



ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE:

STRATEGIC VISION STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT 2015

www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org

ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE: 2015 STRATEGIC VISION STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, Arizona's community colleges embarked upon a long-term Strategic Vision to significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university. **In order to measure progress toward the three major goals outlined in the Strategic Vision, the colleges have implemented a rigorous self-assessment and accountability process centered around the annual collection and distribution of data related to 30 key indicators.**

Data presented in the 2015 Strategic Vision Student Progress and Outcomes Report identify areas of strength, as well as places where Arizona Western College(AWC) will need to focus its efforts in order to improve student access, retention, and completion. **For some of the retention and completion measures, a specific group of students called the "Credential-Seeking Cohort" was tracked; this group is defined as full- and part-time learners who earned at least 12 credit hours by the end of their second year.** Tracking this sub-cohort aligns AWC's data collection and accountability strategies with those of national community college initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA). Furthermore, analysis of retention and completion outcomes within this sub-cohort provides a more accurate gauge of community college student success, as it takes into account learners' diverse educational and training goals.

The 2015 outcomes presented in this report can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge. However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making long-term projections difficult at best.

HIGHLIGHTS OF AWC'S 2015 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

Access

- At AWC, a Hispanic-Serving Institution, 69% of students are members of an underserved minority group and 56% receive Pell grants. These figures are substantially higher than corresponding statewide averages.
- Ensuring greater access for all students, 65% of AWC credits were completed via alternative delivery methods and/or alternative times and places.

Retention

- AWC retained 97% of the fall 2012 Credential-Seeking Cohort to spring 2013 and 81% to the following fall. These rates are considerably higher than statewide and national averages.

Completion

- AWC awarded 2,103 degrees and certificates in 2013-14, a 68% increase from 2010-11.
- Seventy-one percent of 2013-14 transfer students from AWC completed an AGEC and/or degree prior to transfer. This figure is substantially higher than the statewide average of 59% and demonstrates a high level of efficiency and cost-effectiveness in AWC's transfer process.

BACKGROUND

ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION

In 2011 Arizona's community colleges published a long-term strategic plan, which has since been incorporated into strategic planning processes at community colleges across the state. This plan outlined a clear vision for Arizona's ten community college districts and identified 30 key indicators of progress toward 3 major goal areas: access, retention, and completion. **Many of these indicators are aligned with those included in the American Association for Community Colleges' Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) initiative, which will allow for comparisons with national norms in years to come.**

A major function of the Strategic Vision is the collection, analysis, and publication of data pertaining to the 30 key indicators of progress, as well as the sharing of best practices and successful program models across the state. This document is the fourth in a series of annual reports providing data related to student progress and outcomes at Arizona Western College (AWC). Where available, comparable national data are also shown.

As 2015 represents the fourth full year of Strategic Vision data collection, the outcomes presented in this document can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge. These trends will enable Arizona Western College to set reasonable benchmarks for attainment related to core metrics.

However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making longer-term projections difficult at best.

The Strategic Vision, as well as a Technical Guide that provides detailed definitions of each key indicator of progress, can be found online at: www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org.

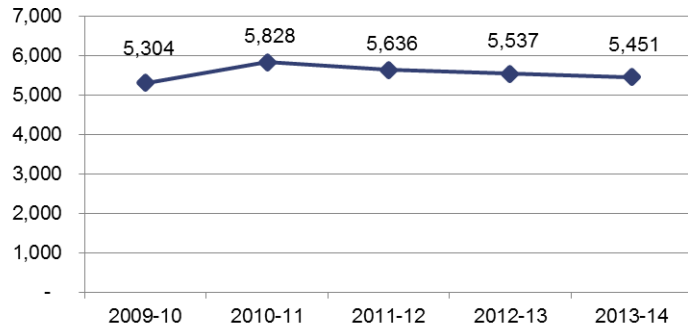
OUR VISION: Arizona's community colleges, through a collaborative effort with education, business, and community partners, will significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university.

