



INDIANA  
**CERTIFICATES**  
REPORT  
2020



# Postsecondary Certificates in Indiana

## Introduction

Early in 2020, the state's message to Hoosiers was to prepare for a rapidly changing economy by future-proofing their careers with upgraded skills and credentials.

We didn't know then just how rapidly things could change.

Despite the COVID-19 crisis that overtook the state and nation's thriving economies, the core of the message remains the same: Hoosiers must do everything they can to keep themselves from getting left behind, and that includes pursuing updated skills and credentials.

Those who found themselves suddenly out of work in March or April may have had their jobs return. Others are still out of work because their jobs are not coming back. Some no longer have the relevant and necessary skills to return to their former jobs, as employers have scaled up automation or increased the use of specialized technology to become more efficient in lean times.

Indiana's goal — that at least 60 percent of Hoosiers have education and training beyond a high school diploma by 2025 — is tied directly to projected workforce needs. Indiana has gained 15 percentage points toward educational attainment since 2008. About 5 percent of that increase is attributed to a gain in workforce certificates; a recent addition by the Lumina Foundation gave Indiana another bump of 5 percentage points for industry certifications, bringing Indiana to 48.5 percent of working-age adults with credentials beyond a high school diploma.

Certificates, such as those earned through Indiana's [Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant or Employer Training Grant](#) programs, offer another pathway for learners to increase their skills and meet job requirements with less time and investment than required of a two- or four-year degree.

*(For an in-depth look at the results of the state's Workforce Ready Grant program, see pages 9-12.)*

## Terminology

A **credential** is an umbrella term that includes academic **degrees** (certifications, associate, bachelor's and master's degrees, for example), along with other types of non-degree academic attainment, such as certificates, licenses, certifications and more.

A **certificate** is a postsecondary credential that takes less time to earn than an associate or bachelor's degree. Certificates can include **short-term certificates** that take less than one year to earn, and **long-term certificates** that take between one and two years to earn.

In addition to certificates, other types of postsecondary credentials include **industry certifications and licenses**, which are awarded by a certification or licensing body. Some credentials are time-limited that must be renewed periodically.

The **Indiana College Core (formerly known as the STGEC or Statewide Transfer General Education Core)** is a block of 30 credit hours that is transferrable among public institutions in Indiana and allows students to transfer with ease.

The **Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant** provides free job training for Hoosiers in five high-value industries: health and life sciences; IT and business services; advanced manufacturing; transportation and logistics; and building and construction.

## Key Takeaways

- **Hoosiers are earning certificates in high-demand fields** that include health care, business and IT, and trades (manufacturing, logistics and construction, for example). The No. 1 certificate in academic year 2018-2019 was business administration, followed by nursing assistant, clinical specialist, electrician and medical assisting services.
- A significant portion of Indiana's certificates come from the **Indiana College Core (formerly the Statewide Transfer General Education Core, or STGEC)**, a 30-hour credit block that transfers among Indiana's postsecondary institutions.
- **Over the past 10 years, Indiana has seen an over 500% increase in certificate production** and more certificates are being awarded than ever before. About 5 percent of the state's educational attainment is attributed to postsecondary certificates (out of 48.5 percent overall attainment).
- **The Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant has been a positive addition to Indiana's certificate options** for working-age Hoosiers, as well as those coming out of high school. Since the Workforce Ready Grant was established in 2017, almost 18,000 Hoosiers have earned a Workforce Ready Grant-eligible certificate. More than 38,000 Hoosiers are enrolled in these programs today. Hoosiers who earn a Workforce Ready Grant certificate see an annual median wage increase of \$6,800.
- **Many adults enroll in and complete postsecondary certificate programs**, in addition to traditional-aged students. Eleven percent of high school students earn certificates, including students who participate in Career and Technical Education. A greater percentage of adults over 25 than traditional-age students between the ages of 18-24 earn certificates in Indiana. About 5 percentage points more adults than traditional-age (18-24) students earn certificates.
- **There are differences in enrollment and completion depending on race/ethnicity, age and gender.** Certificate earners in Indiana are slightly more diverse than associate or bachelor's earners at public colleges in Indiana. These learners are often older than age 25 and more women than men earn certificates.
- **Certificate completion yields a return on investment for students and the state**, but certificate seekers should carefully consider the industry sector, earning potential and ability to stack certificates into advanced degrees to get the best return on investment possible.

