

2.2 College Graduation and Transfer Rates (Based on IPEDS Data)

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

The college graduation rates reported in this section are based on data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The latest available data are for undergraduates who completed degree programs during the 2013–2014 academic year. Completion data for students who finished their degree programs in 2014–2015 will not be available for analysis until mid-2016. Consequently, the following analysis focuses on how 2013–2014 graduation rates for Nebraska institutions compare to 2002–2003 baseline rates. **Throughout this analysis, the terms “completion rate” and “graduation rate” are used interchangeably.**

Based on the same cohorts as graduation rates, the 2013–2014 transfer rates for Nebraska’s six community colleges are presented at the end of this section. Presenting these rates provides an important supplement to the graduation rates reported for these institutions.

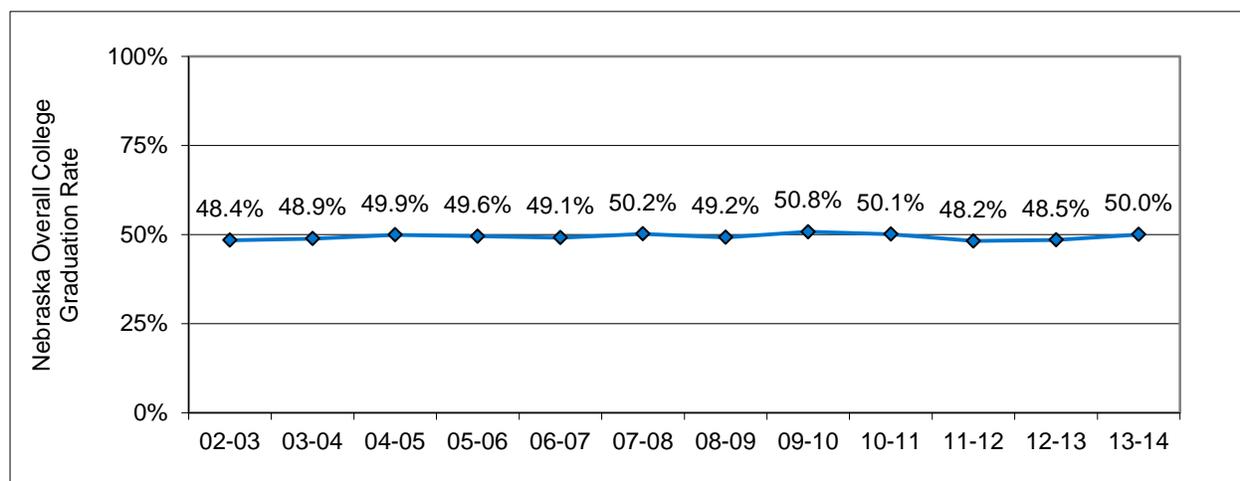
Generally, baccalaureate graduation and transfer rates are based on a six-year time frame, while rates for associate degrees are based on three years. In all cases, rates are calculated only for students who enrolled in degree programs as full-time, first-time freshmen. See Explanatory Note A10.1 in Appendix 10 and Explanatory Note A11.1 in Appendix 11 for further information on IPEDS-defined time frames and how completion and transfer rates are calculated using IPEDS data.

The Overall College Graduation Rate for Nebraska

- As shown in Figure 2.2.1 the statewide graduation rate for Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions increased from 48.4% in 2002–2003 to 50.0% in 2013–2014.

Figure 2.2.1

Overall College Graduation Rate for Nebraska
2002–2003 through 2013–2014



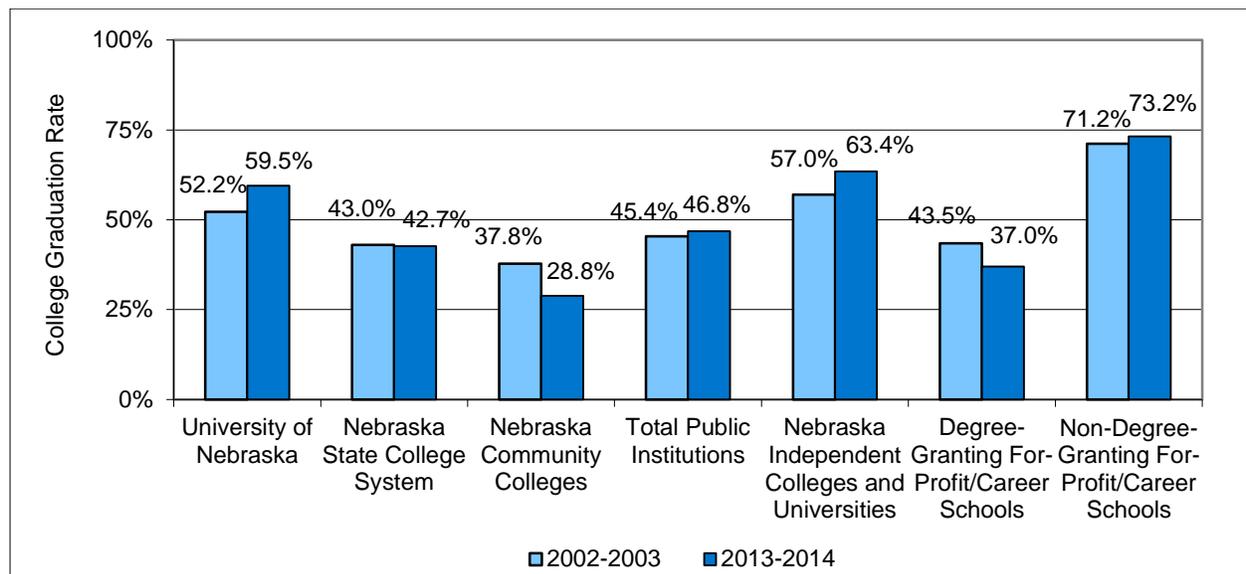
Note. See Table A10.1 in Appendix 10 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 through fall 2014 surveys.

