



A Strategic Vision for Arizona Community Colleges: 2025 Student Progress and Outcomes Report

Trends and Takeaways



A Strategic Vision for Arizona Community Colleges

In 2024, Arizona's community colleges embarked upon a new Strategic Vision in support of the Arizona Community College Coordinating Council's (AC4's) efforts to bridge the skills gap and power the state's future workforce. A major function of the Strategic Vision is the collection, analysis, and publication of data pertaining to 50 student progress and outcomes measures that are aligned with two of AC4's strategic areas of focus: High Quality Education and Workforce Development. Metrics related to High Quality Education are further divided into those pertaining to Equitable Access and Support, Milestone Attainment, and Transfer/Credential Completion.

Many of the cohorts and metrics included in the 2025 Strategic Vision data are new, reflecting current priorities and initiatives and ensuring that Arizona is once again leading the nation in assessing community college student progress and outcomes. Other measures have been in place for years, making it possible to evaluate trends over time. Where possible, national averages are provided to give context to statewide and district-level data.

Arizona's Strategic Vision data are used primarily to guide improvement efforts at community colleges across the state and to illustrate the myriad ways in which Arizona's 10 community college districts serve students and local communities. Statewide data may also be shared with legislators, the Arizona Board of Regents, the Arizona Department of Education, Arizona's workforce development and business communities, and other interested stakeholders in order to assist in the improvement of educational and economic pathways across the state.

Strategic Vision Cohorts

For nearly 15 years, Arizona's community colleges have been assessing the progress and success of first-time-in-college or FTIC students in its annual Strategic Vision reports. Beginning in 2025, the state's 10 community college districts will also report data on several additional cohorts, including transfer students, returning learners, Adult Basic Education students, high school dual enrollment learners, and Career & Technical Education (CTE) completers/leavers.¹

¹ Detailed definitions of all Strategic Vision cohorts and metrics are available in the Arizona Community Colleges: 2025 Strategic Vision Technical Guide.

2022 and 2018 FTIC, Transfer, and Returning Learner Cohorts

The 2022 and 2018 FTIC, Transfer, and Returning Learner Cohorts are used to examine student persistence, milestone attainment, and success after two and six years, respectively. All FTIC, Transfer, and Returning Learner Cohorts can be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, age, enrollment intensity, college readiness, Pell grant status, and first-generation status.

2022 and 2018 Credential-Seeking Sub-Cohorts

Defined as members of the 2022 and 2018 FTIC, Transfer, and Returning-Learner Cohorts who earned at least 12 credits by the end of their second year, the 2022 and 2018 Credential-Seeking Sub-Cohorts are used for some persistence and success measures. Credential-Seeking Sub-Cohorts provide a more accurate gauge of student success, as they take into account learners' diverse education and training goals.

2021-22 Adult Basic Education (ABE) Cohort

The 2021-22 Adult Basic Education Cohort is used to examine ABE enrollment and completion rates, as well as subsequent enrollment in higher education. The ABE Cohort can be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, and age.

2022-23 High School Dual Enrollment (HSDE) Cohort

The 2022-23 HSDE Cohort is used to examine high school dual enrollment patterns, as well as subsequent enrollment in higher education. The HSDE Cohort can be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, and year of expected high school graduation.

2022-23 Credit and Noncredit CTE Completer/Leaver Cohorts

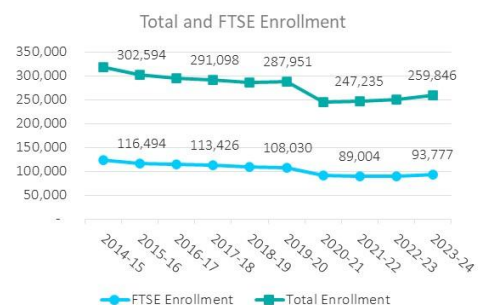
The 2022-23 Credit CTE Completer/Leaver Cohort, defined as all learners who earned a formal award from a credit CTE program or who left the college having completed 7 or more credit hours of CTE coursework in two academic years, is used to examine enrollment and credential completion in credit-based CTE courses or programs. The Credit CTE Completer/Leaver Cohort can be disaggregated by learners who earned an associate or bachelor's degree in CTE, learners who completed a CTE certificate, and learners who left with no award. The 2022-23 Noncredit CTE Completer/Leaver Cohort, defined as all learners who completed a noncredit CTE program or who left the college having completed 180 or more contact hours of CTE in two academic years, is used to examine enrollment and credential completion in noncredit CTE courses or programs.

Trends and Takeaways from the 2025 Strategic Vision Data

Data included in Arizona's 2025 Strategic Vision Report indicate that the state's 10 community college districts are working hard to serve a diverse population of learners, remain agile and responsive to local community needs, and power the workforce of the future. Several trends and takeaways are apparent in the 2025 data.

