

# INDIANA COLLEGE EQUITY REPORT 2021



## Using Data as our Guide to Achieve Educational Equity

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education has for years acknowledged and addressed the equity and achievement gaps that exist in our state's education pipeline. In 2013, the Commission passed a resolution to close Indiana's educational achievement gaps by 2025. In 2021, gaps are closing, but not quickly enough.

Data must be the driving force behind our actions to continue closing these gaps. That's why the Commission first created an annual data report about college equity in 2018 to shine a greater light on the gaps and the barriers that exist for Hoosier students and track how those change over time.



By diving further into the findings of the Commission's annual college [Readiness](#) and [Completion](#) reports and disaggregating this information by race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and geography, the story becomes clear. We can determine if those gaps are closing (or not) and point to the likelihood of student success without interventions such as the 21st Century Scholars program, for example.

Data has been and will continue to be the guide as we build or enhance policies and strategies aimed at helping more students be prepared for postsecondary academic work, access college, succeed while they're there and complete with a degree or credential in hand.

The results of the [2021 College Equity Report](#) highlight the demographics of high school graduates in 2019, their level of academic preparation, college-going rates, metrics of success in early college (2018 graduates) and graduation rates (2020 graduates). Top level findings from this year's report show

- Over the last 10 years, Indiana has become more diverse racially and ethnically, and by socioeconomic status. More students are non-White and more come from low-income households today than in recent history.
- Students who are the least likely to go to college, succeed while there or graduate on time (or at all) are students of color, male students, rural students and low-income students who are not part of the 21st Century Scholars program.
- Poverty has a direct impact on college-going rates. Just 35 percent of low-income high school graduates go to college—lower than the statewide college-going average of 59 percent—and far lower than the percentage of higher-income graduates (64 percent) and those low-income graduates in the 21st Century Scholars program (88 percent).

Achieving educational equity will take time and concerted efforts, but it is possible through actions such as:

- Implementing strategic and data-driven policies and priorities
- Collecting and disseminating important data to inform policymakers, families and students
- Increasing the number of students who take the Academic Honors diploma and earn early college credit to ensure college readiness
- Ensuring more low-income students sign up and take advantage of the 21st Century Scholars program
- Connecting with underserved and low-income populations to ensure students know they can access an affordable college education in Indiana

More and more Indiana students have continued to obtain the necessary credentials to meet the state's growing workforce needs, even during the early phase of the global pandemic. However, we can't let up or get comfortable with these results. This report highlights the importance of continued innovation and focus as we help all our students get across the stage and into fulfilling careers.

Just as crucially, the Commission and Indiana's higher education institutions must continue to endorse the idea that pursuing education beyond high school provides value to individuals—whether that's through economic mobility, stackable credentials that enable lifelong learning or the basic understanding that education is the best pathway to future opportunity.

All these efforts remain centered around Indiana reaching its Big Goal of at least 60 percent of Hoosiers earning a quality degree or credential beyond a high school diploma by 2025. This goal is linked to the state's current and future workforce needs and to our ability to sustain an economy and ensure the economic mobility of our citizens.

The Commission defines equity as the idea that life's circumstances or obstacles shouldn't dictate a person's opportunity to succeed. Our mission is to align the state's system of higher education to the needs of students and the state. That must include all students, and we will continue to use data to help us get there.



**Teresa Lubbers, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education**

# 2021 Equity Report Key Takeaways

## College Pipeline

- **Indiana has become more diverse.** Low-income and non-White Hoosiers make up a larger share of the state's college pipeline than ever before. Hispanic and Latino students are the fastest-growing demographic and are poised to become the second-largest racial or ethnic group among Indiana high schoolers.
- **One out of every 10 high school graduates is a 21st Century Scholar.** The support systems that come with being a Scholar help students succeed, including by promoting high college-going rates and improving graduation rates.
- **Hoosier students are not equally prepared for college.** Not surprisingly, students who earn more demanding diplomas are better prepared and more likely to succeed in college. Achievement gaps in this area run along demographic lines. Black Hoosiers and non-Scholar, low-income Hoosiers are least likely to earn an Academic Honors diploma (17 percent and 14 percent, respectively, compared to a statewide average of 36 percent). They're also least likely to meet early college success benchmarks.
- **High school graduation waivers have increased among nearly every student group.** Students who receive waivers for

high school graduation requirements are often less prepared for college. One out of eight Hoosiers and one out of four Black Hoosiers received a waiver in 2019.

- **Rural students, especially rural men, are less likely to go to college.** Rural students are less likely than non-rural students to go to college, and men are less likely than women. Those two trends combine to create low college-going rates for rural men. About 37 percent of Hispanic/Latino rural men and 46 percent of White rural men go to college after high school, compared to the statewide average of 59 percent.

## College Access and Success

- **College-going rates have declined for every race and ethnicity. Indiana has seen overall declines in college-going rates for the past several years,** from 65 percent in 2015 to 59 percent in 2019. This decline is happening across every race and ethnicity, but at different rates. The college-going rate for Hispanic and Latino students is the lowest for race and ethnicity (49 percent). Just above that rate is the college-going rate for Black Hoosiers (50 percent). However, there was a 13-percentage-point decline in Black college-going rates over the past five years—a far more significant decline than for any other race or ethnicity.

- **The 21st Century Scholars program closes achievement gaps for rural students and across all races and ethnicities.** Students in the 21st Century Scholars program are far more likely to go to college than either their low- or higher-income peers—with 88 percent of Scholars going to college, compared to 35 percent of low-income and 64 percent of higher-income students. While rural Hoosiers are typically less likely to go to college, rural Scholars are nearly as likely as non-rural Scholars to go to college.
- **21st Century Scholars stay in Indiana.** Nearly every 21st Century Scholar goes to college—and virtually every one of them goes to college in Indiana (as per the requirements to use the scholarship). Hence, the greater the number of students in the program, the greater the number of students who go to college and stay in Indiana. Statewide, 12 percent of college-bound Hoosiers go out-of-state for college. Only 2 percent of students eligible for the 21st Century Scholars program go out-of-state. College students who attend an Indiana institution are more likely to stay, work, and raise families in Indiana.

### College Completion

- **More students are finishing what they started. More than 7 out of 10 (71.7 percent) of bachelor's-seeking students graduate within six years of starting.** Likewise, 37.5 percent of students who start at a two-year college complete. Despite recent improvements, more work is needed.

For example, although Hispanic and Latino students have closed the gap at two-year colleges, Hispanic and Latino students at four-year colleges are 9 percentage points behind the average graduation rate.

- **College completion rates for every race and ethnicity have improved over time, but gaps remain and, in some cases, have grown.** Improvements have been made in on-time completion rates for all races and ethnicities and the overall Hoosier population in recent years. The on-time completion rate at four-year institutions for Black Hoosiers was 29 percent for the class of 2020, an increase of 11 percentage points over the class of 2015. However, that is still 21 percentage points below the statewide average—a gap that has barely budged in five years.
- **21st Century Scholars have seen marked improvements in on-time completion rates.** The on-time completion rates for Scholars at two-year institutions are higher than for non-Scholar groups of all backgrounds. While higher-income students still complete at higher rates than Scholars at four-year institutions, the gap has narrowed over time. This gap may continue to narrow as recent reforms to the Scholars program continue to take hold, including the Scholar Success Program.

## High School DEMOGRAPHICS

**38%**

OF 2019 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WERE LOW-INCOME (31% in 2010)

**29%**

OF 2019 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WERE NON-WHITE (20% in 2010)

Hoosier high school graduates in 2019 were more diverse than 10 years ago.

1 out of 10 high school graduates is a 21st Century Scholar.

Black and Hispanic/Latino youth were the most likely to come from low-income homes.

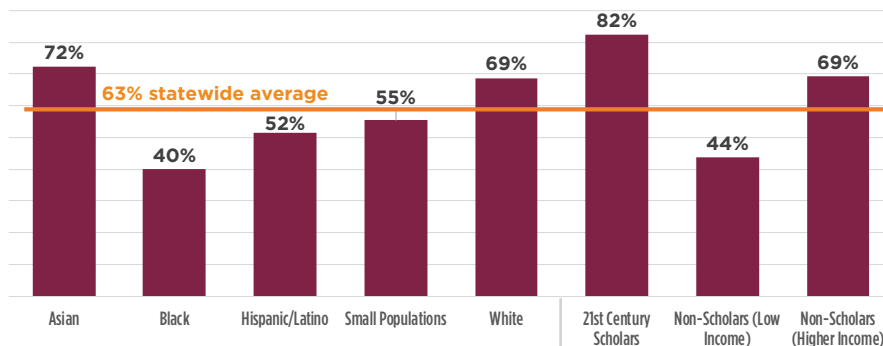
40% of rural HS grads were low-income.

The most populous counties in Indiana are highly diverse and over half are low-income.

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) OR DUAL CREDIT

Students who earn AP or dual credit while in high school are more likely to graduate college on time or at all.

% of high school grads earning AP or dual credit (2019)



## HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA TYPE

Students who earn an **Academic Honors diploma** perform better in college than students with other diploma types. Low-income students and Black students are the least likely to earn an Academic Honors diploma.

Low-income Students:

**14%**

Academic Honors

Black Students

**17%**

Academic Honors

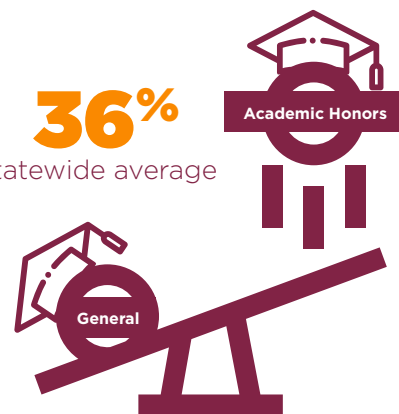
Hispanic/Latino Students

**26%**

Academic Honors

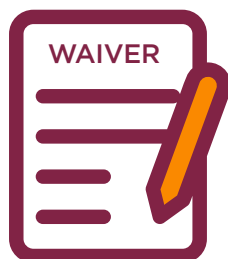
**36%**

Statewide average



## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION WAIVER

Students who graduate high school with a graduation waiver are less likely to go to college.



**1 in 8** high school graduates are awarded a waiver.

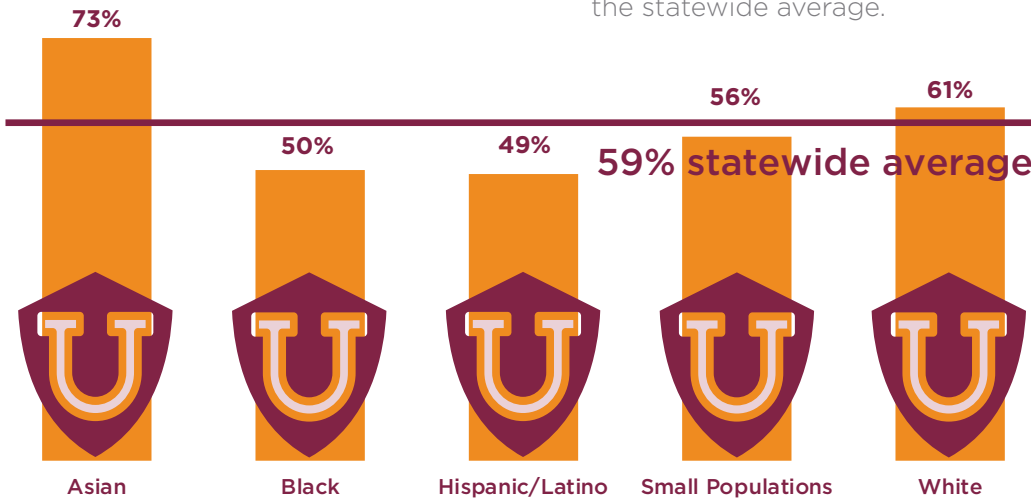
**1 in 4** Black high school graduates are awarded a waiver.

**1 in 5** Hispanic/Latino high school graduates are awarded a waiver.

**1 in 5** low-income high school graduates are awarded a waiver.

## COLLEGE-GOING RATES

High school graduates of color are less likely to go to college, compared to the statewide average.



**21st Century Scholars more than 2x as likely to go to college as their low-income peers**

- 21st Century Scholars: **88%**
- Non-Scholar, low-income: **35%**
- Higher-income: **64%**

**More women than men go to college**

- Women: **65%**
- Men: **51%**

**Rural students are less likely to go to college**

- Rural: **55%**
- Non-rural: **59%**

### 21st CENTURY SCHOLARS



## 21st Century Scholars Closes Equity Gaps

#### College Going

- **88%** of Scholars go to college
- **Scholars** close college-going gaps for rural students and by race and ethnicity

#### College Completion

- **Scholars** also graduate at higher rates than their low-income peers

### COLLEGE SUCCESS



**48%** of all students meet all three benchmarks of success: no remediation, completing all coursework and persisting to the second year

**27%** of Black students met the benchmarks

**29%** of non-Scholar, low-income students met the benchmarks

**40%** of Hispanic/Latino students met the benchmarks

**43%** of 21st Century Scholars met the benchmarks

### COLLEGE COMPLETION



**7 out of 10** Hoosier students complete college in 6 years

**Black** students are least likely to graduate within 6 years.

- **Two-year rate (6yr):** 19% (statewide average is 38%)

- **Four-year rate (6yr):** 49% (statewide average is 72%)

**63%** of bachelor's degree-seeking Hispanic/Latino students graduate within 6 years

# What are equity and achievement gaps?

Equity is the idea that circumstances or obstacles should not dictate opportunity to succeed. It is often measured by observing areas where it does not exist: the gaps among learners from varying geographies, between genders, races or ethnicities and by income level. These differences in outcomes are known as achievement gaps.

Equity is critical to Indiana's success, but it also requires targeted student supports and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (Commission) has adopted goals and policy strategies focused on increasing college access, success and completion for underrepresented students. In 2013, the Commission passed a resolution to eliminate achievement gaps among Indiana's learner populations by 2025.

The Commission has strengthened financial aid programs by modifying requirements to improve college readiness and success. Indiana's commitment to closing achievement gaps is reflected in the state's strategic plan for higher education, *Reaching Higher in a State of Change*, and in its postsecondary outcomes-based funding formula, which allocates dollars for increased degree production and on-time degree completion among federal Pell Grant recipients.

To measure equity, this report analyzes high school demographics and five main indicators:

## High School Demographics

What is the race or ethnicity of young Hoosiers? Did they grow up in a rural household? Are they from a low-income household?

What percentage of recent high school graduates 1) do not need remediation; 2) complete all coursework they attempt; or 3) persist to their second year? What percentage succeed on all three?

## High School Academic Preparation

What types of diplomas do Hoosier high school graduates earn and how do they affect college performance? What percentage of students earn college credit while in high school?

## On-Time College Graduation Rates

What percentage of college students graduate on time (i.e., four years for a bachelor's, two years for an associate)? Note, while other indicators look only at Indiana residents, graduation rates in this report include out-of-state students.

## College Access

What percentage of Hoosiers enroll in college within one year of graduating high school? What type of colleges do Indiana high school graduates initially attend?

## Extended-Time College Graduation Rates

What percentage of students graduate, even if it is not on time (i.e., within six years of starting college)? Please note, while other indicators look only at Indiana residents, graduation rates in this report include out-of-state students.

