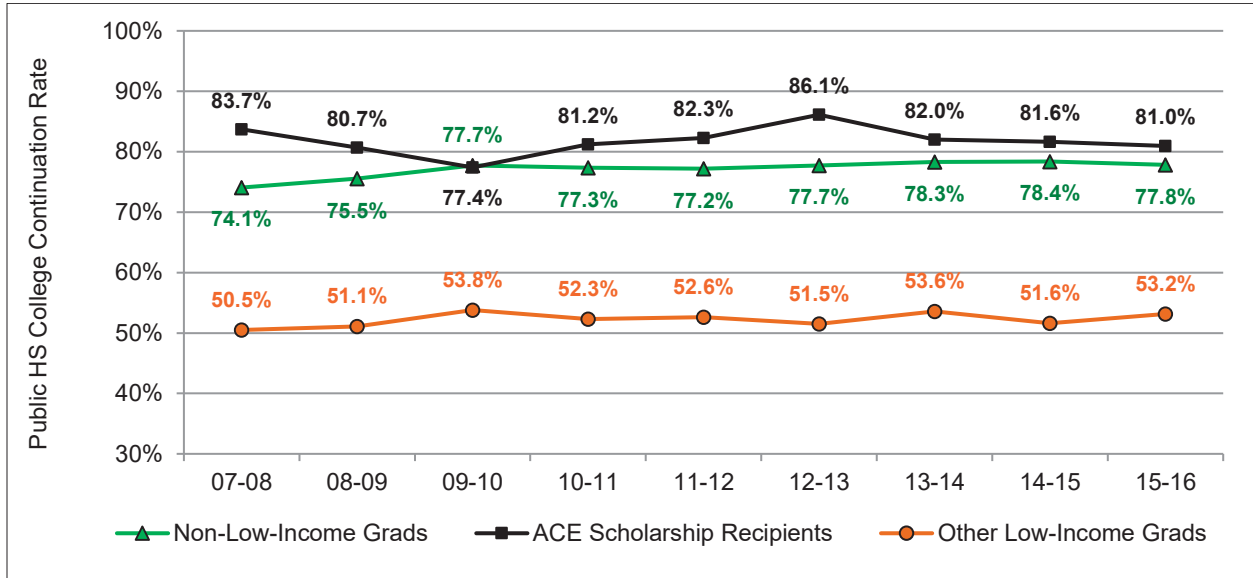
### College Continuation Rates by Household Income

- As shown in [Figure 1.5.8](#), college continuation rates of ACE scholarship recipients have been higher than, or about equal to, the rates for non-low-income graduates of the state's public high schools.
- College continuation rates for ACE scholarship recipients were significantly higher than the college-going rates for other low-income students who graduated from Nebraska's public high schools between 2007-2008 and 2015-2016.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> To calculate the college continuation rates for other low-income graduates, the recipients of ACE scholarships were assumed to be included among the male and female low-income graduates reported by the Nebraska Department of Education to the Coordinating Commission. The numbers of other low-income graduates were determined by subtracting the numbers of male and female ACE scholarship recipients from the total numbers of male and female low-income graduates reported by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Figure 1.5.8

**College Continuation Rates for Public High School Seniors  
Who Received Access Early (ACE) Scholarships  
and Other Graduates of Nebraska Public High Schools  
by Student Income Status: 2007-2008 through 2015-2016**



Note. See Tables A8.4.a, A8.4.b, A8.4.c, A8.4.d, A8.4.e, A8.4.f, A8.4.g, A8.4.h, and A8.4.i in Appendix 8 for supporting data. Data sources: Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (numbers of ACE recipients), May 2017; National Student Clearinghouse (college continuation data), May 2017; and Nebraska Department of Education (numbers of low-income and non-low-income graduates) October 2017.