ACCES INDICATORS

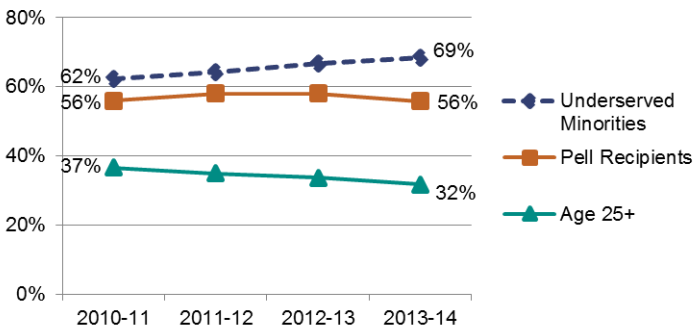
Indicator 1. Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment

Following the statewide trend, annual full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment at AWC has declined slightly from its high of 5,828 in 2010-11. These enrollment numbers likely reflect a greater number of students enrolling directly in the state's universities and/or private institutions, as well as an improved economy drawing more students into the workplace.

Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment



Underserved Populations, as a Percentage of Enrollment



Indicator 2. Enrollment of Underserved Populations

In 2013-14, 69% of AWC students were members of an underserved racial or ethnic group; 56% were Pell recipients, and 32% were over the age of 24. The percentages of Pell recipients and underserved minorities at AWC are substantially higher than corresponding national and statewide averages.

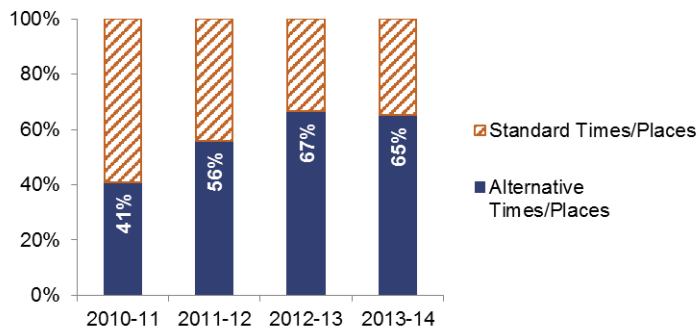
Furthermore, the 69% of AWC students who are members of an underserved racial or ethnic group is 13% higher than the percentage of those populations in Yuma and La Paz Counties (61%).¹

Indicator 3. Percent of Student Credit Hours Earned via Alternative Delivery Methods and/or at Alternative Times and Places

At AWC, only 35% of instruction in 2013-14 occurred in traditional semester-length classes held on campus, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8am and 5pm.

Extending access to many diverse populations, 65% of all student credit hours were earned online, at night or on the weekends, in short-term or open-entry/open-exit courses, and in skills centers, American Indian reservations, Army bases, or prisons.

Percent of SCH Earned at Standard and Alternative Times/Places



¹U.S.. Bureau of the Census. (2015). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Washington, DC: Author.