## Early Success in College



**This Equity Report focuses on the following demographic groups:****Gender: Female and Male****Race/Ethnicity: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Small Populations, and White**

For the purposes of this report, these categories are mutually exclusive. “Undeclared/Unknown Race” students are included in statewide averages but are not broken out. The “Small Populations” group includes students who identify as Native American/Alaskan Native; Native Hawaiian; and Two or More Races. The Commission would prefer to break these groups out, but they often are too small to report separately in ways that would provide statistically meaningful data while still protecting privacy.

**Socioeconomic Status: 21st Century Scholar, Non-Scholar Low-Income, and Higher Income**

**21st Century Scholar:** The 21st Century Scholars program is open to all Hoosiers who come from households with incomes that qualify for Free-or-Reduced-Price-Lunch (FRL) in seventh or eighth grade. Students must enroll during their seventh or eighth grade year (there is an exception for students with a history of foster care). During high school, Scholars must complete the Scholar Success Program (SSP); for college-going and early success in college indicators, this report looks at Scholars who completed the SSP. Graduation rate metrics includes students who received a 21st Century Scholarship during their first year of college.

**Non-Scholar (Low-Income):** Two mutually-exclusive types of low-income students are identified in this report: Scholars and non-Scholar low-income students. This report identifies non-Scholar low-income students in two ways:

- For college-going and early success in college metrics, this report looks at whether the students are FRL-eligible during their senior year of high school. This makes the Scholars and non-Scholar low-income groups financially very similar, since often students who are FRL-eligible in middle school are also FRL-eligible in high school. There are some students who experience life events that can move them above or below the FRL eligibility line over the course of their teenage years.
- For on-time graduation rate statistics, this report defines non-Scholar low-income as students who received a Pell grant in their first year of college. Low-income data for all metrics are broken into 21st Century Scholars and non-Scholars groups, and Scholars are not double-counted in both groups.

**Non-Scholar (Higher-Income):** This report refers to all non-low-income students as “higher-income.” Note that this does not mean the students in this group are wealthy; only that they come from families with higher incomes than the other two groups. Due to data limitations, this group may include low-income students who did not apply for financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

**Geography: Rural; High Density; and Non-Rural, Mid-Density**

Where feasible, the Commission has provided information based on where students reside. For this report, rural/non-rural status is based on whether a student’s graduating high school is located in a county that falls within a Metropolitan Area established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Any county that is not part of a Metropolitan Area is considered rural. Non-rural is further broken into counties with high population density and counties with mixed or medium population density. High density consists of Lake County (part of the Chicago metropolitan area) and Marion County, home to Indianapolis. Both counties have a high population density compared to the rest of the state.

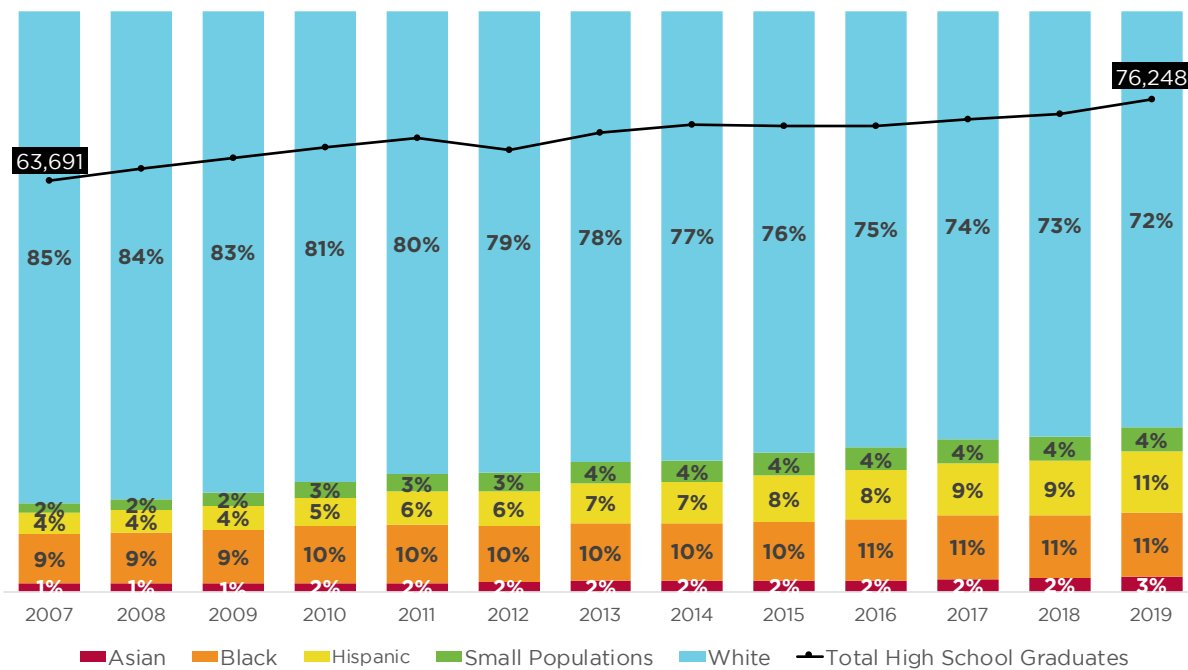
## High School Demographics

As low-income and non-White populations make up a larger share of the talent pipeline for college and the workforce, Indiana must remain committed to closing achievement gaps to better serve all Hoosiers.

Indiana graduated 76,248 high schoolers in 2019. Reflecting both Indiana’s population growth and efforts to improve the high school graduation rate, the class of 2019 was 3 percent larger than the class of 2018 and 20 percent larger than that of 2007. 2019

saw one of the largest one-year increases on record, fueled in part by Hispanic and Latino students. Hispanic and Latino seniors have been the fastest growing demographic for some time, more than tripling since 2007. Asian seniors doubled in that timeframe, going from just under 1,000 high school seniors to about 2,000. About 55,000 (or 7 out of 10) of Indiana’s high school graduates are White. Hispanic and Latino students are poised to become the second-largest racial or ethnic group among Indiana high school seniors

Indiana high school graduates are more diverse



Roughly 10 percent of the high school class of 2019 were 21st Century Scholars. The Scholars program is open to students who meet certain financial criteria in 7th or 8th grade. Once in high school, Scholars must maintain a 2.5 GPA and earn a Core 40 diploma, among other requirements. To students who meet all requirements, the program covers the full cost of tuition and fees for up to four years of college.

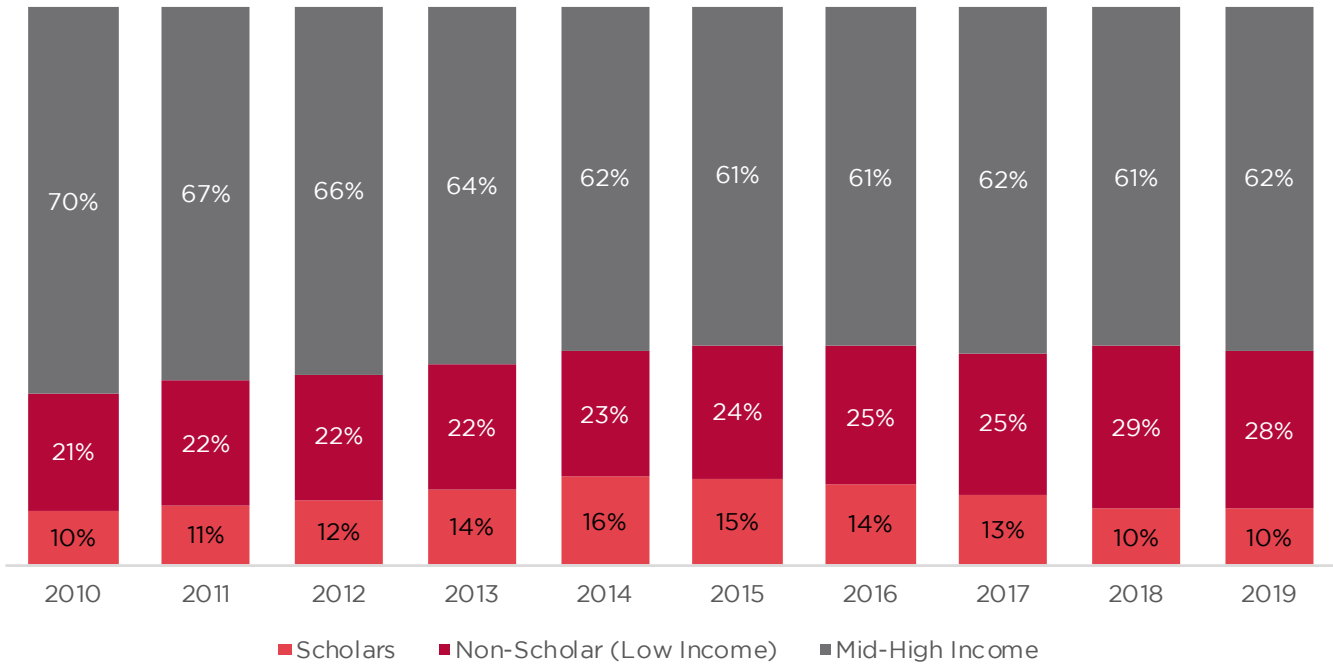
An additional 28 percent of the 2019 class were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) from

the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National School Lunch Program during their senior year of high school. FRL status is often used as a proxy for low-income households.

Combined, 38 percent of high school graduates met one or both of the low-income criteria. Since the income criteria for receiving FRL during senior year is similar to the criteria for enrolling in the Scholars program during 7th or 8th grade, it is likely that many more students could have been 21st Century Scholars.

## Nearly 2 out of 5 Indiana high school graduates are low-income

(21st Century Scholars and/or eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch senior year)

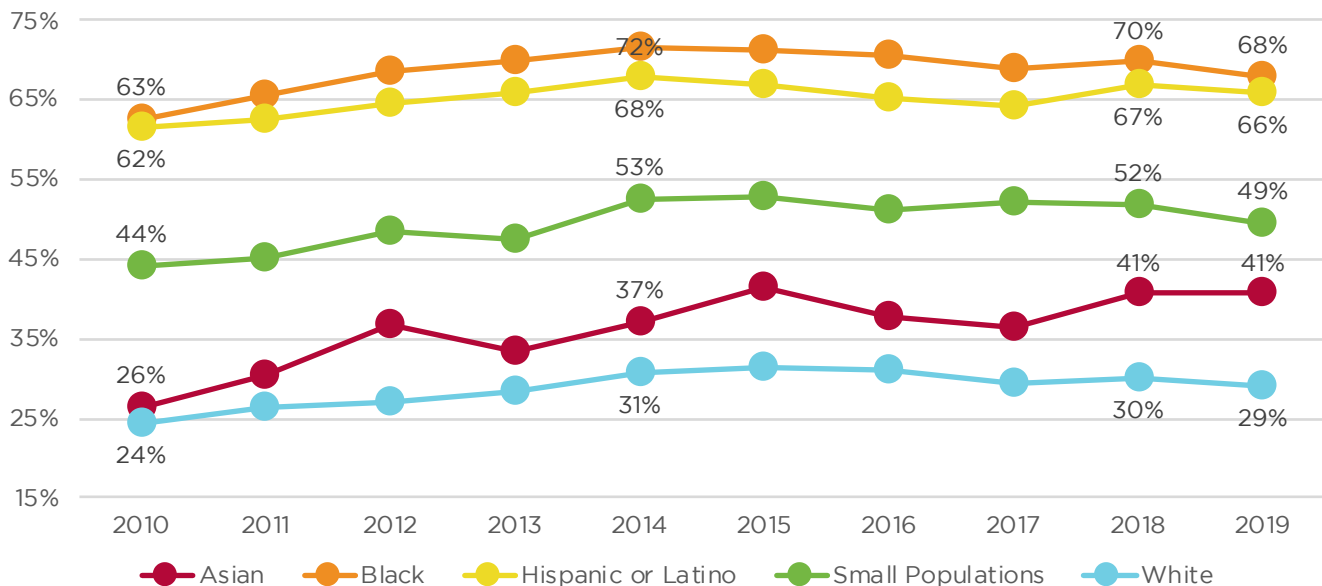


Poverty increased among high schoolers of every racial and ethnic group over the last decade. In the wake of the Great Recession, Indiana youth were more likely to either qualify for the Scholars program or FRL. Since 2014, the percentage of low-income

Hoosiers has been relatively consistent. Black Hoosiers and Hispanic and Latino Hoosiers are the most likely groups to be classified as low-income. Each group is twice as likely as White Hoosiers to meet the low-income criteria.

## Black and Hispanic youth are more than twice as likely as White youth to be low-income

(21st Century Scholars and/or eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch senior year)



## High School Geography

This report breaks out high school graduates by the county in which they graduated.

Each county is put into one of three groups:

- **Rural:** low population per square mile and outside of a metropolitan area
- **High-density:** high population per square mile (Lake and Marion counties)
- **Mid-density:** mixed or moderate population density with strong economic ties to cities (mid-density counties include small metro, suburban and exurban areas)

### Rural decline

A little over a decade ago, Indiana’s 49 rural counties produced 25 percent of Indiana’s high school graduates. Since then, the number of graduates in rural counties has stagnated while other parts of the state have grown. Rural counties now produce 21 percent of Indiana’s high school graduates.

Shrinking or slow-growing communities may struggle to provide sufficient educational resources. Rural communities make up a smaller share of the state’s population and may receive a smaller share of state and philanthropic support.

### High-density and mid-density growth

Indiana’s high-density counties are Lake and Marion. These are the state’s two largest counties by both total population and population per square mile. Combined, these two counties graduate 23 percent of students in the state, up from 20 percent a decade ago.

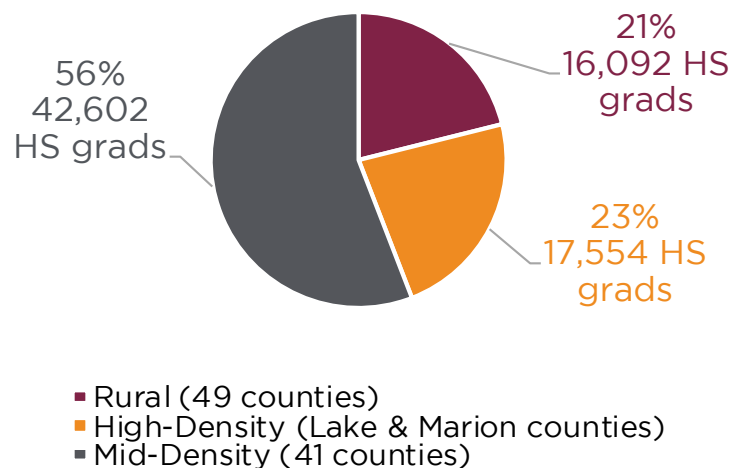
Marion County, home to Indianapolis, graduated 50 percent more high schoolers in 2019 than it did in 2007. Fifteen percent of the statewide Class of 2019 attended a Marion County public or private school.

Lake County, home to Gary, has grown at a more modest pace, but has kept up with the state average. Nearly every year since 2007, Lake County has produced 8 percent of Indiana’s high school graduates.

Indiana’s third, fourth and fifth largest counties—Allen, Hamilton, and St. Joseph—have also grown in number of high school graduates. These three counties produce a combined 16 percent of all high school diplomas.

All told, Indiana’s five largest counties produced 39 percent of the Class of 2019. The nine largest counties (including Elkhart, Hendricks, Porter and Johnson) produced more than half of the state’s high school graduates.

