

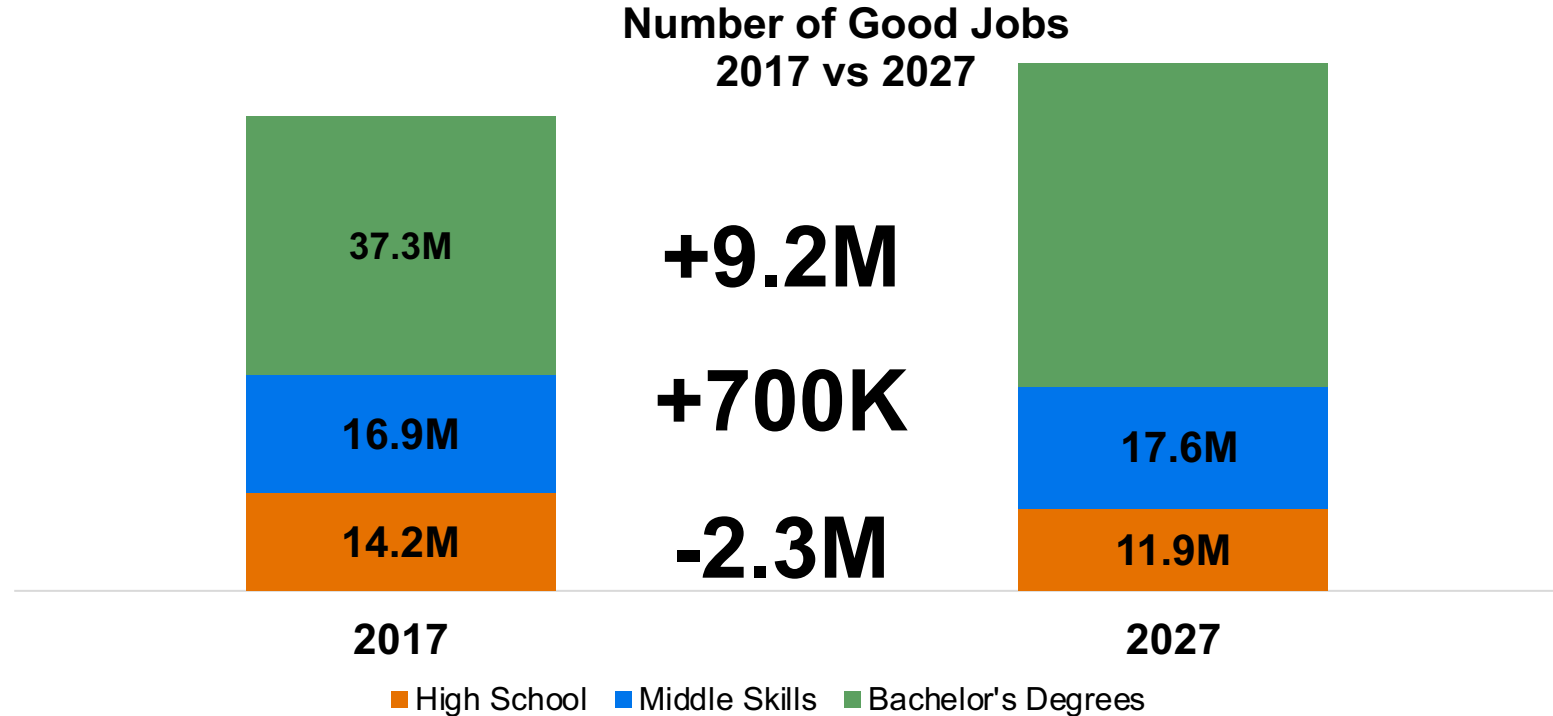
Full Steam Ahead: From Tracking to Transforming Transfer!

Dr. Tatiana Velasco & John Fink
Community College Research Center
Teachers College – Columbia University

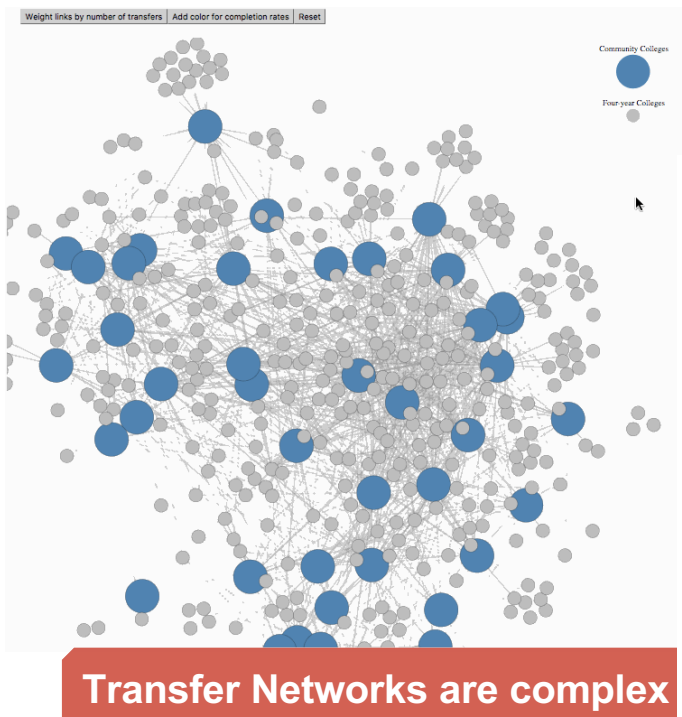
Dr. Tania LaViolet
College Excellence Program
The Aspen Institute

NISTS Opening Session, February 21st, 2024

MANY 'GOOD JOBS' REQUIRE BACHELOR'S DEGREES

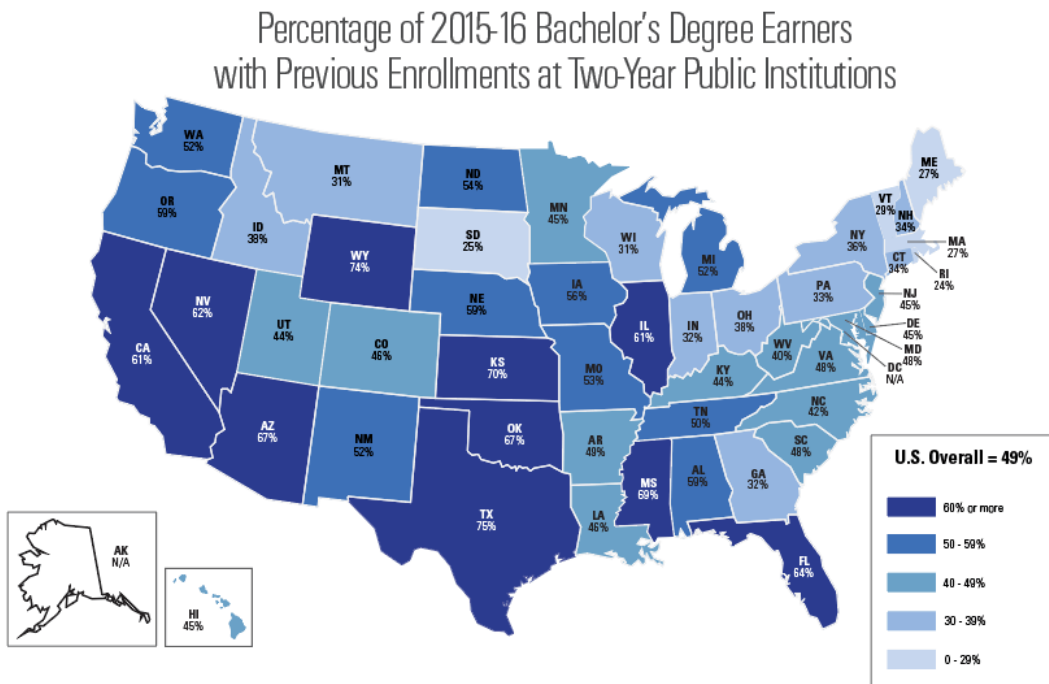


Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce projections based on Current Population Survey data, 2017.



Half of Bachelor's Degrees are Awarded to Students with Prior Community College Enrollments

With data current through August 2016



The Unmet Promise of Transfer as an Accessible Route to the BA

80% of community college students
want a **bachelor's degree**



33% of community college students
transfer to a **four-year institution**

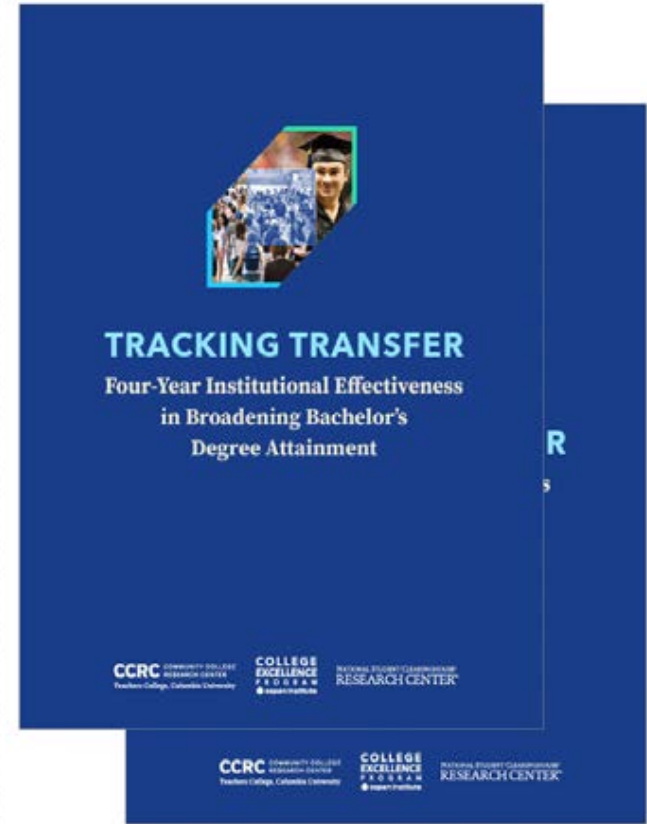


16% of community college students will
graduate with a bachelor's degree
within six years of starting college



Source: Velasco et al., 2024: [Tracking Transfer: Community College and Four-Year Institutional Effectiveness in Broadening Bachelor's Degree Attainment](#)

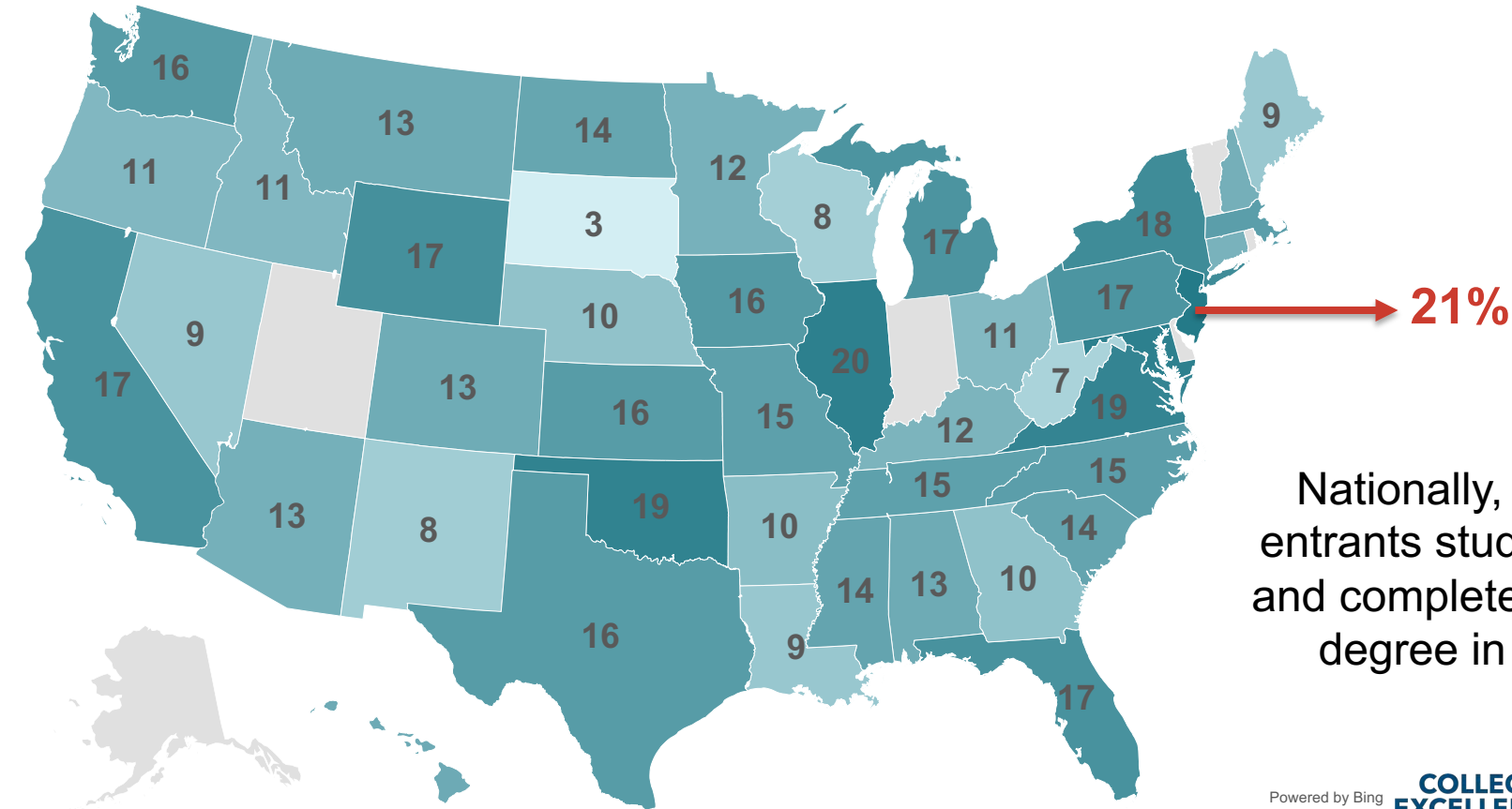
There is no state where at least 25% of their community college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years.