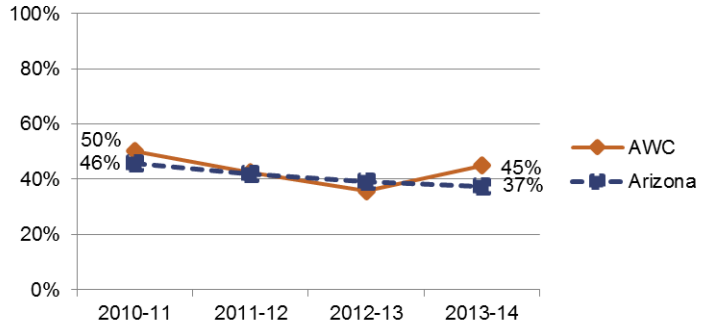
ACCES INDICATORS

Indicators 4-5. Community College-Going Rate and Overall College-Going Rate

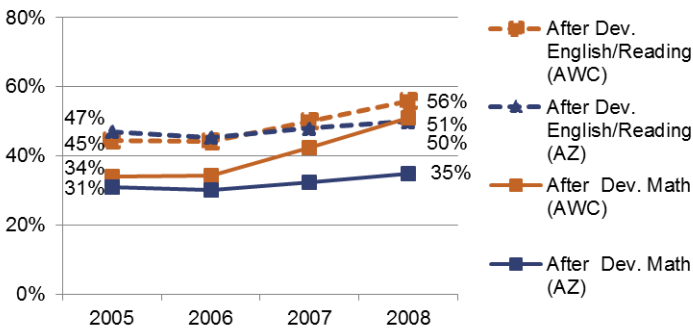
In 2013-14, AWC enrolled 45% of all recent high school graduates from the college's service area. At AWC and across the state, the percentage of recent high school graduates enrolling in community colleges has slightly decreased.

Although not shown on the graph, Arizona's community colleges and universities together enroll 58% of all recent high school graduates.²

Service Area Community College-Going Rates



Success After Remediation (2005-08 New Student Cohorts)



Indicators 6-7. Success after Remediation

After six years, 56% of all developmental English or reading learners in AWC's 2008 New Student Cohort completed a college-level English course and 51% of developmental math learners in the same cohort successfully completed a college-level math course.

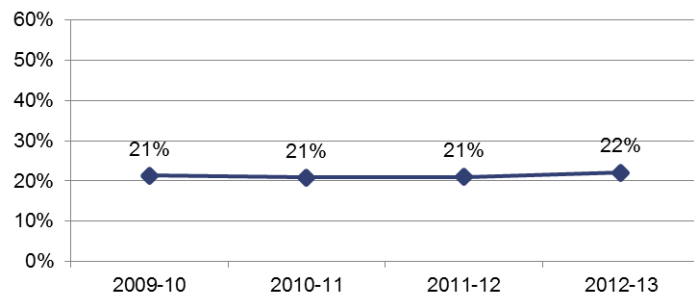
AWC's success after remediation rates have increased substantially in recent years and are now higher than corresponding statewide averages.

Indicator 8. Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of the Median Household Income in Yuma and La Paz County

At just over \$9,100 per year, the net price of attending Arizona Western College is just 22% of the median household income in Yuma and La Paz Counties, making the institution an excellent and affordable option for postsecondary education and training.

Arizona Western College's net price is reported by the National Center for Education Statistics and is based on new full-time students.

Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Median Household Income in Yuma & La Paz Counties



RETENTION INDICATORS

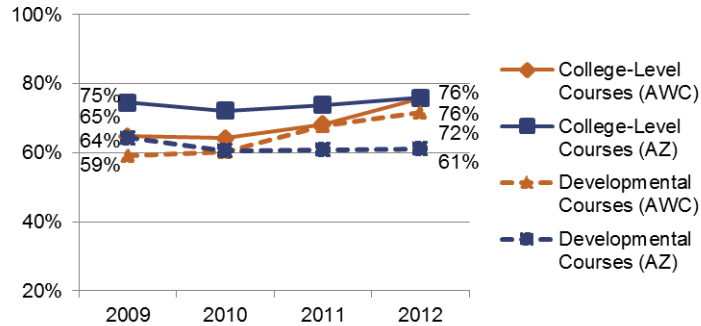
Indicators 9-10. Course Success Rates

Over two years, 76% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by AWC's 2012 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

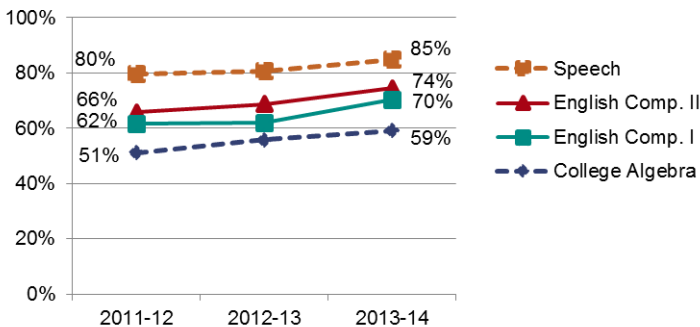
In that same time period, 72% of student credit hours attempted in developmental courses by AWC's 2012 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

AWC's course success rates are the same or higher than statewide averages of 76% and 61%, respectively, and have increased in recent years.