More high school graduates now come from high-density counties than rural counties

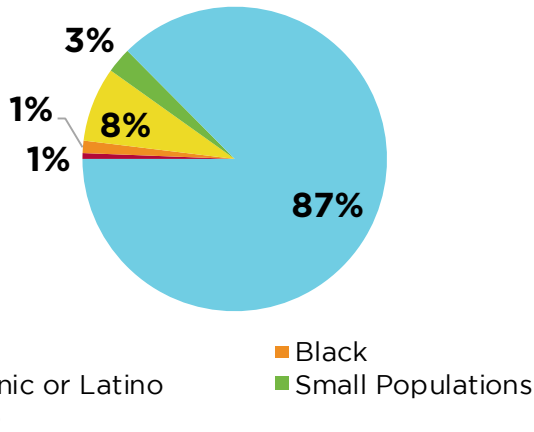


**Geography and diversity**

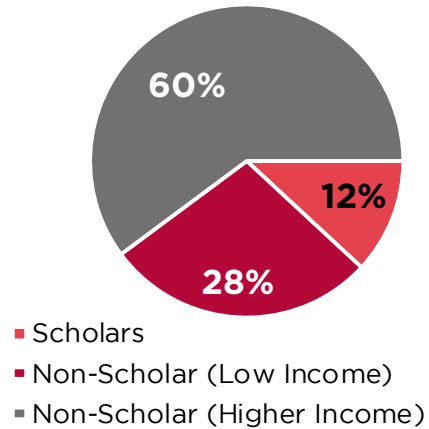
Historically, rural counties were not as racially and ethnically diverse as other counties. That is changing. Today, 8 percent of Indiana’s rural high school graduates are Hispanic or Latino, double the amount from a decade ago.

Rural school students are some of the biggest beneficiaries of the 21st Century Scholars program, as 12 percent of rural graduates are Scholars. Low-income high school graduates in rural counties were more likely to be a Scholar than their peers in other counties, a sign that rural communities are embracing the Scholars program. The Scholars program is helping to close the college-going gap between rural and non-rural students (see other sections for more on college-going rates).

87% of rural 2019 high school graduates were White



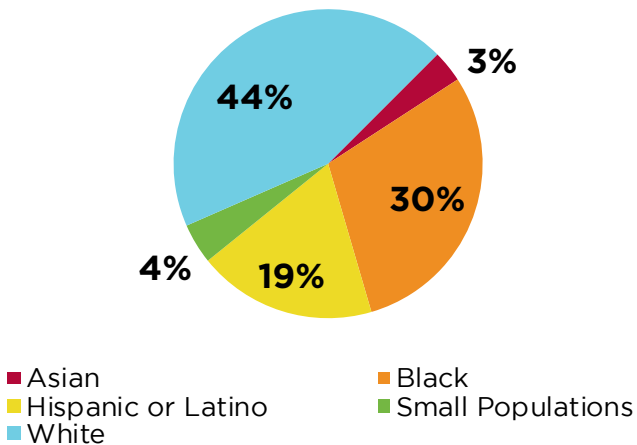
40% of rural high school graduates were low-income



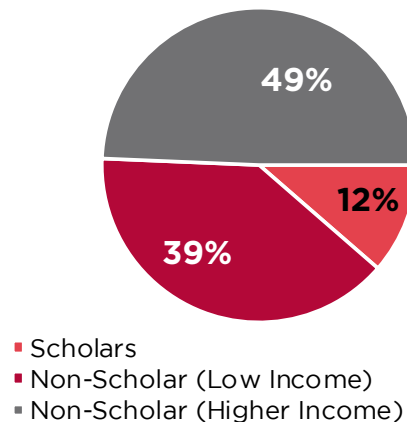
Indiana’s two high density counties have a significant degree of racial diversity. In 2019, 8,376 Black Hoosiers earned a high school diploma. 5,204, or 62 percent, of those diplomas were awarded in Lake or Marion county.

More than half of Lake and Marion are considered low-income. Although 12 percent of high-density county graduates are Scholars, an additional 39 percent are non-Scholar, low-income. This is a sign that many students in Lake and Marion could be eligible or had been eligible for the Scholars program but did not enroll or complete the requirements.

Lake and Marion 2019 high school graduates were highly diverse



51% of Lake and Marion high school graduates were low-income

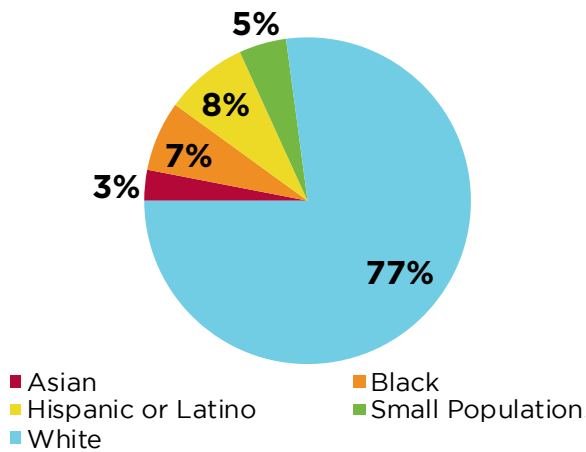


Just over half of Indiana’s high school students live in counties that are neither rural nor high density. Many of these mid-density counties might contain rural or urban areas but do not meet the rural county or high-density criteria. As a group, mid-density counties might be considered small cities, suburbs and exurbs—meaning these counties contain or are closely linked to a metropolitan area.

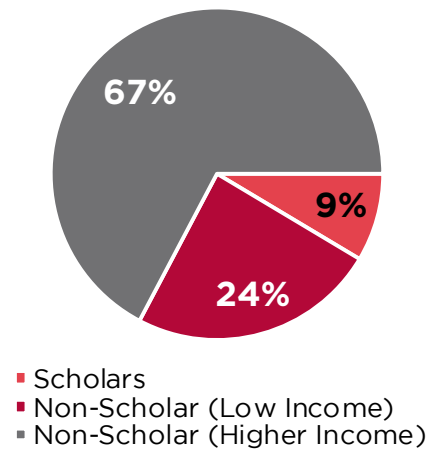
Hamilton County, one of the largest counties in the state, provides a case study in how K-12 resources and a college-going culture can have far-reaching impacts on students. The county has the state’s highest educational attainment rate and 15 percent of Hamilton County high school graduates were classified as low-income—a reminder that educational attainment and wealth are linked in a variety of ways.

Most Hamilton County residents perform well on academic preparation metrics, such as early college credit, and the county’s college-going rate is 77 percent. Among Hamilton County’s low-income students, 98 percent of 21st Century Scholars and 52 percent of non-Scholar, low-income students went to college. Each of those college-going rates are well above the corresponding rates in other counties.

77% of mid-density 2019 high school graduates were White



37% of mid-density high school graduates were low-income



## High School Academic Preparation

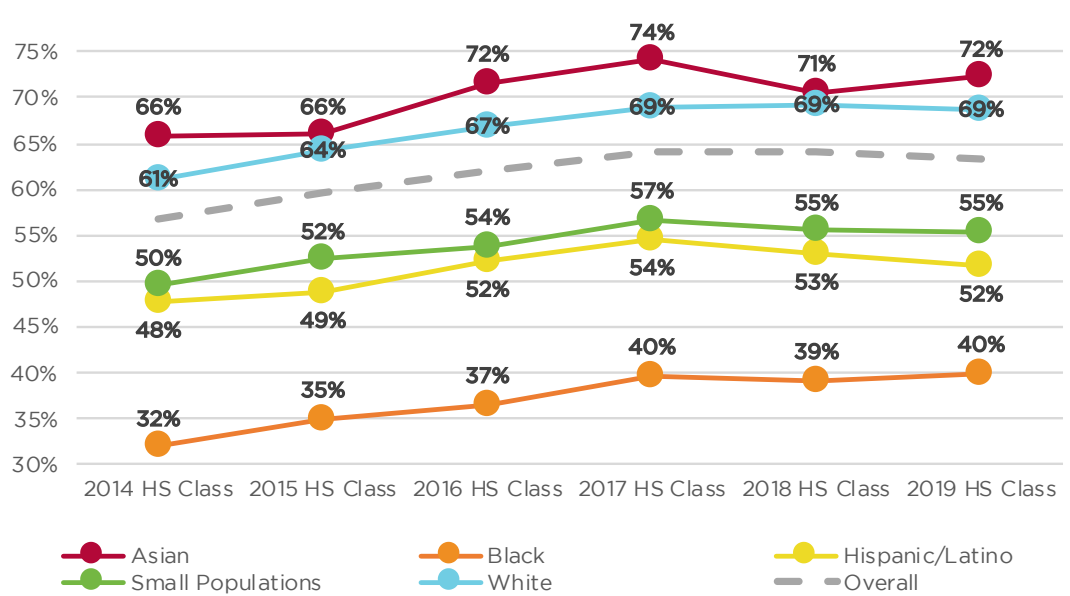
### AP & Dual Credit

College achievement gaps are partly the result of disparities in high school academic preparation. K-12 and higher education partners must work together to close these gaps.

Students can prepare for college by earning college credit while in high school. Nearly two-thirds of Indiana high schoolers earn college credit through dual credit courses or through Advanced Placement

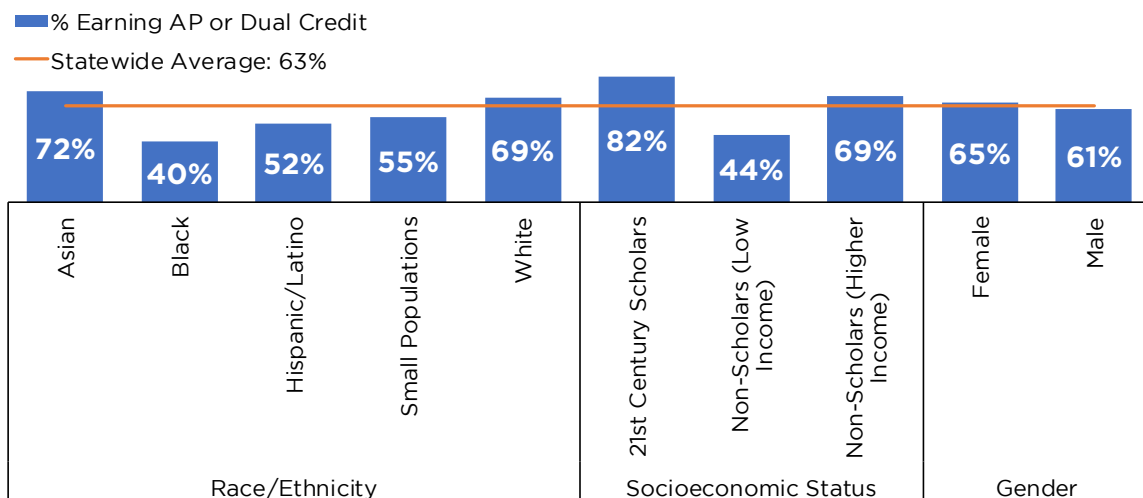
(AP) exams. Students who do so are more likely to complete college, and more likely to graduate early. For additional details, see the Commission's [Early College Credit Reports](#).

63% of Indiana's high school grads earn AP or dual credit



Although most Hoosiers earn some college credit before graduating high school, there are wide gaps across race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Since AP and dual credit help students prepare for college, and can help them graduate early, these gaps can compound when students reach college.

Scholars are the most likely group to earn AP or dual credit



The Indiana State Board of Education has adopted four distinct high school diplomas:

- **General**
- **Core 40**
- **Core 40 with Technical Honors**
- **Core 40 with Academic Honors**

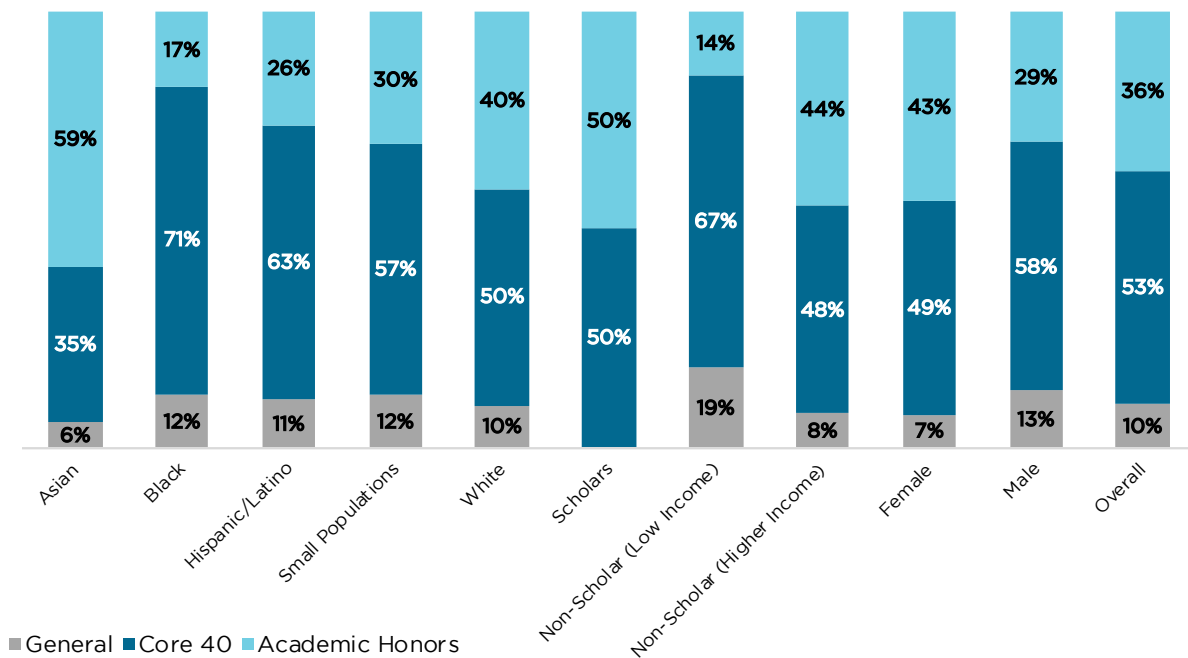
All Indiana students are required to earn at least the Core 40 unless their parents or guardians choose to opt-out, in which case the student may pursue a General Diploma. In this report, the Core 40 and the Technical Honors diplomas are grouped together as “Core 40.” This is because the Technical Honors group is relatively small and the college-going rates for these two diploma groups are somewhat similar. In this report, “Academic Honors” includes any student who earned an Academic Honors or an International Baccalaureate Diploma. Students who earned both a Technical Honors and an Academic Honors are grouped with Academic Honors.

Only 17 percent of Black students and 26 percent of Hispanic or Latino students earn the state’s most rigorous diploma, the Academic Honors Diploma, while 40 percent of White students earn the diploma.

Students who come from middle-class or wealthy backgrounds are more likely to earn an Academic Honors Diploma, which could indicate that lack of financial resources at home or in school districts may play a role in the academic performance of Hoosiers.

A student’s high school diploma can point to how well the student will fare in college. Students with an Academic Honors diploma perform better in college than students with a Core 40 or General diploma, for example. See the Early Success in College section for more information on this topic.

