

## Section 1 Increasing Postsecondary Enrollment

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

The first priority recommended by the 2003 LR 174 Task Force was to increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska. To monitor progress toward achieving this goal, this section compares the latest available total student unduplicated headcounts and enrollments of first-time freshmen to fall 2013 within the context of 10-year trends and estimated 11-year trends.

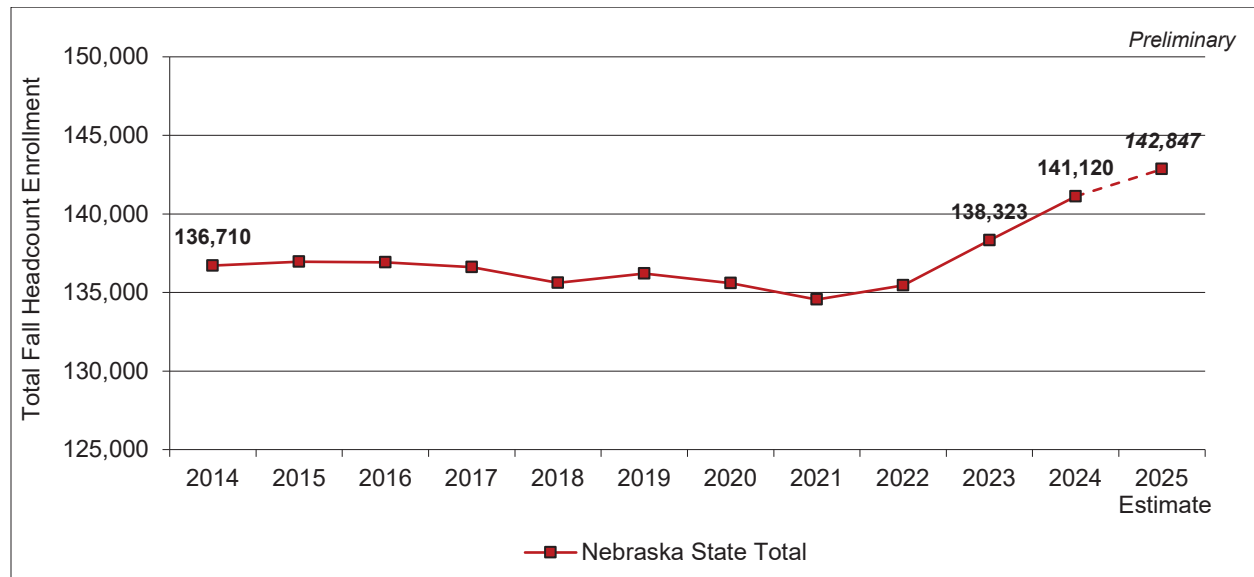
The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education is the official source of the enrollment data summarized for fall 2014 through fall 2024. Enrollments for fall 2025 are preliminary, based on estimates that institutions reported directly to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

#### **Nebraska Total Fall Headcount Enrollment**

- Total headcount—the count of all students taking courses for credit—at Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions increased from 136,710 in fall 2014 to 141,120 in fall 2024, for a 10-year increase of 3.2%, as shown in [Figure 1.1](#). It is estimated that enrollment increased 1.2% between fall 2024 and fall 2025. In the context of estimated 11-year trends, total fall enrollment increased 4.5% between 2014 and 2025.

**Figure 1.1**

**Total Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025**



Note. See [Table A1.1](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

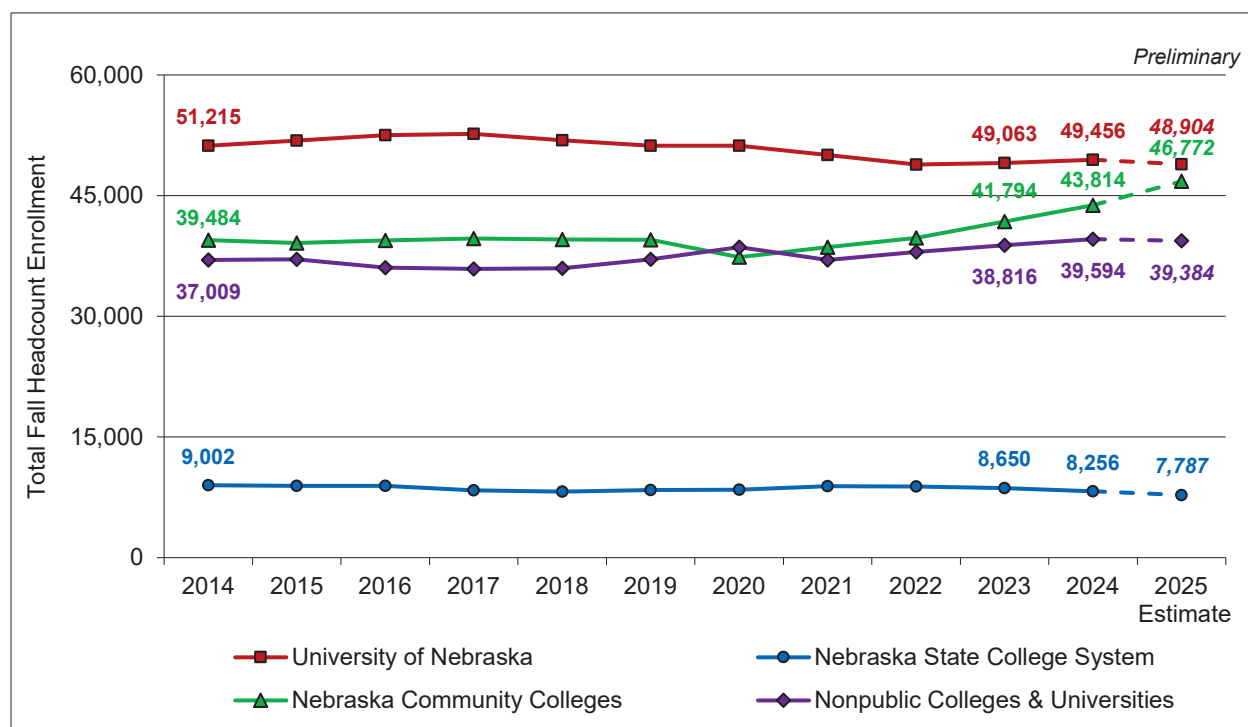
## Nebraska Total Fall Headcount Enrollment by Sector

