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# 2026 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report



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Presented at the March 13, 2026, Commission Meeting

# Background

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

# Important Technical Notes

- Adjustments are occasionally made to improve data accuracy
  - e.g., Data sources may revise previous estimates
  - Therefore, it is generally advisable to reference the most current edition of this report
- Due to rounding...
  - Percentages may not sum to 100.0%
  - Totals may not equal the sum of their parts
- Throughout this presentation, you'll see a graphic like this in the lower left side of the screen. For more information about data presented on a particular slide, please refer to the corresponding page number in the *2026 Progress Report*.



# What's New for 2026

- Updated data from the U.S. Census Bureau was just released last week for Section 3
  - Updated pages have been distributed
    - Pages I, S1, S18-S19, 123-124, 126-130, and 325-329
- Institution changes
  - Removed the University of Phoenix
    - Closed as of fall 2015 and did not report data to IPEDS for the prior year
  - Data for the College of Hair Design-Downtown and the College of Hair Design-East Campus is reported under a single institution (College of Hair Design-Downtown) as of fall 2025
  - Stephanie Moss Academy is now Xenon A Stephanie Moss Academy

## **PRIORITY 1**

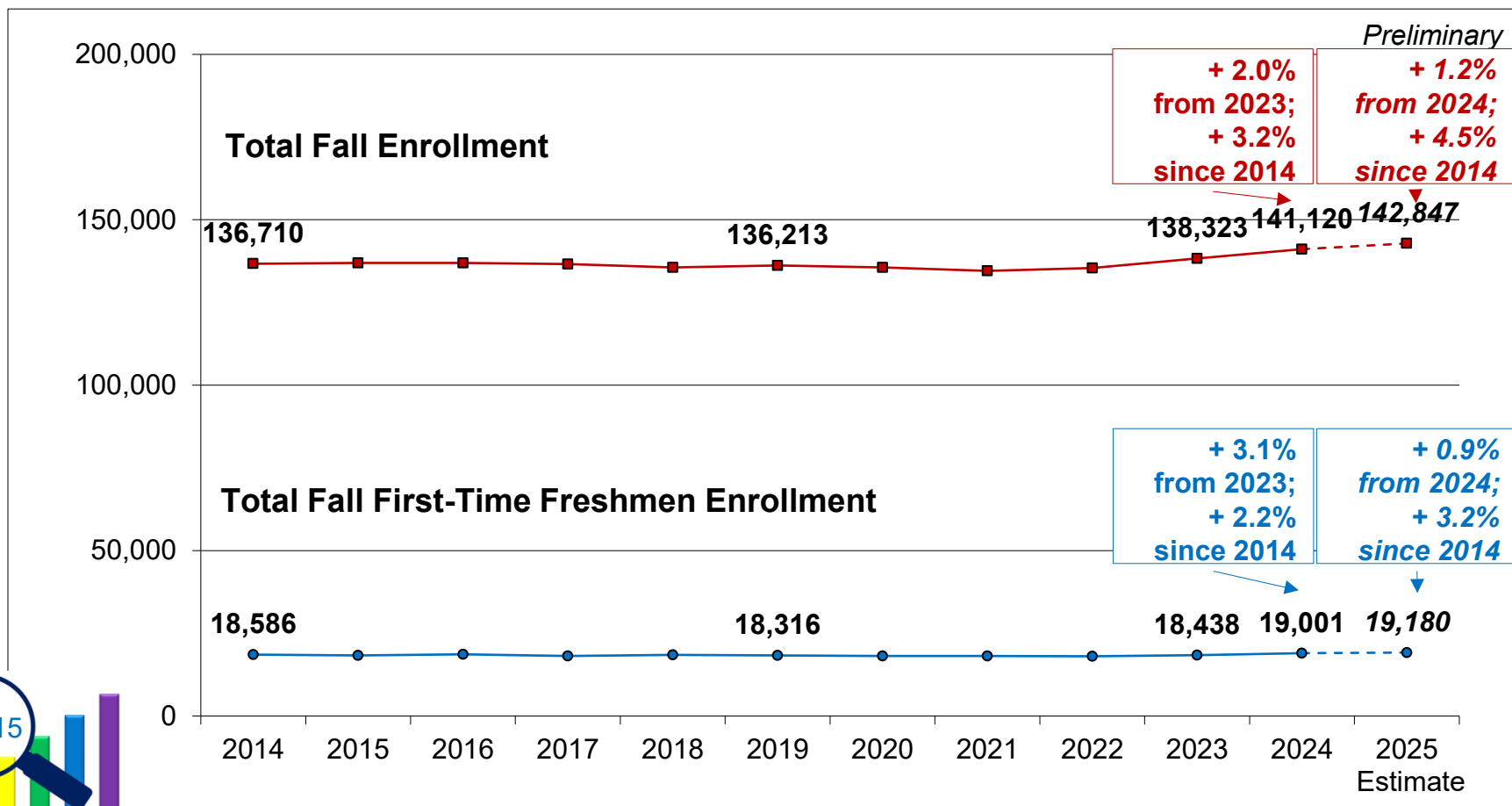
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# **INCREASE POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT**

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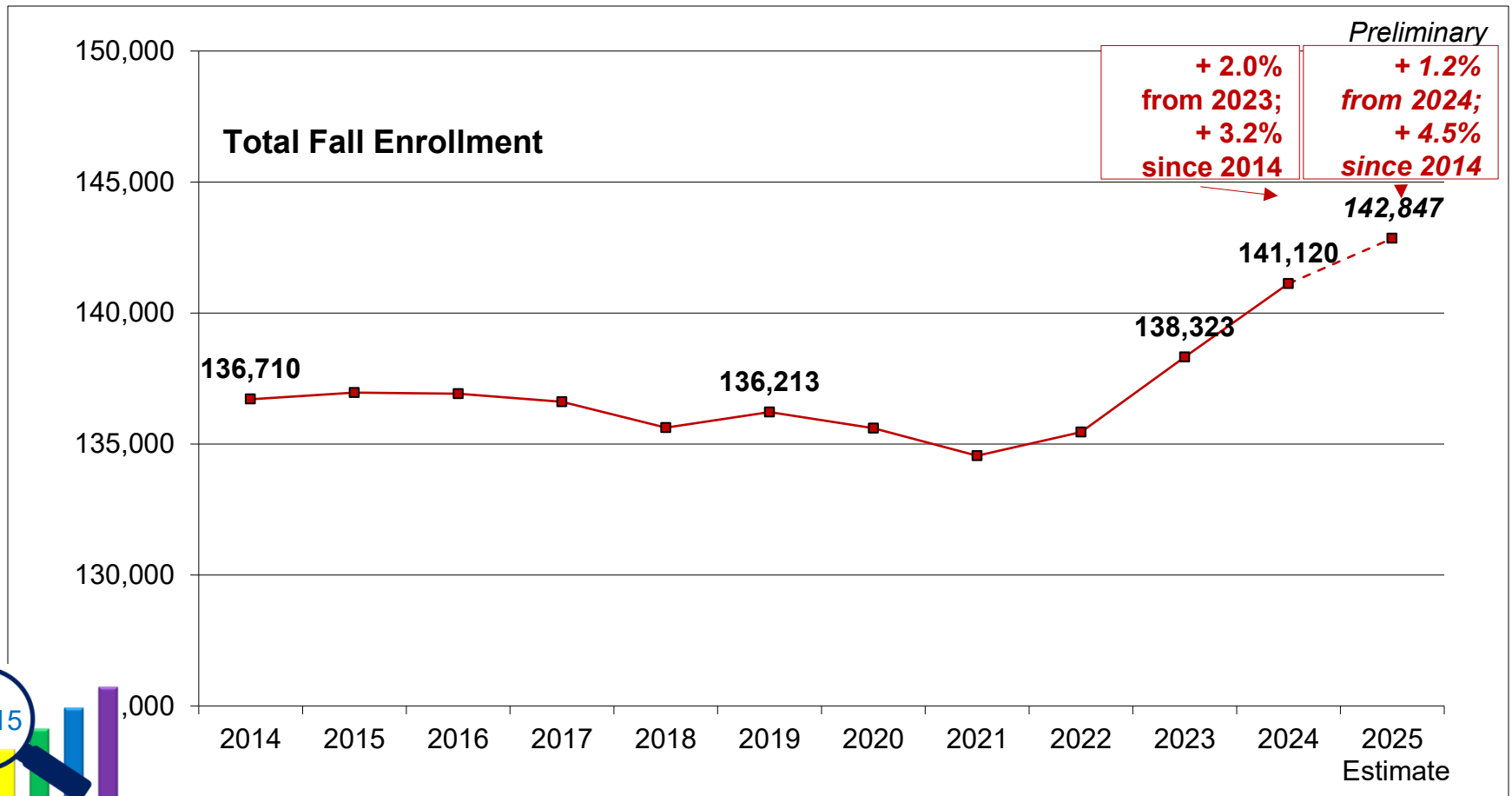
# Fall Enrollment at Nebraska's Postsecondary Institutions

- **Total fall enrollment** increased an estimated **1.2%** over the last year for a total 11-year increase of **4.5%**
- **Fall first-time freshmen enrollment** increased an estimated **0.9%** over the last year for a total 11-year increase of **3.2%**



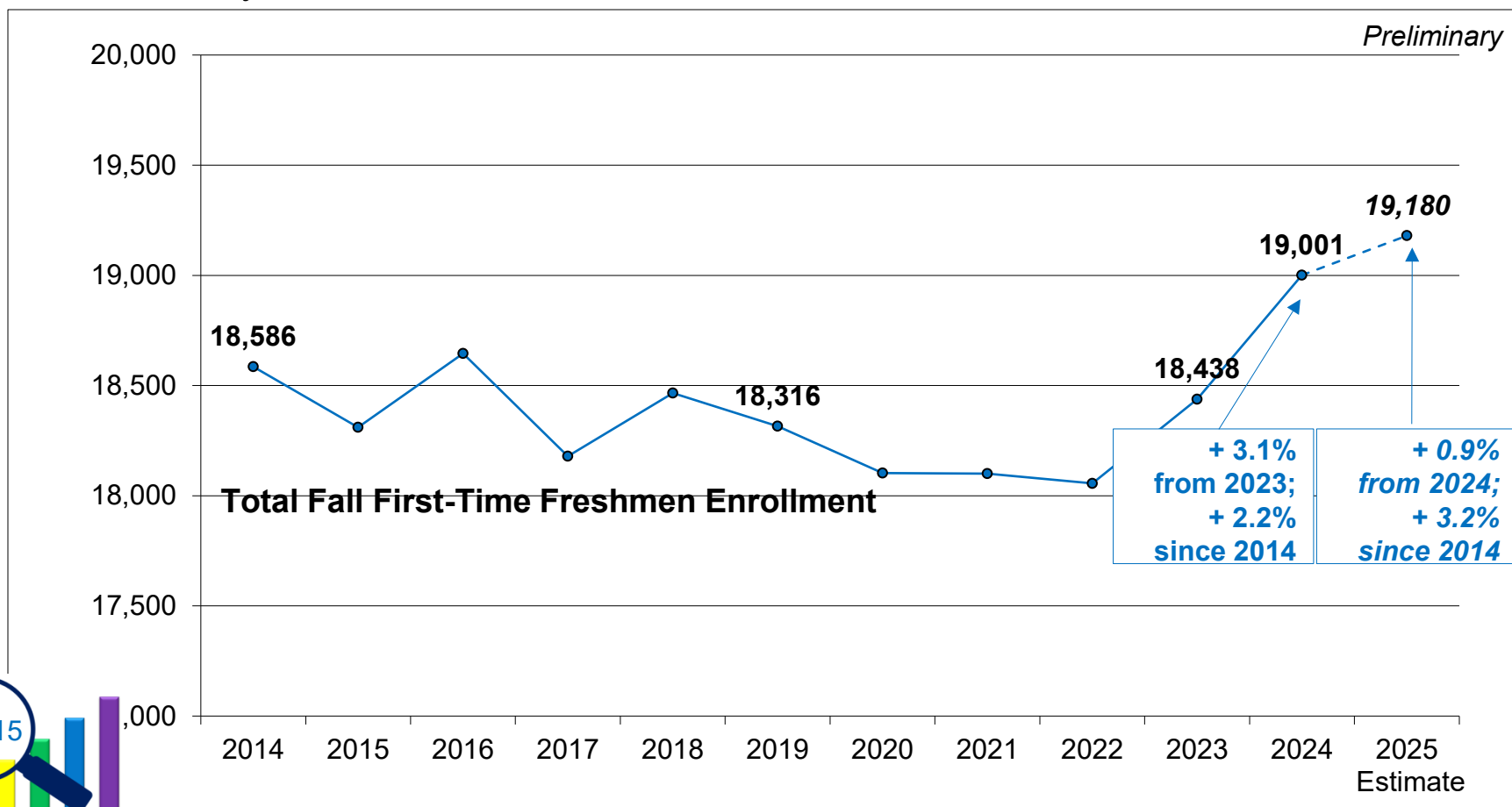
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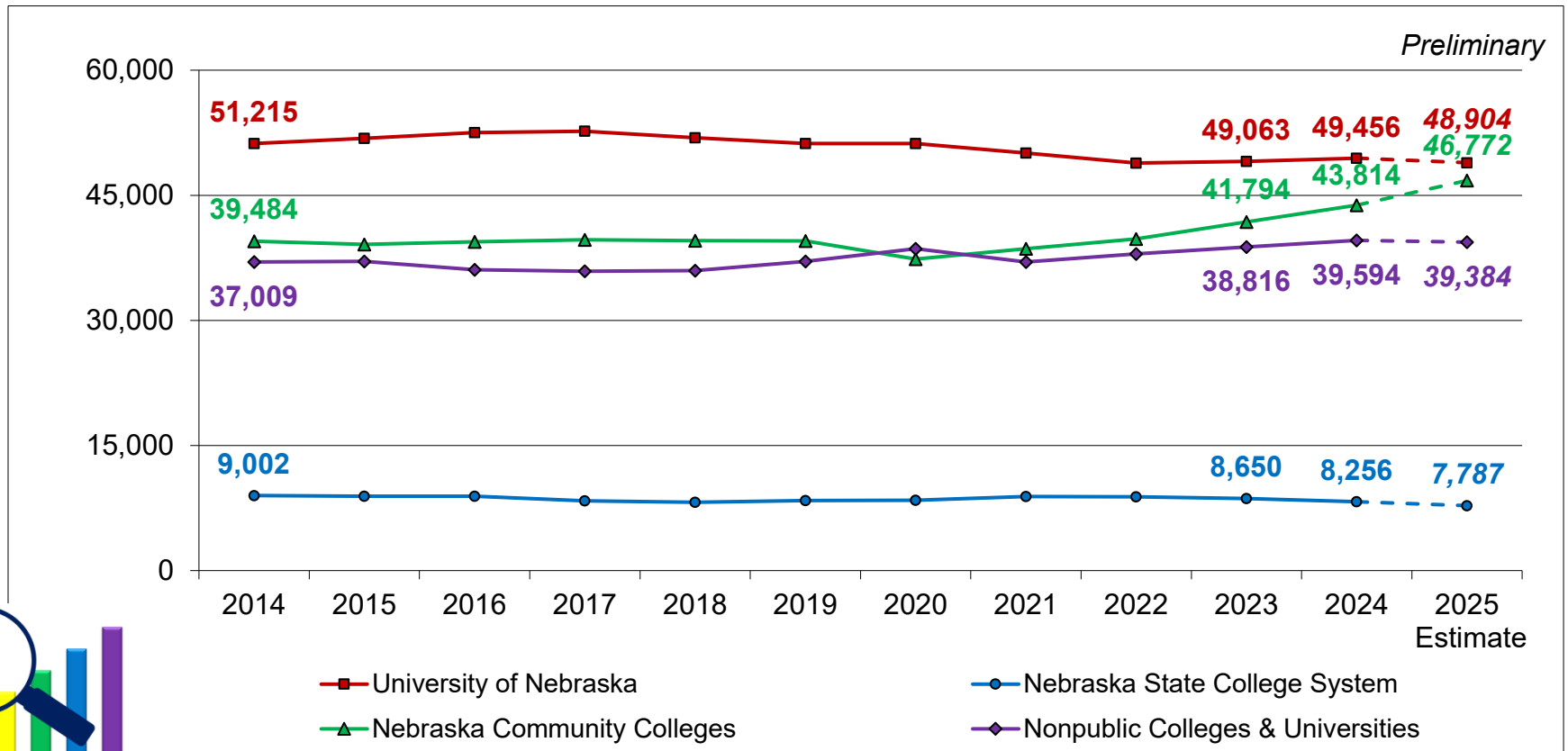
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# Total Fall Enrollment by Sector

SECTOR	1-Year Change 2023 to 2024	Est. 1-Year Change 2024 to 2025	10-Year Change 2014 to 2024	Est. 11-Year Change 2014 to 2025
■ University of Nebraska	0.8%	-1.1%	-3.4%	-4.5%
● Neb. State College System	-4.6%	-5.7%	-8.3%	-13.5%
▲ Neb. Community Colleges	4.8%	6.8%	11.0%	18.5%
◆ Nonpublic Colleges & Univ.	2.0%	-0.5%	7.0%	6.4%