High School Diploma Type, Class of 2019

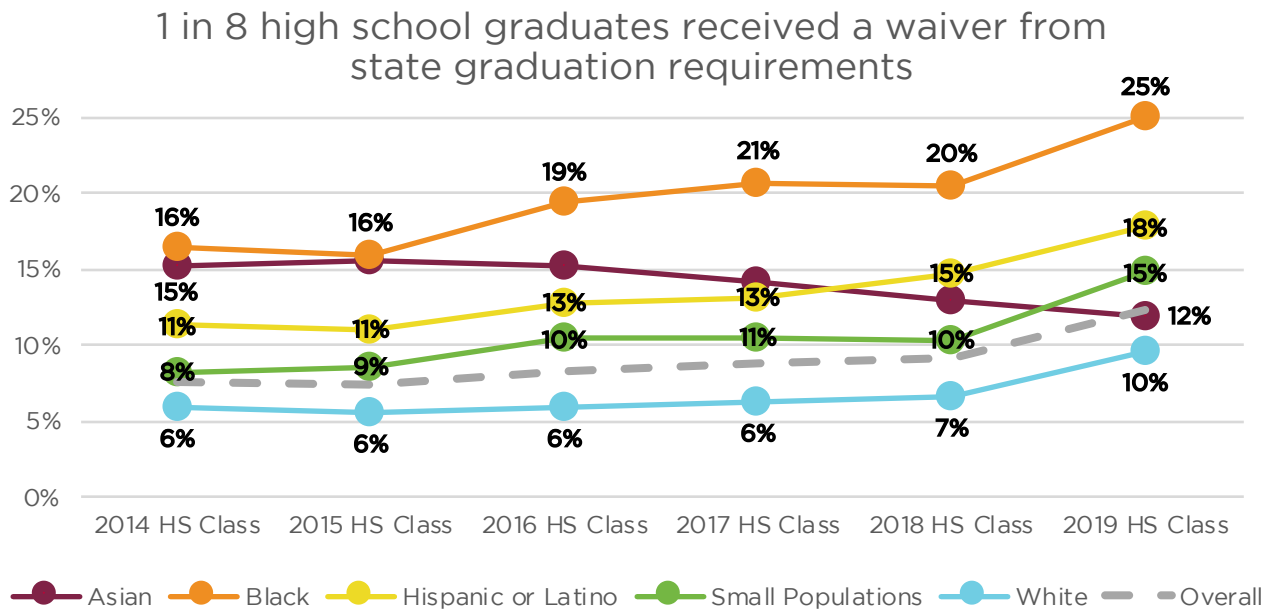




**High School Graduation Waivers**

Some students who graduate from high school do so with the assistance of a graduation waiver. Most high school students must pass a statewide test (currently the 10th grade ISTEP+ in English/Language Arts and Mathematics) to earn a diploma. Students who have not passed the 10th grade test by senior year may be eligible for a graduation waiver if they meet certain criteria.

In 2019, one in eight high school graduates received a waiver (or about 12 percent of the graduating class), which is the highest amount in at least 15 years.



Waivers are strongly correlated with both race and with family income. One out of four Black Hoosiers and one out of five Hispanic/Latino Hoosiers graduates high school with a waiver. While about 22 percent of non-Scholar, low-income students graduate with a waiver, 21st Century Scholars have the lowest rates of graduation waivers. Scholars are required to meet certain high school benchmarks and often receive support throughout high school from education and non-profit organizations, something low-income, non-Scholar students do not receive consistently.

## College-Going Rates

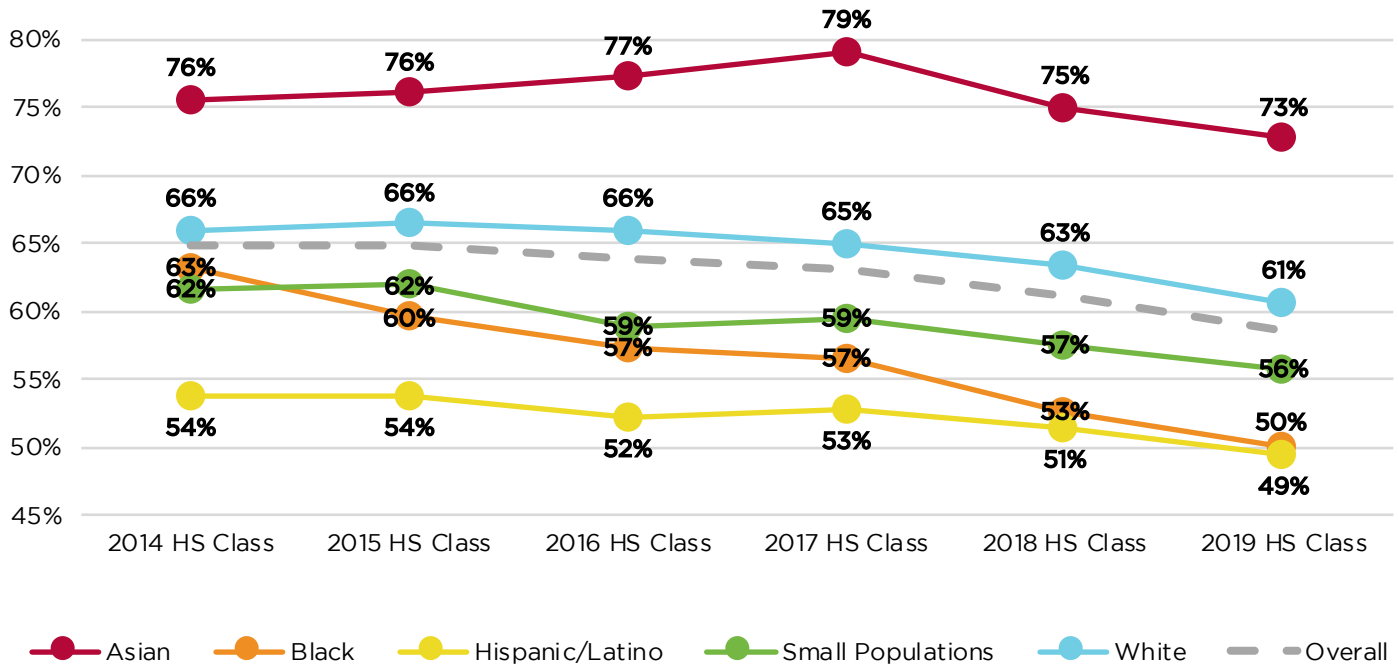
The Commission’s college-going metric explores the percentage of high school graduates who go to college within one year of leaving high school. (For additional information, including detailed information for each high school, see the [College Readiness Reports](#).)

Overall, Indiana’s college-going rate was 65 percent in 2014 and 59 percent in 2019. Most of the class of 2019 enrolled in college, but there were significant

differences across racial and ethnic groups, though every racial and ethnic group experienced a decline in college-going rates in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the rate for Hispanic and Latino students and the rate for White students each decreased by about 5 percentage points. At the same time, Black college-going rates decreased the most, by 13 percentage points. As a result, the gap between the overall average rate and the rate for Black students has grown.

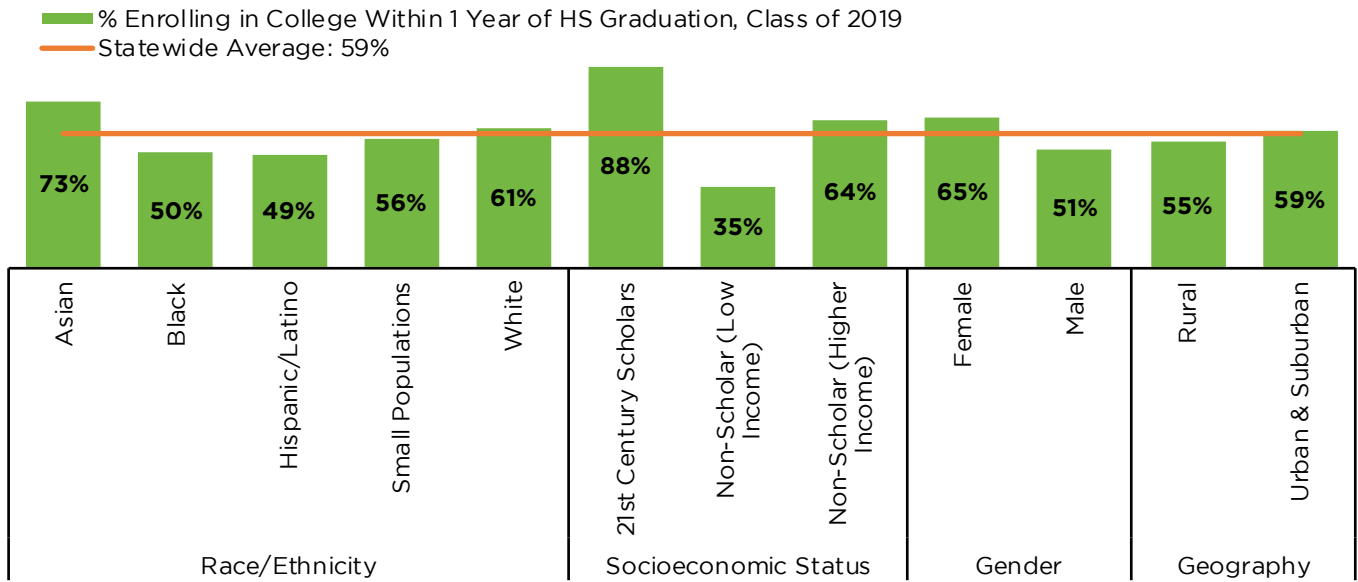
59% of Indiana’s high school grads go straight to college



Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of Asian students enrolled in college within one year of high school compared to 61 percent of White, 50 percent of Black and 49 percent of Hispanic and Latino students.

College-going rates also differ significantly by socioeconomic status. 21st Century Scholars had the highest college-going rate among all demographic groups at 88 percent. This is more than double the rate of their low-income, non-Scholar peers and is 24 percentage points higher than their higher income peers.

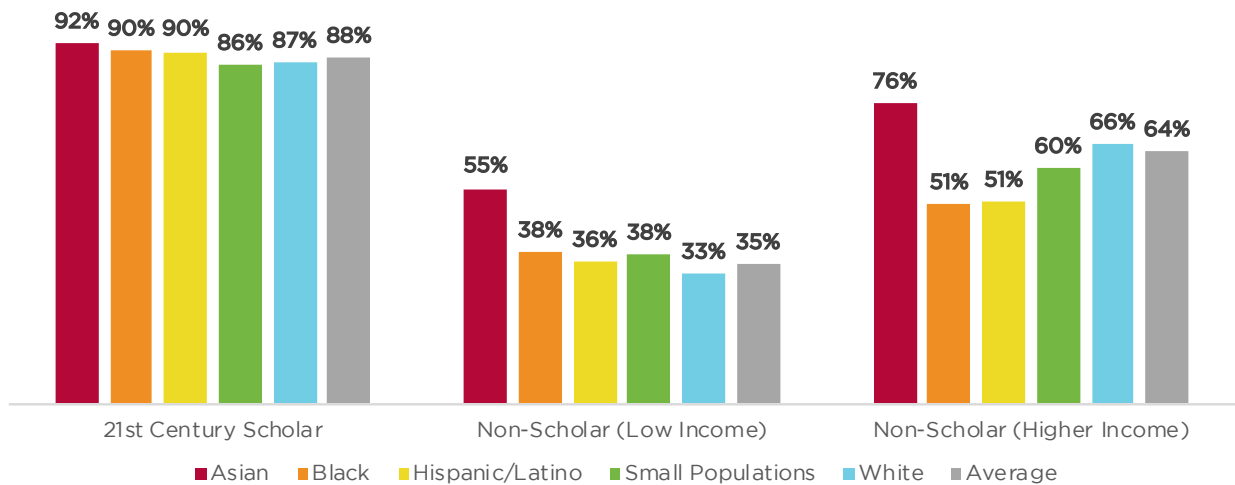
### Large gaps persist in who goes to college after high school



There is almost no college-going gap by race or ethnicity among 21st Century Scholars. About 9 out of 10 Scholars of every race or ethnicity go to college.

Substantial racial and ethnic college-going gaps exist among non-Scholars, however, particularly for middle- and higher-income students. About two-thirds of White, middle- and high-income students go to college while only about half of Black and Hispanic and Latino, middle- and high-income students do so. The opposite of this example is true for low-income White students. White Scholars and White low-income, non-Scholars were slightly less likely than their peers to enroll in postsecondary education. One possible explanation is that White students are more likely to be rural, and rural students typically have lower college-going rates (see next section).

### Regardless of race, college-going rates are highest for 21st Century Scholars (high school class of 2019)



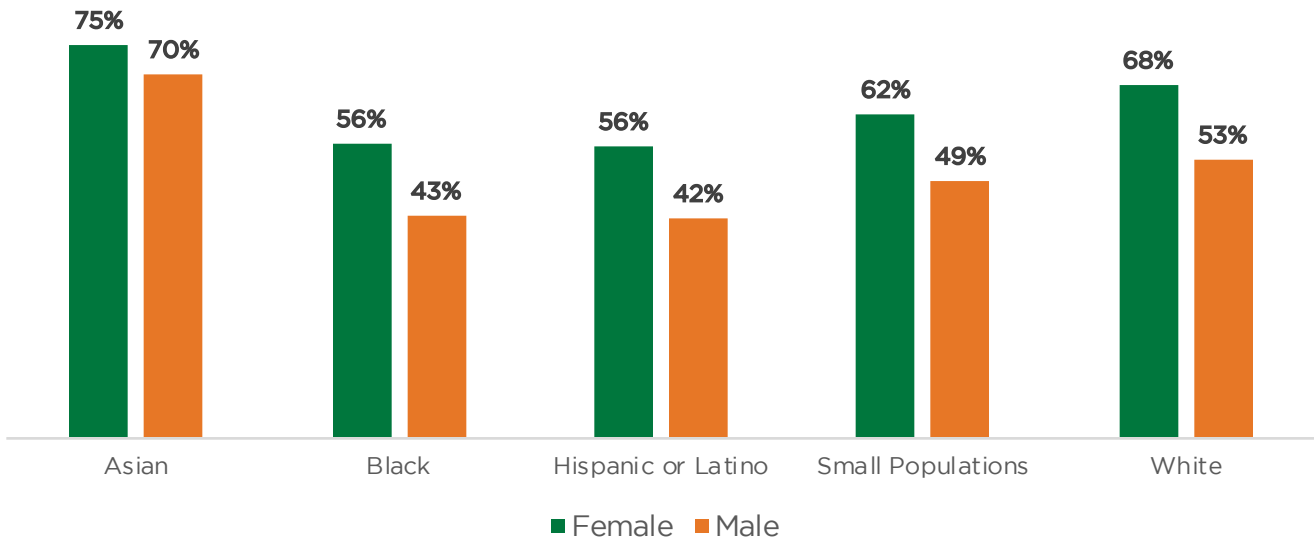
**College-Going Rates by Gender**

Men typically have lower college-going rates than women. Across Indiana, 65 percent of women and 51 percent of men go straight to college after high school. This gap is seen across each race and ethnicity. The gap also widened by 2 percentage points between 2018 and 2019.

Black men and Hispanic/Latino men have the lowest college-going rates. Roughly 43 percent of Black men and 42 percent of Hispanic/Latino men who graduated high school in the 2018-2019 academic year enrolled in college during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Asian Hoosiers had both the highest college-going rates and the smallest gender gap, of only 5 percentage points (75 percent of Asian women and 70 percent of Asian men enroll in college right after high school). White Hoosiers had the largest gender gap, at 15 percentage points between women and men. This may be partially explained by low college-going rates among rural men, who are more likely to be White. Rural college-going rates are discussed elsewhere in this report. All other race and ethnic groups had a gender gap of roughly 13 percentage points.