- The University of Nebraska continues to lead the state’s higher education system in terms of fall headcount enrollment. As shown in [Figure 1.2](#), Nebraska’s community colleges and nonpublic institutions contributed positively to the state’s increased enrollment since 2014. However, based on preliminary data for fall 2025, enrollments at the University of Nebraska and the state colleges declined between fall 2014 and fall 2025.
- By sector, Nebraska’s postsecondary enrollment has changed as follows:

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%
Nebraska State College System	-4.6%	-5.7%	-8.3%	-13.5%
Nebraska Community Colleges	4.8%	6.8%	11.0%	18.5%
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	2.0%	-0.5%	7.0%	6.4%
Total Nebraska	2.0%	1.2%	3.2%	4.5%

Figure 1.2

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025



Note. See [Table A1.2](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

## Nebraska Public Colleges and Universities: Fall Enrollment by Institution

Within all sectors, changes in enrollment vary from one institution to another. The charts in this section show the enrollment trends of the institutions in each public sector from fall 2014 to fall 2025.

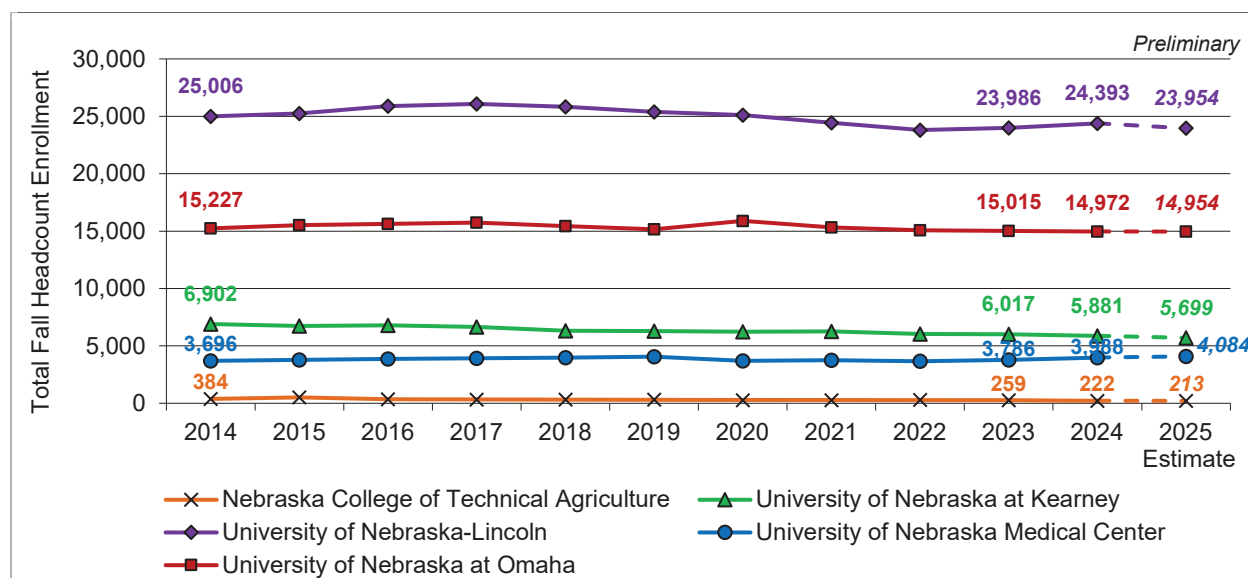
### University of Nebraska

- From fall 2014 to fall 2025, fall enrollment decreased an estimated 4.5% at the University of Nebraska. While the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha experienced decreases during this 11-year period, fall enrollments increased at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2014 and fall 2025, at the institutions constituting the University of Nebraska:

Institution	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
Neb. College of Technical Agriculture	-14.3%	-4.1%	-42.2%	-44.5%
University of Nebraska at Kearney	-2.3%	-3.1%	-14.8%	-17.4%
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	1.7%	-1.8%	-2.5%	-4.2%
University of Neb. Medical Center	5.3%	2.4%	7.9%	10.5%
University of Nebraska at Omaha	-0.3%	-0.1%	-1.7%	-1.8%

Figure 1.3

Fall Headcount Enrollment at the University of Nebraska by Institution  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025