Cohort Bachelor's Completion Rate

3

21



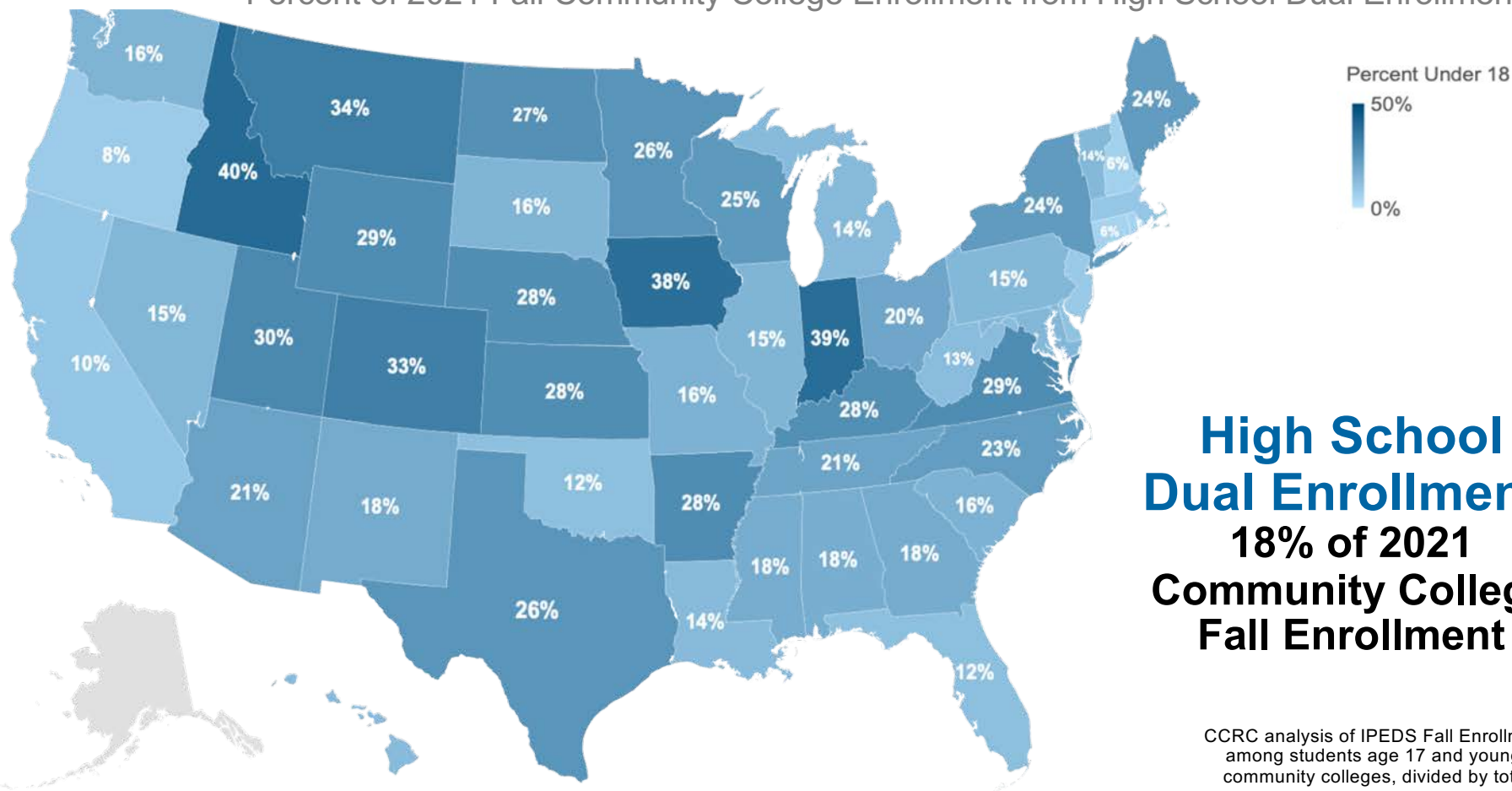
Nationally, 16% of CC entrants students transfer and complete a bachelor's degree in six-years.

Aspiring transfer students encounter many college-created barriers

- Students not helped to explore career/college options, and develop a plan—and their progress isn't monitored
- Transfer paths unclear, “get your gen eds out of the way” can mislead students
- Early momentum matters: Too many entering students weeded out through dev ed, poorly resourced instruction in uninspiring gen ed; too few experience high-quality active learning
- Unreceptive transfer cultures upon arrival at the four-year, exclusionary practices limit access to HIPs
- Dual enrollment offerings not designed to help students actively explore interests and develop goals for college and careers



Percent of 2021 Fall Community College Enrollment from High School Dual Enrollment



**High School
Dual Enrollment:
18% of 2021
Community College
Fall Enrollment**

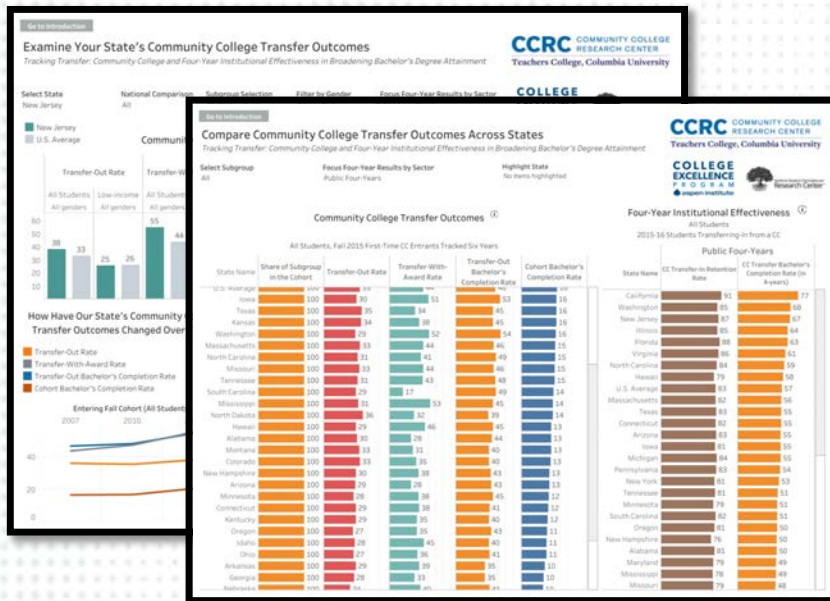
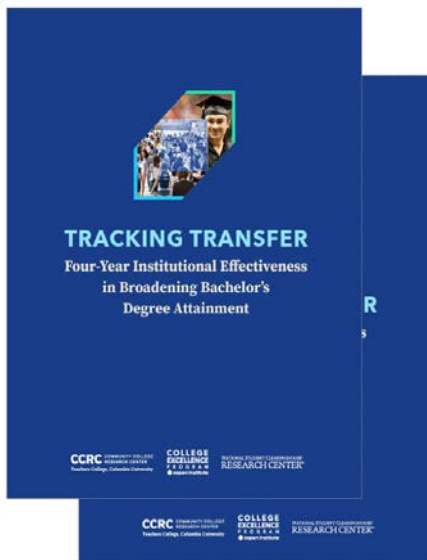
CCRC analysis of IPEDS Fall Enrollments among students age 17 and younger at community colleges, divided by total fall enrollments.

Turn to a neighbor...

**What are the
biggest college-
created barriers
that our transfer
students run into?**



Tracking Transfer: Community College and Four-Year Institutional Effectiveness in Broadening Bachelor's Degree Attainment



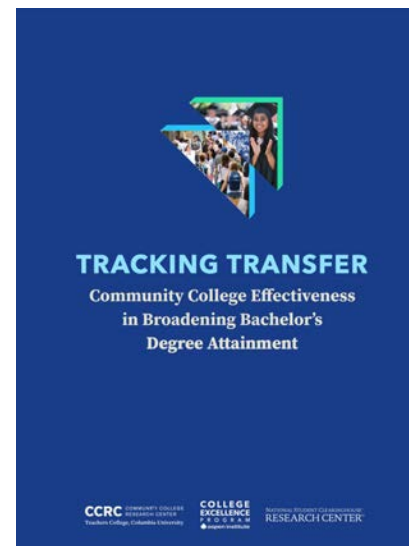
National Student Clearinghouse[®]
Research Center[™]

COLLEGE
EXCELLENCE
PROGRAM
aspen institute

CCRC

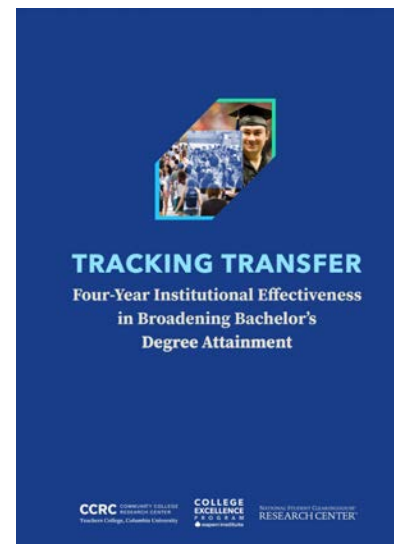
Key Findings: Tracking **Community College** Effectiveness in Broadening Bachelor's Attainment

1. Nationally, **transfer and bachelor's completion rates are low**, especially for populations underrepresented among bachelor's degree holders.
2. A **small** but noteworthy **number of colleges achieve strong transfer outcomes** for Black or Hispanic students.
3. Transfer outcomes of **prior high school dual enrollment students are stronger** than those of students without having taken any dual enrollment courses.