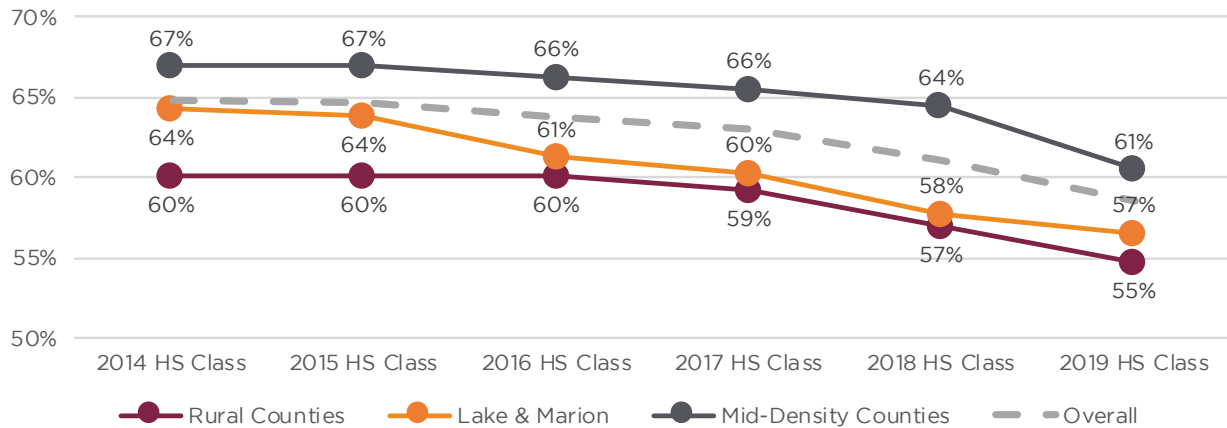
Men are less likely to go to college right after high school  
(HS class of 2019 college-going rates)



**College-Going Rates by Geography**

Rural county high schools have college-going rates that are consistently below the statewide average, by about 4 percentage points. High-density counties (Lake and Marion) also have below-average college-going rates. Though grouping high schools by county can be useful, there can be wide variation even within counties. For example, Marion County is home to schools with college-going rates as high as 89 percent and as low as 23 percent. See the [College Readiness Reports](#) for more information on individual high schools.

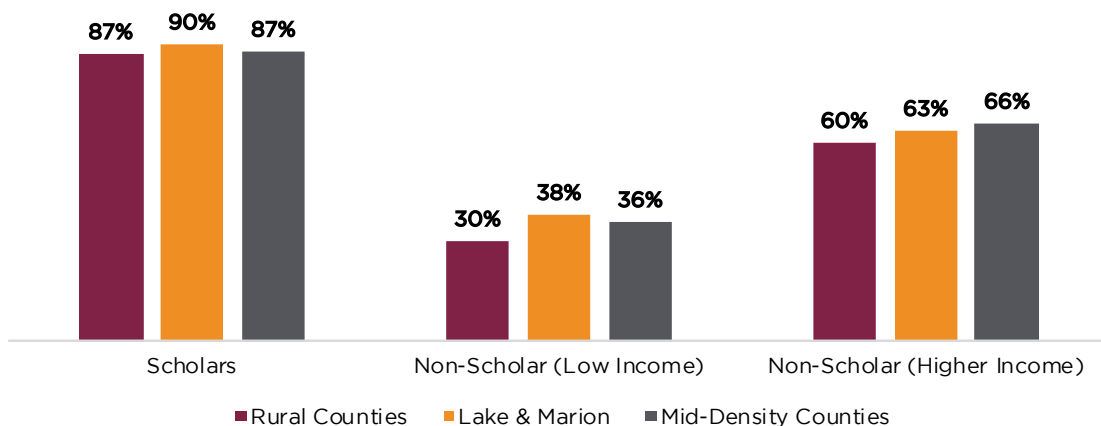
Rural county college-going rates are consistently 4 percentage points below the state average



21st Century Scholars in rural counties, high-density counties, and mid-density counties all have high college-going rates. Regardless of where they grow up, nearly 9 out of 10 Scholars go to college. There is almost no gap between rural Scholars and non-rural Scholars.

Low-income students in Lake and Marion counties have slightly higher college-going rates than low-income students in other counties. This may be because these counties have several nearby college campuses ([students are more likely to go to colleges near their homes](#)) and their large size and population density helps to sustain community initiatives and organizations that support low-income students.

The 21st Century Scholars program helps close the rural college-going gap (HS class of 2019 college-going rates)



**College-Going Rates: Gender and Geography**

Men from rural counties have especially low college-going rates. While women from rural counties have slightly lower college-going rates than non-rural women, rural men have significantly lower rates than non-rural men. Men from high-density counties (Lake and Marion) are about as likely as men from mid-density counties to go to college.

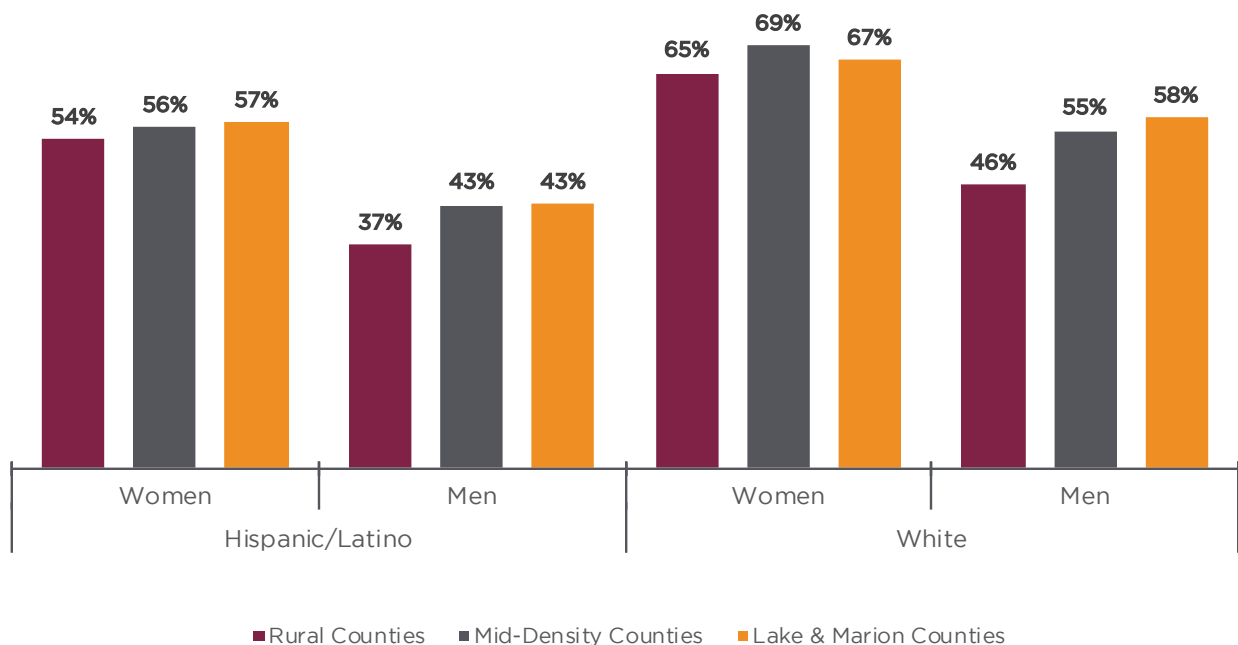
While small sample sizes prevent this report from breaking out rural men who are Black, Asian or belong to Small Populations, we can pull out rural men from Hispanic/Latino and White populations as a case study.

Just under 37 percent of Hispanic and Latino rural men who graduated high school in 2019 enrolled in college the following year. That is 7 percentage points lower than the college-going rates for Hispanic and Latino men in non-rural counties. Similarly, 46 percent of White men from rural counties went to college right after high school, far below the rates of White men in other parts of Indiana.

The college-going gender gap that is seen across Indiana is wide in rural communities. White rural men have college-going rates that are 19 percentage points below the college-going rates of White rural women (46 percent compared to 65 percent). Hispanic and Latino rural men have rates that are 17 percentage points below Hispanic and Latino rural women (37 percent compared to 54 percent).

The reasons behind these gaps are unknown, though it is possible rural men are more skeptical of the value of higher education and may enter the workforce straight out of high school rather than continuing education. It is important to note that entering the labor force after high school is not a guarantee of employment. The unemployment rate for workers between the ages of 18 and 24 is currently double that of older workers.

**Rural men are less likely to go to college after high school**  
(HS class of 2019 college-going rates)



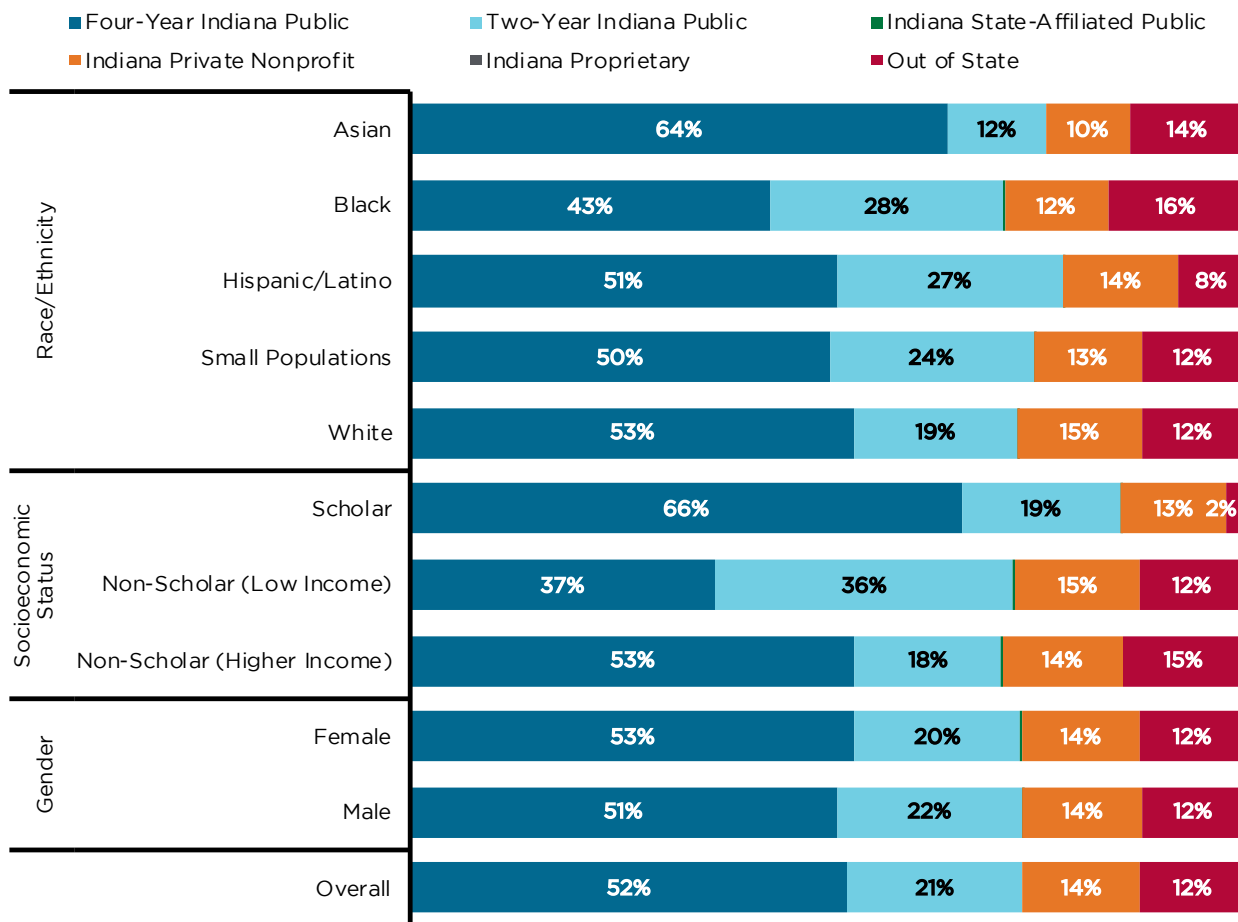
**Enrollment Patterns**

There is wide variation not just in who goes to college, but in where they go—though most college-bound high schoolers stay in Indiana.

21st Century Scholars are the most likely group to stay in Indiana for college; this is not surprising, as the scholarship is only applicable at Indiana institutions. A full 98 percent of college-bound Scholars enroll at an in-state institution. The chart below also highlights that low-income students who are not 21st Century Scholars are the most likely group to enroll at two-year institutions (Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University), pointing to the role these institutions play in providing affordable postsecondary education.

Enrollment patterns also differ by race and ethnicity. For instance, Black and Hispanic/Latino students are more likely to go to a two-year college. Two-year colleges have lower completion rates than four-year colleges, so differences in enrollment can exacerbate differences in completions by race and ethnicity. Black students are also the most likely group to go out of state for college, which could be due to the desire to attend a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), of which there are none in Indiana.

**Most college-bound high schoolers stay in Indiana**  
(class of 2019)



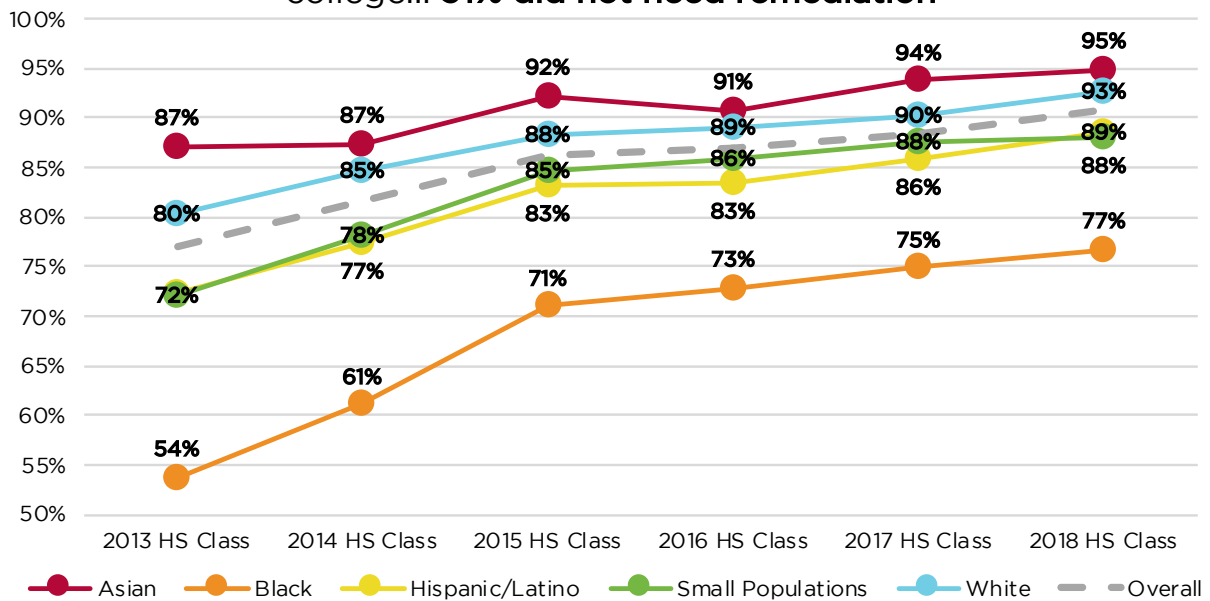
## Early Success in College

Students are not equally prepared for college coursework, or do not have equal access to the resources they need for success. The Commission uses a composite early success metric made up of three measures, which help point to whether students are on track to complete college.

