

College Enrollment and Completion

DEFINITION

College enrollment and completion is the percentage of Rhode Island public high school students who enroll in a two- or four-year college and earn a college diploma (an associate degree or bachelor's degree) within six years of enrollment.¹

SIGNIFICANCE

Between 2018 and 2028, jobs requiring a postsecondary degree or certificate are projected to grow faster than jobs requiring less education, yet only 35% of Rhode Island adults ages 25 to 64 have a bachelor's degree or higher.^{2,3} Between 2014 and 2018 in Rhode Island, 7.8% of adults with a high school diploma were unemployed, compared to 2.7% with a bachelor's degree or higher.⁴ During that same period, the median annual income for adults with a high school diploma was \$33,970, compared to \$54,565 for adults with a bachelor's degree.⁵ Students must complete college to increase their income and reduce the risk of unemployment. While college enrollment rates have doubled in recent decades, there are still large gaps in the percentage of students who enroll in college, the types of colleges students enroll in, and the percentage who attain college degrees across different income groups.⁶

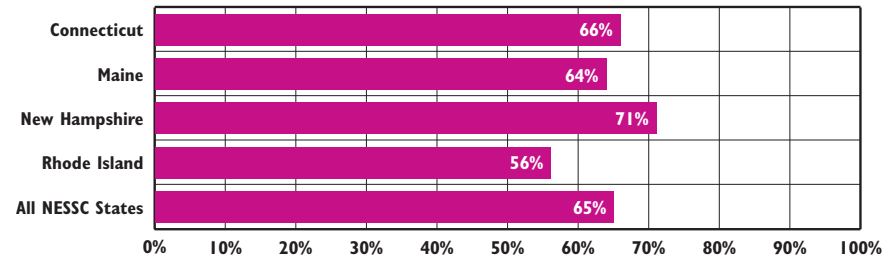
In the U.S., two-thirds of low-income students attend community colleges and

for-profit institutions, many of which have low completion rates. Low-income students are also more likely to delay going to college and to have breaks in enrollment, both of which lower their chances of completing their college degrees.⁷ There are also barriers to attainment for students of color. Addressing racial disparities can improve college completion outcomes.^{8,9}

Low-income and first-generation college students often arrive at college less academically prepared than other students. They can benefit from a wide range of academic and social supports, including comprehensive assessment and placement, summer transition programs, peer-mentored and peer-facilitated programs that offer tutoring and other academic support, learning communities that allow a group of students to enroll in two or more classes together so they can establish peer relationships that support their success, personal and career counseling, mentoring, and/or referrals to social services.^{10,11,12}

Improving college access and completion will require states to make improvements at all points in the early education to college system, including increasing access to high-quality preschool, implementing research-driven early intervention and dropout prevention programs, aligning the K-12 education system with college demands, making college affordable, and providing student support programs.^{13,14,15,16}

College Completion, New England Secondary School Consortium States (NESSC), 2012 Cohort



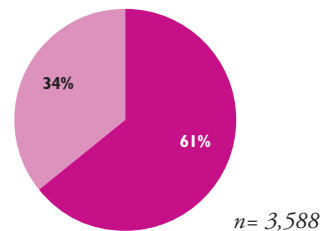
Source: Common Data Project: 2019 annual report, school year 2017-2018. (2019). Retrieved March 6, 2020, from www.newenglandssc.org

◆ Fifty-six percent of Rhode Island public high school graduates who enrolled in a two- or four-year college in 2012 earned a college diploma within six years. In Rhode Island, there are large gaps in college completion between low-income and higher-income students, with 37% of low-income students completing college within six years, compared to 68% of higher-income students.¹⁷

Pipeline to College Completion, 2007-2008 High School Freshman Class

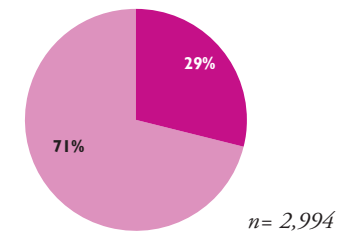
Students With No Remedial Coursework

61% Percentage Completed College
34% Percentage Did Not Complete College



Students With Remedial Coursework

29% Percentage Completed College
71% Percentage Did Not Complete College



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education. (2019). *A ten year look: Postsecondary success in Rhode Island: College remediation*. Retrieved March 5, 2020, from www.ride.ri.gov

◆ Among students who were freshman in high school during the 2007-2008 school year who graduated from high school and enrolled in a Rhode Island public college, 46% (2,994) took remedial coursework, and 54% (3,558) did not. Twenty-nine percent of students enrolled in remedial coursework had completed college 10 years after starting high school.¹⁸

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Table 56.