# Analysis of postsecondary certificates

## Trends over time

According to a [2020 report](#) from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 8.9 percent of students nationally are enrolled in a certificate program. The Lumina Foundation’s [Stronger Nation Report](#) attributes about 9.9 percent of Indiana’s educational attainment to short-term credentials, with 38.6 percent of the attainment coming from associate degree attainment or greater. Of that nearly 10 percent of short-term credentials, about 5 percent are attributed to postsecondary certificates (with the rest coming from industry certifications).

Over the last 10 years, Indiana has seen over a 500% increase in certificate production, from 3,390 certificates conferred in 2009 to 21,628 certificates conferred in 2019. **(Figure 1)**

The State of Indiana—along with education and workforce leaders nationally—have emphasized the message that postsecondary education includes a full range of credentials and pathways to higher education and jobs. This includes everything from short-term industry certifications through graduate and other advanced degrees.

At the same time, there has been an overall increase in enrollment at Indiana’s community college system, Ivy Tech Community College, which may account for some of the increase. These numbers don’t reflect the most recent downturn in enrollment due to COVID-19. Hoosiers also continue to pursue certificates to stack their credentials for greater earning potential.

There are numerous delivery methods for earning certificates in Indiana:

- A transferrable block of 30 credit hours for students in high school and college (Indiana College Core [formerly known as the Statewide General Transfer Education Core])
- Students earning dual credit while in high school
- High-value certificates Indiana prioritizes by funding through the Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready program
- Certificates and Technical Certificates earned at Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University

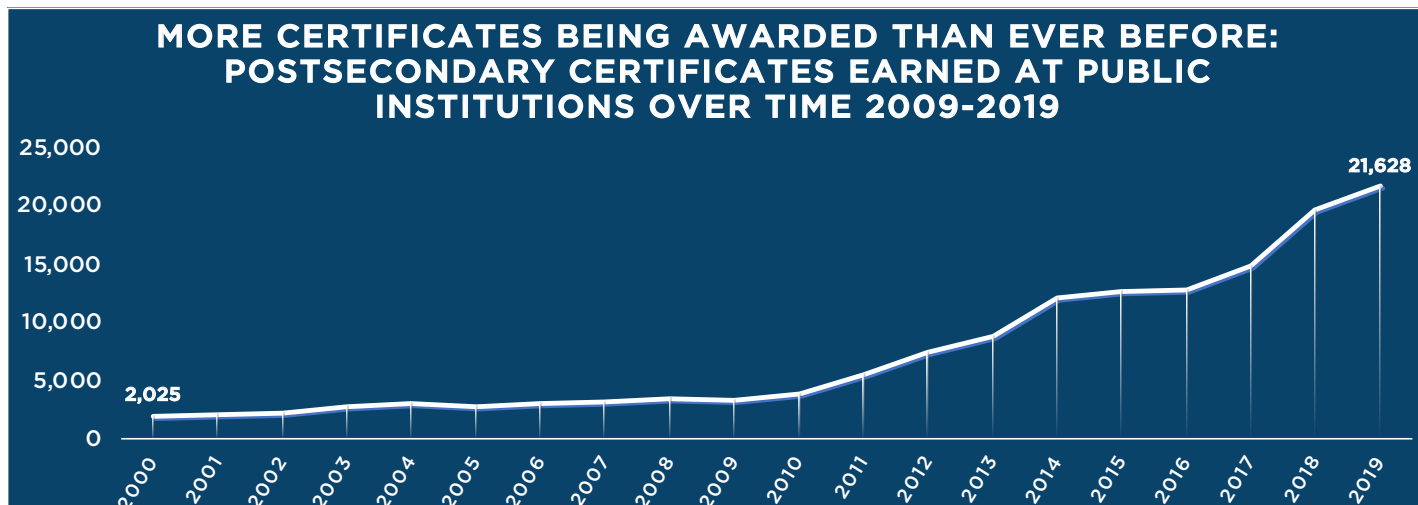


Figure 1

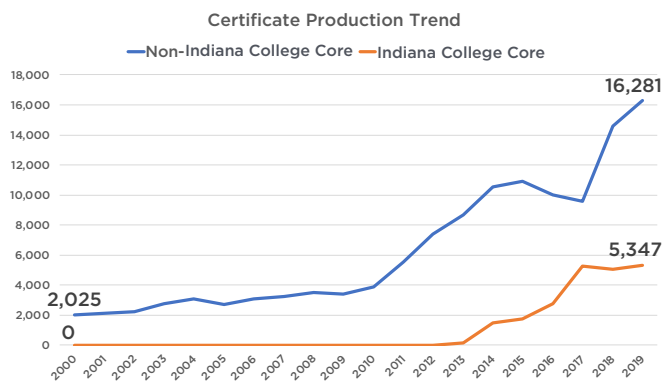


Figure 2

The Indiana College Core (previously known as the STGEC) was created by the Indiana General Assembly in 2012 and more than 5,300 of these certificates were awarded in 2019. **(Figure 2)** Of those, 1,257 were awarded in high school. This report acknowledges the benefit of the Indiana College Core for students, but the rest of this report will exclude or separate the Indiana College Core from the analysis of other postsecondary and workforce certificates.

