

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's degree or bachelor's degree) within six years of enrollment.¹

SIGNIFICANCE

By 2020, 71% of jobs in Rhode Island will require post-secondary education beyond high school, and yet only 35% of Rhode Island adults between the ages of 25 and 64 have a bachelor's degree or higher, and an additional 28% have some college or an associate's degree.^{2,3} Between 2013 and 2017 in Rhode Island, 8.7% of adults with a high school diploma were unemployed, compared to 5.6% of those with some college or an associate's degree and 2.9% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher.⁴ During that same period, the median annual income for adults with a high school diploma was \$32,734, compared to \$38,016 for adults with some college or an associate's degree and \$53,036 for adults with a bachelor's degree.⁵

Students must complete college degrees 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

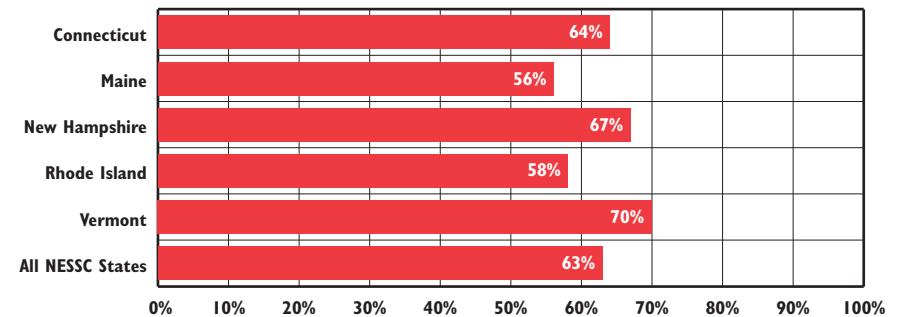
colleges students enroll in, and the percentage who attain college degrees across different income groups.⁶

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 and fulfill workforce needs.^{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}

State policies that transform remediation practices, encourage full-time college attendance, and help students balance work and school, could further increase college completion rates.¹³

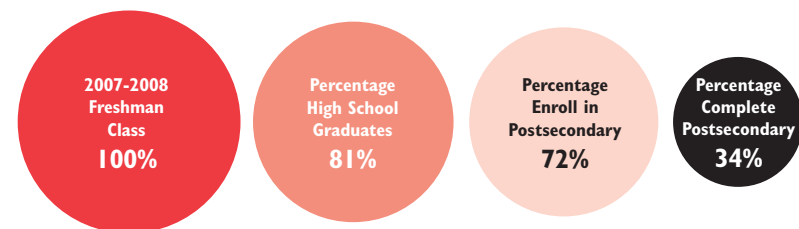
College Completion, New England Secondary School Consortium States (NESSC), 2011 Cohort



Source: Common Data Project: 2018 annual report, school year 2016-2017. (2018). Retrieved March 15, 2019, from www.newenglandssc.org

◆ Fifty-eight percent of Rhode Island public high school graduates who enrolled in a two- or four-year college in 2011 earned a college diploma within six years, an increase of five percentage points from the 2010 cohort. In Rhode Island, there are large gaps in college completion between low-income and higher-income students, with 38% of low-income students completing college within six years, compared to 69% of higher-income students.¹⁴

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



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education. (February 13, 2019). PrepareRI college readiness project: A system-wide effort to prepare all students for college success. Retrieved March 18, 2019, from www.ride.ri.gov

◆ Of the students who were freshman in high school during the 2007-2008 school year, 81% had graduated from high school, 72% had enrolled in college, and 34% had completed college 10 years later.¹⁵

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Table 56.

College Enrollment and Completion, Rhode Island

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2017	# OF 2017 HS GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE WITHIN 6 MONTHS	% OF 2017 HS GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE WITHIN 6 MONTHS	# OF STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE IN 2016	# OF 2016 COLLEGE ENROLLEES WHO PERSISTED (ENROLLED FOR A THIRD SEMESTER)	% OF 2016 COLLEGE ENROLLEES WHO PERSISTED (ENROLLED FOR A THIRD SEMESTER)
Barrington	238	196	82%	253	244	96%
Bristol Warren	199	124	62%	185	160	86%
Burrillville	146	101	69%	117	98	84%
Central Falls	151	58	38%	91	57	63%
Chariho	300	183	61%	204	176	86%
Coventry	320	216	68%	291	237	81%
Cranston	678	429	63%	593	476	80%
Cumberland	284	202	71%	285	247	87%
East Greenwich	141	112	79%	171	163	95%
East Providence	293	167	57%	271	206	76%
Exeter-West Greenwich	123	81	66%	95	87	92%
Foster-Glocester	140	80	57%	109	94	86%
Johnston	169	108	64%	132	111	84%
Lincoln	178	136	76%	201	180	90%
Middletown	140	104	74%	124	107	86%
Narragansett	91	68	75%	100	87	87%
Newport	113	57	50%	77	61	79%
North Kingstown	299	233	78%	277	263	95%
North Providence	203	147	72%	197	164	83%
North Smithfield	108	87	81%	114	105	92%
Pawtucket	472	203	43%	283	205	72%
Portsmouth	239	191	80%	188	167	89%
Providence	1,212	596	49%	918	612	67%
Scituate	105	83	79%	95	92	97%
Smithfield	174	130	75%	142	126	89%
South Kingstown	231	172	74%	191	178	93%
Tiverton	112	73	65%	94	79	84%
Warwick	564	362	64%	482	400	83%
West Warwick	183	105	57%	133	108	81%
Westerly	188	123	65%	158	140	89%
Woonsocket	288	127	44%	201	139	69%
Beacon Charter High School for the Arts	54	33	61%	42	30	71%
Blackstone Academy	39	20	51%	26	23	88%
Paul Cuffee Charter School	61	32	52%	43	30	70%
The Greene School	46	22	48%	24	20	83%
Highlander Charter School	16	0	0%	NA	NA	NA
RI Nurses Institute Middle College	52	28	54%	37	31	84%
Sheila "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy	28	*	18%	11	*	45%
Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts	29	11	38%	28	23	82%
Village Green Virtual Public Charter School	75	37	49%	NA	NA	NA
William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School	139	74	53%	145	106	73%
Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center	195	106	54%	132	93	70%
Four Core Cities	2,123	984	46%	1,493	1,013	68%
Remainder of State	5,979	4,078	68%	5,291	4,567	86%
Rhode Island	8,834	5,425	61%	7,244	5,918	82%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

of students who graduated from high school in 2017, # of 2017 high school graduates who enrolled in college within six months, # of students who enrolled in college in 2016, and # of 2016 college enrollees who persisted (were enrolled for a third semester) are all from Rhode Island Department of Education. The # of 2016 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.

Data for Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts are from the National Student Clearinghouse report.

* 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 state totals.

NA Schools did not have students graduating in this year.

References

¹ Common Data Project: 2018 procedural guidebook. (2018). Retrieved March 18, 2019, from <http://newenglandssc.org>

² Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2013). *Recovery: Job growth and education requirements through 2020 (State report)*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Table B23006.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Table S2301.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Table B20004.

⁶⁷ 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.

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