**Course Success Rates
(2009-12 New Student Cohorts)**



**Percent of Gateway Math and English
Credit Hours Successfully Completed**



Indicator 11. Percent of Gateway (First College-Level) Math and English Credit Hours Successfully Completed

In 2013-14, between 59% and 85% of student credit hours attempted in College Algebra, English Composition I and II, and Speech were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

These rates are similar to corresponding statewide averages (62%, 73%, 75%, and 78%, respectively), and have increased over time. College-level math courses pose the greatest challenge to students, both at Arizona Western College and throughout the nation. AWC will continue working to improve the percentage of its learners successfully completing gateway (first college-level) courses.

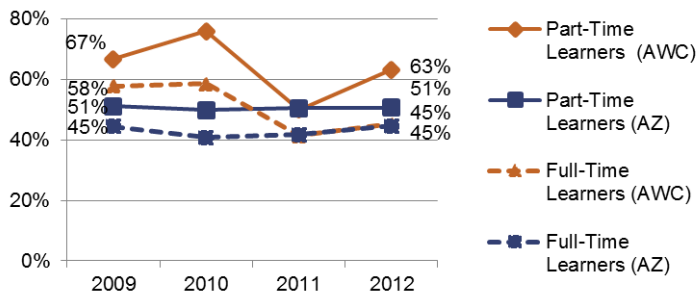
RETENTION INDICATORS

Indicator 12. Percent of Full-Time Learners Completing 42 Credits and Percent of Part-Time Learners Completing 24 Credits within Two Years

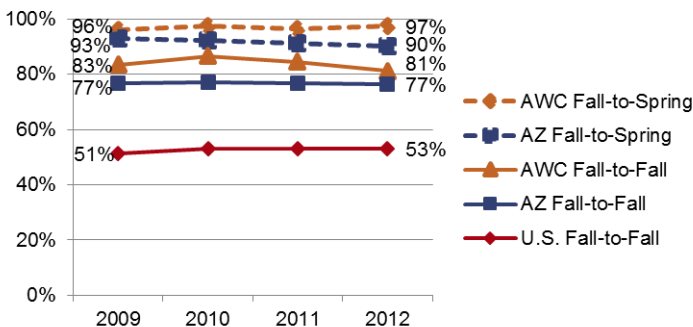
By the end of their second year, 63% of part-time learners in AWC's 2012 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 45% of full-time learners in the same cohort had completed 42 credits. These rates have been somewhat variable over time.

Although there is room for improvement, these rates are notable, as research has linked attainment of credit thresholds (roughly equivalent to 20 credits per year for full-time students) to higher retention and completion rates.³

Percent of Learners Reaching Credit Thresholds within Two Years (2009-12 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



Retention Rates (2009-12 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



Indicators 13-14. Retention Rates

Ninety-seven percent of learners in AWC's 2012 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who successfully transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted at their college to spring 2013, and 81% of them returned for classes the following fall.

Both AWC's fall-to-fall and fall-to-spring rates exceed statewide averages. Additionally, they are both substantially higher than the 53% fall-to-fall retention rate reported as a national comparison,⁴ as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, national community college accountability initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability are beginning to track and analyze retention among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

³Moore, C., Shulock, N., & Offenstien, J. (2009). *Steps to success: Analyzing milestone achievement to improve community college student outcomes*. Sacramento: California State University, Sacramento, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy.