The data captured in this analysis does not include non-postsecondary certificates that are funded by other sources, however. It is the Commission’s intention to be able to capture such information in the future.

**Certificates impact Indiana’s educational attainment**

In 2012, Indiana adopted a big goal of having at least 60 percent of working-age Hoosiers with a high-quality degree or credential beyond high school by 2025.

The goal includes certificates, which make up about 5 percent of Indiana’s educational attainment (out of

48.5 percent attainment). This 5 percent represents about 160,000 Hoosiers.

In 2017, the state of Indiana created the Next Level Jobs program, which includes the Workforce Ready Grant. Through the Workforce Ready Grant, learners can earn a tuition-free credit-bearing postsecondary certificate, or a non-credit-bearing certificate. (See terminology on page 2 for more about the difference.)

Since 2017, Indiana has awarded 18,000 Workforce Ready Grants and more than 38,000 Hoosiers have enrolled in the program (as of November 2020). (For a more detailed breakdown of the Next Level Jobs program, see pages 9-12).

Non-credit workforce certificates, apprenticeships, and other long- and short-term certificates are currently not counted toward educational attainment levels, but these types of credentials are still significant pathways for advanced education and training.

**Health care, business top interest sectors**

Most certificates conferred in Indiana are granted in high-demand areas and a significant portion of

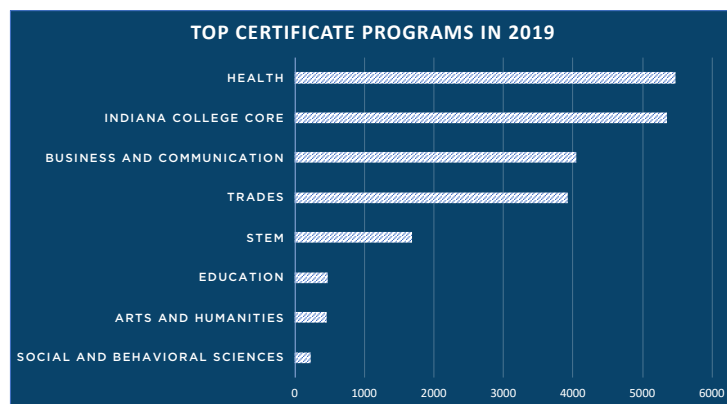


Figure 3

## TOP 10

### CERTIFICATES AWARDED IN 2019:

1. Business Administration
2. Nursing Assistant
3. Clinical Specialist
4. Electrician
5. Medical Assisting Services
6. Licensed Nurse Training
7. Emergency Care Attendant
8. Pre-Nursing Studies
9. Accounting Technology
10. Early Childhood Education

certificates are in the transferrable Indiana College Core program. More Hoosiers seek certificates in health-related fields than any others. **(Figure 3)** Excluding the Indiana College Core, business and communication sectors and trades (manufacturing, logistics and construction) are the next most popular industry sectors by certificate program in 2019.

#### Mission differentiation with certificate production

Each of Indiana’s public institutions offers something different—and unique—to students. The state’s community college system, Ivy Tech Community College, has awarded the most postsecondary certificates over time in Indiana. **(Figure 4)**

Enrollees at Ivy Tech Community College often earn certificates on their way to an associate degree, enabling students to stack and embed postsecondary certificates into advancing degrees.

#### Characteristics of certificate earners in Indiana

Certificate seekers tend to be older (age 25 and up) and slightly more diverse than all other public college graduates in Indiana.

**Race/ethnicity: (Figure 5)** Most certificate earners and other public college graduates in Indiana are White, tracking along the state’s population. However, a larger percentage of both White and Black Hoosiers earned certificates in 2019 than other degree types (including associate and bachelor’s degrees).

- For example, of all certificate earners in Indiana, just over 8 percent are Black, while 6.4 percent of all other public college graduates are Black.