College Graduation Rates by Sector and by Institution

- Completion rates by sector varied noticeably, as shown in [Figure 2.2.2](#). (See [Table A10.2](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.)
- The non-degree-granting, for-profit/career schools have had the highest overall completion rate among the state's six sectors of postsecondary education since 2002–2003, followed by Nebraska's independent (not-for-profit) colleges and universities and the University of Nebraska.

Figure 2.2.2

Graduation Rates for Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector 2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline



Note. See [Table A10.3](#), [Table A10.4.a](#), and [Table A10I](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

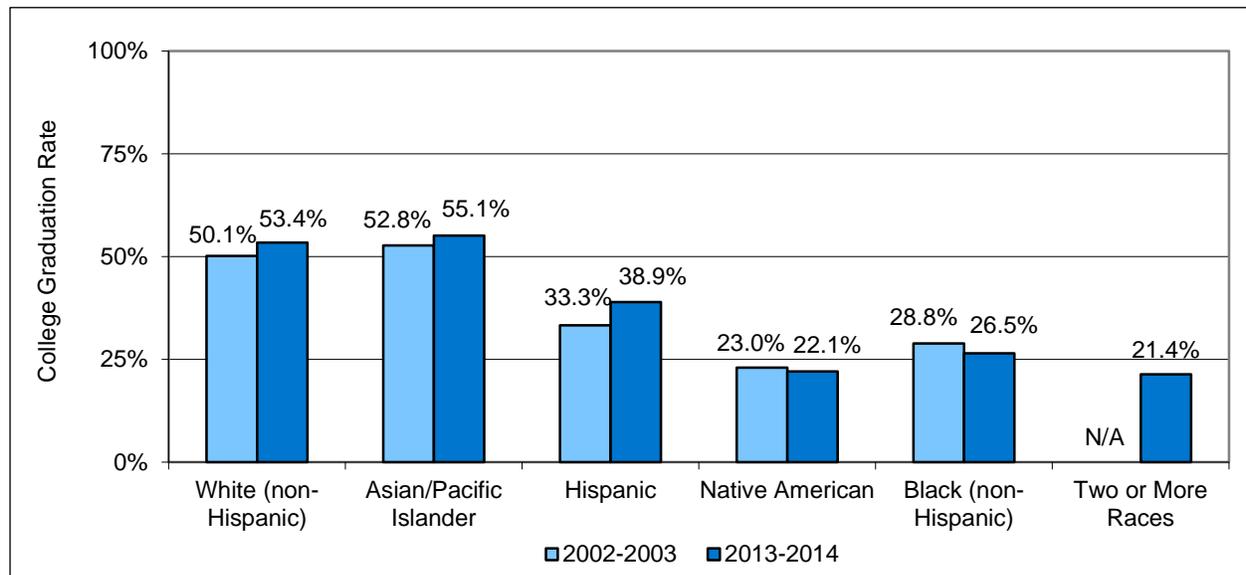
- The overall graduation rate for the [University of Nebraska](#) system increased from 52.2% in 2002–2003 to 59.5% in 2013–2014.
 - The highest graduation rate within this sector in 2013–2014 was at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (66.8%) while the lowest rate was at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (43.5%).
- The overall graduation rate for the [Nebraska State College System](#) decreased from 43.0% in 2002–2003 to 42.7% in 2013–2014. The highest graduation rate within this sector in 2013–2014 was at Wayne State College (48.5%) while the lowest rate was at Chadron State College (36.2%).
- The overall graduation rate for [Nebraska's community colleges](#) decreased from 37.8% in 2002–2003 to 28.8% in 2013–2014.
 - Between 2002–2003 and 2013–2014, the graduation rate at Mid-Plains Community College increased 0.1 percentage point while the graduation rate at Western Nebraska Community College increased 5.6 percentage points.