Note. See Table A1.2 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

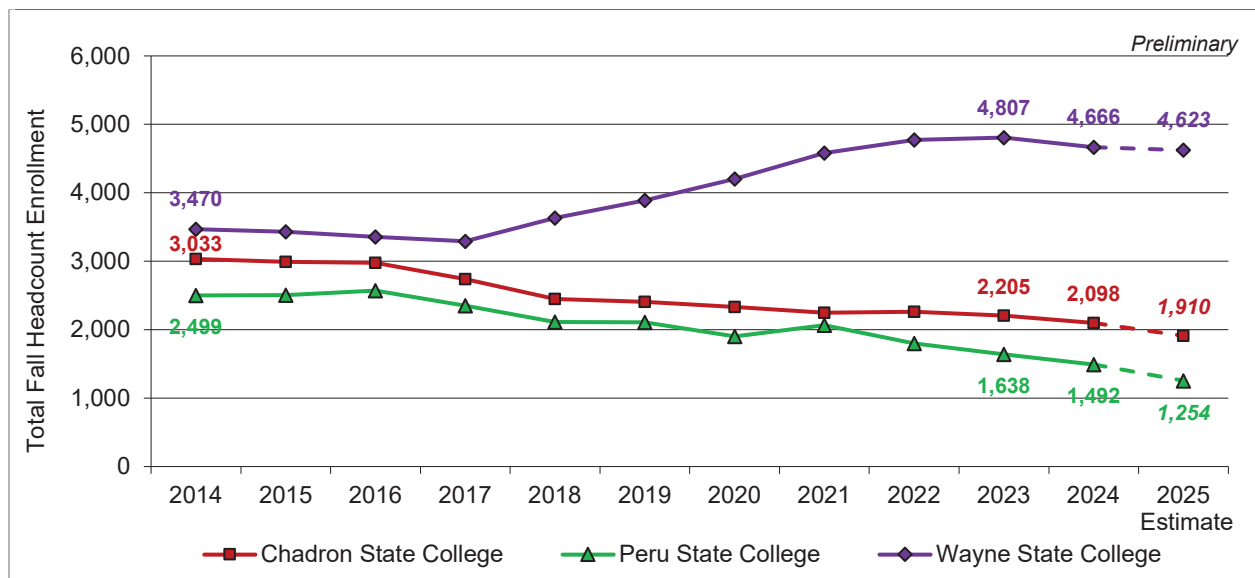
## Nebraska State College System

- From fall 2014 to fall 2025, fall enrollment decreased an estimated 13.5% within the Nebraska State College System. While Wayne State College experienced a 33.2% increase during this 11-year period, Chadron State College and Peru State College experienced decreases of 37.0% and 49.8%, respectively.
- Notably, since fall 2016, Wayne State College increased an estimated 37.7% while Chadron State College and Peru State College reported decreases of 35.8% and 51.2%, respectively.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2014 and fall 2025, at the institutions constituting the Nebraska State College System:

Institution	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
Chadron State College	-4.9%	-9.0%	-30.8%	-37.0%
Peru State College	-8.9%	-16.0%	-40.3%	-49.8%
Wayne State College	-2.9%	-0.9%	34.5%	33.2%

Figure 1.4

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska State College System by Institution  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025



Note. See [Table A1.2](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

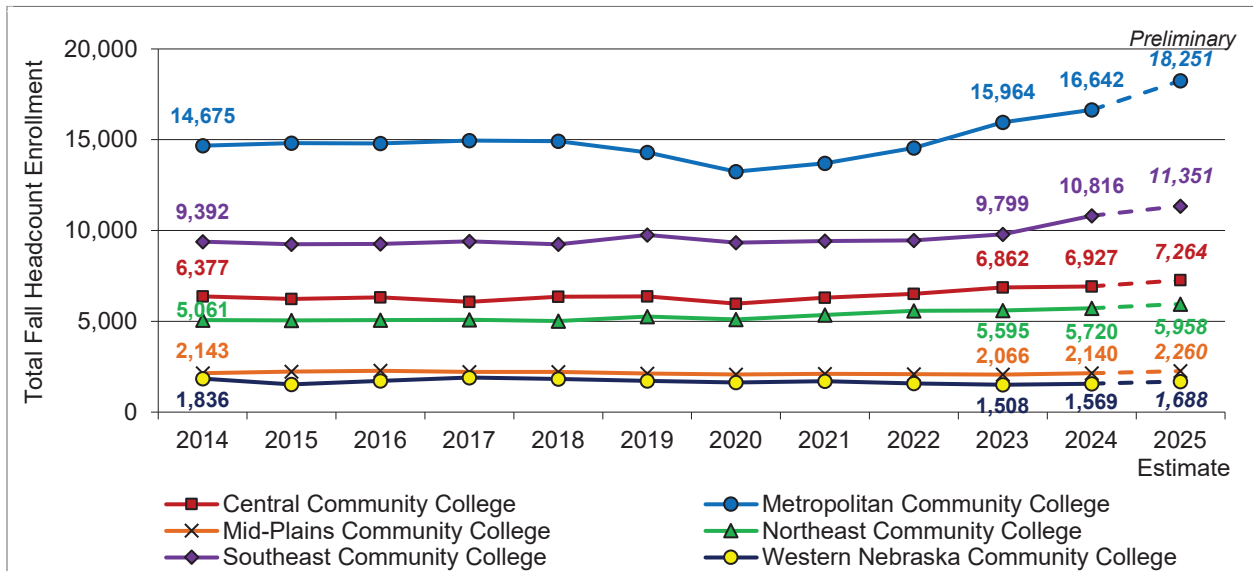
## Nebraska Community Colleges

- From fall 2014 to fall 2025, total fall enrollment increased an estimated 18.5% at the community colleges. Central Community College, Metropolitan Community College, Mid-Plains Community College, Northeast Community College, and Southeast Community College reported increases ranging from 5.5% to 24.4%. Meanwhile, Western Nebraska Community College reported a decrease of 8.1%
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2014 and fall 2025, at Nebraska's six community colleges:

Institution	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
Central Community College	0.9%	4.9%	8.6%	13.9%
Metropolitan Community College	4.2%	9.7%	13.4%	24.4%
Mid-Plains Community College	3.6%	5.6%	-0.1%	5.5%
Northeast Community College	2.2%	4.2%	13.0%	17.7%
Southeast Community College	10.4%	4.9%	15.2%	20.9%
Western Neb. Community College	4.0%	7.6%	-14.5%	-8.1%

Figure 1.5

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Community Colleges by Institution  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025



Note. See Table A1.2 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

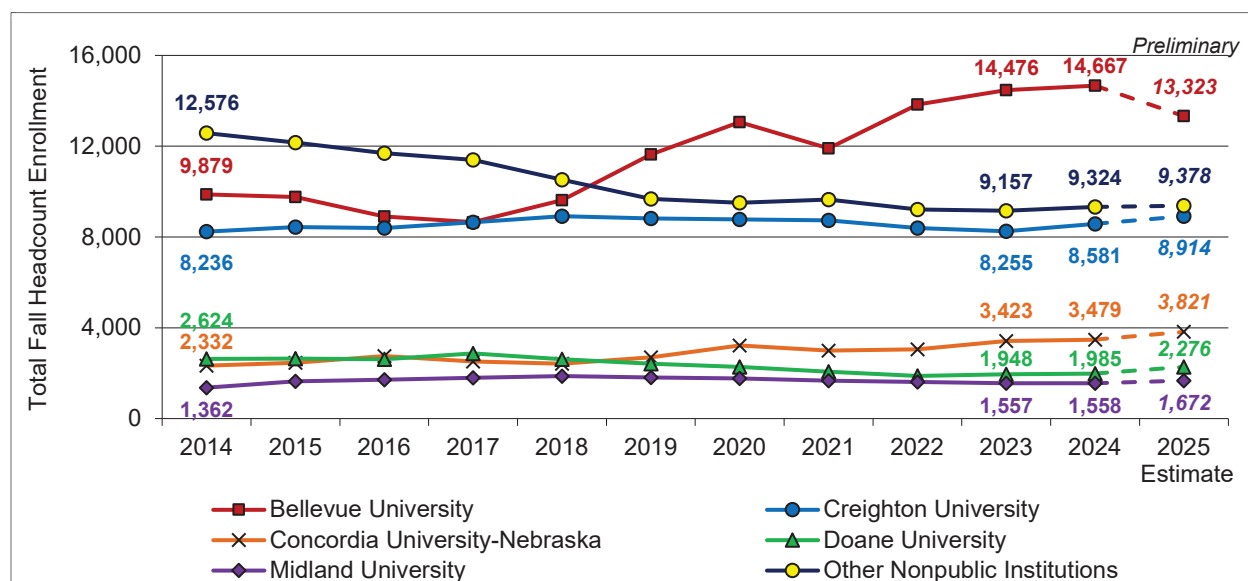
## Nebraska Nonpublic Colleges and Universities: Fall Enrollment