**Gender:** More women earn certificates than men in Indiana. However, fewer women earn certificates than other types of degrees from Indiana public colleges. Women comprised almost 54 percent of certificate

## TOP 5

### PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AWARDED CERTIFICATES:

1. Ivy Tech Community College: **18,605**
2. Vincennes University: **1,215**
3. Indiana University Purdue University – Indianapolis: **778**
4. Purdue University – West Lafayette: **584**
5. Indiana University – Bloomington: **102**

Figure 4

## RACE/ETHNICITY OF GRADUATES

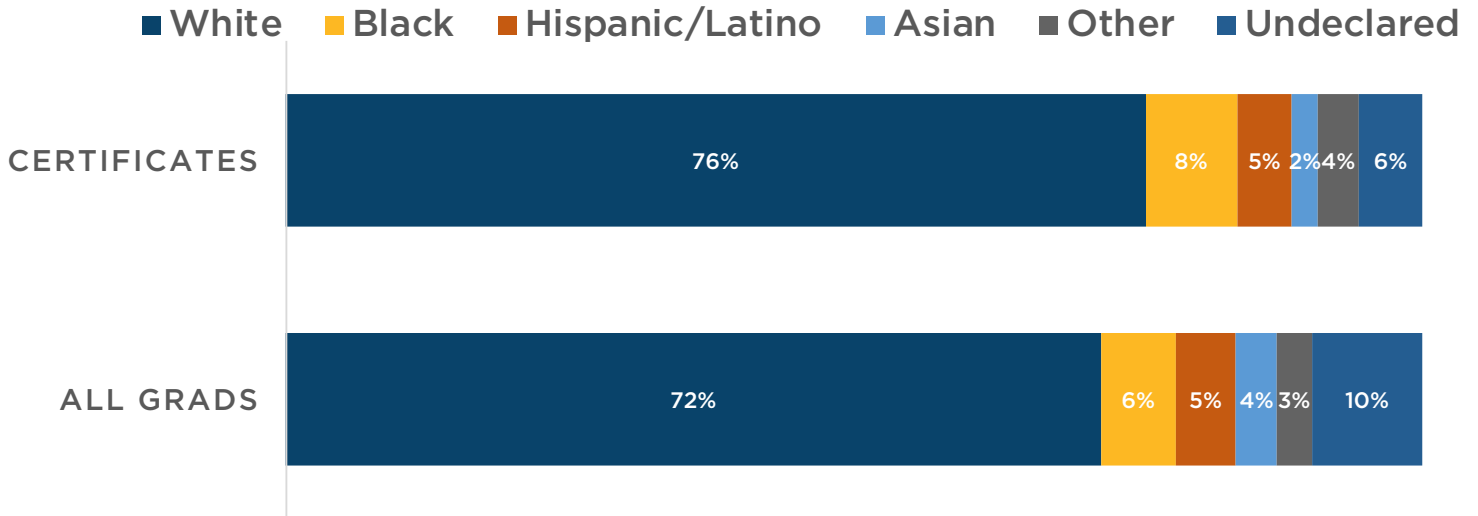


Figure 5

earners (excluding Indiana College Core earners), compared to about 56 percent women for all other public college degree types in 2019.

**Age: (Figure 6)** Almost half of all certificate earners

### Age Demographics of Certificate Earners (excluding Indiana College Core)

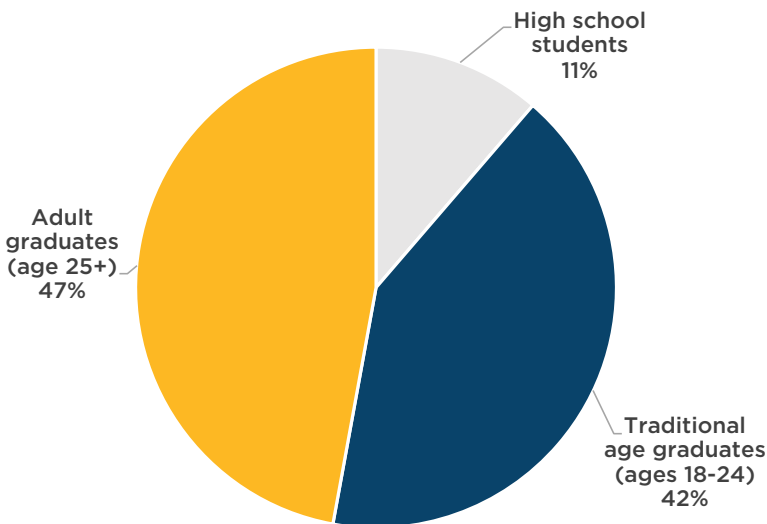


Figure 6

are adults over the age of 25. About 11 percent of high school students earn a certificate (not including the Indiana College Core) through dual enrollment, dual credit or other avenues.