# High School Graduation Rates

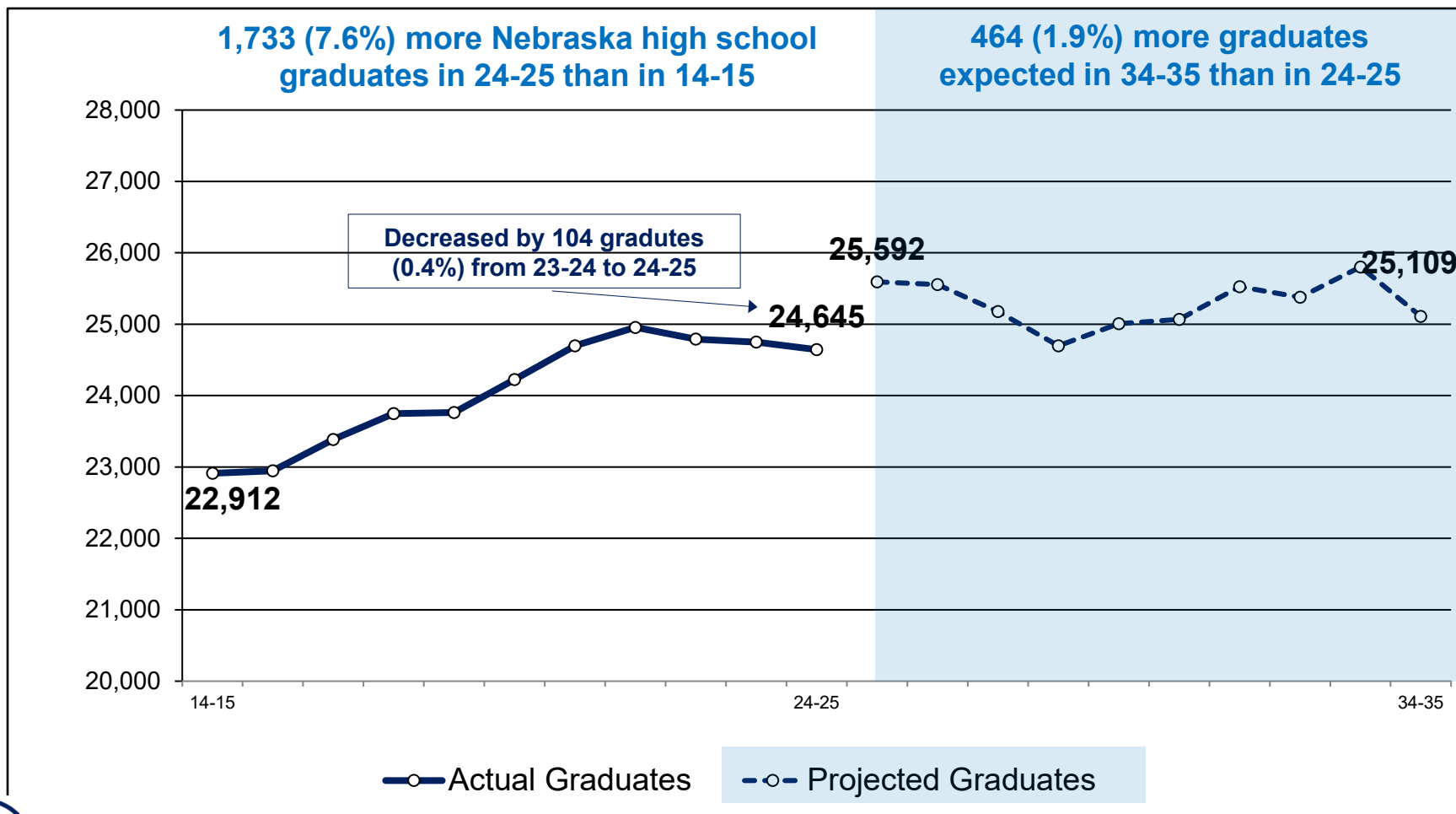
## Section 1.1.a

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



# Total Number of Nebraska High School Graduates

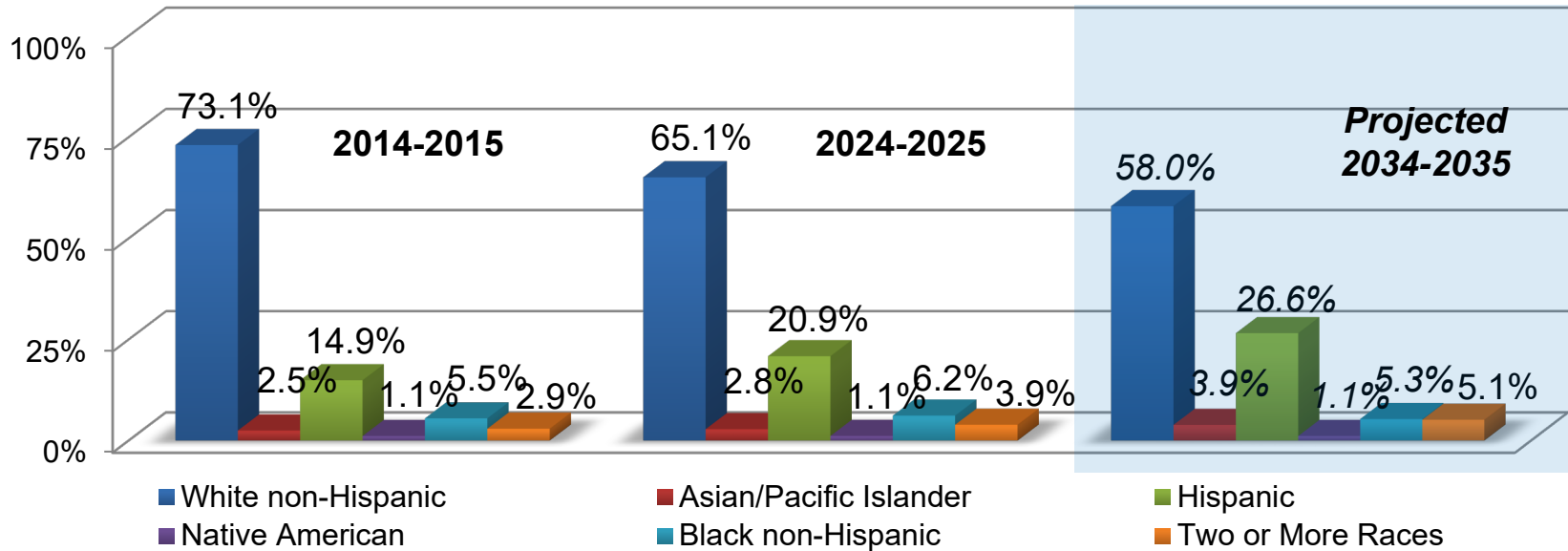
## Actual (14-15 through 24-25) and Projected (25-26 through 34-35)



*Note.* Projections include students from educational service units and state-operated schools (estimated 100 per year). The latest projections released by WICHE are from 2024.



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

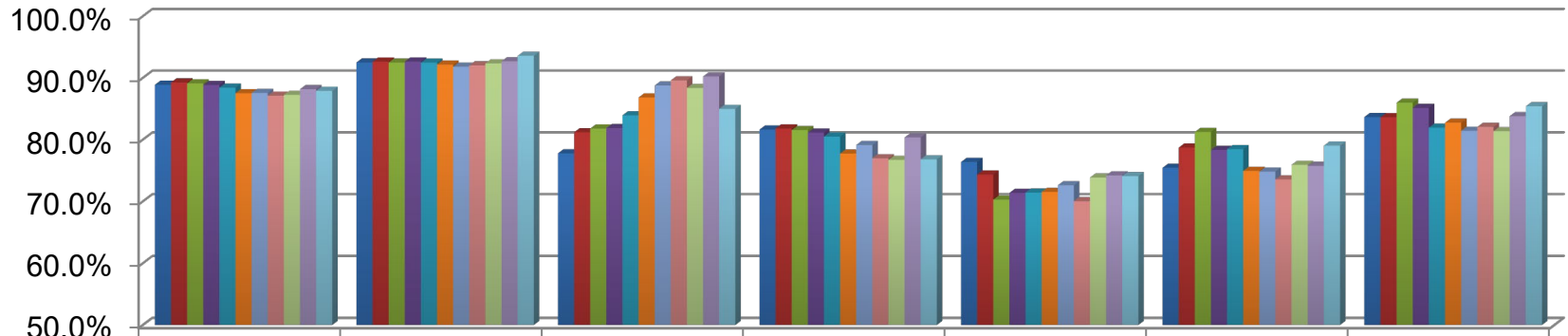


	2014-2015	2024-2025	Projected 2034-2035	10-Year Change 14-15 to 24-25	Projected 10-Year Change 24-25 to 34-35
White (non-Hispanic)	14,817	14,444	13,104	-2.5%	-9.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	503	626	876	24.5%	39.9%
Hispanic	3,026	4,631	6,006	53.0%	29.7%
Native American	228	253	253	11.0%	0.0%
Black (non-Hispanic)	1,112	1,369	1,205	23.1%	-12.0%
Two or More Races	595	869	1,164	46.1%	33.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,281</b>	<b>22,192</b>	<b>22,547</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>



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

- In 2022, Nebraska was ranked **21st highest** in the nation
- *(National data has not been released for state-to-state comparisons for 2023, 2024, or 2025)*

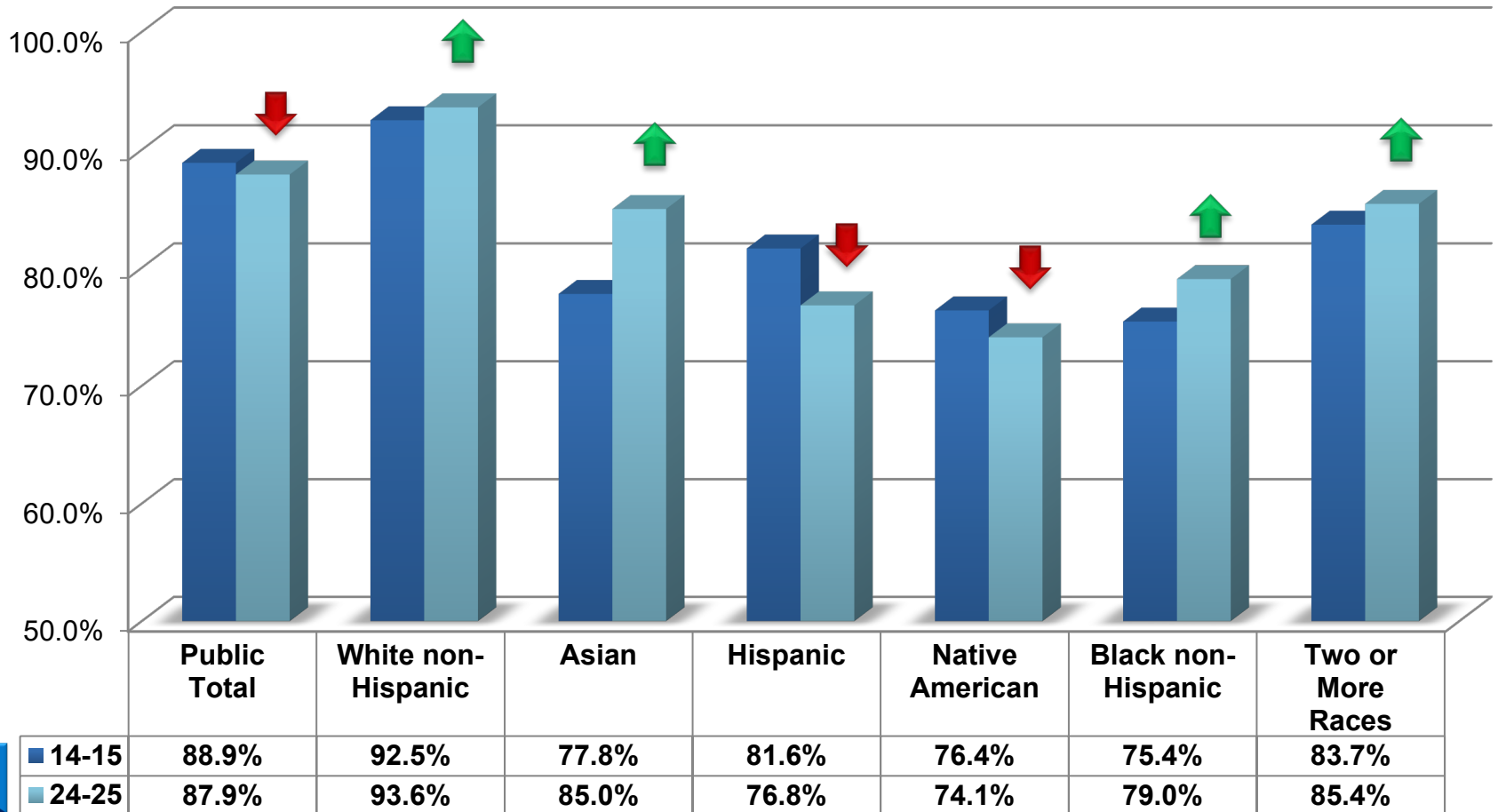


	Public Total	White non-Hispanic	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Black non-Hispanic	Two or More Races
■ 14-15	88.9%	92.5%	77.8%	81.6%	76.4%	75.4%	83.7%
■ 15-16	89.3%	92.6%	81.2%	81.8%	74.3%	78.7%	83.6%
■ 16-17	89.1%	92.5%	81.8%	81.6%	70.3%	81.2%	86.0%
■ 17-18	88.9%	92.7%	81.9%	81.1%	71.4%	78.3%	85.1%
■ 18-19	88.4%	92.5%	83.9%	80.5%	71.4%	78.5%	81.9%
■ 19-20	87.5%	92.2%	86.8%	77.7%	71.5%	74.9%	82.8%
■ 20-21	87.6%	91.8%	88.8%	79.1%	72.6%	74.8%	81.4%
■ 21-22	87.1%	92.0%	89.6%	77.0%	70.0%	73.6%	82.1%
■ 22-23	87.2%	92.4%	88.4%	76.7%	73.9%	75.9%	81.4%
■ 23-24	88.2%	92.7%	90.2%	80.4%	74.2%	75.8%	83.8%
■ 24-25	87.9%	93.6%	85.0%	76.8%	74.1%	79.0%	85.4%



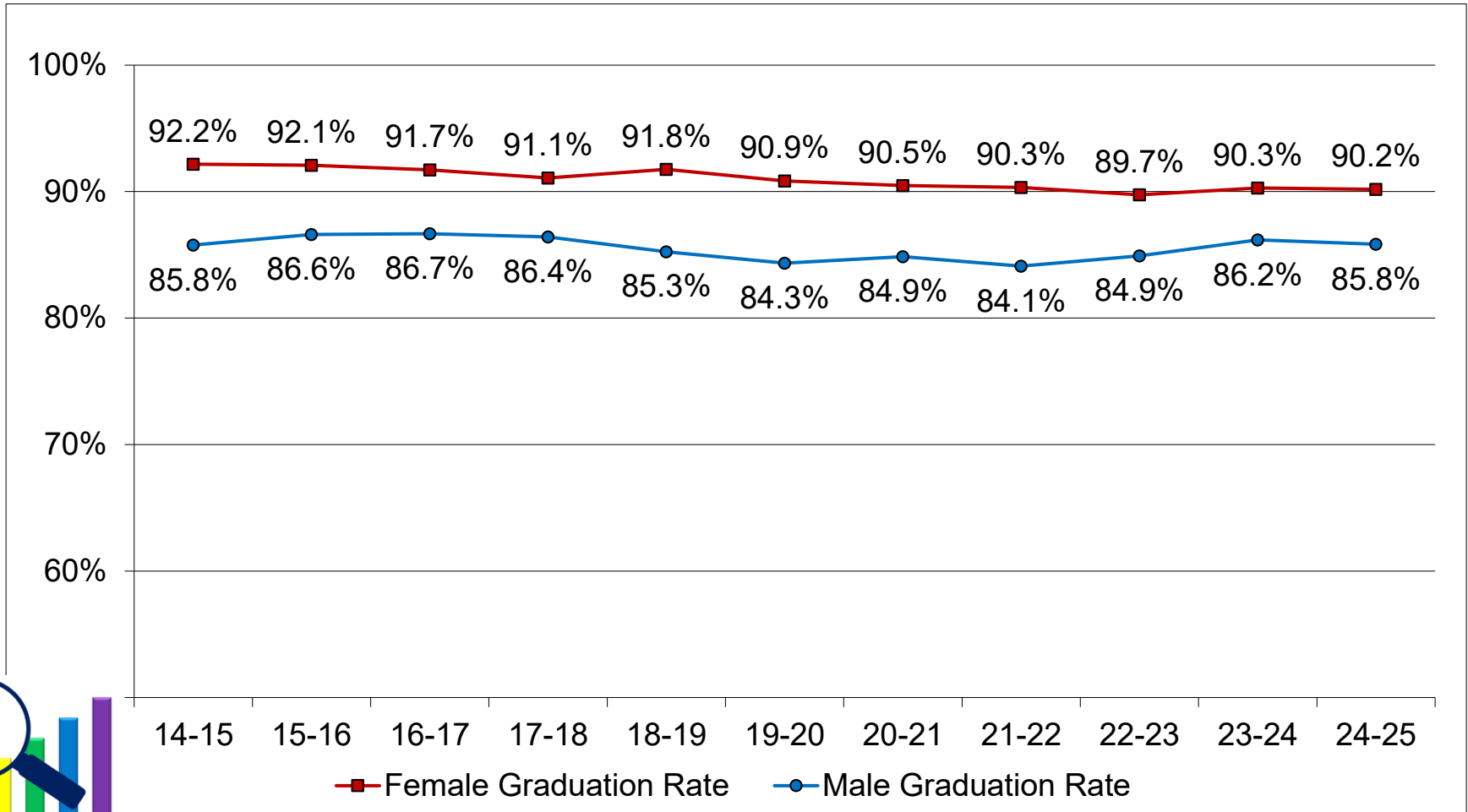
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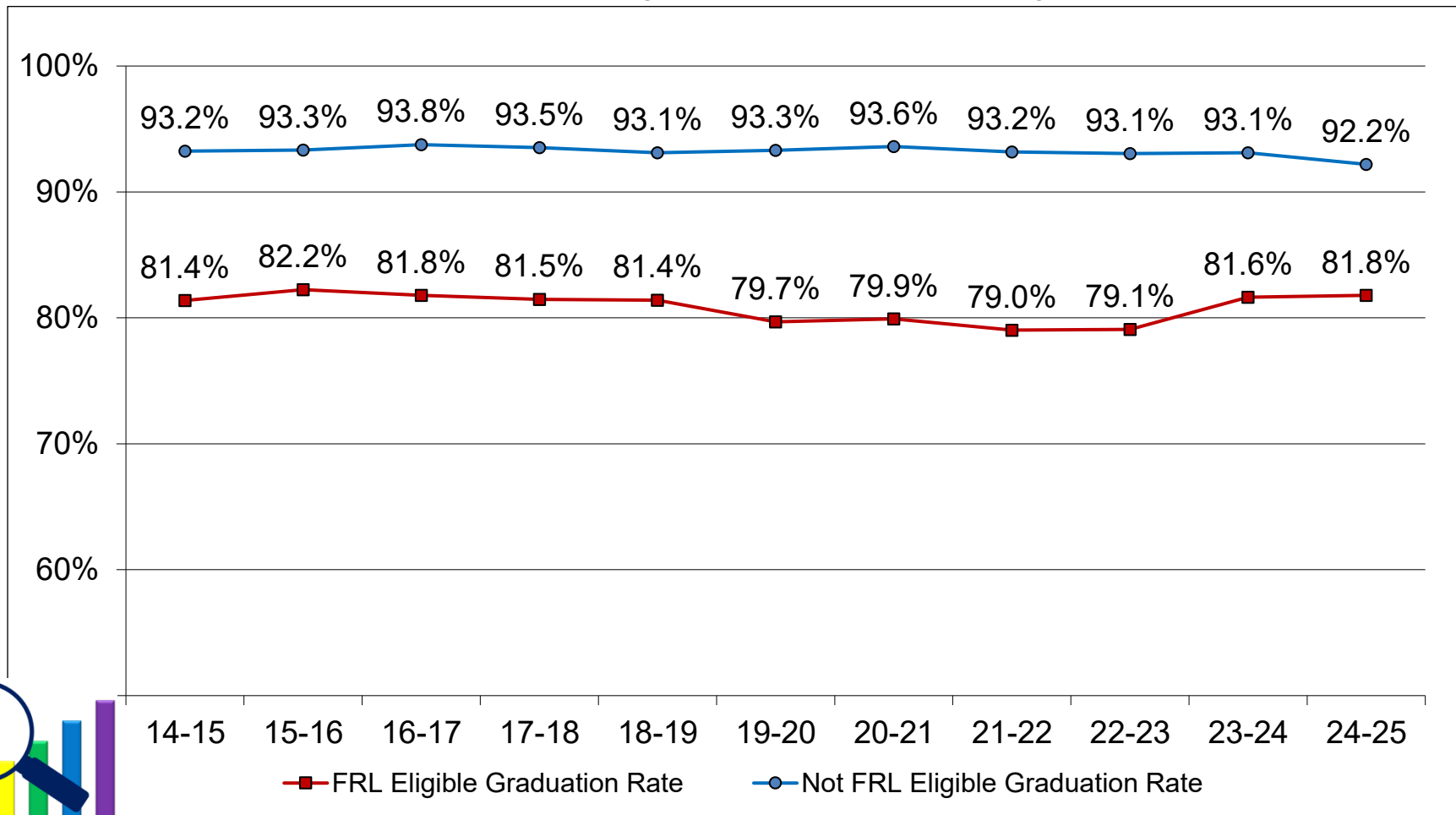
# Nebraska Public High School Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rates by Sex