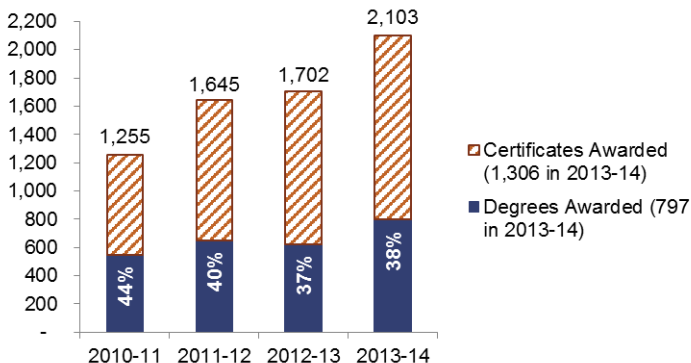
⁴NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates – First-time college freshmen returning their second year*. Boulder, CO: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

Indicator 15. Percent of Learners Achieving their Stated Education or Training Goals

This indicator is in development. It will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision once enough time has passed to link intent to completion data.

Degrees and Certificates Awarded



Indicator 16. Number of Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Arizona Western College increased by 68%.

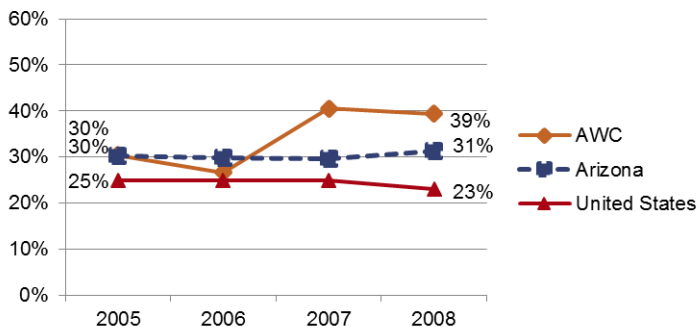
Of the 2013-14 total, 38% were degrees and 62% certificates. Arizona Western College is making a concerted effort to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials, especially in high-demand fields.

Indicator 17. Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (Graduation Rate)

After six years, 39% of AWC's 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate.

AWC's graduation rate is somewhat higher than the statewide average of 31%, and substantially higher than the 23% reported as a national comparison,⁵ although the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. Nonetheless, the Voluntary Framework of Accountability is beginning to track and analyze completion among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

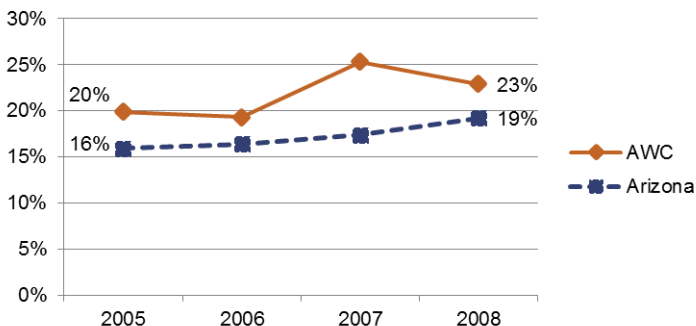
Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (2005-08 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



⁵U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

AGEC Completion Rate (2005-08 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



Indicator 18. AGEC Completion Rate

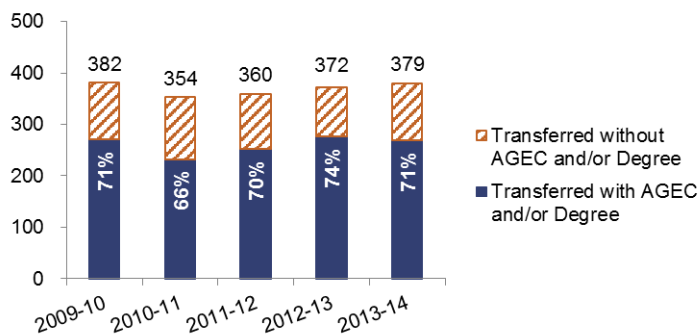
Twenty-three percent of AWC's 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) within 6 years, a slight increase from the 2005 cohort.

