



INDIANA *for* COMMISSION  
HIGHER EDUCATION



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## **Commission provides clearer picture of college completion in Indiana**

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. – The Commission for Higher Education delivered the state’s clearest and most comprehensive picture yet of college graduation rates in Indiana with the release of the first “[Indiana College Completion Reports](#).”

“Improving college completion is a complex problem, but overcoming Indiana’s completion challenge begins with a clearer understanding of where we are and where we need to go,” said Teresa Lubbers, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education.

“Clearly, an on-time degree will always be the best and most affordable path to college graduation,” Lubbers noted. “At the same time, we recognize that Indiana’s completion picture includes not only full-time students who start and finish at the same campus but also students who attend college part-time, students who transfer between colleges, students who take longer and students who earn a different credential than the one they set out to pursue. Every graduate brings Indiana another step closer to reaching its 60 percent education attainment goal, and each student must be acknowledged and accounted for in addressing our state’s completion challenge.”

### **Key Takeaways from the Indiana College Completion Reports**

Among the key findings from the Indiana Completion Reports:

- **Time is the Enemy:** On-time college completion is the exception in Indiana with the majority of students taking longer to graduate. Less than one out of every 10 students finishes a two-year degree within two years, and just three out of every 10 students finish a four-year degree within four years. An additional year of college can cost a Hoosier student nearly \$50,000 in extra tuition, lost wages and related costs. Taking longer to complete not only means students pay more, but it also decreases the chances that they graduate at all.
- **Full-time vs. Part-time:** Full-time student success rates are significantly higher than part-time student success rates. Full-time students at Indiana colleges are nearly twice as likely to earn a two-year degree and six times more likely to graduate with a four-year degree than their part-time student peers.
- **The Completion Achievement Gap:** A closer look at Indiana’s completion picture reveals stark disparities in graduation rates for low-income and minority Hoosier students. The gap in graduation rates for Indiana college students by race and ethnic groups is 24 percentage points at the state’s two-year colleges and 31 percentage points at Indiana four-year colleges.
- **Transfer Students and Degree Changers:** Traditional graduation rates do not fully capture all forms of student success, including transfer students and students who earn a different degree type than what they set out to pursue (e.g., changed from a four-year degree to a two-year degree). Incorporating transfer students and degree changers increases the statewide success rate by 8 percent for two-year college entrants and by 13 percent for four-year college entrants.
- **The Cost Per Completion:** Indiana’s two-year colleges spend an average of \$31,369 for each degree produced. Indiana’s four-year colleges spend an average of \$62,208 for each degree produced.

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The Completion Reports—which include both state-level and campus-specific data profiles—are part of an ongoing series of annual reports—including College Readiness Reports and Return on Investment reports—developed by the Commission to convey the progress of Hoosier students at each stage in the postsecondary pipeline. The reports are provided as companion pieces to the Commission’s “Reaching Higher, Achieving More” strategic plan. Adopted in 2012, “Reaching Higher, Achieving More” calls for key reforms designed to increase college completion and education attainment in Indiana.

Read the Commission’s College Completion Reports and strategic plan online at [www.che.in.gov](http://www.che.in.gov).

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## **What People Are Saying about Indiana’s College Completion Reports**

“To get the biggest bang for their tuition buck, college students must complete their academic programs and earn that all-important diploma. The Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s Indiana College Completion Reports starkly highlight the fact that most Indiana students don’t finish what they start when they enroll in college, and so students, taxpayers and employers fail to reap the full return on their investment in higher education. The Indiana College Completion Reports offer valuable information to help students and families in their selection of a higher education program, and to inform education providers and policy makers by shining the spotlight on the critical issue of college completion with a purpose.”

– William D. Hansen, President and CEO, USA Funds.

"This is very impressive. These Completion Reports represent Indiana's continuing commitment to graduate more students and more of those students on time. Indiana is leading the country in providing important, consumer-friendly information to students, parents and the general public."

– Stan Jones, President, Complete College America

“This report shines a bright light on the important work that Indiana’s higher education stakeholders—institutions, students, policymakers, and employers—must continue. Our state will not thrive, or meet the needs of our economy, without significant improvement in college completion, and particularly without significant focus on improving completion rates for low income students and students of color. I applaud the Commission for its comprehensive approach in measuring completion, and for highlighting completion gaps among students populations.”

– Jamie Merisotis, President and CEO, Lumina Foundation.