- Graduation rates for females have consistently been higher than for males
- Since 2015, graduation rates declined 2.0 percentage points for females and were unchanged for males



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

- Graduation rates for non-FRL have consistently been higher than for FRL
- Since 2015, graduation rates decreased 1.0 percentage points for students not eligible for FRL and increased 0.4 percentage points for students eligible for FRL



# Preparation for College

## Section 1.1.b

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



# The ACT Assessment

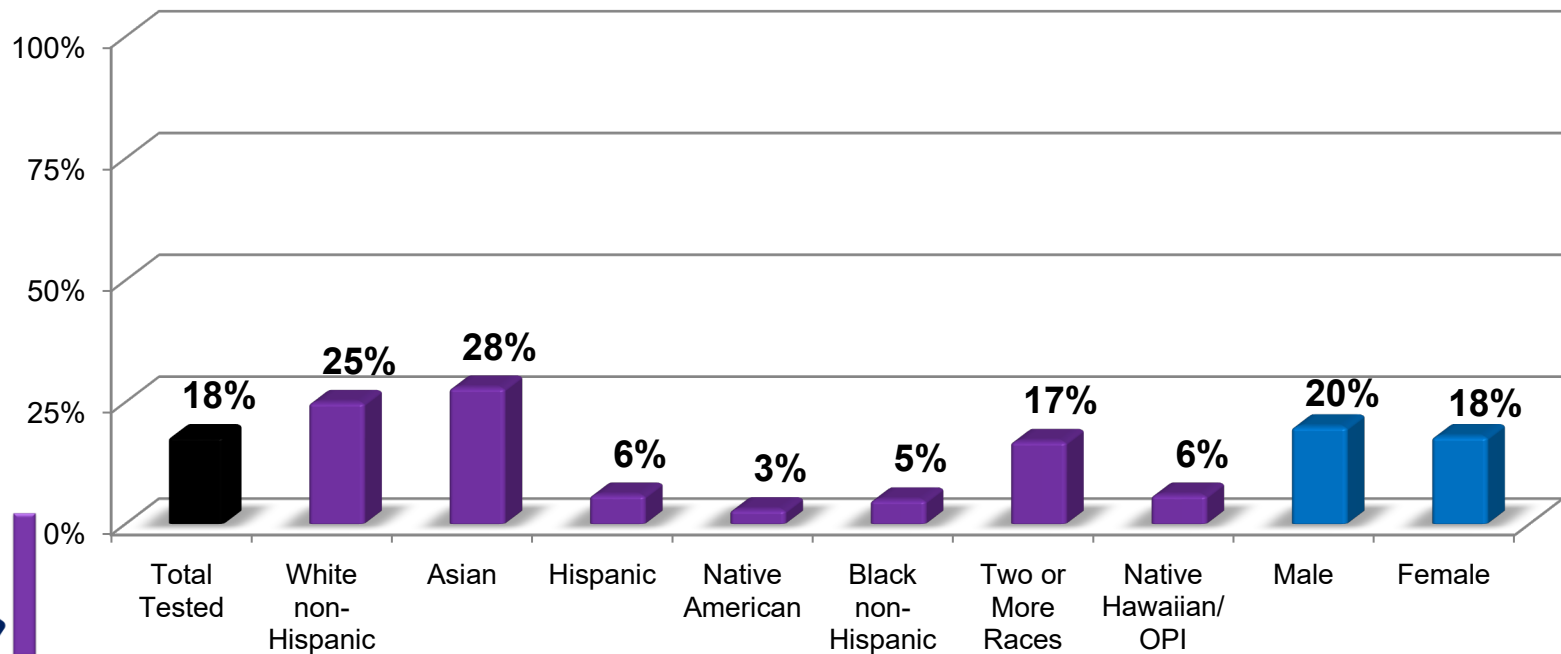
- In Nebraska, ACT is the predominant college entrance exam used to measure the extent to which Nebraska students are prepared for college
- Beginning with the class of 2018, all students take the ACT test in the cohort minus one year (typically, the student's junior year)
  - However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and extensive school closures, this requirement was waived for the graduating class of 2021 and not all 2022 graduates took the exam
    - ACT estimates that 86% of the 2021 graduating class, 94% of the 2022 graduating class, 96% of the 2023 graduating class, 95% of the 2024 graduating class, and 100% of the 2025 graduating class took the ACT test
  - In comparison, only 1.4% of high school graduates took the SAT Reasoning Test in 2025
- Therefore, this section focuses on the ACT Assessment
  - ACT Composite Scores:
    - 2015: Nebraska = 21.5                      National = 21.0
    - 2025: Nebraska = 19.2                      National = 19.4



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

Nebraska High School Graduating Class of 2025

- **Only 18% are sufficiently prepared** to earn B's or C's in entry-level college courses in English, algebra, biology, and social science
  - In comparison, 29% were sufficiently prepared in 2015 and 18% were sufficiently prepared in 2024
- Hispanics, Native Americans, Black non-Hispanics, multiracial, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders are less prepared for these courses than their White non-Hispanic or Asian classmates
- Females are less prepared than their male classmates



# College Continuation Rates

## Section 1.1.c

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



# Two Measures of Nebraska's College Continuation Rates

## 1. IPEDS

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

## 2. National Student Clearinghouse

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



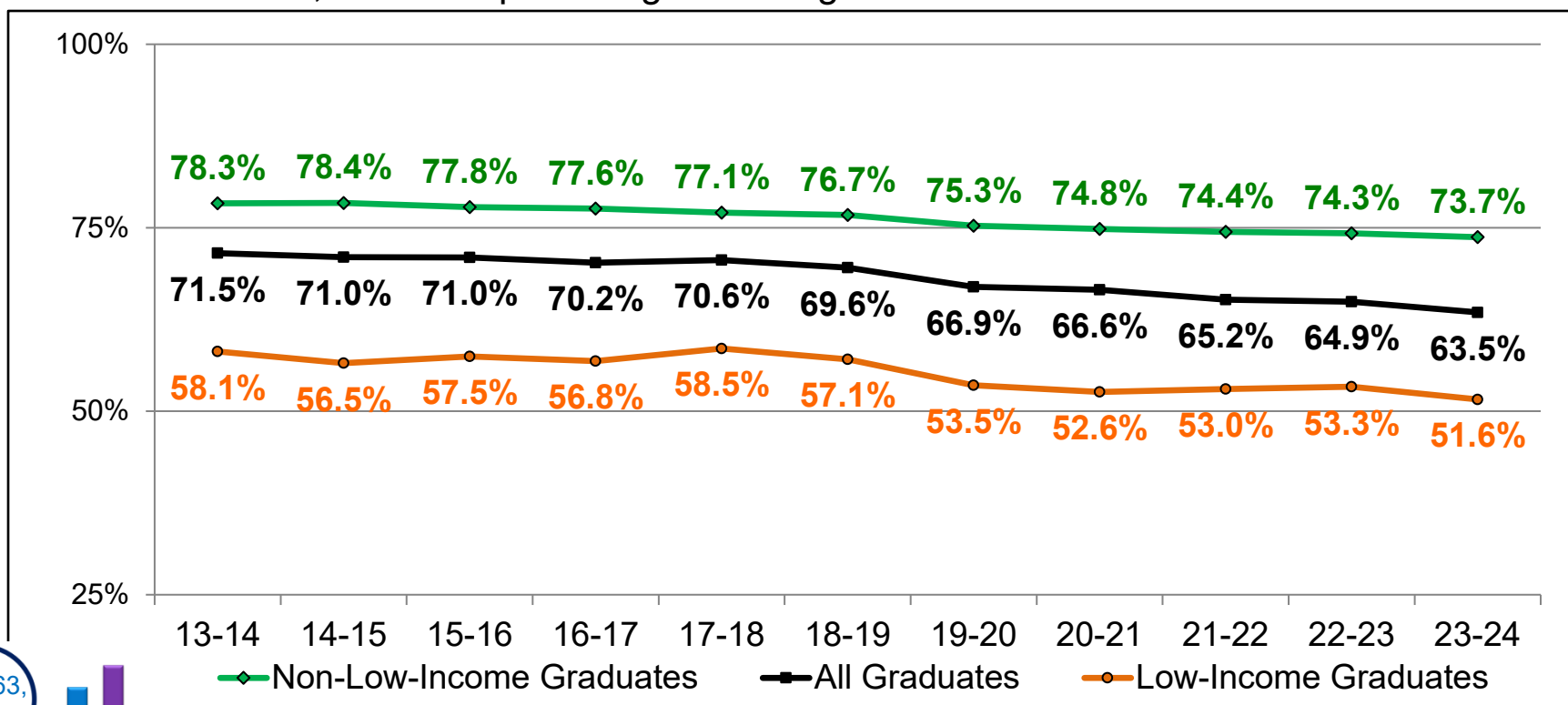
# College Continuation Rates

- IPEDS
  - Fall 2014 = 62.1%
  - Fall 2024 = 63.2%\*
    - Up from 60.5% in fall 2022
  - Ranked 7th highest nationally in fall 2024
- National Student Clearinghouse
  - Graduating class of 2013-2014 = 71.5%
  - Graduating class of 2023-2024 = 63.5%
    - Down from 69.6% five years ago (2019-2020)
    - Lowest rate in the reporting period



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

- Non-low-income graduates have consistently continued on to college at higher rates than low-income graduates
- The proportion of students classified as low income has increased over the last decade
  - In 2014, **33.6%** of public high school graduates were low income
  - In 2024, **46.3%** of public high school graduates were low income



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



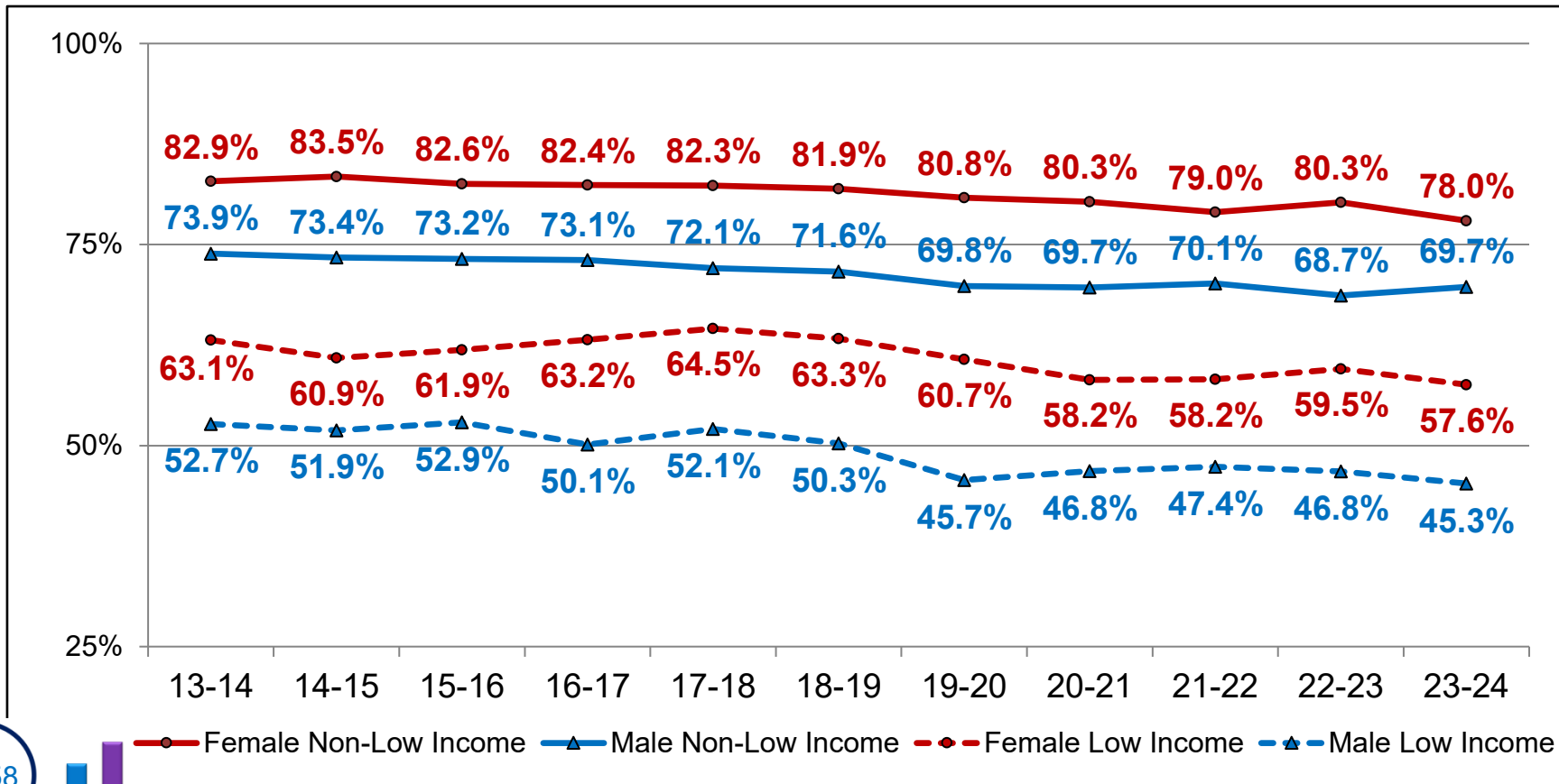
# College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Student Income Status and Sex

- Female** college continuation rate:

- 13-14 = **76.0%**
- 23-24 = **68.2%**

- Male** college continuation rate:

- 13-14 = **67.0%**
- 23-24 = **58.8%**

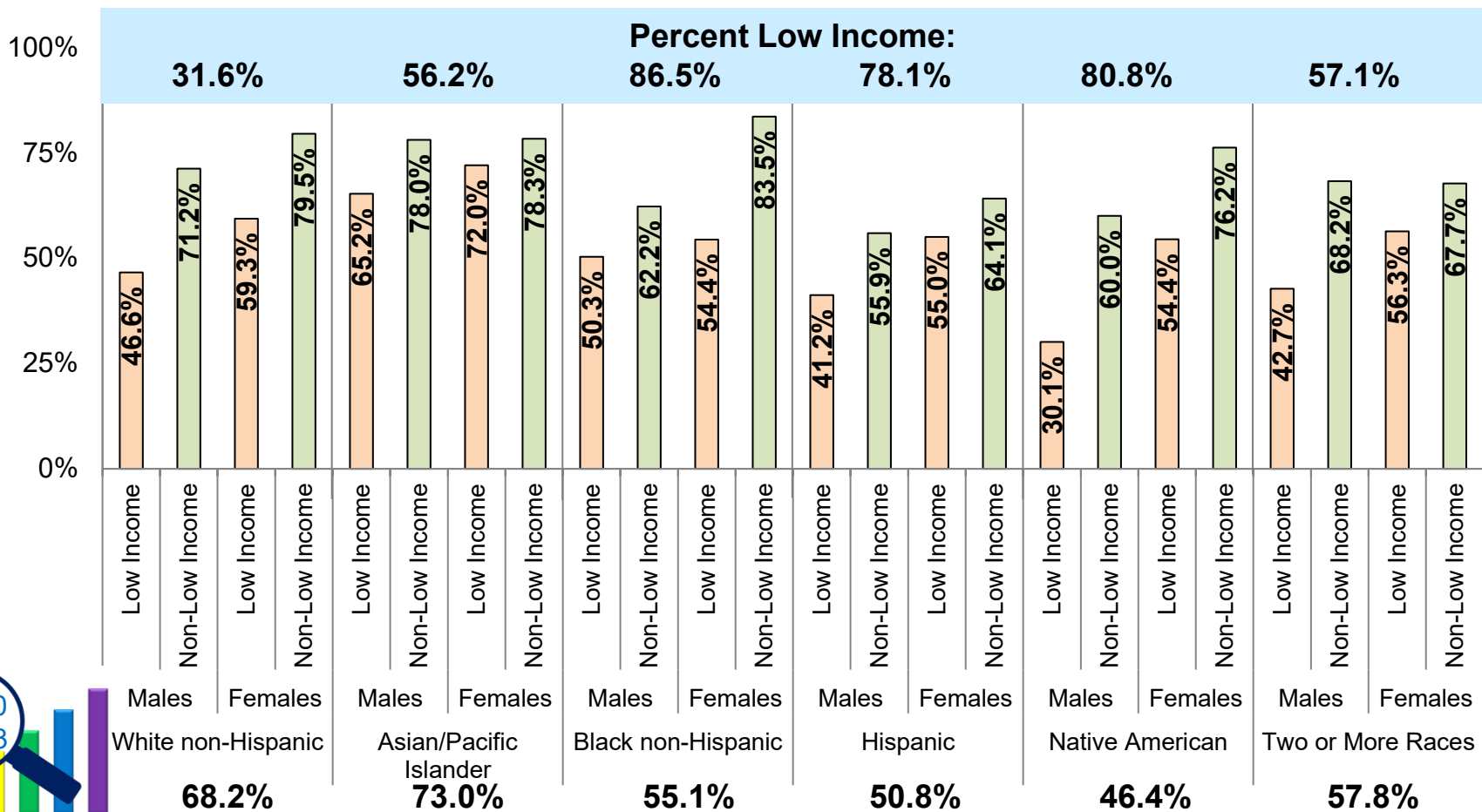


Note. Effective with the 2021-2022 cohort, students are classified as low income if they are eligible for FRL or if they graduate from a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).