Key Findings: Tracking **Four-Year Institution Effectiveness** in Broadening Bachelor's Attainment

1. **Outcomes** for community college transfer students **after they arrive at four-year institutions are low** overall and even lower for low-income, Black, and older transfer students.
2. Transfer students who earn a **pre-transfer community college award** have much stronger post-transfer outcomes.
3. **AANAPISIs and HSIs** exhibit **strong** transfer outcomes. (And **for-profits** and **POIs** were **weakest**)



Let's dive in



Transfer Metrics Review

Community College Transfer Metrics



Percent of CC
entrants who
transferred

(ever enrolled
at any four-
year)

Percent of
transfers who
completed at
the CC

Percent of
transfers who
completed a
bachelor's

Percent of
CC entrants
who
transferred
and
completed a
bachelor's

Transfer-out Rate

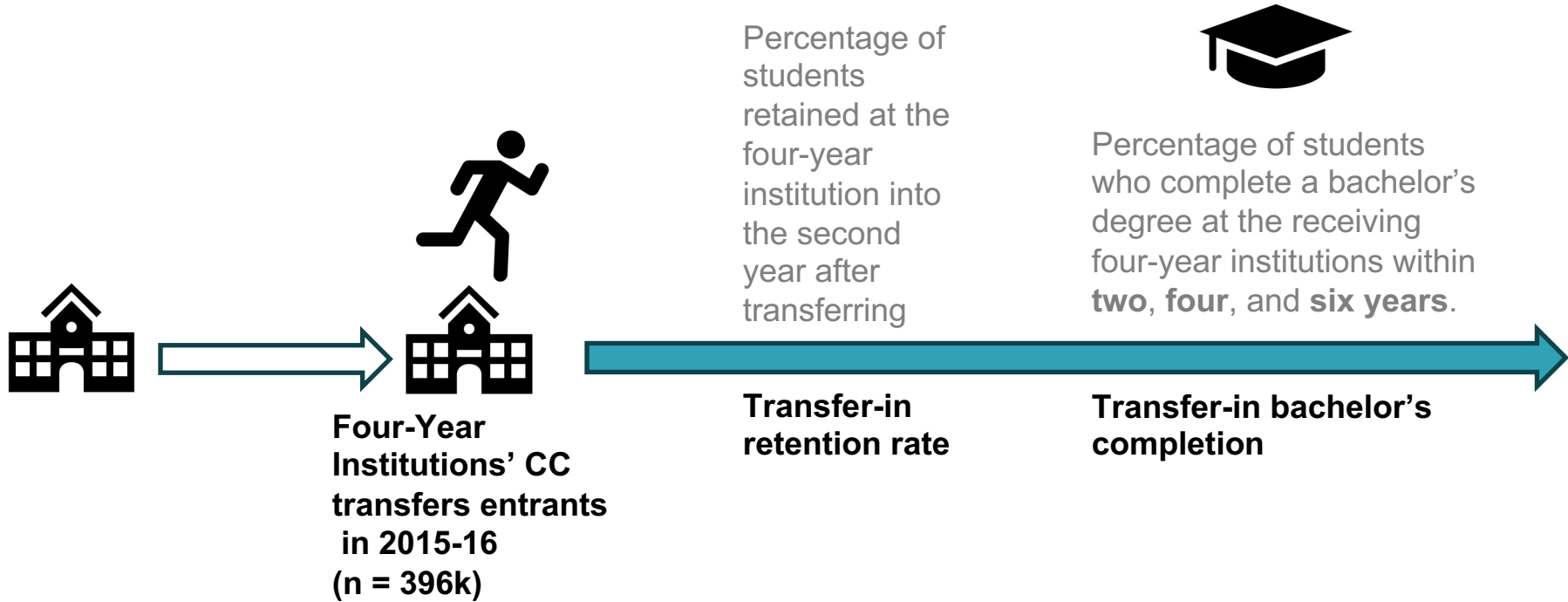
**Transfer with
Award Rate**

**Transfer-out
Bachelor's
Completion Rate**

**Cohort
Bachelor's
Completion Rate**

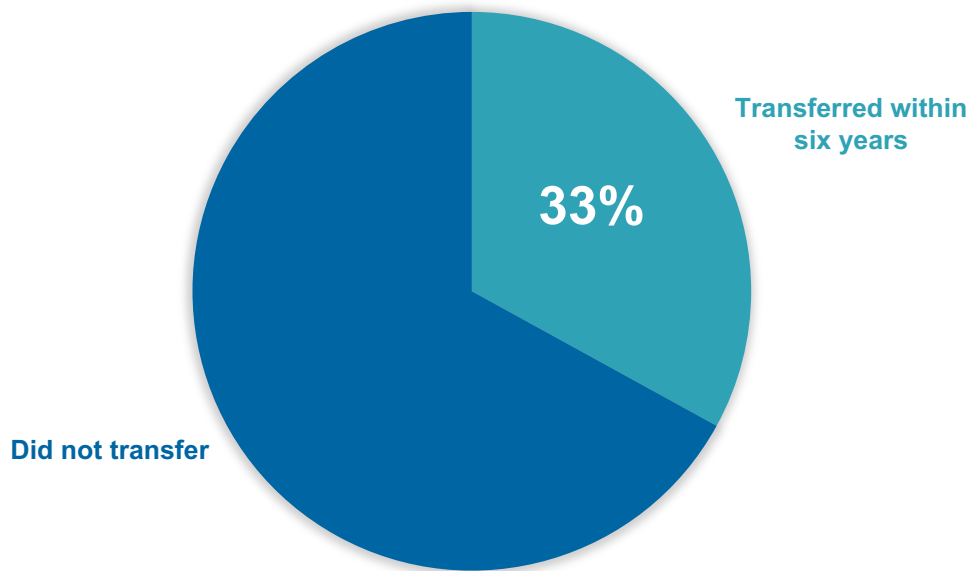
Community college
FTIC students,
Fall 2015
(n = 670K)

Four-Year Institutions Post-Transfer Metrics



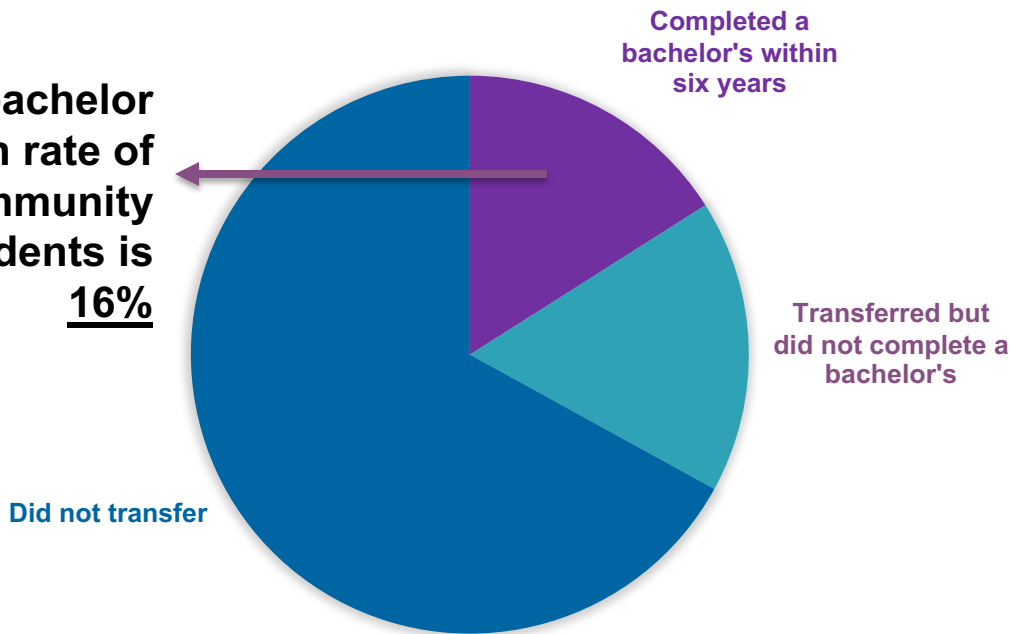
Community College Transfer Metrics and National Findings

Only 33% of students transfer to a four-year institution within six years



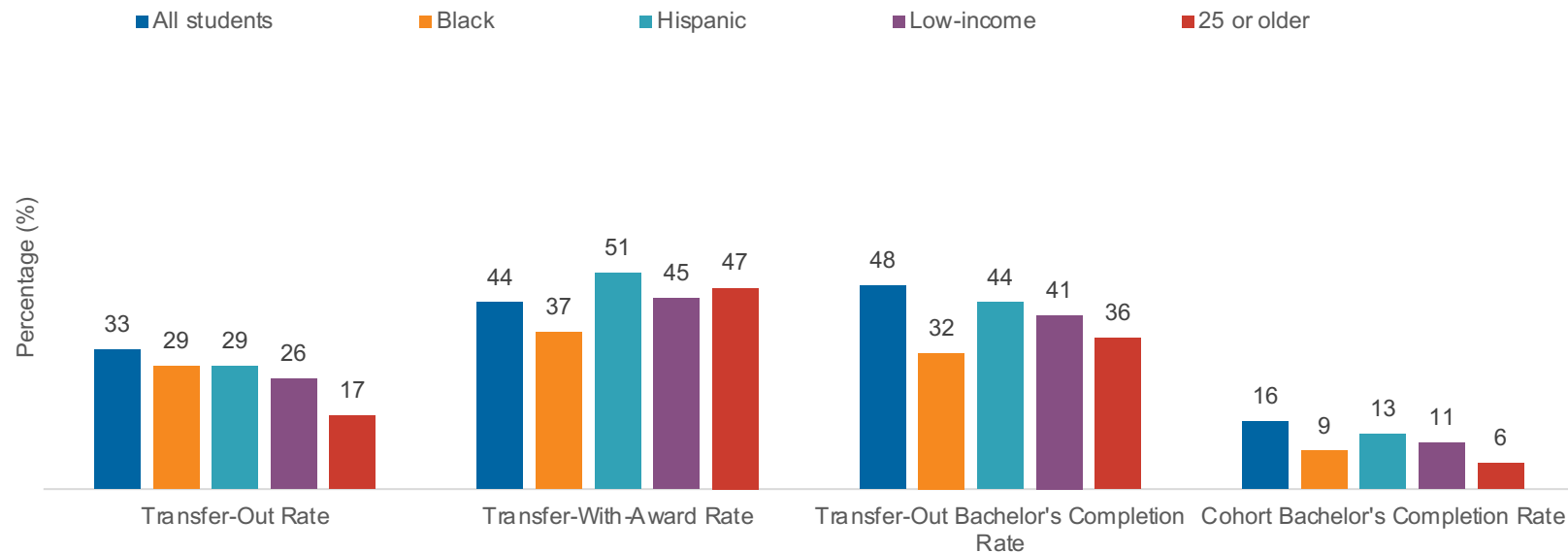
And, only half of those complete a bachelor's degree within six years

The average bachelor completion rate of entering community college students is 16%



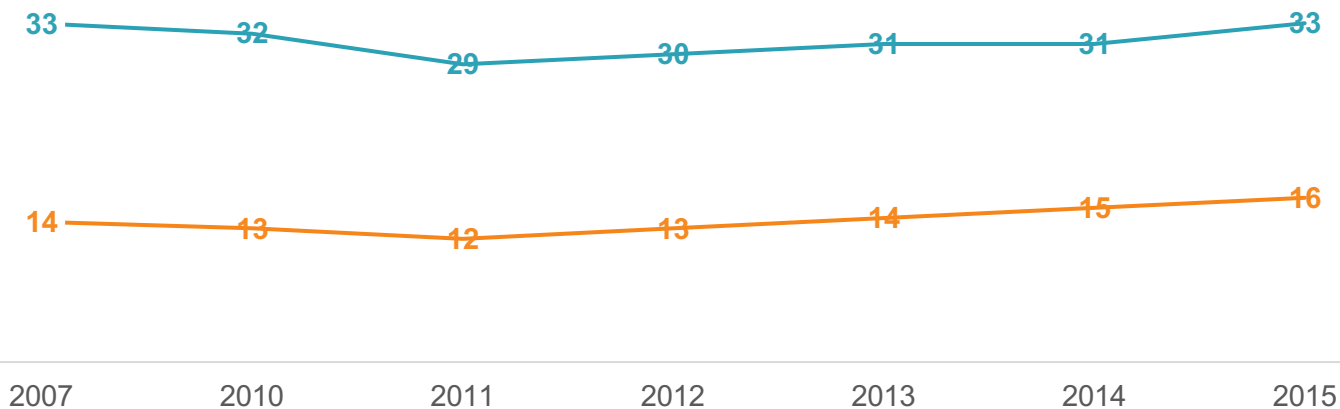
Transfer outcomes are even lower among low-income, Black, Hispanic and older students

Six-Year Transfer Outcomes, Fall 2015 Community College Entrants



— Transfer Out Rate

— Cohort Bachelor Completion Rate



**Transfer
rates have
remain
steady
compared to
2007**

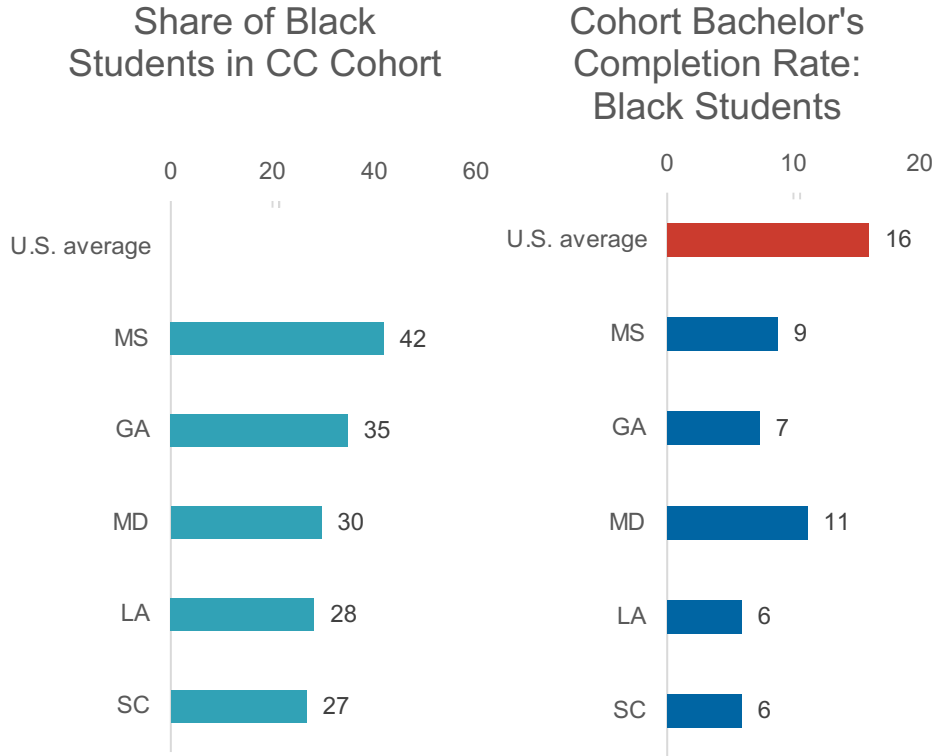
Community College Transfer Outcomes

All Students, Fall 2015 First-Time CC Entrants Tracked Six Years



**Transfer metrics
look different
across states
overall**

And for student subgroups



At states with large shares of low-income, black and older students, the bachelor's completion rates are low.