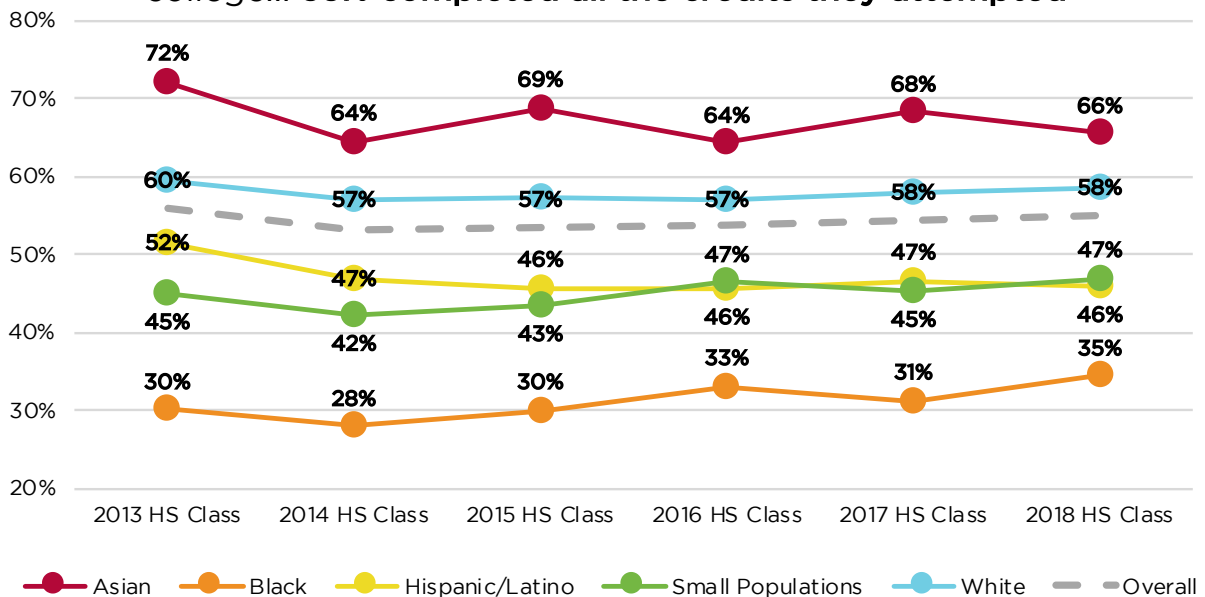
These measures are:

- Students not needing remediation
- Students completing all coursework attempted
- Students persisting to their second year

Among 2018 high school grads who went straight to college... **91% did not need remediation**

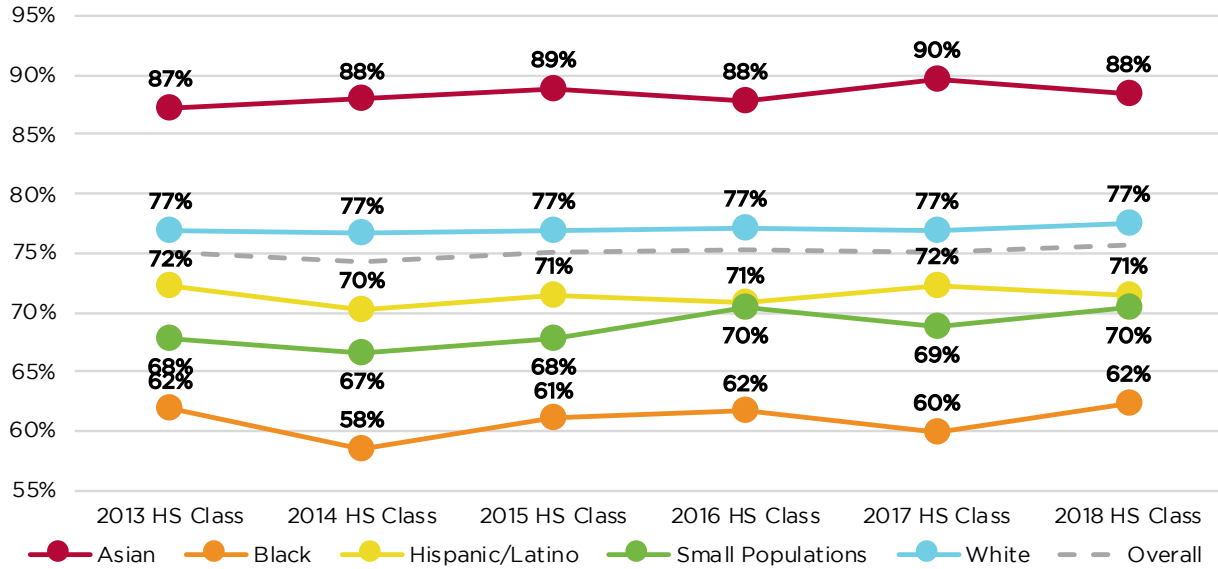


Among 2018 high school grads who went straight to college... **55% completed all the credits they attempted**





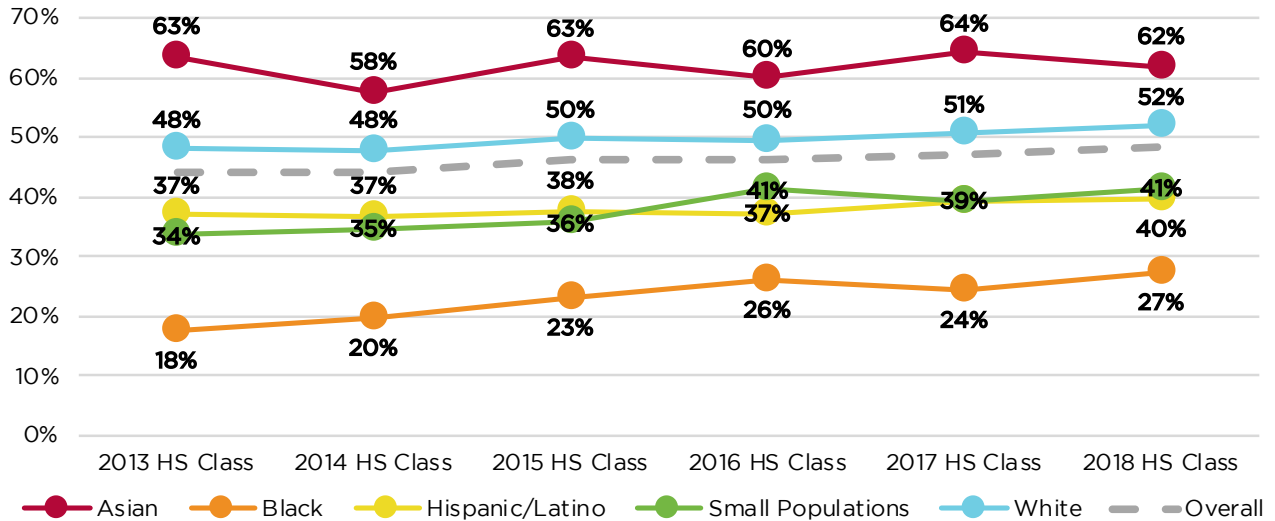
Among 2018 high school grads who went straight to college... **76% came back for a second year of college**



Out of high school class of 2018 graduates who went on to college, 48 percent met all three benchmarks. These students did not need remediation when they arrived in college during the 2018-19 academic year; they completed and passed all courses in their first term; and they came back for the 2019-20 academic year.

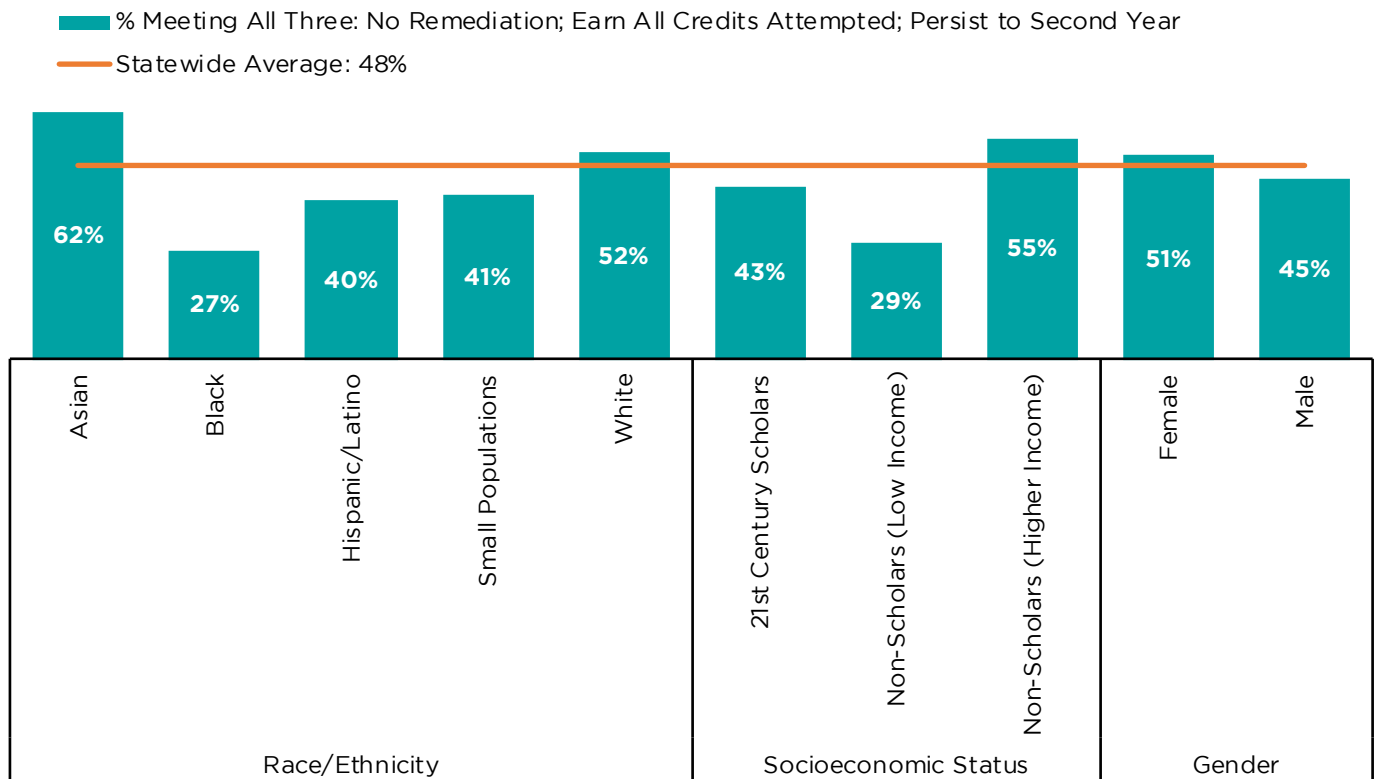
Asian students, though the most likely group to meet all three benchmarks, have seen little progress over the past five years. Black students have seen significant progress during that timeframe but remain well below the statewide average.

Among 2018 high school grads who went straight to college... **48% met all three early success in college benchmarks**



There are also gaps in the early success metric when looking at gender and at family income. Women were six percentage points more likely than men to meet all three early success metrics. Traditional-aged students from higher income families were almost twice as likely to meet the metrics as non-Scholar students from low-income households. Despite recent gains, Scholars are slightly below average on these metrics, but are expected to continue to improve as recent reforms continue to take effect.

### Black students were the least likely group to meet all three early success benchmarks (high school class of 2018)



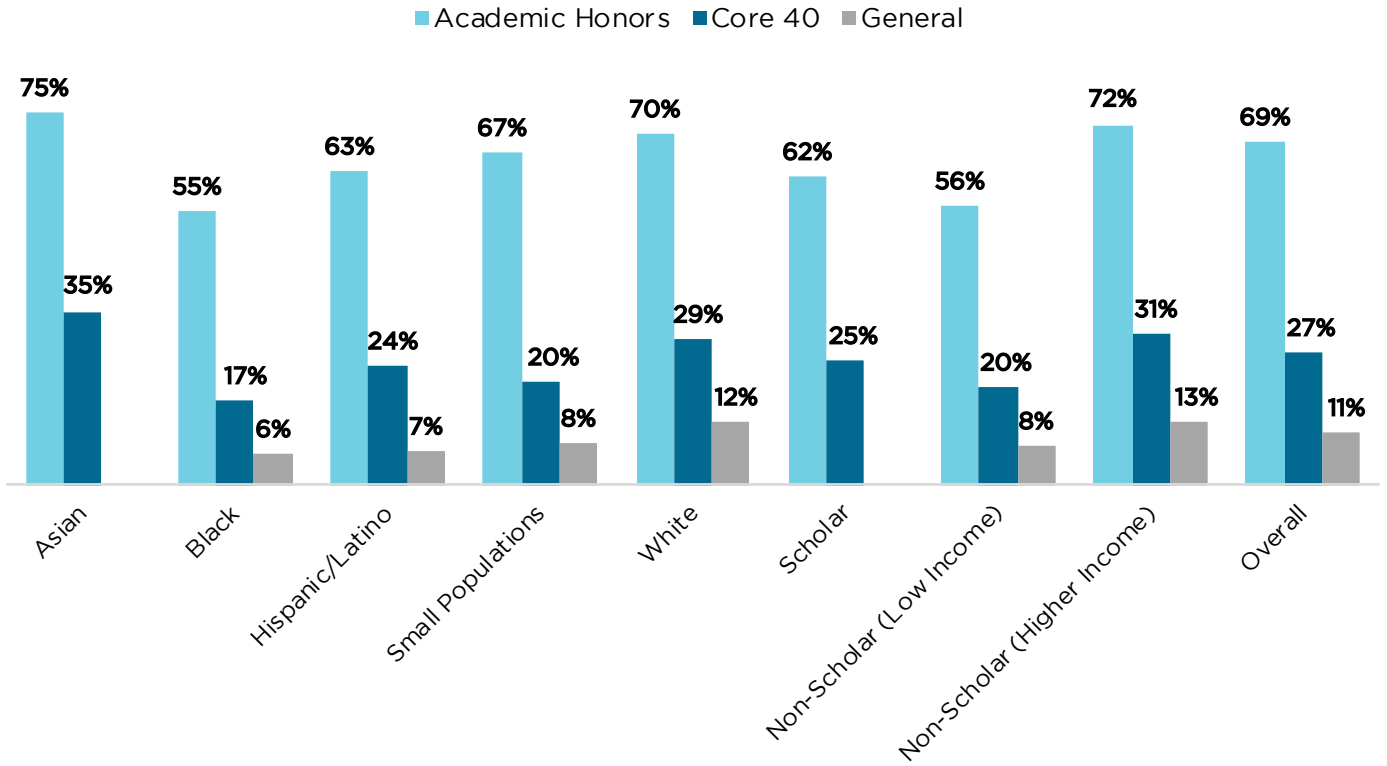
Since Black students and Hispanic and Latino students are less likely to earn the state’s most rigorous high school diploma, they may not have received the same levels of academic preparedness that their peers received, possibly explaining some of the gaps in early success benchmarks.

