



Affordability



Transitions



Success



Equity



Talent



Value

HIGHER EDUCATION *Matters*

A Statewide Strategic Agenda for
Kentucky Postsecondary Education

2022-2030



KENTUCKY'S PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY SYSTEM

VISION

Kentucky will be a national leader in building a strong, sustainable and equitable economy through increased educational attainment and affordable, high-quality postsecondary programs.

MISSION

Kentucky's postsecondary education system drives innovation, enhances public health and well-being, breaks cycles of generational poverty and improves quality of life by preparing students to be lifelong learners and excel in a diverse, knowledge-based economy.

VALUES

- **Inclusion, equity & diversity**
- **Transparency & accountability**
- **Comprehensive student support**
- **Institutional collaboration**
- **Quality & excellence**
- **Affordability & accessibility**
- **Innovation**
- **Business & community partnerships**



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Aaron Thompson, Ph.D.

In accordance with Kentucky Revised Statute 164.020, we are pleased to present “Higher Education Matters: A Statewide Strategic Agenda for Kentucky Postsecondary Education, 2022-2030.”

This agenda advances a bold vision for increased economic growth and vitality in the Commonwealth through improvements in the education and skill levels of our workforce. It establishes strategic priorities to drive higher education innovation and improvement, and key performance indicators to monitor progress toward an ambitious educational attainment goal - for 60% of working-age Kentuckians to have a high-quality postsecondary credential by the year 2030.

The previous iteration of this agenda, “Stronger by Degrees,” promoted high-impact practices that enabled us to reimagine developmental education and infuse workplace essential skills into select degree programs. “Higher Education Matters” will accelerate the adoption of high-impact practices that further improve teaching and learning, ensure the quality and relevancy of postsecondary credentials and invite non-traditional and historically excluded individuals onto our campuses in greater numbers.

A critical focus of “Higher Education Matters” is creating equitable higher education opportunities for low-income and minoritized Kentuckians. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us how

easily academic momentum can be stalled by unemployment, poor physical or mental health, food and housing insecurity and the lack of reliable broadband access. We must ensure at-risk students are provided access to life-changing postsecondary credentials, as well as the academic, social and emotional supports to succeed. Doing so is both an economic and moral imperative.

As Kentucky recovers from the global pandemic, we will continue to deal with its aftereffects. This strategic agenda provides a framework that is fixed enough to provide focus and stability, yet flexible enough to respond to future crises.

This plan was not created in a vacuum. It relies on the contributions of many constituencies and committees. I would be remiss if I did not thank the hundreds of individuals - including CPE board members, higher education leaders, faculty members, students, K-12 educators, legislators, employers and partners - that provided valuable insight and direction throughout the development process.

This is not CPE’s strategic plan; this agenda belongs to each and every one of us. Kentucky will rise or fall based on our collective, united efforts to enable all citizens to reach their highest potential. We have a lot of ground to cover, but together we can navigate the path toward a more equitable and prosperous Commonwealth.



Kentucky will rise or fall based on our collective, united efforts to enable all citizens to reach their highest potential.



INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Matters

Restoring Higher Education's Value Proposition

This strategic agenda for Kentucky postsecondary education is built on a simple, enduring premise: higher education matters to our state and its people.

Higher education empowers individuals to reach their highest potential and achieve personal and professional fulfillment. It improves collective health and well-being, advances knowledge and discovery, ignites innovation and fuels our economy.

Research studies enumerate its benefits to individuals and society. On average, college graduates earn more money, have lower rates of unemployment, enjoy better health, live longer and are more active citizens and volunteers. States with high levels of educational attainment - like Massachusetts, Colorado and Washington - generate higher tax revenues, create more jobs and spend fewer resources on public assistance, disease, addiction and incarceration.

Despite these findings, the value of college is now a matter of debate. Media stories portray recent college graduates as underemployed and overburdened with debt. Editorials encourage young people to forgo college and learn a trade (which, ironically, mostly requires some postsecondary education or training).

These voices have undermined the public's faith in higher education, at a time when a college credential is more important than ever. The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce found that since 2008, 99% of all new jobs created require some level of postsecondary education and training, but less than half of Americans between the ages of 25-34 have the necessary credentials to fill these jobs.

We must restore the value proposition to higher education. Kentucky's future prosperity and quality of life depend on it.

Developing the Agenda

This agenda is Kentucky's plan to create a more inclusive, innovative higher education system that serves students of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs. It reaffirms our goal for 60% of Kentucky adults to have a postsecondary credential by the year 2030, and builds on unprecedented gains in degree production over the last decade.

We must restore the value proposition to higher education.

It responds to the suggestions and concerns of hundreds of Kentuckians - higher education faculty and administrators, K-12 educators, board members, legislators, employers and others - who worked with us on its development. Based on trend analysis, research and stakeholder feedback, this agenda identifies the strategic priorities that will focus our efforts over the next decade, with equity as a cross-cutting priority. They are: affordability, transitions, success, talent and value.

A Framework for Accountability

This agenda includes common objectives that will guide system-wide progress. The statewide strategies will be led by CPE, in conjunction with its partners. Public institutions will develop campus-level strategies that respond to each objective. All strategies will be reviewed and revised every three years.

CPE and campuses will set numeric targets for key performance indicators, which also will be updated on a three-year cycle. Additional contextual metrics will help us monitor progress and adjust strategies as needed, but targets will not be set.