- From fall 2014 to fall 2025, total fall enrollment increased an estimated 6.4% at Nebraska’s nonpublic colleges and universities.
- The following five nonpublic institutions are estimated to have enrolled the highest number of students within the nonpublic sector in fall 2025: Bellevue University, Creighton University, Concordia University-Nebraska, Doane University, and Midland University.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in enrollment, as well as the total changes in enrollment between fall 2014 and fall 2025, at Nebraska’s nonpublic institutions. (See [Table A1.2](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for more information on fall enrollments at Nebraska’s nonpublic institutions.)

Institution	1-Year Change 2023 to 2024	Est. 1-Year Change 2024 to 2025	10-Year Change 2014 to 2024	Est. 11-Year Change 2014 to 2025
Bellevue University	1.3%	-9.2%	48.5%	34.9%
Creighton University	3.9%	3.9%	4.2%	8.2%
Concordia University-Nebraska	1.6%	9.8%	49.2%	63.9%
Doane University	1.9%	14.7%	-24.4%	-13.3%
Midland University	0.1%	7.3%	14.4%	22.8%
Other Nonpublic Institutions	1.8%	0.6%	-25.9%	-25.4%

Figure 1.6

Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Nonpublic Colleges and Universities  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025



Note. See [Table A1.2](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

**Nebraska Fall Headcount Enrollment Summary by Sector**

- As shown in Table 1.1, the net effect of the changes in enrollment that occurred between fall 2014 and fall 2025 is that enrollments at the University of Nebraska and the state colleges accounted for lower percentages of Nebraska’s total postsecondary enrollment in fall 2025 than they did in fall 2014 while enrollments at the community colleges and the nonpublic institutions accounted for higher percentages of total fall enrollment.

<b>Table 1.1 Nebraska Total Fall Headcount Enrollment by Sector 2014 and 2025</b>				
Enrollment Sector	Fall 2014		<i>Estimated Fall 2025</i>	
	Enrollment	% of Enrollment	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>% of Enrollment</i>
University of Nebraska	51,215	37.5%	<i>48,904</i>	<i>34.2%</i>
Nebraska State College System	9,002	6.6%	<i>7,787</i>	<i>5.5%</i>
Nebraska Community Colleges	39,484	28.9%	<i>46,772</i>	<i>32.7%</i>
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	37,009	27.1%	<i>39,384</i>	<i>27.6%</i>
Total Nebraska Postsecondary Headcount Enrollment	136,710	100.0%	<i>142,847</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Data sources: For 2014 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 survey. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.				

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

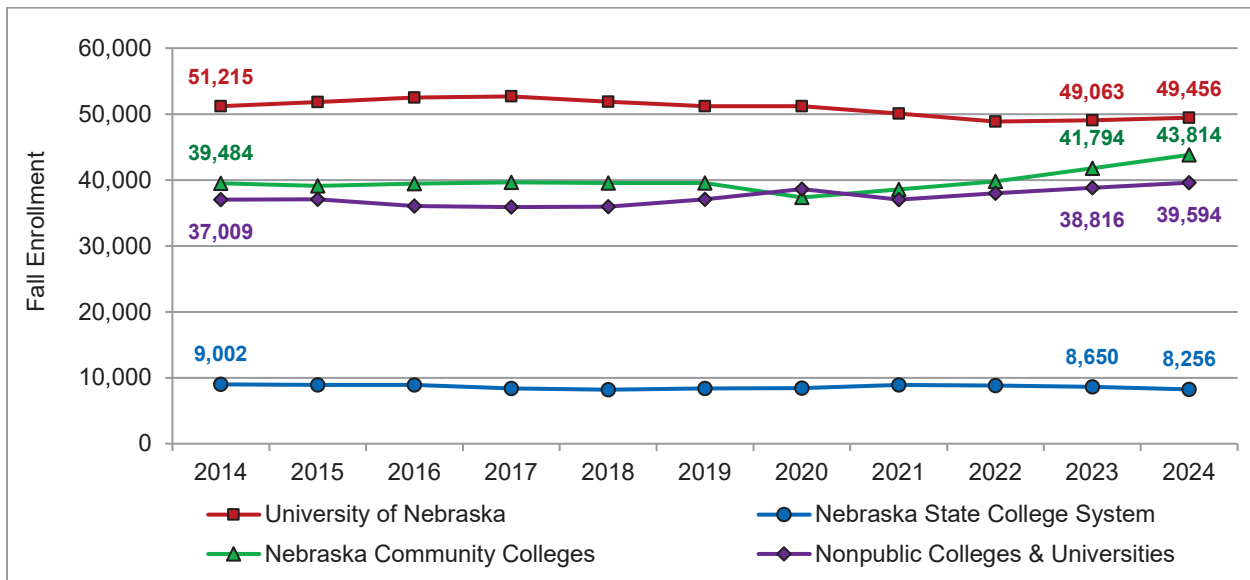
Fall headcount enrollment is the best available indicator of enrollment trends across all sectors of postsecondary education in Nebraska because it is reported by and can be analyzed by race/ethnicity, sex, enrollment status (part-time/full-time), level of study (undergraduate/graduate), and distance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

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

For some institutions, fall enrollment is about the same or only slightly lower than the school's 12-month unduplicated headcount. However, for other institutions, fall enrollment is considerably lower than the total number of students the school serves over the course of an academic year. This is particularly true for Nebraska's community colleges, where the percentage of students enrolled in the fall is about 56.8% to 70.4% of the students served over the course of an academic year. The following analysis compares fall and 12-month unduplicated headcounts for Nebraska's five sectors of higher education.