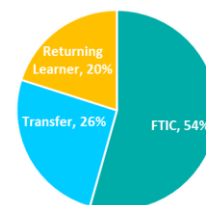
COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS CONTINUE TO RECOVER, LED BY OLDER STUDENTS AND THOSE FROM HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED GROUPS

- Both total and full-time-student-equivalent (FTSE) enrollment in Arizona community colleges have continued to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, despite projected declines in the number of high school graduates. Although numbers are still lower than during the boom years following the Great Recession, **enrollment in Arizona's community colleges rose roughly 4% between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years.**



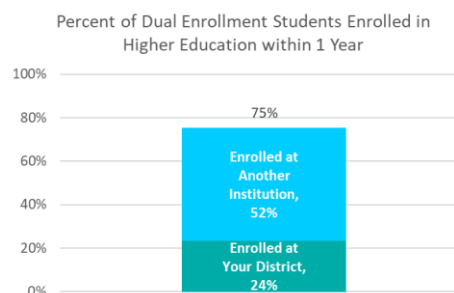
- First-time-in-college or **FTIC students make up just over half (54%) of all learners; 26% are transfer students, and one in five are returning learners** (those with previous credits from their college but who had stopped out for at least three academic terms before re-enrolling).
- Although 72% of all students are between 18-24 years of age, **adult students (25+) make up more than half of all transfer students and 70% of returning learners.**
- Across Arizona, **16% of learners receive Pell grants**, and **one-third are first-generation college students**. 54% of students are from historically underserved races or ethnicities.

Enrollment by Cohort



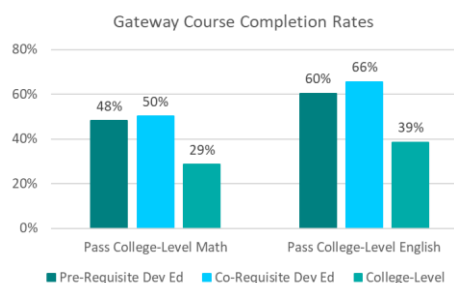
DUAL ENROLLMENT CONTINUES TO BOLSTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS—BEFORE AND AFTER STUDENTS GRADUATE

- Dual enrollment continues to grow across Arizona: in the 2023-24 academic year, **Arizona community colleges enrolled 41,499 high school students for dual credit.**
- Across the state, **dual enrollment students take an average of 10 postsecondary credits before they graduate, and this number is roughly double at many rural colleges.** One out of every five credits earned through dual enrollment is in a CTE course.
- **Three-quarters of all dual enrollment students in Arizona enroll in higher education within one year of graduating, and roughly one-third of these enroll at the community college or district where they took courses.** At some colleges, up to 80% of dual enrollment students enroll directly at the institution where they earned credits while in high school.



CO-REQUISITE DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION IMPROVES GATEWAY COURSE COMPLETION AND CONTRIBUTES TO FIRST-YEAR PERSISTENCE

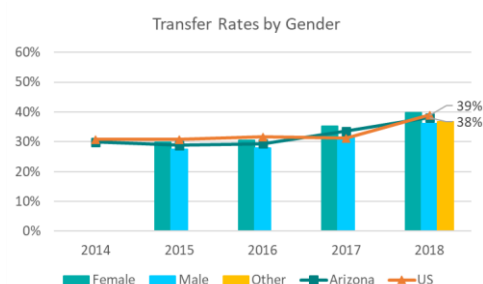
- 2024 Strategic Vision data showed that among first-time students enrolling in pre-requisite developmental math and/or English, between 48% and 60% passed a gateway math or English course within six years. According to 2025 Strategic Vision data, which assessed enrollment and success in co-requisite developmental education, 50% of first-time students enrolled in a co-req support course passed college-level math—and 66% passed college-level English—within one year. **By implementing a co-requisite model for developmental education, Arizona’s community colleges both improved gateway course completion and dramatically increased the number of under-prepared students achieving this milestone within their first year of enrollment.**



- Although students requiring co-requisite developmental support in English persist to the second year at a rate slightly lower than the statewide average, first-year persistence rates among those enrolled in co-requisite math are the same as those for students who were college-ready at entry (both 80%), and persistence rates among students who enrolled in co-requisite math *and* English were three percentage points higher (83%). In other words, **there does not appear to be a persistence penalty for students requiring co-requisite developmental support, and indeed these courses may contribute to higher first-year persistence rates.**

IN-STATE TRANSFERS ARE DOWN, OVERALL TRANSFER RATES ARE UP

- The number of in-state transfers (7,926 in 2023) has continued to decline, although the in-state transfer rate remained steady at 27%. However, **the overall transfer rate among credential-seeking students (to both public and private institutions, in-state and out) rose dramatically to 38%**, similar to the 39% national average.²



- Six-year transfer rates are highest among transfer students (49%), students under age 25 (41%), those enrolled full-time (40%), first-generation college students (43%), those who were college-ready at entry (42%), and learners who do not receive Pell grants (40%).**