Kentucky's higher education institutions will pursue these objectives, strategies and targets as one system, united by common challenges and enhanced by individual strengths.



Higher education strengthens the economy, creates wealth, reduces inequality, breaks cycles of generational poverty, improves health and well-being and preserves democracy.



60% of Kentucky working-age adults (ages 25-64) will have a high-quality postsecondary credential by the year 2030.



KY's 60x30 Goal Our North Star

Progress Toward the Goal

In ancient times, sailors used the North Star as a navigational guide due to its fixed position in the sky. Today, the North Star has come to symbolize any guiding principle or purpose. During prosperity or adversity, it is a steadfast point on which we set our sights.

For Kentucky's postsecondary system, the 60x30 goal is our North Star. The previous strategic agenda, "Stronger by Degrees," established this statewide educational attainment goal back in 2016. With its adoption, Kentucky joined 45 other states and the Lumina Foundation in efforts to raise the education and skill levels of our workforce to meet current and future demands for talent.

Since 2009, Kentucky has made phenomenal progress toward the goal, increasing educational attainment by 18.9 percentage points, outpacing a 13.8 percentage-point national gain. Only two other states, Arizona and Louisiana, made more progress than Kentucky during this time frame. At 49.4%, Kentucky's attainment rate is fast approaching the national average of 51.9%.

Much of this progress is due to increases in short-term credentials, which include certificates and industry certifications. The state's current short-term credential attainment rate is 13.3%, of which 9.2% are certificates and 4.1% are industry certifications. Since 2014-15, short-term credentials awarded by KCTCS (unduplicated count) have risen 53% (not including diplomas).

Statewide Challenges

However, Kentucky is facing some strong headwinds in the decade to come, which threaten to blow us off course. These include:

- **A declining number of high school graduates.** In its report, "Knocking at the College Door," the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education projects that the number of high school graduates in Kentucky will peak during the year 2025 at 52,120, falling to 44,508 by 2030, a 14.6% decline. Combined with decreases in the college-going rate of high school graduates over the last decade, this decline almost certainly will result in lower postsecondary enrollments, unless institutions increase participation among working-age adults and out-of-state students.
- **Falling adult enrollments.** Unfortunately, undergraduate enrollment among working-age adults has decreased 47% since 2011-12. Kentucky will need aggressive recruitment efforts and redesigned programs and supports to attract adults pursuing their first postsecondary credential.
- **Unequal rates of attainment.** There are significant disparities in educational attainment linked to race and ethnicity that must be addressed, especially since the state's population is growing more diverse. The educational attainment rate is 28.6% for African-American/Black Kentuckians and 26.7% for Hispanic/Latinx Kentuckians, compared to 36.1% for White Kentuckians. These gaps must be closed.

Kentucky's attainment rate has increased 18.9 points since 2009.

Looking Ahead

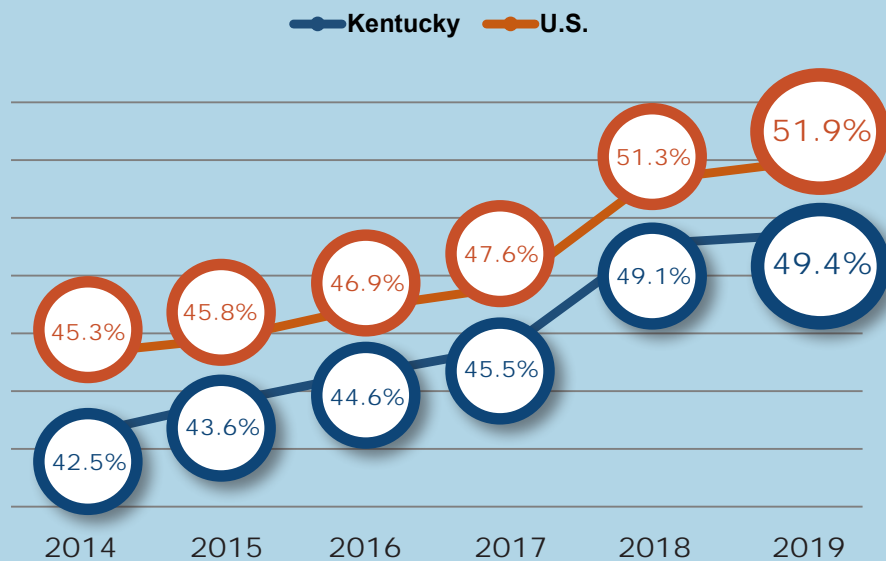
In the decade ahead, CPE will provide more detailed projections to monitor progress toward the 60% attainment goal, including annual average increases needed in statewide degree production.