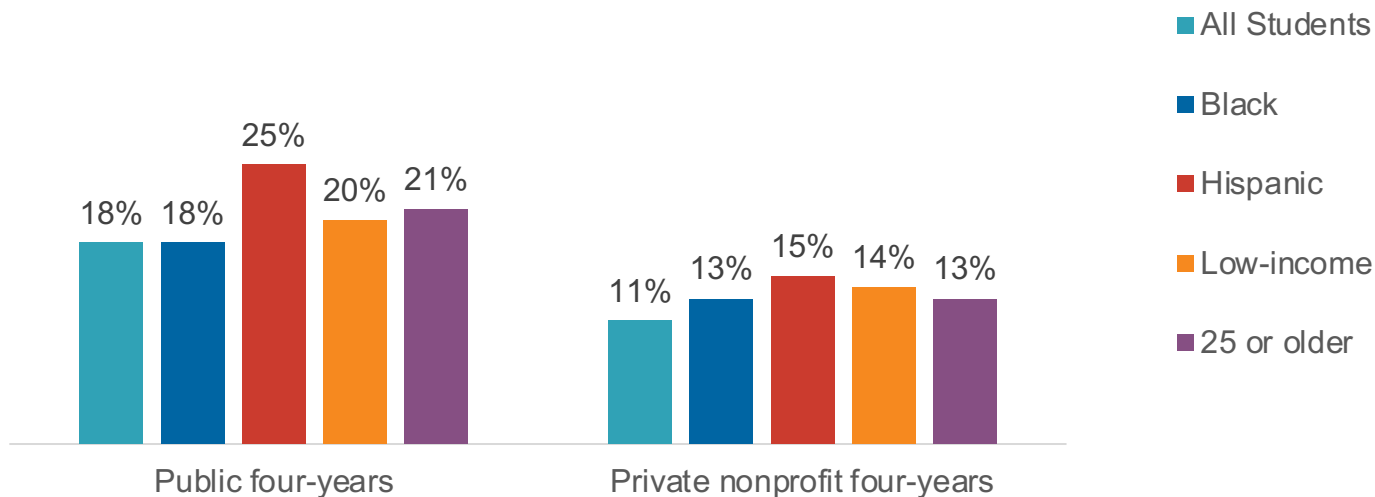
**How about four-year
institutions?**

**Let's account for what
happens to students AFTER
they transfer**

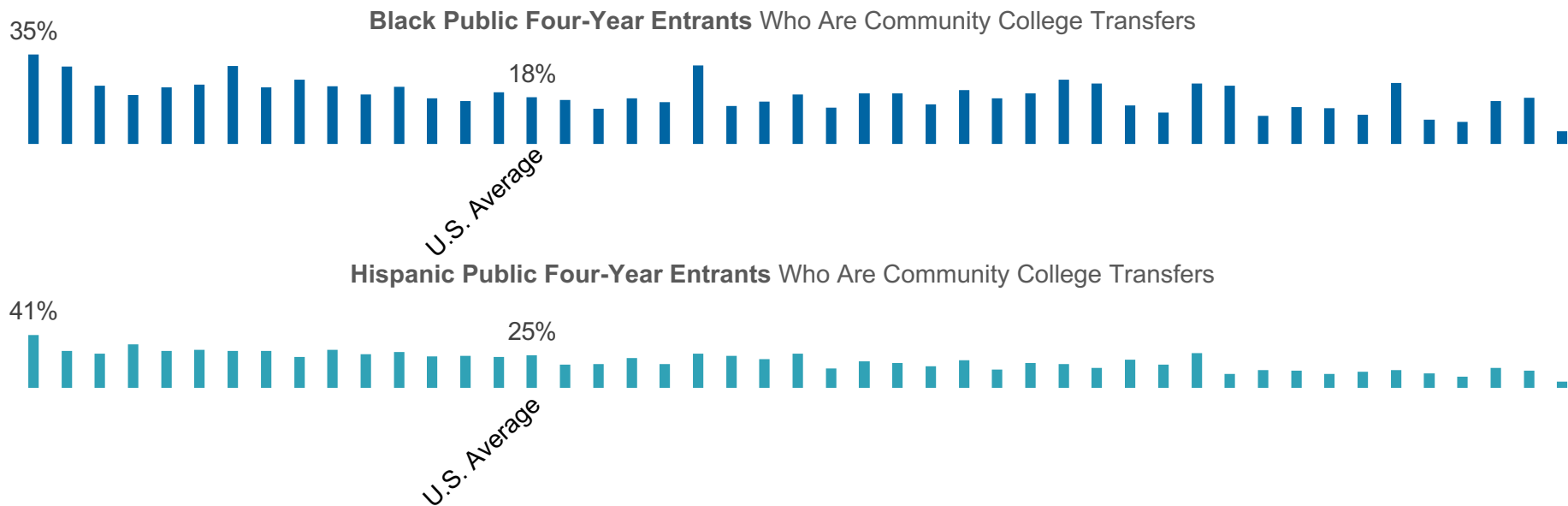
Four-Year Institutions Transfer Metrics and National Findings

Community college transfer pathways are a major source of enrollment and diversity at four-year institutions.

Community College **Transfer-Serving Proportion:**
Percent of Entering Students who are CC Transfers



Community college transfers' contribution to institutions' diversity varies across states.

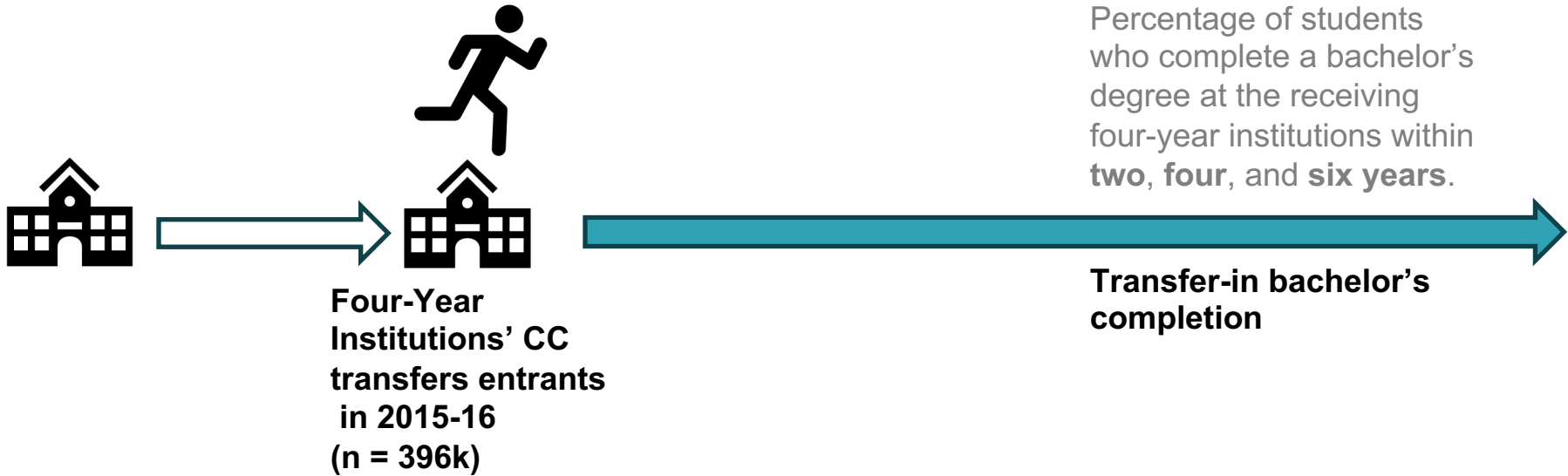


Recall that only 33% of community college students transferred to a four-year institution within six years

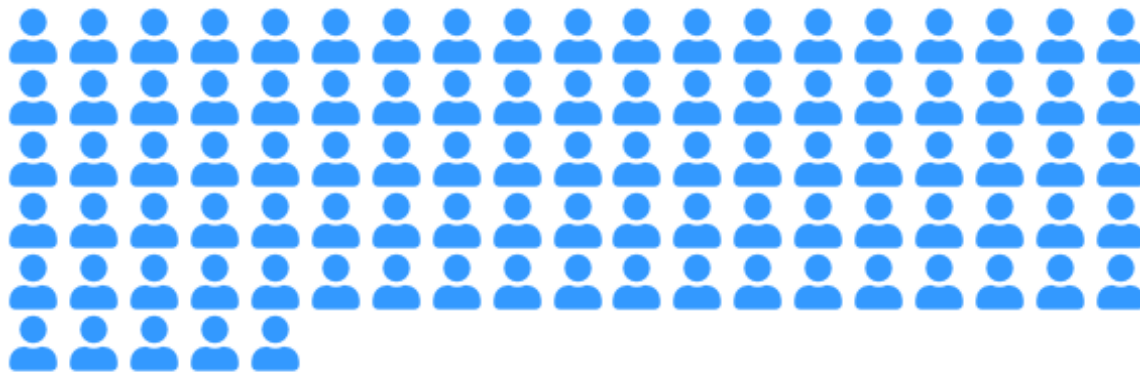
Four-Year Institutions Post-Transfer Metrics



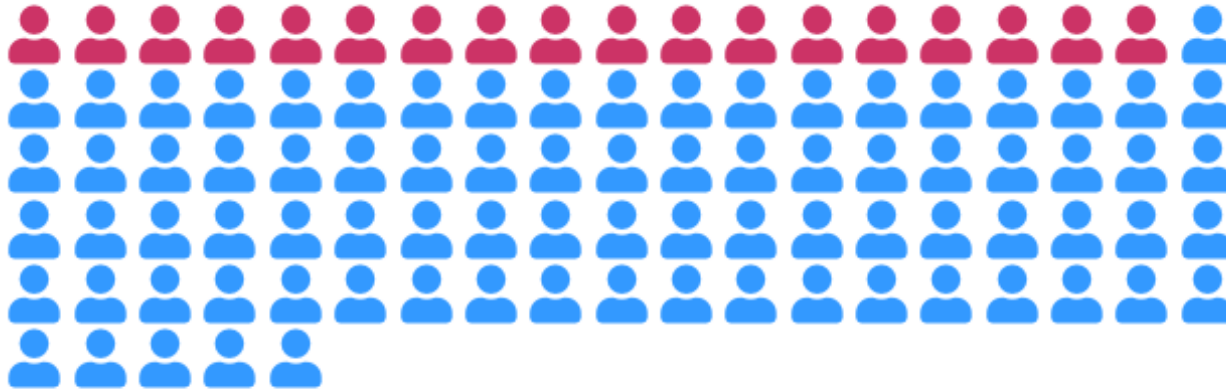
Percentage of students who complete a bachelor's degree at the receiving four-year institutions within **two, four, and six years.**