# College Continuation Rates for Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, and Student Income Status 2023-24

- By race/ethnicity, college continuation rates ranged from 46.4% for Native Americans to 73.0% for Asian/Pacific Islanders
- The lowest college continuation rate among the 24 subgroups was for low-income, Native American, male graduates (30.1%); the highest was for non-low-income, Black, female graduates (83.5%)



# Nebraska High School Graduates Who Go to School in Nebraska

## Section 1.2

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



- Of Nebraska's recent high school graduates who go on to college, about 8 out of 10 go to college in Nebraska
  - Fall 2014 = 81.2%
  - Fall 2024 = 80.5%
- However, it is difficult to increase Nebraska college enrollments only by increasing the percentage of Nebraska high school graduates who go to college in the state



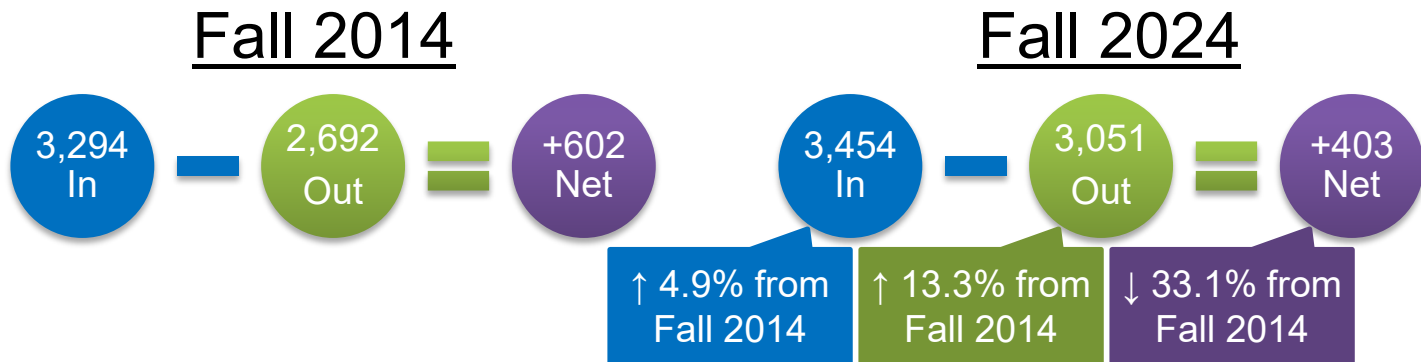
# Non-Nebraska FTF Who Enroll at Nebraska Colleges and Net Migration

## Section 1.3

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



- Out-of-state and foreign first-time freshmen enrolled at Nebraska’s colleges increased by 5.0% between fall 2014 and fall 2024:
  - Fall 2014 = 4,055
  - Fall 2024 = 4,258
  - Out-of-state FTF increased 6.1% while foreign FTF decreased 6.2%
- Looking at non-foreign FTF who attended postsecondary institutions *within 12 months of high school graduation*\*:



# Enrollment of First-Time Freshmen by Sex and by Race/Ethnicity

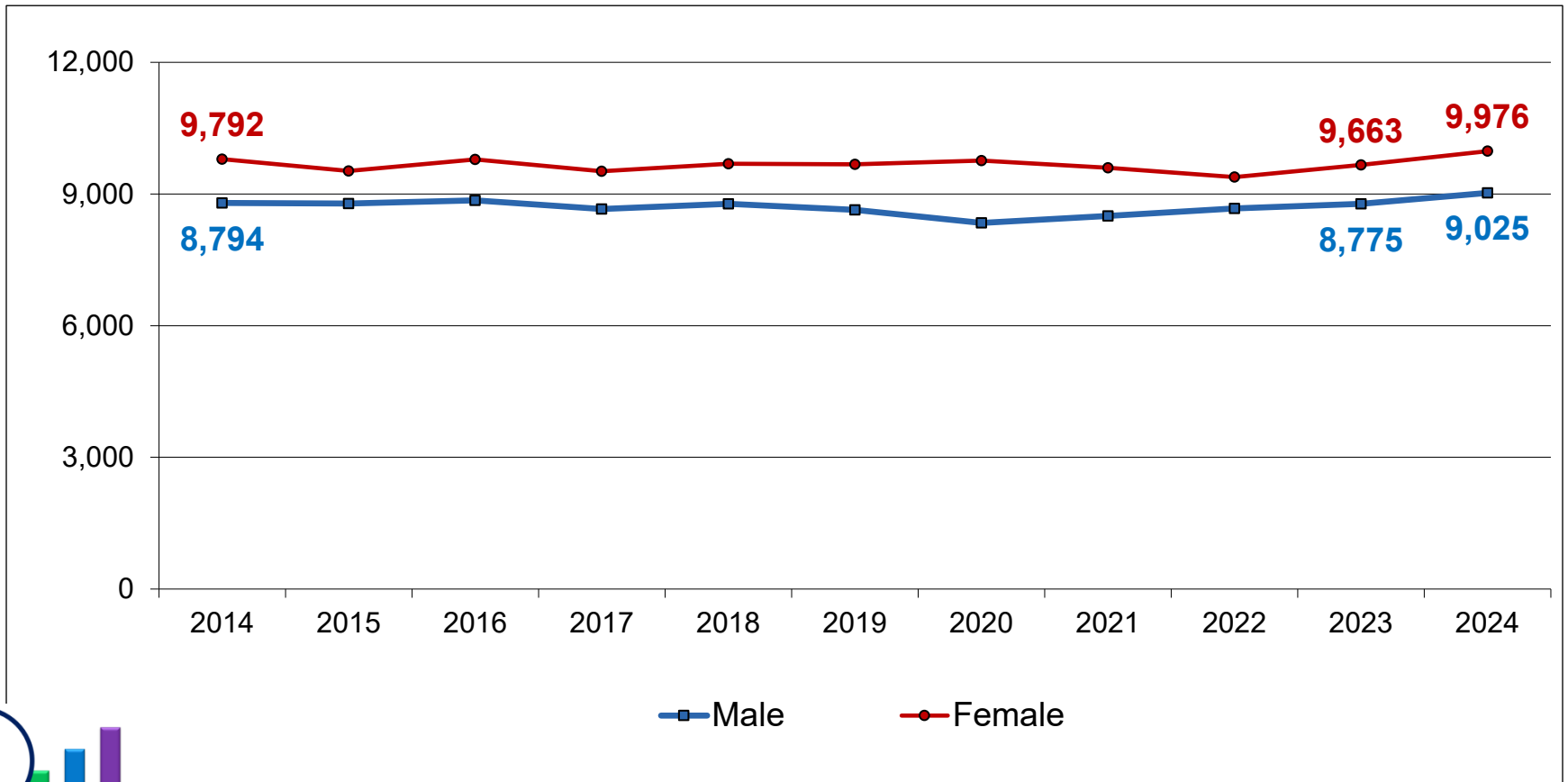
## Section 1.4

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



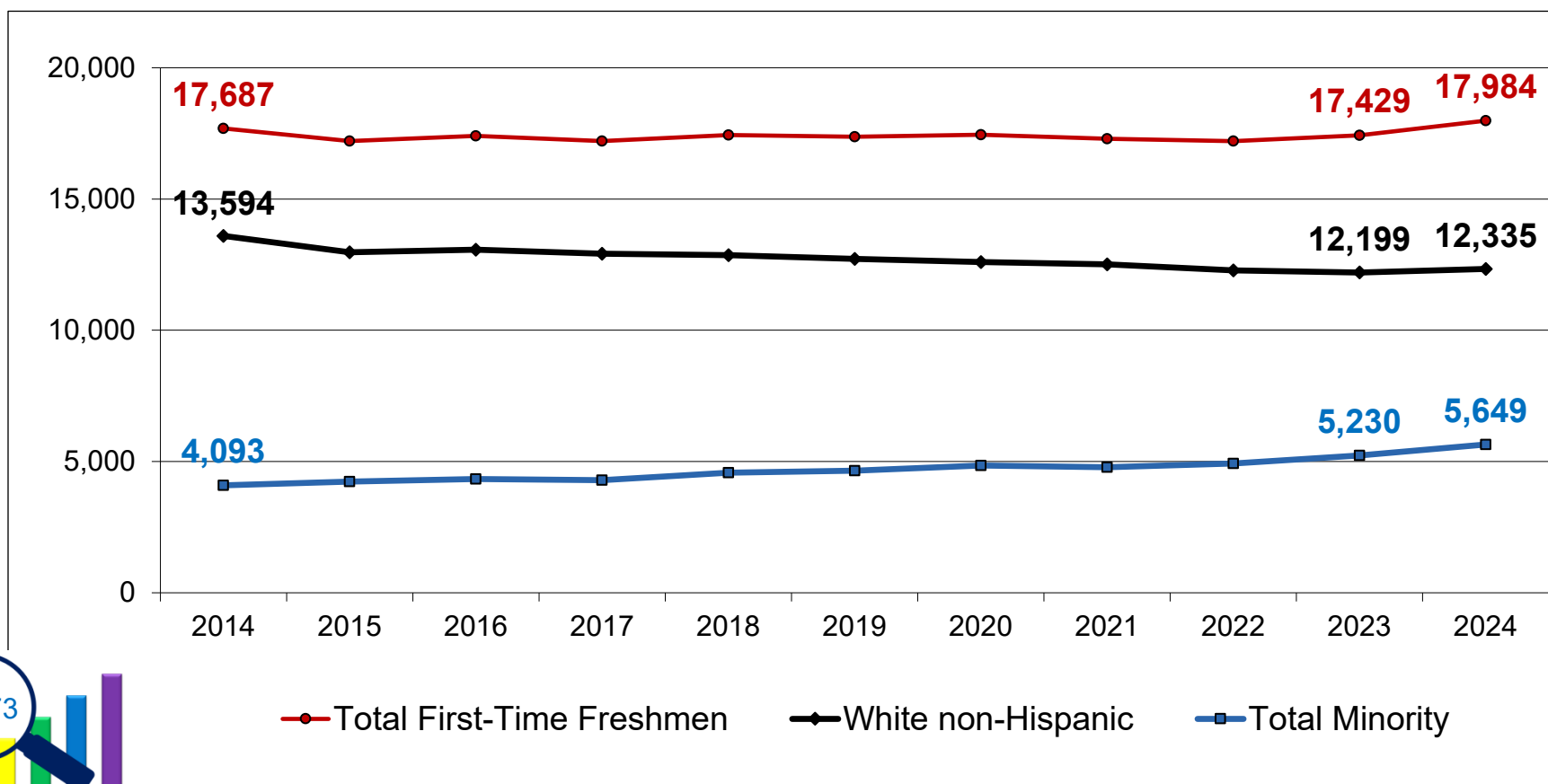
# First-Time Freshmen by Sex

	1-YEAR CHANGE	10-YEAR CHANGE
■ Male	2.8%	2.6%
● Female	3.2%	1.9%



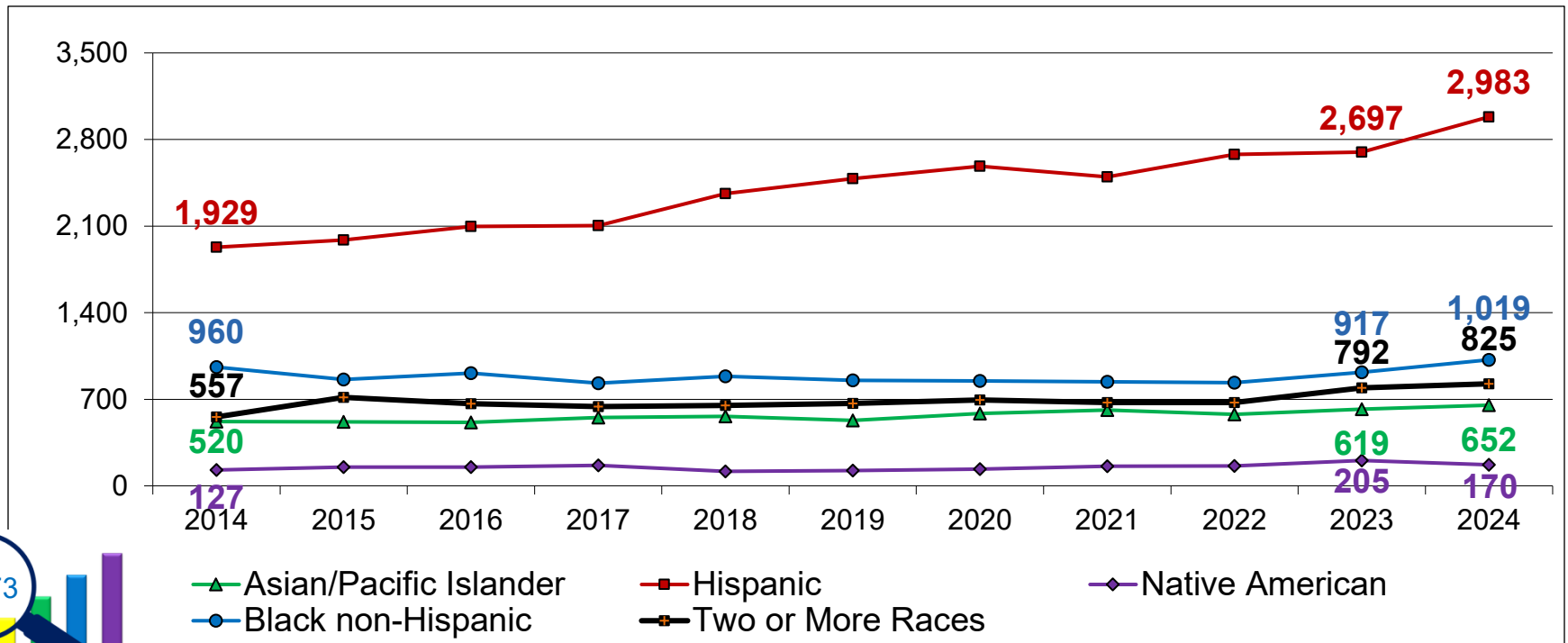
# White Non-Hispanic and Minority First-Time Freshmen

	1-YEAR CHANGE	10-YEAR CHANGE
● Nebraska State Total (Known Race)	3.2%	1.7%
◆ White (non-Hispanic)	1.1%	-9.3%
■ Total Minority	8.0%	38.0%



# Minority First-Time Freshmen

	1-YEAR CHANGE	10-YEAR CHANGE
▲ Asian/Pacific Islander	5.3%	25.4%
● Black (non-Hispanic)	11.1%	6.1%
■ Hispanic	10.6%	54.6%
◆ Native American	-17.1%	33.9%
⊕ Two or More Races	4.2%	48.1%



# Financial Aid

## Section 1.5

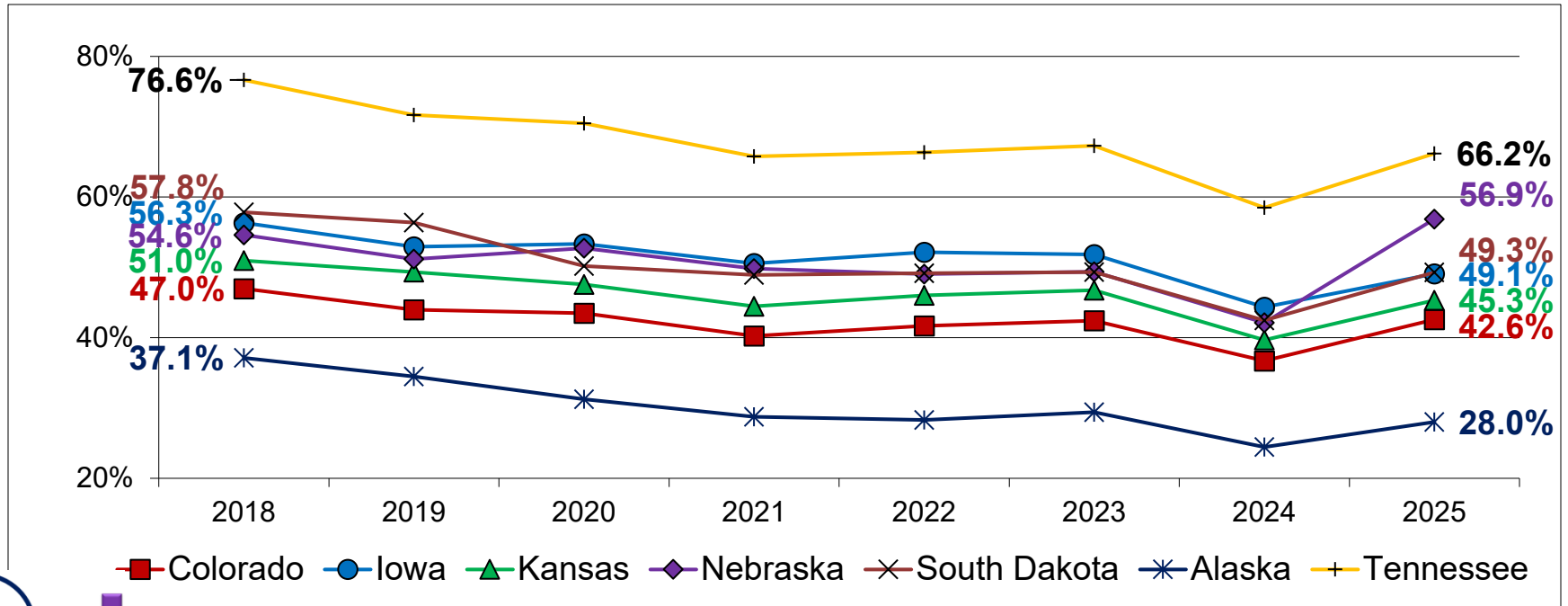
Increase need-based financial aid in order to improve access to higher education for Nebraskans with limited financial means.