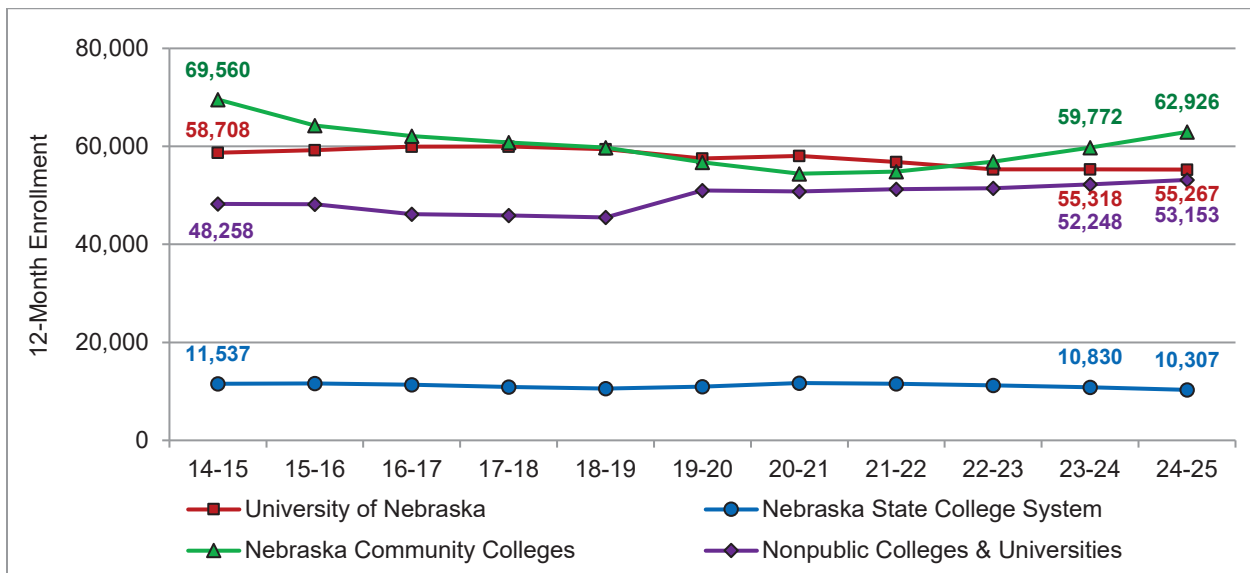
- Figure 1.8 shows total fall enrollment by sector from fall 2014 through fall 2024, the latest period for which official data are available from the NCES. Figure 1.9 shows the comparable 12-month enrollments reported to the NCES for the 2014-2015 academic year through the 2024-2025 academic year.
- The fall and 12-month enrollments shown in Figure 1.8 and Figure 1.9 are both valid measures for determining whether sector enrollments are generally increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same. However, the two headcounts provide different information about sector enrollments.
- Based on the fall enrollments charted in Figure 1.8, the University of Nebraska enrolls a higher number of students than Nebraska's six community colleges. In fall 2024, for example, the University of Nebraska enrolled 49,456 students compared to enrollment of 43,814 students at the community colleges.
- The 12-month enrollments summarized in Figure 1.9 show that Nebraska's community colleges enrolled more students in 2024-2025 than the University of Nebraska. In 2024-2025, the University of Nebraska served 55,267 students over the course of the academic year while the community colleges served 62,926 students.

**Figure 1.8**  
**Fall Headcount Enrollment**  
**at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector**  
**Fall 2014 through Fall 2024**



Note. See Table A1.1 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys.

**Figure 1.9**  
**12-Month Unduplicated Headcount**  
**at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector**  
**2014-2015 Academic Year through 2024-2025 Academic Year**

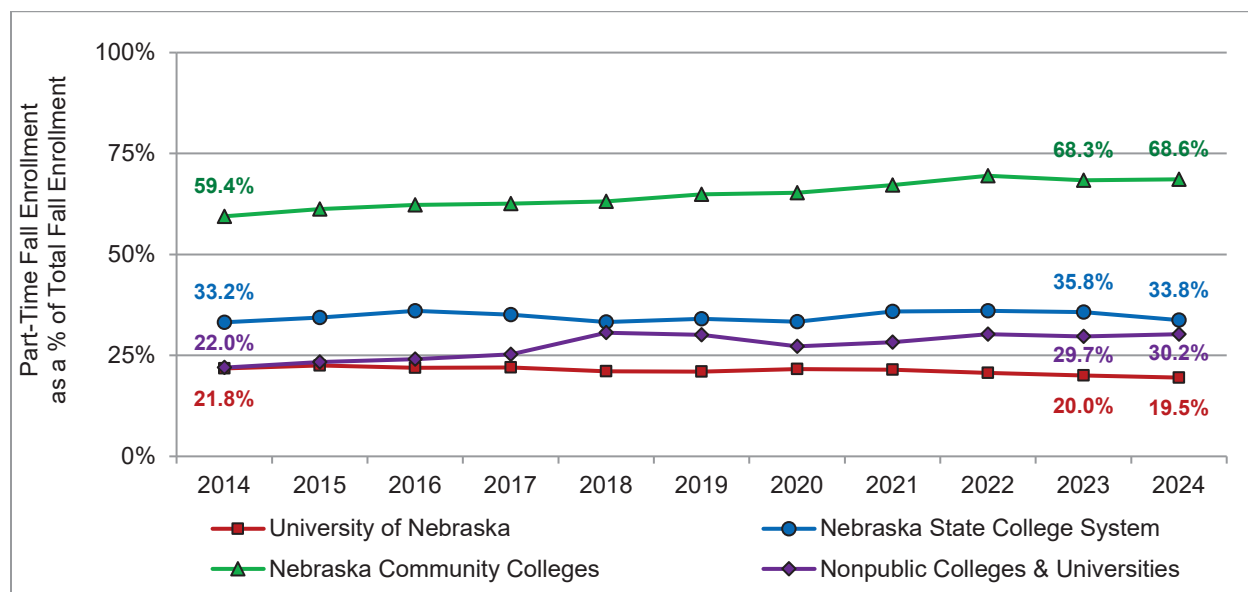


Note. See Table A1.3 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS 2015 through 2025 surveys.