KENTUCKY'S ATTAINMENT GOAL

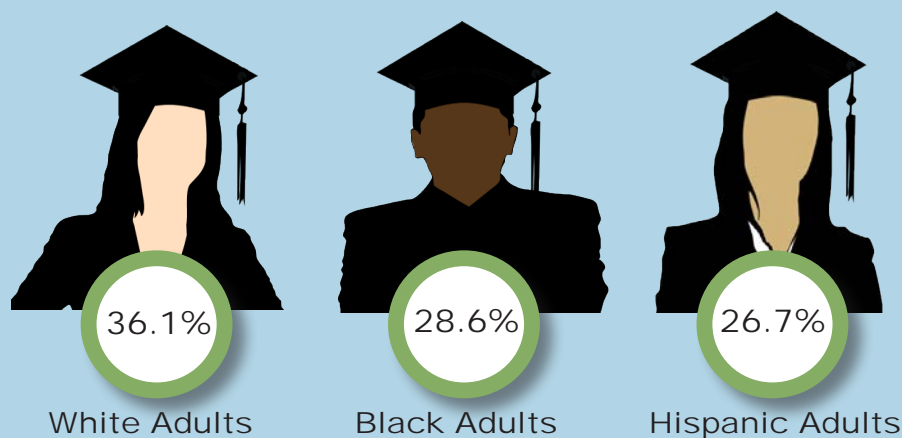
60% with a postsecondary credential

KY is making progress toward the 60% goal,



Percentage of adults (25-64) with a short-term certificate or higher, 2014-2019. The jump from 2017 to 2018 is due to the inclusion of industry-recognized certifications. Source: Lumina Foundation's "A Stronger Nation," luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/#/progress.

but attainment gaps must be addressed.



Source: Lumina Foundation. Percentages represent Kentuckians ages 25-64 with an associate degree or higher in 2019. Short-term certificates are not available by race/ethnicity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Building on previous agendas, “Higher Education Matters” is a blueprint for accelerating change and improvement in Kentucky’s public postsecondary system. The strategic priorities identified in this plan represent our primary issues and top concerns as we face head-on the demographic, economic and technological forces reshaping higher education in Kentucky.





Kentucky will ensure all students have equitable access to postsecondary education and the necessary tools to complete their programs prepared for life and work.



EQUITY

A Cross-Cutting Priority

Statewide Challenges

Since its founding, America has been known as a land of opportunity, where hard work and perseverance lead to prosperity. Yet in reality, our nation has not provided a level playing field for all of its citizens.

Inequities in Kentucky's educational systems have exacerbated disparities in employment, income and health. These opportunity gaps prevent all Kentuckians from reaching their full potential.

The educational attainment rates of Kentuckians historically underrepresented in postsecondary institutions trail White Kentuckians by a considerable margin. While 36.1% of White Kentuckians (ages 25-64) have a college degree, only 28.6% of African-American/Black, 26.7% of Hispanic/Latinx and 25.4% of Native Americans/Alaskan Natives do.

Demographers predict that the United States will become a minority majority nation by the year 2045. Currently, 87.5% of Kentucky residents identify as White, but by 2040, that percentage is projected to fall to 77%. Kentucky's ability to meet our 60x30 attainment goal hinges on enrolling and graduating a more diverse student body, requiring us to create more inclusive, welcoming and supportive educational spaces.

Systemwide Responses

To address these challenges, the Council on Postsecondary Education has adopted one of the most comprehensive diversity, equity and inclusion policies in the nation. The policy requires campuses to implement actions to increase enrollment,

retention and completion of minoritized students, as well as improving cultural competence among members of the campus community. Campuses set targets annually, and failure to reach quantitative and qualitative goals limits their ability to offer new academic programs.

Additionally, the state's performance funding model places a premium on degrees awarded to underrepresented, minoritized and low-income students. Since its adoption, Kentucky has made significant headway in closing opportunity gaps, but more improvement is needed.

The U.S. will become a minority majority nation by the year 2045.

Equity Cuts Across all Other Issues

Kentucky will no longer accept an educational system that produces inequitable results for individuals of similar talents, aspirations and abilities. Because of the urgency of this challenge, equity has been identified as a cross-cutting priority of this agenda.

There are no specific statewide objectives and strategies proposed for equity, because equity is a critical component of every strategic priority. As we implement the statewide strategies set forth in this agenda, each action will be examined through an equity lens. Action plans will outline how interventions will be targeted to at-risk students. For every key performance indicator, we will disaggregate results to ensure improvement rates are equitable among targeted student populations.

Through an unwavering focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, Kentucky's postsecondary system will work to ensure that income, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or geography are never a barrier to college success.



AFFORDABILITY

A Strategic Priority

Statewide Challenges

Over the last two decades, federal and state disinvestment in public higher education has shifted the majority of college costs to students and their families. In 2000, Kentucky subsidized 66% of operational costs for public postsecondary institutions, with tuition and fees covering the remaining 34%. By 2020, the state's share of funding was down to 32%, with 68% borne by students.

Consequently, increases in college costs have become a serious burden for many Kentucky families. While the cost of living has steadily increased, real wages have remained flat. Declining amounts of college savings mean student borrowing is at an all-time high. According to Forbes, student loans now comprise the largest chunk of U.S. non-housing debt, more than credit cards or auto loans.

At a time when postsecondary education and training is essential to long-term economic security, college is becoming financially inaccessible to our most vulnerable populations. If left unchecked, declines in college access will lead to greater income inequality, making it all but impossible for everyday Kentuckians to get ahead.

In a national survey conducted by the Citizens Financial Group, 70% of current college students said worries about college affordability had a moderate to high impact on their enrollment plans for the fall 2021 semester. Responding to rising concerns from students, parents and

elected officials, the Council has elevated college affordability to one of five strategic priorities our public postsecondary system will pursue over the next eight years.

Systemwide Responses

To this end, the state's higher education system will build on the success achieved over the last decade to increase college access and affordability.

Federal & state disinvestment in public higher education has shifted costs to students.

We will work with elected leaders to increase state funding for postsecondary education and student financial aid, so rising costs are not passed on to students.

We will work to limit increases in tuition and fees, while exploring collaborative purchasing agreements, open educational resources and other efficiency measures to keep ancillary costs in check.