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

# FAFSA Completion Rates

- FAFSA is the first step to gaining access to federal and state student financial aid
- Nebraska ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in FAFSA completions for 2025 (up from 32<sup>nd</sup> in 2024)
  - Nebraska had the largest increase nationally between 2024 and 2025 (up 14.8 percentage points)
- Nationally, 53.9% of 2025 high school seniors completed the FAFSA
- 2024 Nebraska high school graduates missed out on over an estimated \$27.5 million in federal Pell grants by not completing the FAFSA (2025 data has not been released)



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

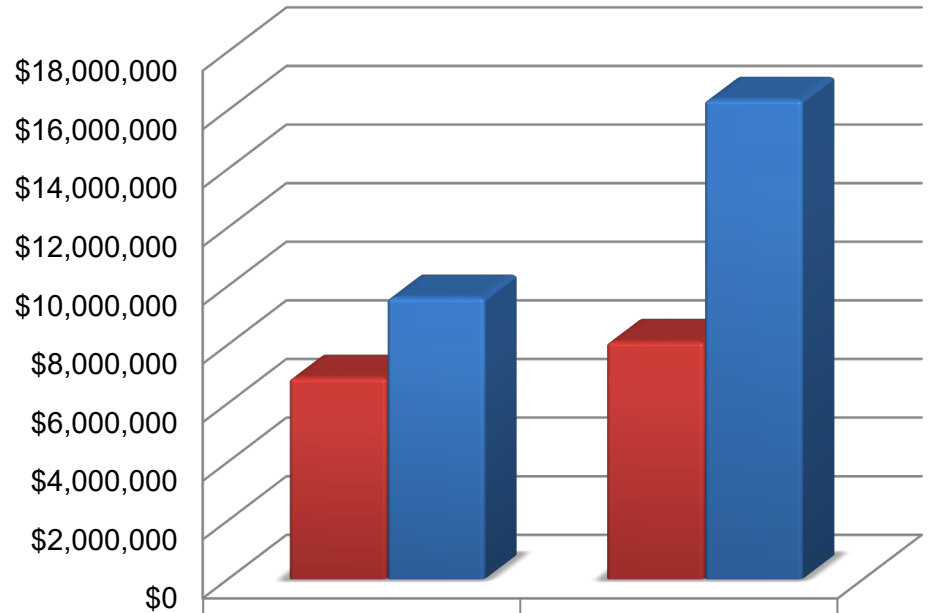


# NOG Funding

## Change in Funding:

- State General Funds: + 17.8%
- Lottery Funds: + 70.4%
- **Total Funds: + 48.5%**
- For the 25-26 year, the lottery funds were unchanged while the state general funds decreased by \$1,000,000

**Total Funds: \$16.5M Increased to \$24.4M**

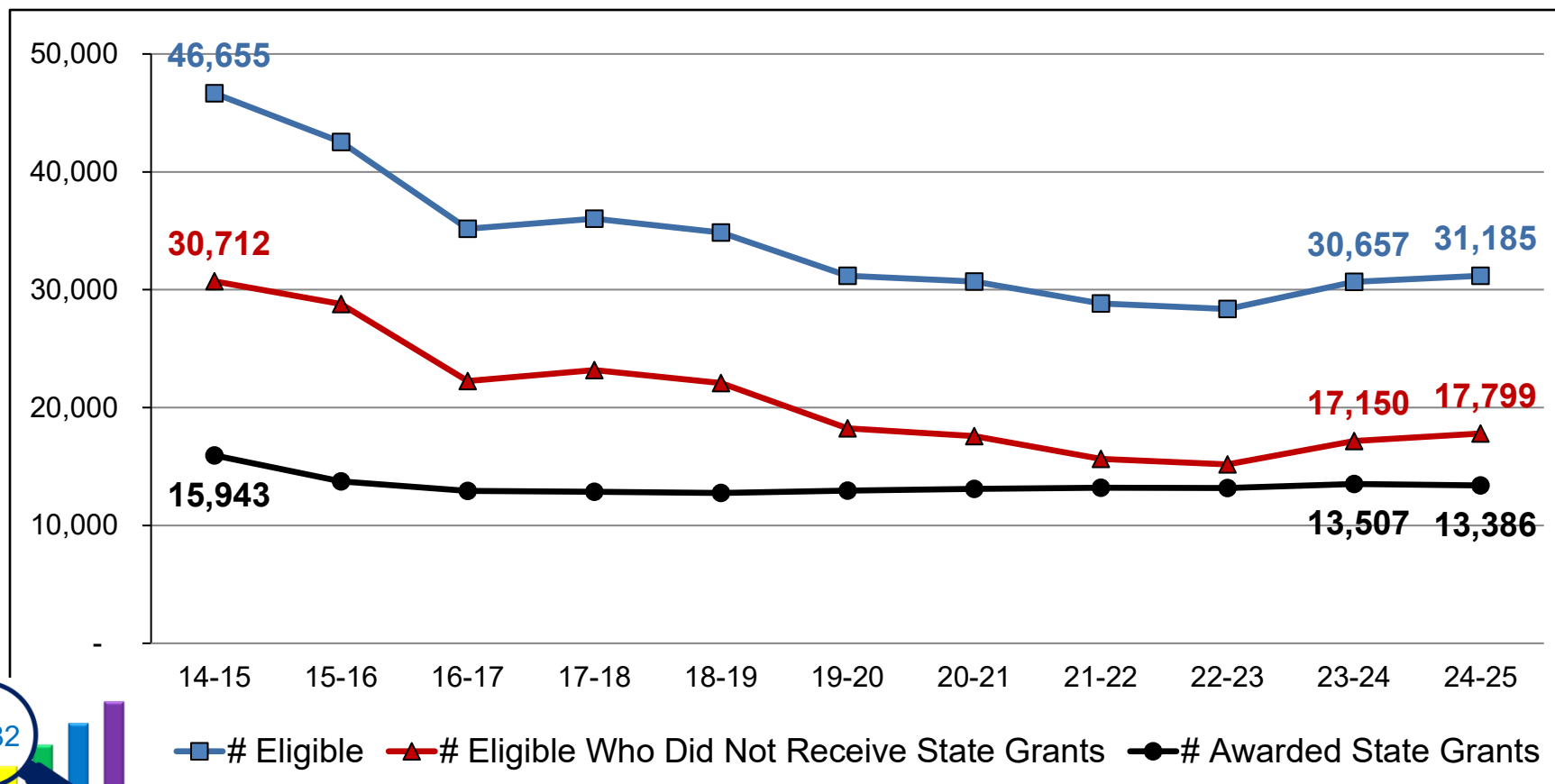


	2014-15	2024-25
■ State General Funds	\$6,868,156	\$8,093,430
■ Lottery Funds	\$9,600,000	\$16,354,872



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

- In 2014-15, **34.2%** of eligible students received a state grant
- In 2024-25, **42.9%** of eligible students received a state grant



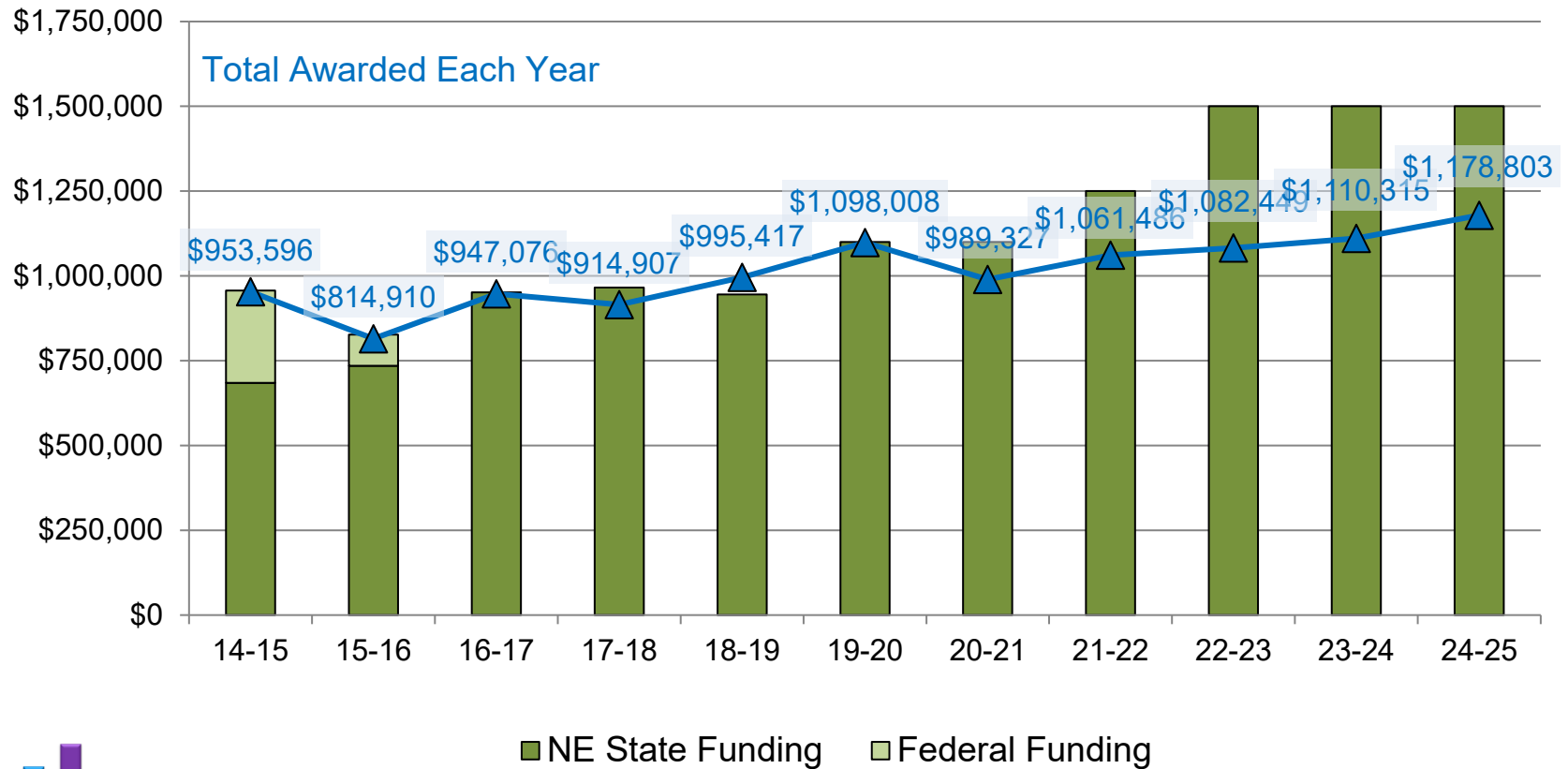
# ACE Scholarships

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



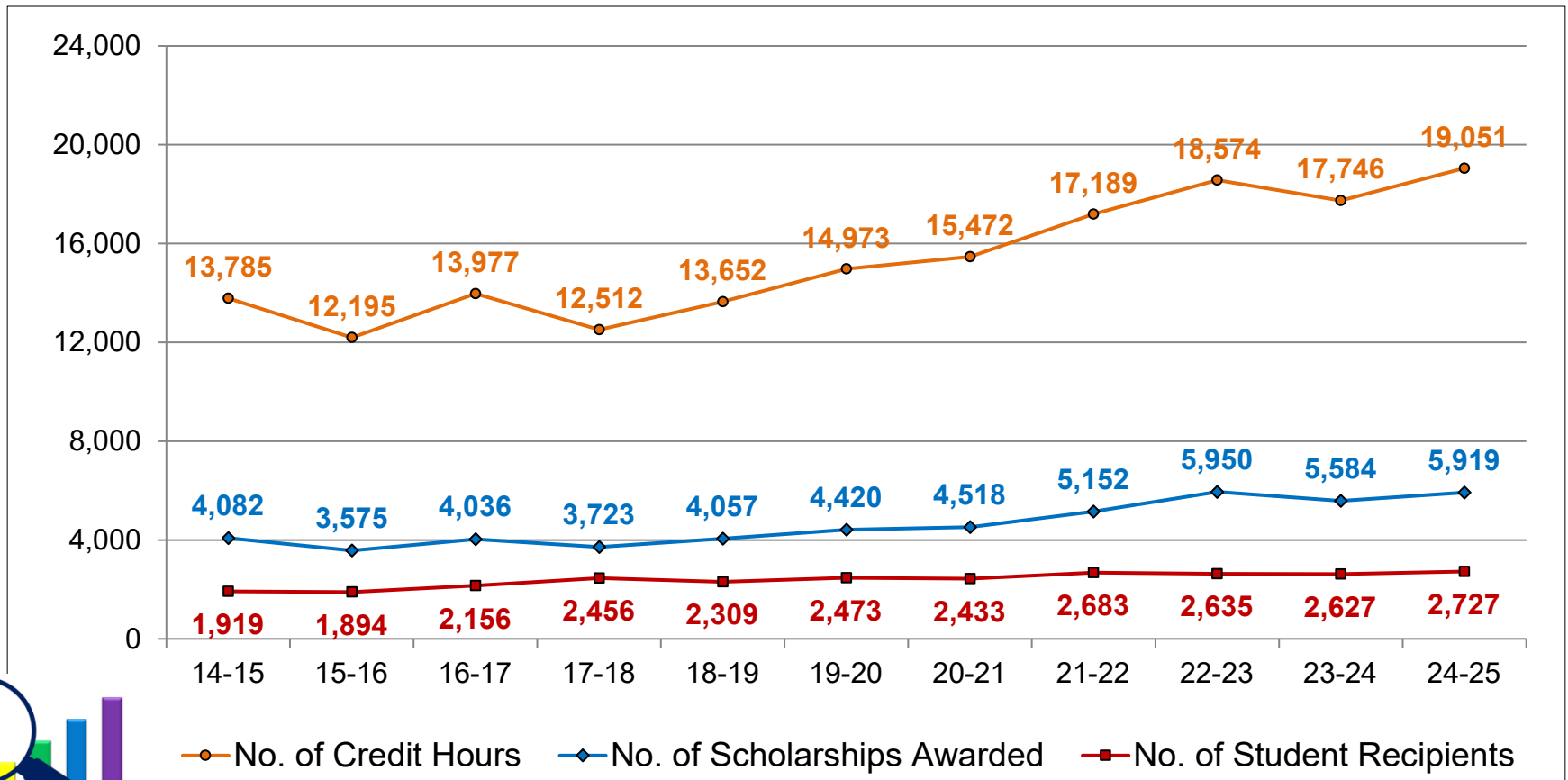
# Growth of ACE Scholarship Program in Dollars Awarded

- Dollars awarded increased **23.6%** between 2014-15 and 2024-25



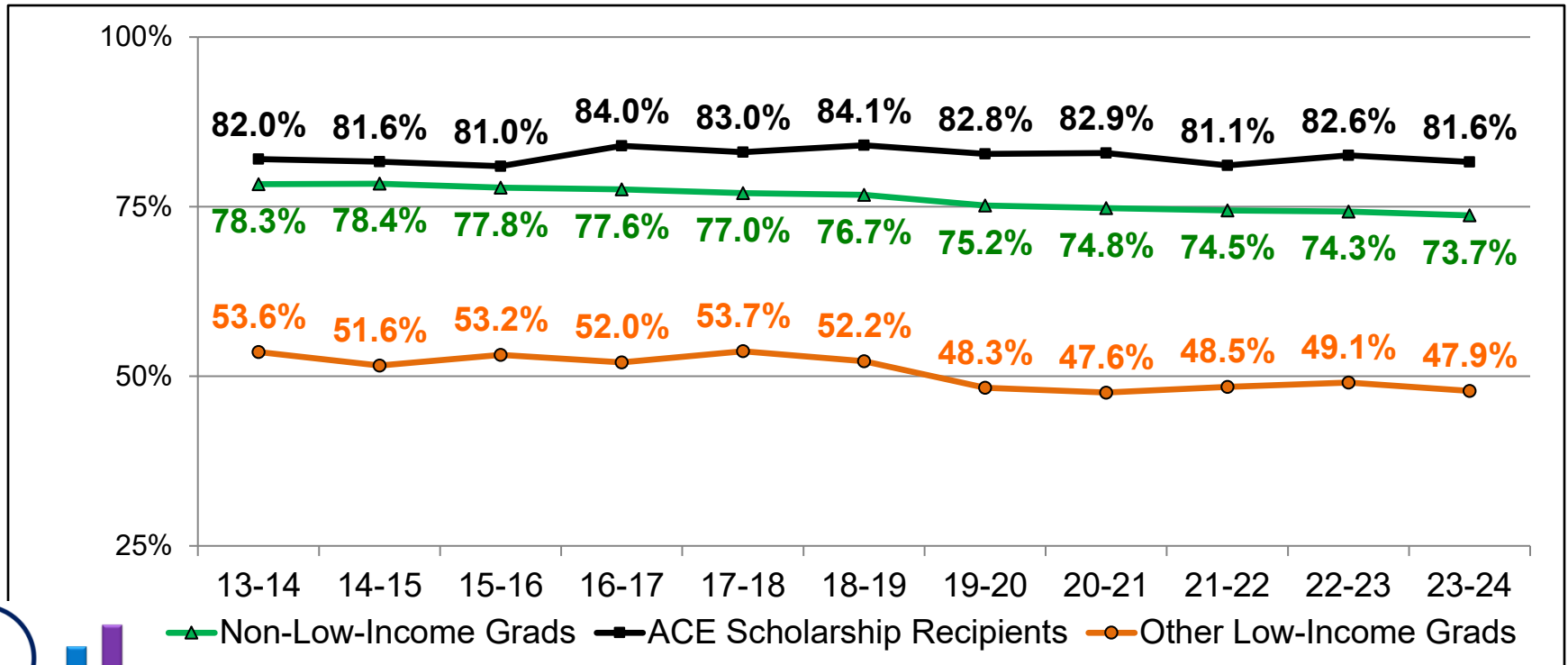
# Growth of ACE Scholarship Program in Student Recipients, ACE Scholarships, and Credit Hours

- Number of students has increased **42.1%**
- Number of scholarships has increased **45.0%**
- Number of credit hours has increased **38.2%**



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

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



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



# 2025 Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program Evaluation

- The Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) evaluated the impact of the ACE scholarship program
- Used propensity score matching to control for pre-existing differences between ACE participants and non-participants to estimate treatment effects of the ACE program
  - College going rates
    - ACE recipients 11 percentage points more likely to continue onto college versus non-ACE recipients
  - Persistence
    - ACE recipients were more likely to persist at four-year institutions (2 percentage points) and two-year institutions (4 percentage points)
  - College completion
    - ACE recipients were more likely to complete at two-year institutions (5 percentage points)
    - While ACE recipients were also more likely to complete at four-year institutions (2 percentage points), the difference was not statistically significant



*Note.* College going rates include 2018 through 2023 public high school graduates. Persistence includes 2018 through 2022 cohort years. College completion includes 2018 and 2019 cohort years at four-year institutions and 2018 through 2021 cohort years for two-year institutions. See <https://insights.nswers.org/evaluations/ace-2025/> for more information.