- The historically higher 12-month headcount of the community colleges reflects the fact that these colleges serve many students who take courses only one semester or quarter of the academic year. Furthermore, the community colleges enroll more part-time students than the University of Nebraska, Nebraska state colleges, and nonpublic colleges and universities. As shown in [Figure 1.10](#), part-time students accounted for 68.6% of total fall enrollment at the community colleges in fall 2024. In comparison, part-time students accounted for 19.5% of the University of Nebraska’s fall 2024 enrollment, 30.2% of the fall enrollment at the nonpublic institutions, and 33.8% at the state colleges.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1.10**

**Part-Time Fall Enrollment as a Percentage of Total Fall Headcount Enrollment at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector Fall 2014 through Fall 2024**



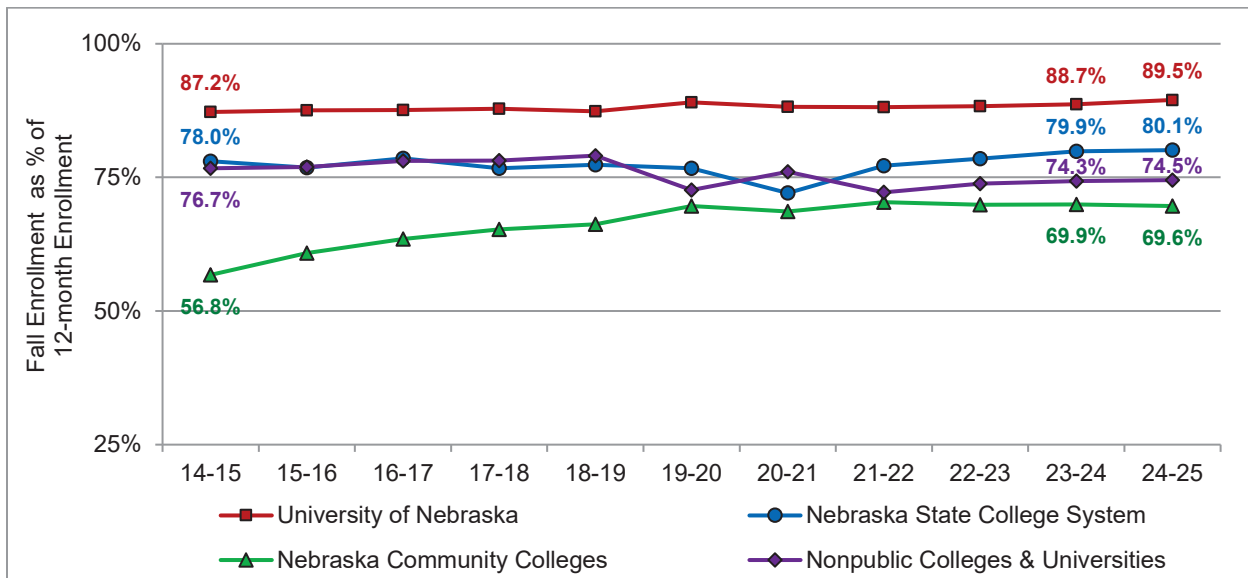
Note. For more information, see the *2025 Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska – Enrollment* on the Commission’s website at [ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports](http://ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports). Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys.

- [Figure 1.11](#) shows fall enrollment as a percentage of 12-month enrollment as a means of directly comparing these two headcounts. As shown in this chart, fall enrollment in 2024 accounted for 89.5% of 12-month enrollment during the 2024-2025 academic year at the University of Nebraska. Meanwhile, fall enrollments accounted for 80.1%, 74.5% and 69.6% of the students served annually by the state colleges, nonpublic institutions, and community colleges, respectively.
- The Commission will continue to use fall unduplicated headcounts as the primary measure of the number of students enrolled at colleges and universities in Nebraska. However, fall headcount enrollments should be interpreted with the understanding that there are many more students who are served by Nebraska’s postsecondary education system over the course of any given academic year, and this is especially true in the case of the state’s community colleges and nonpublic institutions.

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

Figure 1.11

Fall Headcount Enrollment as a Percentage of 12-Month Unduplicated Headcount at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector 2014-2015 Academic Year through 2024-2025 Academic Year



Note. See Table A1.1 and Table A1.3 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS 2014 through 2025 surveys.

## First-Time Freshmen Enrollments at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions

First-time freshmen enrollments are indicators of the general direction undergraduate enrollments are headed as well as general measures of the numbers of high school graduates who go on to college in Nebraska. Consequently, this section compares fall 2014 enrollments of first-time freshmen to estimated first-time freshmen enrollment in fall 2025. Enrollments for fall 2025 are preliminary, based on estimates that institutions report directly to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