We will work in partnership with P-12 educators, advisors, counselors and other stakeholders to help incoming students understand the complexities of college pricing, and the role of grants, scholarships and responsible borrowing in managing costs. The published cost of attendance stops many students and families in their tracks. Providing greater transparency around out-of-pocket costs will ensure sticker shock does not prevent students from applying.

We also will focus on decreasing the time it takes to earn a credential, since additional semesters mean additional cost. Early postsecondary opportunities and improved advising are strategies that can help students graduate on time.



Kentucky will ensure postsecondary education is affordable for all Kentuckians.



AFFORDABILITY

Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

1. Reduce financial barriers to college enrollment and completion.

- 1a. Work with campuses, stakeholders and other state leaders to increase access to grants and scholarships for low- and middle-income students.
- 1b. Moderate increases in tuition and mandatory fees at Kentucky's public colleges and universities.
- 1c. Increase opportunities for institutional collaboration to reduce campus expenditures and limit increases in college costs.

2. Improve the public's understanding of how to pay for college.

- 2a. Provide informational resources and advising strategies for counselors, teachers and community partners on paying for college.
- 2b. Coordinate and support efforts to increase the number of Kentuckians who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- 2c. Establish state-level networks for high school counselors and other college access professionals to share effective practices, build expertise and develop common outreach and messaging for Kentucky students.

Key Performance Indicators

Average Unmet Financial Need (State & Campus-Level): The cost of attendance minus the sum of expected family contribution and all federal, state and local government and institutionally funded scholarships or grants received by students in an academic year.

Time to Degree (State & Campus-Level): Total number of academic years enrolled prior to degree completion.




FAFSA Completion (State-Level): Percent of recent high school graduates who matriculated to a Kentucky public postsecondary institution and completed a FAFSA application.



COLLEGE IN KENTUCKY

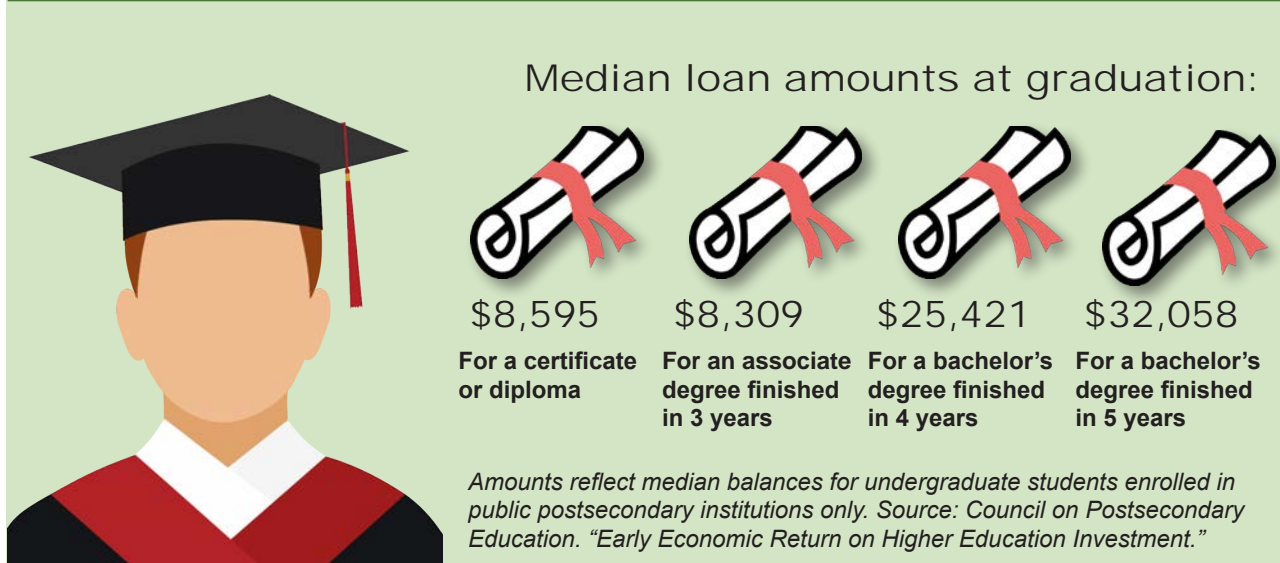
May Cost Less Than You Think

The actual cost of college is less than advertised.

	The published cost of college, including tuition, room, board & other expenses	Federal, state & institutional grants and scholarships	Out-of-pocket cost of a credential
			
	Sticker Price	Financial Aid	Net Price
2-Yr. Public	\$6,531	\$3,523	\$5,460
4-Yr. Public	\$14,151	\$6,400	\$10,802

This chart reflects median annual amounts in 2019-20 for in-state, undergraduate students at public institutions. For median amounts by institution, visit KY Students' Right to Know at https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/2021_KCSRK.

The typical undergraduate borrows \$32K or less.





Kentucky will ensure more students transition to college prepared to succeed.



TRANSITIONS

A Strategic Priority

Statewide Challenges

Over the decade, the U.S. saw little movement in the percentage of high school seniors enrolling directly in college, which remained around 66%. Kentucky, on the other hand, experienced a rather steep decline in its in-state college-going rate, falling from 55% in 2014 to 50.5% in 2019.