## **PRIORITY 2**

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

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# Freshmen Retention Rates

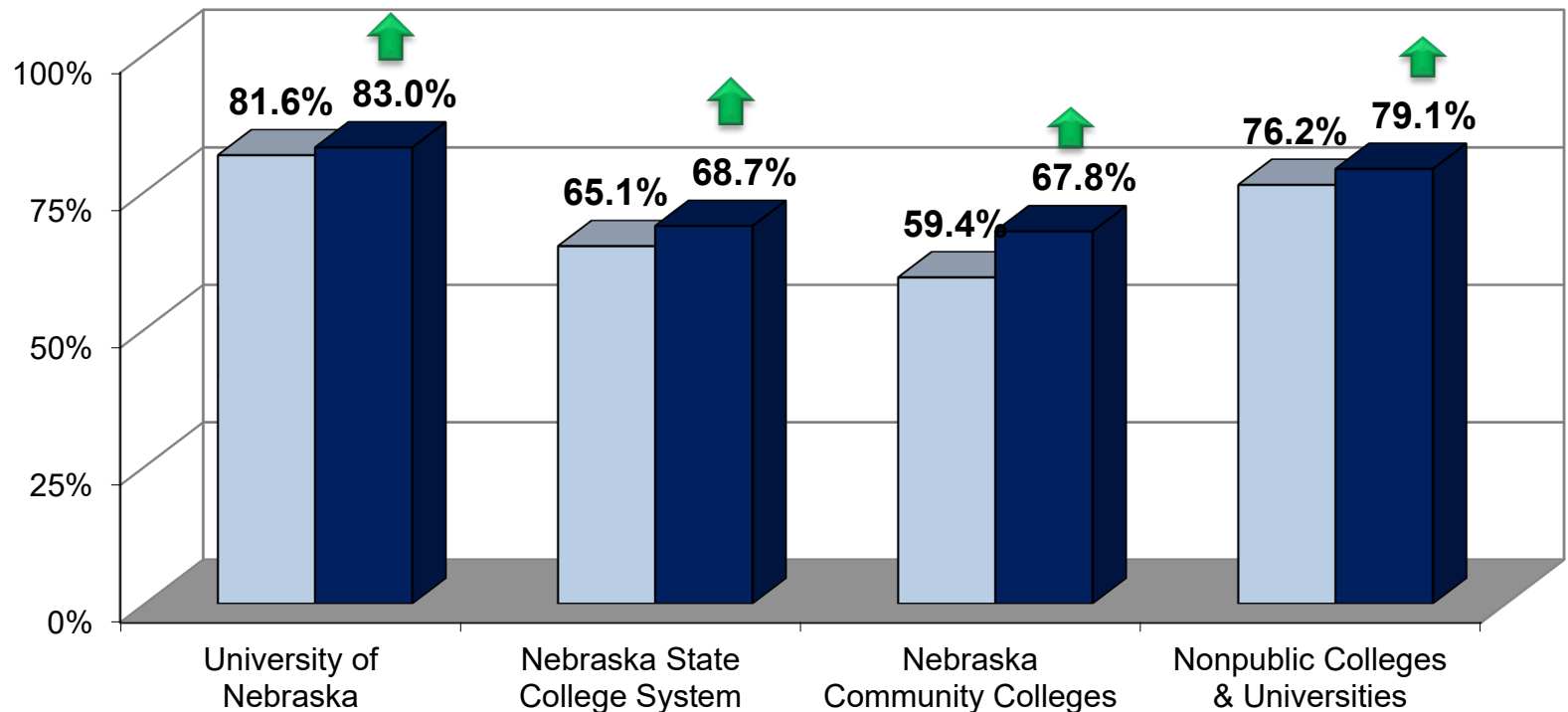
## Section 2.1

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



# IPEDS Full-Time, First-Time Freshmen Retention Rates

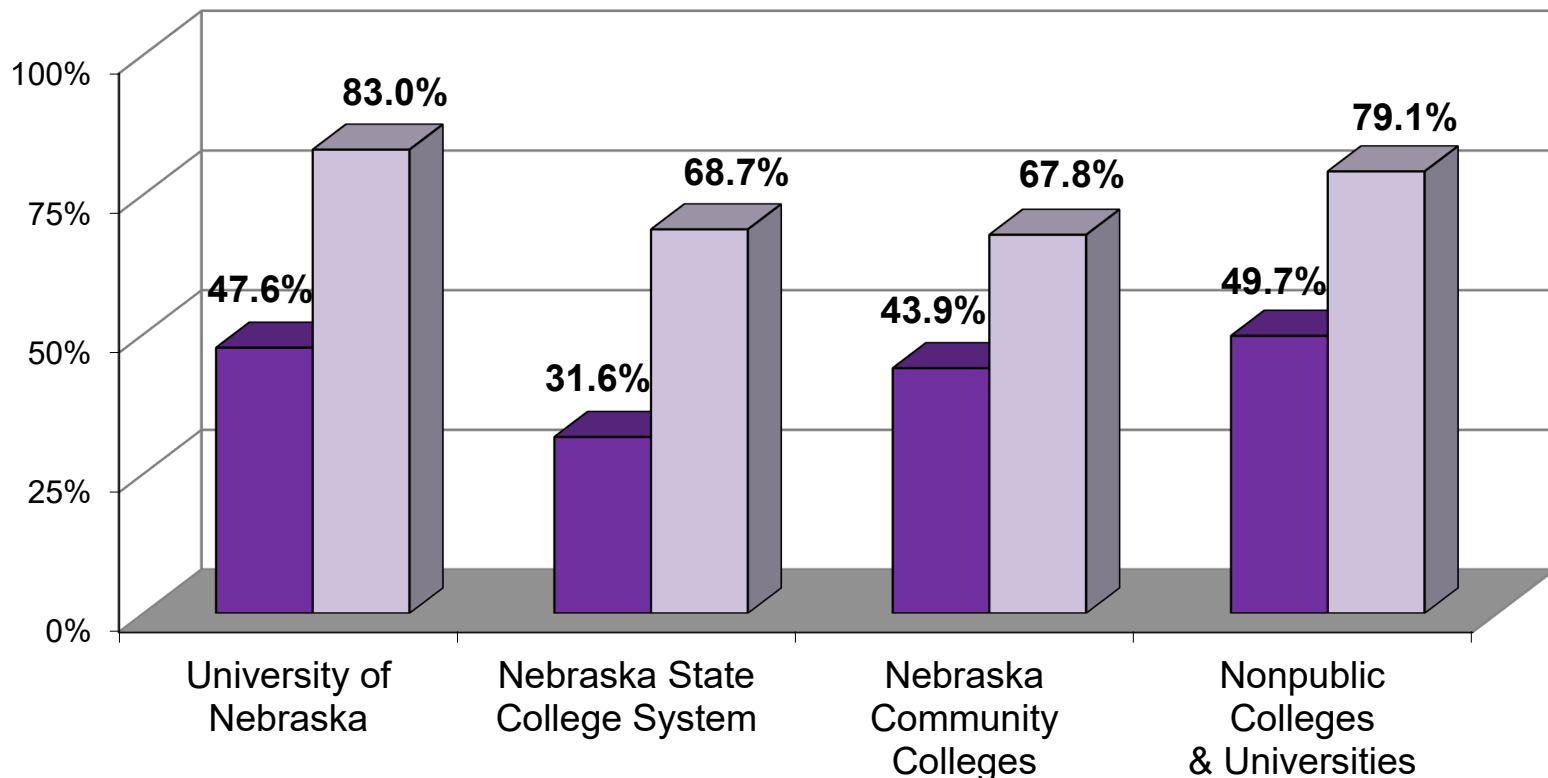
- Overall retention rate in fall 2014 = **73.1%**
- Overall retention rate in fall 2024 = **77.4%**
- As shown below, retention rates have increased within all four sectors of higher education in the state



□ 2014 Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rate    ■ 2024 Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rate

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

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



■ 2024 Part-Time Freshmen Retention Rate

■ 2024 Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rate

# College Graduation and Transfer Rates

## Section 2.2

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



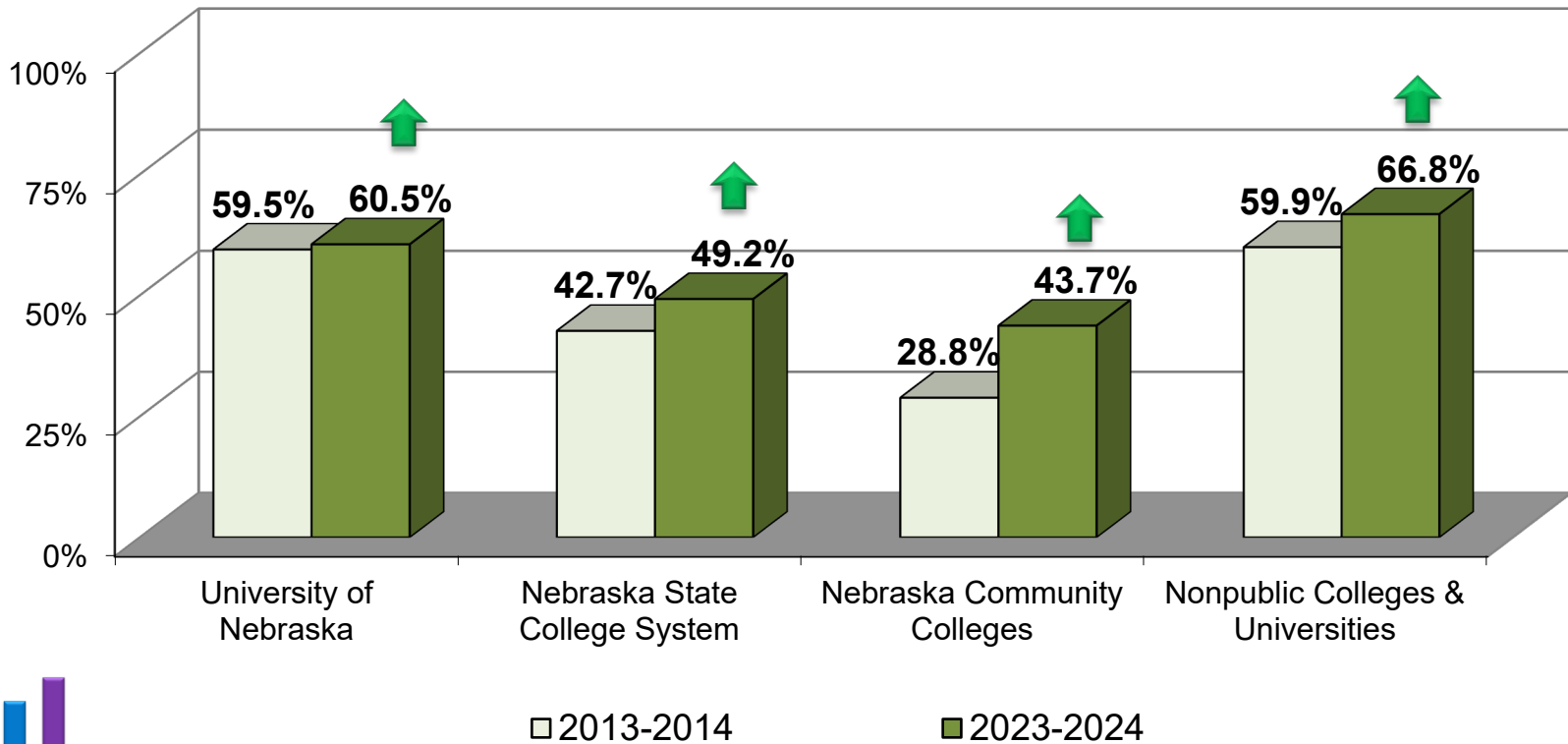
# IPEDS Graduation Rates

## Public 2-Year Graduation Rates:

- 2013-14 = **29.1%**
- 2023-24 = **44.2%**
  - Highest rate during reporting period

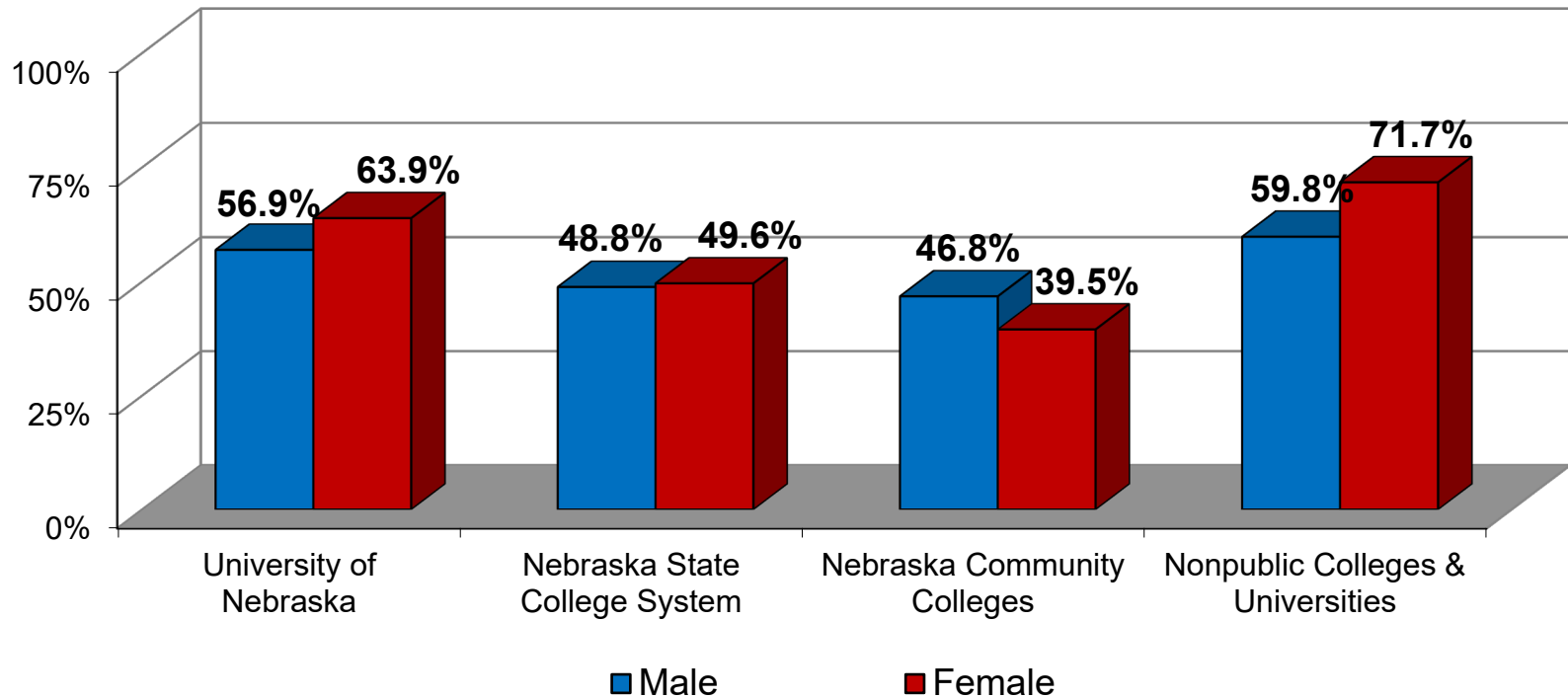
## Public 4-Year Graduation Rates:

- 2013-14 = **57.0%**
- 2023-24 = **58.9%**



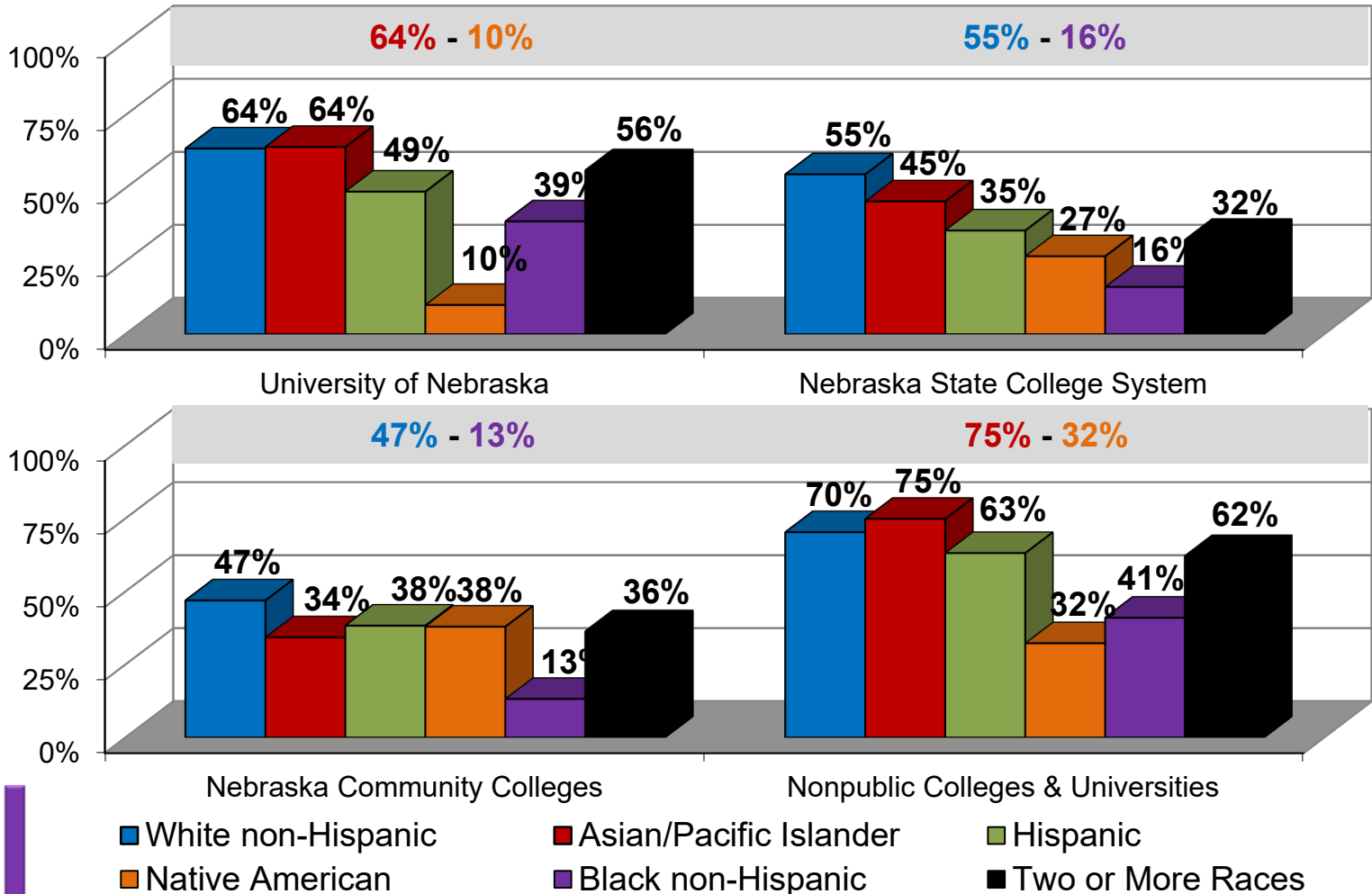
# 2023-2024 IPEDS Graduation Rates by Sector and by Sex

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



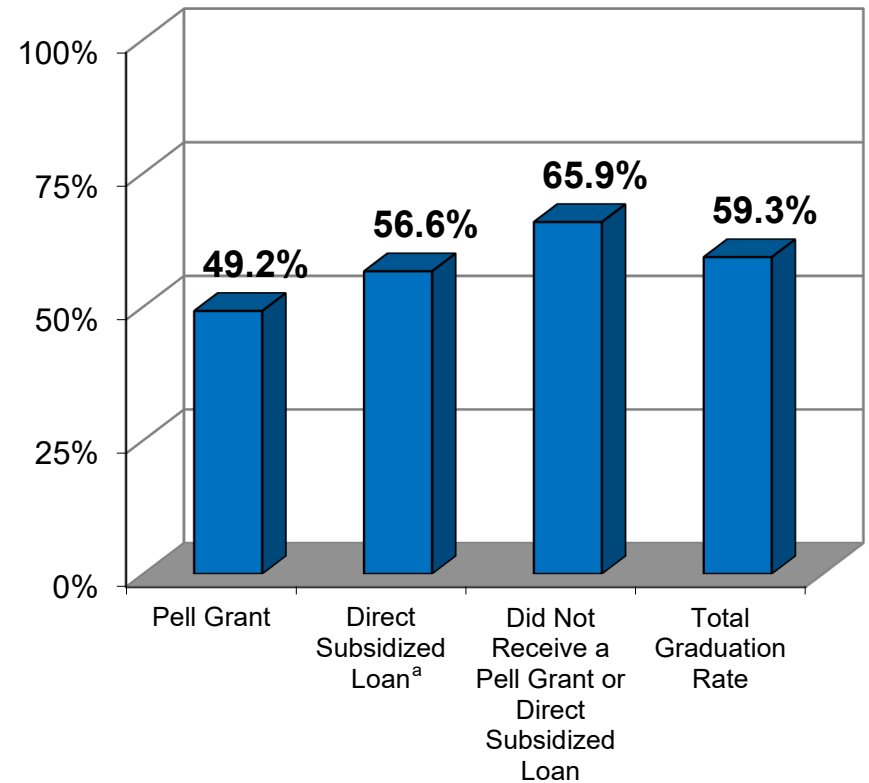
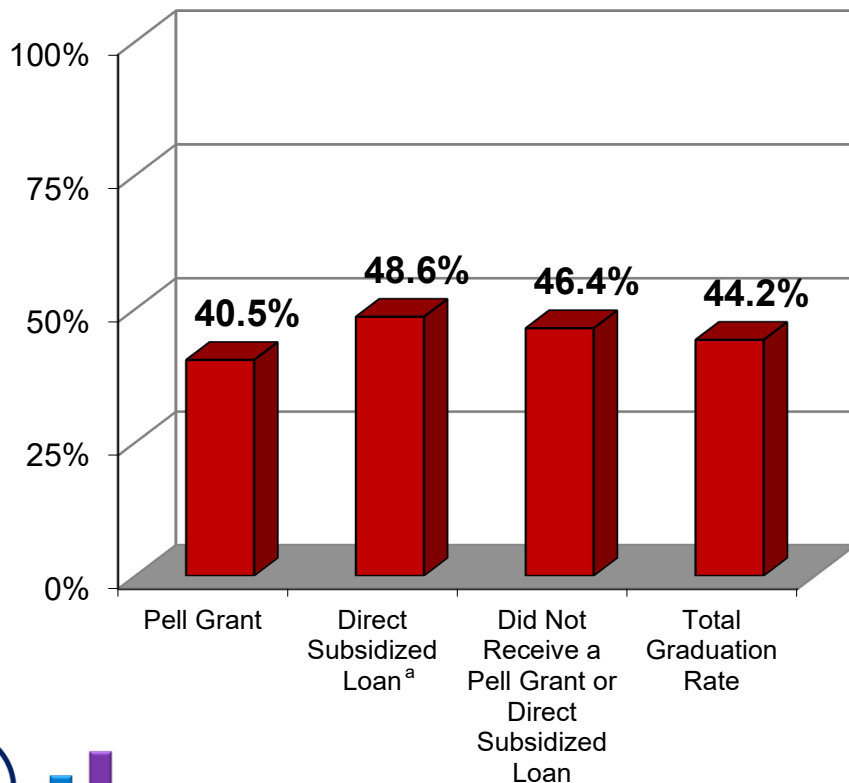
# 2023-2024 IPEDS Graduation Rates by Sector and by Race/Ethnicity