- As has been the case in the past, however, graduation rates at Nebraska’s four other community colleges continue to lag behind their respective 2002–2003 rates. Metropolitan Community College’s 2013–2014 graduation rate of 13.6% was the lowest within this sector, while Northeast’s rate of 46.1% was the highest graduation rate among the community colleges.
- Within the independent sector, the graduation rate has increased from 57.0% in 2002–2003 to 63.4% in 2013–2014.
 - The highest graduation rates in the independent sector in 2013–2014 were reported by Bryan College of Health Sciences (80.0%) and Creighton University (77.8%). Nebraska Indian Community College’s 2013–2014 graduation rate of 3.3% (one graduate) was the lowest within this sector.
- The sector graduation rate for the degree-granting, for-profit/career schools decreased from 43.5% in 2002–2003 to 37.0% in 2013–2014.
 - The highest graduation rate within this sector was 100.0% at the Universal College of Healing Arts (eight graduates) while the lowest rate was at Kaplan University-Lincoln (28.8% graduation rate, 49 graduates).
- The overall graduation rate for the non-degree-granting, for-profit schools increased from 71.2% in 2002–2003 to 73.2% in 2013–2014. Graduation rates for 2013–2014 ranged from 100.0% at the Capitol School of Hairstyling and Esthetics (79 graduates) to 60.4% at La’James International College (67 graduates).
- Within all of the sectors, some schools showed significant decreases in their completion rates, while others reported noticeable improvements in their completion rates. Consequently, the sector completion rates shown in Figure 2.2.2 should not be interpreted as an indicant of the performance of any particular school.
- See Table A10.3 for the 2002–2003 and 2013–2014 completion rates by institution and by sector. See Table A10.4.a through Table A10.4.l in Appendix 10 for the data used to calculate the completion rates for the six sectors and each of the state’s postsecondary institutions from 2002–2003 through 2013–2014.

College Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

- An analysis of IPEDS data reveals that completion rates at Nebraska's postsecondary institutions varied and changed by race/ethnicity between 2002–2003 and 2013–2014.
- As shown in [Figure 2.2.3](#), the completion rates for white non-Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders in 2002–2003 and 2013–2014 were significantly higher than the completion rates for Hispanics, Native Americans, black non-Hispanics, and multiracial students.³³
- Comparing the graduation rates in 2002–2003 to those in 2013–2014, the greatest increases were for Hispanics (5.6 percentage points) and white non-Hispanics (3.3 percentage points).
- Completion rates for each racial/ethnic group fluctuate, at least slightly, from year to year.
- See [Table A10.5](#) and [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

Figure 2.2.3
Graduation Rates for Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions
by Race/Ethnicity
2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline



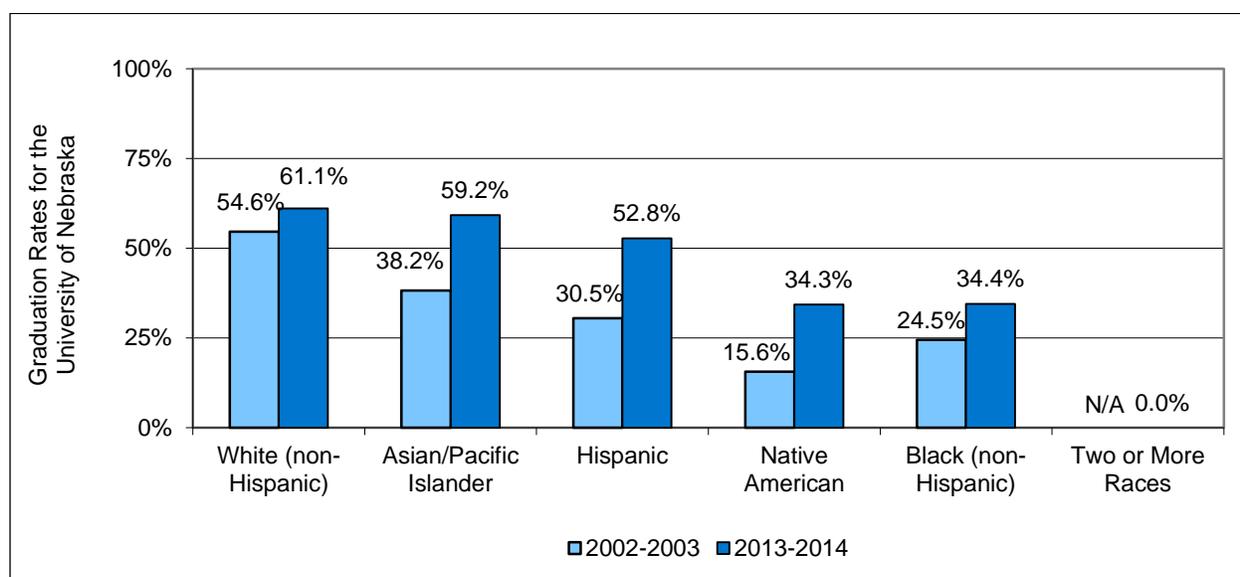
Note. See [Table A10.5](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

³³ The race/ethnic category 'two or more races' was first available in IPEDS for fall 2008 enrollment. However, institutions were not required to use the new race/ethnic category until fall 2011 enrollments were reported.