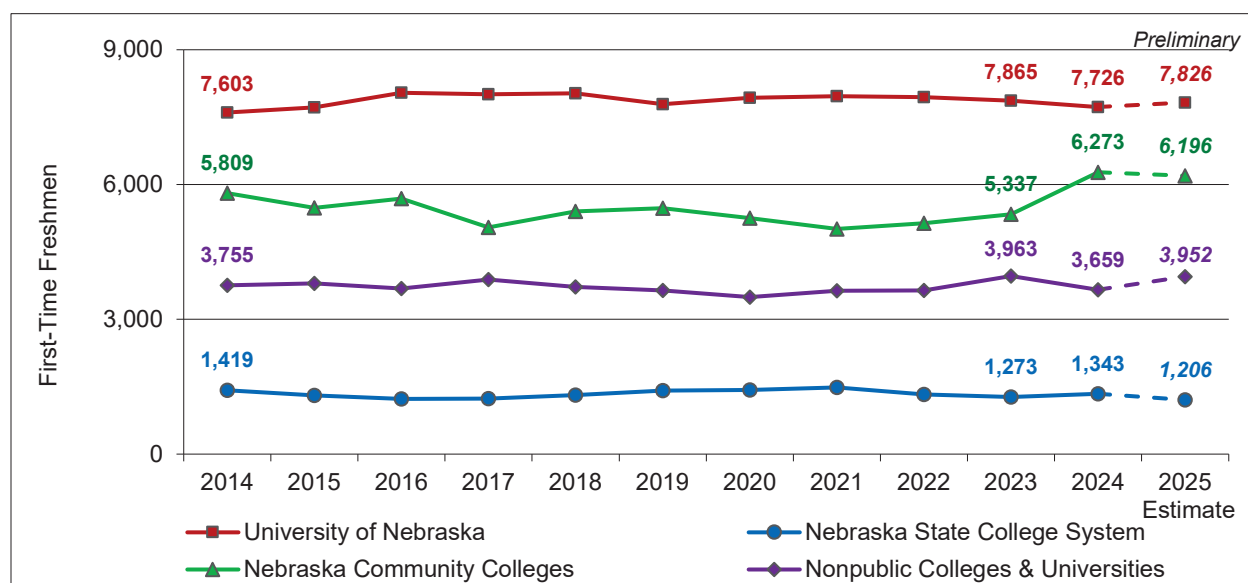
### Total Enrollment of First-Time Freshmen by Sector

- As shown in [Figure 1.12](#), the University of Nebraska has enrolled more first-time freshmen than any other sector since fall 2014.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in first-time freshmen enrollments, as well as the total changes in first-time freshmen enrollments, between fall 2014 and fall 2025:

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	-1.8%	1.3%	1.6%	2.9%
Nebraska State College System	5.5%	-10.2%	-5.4%	-15.0%
Nebraska Community Colleges	17.5%	-1.2%	8.0%	6.7%
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	-7.7%	8.0%	-2.6%	5.2%
Total Nebraska	3.1%	0.9%	2.2%	3.2%

**Figure 1.12**

### **Total First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Sector Fall 2014 through Fall 2025**

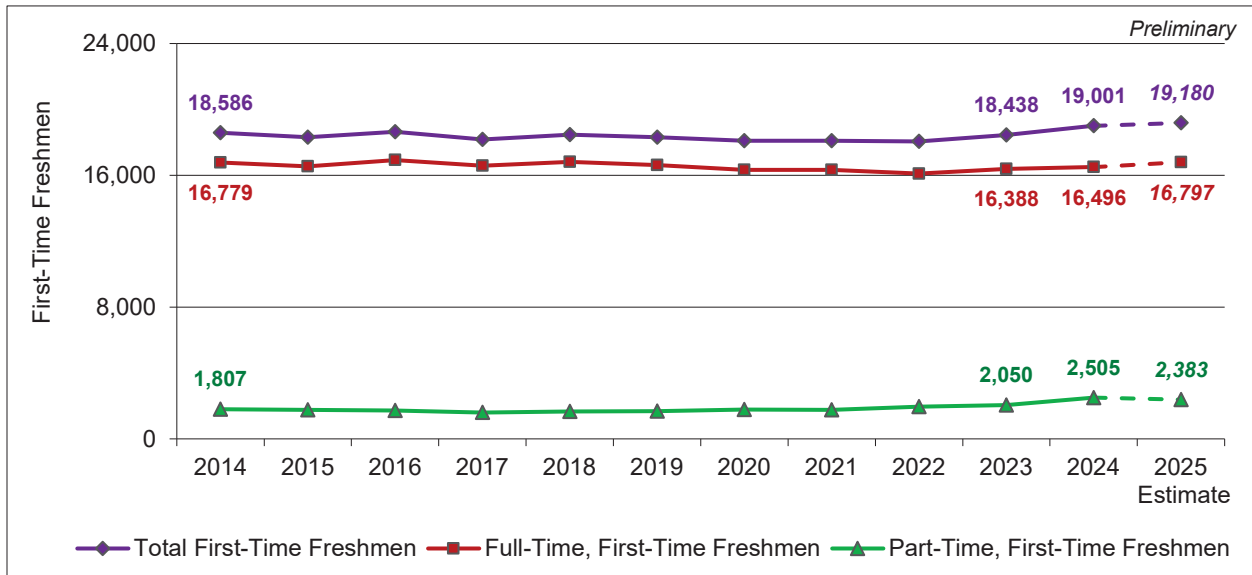


Note. See [Part C of Table A1.4 in Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

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

- As shown in [Figure 1.13](#), total enrollment of first-time freshmen at Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions increased an estimated 3.2% between fall 2014 and fall 2025.
- Full-time first-time freshmen accounted for an estimated 87.6% of the first-time freshmen attending postsecondary institutions in Nebraska in fall 2025, down from 90.3% in fall 2014.
- Full-time first-time freshmen enrollment increased an estimated 0.1% over the 11-year period between fall 2014 and fall 2025. Meanwhile, part-time first-time freshmen enrollment increased an estimated 31.9% over the 11-year period.
- Analyzing the actual changes in fall enrollment between 2014 and 2024 reveals that Nebraska’s total first-time freshmen enrollment increased 2.2%. Full-time first-time freshmen enrollment decreased 1.7% while part-time first-time freshmen enrollment increased 38.6%.

**Figure 1.13**  
**Total First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Full- and Part-Time Student Status**  
**Fall 2014 through Fall 2025**



*Note.* See [Table A1.4](#) in [Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