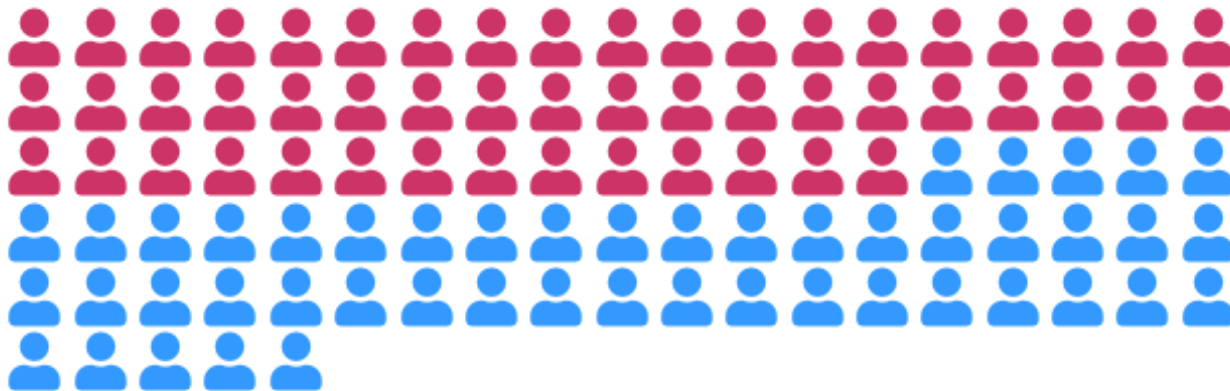
Let's examine the post-transfer outcomes of those who got to transfer



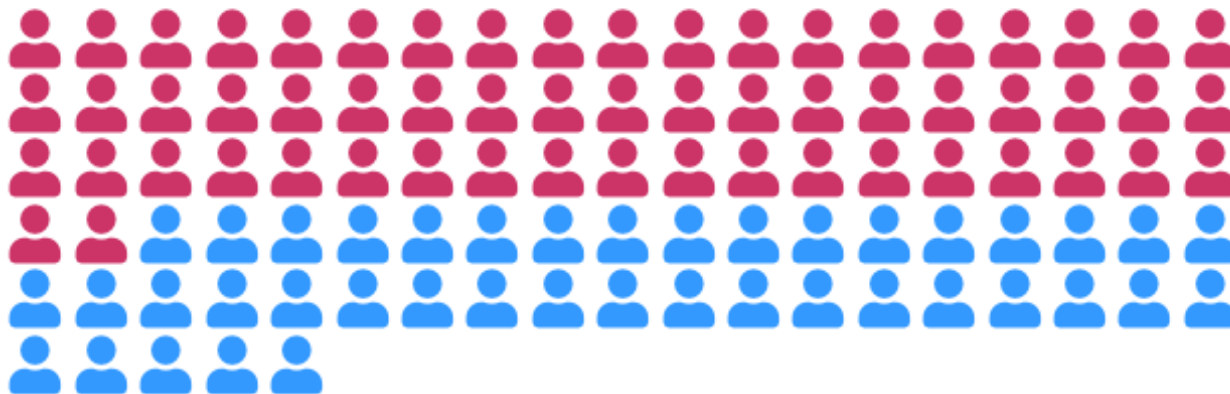
After two years of transferring, only 18% of community college transfers at four-year institutions have completed a bachelor's degree.



After four-years of transferring, 52% have completed a bachelors degree.

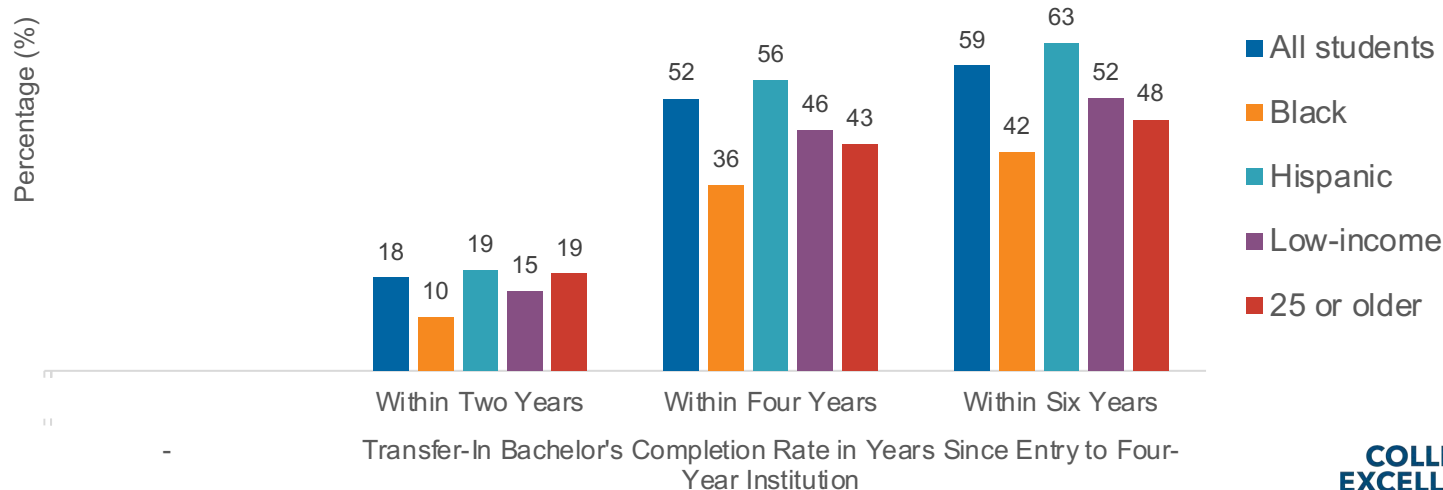


And after six years, that rate has increased only to 59%

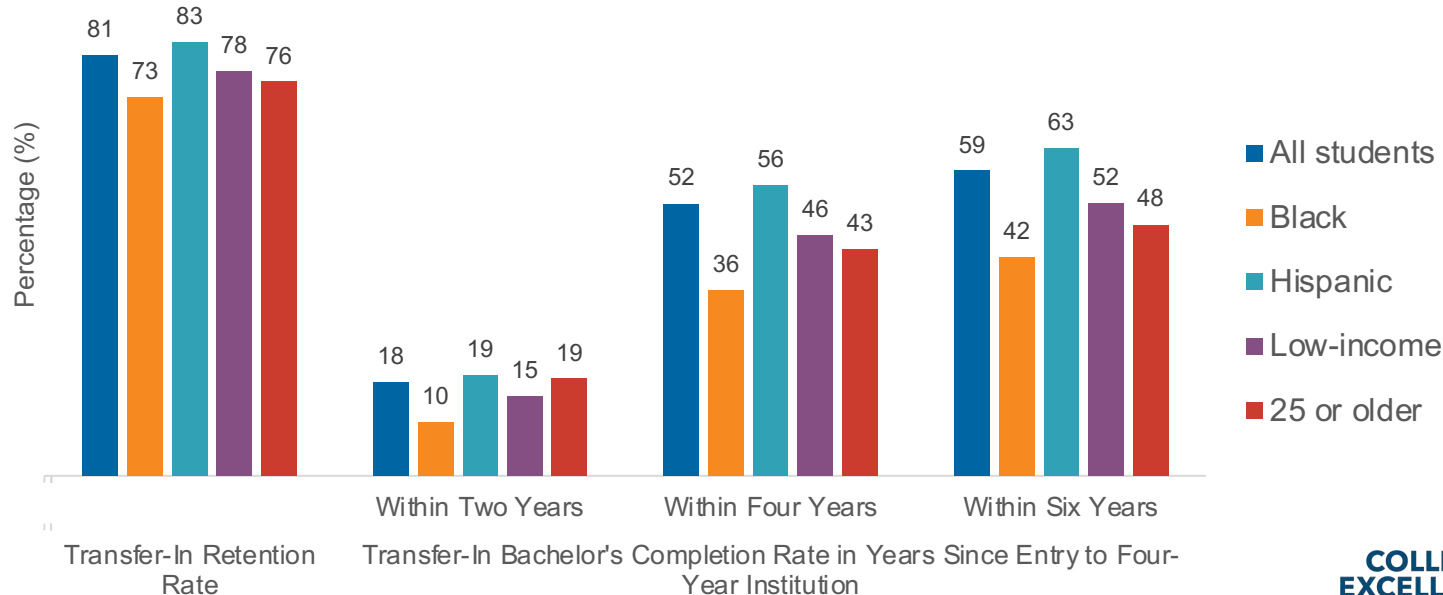


41% of community college transfer have not completed a bachelor's degree after six years of transferring!

Outcomes for community college transfer students after they arrive at four-year institutions are low overall and **even lower for some student subgroups.**



Yet community college transfers have high retention rates



Among bachelor's completers, community college transfers underrepresented in STEM compared to non-transfers

Select State
U.S. Average

Subgroup Selection
(Multiple values)

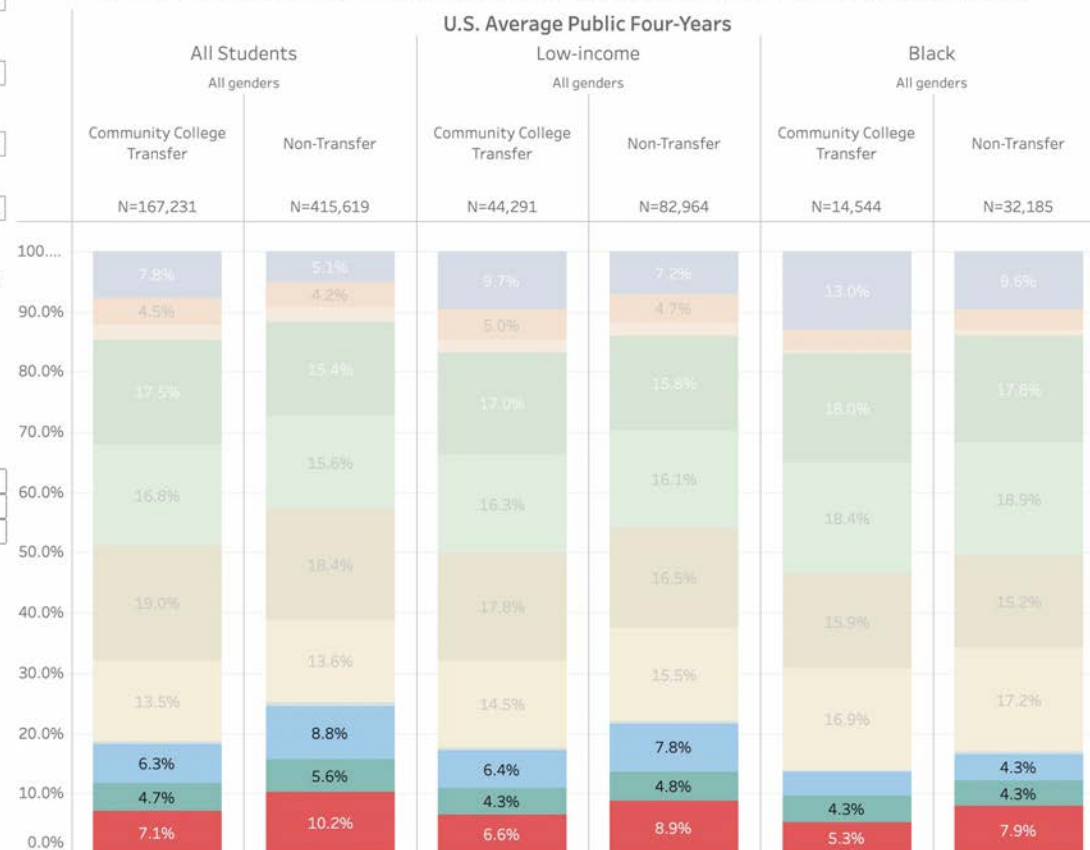
Gender
All genders

Focus Four-Year Results by Sector
Public Four-Years

Bachelor's Degree Field

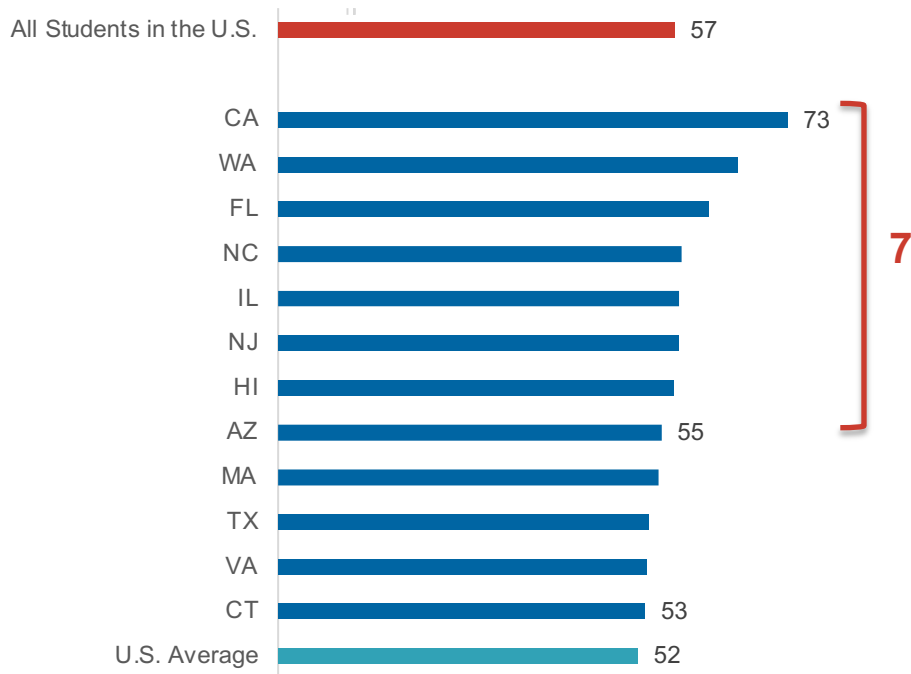
- Public services and administration
- Education
- Agriculture and natural resources
- Social and behavioral sciences
- Arts, humanities, and English
- Business
- Health professions
- Applied technology
- Engineering
- Computer science
- Science and mathematics