As we approach 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt the postsecondary plans of thousands of Kentuckians. Some are delaying college to help make ends meet, or to care for parents or relatives who are ill. For many rural and low-income students, a lack of reliable broadband access made it difficult to remain engaged in remote learning. For these individuals, the financial, physical and emotional toll of COVID will linger long after the virus recedes.

Systemwide Responses

While these circumstances are beyond our control, there are actions higher education can take to provide extra guidance to students. We can remove tripwires that cause individuals to stumble on the path to college, particularly if they are first-generation or historically underserved by postsecondary institutions. We can simplify bureaucratic and onerous admission processes, for instance, and help demystify financial aid applications like the FAFSA.

The rise of early college experiences in high school show tremendous promise. Dual credit and enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP),

International Baccalaureate (IB) and similar programs allow students to earn college credit while still in high school, giving them a jump-start on postsecondary education. The challenge is to expand access to students of all socioeconomic backgrounds and ability levels, and ensure credits count toward degree requirements and not just as electives.

It is unrealistic to expect high school guidance counselors to help every student navigate the maze of college admission requirements and decisions. With its partners, CPE will advocate for dedicated college coaches and advisors serving every school district in the Commonwealth, and create resources that walk students and their parents step-by-step through the planning and application process.

Colleges and universities also must do their part to enroll and retain students through those critical first months. CPE will work with campuses to increase recruitment of individuals historically excluded or underrepresented in higher education, including working-age adults balancing careers and families. We will streamline and digitize admission processes and materials to the greatest extent possible. Predictive analytics can help pinpoint at-risk students and better target intervention strategies.

Such actions will go a long way toward creating smoother educational transitions, from cradle to career.

The rise of early college experiences in high school show tremendous promise.



TRANSITIONS

Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

3. Increase students' readiness to enter postsecondary education.

- 3a. Expand access to high-quality, early postsecondary opportunities.
- 3b. Develop digital resources to help students explore career interests and college options.
- 3c. Partner with public K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions to provide outreach to students to help them prepare and plan for college.

4. Increase enrollment in postsecondary education.

- 4a. Enhance college recruitment strategies through partnerships with postsecondary institutions and other stakeholders, with attention to underrepresented, minoritized, adult and low-income students.
- 4b. Work with education providers to streamline and simplify postsecondary admission processes.

Key Performance Indicators

Undergraduate Enrollment (State & Campus-Level): Total unduplicated number of students who enroll in an undergraduate program in an academic year, either full-time or part-time.

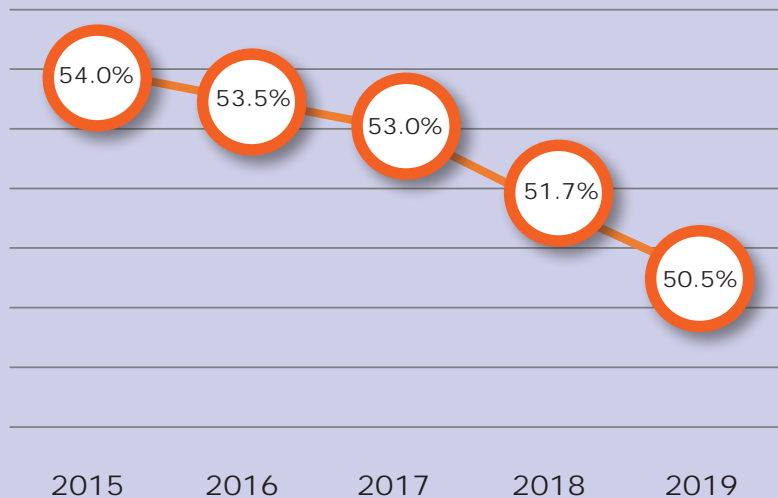
College-Going Rate (State-Level): Percent of recent Kentucky high school graduates who attend any in-state or out-of-state postsecondary institution in the summer, fall or spring following high school graduation.



IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESS

Strengthening K-12 to College Transitions

Kentucky must increase its in-state college-going rate.



Percentage of KY high school students who enroll directly in an in-state public or private college the fall or spring following graduation.

Source: KY Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)



45.3%

Current in-state college-going rate of Hispanic students in Kentucky.



44.6%

Current in-state college-going rate of Black students in Kentucky.

These statewide initiatives will help.



- A federal grant program administered by CPE
- Provides early college awareness & readiness
- Serves more than 12,000 high school and college students in low-income schools across Kentucky
- Teaches students how to plan, apply and pay for college
- Follows students from middle school through their first year of college
- Offers mentoring and support



Commonwealth Education Continuum

- Collaboration of CPE, KDE, KHEAA and the Education & Workforce Development Cabinet
- Recommendations for more equitable early college experiences
- Strategies for improved college & career readiness
- Diversification of teaching & advising corps



SUCCESS

A Strategic Priority

Statewide Successes & Challenges

Kentucky's colleges and universities made impressive gains in retention and completion over the last decade. The six-year graduation rate rose from 47.6% to 56.4% at public universities, while the three-year graduation rate at KCTCS jumped 13.3 points to 33%.

However, while institutions are narrowing completion gaps at a historic pace, more progress is needed to close them. The six-year graduation rate of African-American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, indigenous and mixed-race students currently stands at 44%, and the three-year rate is 24.3%.

Increasing degree production for everyone is an overriding concern of this agenda, but we are not prioritizing quantity over quality. High-quality credentials equip students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world that demands critical thinking, ingenuity, flexibility and teamwork. From certificates to doctorates, we must ensure students master the content, skills and mindsets necessary for future success and fulfillment. The challenge is producing quality credentials at a pace commensurate with our overarching attainment goal.