College Graduation Rates by Sector and by Race/Ethnicity

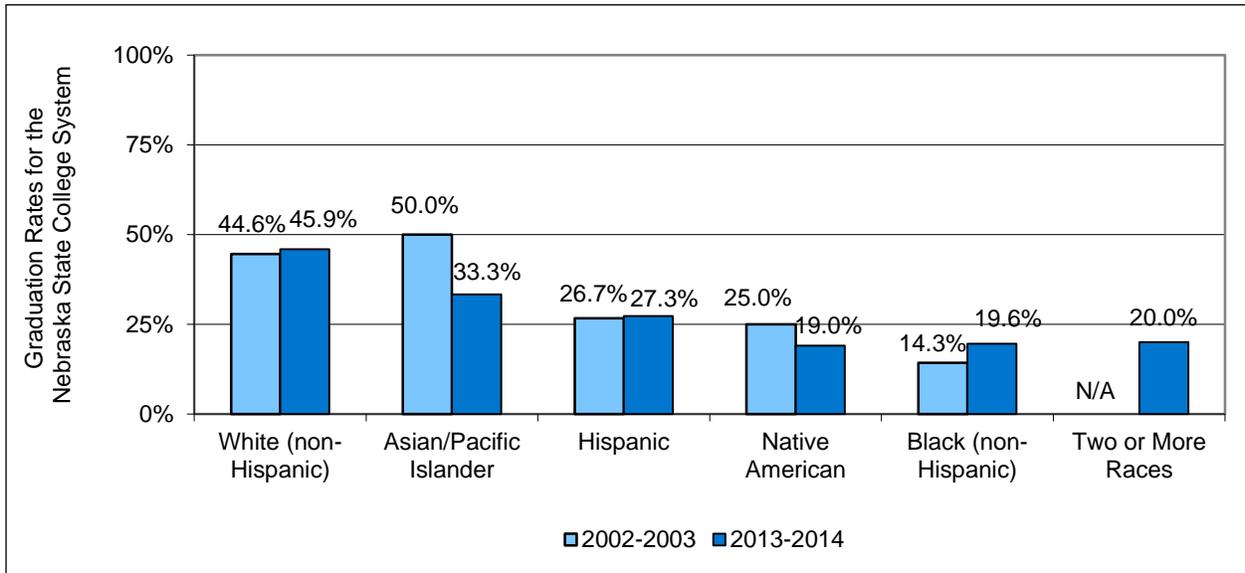
- The following charts show how the graduation rates for each racial/ethnic group varied and changed between 2002–2003 and 2013–2014 within each of the six sectors of higher education in Nebraska.
- As shown in [Figure 2.2.4](#), graduation rates increased for all racial/ethnic groups at the University of Nebraska between 2002–2003 and 2013–2014.
- Within the Nebraska State College System, graduation rates increased for white non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and black non-Hispanics but decreased for Asians/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans (see [Figure 2.2.5](#)). That all graduation rates did not increase or remain about the same is due, at least in part, to the fact that only a small number of minority students graduated from the state colleges in 2002–2003 and 2013–2014.
- As shown in [Figure 2.2.6](#), graduation rates at Nebraska’s community colleges decreased for all racial/ethnic groups except Hispanics between 2002–2003 and 2013–2014.
- Graduation rates increased between 2002–2003 and 2013–2014 for white non-Hispanics and black non-Hispanics within the independent sector (see [Figure 2.2.7](#)). Meanwhile, graduation rates for black non-Hispanics decreased within the degree-granting for-profit/career schools (see [Figure 2.2.8](#)) and the non-degree-granting for-profit/career schools (see [Figure 2.2.9](#)).
- See [Table 10.7](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

Figure 2.2.4
Graduation Rates for the University of Nebraska
by Race/Ethnicity
2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline



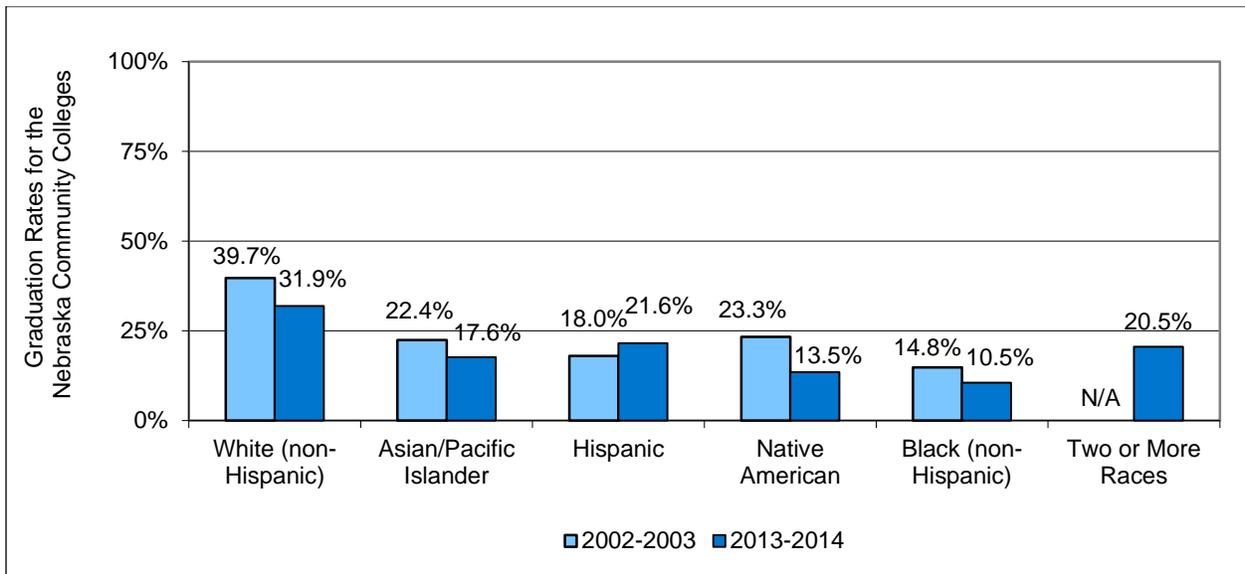
Note. See [Table A10.7](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