Fields of Study of Bachelor's Degree Completers Within Six Years After Four-Year Institution Entry



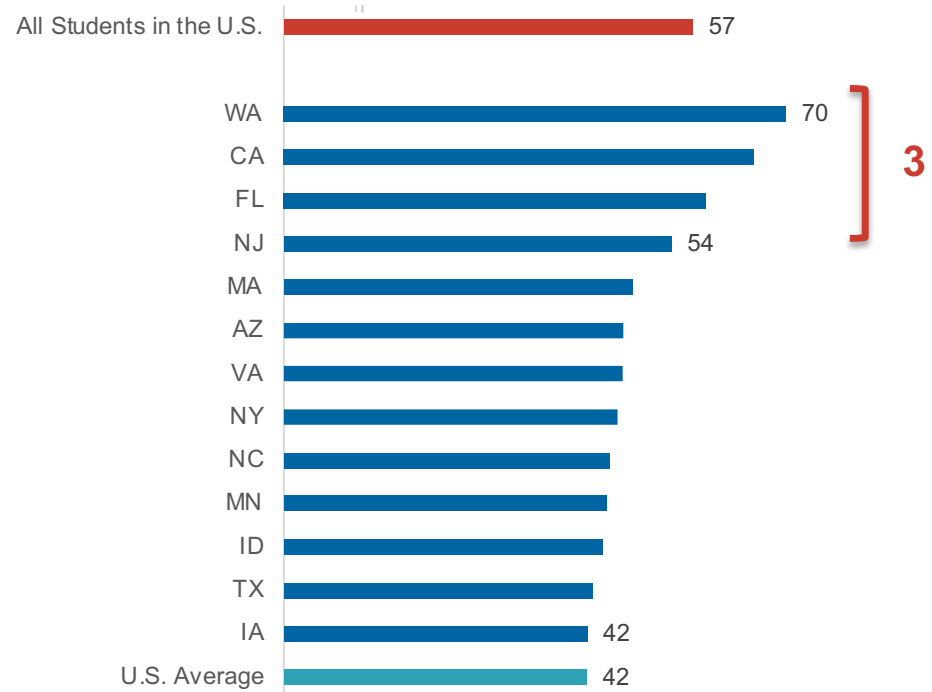
Among public four-year institutions, a handful of states have strong results overall and for low-income community college transfer students.

Public Four-Years Transfer-in Bachelor's Completion rate: **Low-Income Students**



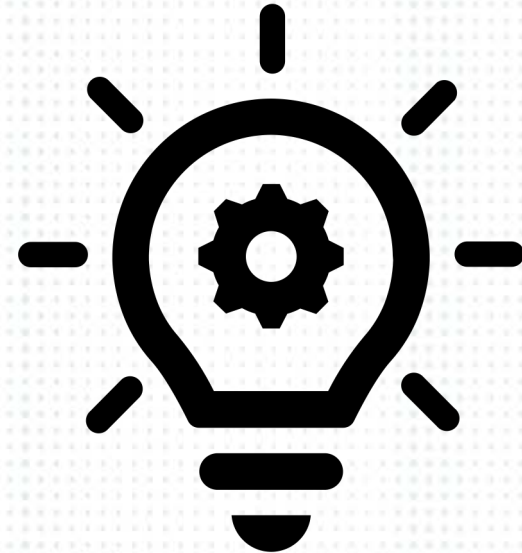
Among public four-year institutions, a handful of states have strong results overall without gaps for Black community college transfer students.

Public Four-Years Transfer-in Bachelor's Completion rate: Black Students



So, what can we do?

**Transfer outcomes
are low, but the
data points to
promising areas
for improvement.**

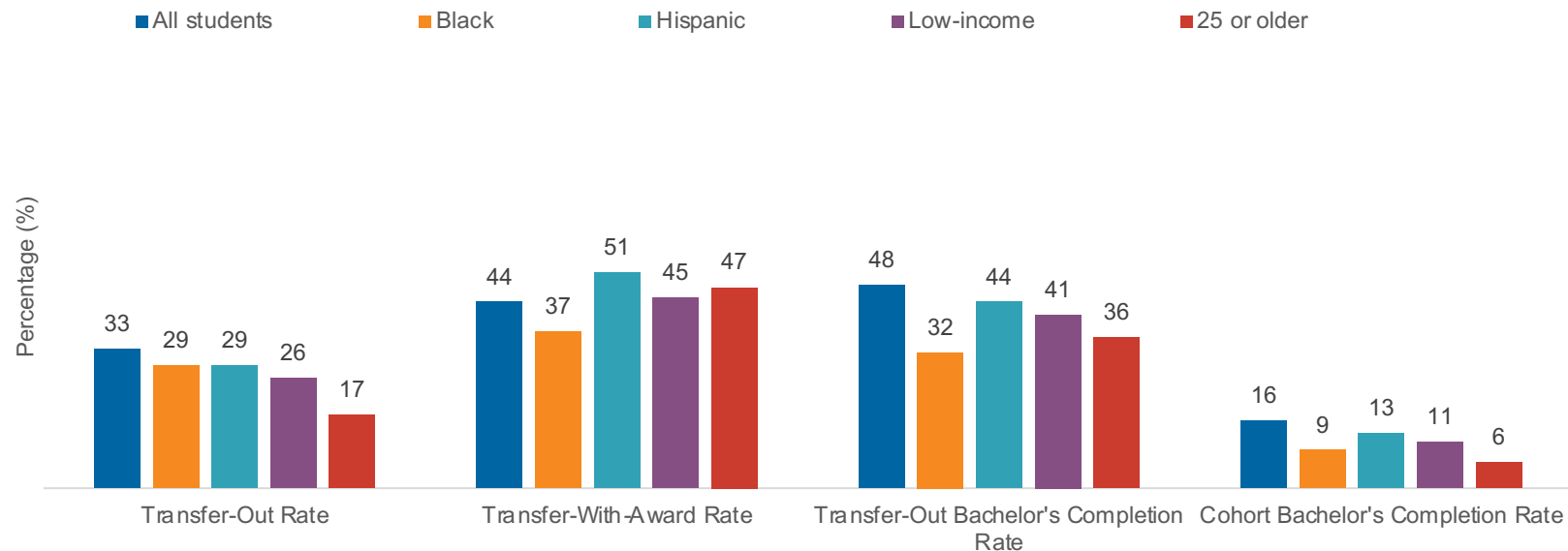


**Four promising findings for
expanding bachelor's attainment**

1. Expand the benefits of dual enrollment by building transfer pathways into high school.

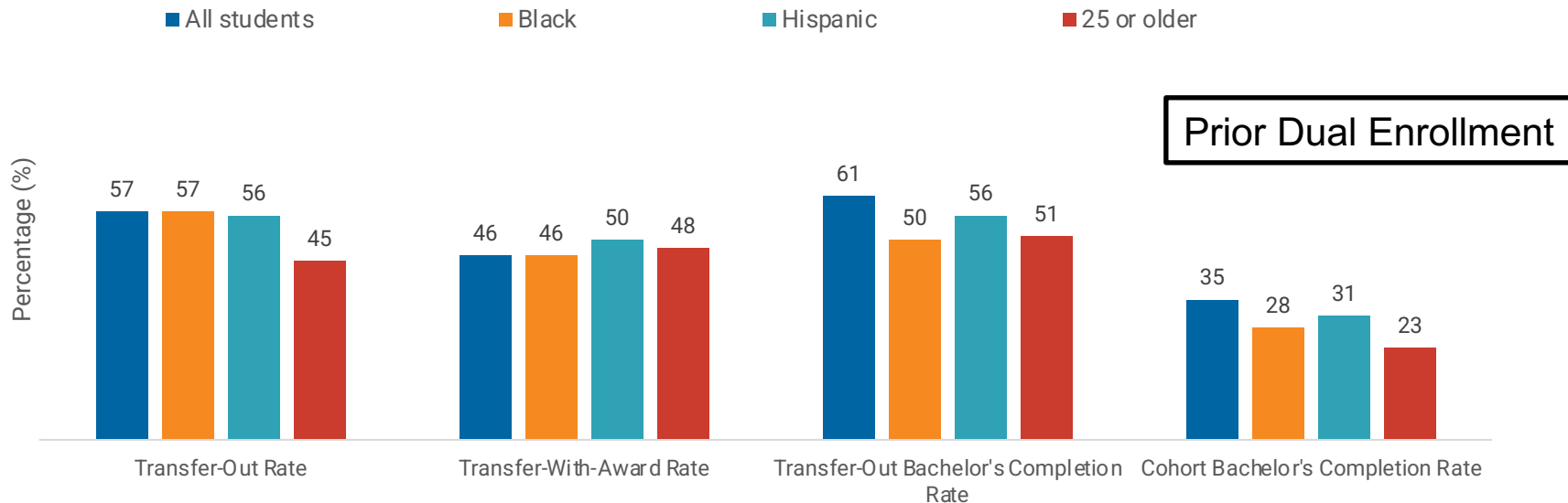
Recall... transfer outcomes are even lower among low-income, Black, Hispanic and older students

Six-Year Transfer Outcomes, Fall 2015 Community College Entrants

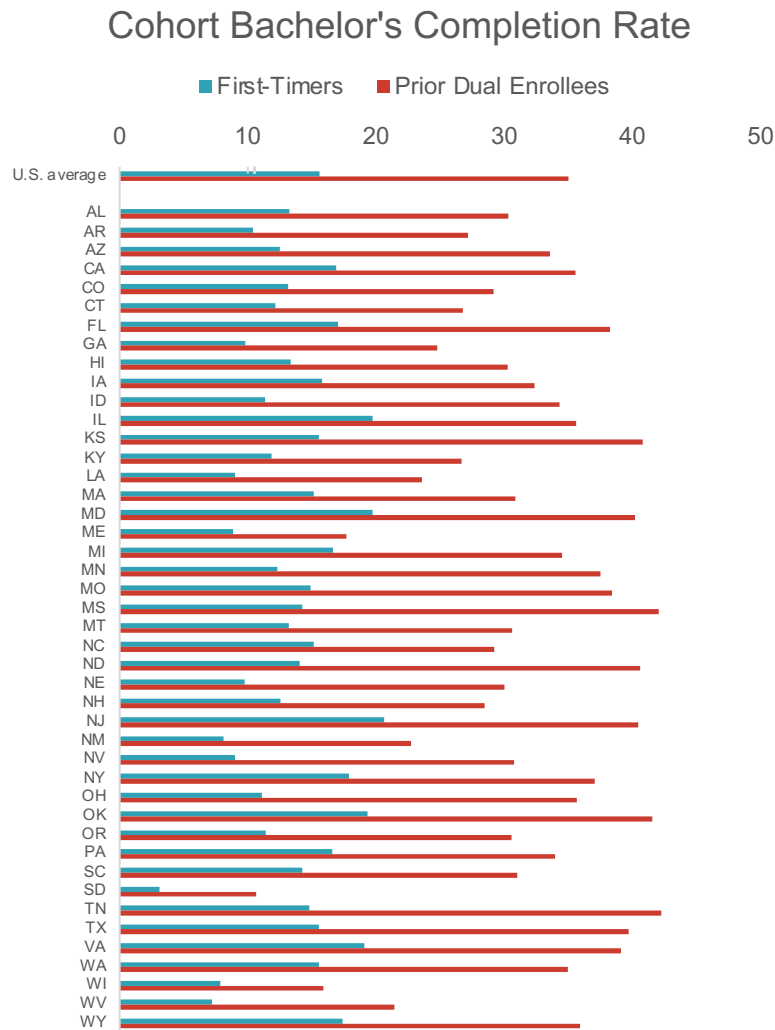


Many students enter CCs with prior dual enrollment, and their transfer outcomes are much better

Six-Year Transfer Outcomes, Fall 2015 Community College Entrants with Prior Dual Enrollment



**And this is
true for all
states overall,
and for most
student
subgroups**

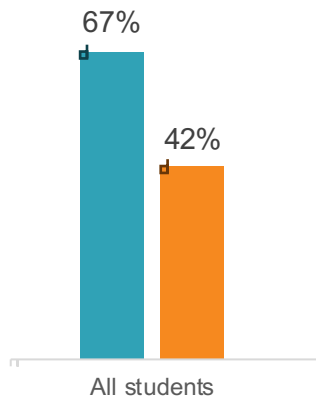


2. Encourage pre-transfer awards

Transfer students who earned a pre-transfer community college award have much stronger outcomes.