College Enrollment and Completion, Rhode Island

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2018	# OF 2018 HS GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE WITHIN 6 MONTHS	% OF 2018 HS GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE WITHIN 6 MONTHS	# OF STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE IN 2017	# OF 2017 COLLEGE ENROLLEES WHO PERSISTED (ENROLLED FOR A THIRD SEMESTER)	% OF 2017 COLLEGE ENROLLEES WHO PERSISTED (ENROLLED FOR A THIRD SEMESTER)
Barrington	289	240	83%	202	188	93%
Bristol Warren	196	148	76%	181	153	85%
Burrillville	155	111	72%	122	97	80%
Central Falls	143	63	44%	88	59	67%
Chariho	225	161	72%	205	174	85%
Coventry	351	255	73%	286	242	85%
Cranston	698	498	71%	597	505	85%
Cumberland	252	180	71%	260	232	89%
East Greenwich	181	156	86%	180	164	91%
East Providence	329	208	63%	277	220	79%
Exeter-West Greenwich	124	92	74%	119	106	89%
Foster-Glocester	167	105	63%	132	110	83%
Johnston	183	133	73%	191	158	83%
Lincoln	178	130	73%	198	175	88%
Middletown	125	93	74%	120	101	84%
Narragansett	105	77	73%	70	63	90%
Newport	154	95	62%	96	78	81%
North Kingstown	309	251	81%	301	279	93%
North Providence	214	152	71%	185	147	79%
North Smithfield	95	80	84%	111	96	86%
Pawtucket	398	208	52%	304	233	77%
Portsmouth	189	158	84%	195	174	89%
Providence	1,445	792	55%	934	666	71%
Scituate	104	81	78%	113	106	94%
Smithfield	155	135	87%	161	145	90%
South Kingstown	208	166	80%	251	229	91%
Tiverton	123	87	71%	115	94	82%
Warwick	566	386	68%	507	406	80%
West Warwick	226	140	62%	138	107	78%
Westerly	165	118	72%	165	139	84%
Woonsocket	286	144	50%	201	139	69%
Beacon Charter High School	58	32	55%	54	45	83%
Blackstone Academy	71	52	73%	42	34	81%
Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy	58	52	90%	NA	NA	NA
Paul Cuffee Charter School	59	46	78%	45	34	76%
The Greene School	48	32	67%	28	21	75%
Highlander Charter School	31	21	68%	NA	NA	NA
RI Nurses Institute Middle College	54	32	59%	23	19	83%
Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy	22	2	9%	11	*	45%
Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts	26	13	50%	17	12	71%
Village Green Virtual Public Charter School	54	32	59%	31	23	74%
William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School	172	101	59%	117	84	72%
Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center	217	121	56%	114	74	65%
Four Core Cities	2,272	1,207	53%	1,527	1,097	72%
Remainder of State	6,077	4,441	73%	5,497	4,700	86%
Rhode Island	9,219	6,184	67%	7,506	6,148	82%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

of students who graduated from high school in 2018, # of 2018 high school graduates who enrolled in college within six months, # of students who enrolled in college in 2017, and # of 2017 college enrollees who persisted (were enrolled for a third semester) are all from Rhode Island Department of Education. The # of 2017 college enrollees who persisted may include students enrolled directly after high school or afterwards. Percentages may not sum exactly due to rounding.

Four core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Students from Little Compton attend high school in Portsmouth, and Jamestown students can choose to attend high school in Narragansett or North Kingstown.

New Shoreham, DCYF, and Rhode Island School for the Deaf are not reported because there are fewer than 10 students in these cohorts.

* Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These numbers are still counted in remainder of state and Rhode Island totals.

NA Schools did not have students graduating in this year.

References

- ¹ Common Data Project: 2018 procedural guidebook. (2018). Retrieved March 6, 2020, from www.newenglandssc.org
- ² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). *Employment, wages, and projected change in employment by typical entry-level education*. Retrieved January 29, 2020, from www.bls.gov
- ³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018. Table B23006.
- ⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018. Table S2301.
- ⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018. Table B20004.
- ⁶ Miller, A., Valle, K., Engle, J., & Cooper, M. (2014). *Access to attainment: An access agenda for 21st century college students*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

(continued on page 189)