

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

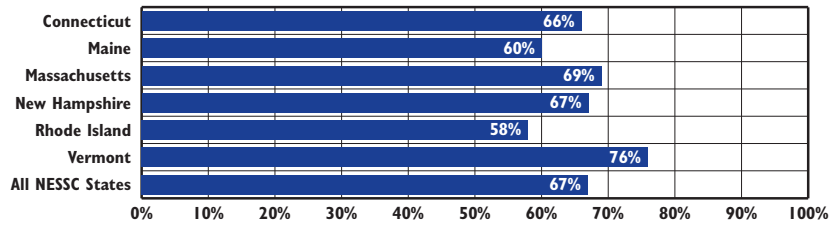
Between 2021 and 2031, jobs requiring a postsecondary degree or certificate are projected to grow faster than jobs requiring less education, yet only 38% of Rhode Island adults ages 25 and 64 have a bachelor's degree or higher.^{2,3} Between 2018 and 2022 in Rhode Island, 6.8% of adults with a high school diploma were unemployed, compared to 2.9% with a bachelor's degree or higher.⁴ During that same period, the median annual income for adults with a high school diploma was \$41,968, compared to \$66,011 for adults with a bachelor's degree.⁵ Students who complete college are more likely to be employed and have higher incomes. While college enrollment rates for low-income students have doubled in recent decades, there are still large gaps in the percentage of students who enroll in and complete college and the types of college students attend. In the U.S., nearly two-thirds of low-income students attend community colleges or 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.^{6,7,8} There are also barriers to attainment for Students of Color. Addressing racial disparities can improve college completion outcomes.^{9,10}

Low-income students and Students of Color often arrive at college with academic potential but less academic preparation and social capital than other students. They can benefit from a wide range of 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.^{11,12,13}

A 2022 national study, found that 55% of students considered dropping out of college due to mental and emotional factors, more than any other factor, including the cost of tuition (36%). Improving college completion will require better aligning the K-12 education system with college demands, making college affordable, and providing both mental health and academic supports.^{14,15,16}

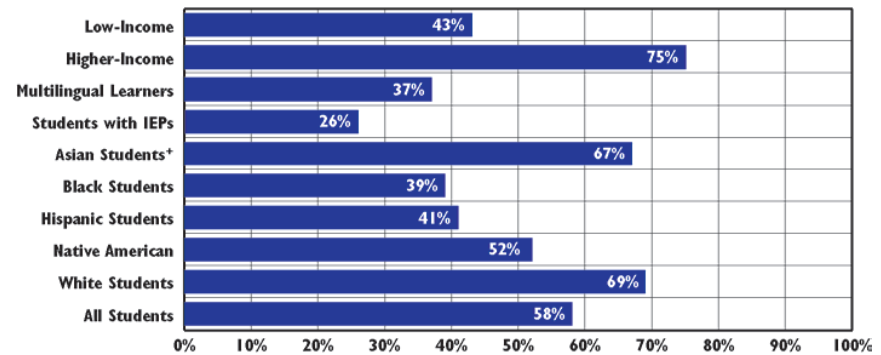
College Completion, New England Secondary School Consortium States (NESSC), 2015 Cohort



Source: New England Secondary School Consortium. (2022). *Common Data Project: 2022 annual report, school year 2020-2021*. Retrieved April 4, 2024, from www.greatschoolspartnership.org

★ Fifty-eight percent of Rhode Island public high school graduates who enrolled in a two- or four-year college in 2015 earned a college diploma within six years.¹⁷

Six-Year College Completion by Student Subgroup, Rhode Island, 2015 Cohort



Source: New England Secondary School Consortium. (2022). *Common Data Project: 2022 annual report, school year 2020-2021*. Retrieved April 4, 2024, from www.greatschoolspartnership.org. *Data for Asian students is not disaggregated by ethnic group. National research shows large academic disparities across Asian ethnic groups.

★ In Rhode Island, there are large gaps in college completion between low-income and higher-income students, with 43% of low-income students completing college within six years, compared to 75% of higher-income students. There are also large disparities by race and ethnicity, language status, and disability.¹⁸

College Enrollment and Completion

Table 56.