Community College Transfer-In Bachelor's Completion Rate

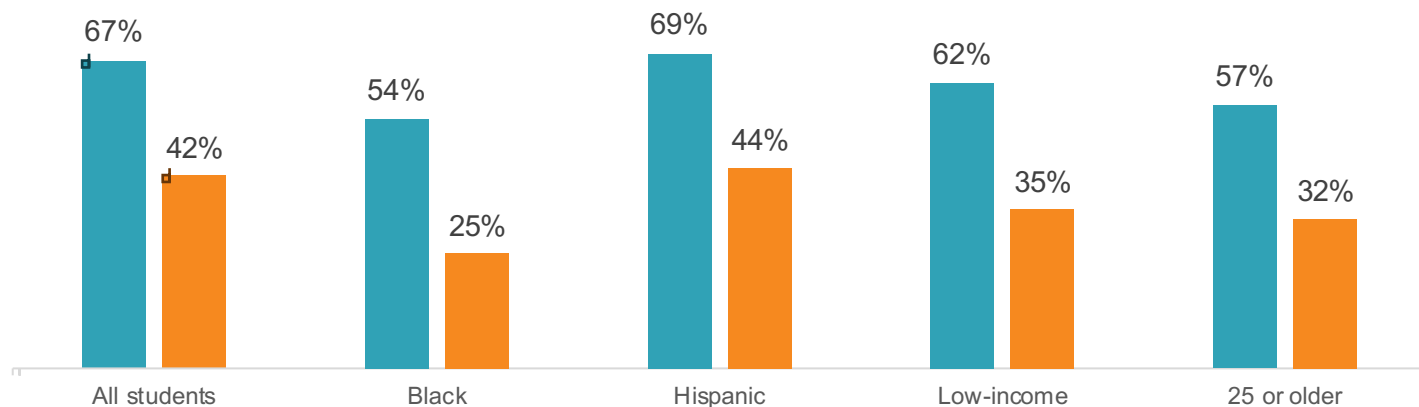
■ Any community college award (n = 161,313) ■ No community college award (n = 238,000)



Transfer students who earned a pre-transfer community college award have much stronger outcomes.

Community College Transfer-In Bachelor's Completion Rate

■ Any community college award (n = 161,313) ■ No community college award (n = 238,000)

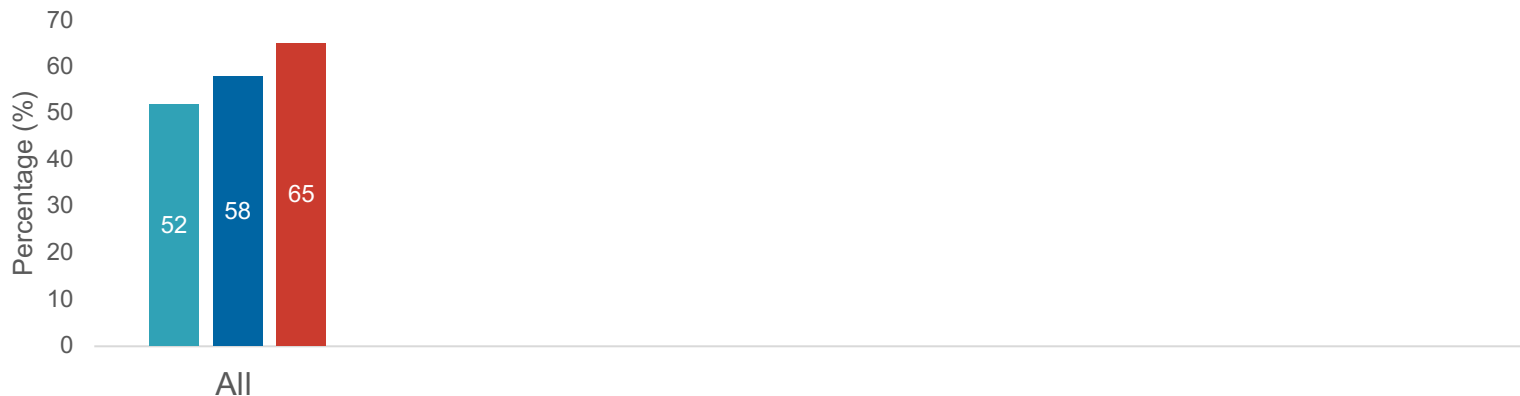


**3. Some four-year
institutional types
have stronger
outcomes**

Minority-serving four-year institutions exhibit stronger bachelor's completion rates

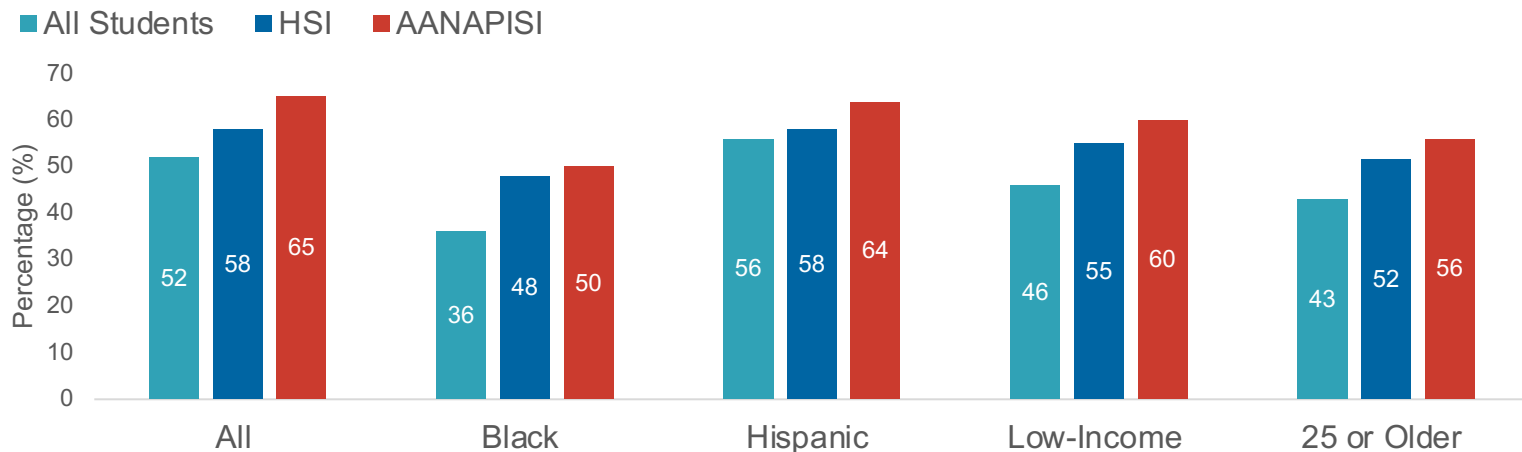
Community College Transfer-In **Bachelor's Completion Rate Within Four Years** by Student and Institutional Characteristics

■ All Students ■ HSI ■ AANAPISI



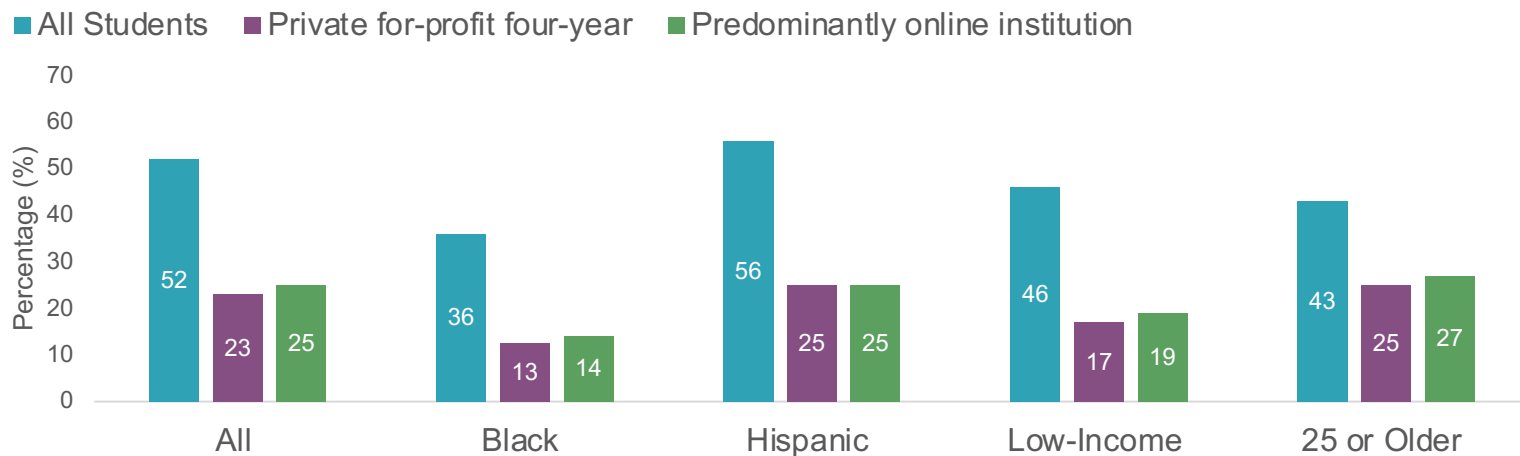
Minority-serving four-year institutions exhibit stronger bachelor's completion rates **across all subgroups**

Community College Transfer-In **Bachelor's Completion Rate Within Four Years** by Student and Institutional Characteristics



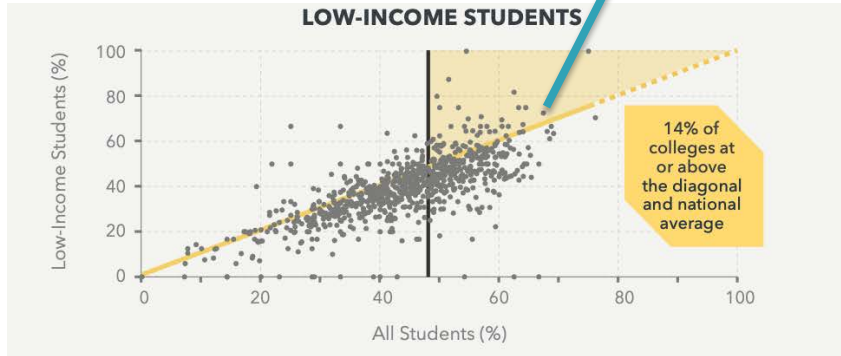
Whereas for-profit colleges and predominately online institutions (POIs) have the lowest outcomes.