Systemwide Responses

In the years ahead, Kentucky higher education will double down on the widespread adoption of high-impact practices that research has proven to be effective. As we begin this agenda, CPE is launching the Kentucky Student Success

Collaborative, a one-of-a-kind center dedicated to the advancement of innovative strategies and best practices. This entity will increase our capacity to engage and unite campuses in more sustained, comprehensive improvement efforts.

We will continue to improve transfer from two-year to four-year institutions by helping students and practitioners understand how credits apply to specific degree programs across the state. We will promote credit for prior learning and accelerated programs to make our institutions friendlier for working-age adults, an underserved market that is critical to creating a more competitive workforce and reaching our 60x30 goal.

The system will not prioritize the quantity of credentials over quality.

Just as technology is revolutionizing the way we work, it is also transforming teaching and learning. Digital classrooms, global online collaborations and personalized learning software are only the beginning. Combined with face-to-face instruction, technology can accelerate and deepen learning in profound ways. But we cannot harness this powerful tool if educators lack training and resources, or if broadband access is not universally accessible and affordable.

Finally, we intend to make internships, apprenticeships, service and other forms of work-based learning a mandatory curricular experience. Students should be able to connect classroom learning to the world of work, and articulate these connections to employers. More robust employer partnerships will increase the relevance and responsiveness of academic programs, and ensure students are able to secure meaningful employment in their field of study.



Kentucky will ensure more students earn high-quality degrees and credentials.



SUCCESS

Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

5. Increase persistence in and timely completion of postsecondary programs.

- 5a. Share, implement and evaluate emerging, promising and proven practices supporting student success and college completion.
- 5b. Identify and promote efforts to ensure “on-time” program completion.
- 5c. Work with campuses and other state and national partners to close opportunity and success gaps for historically underserved students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.
- 5d. Work with education providers to limit barriers to enrollment and completion for adult learners and other students balancing the competing demands of work, life, family and school.

6. Maximize transfer of academic and experiential credit.

- 6a. Work with campuses to reduce barriers that prevent the seamless transfer of credit.
- 6b. Promote transfer opportunities and program pathways.

7. Ensure academic offerings are high-quality, relevant and inclusive.

- 7a. Work with campuses to ensure the essential competencies and outcomes outlined in the Kentucky Graduate Profile are embedded in all academic programs.
- 7b. Work with campuses to ensure academic and co-curricular offerings are equity-focused and inclusive.

Key Performance Indicators

Undergraduate Credentials Conferred (State & Campus-Level): Total degrees and credentials awarded by public universities and KCTCS institutions.

Graduation Rate (State & Campus-Level): The percent of first-time, full-time credential-seeking students receiving a bachelor’s degree within 6 years at public universities, or an associate degree or credential within 3 years at KCTCS from their starting institution.

2-Year to 4-Year Transfer (Campus-Level): Percent of first-time, full-time credential-seeking students entering KCTCS in the fall who transfer to any in-state, 4-year public institution within 3 years of entry.

Persistence Rate (State-Level): Percent of first-time, credential-seeking students enrolled in the summer or fall who are still enrolled the following fall at any in-state postsecondary institution or, in the case of KCTCS students, have completed a credential.

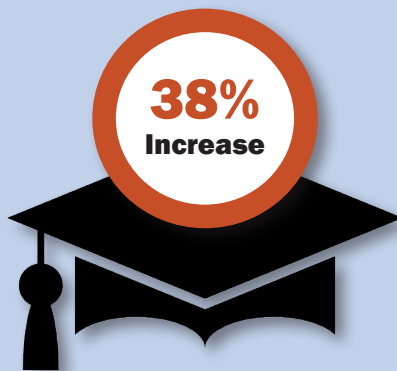
Retention Rate (Campus-Level): Percent of first-time, credential-seeking students enrolled in the summer or fall who return to the same institution the following fall.



ACCELERATING SUCCESS

Building on a Decade of Credential Growth

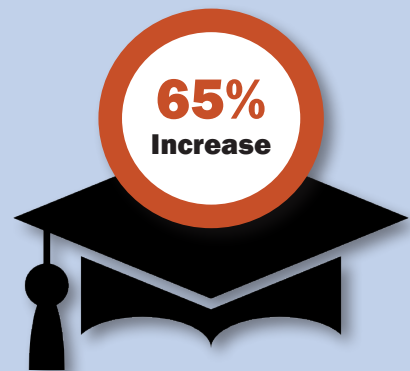
Undergraduate Credential Growth Over the Last Decade:



In Certificates & Associate
Degrees Awarded by
KCTCS



In Bachelor's Degrees
Awarded by Public
Universities



In Credentials Awarded
by Public Institutions
to Underrepresented
Minoritized Students

The Kentucky Student Success Collaborative

To accelerate meaningful transformation around student success, CPE launched the KYSSC, a first-of-its-kind statewide program supporting greater degree completion and successful career transitions. KYSSC offers its higher education partners the following resources and assistance:

Professional Development

Virtual and online assistance based on campus priorities.

Communities of Practice

Collaboration and resource sharing around common challenges and opportunities.

Resource & Knowledge Hub

An interactive, online platform for faculty and practitioners to share experiences and resources.

Technical Assistance

Guidance from national organizations and thought leaders on issues and challenges.

