



## 2021 SMART Act Report

Colorado's strategic plan for higher education, [Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development](#) supports the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's vision that all Coloradans have an education beyond high school to pursue their dreams and improve our communities. To accomplish these goals, the Department supports students, advocates and develops policies to maximize higher education opportunities for all. The plan provides a series of metrics pursuant to CRS 23-1-108 (1.5)(f). More detailed information on the Department's work can be found in its [annual report](#).

### The Colorado Rises Goal – Reaching 66% Statewide Attainment by 2025:

Colorado established an attainment goal in 2012 that has risen from 47.5% to 61% over the past nine years.<sup>1</sup> Factoring the state's changing demographics, the Commission has also set an ambitious equity attainment goal of 66% for African American or Black, Hispanic or Latinx and American Indian or Alaska Native populations; current statewide attainment levels are 37.9% for African Americans or Blacks, 25.1% for Hispanics or Latinx, and 30.9% for American Indian or Alaska Natives.<sup>2</sup> The Department continues to navigate the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and is committed to building a Colorado for all. By pursuing the following four strategies and tracking the associated metrics, Colorado can close the gap and expand educational opportunity.

CCHE identified four strategic goals within the scope of the public postsecondary system to make this plan actionable:

**STRATEGIC GOAL #1:** Increase Credential Completion

**STRATEGIC GOAL #2:** Erase Equity Gaps

**STRATEGIC GOAL #3:** Improve Student Success

**STRATEGIC GOAL #4:** Commit to Affordability, Cost Containment and Innovation

### Highlights from this year's report:

- Though credential production is increasing, Colorado must accelerate trends to meet our goals.
- Colorado must align and increase certificate production with workforce demands.
- Credentials in educator preparation and STEM fields increased in the past year.
- While some groups continue to increase their credential completion, Colorado has significant work to do to improve outcomes for Coloradans of color and lower income students.
- The most recent year of data shows significant improvements in both retention as well as 3- and 4-year graduation rates.
- Colorado continues to see growth in dual and Concurrent Enrollment courses and programs.
- Lower tuition increases and efforts to contain costs and make postsecondary education more affordable and have helped lower the number of students with debt.

<sup>1</sup> Lumina Foundation's [Stronger Nation report on Colorado](#) using American Community Survey Data through the U.S. Census

<sup>2</sup> Lumina Foundation's [Stronger Nation report on Colorado](#) using American Community Survey Data through the U.S. Census

This report includes select performance metrics related to these four strategic goals.

A  indicates positive progress in the most recent year.

While the state has made progress in most areas, we must accelerate to reach our 2025 goal.



### STRATEGIC GOAL #1—Increase Credential Completion:

The first strategic goal is to significantly increase the number of credentials that students earn over an eight-year period and credential completion in high-demand areas, such as STEM and teacher preparation.

#### OVERALL UNDERGRADUATE CREDENTIAL PRODUCTION INCREASED YEAR OVER YEAR BETWEEN ACADEMIC YEARS 2011-12 AND 2019-20.<sup>3</sup>

Academic Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Credentials</b>	41,956	46,023	48,643	49,816	51,477	56,019	57,353	59,155	59,232
1-Year Change		10%	6%	2%	3%	9%	2%	3%	.1%
<b>Certificates</b>	11,567	13,859	15,604	15,373	16,217	20,069	20,214	21,393	21,215
1-Year Change		20%	13%	-1%	5%	24%	1%	6%	-1%



#### EDUCATOR PREPARATION CREDENTIALS AND STEM CREDENTIALS INCREASED 2018-19 AND 2019-20.

Academic Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Educator Prep. Credentials<sup>4</sup></b>	3,078	2,858	2,704	2,563	2,472	2,674	2,553	2,491	2,615
1-Year Change		-7%	-5%	-5%	-4%	8%	-5%	-2%	5%
<b>STEM Credentials<sup>5</sup></b>	7,378	7,991	8,823	9,598	9,958	10,695	11,172	11,941	13,214
1-Year Change		8%	10%	9%	4%	7%	4%	7%	11%



### STRATEGIC GOAL #2—Erase Equity Gaps:



With our state's changing demographics, the goal of 66% is unattainable if we do not make major progress on erasing equity gaps—the racial disparities in educational attainment. Of states with at least one million Hispanic or Latinx residents, Colorado ranks among the highest in terms of equity gaps in recent years.<sup>6</sup> *Colorado Rises* aims to raise African American or Black, Hispanic or Latinx and American Indian or Alaska Native students to 66%.

#### AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC STUDENTS SAW INCREASED CREDENTIAL COMPLETION BETWEEN ACADEMIC YEARS 2011-12 AND 2019-20 BUT ARE NOT ON TRACK TO MEET GOALS; PELL STUDENT CREDENTIAL COMPLETION REMAINS RELATIVELY FLAT FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.<sup>7</sup>

Academic Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>									
African American	1,453	1,449	1,741	1,844	1,809	1,942	2,057	2,164	2,164
1-Year Change		0%	20%	6%	-2%	7%	6%	5%	0%
Hispanic	5,438	5,761	7,096	7,755	8,307	9,402	10,281	11,365	11,625
1-Year Change		6%	23%	9%	7%	13%	9%	11%	2%



3 Source: SURDS Data. Also available on the [CDHE Master Plan Dashboard](#).

4 Source: SURDS Data.

5 Source: SURDS Data. STEM credentials include all those CIP codes listed as STEM on lists maintained by NSF and ICE. It also includes institution-specific STEM designations. Post-baccalaureate certificates were removed changing the numbers slightly from 2018.

6 Source: Rocky Mountain Divide: Lifting Latinos and Closing Equity Gaps in Colorado, Georgetown Center for Workforce and Education.