Increasing AGEC completion rates—a key priority for all of Arizona's community colleges—will not only ease transfer to Arizona's public universities but should help to improve bachelor's degree completion in the state.

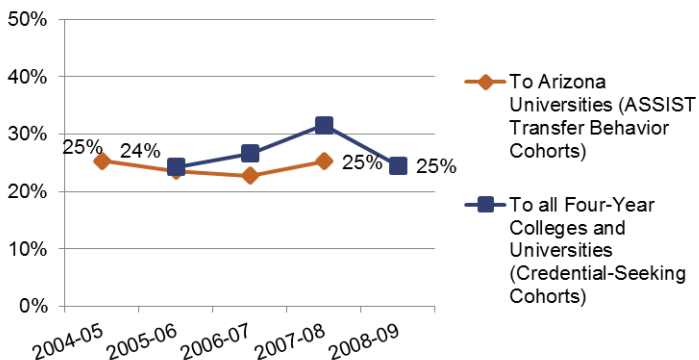
Indicators 19-20. Number of In-State University Transfers, and Percent with an AGEC and/or Degree at Time of Transfer

Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, the number of students transferring from AWC to an in-state, public university has remained relatively stable. In 2013-14, 71% of transfers had earned an AGEC and/or degree prior to transferring, a sign that the transfer process is relatively efficient and cost effective for both students and the state.

Number of In-State University Transfers and Percent with AGEC and/or Degree



Transfer Rates



Indicators 21-22. In-State and Overall Transfer Rates

AWC's transfer rate among ASSIST Transfer Behavior Cohorts have remained steady at 25%. The college's overall transfer rate (the percent of learners in Credential-Seeking Cohorts who transferred to any four-year college or university within 6 years) is also 25%. Both rates are similar to the most recent national transfer rate (25%) calculated by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges.⁶

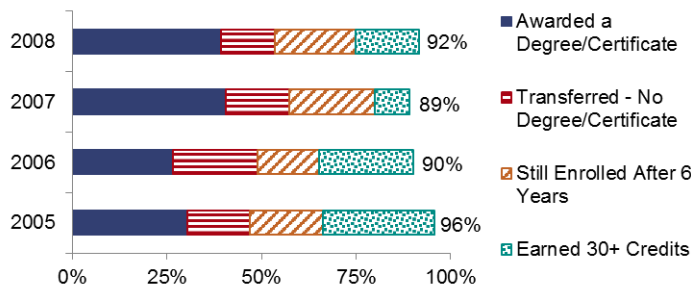
COMPLETION INDICATORS

Indicator 23. Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Community College Outcome

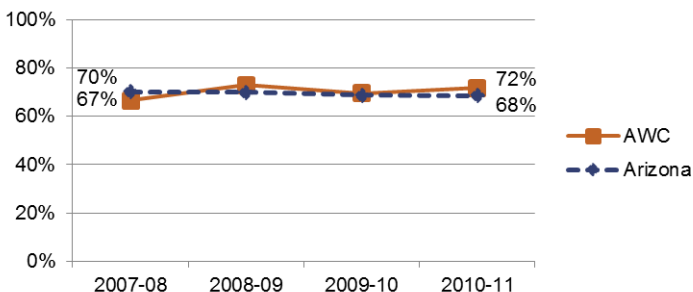
Ninety-two percent of learners in AWC's 2008 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within 6 years; over 40% of these earned a degree or certificate.

Because community college learners enter college with diverse education and training goals, and because they often attend part-time and/or earn credits from more than one community college, the VFA and other national accountability initiatives have broadened the definition of a successful community college outcome to include: earning a degree or certificate; transferring to another two- or four-year college or university; continued enrollment; and/or leaving the institution after earning 30 or more credits.

Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Outcome (2005-08 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Universities Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



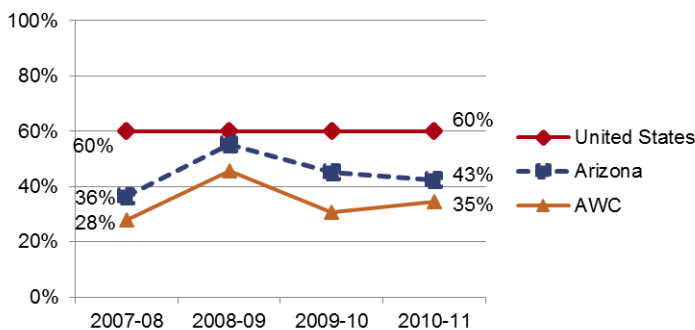
Indicator 24. Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Public Universities who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

Seventy-two percent of all 2010-11 full-time transfers from Arizona Western College to in-state universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years. This rate exceeds the statewide average (68%) and indicates that most full-time students transferring to an in-state public university are graduating in a timely manner.

Indicator 25. Percent of all Transfers who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

Thirty-five percent of 2010-11 transfers from AWC to all four-year institutions—public and private, in-state and out—earned a bachelor's degree within four years. This rate is somewhat lower than statewide and national averages (43% and 60%, respectively)⁷ and may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer.

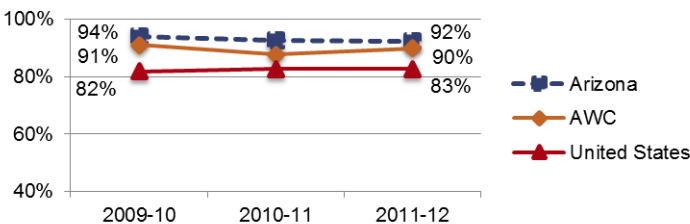
Percent of all Transfers Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



⁷National Student Clearinghouse. (2012). *Snapshot report: transfer outcomes (four years after transfer)*. Herndon, VA: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

Percent of Learners Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential (2009-12 Occupational Completers/Leavers)



Indicator 26. Percent of Occupational Program Completers/Leavers Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential within One Year

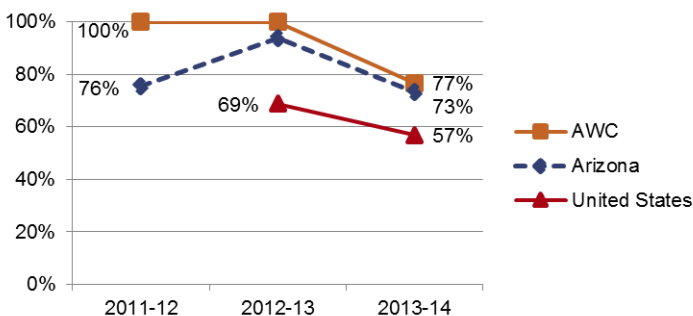
Out of all learners in AWC's 2011-12 Occupational Completers/Leavers Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment aligned with industry-recognized standards up to one year after college exit, 90% passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. This level of performance exceeds the 2011-12 national average of 83%,⁸ but is slightly lower than the statewide number.

Examples of occupational programs leading to industry-recognized credentials include, among others, aviation technology, building and construction, dental hygiene, education, emergency medical technician, fashion, fire science, nursing, solar technologies, and veterinary technologies.

Indicator 27. Wage Growth of Occupational Completers

This indicator will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision pending a statewide agreement for sharing wage data.

Percent of ABE/GED Learners Entering Employment



Indicator 28. Percent of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) Learners Entering Employment

In 2013-14, 77% of AWC's ABE/GED learners who were not employed at the time of entry—and who were surveyed by the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS)—entered employment within three months of exiting the program.

Although this rate has been variable over time, AWC's ABE/GED learners have consistently performed higher than statewide (73%) and national (57%)⁹ averages, indicating that Arizona Western College is effectively moving ABE/GED learners into the workforce.