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



# 2023-2024 IPEDS Graduation Rates by Financial Aid Received

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



■ Total Two-Year Public Institutions

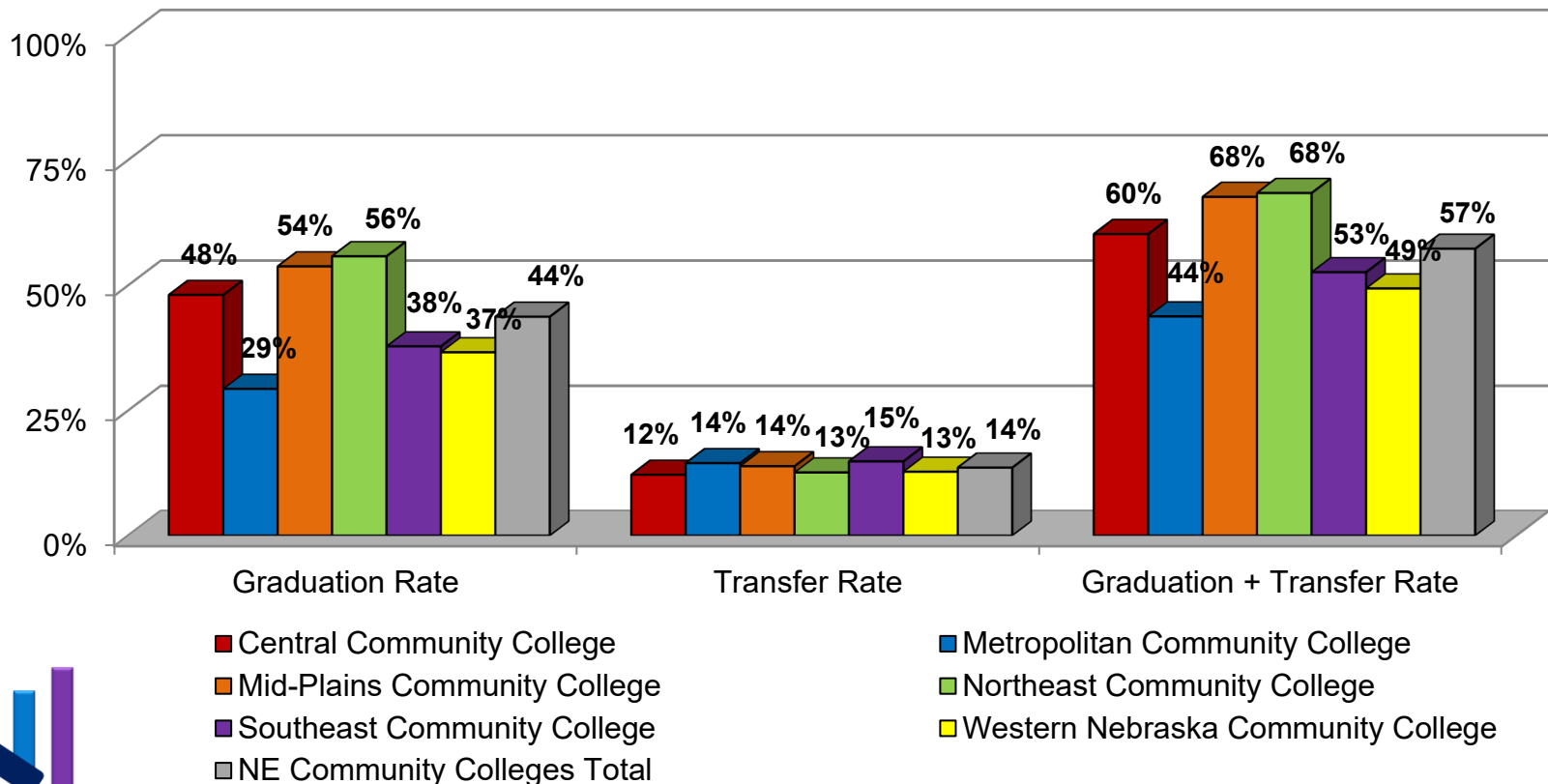
■ Total Four-Year Public Institutions

<sup>a</sup> Only includes recipients that did not receive a Pell Grant.



# 2023-2024 Transfer Rates for Nebraska Community Colleges

- The overall transfer rate for the community colleges was **14%**
- Transfer rates ranged from **15% at Southeast** to **12% at Central**
- The rates produced by combining each institution's graduation rates and transfer rates ranged from **44% at Metro** to **68% at Northeast**



# Graduation and Persistence Rates

## Section 2.3

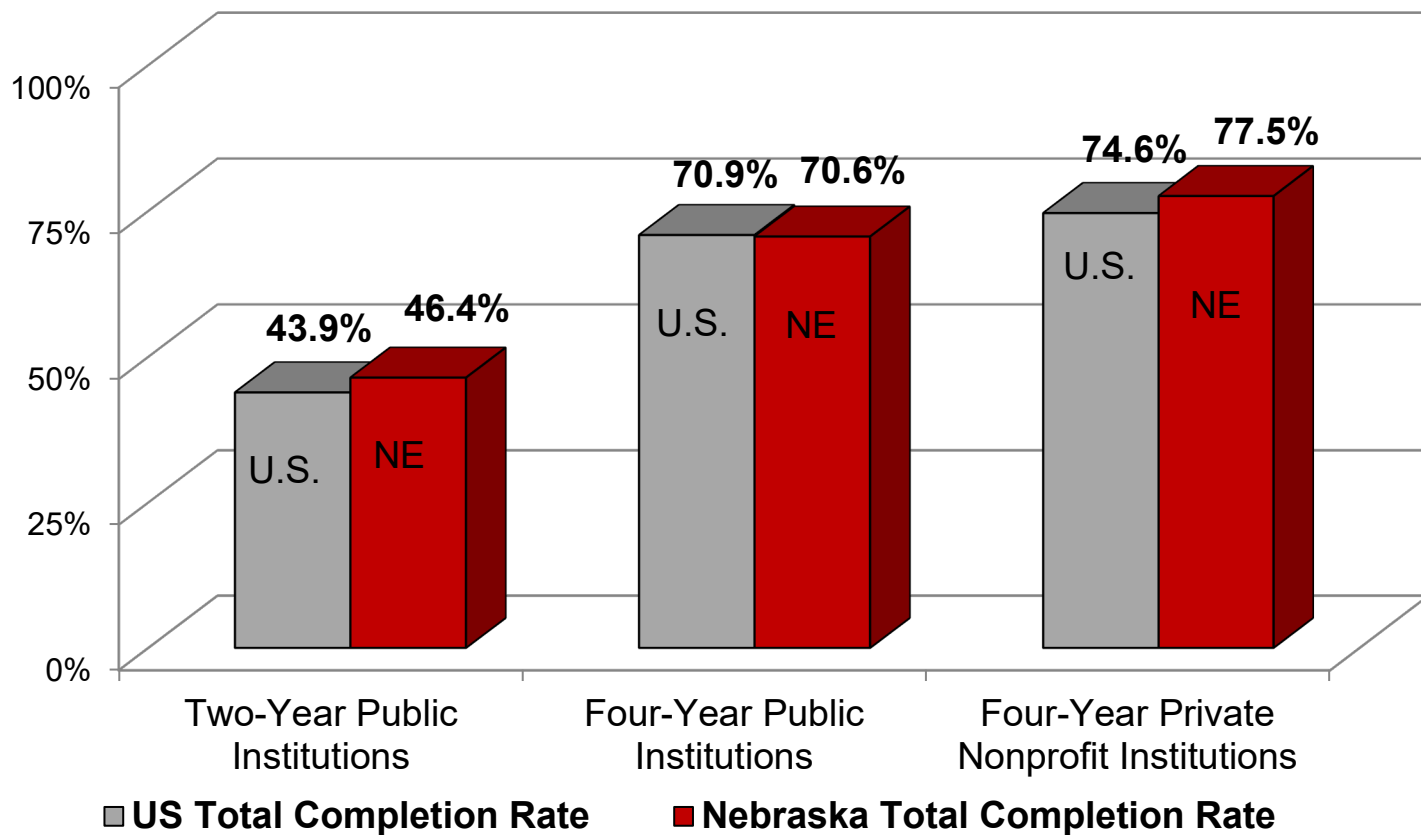
Research by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (*Yearly Progress and Completion*) provides important information about the completion and persistence rates of students who start college at Nebraska's public and private institutions.



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



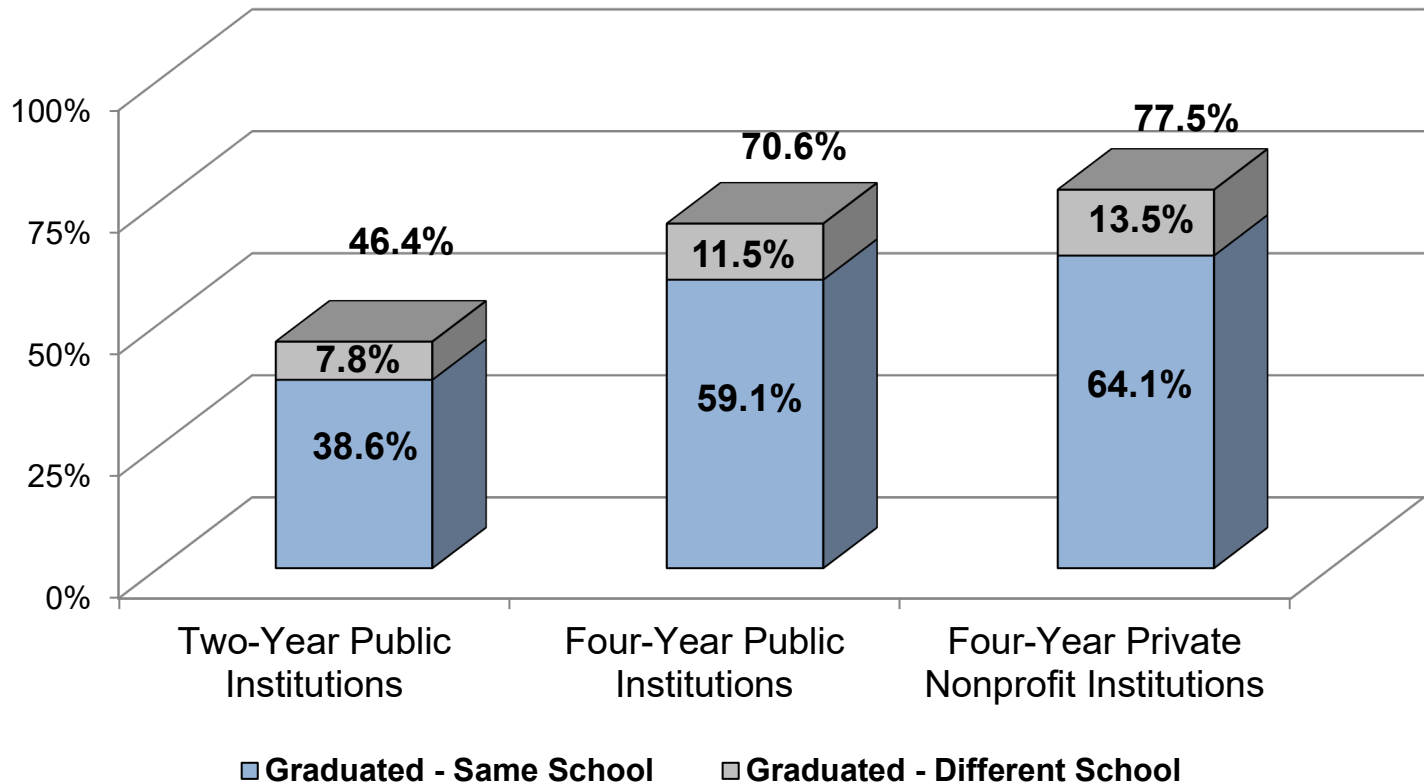
# Six-Year Total Completion Rates for Nebraska and the United States for First-Time Degree-Seeking Freshmen Fall 2019 Cohort



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

## Fall 2019 Cohort

- Completion rates for starting institutions range from 38.6% - 64.1%
- Roughly 8% to 14% of students received their first completion at an institution in the U.S. other than their starting institution, no matter the sector of first enrollment



# Yearly Progress and Completion Fall 2019 Summary

- Students are most likely to earn degrees or certificates if they:
  - Start college full time
    - 24.0 to 34.0 percentage point increase (Figure 2.3.5)
  - Start college at a four-year institution
    - 24.2 to 31.1 percentage point increase (Figure 2.3.1)
  - Enter college with prior dual enrollment experience
    - 10.6 to 14.2 percentage point increase (Figure 2.3.6)
  - Start college before they are 20 years old
    - 30.8 percentage point increase compared to age 21-24
    - 11.0 percentage point increase compared to age 25+ (Figure 2.3.8)



## **PRIORITY 3**

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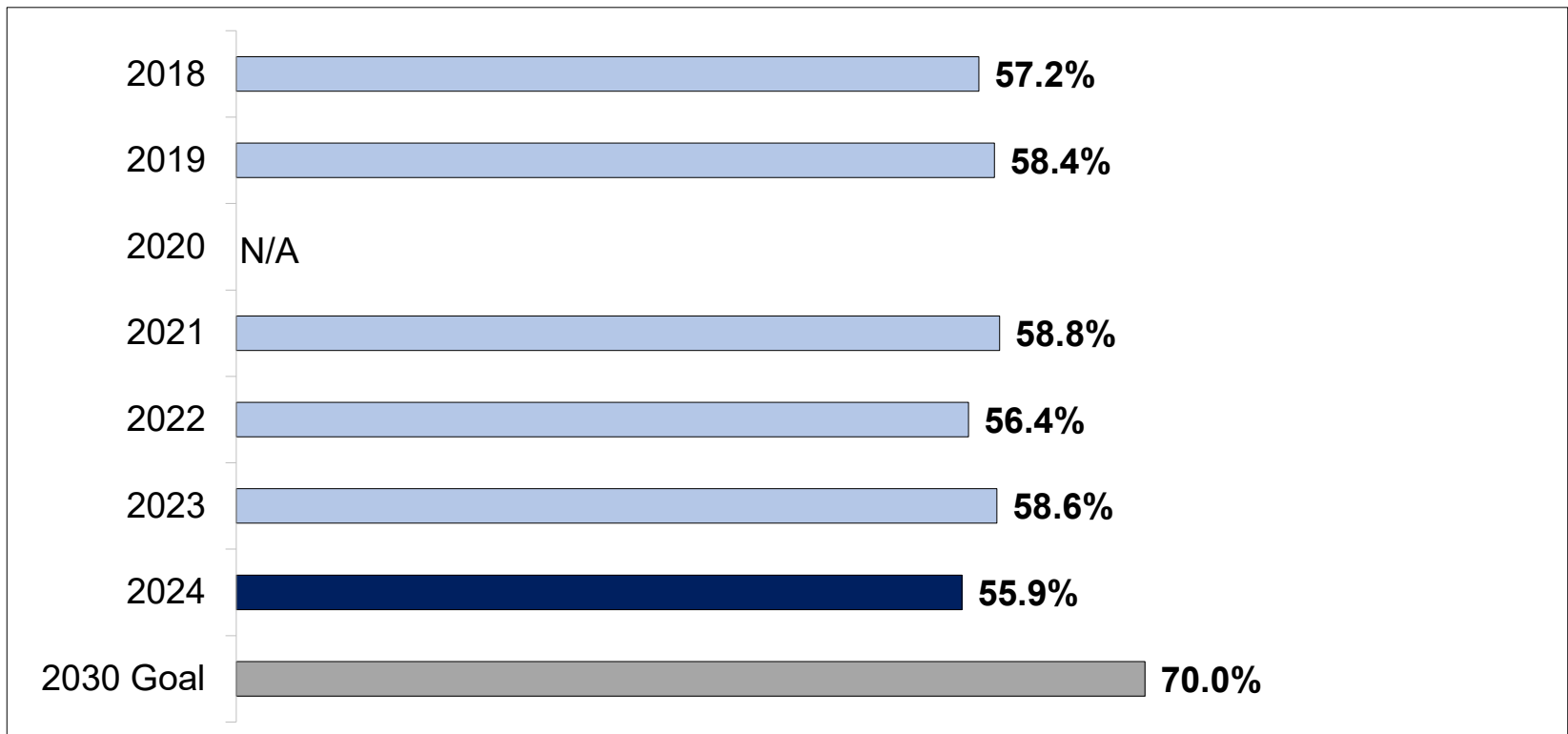
**REDUCE, ELIMINATE, AND THEN REVERSE THE  
NET OUT-MIGRATION OF NEBRASKANS WITH  
HIGH LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

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

# Credential Attainment for 25- to 34-Year-Olds

- It is the goal of the State of Nebraska that at least 70% of 25- to 34-year-old Nebraskans will have a degree, certificate, diploma, or other postsecondary or industry-recognized credential with economic value by 2030
- Lumina estimates that 55.9% of Nebraskans aged 25 to 34 have obtained a credential or higher as of 2024, down from 58.6% in 2023
  - Certificate = 6.8%, Associate's = 11.0%, Bachelor's+ = 38.1%