7 Source: SURDS Data. Also available on the [CDHE Master Plan Dashboard](#).

Native American	437	485	511	532	502	565	536	567	507
1-Year Change		11%	5%	4%	-6%	13%	-5%	6%	-11%
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>Income</b>									
Pell Eligible	12,777	14,084	15,029	14,904	14,926	15,005	15,536	15,483	14,823
1-Year Change		10%	7%	-1%	0%	1%	4%	0%	-4%



### STRATEGIC GOAL #3—Improve Student Success:

To graduate more students, Colorado must focus on promoting and improving successful student retention and momentum.

**RETENTION RATES, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO START AT A COLLEGE ONE FALL AND ENROLL THE NEXT FALL, STAYED RELATIVELY CONSTANT BETWEEN THE FALL 2011 AND THE FALL 2018 COHORTS.<sup>8</sup>**

Cohort	Fall 11-12	Fall 12-13	Fall 13-14	Fall 14-15	Fall 15-16	Fall 16-17	Fall 17-18	Fall 18-19
<b>Fall to Fall Retention</b>	68.8%	70.4%	70.2%	72%	72.5%	71.8%	73%	73.8%
1-Year Change		2%	0%	2%	1%	-1%	1%	1%

**AT TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, GRADUATION RATES INCREASED BETWEEN THE FALL 2009 AND FALL 2016 COHORTS. AT FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS ON-TIME GRADUATION RATES INCREASED AND 150%-TIME GRADUATION RATES REMAINED RELATIVELY FLAT.<sup>9</sup>**

2-Year Institutions									
Cohort Year	Fall 09	Fall 10	Fall 11	Fall 12	Fall 13	Fall 14	Fall 15	Fall 16	
3 Year Graduation	20.9%	21.0%	20.8%	21.8%	21.6%	24.3%	26.9%	29.2%	
4-Year Institutions									
Cohort Year	Fall 06	Fall 07	Fall 08	Fall 09	Fall 10	Fall 11	Fall 12	Fall 13	
4 Year Graduation	31.2%	31.8%	32.8%	32.9%	34.2%	34.5%	36.1%	37.4%	
6 Year Graduation	58.7%	59.3%	59.2%	60.2%	59.9%	59.3%	61.8%	61.1%	

**ENROLLMENT IN CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT CONTINUE TO GROW.<sup>10</sup>**


High School Graduating Class	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019
<b>Enrollment</b>								
High school graduates attempting Concurrent Enrollment	14.7%	18.6%	22.0%	25.7%	26.5%	28.7%	30.4%	32.8%
1-Year Change		4%	3%	4%	1%	2%	2%	2%
High school graduates attempting Any Dual Enrollment	21.2%	22.8%	25.7%	31.1%	33.3%	35.7%	38.2%	39.5%
1-Year Change		2%	3%	5%	2%	2%	3%	1%

8 Source: SURDS Data, also available in the annual Retention Rate Report

9 Source: SURDS Data, also available in annual Graduation Rate Report

10 Source: SURDS and CDE, also available in the annual [Concurrent Enrollment Report](#)

Academic Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
<b>Outcomes</b>								
Credentials Produced	775	956	1,231	1,491	2,017	2,758	3,116	2,877
1-Year Change		23%	29%	21%	35%	37%	13%	-7.7% <sup>11</sup>



**STRATEGIC GOAL #4— Commit to Affordability, Cost Containment and Innovation:**

To help ensure affordability for Colorado students and strengthen Colorado’s economic and community development, Colorado needs to increase public investment and encourage efficient institutional delivery models that reduce costs and time-to-degree.

**WHILE MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME EXPERIENCED 36 PERCENT GROWTH BETWEEN FISCAL YEARS 2012-13 AND 2019-20, RESIDENT TUITION AT FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS GREW BY 44%. THIS REFLECTS RECENT EFFORTS TO HOLD TUITION INCREASES LOW.**

Fiscal Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
<b>Resident Tuition<sup>12</sup></b>	\$6,513	\$7,028	\$7,338	\$7,666	\$8,144	\$8,519	\$8,758	\$8,840	\$8,884
1-Year Change		8%	4%	4%	6%	5%	3%	0.9%	0.5%
<b>Median Family Income<sup>13</sup></b>	\$57,255	\$67,912	\$60,940	\$66,596	\$70,566	\$74,984	\$73,034	\$72,499	\$82,611
1-Year Change		19%	-10%	9%	6%	6%	-3%	-1%	14%
Tuition as a Percent of Income	11.4%	10.3%	12.0%	11.5%	11.5%	11.4%	12.0%	12.2%	10.8%

**THE PERCENT OF RESIDENT ASSOCIATES DEGREE GRADUATES AND RESIDENT BACHELOR’S DEGREE GRADUATES WITH DEBT HAS STEADILY DECLINED SINCE 2013-14, THOUGH FOR BACHELOR’S DEGREES, THE PERCENTAGE IS LEVELING OFF.<sup>14</sup>**

Graduation Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Bachelor’s Degree Graduate with Debt	64%	62%	60%	59%	56%	55%	55%	✓
Associates Degree Graduate with Debt	54%	53%	50%	48%	45%	42%	39%	✓

## For More Information

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Colorado Department of Higher Education <https://higher.ed.colorado.gov/>

Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development <http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/>



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<sup>11</sup> Credential completion increased among all credential types except less than 1-year certificates. Since this year’s report includes data from Spring 2020, impacts of COVID-19 and the disruption of the academic year could contribute to this drop.

<sup>12</sup> Source: [CDHE Tuition and Fees Data](#)

<sup>13</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>14</sup> CDHE’s Return on Investment report: <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/return-of-investment>