Community College Transfer-In **Bachelor's Completion Rate Within Four Years** by Student and Institutional Characteristics



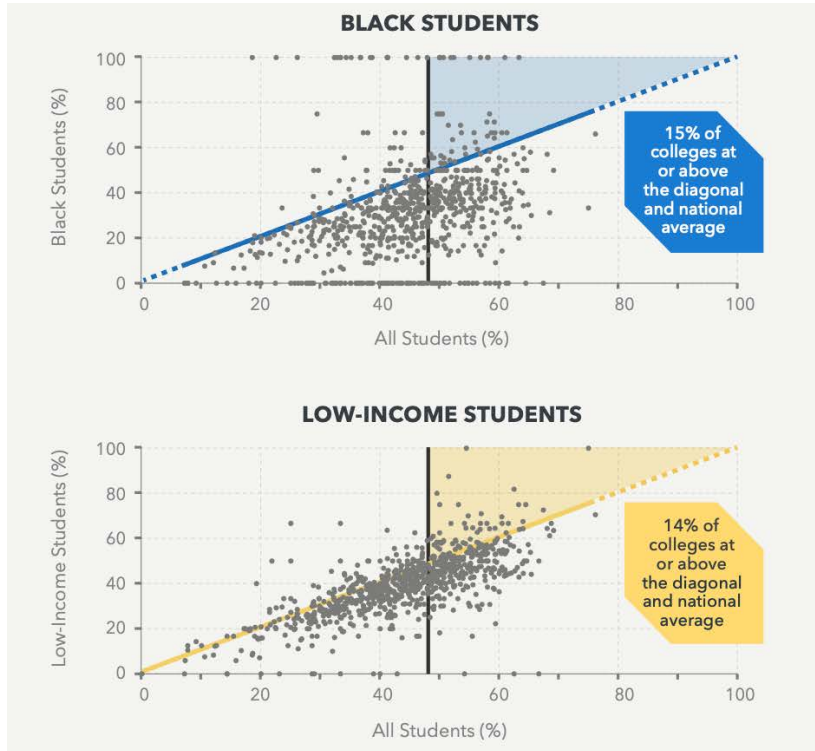
**4. Some colleges
exhibit stronger
transfer outcomes and
with little disparities**

14% of community colleges have bachelor's completion rates above the national average and with no disparities for low-income students.



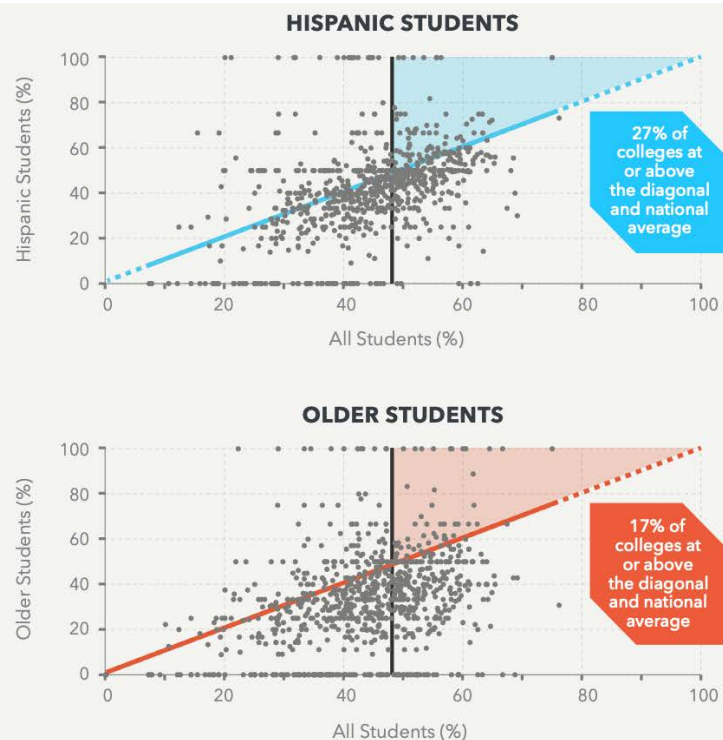
15% of community

... ..



27% of community colleges have bachelor's completion rates above the national average, with no disparities for Hispanic students.

For older students, it is 17% of colleges



Turn to a neighbor...

**What transfer data
and performance
metrics does your
college regularly
track?**


**What's on your
data “wish list”?**



States and colleges must measure and report transfer metrics annually.

Data is key to monitoring transfer performance and benchmarking it to other institutions nationally and in the state.

Use data to increase the understanding of transfer student outcomes



How to Measure Community College Effectiveness in Serving Transfer Students

By John Fink and David Jenkins

While many students who start at a community college intend to transfer and complete a bachelor's degree, most of them are not successful. One of the impediments to improving outcomes for these students has been the lack of widely available measures of institutional effectiveness in serving transfer students. In the publication *Tracking Transfer* (Jenkins & Fink, 2016), CCRC, in partnership with the Aspen Institute and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center, proposed a common set of metrics for assessing the performance of two- and four-year institutions in enabling degree-seeking students to transfer and complete bachelor's degrees. The NSC Research Center has since incorporated the *Tracking Transfer* metrics into its own new *Tracking Transfer Signature Report* series (see Shapiro et al., 2017, for the first report), which will provide state and national outcomes data annually to allow colleges to benchmark their performance on transfer.

In this guide, we provide instructions for community colleges that want to use NSC data to measure their effectiveness in serving transfer students. To do so, colleges will need to access both NSC enrollment and degree file data on their students. Based on the methods we used in *Tracking Transfer*, Part 1 of this guide explains how community colleges can assess their own overall effectiveness in helping students to transfer and complete bachelor's degrees. Part 2 shows how colleges can go on to evaluate the effectiveness of transfer partnerships with their top receiving four-year institutions.

The metrics we describe in this guide can serve as useful tools to examine what practices facilitate or impede effective transfer. Therefore, calculating these metrics on a periodic basis, comparing them with state and national benchmarks, and sharing them with faculty, advisors, and others can play an important role in efforts to improve bachelor's degree outcomes for community college students.

The metrics we describe in this guide can serve as useful tools to examine what practices facilitate or impede effective transfer.

Which Community College

Community Colleges

Institutional Performance

ED Analysis of NSLDS

Community College

Sorted by State Median

MISSOURI

COLORADO

RHODE ISLAND

CALIFORNIA

TEXAS

ALABAMA

VIRGINIA

DELAWARE

UTAH

OREGON

MONTANA

MAINE

VERMONT

IDAHO

MINNESOTA

NEVADA

NEBRASKA

GEORGIA

LOUISIANA

HAWAII

WEST VIRGINIA

ARIZONA

OHIO

INDIANA

SOUTH CAROLINA

NORTH CAROLINA

KENTUCKY

SOUTH DAKOTA

Introduction

State Overview

Compare States

Post-Transfer Outcomes

PDE Transfer Outcomes

Bachelor's Degree Fields

Go to Introduction

Examine Your State's Community College Transfer Outcomes

Tracking Transfer: Community College and Four-Year Institutional Effectiveness in Broadening Bachelor's Degree Attainment

CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER

Teachers College, Columbia University

COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

aspen institute

CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER

Teachers College, Columbia University

Select State

New Jersey

National Comparison

(All)

Subgroup Selection

(Multiple values)

Filter by Gender

All Genders

Focus Four-Year Results by Sector

Public Four-Years

New Jersey

U.S. Average

Community College Transfer Outcomes

Transfer-Out Rate

Transfer-With-Award Rate

Transfer-Out Bachelor's Completion Rate

Cohort Bachelor's Completion Rate

Public Four-Years

CC Transfer-In Retention Rate

CC Transfer Bachelor's Completion Rate (in 4-years)

How Have Our State's Community College Transfer Outcomes Changed Over Time?

Transfer-Out Rate

Transfer-With-Award Rate

Transfer-Out Bachelor's Completion Rate

Cohort Bachelor's Completion Rate

Entering Fall Cohort (All Students)

2007 2010 2015

What Percent of Four-Year Students Enter Via the Community College Transfer Pathway?

Disaggregate by

Race/Ethnicity

Percent of New Jersey Four-Year Entrants Who Were Community College Transfers

Public Four-Years

All Students

All Genders

23

Asian

All Genders

16

Black

All Genders

23

Hispanic

All Genders

29

Nat. Hawaiian/...

All Genders

Native American

All Genders

White

All Genders

24

Explore More Dashboards

How does our state compare to other states?

Compare States

How do community college transfers fare post-transfer compared to other students at four-year institutions?

Post-Transfer Outcomes

How do transfer outcomes compare for students who begin their journey through high school dual enrollment?

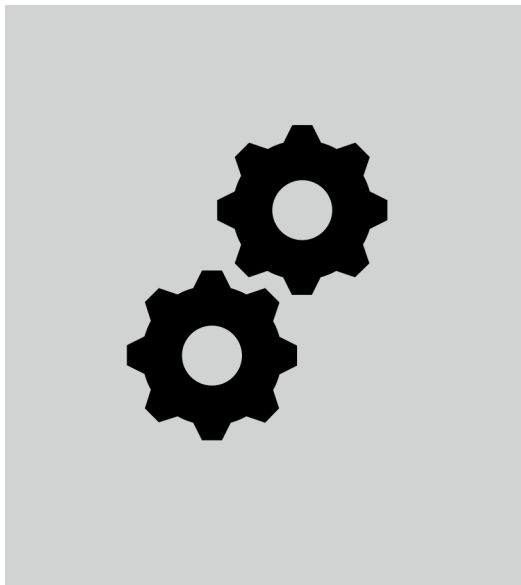
Prior Dual Enrollment

What bachelor's degree majors are transfers completing, and is it representative compared to non-transfers?

Bachelor's Degree Fields

What Does It Take to Deliver Strong Transfer & Bachelor's Completion Outcomes for All Students?

What We Did



Identified 252 partnerships with:

- Relatively strong outcomes overall for Black, Hispanic, and lower-income transfer students
- Relatively low disparities for these groups

Ranked partnerships based on:

- Number and share of Black, Hispanic, and lower-income students
- Equity in bachelor's completion rate
- Better-than-expected bachelor's completion accounting for institutional and demographic characteristics.

Conducted a qualitative review of 70 partnerships, narrowing to 22 partnerships for 90-minute screening interviews.

Conducted 11 in-person site visits and additional virtual follow-up interviews.

Snapshots from the Field



Some General Observations



Place matters.

High-stakes choices can't be left to chance.

Interactions rooted in empathy must be supported by systems rooted in accuracy (and vice versa).

Grassroots efforts can produce strong and equitable outcomes, but they are subject to disruption.

Grassroots programs are often precursors to transformational change.

Emerging Practical Guidance from Our Fieldwork



Make Transfer a **President-Level Priority to Achieve Sustainable Success at Scale**



Create Programmatic Pathways to **Timely Bachelor's Completion & Postgraduate Success**



Tailor Transfer Advising & Supports to **Foster Trust, Momentum, and Engagement**



Make Transfer a **President-Level** Priority to Achieve Sustainable Success at Scale

Features of this strategy

Multilevel, well-resourced partnerships

- President-led
- Cabinet-sponsored governance structures that span both institutions
- Individual and shared investment, including dedicated staff

End-to-end redesign of the transfer student experience

- Transfer models that extend beyond credit mobility
- Strategies tailored to regional needs
- Attention to affordability and financial aid
- “Any student could be a transfer student” mentality

Transfer student-centered standard operating procedures

- Disaggregated data reporting for accountability, case-making, and continuous improvement
- Automation and predictable processes to streamline student experience
- Recurring mechanisms to assess student perspectives



Create Programmatic Pathways to **Timely Bachelor's Completion & Postgraduate Success**

Features of this strategy

Four-year maps

- Clear, term-by-term plans
- Set expectation for timely completion but adjustable for part-time students
- Built for no excess credit, including the simplest alternatives to 2+2
- Link to family-sustaining careers in service areas

Sequences that promote learning and progression

- Embed relevant math and English in the first year
- Align gateway course instruction to university-level success
- Frontload courses that inspire early major changes or commitment
- Include key high-impact experiences and finances

Regular faculty engagement

- Venues for routine pathway development and maintenance
- Professional development to incorporate transfer needs into the classroom
- Map-supported transfer-inclusive scheduling



Tailor Transfer Advising & Supports to Foster Trust, Momentum, and Engagement

Features of this strategy

A knowledgeable and caring advising corps

- Displays empathy for the transfer student population
- Attends mandatory, routine, transfer-specific professional development
- Starts with students' end goals in mind, supporting early major pathway selection & progression

An inescapable, pervasive advising campaign

- Proactive in high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions
- Available through in-person and virtual formats and beyond 9-5 hours
- Inevitable engagement throughout community college and university admissions, orientation, and onboarding

A transfer-specific approach to holistic success

- Includes career advising and links to high-impact experiences
- Fosters community-building and inclusion
- Supports students' financial and material needs

Pair & Share



1. What practices or strategies resonate with your work? What further questions do our findings raise?
2. What stands in the way of advancing these strategies?
3. What is something you can do from your seat to bring your institution closer to the ideal state?



Share what you are doing with us!