Figure 2.2.5
Graduation Rates for the Nebraska State College System
by Race/Ethnicity
2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline



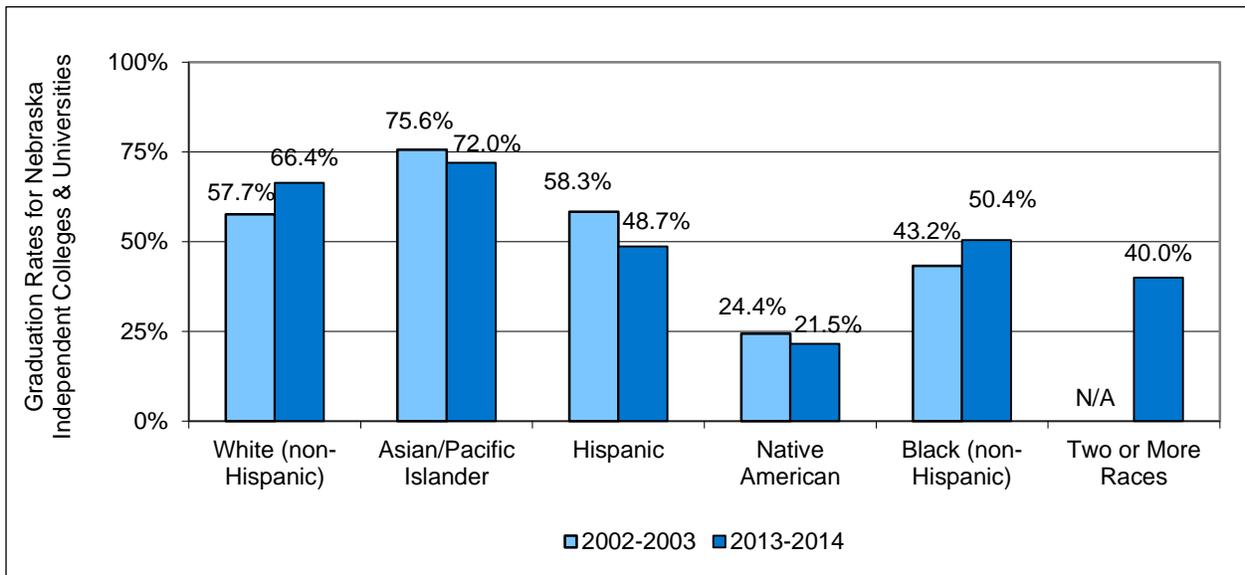
Note. See Table A10.7 in Appendix 10 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

Figure 2.2.6
Graduation Rates for the Nebraska Community Colleges
by Race/Ethnicity
2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline



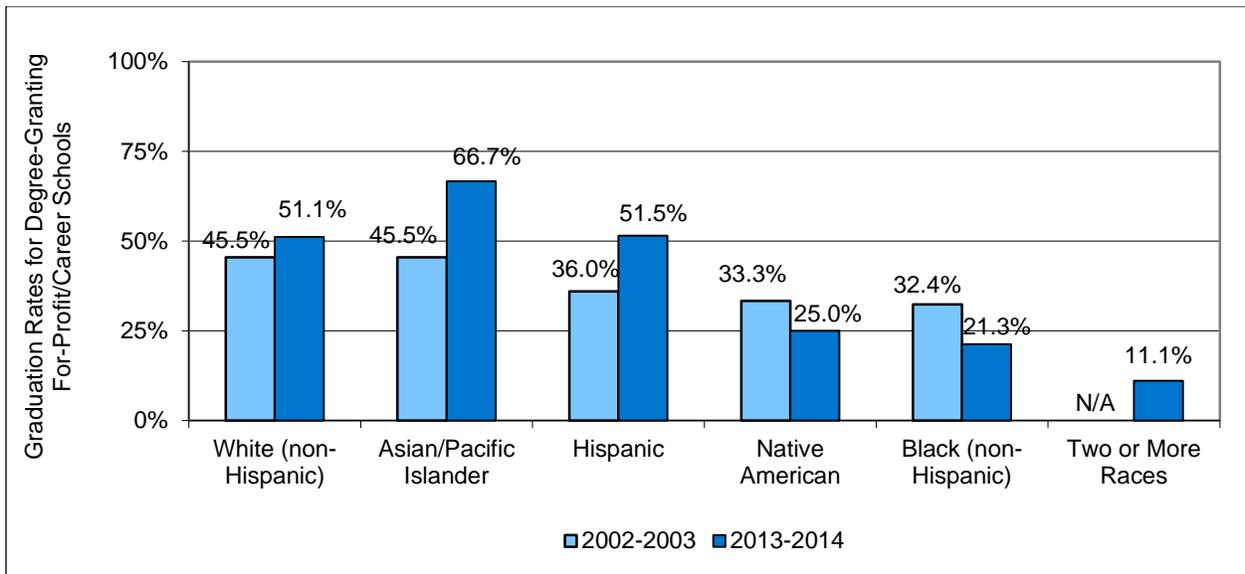
Note. See Table A10.7 in Appendix 10 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

Figure 2.2.7
Graduation Rates for Independent Colleges and Universities
in Nebraska by Race/Ethnicity
2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline