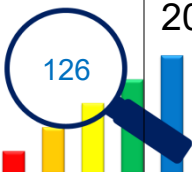
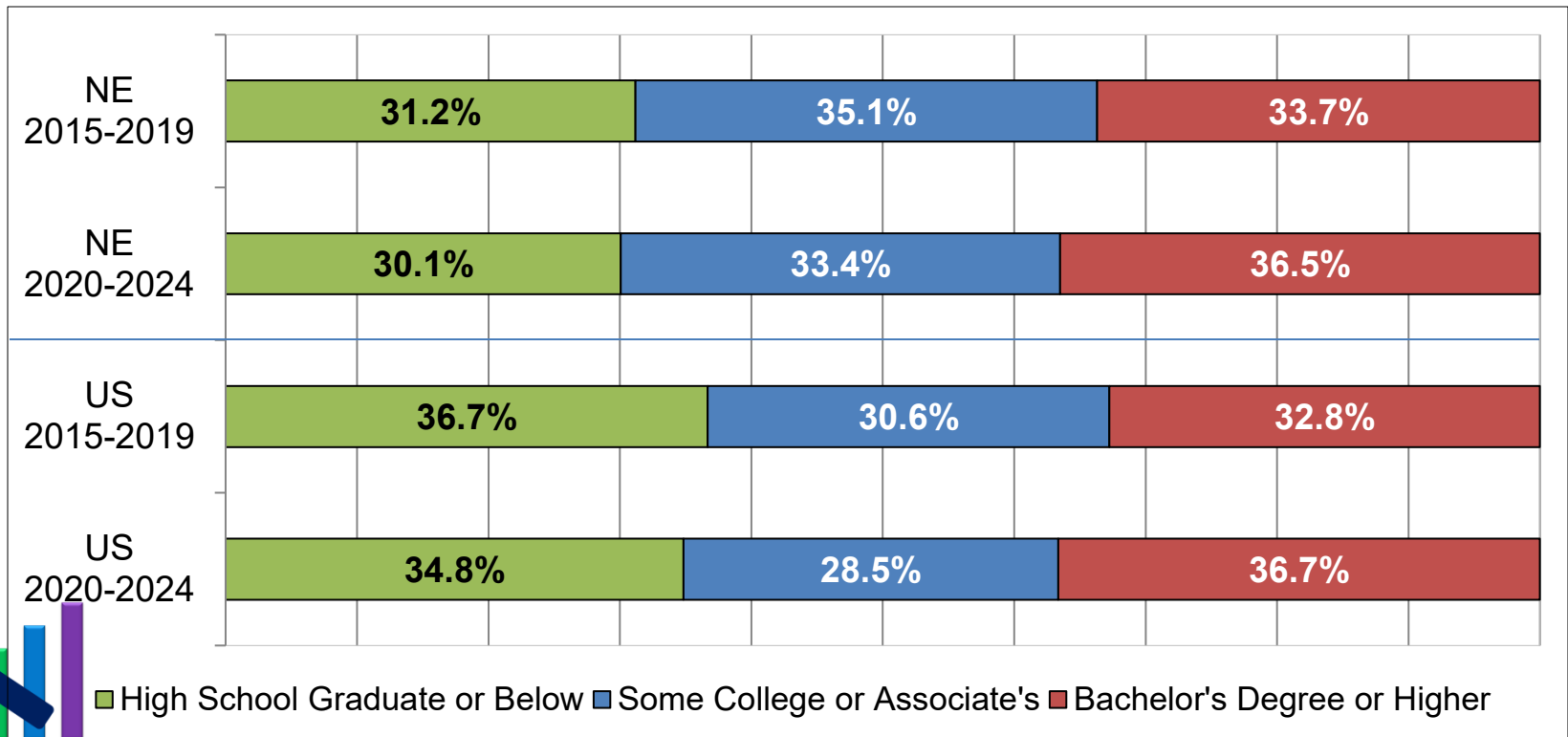


Note. Data for 2020 is excluded due to quality concerns.



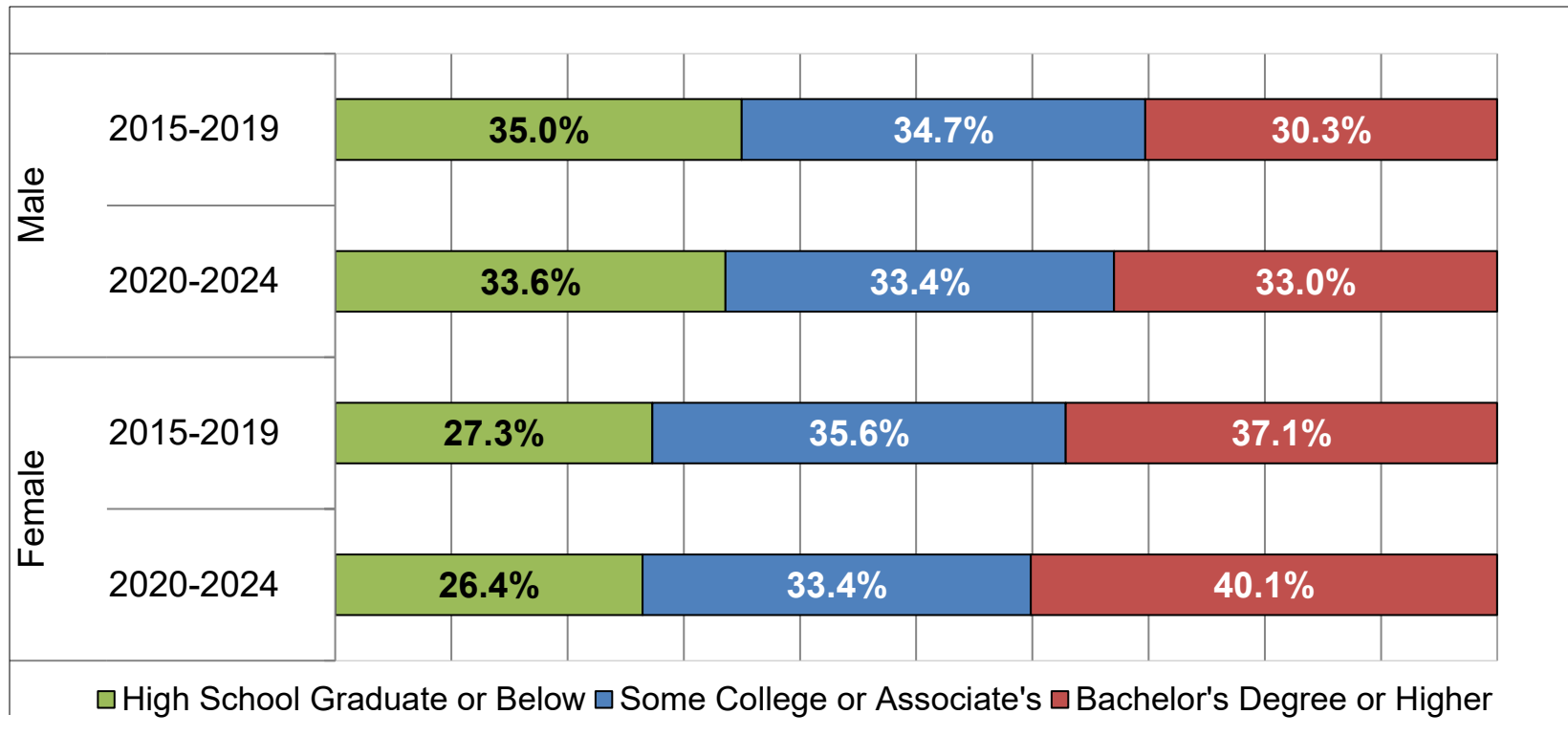
# Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds

- Nebraska's estimated population of 22- to 64-year olds increased 1.7% between 2015-2019 and 2020-2024
- **By education level, Nebraska's estimated percent of the population:**
  - **High school graduates or below: Decreased 1.1 percentage points**
  - **Some college or associate's: Decreased 1.7 percentage points**
  - **Bachelor's degree or higher: Increased 2.8 percentage points**
- Compared to the US, Nebraska has a higher percentage of some college/associate's but a lower percentage of bachelor's or higher. Bachelor's+ is increasing at a faster rate nationally.



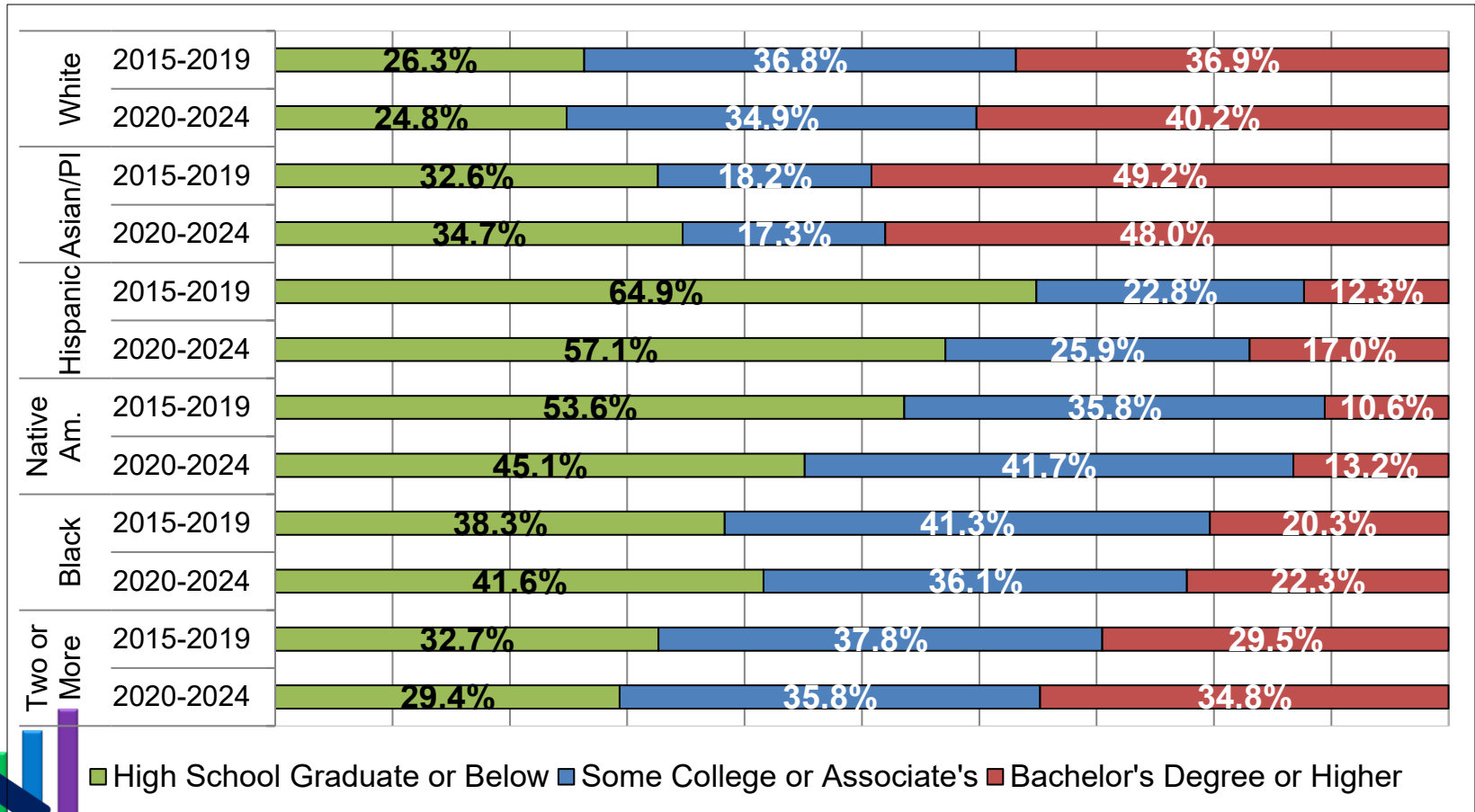
# Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds by Sex

- The percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 2.7 percentage points for males and 3.0 percentage points for females
- For both five-year periods, females had higher attainment rates than males



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

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



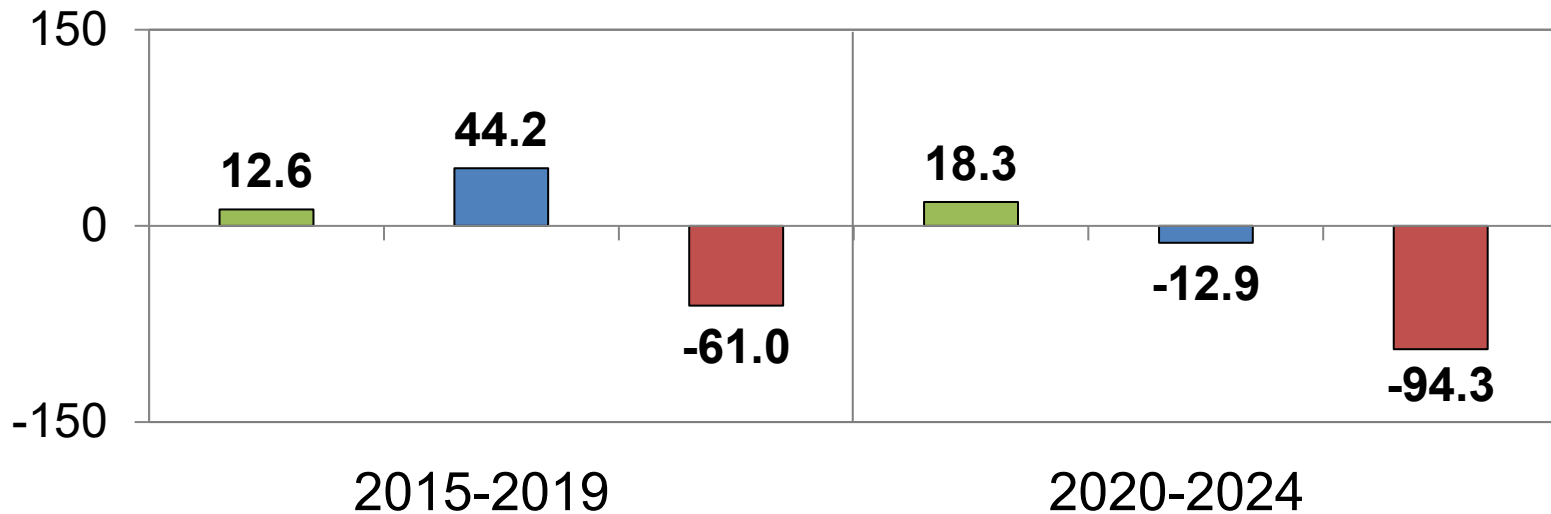
# Migration Estimates Compared to Educational Attainment for 22- to 64-Year-Olds

## 2015-2019

- For every 10,000 people in Nebraska age 22 to 64, with a bachelor's degree or higher, there was an average annual net out-migration of 61.0 people with a bachelor's or higher
  - Estimated annual net out-migration of 2,126 people, or 10,630 over the five-year period, with a bachelor's or higher**

## 2020-2024

- For every 10,000 people in Nebraska age 22 to 64, with a bachelor's degree or higher, there was an average annual net out-migration of 94.3 people with a bachelor's or higher
  - Estimated annual net out-migration of 3,624 people, or 18,120 over the five-year period, with a bachelor's or higher**



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

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# CONCLUSION

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# Nebraska Key Takeaways

- **2024-2025 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE:** **87.9%**
- **2023-2024 COLLEGE CONTINUATION RATES**  
**PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS:** **63.5%**  
**ACE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:** **81.6%**
- **6-YEAR COMPLETION RATE, FALL 2019 COHORT:** **46.4% (PUBLIC 2-YR)**  
**70.6% (PUBLIC 4-YR)**
- **AVERAGE ANNUAL NET MIGRATION FOR EVERY 10,000 WORKING-AGE NEBRASKA'S WITH A BACHELOR'S +:** **-94.3**
- **BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER 22 TO 64 YEARS:** **36.5%**
- **CREDENTIAL WITH VALUE IN THE WORKPLACE+ 25 TO 34 YEARS:** **55.9%**



- Given the findings of the *2026 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*, more work needs to be done in order for Nebraskans to enroll in college and complete degrees.
- So, what do we need to do?

- **At the High School Level:**
  - **Increase high school graduation rates and close attainment gaps**
  - Increase the percentage of students who are prepared academically for college
  - **Increase the number of students who take dual and concurrent enrollment courses to reach the NDE's goal (50% of students will engage in dual enrollment by 2030)**



- **At the High School Level:**

- **Increase opportunities for students to connect to career pathways of interest to them that lead to employment and additional education**

- **Increase high school counseling/advising resources to:**

- Address mental health issues that may slow or prevent high school completion
    - Improve students' awareness of careers and the range of higher ed opportunities and their associated career pathways, and
    - Help students understand financial aid opportunities and plan the most direct pathway to their educational goals



- **At the Postsecondary Level:**
  - **Increase the percentage of high school graduates who go on to college**
  - Encourage students to enroll full time and not delay enrollment
  - Increase efforts to improve retention and persistence rates
  - **Support and expand efforts, such as Transfer Nebraska and 2+2 (A to B) agreements, to improve students' knowledge of how credits will transfer**
  - Develop new programs aimed at meeting immediate workforce shortages, such as Workforce Pell programs, and longer-term programs that integrate workplace experience more directly into the curriculum (e.g., degree apprenticeships)
  - Make formal connections to communities outside of/in addition to Omaha and Lincoln for mentorships and internships



- **At the Postsecondary Level:**
  - **Identify and reach out to adults with college credit but no earned credential with completion initiatives, including stackable microcredentials and badges that are recognized by employers**
    - **Identify resources necessary to achieve success, such as intensive coaching, high speed internet access, rolling course start dates, childcare, and emergency grants or loans**
  - Reach out to adults who have basic education needs and enroll them in adult basic education and workforce preparation, such as the Integrated Education and Training Program at Metro Community College
  - Continue to build out and publicize the capabilities of the Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) to study the P-16 employment pipeline, including employment trajectories of recent graduates, to develop strategies to reduce brain-drain



- **At the State Government Level:**

- Monitor and work toward the statewide attainment goal that 70% of 25–34-year-old Nebraskans will have a degree or short-term credential with value in the workforce by 2030
- **Adequately fund public colleges and universities to maintain affordable tuition and fees, provide adequate student support services and timely course offerings, and ensure that a full range of high quality programs connected to Nebraska’s statewide and regional economic needs is available**
- **Increase funding for the Nebraska Opportunity Grant program**
- Provide resources to meet the NDE’s 50% dual enrollment participation goal
- Consider implementing a proactive, or “direct,” admissions program with Nebraska postsecondary institutions, whereby high school students are notified by institutions that they meet admission requirements before they apply



- **At the State Government Level:**

- **In partnership between the DOL, the NDE, and postsecondary institutions, continue the development of a credential registry, talent marketplace, and electronic learner and employment records that will allow institutions, students, employees, and employers to benefit from the skills-based economy.**
- Consider new programs that are aimed at adults without degrees or credentials (ex., Tennessee Reconnect and Missouri's Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant)
- Ensure that high-speed broadband is available to all Nebraska families at an affordable cost
- Continue funding the Nebraska Career Scholarship Program to attract students to programs leading to occupations identified as high wage, high demand, and high skill in Nebraska and to connect students to Nebraska employers through internship opportunities
- Consider tax incentives for graduates with student loan debt who remain in or come to Nebraska to work and/or employers who assist employees with student loan payments
  - Alternatively, create or expand loan forgiveness programs for targeted high-need occupations



# Questions?

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The full report is available online at [ccpe.nebraska.gov](http://ccpe.nebraska.gov)