Change Leadership Institute

A forum for faculty, staff, and administrators to build capacity for growth and innovation.

<https://kystudentsuccess.org>



Kentucky will increase talent and innovation to support our communities, employers and economy.



TALENT

A Strategic Priority

Statewide Challenges

A primary purpose of postsecondary education is to produce adaptive, highly skilled workers to fuel the economy. In the recent past, a high school education was sufficient to secure gainful employment capable of supporting a family. However, automation and outsourcing are rendering these jobs nearly obsolete. As noted by the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, two out of three high-wage jobs created in the U.S. since 2008 demand postsecondary experience.

A 2021 report by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce estimates that the state has 90,000 to 100,000 job openings in any given month, and 65% to 85% of these vacancies require training, credentialing or degrees beyond high school. Data from the Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) program show that only 30% of the state's jobs require a high school diploma or less, corroborating this finding.

At 56.3%, Kentucky currently has one of the lowest workforce participation rates in the nation. Poor health, substance use disorders and childcare shortages are partly to blame, but the lack of requisite skills and credentials is a large and growing part of the problem. The lack of active, skilled workers limits Kentucky's economic growth and expansion, increases spending on entitlement programs and reduces state tax revenues.

Systemwide Responses

Kentucky must expand postsecondary access to undereducated, working-age adults to fill critical work shortages in healthcare, STEM fields, early childhood development and other high-demand

areas. Work-based education opportunities, tuition assistance and public-private partnerships like UPS's Metropolitan College can put adults to work while they gain valuable credentials that move them up the career ladder.

Endless debates pitting technical training against liberal arts education miss the larger point: today's graduates need both. We must ensure liberal arts graduates gain technical and vocational proficiencies, just as students pursuing more technical and vocational credentials gain exposure to the humanities and liberal arts.

**65% to 85%
of Kentucky
job openings
require training
beyond high
school.**

CPE's recent partnership with the Quality Assurance Commons put essential employability skills front and center. The Kentucky Graduate Profile identifies career-focused learning outcomes that each graduate should demonstrate as part of their college curriculum. The Kentucky Graduate Academy, which includes representatives from each public campus, will assess the extent to which academic programs equip students with essential employability skills, making adjustments as needed.

Besides talent production, higher education institutions drive economic development through basic and applied research and business services. Innovations originating in laboratories are driven to the marketplace, spawning new companies and creating products and processes that improve our lives. This agenda will focus on strategies to ensure these efforts are aligned with the state's emerging and existing industries.

Finally, Kentucky's postsecondary system will continue its mission of regional stewardship by working with community partners to exchange knowledge and expertise for the mutual benefit of the Commonwealth.



TALENT

Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

8. Improve the career outcomes of postsecondary graduates.

- 8a. Work with campuses to include a work-based learning or other career-relevant experience in all undergraduate programs.
- 8b. Work with colleges and universities to strengthen campus-based career advising and development.
- 8c. Facilitate meaningful partnerships between employers, community partners and education providers to improve the career outcomes of postsecondary programs.

9. Increase research and service to support strong communities and economies.

- 9a. Identify high-growth, high-demand and high-wage industries by region and target postsecondary programs for increased enrollment in those areas.
- 9b. Encourage targeted research, the development of signature academic programs and expanded community engagement supporting Kentucky's high-need, priority areas.

Key Performance Indicators

Graduates Working or Pursuing More Education (State-Level): Percent of certificate, associate and bachelor's degree graduates working in Kentucky or pursuing additional education one year after graduation.

Graduate and Professional Degrees (State & Campus-Level): Total number of graduate/professional degrees awarded in an academic year.

Statewide Educational Attainment Goal (State-Level): Percent of Kentuckians ages 25-64 with a postsecondary credential (certificate or higher).



WORK-READY GRADUATES

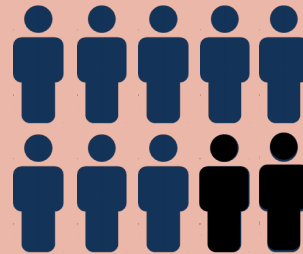
Producing Talent for Kentucky Employers



Only **48%** of Kentuckians have skills training beyond high school, which **65%-85%** of jobs require.

Source: KY Chamber of Commerce, "20 Years in the Making: Kentucky's Workforce Crisis," September 2021.