⁸ Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. (2014). *Core indicator report :1P1 Technical Skill Attainment , 2011-12*. Washington, DC: Author.

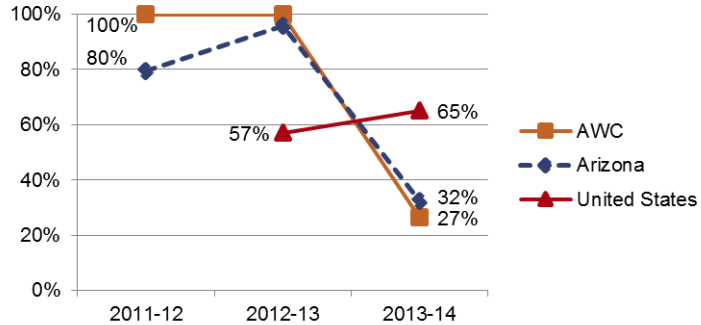
⁹U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2015). *Core Follow-Up Outcomes Measures, 2013-2014*. Washington, DC: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

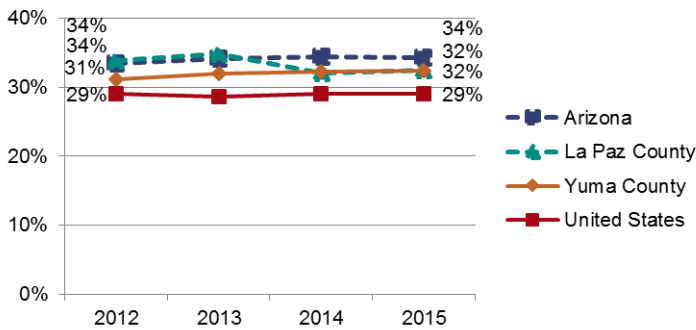
Indicator 29. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) Learner Outcomes

In 2013-14, only 27% of AWC's ABE/GED completers who held a GED or high school diploma subsequently enrolled in further education within one year of program exit. This number is substantially lower than both results from previous years and the national average (65%)¹⁰ and may be a factor of low NRS survey response rates and/or an indication that more ABE/GED students are choosing to enter the job market instead of higher education.

Percent of ABE/GED Completers Enrolled in Postsecondary Education



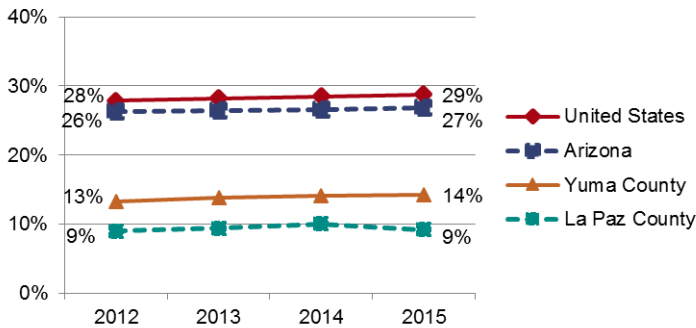
Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree



Indicator 30. Percent of Adults with Postsecondary Experience and/or Degrees

Thirty-two percent of Yuma and La Paz County adults age 25 and older have attended some college and/or have earned an associate degree. This rate is somewhat lower than the statewide average (34%) but higher than the national number (29%).¹⁰

Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree



However, only 14% of adults in Yuma and 9% of adults in La Paz Counties hold a bachelor's or higher degree. By continuing to provide education leading to transfer and bachelor's degrees, and by partnering with the state's public universities, AWC and other community colleges across the state will endeavor to help the Arizona Board of Regents reach their goal of raising the percentage of Arizona adults holding a bachelor's degree to 28% by 2017.

⁹U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2015). *Core Follow-Up Outcomes Measures, 2013-2014*. Washington, DC: Author.

¹⁰U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2015). *Educational attainment: 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.