Note. See [Table A10.7](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

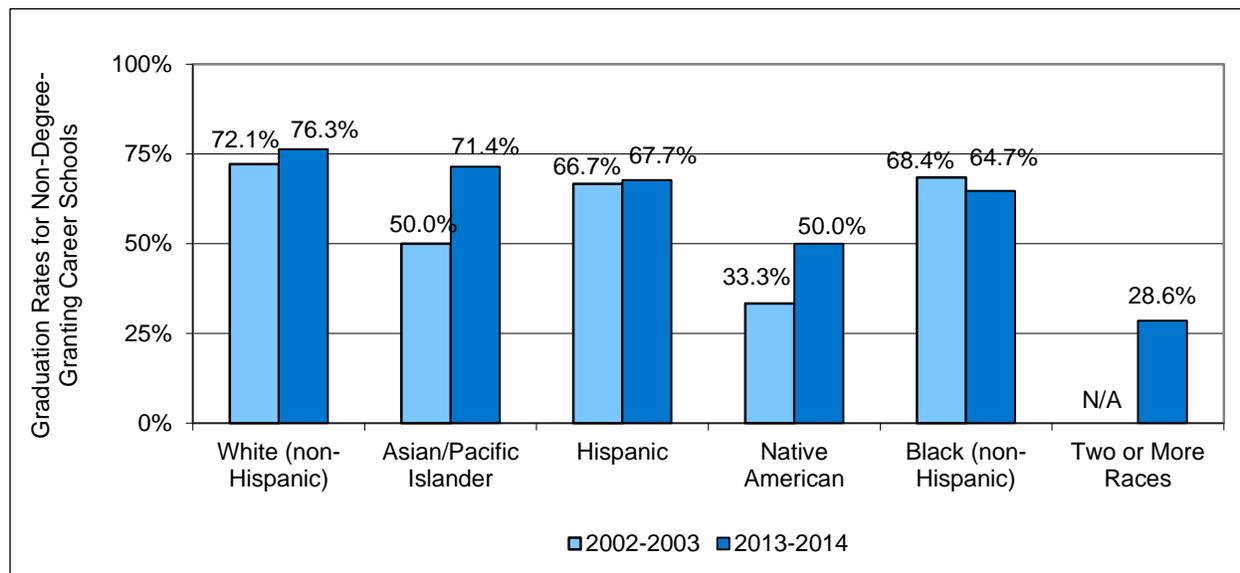
Figure 2.2.8
Graduation Rates for the Degree-Granting, For-Profit/Career Schools
in Nebraska by Race/Ethnicity
2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline



Note. See [Table A10.7](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

Figure 2.2.9

**Graduation Rates for the Non-Degree-Granting, For-Profit/Career Schools
in Nebraska by Race/Ethnicity
2013–2014 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline**



Note. See Table A10.7 in Appendix 10 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2003 and fall 2014 surveys.

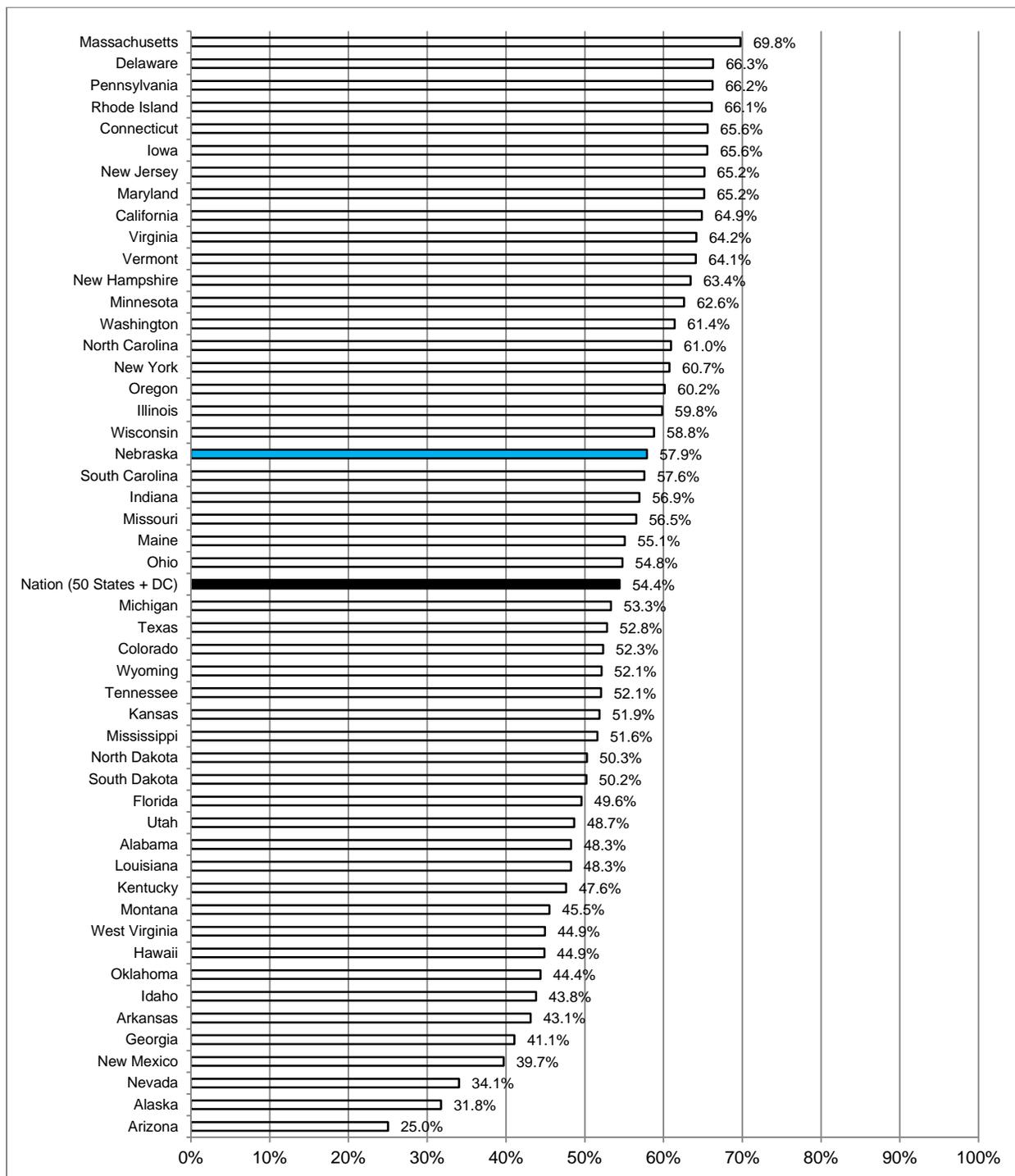
Nebraska Graduation Rates Compared to the Graduation Rates of Other States