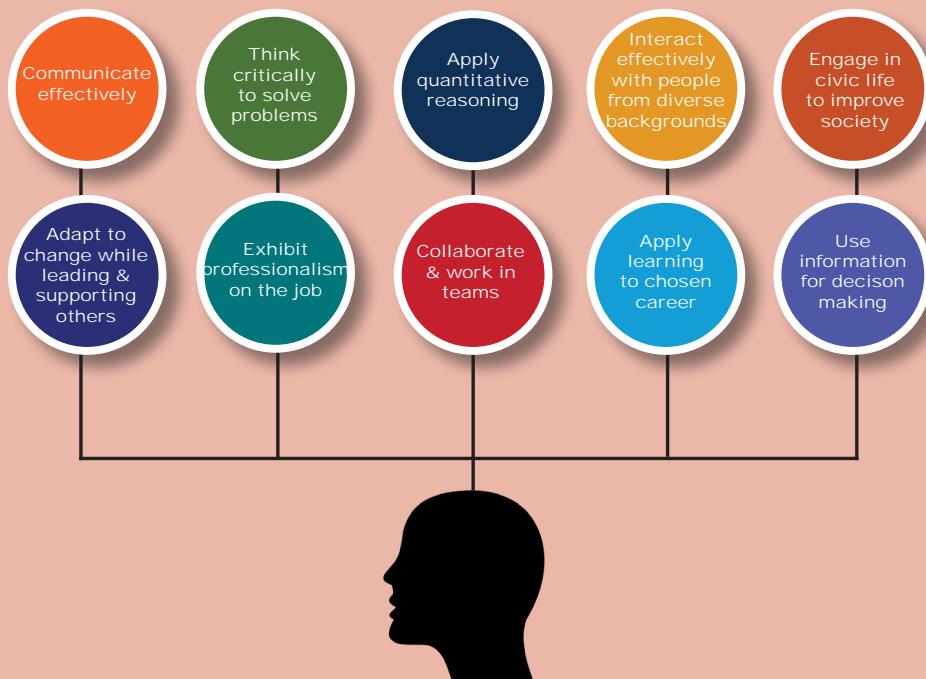
8 out of 10



Kentucky businesses have trouble finding workers with the right skills.

Source: 2017 study conducted by Talent Pipeline Management, a statewide initiative of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Kentucky Graduate Profile



In partnership with Kentucky campuses, CPE identified 10 essential skills that employers expect in college graduates. CPE is working with campuses to integrate these competencies into their curricular and co-curricular offerings.



VALUE

A Strategic Priority

The Perceived Value of College

Even before the pandemic, Americans were questioning the value of higher education. The extent of this skepticism varies according to socioeconomic status, political party affiliation, geographic region and other factors.

A 2021 survey conducted by the American Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Bipartisan Policy Center asked adults whether college was definitely or probably still worth it. Overall, only 27% of respondents believed college was definitely worth it; another 33% said it probably was. While only half of low-income respondents said college was worth it, three-quarters of wealthy Americans did. Democrats expressed the strongest belief in college's worth (70%), followed by Republicans (53%) and Independents (52%).

The Actual Value of College

Negative beliefs about the value of college, though widespread, are based more on feeling than fact. College's return on investment in strict financial terms depends on how much you paid for your degree and the marketability of your chosen field. Some students reap greater financial rewards than others. But to promote the belief that college is no longer a wise investment is a grave disservice to parents and students everywhere. While a college credential does not guarantee economic security, the lack of a credential most certainly limits earning potential and perpetuates generational poverty in our communities.

In September 2021, CPE released a study showing that among Kentucky's high school class of 2011, postsecondary graduates were earning substantially more money than high school graduates by 2019, despite fewer years of full-time work. The typical community college or university graduate recouped their higher education

investment in about three to five years, depending on the credential earned. Over a 30-year career, bachelor's degree graduates in Kentucky make \$1 million more than high school graduates, while those with associate degrees make nearly half a million more.

Although anecdotes about college loan debt regularly feature students owing upwards of \$100,000 or more, the average bachelor's degree graduate in Kentucky borrows between \$25,000 and \$33,000 for their degree.

Systemwide Responses

The Council on Postsecondary Education will launch a statewide communications and public awareness campaign to counteract negative messages about the value of college perpetuated by the media and partisan pundits. We will educate individual students about the benefits of a college credential, and inform policy makers about how higher education increases tax revenue, decreases unemployment and entitlement program expenditures, improves health outcomes and produces a myriad of benefits that can't easily be quantified, like increased volunteerism and voting.

Part of this effort is helping Kentuckians understand that college is not only a four-year, residential undergraduate degree. Since that experience may not be for everyone, there are a multitude of college options in our state, many technical in nature, that allow students to pursue careers in the skilled trades, ranging from short-term certificates to applied associate degrees.

It is our hope that increasing higher education's value proposition will lead to greater investment from both the General Assembly and the private sector. More profoundly, it will restore our belief in higher education's ability to put Americans on a path to future prosperity and fulfillment.

Workers with a bachelor's degree make \$1M more than high school graduates over a lifetime.



Kentucky will improve public understanding that postsecondary education is key to greater opportunity and economic growth.



VALUE

Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

10. Increase public belief in the power of postsecondary education.

10a. Conduct a public awareness campaign and develop communications strategies to promote college going and elevate the importance of higher education to Kentucky's residents and economy.

11. Build support for greater investment in postsecondary education.

11a. Communicate higher education's return on investment and the need for increased state and federal support.

11b. Seek funding from foundations and other external sources to support Strategic Agenda priorities.

Key Performance Indicators

State General Fund Appropriations (State-Level): Percent change in net general fund appropriations for full-time equivalent students, excluding state financial aid or state monies for debt service.



HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS

College-Educated Citizens Build a Better Kentucky

College Benefits Individuals & Society



Earnings

College graduates earn more and are less likely to rely on public assistance.



Health

College graduates are more likely to be insured, exercise and enjoy better health.



Civic Responsibility

College graduates are more likely to vote, donate to charity and be civically engaged.



Literacy

College graduates are more likely to read to their children and be supportive of their education overall.



Employment

College graduates are more likely to find jobs and stay employed, even in a down economy.



Economy

The state gains more from college graduates through higher earnings and less dependence on public assistance.



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Regina Huff, State Representative
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Focus Group Sessions

On Issues

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- College Affordability
- Transitioning from Postsecondary Education to the Workforce
- Engaging the Adult Learner
- Stronger Partnerships between P-12 and Postsecondary Education

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