However, even when controlling for the type of high school diploma a student earned, gaps remain in the early success metric. For example, 63 percent of Hispanic and Latino Academic Honors graduates meet all three early college success metrics,

compared to 75 percent of Asian Academic Honors graduates. Even after controlling for high school diploma, wealthier students significantly outperform their peers. In fact, a mid-to-higher income student with a General Diploma has almost as good of a chance at experiencing early success in college as a Black student with a Core 40 diploma.

This indicates the obstacles many minority and low-income students face do not disappear once they reach college, and in some cases may grow or compound.

Nearly 70% of 2018 high school grads with Academic Honors Diplomas met all three early success in college metrics, compared to 11% of General Diploma earners

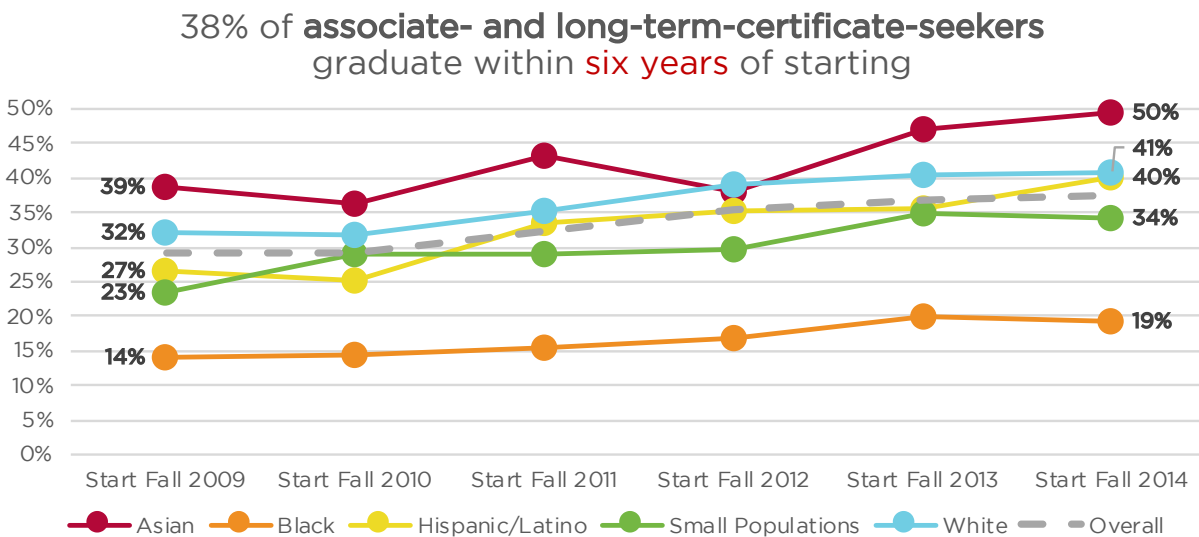


## Graduation Rates

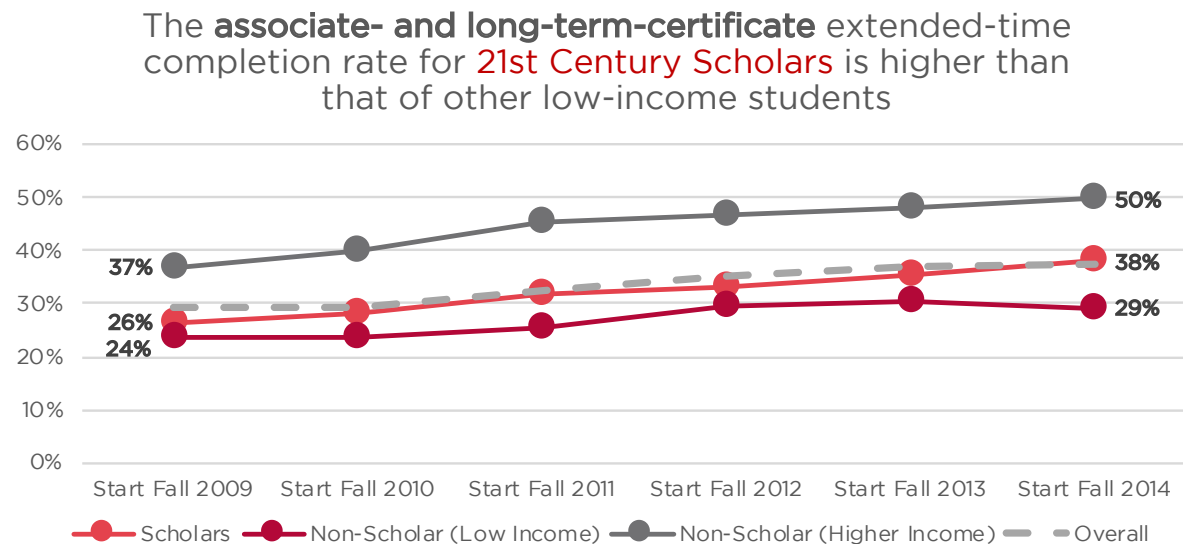
### Associate Degrees and Long-Term Certificates: Extended-Time Completion

The Commission calculates the six-year graduation rate as an “extended-time rate.” Of students who were pursuing an associate degree or long-term certificate and started as full-time students in Fall 2014, 37.5 percent graduated within six years. This is an improvement of 8.3 percentage points in a five-year period.

The extended-time completion rate for Black students (19 percent) is half of the state’s overall extended-time rate of 37.5 percent.



21st Century Scholars are about as likely as the average two-year college student to complete within six years. That is significantly above the 29 percent extended-time completion rate of non-Scholar, low-income students.

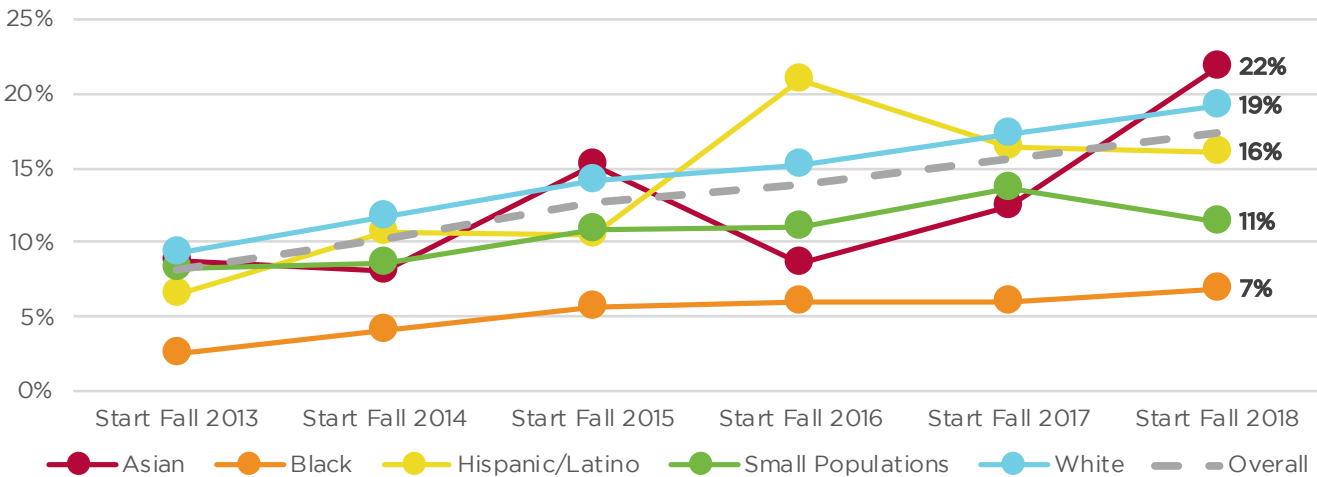


**Associate Degrees and Long-Term Certificates: On-Time Completion**

Of students who were pursuing an associate degree or long-term certificate and who started as full-time students in 2018, 17.3 percent graduated after two years, an improvement of over 9 percentage points in five years.

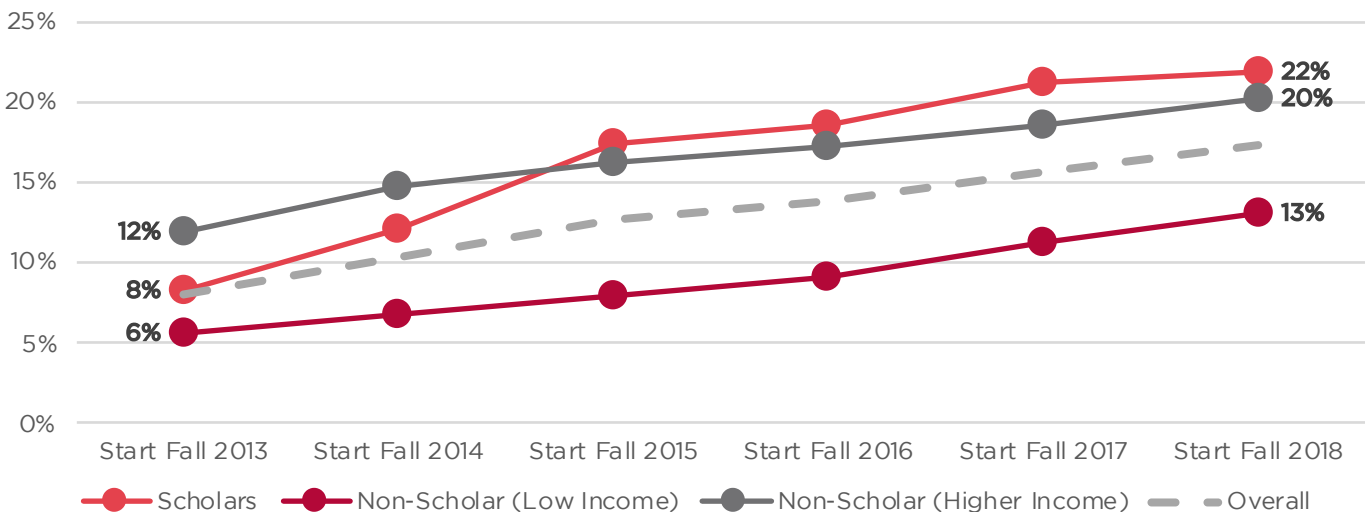
Though every racial and ethnic group improved over the past several years, there is more work to be done. Only 7 percent of Black associate- and long-term certificate seekers graduate within two years. This is especially worrying since Black students are more likely than other groups to attend a two-year college.

**17% of associate- and long-term-certificate-seekers graduate within two years of starting**



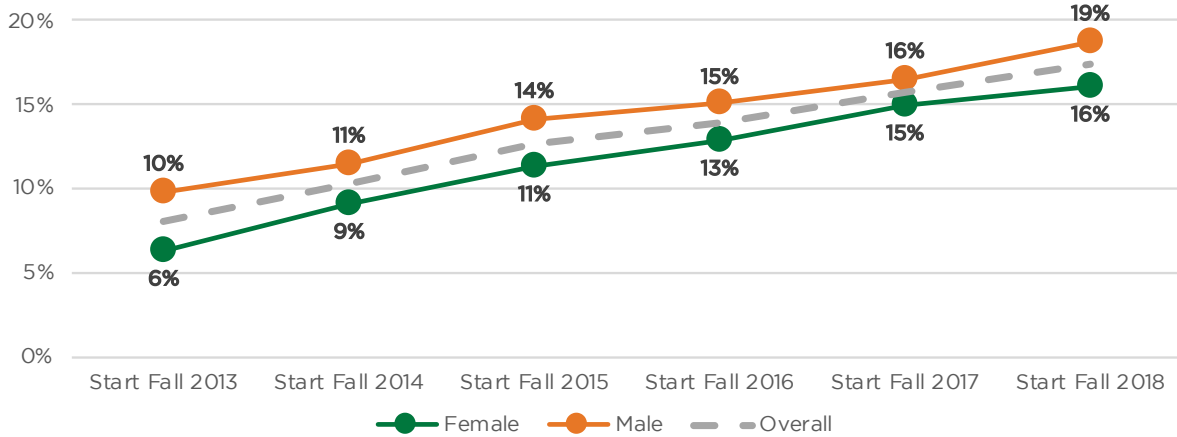
21st Century Scholars were the most likely group to graduate within two years. Scholars far exceed the completion rates of their low-income peers, and graduate at slightly higher rates than their wealthier peers. The Scholars completion rate saw rapid gains around the time recent financial aid reforms—such as credit completion requirements—came into effect.

**The associate- and long-term-certificate on-time completion rate for 21st Century Scholars has nearly tripled**



On nearly every metric in this report, women perform better than men. One exception is the on-time completion rate at two-year colleges. On this metric, men persistently graduate at higher rates. Women have higher completion rates when looking at extended-time completion rates and at four-year institution on-time rates. It is possible that women at two-year colleges are not receiving the support they need to graduate on time.

Men are more likely than women to complete an **associate or long-term certificate** within **two years** of starting

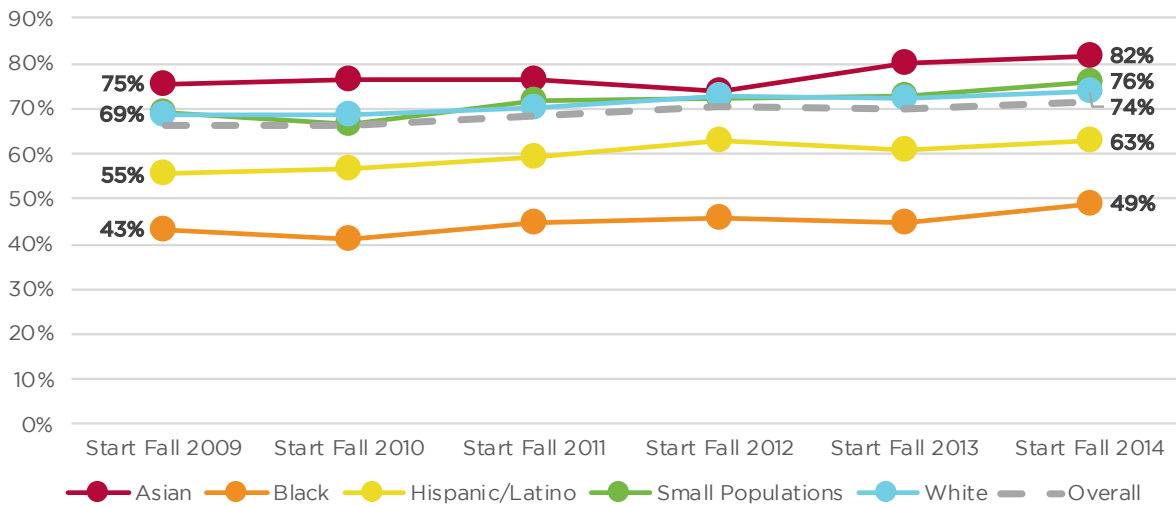


**Bachelor’s Degrees: Extended-Time Completion**

Nearly three-quarters (71.7 percent) of bachelor’s degree seekers who start as full-time students graduate within six years. This includes students who transferred and subsequently graduated from a different college as well as students who changed the degree level they were pursuing.