College Enrollment and Completion, Rhode Island

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2023	# OF 2023 HS GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE WITHIN 6 MONTHS	% OF 2023 HS GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE WITHIN 6 MONTHS	# OF STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE IN 2022	# OF 2022 COLLEGE ENROLLEES WHO PERSISTED (ENROLLED FOR A THIRD SEMESTER)	% OF 2022 COLLEGE ENROLLEES WHO PERSISTED (ENROLLED FOR A THIRD SEMESTER)
Barrington	275	230	84%	262	241	92%
Bristol Warren	210	146	70%	187	150	80%
Burrillville	146	88	60%	105	77	73%
Central Falls	175	79	45%	78	32	41%
Chariho	240	173	72%	183	158	86%
Coventry	294	198	67%	257	200	78%
Cranston	819	572	70%	564	435	77%
Cumberland	343	256	75%	267	228	85%
East Greenwich	188	153	81%	174	164	94%
East Providence	342	188	55%	201	149	74%
Exeter-West Greenwich	103	73	71%	100	89	89%
Foster-Glocester	216	151	70%	151	125	83%
Johnston	170	114	67%	163	119	73%
Lincoln	213	172	81%	170	144	85%
Middletown	126	83	66%	110	86	78%
Narragansett	116	86	74%	80	73	91%
Newport	144	82	57%	92	65	71%
North Kingstown	309	245	79%	297	255	86%
North Providence	257	183	71%	190	145	76%
North Smithfield	96	71	74%	94	76	81%
Pawtucket	412	192	47%	206	131	64%
Portsmouth	197	165	84%	169	151	89%
Providence	1,470	765	52%	901	614	68%
Scituate	96	78	81%	67	54	81%
Smithfield	203	160	79%	132	119	90%
South Kingstown	205	158	77%	174	154	89%
Tiverton	126	77	61%	94	81	86%
Warwick	527	357	68%	369	288	78%
West Warwick	210	125	60%	140	98	70%
Westerly	161	114	71%	140	113	81%
Woonsocket	298	116	39%	133	83	62%
Beacon Charter High School	40	26	65%	36	28	78%
Blackstone Academy	83	60	72%	60	42	70%
Blackstone Valley Prep						
Mayoral Academy	76	55	72%	60	42	70%
Charette Charter School	33	15	45%	22	12	55%
Paul Cuffee Charter School	53	36	68%	56	34	61%
The Greene School	41	25	61%	37	30	81%
Highlander Charter School	55	40	73%	26	17	65%
RI Nurses Institute Middle Colledge	36	36	100%	38	27	71%
Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy	29	11	38%	19	*	37%
Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts	22	17	77%	26	19	73%
Village Green Virtual Public Charter School	45	29	64%	18	*	50%
William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School	193	133	69%	111	76	68%
YouthBuild	27	*	19%	NA	NA	NA
Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center	205	140	68%	111	76	68%
Four Core Cities	2,355	1,152	49%	1,318	860	65%
Remainder of State	6,340	4,504	71%	4,940	4,045	82%
Rhode Island	9,638	6,286	65%	6,879	5,325	77%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

of students who graduated from high school in 2023, # of 2023 high school graduates who enrolled in college within six months, # of students who enrolled in college in 2022, and # of 2022 college enrollees who persisted (were enrolled for a third semester) are all from Rhode Island Department of Education. The # of 2022 college enrollees who persisted may include students enrolled directly after high school or afterwards. Percentages may not sum exactly due to rounding.

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

UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

YouthBuild is the YouthBuild Preparatory Academy.

* 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 this year.

References

- ^{1,17,18} New England Secondary School Consortium. (2022). *Common Data Project: 2022 annual report, school year 2020-2021*. Retrieved April 6, 2023, from www.newenglandssc.org
- ² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023). *Employment, wages, and projected change in employment by typical entry-level education*. Retrieved April 3, 2023, from www.bls.gov
- ³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022. Table B23006.
- ⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022. Table S2301.
- ⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022. Table B20004.

(continued on page 191)