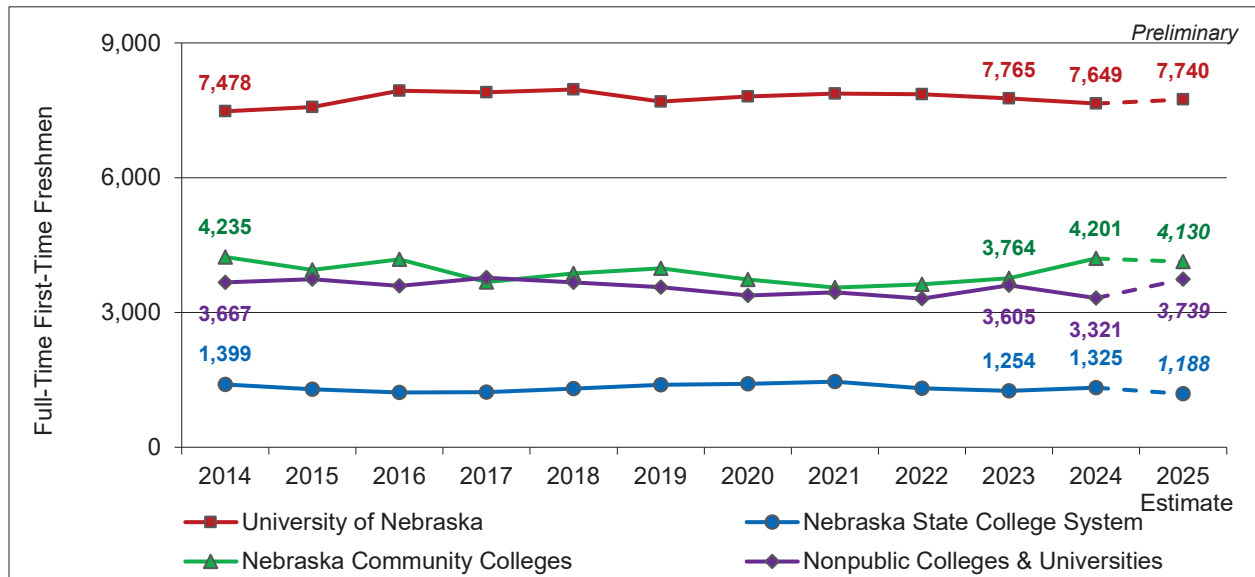
## Enrollment of Full- and Part-Time, First-Time Freshmen by Sector

- From fall 2014 to fall 2025, full-time first-time freshmen enrollment increased an estimated 0.1%. As illustrated in [Figure 1.14](#), full-time first-time freshmen enrollments varied by sector.
- Following are the most recent one-year changes in full-time first-time freshmen enrollments, as well as the total changes in full-time first-time freshmen enrollments, between fall 2014 and fall 2025:

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	-1.5%	1.2%	2.3%	3.5%
Nebraska State College System	5.7%	-10.3%	-5.3%	-15.1%
Nebraska Community Colleges	11.6%	-1.7%	-0.8%	-2.5%
Nonpublic Colleges & Universities	-7.9%	12.6%	-9.4%	2.0%
Total Nebraska Full-Time First-Time	0.7%	1.8%	-1.7%	0.1%

**Figure 1.14**

**Total Full-Time, First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Sector  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025**



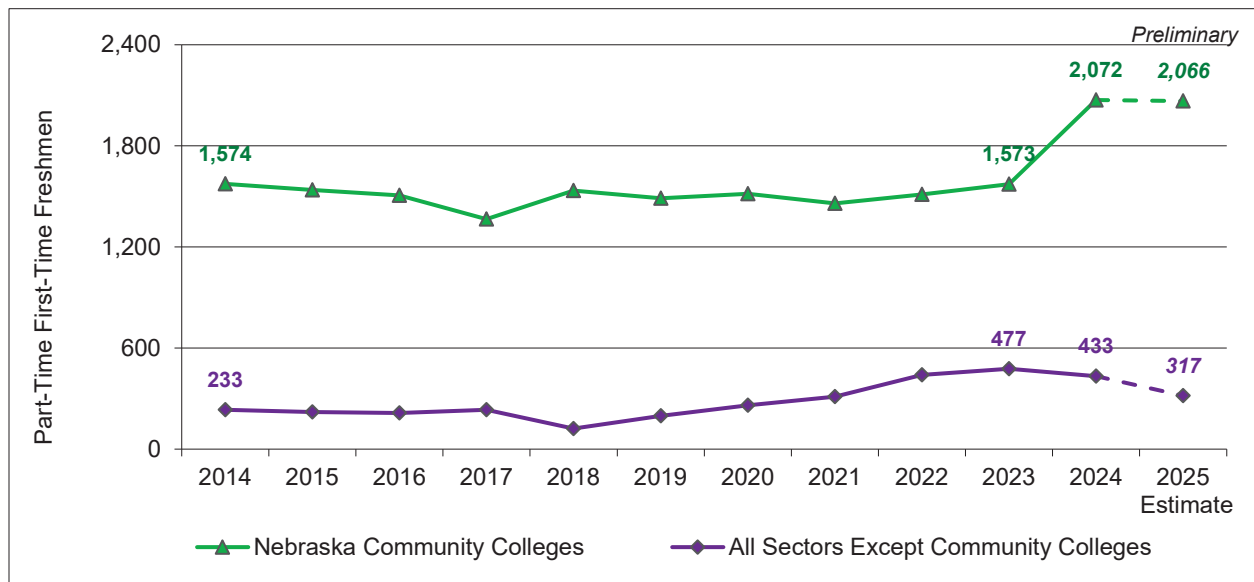
Note. See [Part A of Table A1.4 in Appendix 1](#) for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

- As shown in [Figure 1.15](#), Nebraska’s community colleges account for the majority of first-time freshmen who attend school part-time (87.1% of the state total in fall 2014 and an estimated 86.7% in fall 2025).
- From fall 2014 to fall 2025, part-time first-time freshmen enrollment increased an estimated 31.9%.

- Enrollment of part-time first-time freshmen at Nebraska’s community colleges decreased an estimated 0.3% from fall 2024 to fall 2025, resulting in an estimated 11-year increase of 31.3%.
- The large increase in part-time first-time freshmen between fall 2023 and fall 2024 was largely due to increases in these students at Metropolitan Community College (from 609 to 1,030) and Southeast Community College (from 557 to 655).
- The number of part-time first-time freshmen enrolled at other types of institutions decreased an estimated 26.8% from fall 2024 to fall 2025, resulting in an estimated increase of 36.1% over the 11-year period.

**Figure 1.15**

**Total Part-Time, First-Time Freshmen Enrollment by Sector  
Fall 2014 through Fall 2025**



Note. See Part B of Table A1.4 in Appendix 1 for supporting data. Data sources: For 2014 through 2024 data, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2014 through fall 2024 surveys. Preliminary enrollments for fall 2025 were collected from each institution by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, December 2025.

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

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

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

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