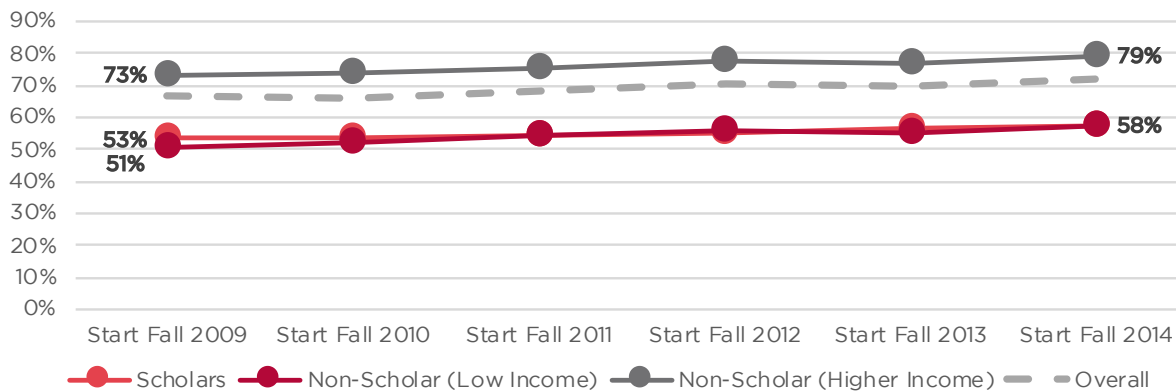
Each racial and ethnic group has seen an increase in the extended-time completion rate, yet gaps remain. Black students were the only demographic in which fewer than half had earned a college credential after six years. Just as troubling, the completion gap between Black students and the statewide average is virtually unchanged over the past five years.

72% of **bachelor’s-seekers** graduate within **six years** of starting



While 21st Century Scholars are much more likely than their low-income peers to graduate on time, the difference mostly shrinks when looking at the extended time rate. This may be because Scholars have a much stronger incentive to graduate on-time, but that incentive has less of an impact when a fifth and sixth year are included. Even if that is the case, the time and money saved by graduating in four years instead of six can be significant to both students and the state’s economy.

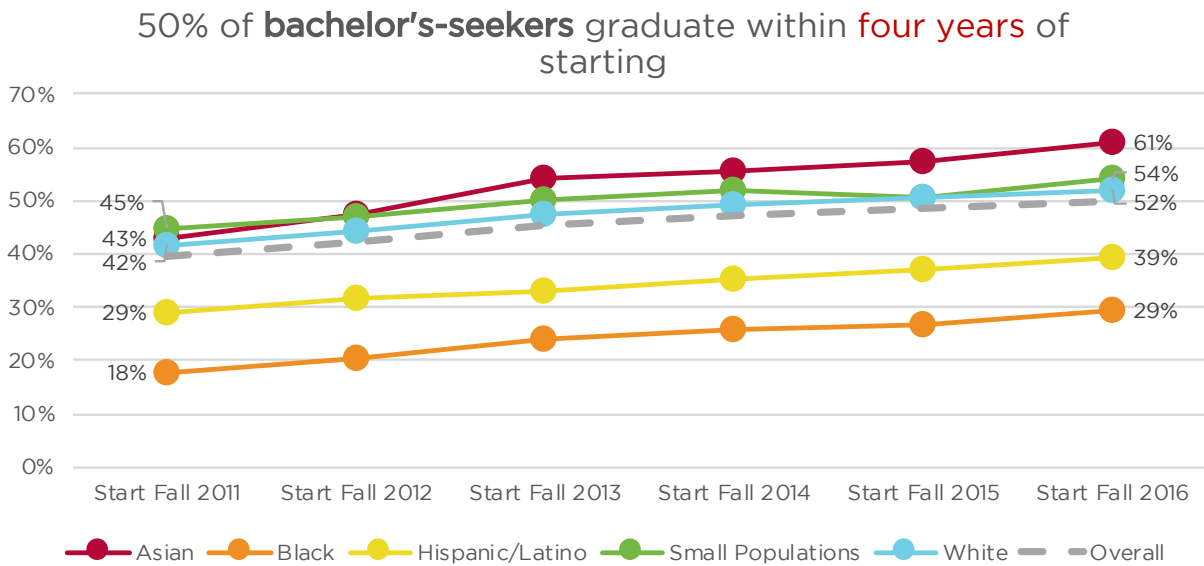
Nearly 60% of low-income **bachelor’s seekers** graduate within **six years**



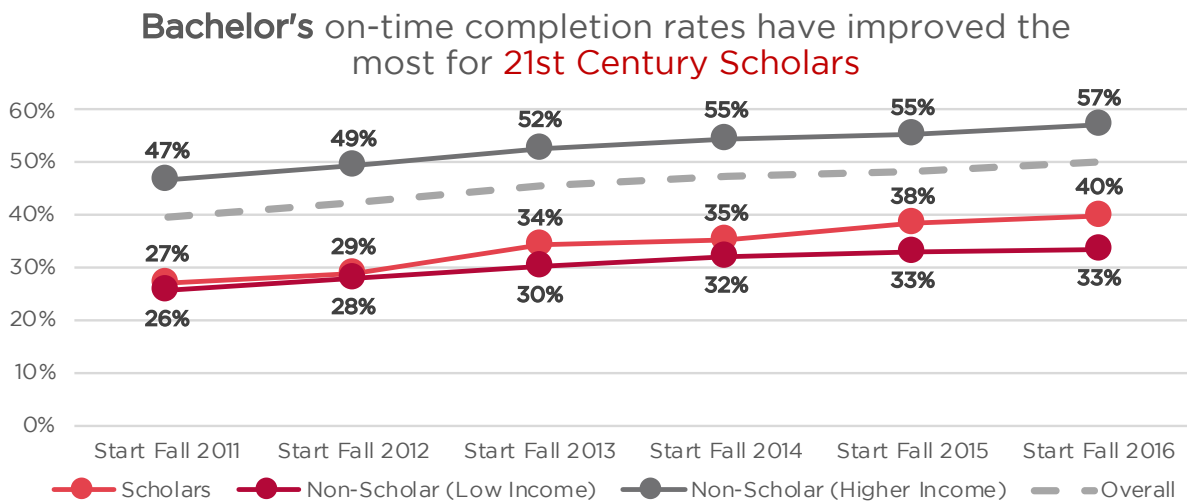
**Bachelor’s Degrees: On-Time Completion**

Half of bachelor’s degree seekers who started as full-time students in Fall 2016 had earned a bachelor’s by spring 2020, an improvement of 10 percentage points in five years.

Every racial and ethnic group saw improvement in that timespan. However, most gaps were relatively unchanged over this time. Five years ago, the on-time completion rate for Black students was 22 percentage points behind the statewide average. Today, it is 21 percentage points. Similarly, Hispanic and Latino students remain 11 percentage points behind the statewide average. Asian students saw the biggest increase, going from slightly above the statewide average to well above it.



Students from wealthier backgrounds are more likely to graduate on-time. In recent years, the on-time completion rate for 21st Century Scholars has significantly improved, which corresponds to recent reforms to Indiana’s financial aid system. These reforms include credit completion requirements and the Scholars Success Program. Overtime, these rates may continue to improve as these and other reforms become more embedded.





# Equity Report Recommendations

There are obvious gaps for many Hoosier students, in terms of academic preparation, access to postsecondary opportunity and college success and completion. Those gaps often run along demographic lines that include race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and geography. The following recommendations build upon the foundation outlined in the Commission's strategic plan, [Reaching Higher in a State of Change](#), which supports the state's Big Goal, that at least 60 percent of Hoosiers will have education and training beyond high school by 2025.

## Readiness

- The Commission will continue to leverage the 21st Century Scholars program as one of the best ways to close equity gaps for low-income students in Indiana.
- The Commission encourages K-12 schools to support more students in earning the Academic Honors diploma and for fewer students to earn a graduation waiver.
- The Commission calls for adequate funding and equitable access to dual credit and Advanced Placement opportunities, including closing racial/ethnic and income gaps in early college credit attainment. Additionally, Indiana requires a diverse and qualified pipeline of educators who are credentialed to teach these courses. The Commission recommends educators take full advantage of free credentialing opportunities through the [STEM Teach](#) and [Teach Dual Credit](#) initiatives.

## Completion

- The Commission commends lawmakers for their continued strong commitment to financial aid. It also encourages Indiana's colleges to maintain or expand efforts to keep college affordable for all Hoosiers.
- The Commission requires 100 percent of postsecondary programs to have an internship, work-based learning, research project or other student engagement experience that has career relevance.

## Partnerships and Engagement

- The Commission will sustain its targeted outreach to Black and Hispanic/Latino learners to increase awareness of financial aid programs by continuing to partner with community and faith-based organizations, as well as the Padres Estrellas and Ambassadors programs and other initiatives.
- To address the disparity in college-going rates for rural students, the Commission will partner with the Indiana Department of Education, community organizations and local policymakers to advocate for the growing need for education beyond high school.
- The Commission will partner with the Indiana Department of Education to help streamline and smooth transitions between K-12 and postsecondary education.

## ABOUT THE DATA

### General Notes and Sources:

Sources: Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE); Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI); Indiana Department of Education (IDOE); National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).

Indiana High School Graduates: Count of Indiana high school graduates is based on the total count of graduates reported on the IDOE-GR reports. Graduate counts are not IDOE cohort graduate counts and thus, may not match cohort graduate counts reported in other places, such as DOE compass. SOURCE: IDOE

College Completion Cohorts: Cohorts were created using data submitted by Indiana public institutions to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) through the CHE Data Submission System (CHEDSS). Student cohorts include students enrolling as first-time students in their entry year and who were degree-seeking students in the fall semester listed enrolled full-time (12 or more credit hours) as of institution census date. Two-year institutions represent Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University, and four-year institutions represent all other public institutions. Cohorts were tracked longitudinally for on-time completion using subsequent data submitted by public institutions. SOURCE: ICHE

### High school demographics and preparation: (Indiana high school graduates)

BaHigh School Diploma Type: High school diploma type received upon high school graduation. Academic Honors represents students who received an Academic Honors Diploma, both an Academic and Technical Honors Diploma, or an International Baccalaureate Diploma. Core 40 represents students who received a Core 40 Diploma or a Technical Honors Diploma. SOURCE: IDOE

AP Participation/Passing Exam Status: Represents students who sat for and/or passed (received a score of 3 or higher) at least one Advanced Placement exam. SOURCE: IDOE

Dual Credit Status: Represents students who earned/did not earn credit hours awarded by Indiana public colleges that were recognized by both the high school and the postsecondary institutions. Dual credit calculations include credits awarded by Indiana public colleges. SOURCE: ICHE

### College-going rates and enrollment: (Indiana high school graduates)

College Enrollment: Represents students reported as enrolled in postsecondary education, regardless of institution type, within the year following high school graduation (e.g., for 2020 high school graduates, postsecondary enrollment is counted for 2019-20 school year). A student was considered enrolled only if a) s/he was enrolled as a degree or certificate seeking undergraduate student and b) s/he was enrolled for the equivalent of at least one semester during the school year. SOURCES: ICHE, ICI, NSC

Indiana Public College Enrollment: Represents students reported as enrolled in an Indiana public postsecondary institution. SOURCE: ICHE

### Early success in college: (Indiana high school graduates)

Early Success in College Composite: Represents Indiana public college students who met all three indicators of 1) no remedial coursework, 2) earned all credits attempted, and 3) persisted to second year. SOURCE: ICHE

No Remedial Coursework: Represents Indiana public college students NOT identified as deficient in the general competencies necessary for regular postsecondary curriculum in English/language arts and/or mathematics. Both credit and non-credit remedial coursework are accounted for in calculations. SOURCE: ICHE

Earned All Credits Attempted: Represents Indiana public college students who had earned credit hours equal to that of credit hours attempted as of end of term. SOURCE: ICHE

Persistence to Second Year: Represents percentage of Indiana public college students who continued enrollment into the fall semester of the second year at any Indiana public college. SOURCE: ICHE

### Extended-time college completion: (College completion cohorts)

Extended-Time (Any campus, any degree level within six years): Represents students in college completion cohorts (see above) who completed, within six years, any degree at any public institution in Indiana, or at a private or for-profit college/university in Indiana or elsewhere in the United States, provided the college or university participates in the National Student Clearinghouse. SOURCE: ICHE

### On-time college completion: (College completion cohorts)

On-Time (same campus, same degree level): Represents students in college completion cohorts (see above) who completed a degree on time at the same level initially sought at the same Indiana public college/university system in which they initially enrolled. SOURCE: ICHE

### Disaggregation:

Gender: Represents gender, male or female, as reported by IDOE (college going, early success in college) or by Indiana public institutions to ICHE (on-time college completion).

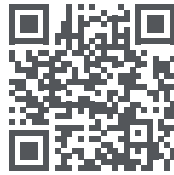
Race/Ethnicity: Represents race/ethnicity as reported by IDOE (college going, early success in college) or by Indiana public institutions to ICHE (on-time college completion). Groups include five mutually exclusive race/ethnicity categories: Asian, Black, Hispanic or Latino, Small Populations, and White. The Small Populations race/ethnicity category includes Native American/Alaskan Native, Two or More Races, Native Hawaiian groups and, in some instances, Undeclared.

Socioeconomic Status: For college-going and early success in college indicators, the report defines low-income in one of two ways: whether the student is at that point in time a 21st Century Scholar (in which they had to have been Free-or-Reduced-Lunch-eligible in 7th or 8th grade) or whether the student received Free-or-Reduced Lunch during their senior year of high school. For on-time college completion, the report defines low-income in one of two ways: whether the student received a 21st Century Scholarship in their year of entry or whether the student received a Pell grant in their year of entry. Low-income data for all metrics are broken into 21st Century Scholars and non-21st Century Scholars groups.

Rural/Non-Rural Classification: Identifies whether a student's high school of graduation is located in a county that falls within a Metropolitan Area established by the Office of Management and Budget. Any county that is not a part of a Metropolitan Area is considered rural. This report further breaks out non-rural counties into high-density (Lake and Marion counties) and mid-density (all remaining non-rural counties). The rural/non-rural classifications for Indiana counties are listed in section I of the following document: <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/ruralhealth/resources/forhpeligibleareas.pdf>

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education builds a policy agenda on a commitment to using compelling data to increase transparency, inform practice and drive change for the benefit of all Hoosiers. By publishing a series of [consumer-friendly reports](#), the Commission spotlights progress at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.



The [College Equity Report](#) disaggregates demographic data from the Commission's College Readiness and Completion reports to highlight outcomes in Indiana for race and ethnicity, gender, geography and socioeconomic status. The report also tracks the state's progress in closing the educational achievement gaps in Indiana.

[Reaching Higher in a State of Change](#) is the Commission's fourth strategic plan. It is the guiding document for Indiana to reach the goal of at least 60 percent of Hoosiers with education and training beyond high school by 2025. With the priorities of completion, equity

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

and talent, its "Blueprint for Change" outlines action steps to achieve Indiana's attainment goal.

The [College Value Report](#) provides a clearer picture of the returns a college degree yields after graduation and beyond, both to the individual and the state. These benefits include greater earnings, job security, enhanced social mobility, increased civic engagement, improved health and wellness, a higher quality of life and more.

The [College Readiness Reports](#) help schools and communities understand how students are performing in college, while informing state and local policies that increase college readiness, access and success.

The [College Completion Reports](#) provide a clearer and more comprehensive picture of college completion in order to advance Indiana's collective efforts to boost educational attainment.

07-14-2021



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# INDIANA COMMISSION *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

## MISSION

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education is a 14-member public body created in 1971 to define the missions of Indiana's colleges and universities, plan and coordinate the state's postsecondary education system, administer state financial aid, and ensure that Indiana's higher education system is aligned to meet the needs of students and the state.



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