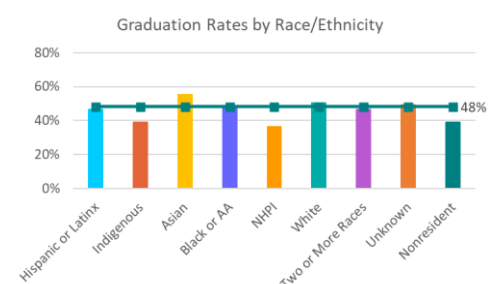
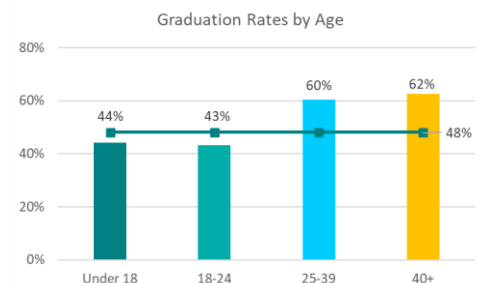
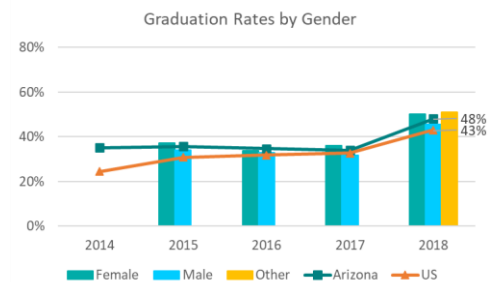


- By race/ethnicity, transfer rates are highest among Asians (48%), Blacks or African Americans (43%), White students (41%), and those of two or more races or ethnicities (41%). **Equity gaps are most pronounced for Indigenous and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) students (30% each), Hispanic or Latinx learners (33%), nonresidents (35%), and those from an unknown race or ethnicity (36%).**

² AACC. (2019). VFA Summary Report: Leading Indicators of Success and Student Outcomes for Community Colleges.

GRADUATION RATES INCREASED DRAMATICALLY WITH THE INCLUSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS AND RETURNING LEARNERS

- Arizona's community colleges awarded 45,842 bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, and certificates to 22,354 recipients in 2024.
- Statewide graduation rates rose dramatically among the 2018 credential-seeking cohort, largely because of the inclusion of transfer students and returning learners. Among all credential-seeking FTIC students, transfer students, and returning learners, 48% earned a degree or certificate from an Arizona community college within six years, a rate that is substantially higher than the 43% national average.³
- Six-year graduation rates are highest among **transfer students** (60%), **returning learners** (53%), **college-ready students** (56%), **adult students** (61%), and those **enrolled full-time** (49%). **First-generation college students and Pell recipients both graduate at substantially lower rates than their non-first-generation and non-Pell peers** (46% compared to 51%, and 44% compared to 52%, respectively).
- By race/ethnicity, graduation rates are highest among Asians (55%), White students (51%), and those of unknown race or ethnicity (50%). **Equity gaps are most pronounced for NHPI students (37%), nonresidents (39%), and Indigenous learners (40%).**



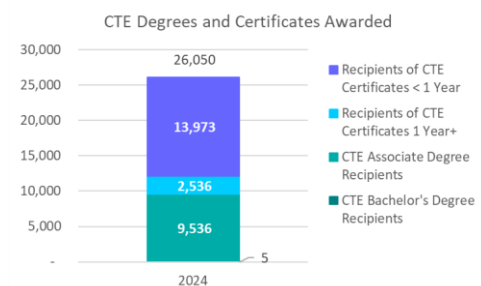
³ National Student Clearinghouse. (2023). Completing College: National and State Reports with Six- and Eight-Year Completion Rates Dashboards.

FIRST-YEAR SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME, FIRST-GENERATION, AND UNDER-PREPARED STUDENTS LEADS TO GREATER PERSISTENCE AND MILESTONE ATTAINMENT, BUT MUST BE MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED TO BOOST TRANSFER AND COMPLETION

- 2025 Strategic Vision data show that Pell recipients, part-time learners, those who require co-requisite developmental support, and first-generation college students are, in most cases, receiving the support they need to persist and meet early college milestones. However, that **support must be maintained and strengthened throughout the course of students' college careers—indeed through transfer or credential completion—in order to eliminate equity gaps and boost educational attainment among historically underserved groups.**

CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS ARE TRAINING THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE, INCLUDING MANY WITH PRIOR ASSOCIATE OR BACHELOR'S DEGREES

- Nearly 90,000 learners were enrolled in credit-bearing CTE courses or programs across the state in 2024, and **Arizona's community colleges awarded 26,050 CTE bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, and workforce certificates of varying lengths.**
- Across the state, **community colleges offer programs leading to employment in all 25 of the highest-demand occupations requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree** (including nurses, medical assistants, HVAC installers, and computer user and network support specialists).
- 6% of students enrolling in CTE courses or programs already have an associate degree at the time of entry, and an additional 7% have a prior bachelor's degree.** Among these students, 38% and 28%, respectively, earn a subsequent degree in CTE, and an additional 18-21% earn a CTE certificate. (Among CTE students entering without a prior degree, 36% earn a CTE certificate or degree.) **These data illustrate the community college's growing role in upskilling and re-training a diverse array of learners for the jobs that will power Arizona's economy in the decades to come.**



On behalf of the Arizona Community College Coordinating Council (AC4), the 2025 Strategic Vision Trends and Takeaways Report was produced by Kisker Education Consulting in collaboration with the offices of Institutional Effectiveness at Arizona's 10 community college districts