Figure 2.2.10 and Figure 2.2.11 show how the graduation rates of Nebraska’s four-year and two-year institutions compare to the rates calculated for other states and the United States as a whole. These rates are calculated for all of the degree-granting institutions within each state, including public, private (not-for-profit), and for-profit schools. These rates also are for all awards conferred. For example, the graduation rate for Nebraska’s two-year schools encompasses awards of diplomas and certificates as well as two-year associate degrees.

- As shown in Figure 2.2.10, the graduation rate for Nebraska’s four-year institutions was 57.9% for 2013–2014, or 20th highest among the 50 states and 3.5 percentage points above the graduation rate for all four-year institutions in the United States, which was 54.4%.
- As illustrated in Figure 2.2.11, the graduation rate for Nebraska’s two-year institutions was 29.3%, or 12th highest among the 50 states, and 1.5 percentage points higher than the graduation rate of 27.9% for all two-year institutions in the United States.

Figure 2.2.10

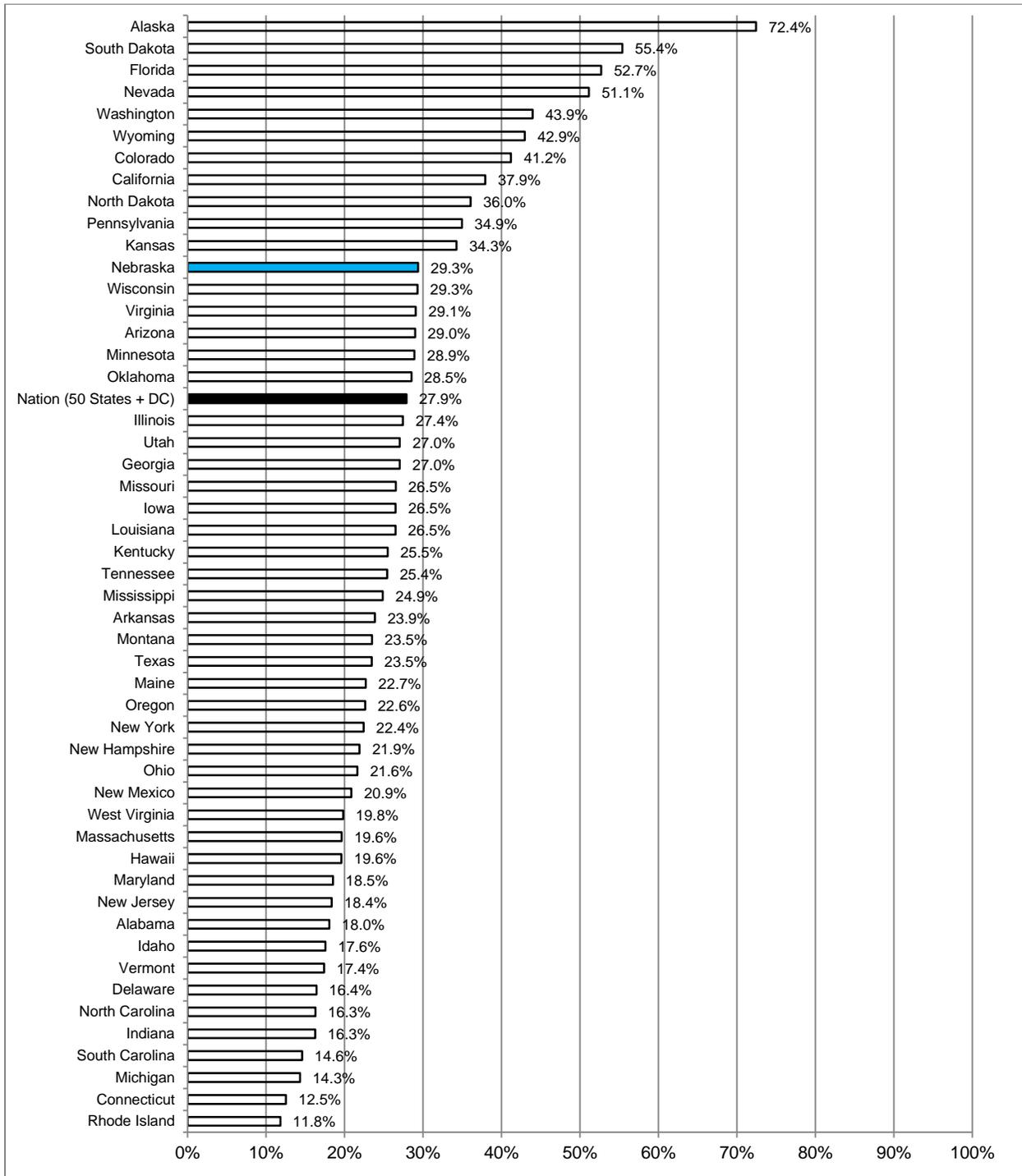
2013–2014 Graduation Rates for Four-Year Institutions by State



Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 survey. Graduation rates obtained from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), February 2016.

Figure 2.2.11

2013–2014 Graduation Rates for Two-Year Institutions by State



Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 survey. Graduation rates obtained from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), February 2016.

Transfer Rates for Nebraska Community Colleges

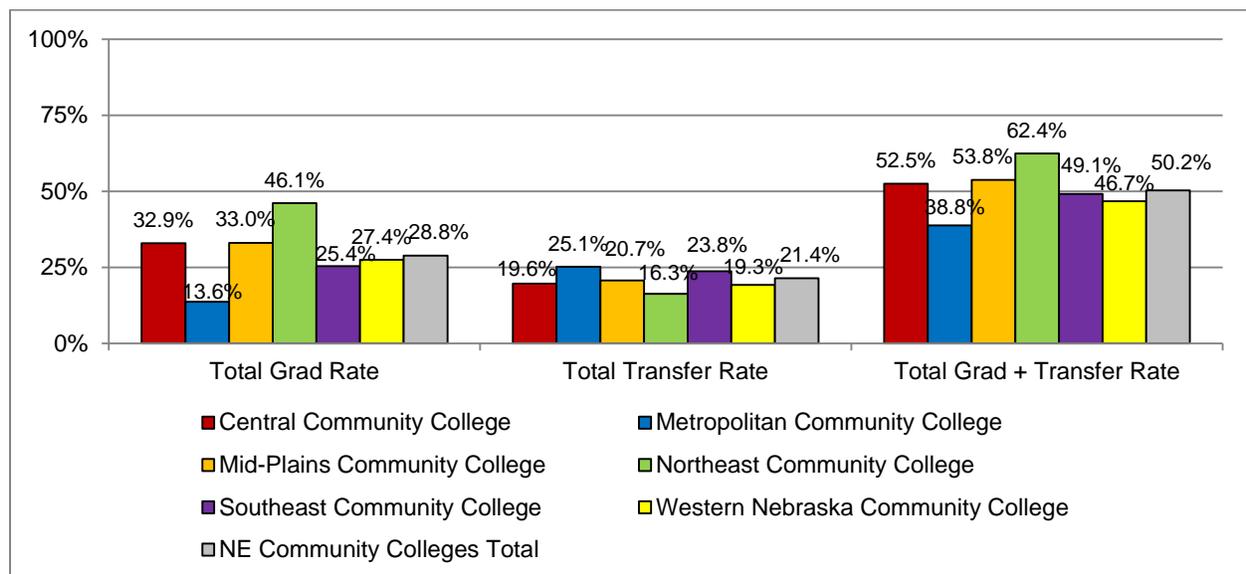
All six of Nebraska’s community colleges reported transfer rates for the 2013–2014 academic year. A college’s graduation and transfer rates are based on the same full-time, first-time freshmen cohort. Consequently, a college’s graduation and transfer rates can be added together to determine the total percentage of the full-time, first-time freshmen who either completed their programs or transferred to other schools within 150% of the time specified for normal program completion. For two-year associate degrees, this specific period is usually three years. For one-year certificate programs, 150% of normal completion time is 18 months. (For more information about computed college transfer rates based on IPEDS data, see [Explanatory Note A11.1](#) in [Appendix 11](#).)

[Figure 2.2.12](#) compares the 2013–2014 graduation, transfer, and graduation plus transfer rates for the six community colleges: Central Community College, Metropolitan Community College, Mid-Plains Community College, Northeast Community College, Southeast Community College, and Western Nebraska Community College.

- As shown in [Figure 2.2.12](#), the 2013–2014 graduation rates for the colleges ranged from 13.6% at Metropolitan Community College to 46.1% at Northeast Community College.
- The schools’ transfer rates ranged from 16.1% at Northeast Community College to 25.1% at Metropolitan Community College.
- The rates produced by combining each institution’s graduation rates and transfer rates ranged from 38.8% at Metropolitan Community College to 62.4% at Northeast Community College.

Figure 2.2.12

2013–2014 Graduation Rates and Transfers Rates for Nebraska Community Colleges by Type of Rate



Note. See [Table A10.4.1](#) in [Appendix 10](#) and [Table A11.1](#) and [Table A11.2](#) in [Appendix 11](#) for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 survey.

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