### Return on investment for students and Indiana

Certificates can result in higher wages, especially if a student is strategic with their program and profession.

For example, Hoosiers who earn a Workforce Ready Grant-eligible certificate have a \$6,800 median annual wage gain after completing the credential.

A higher-level degree is one of the smartest investments a Hoosier may ever make. Most credentials are paid for within only a few years and make returns on investment for years to come.

However, students should keep in mind that earning potential varies by industry sector and the return on investment of certificates diminishes over time.

Some certificates do not provide the type of higher wages that can be expected in other industries, for example. The Commission's **2020 College Value**

### Earnings for Popular Programs of Study by Degree Level Five Years After Graduation

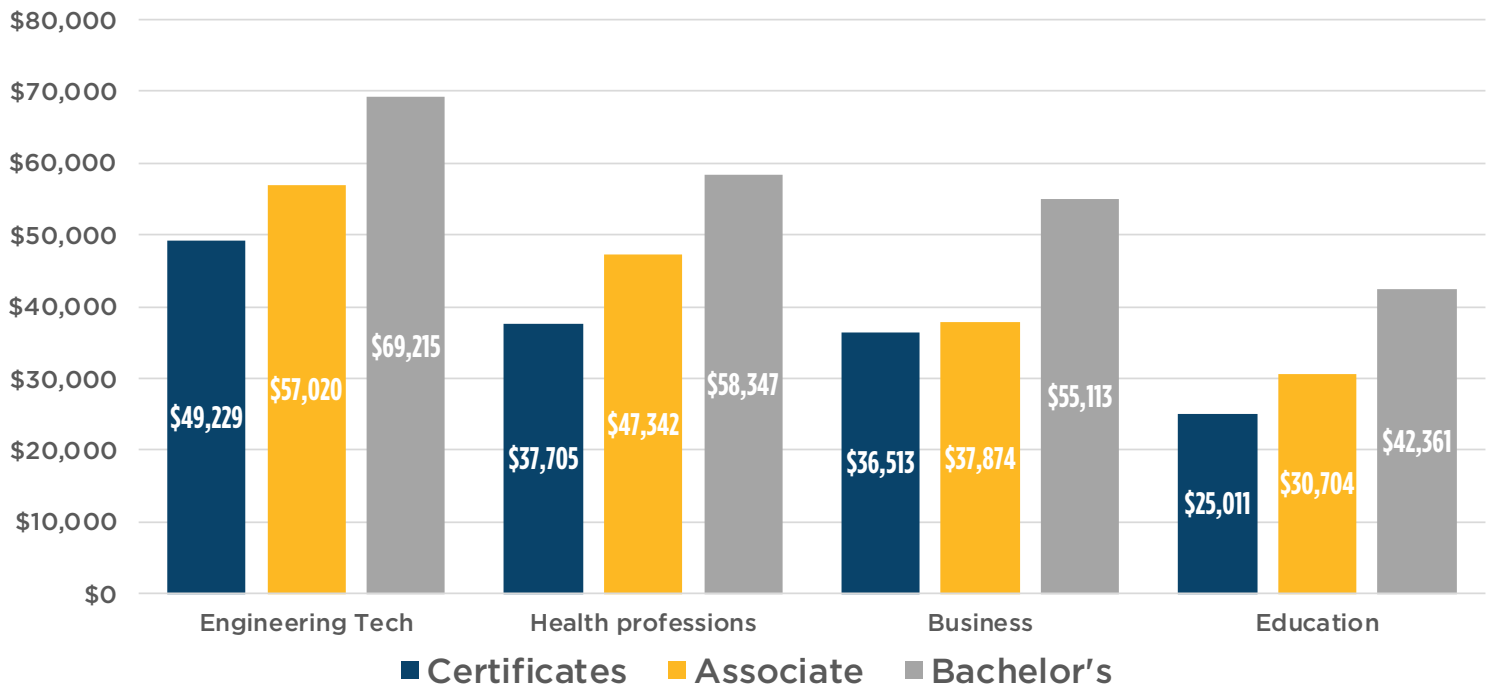


Figure 7

**Report** shows students who earn a certificate through an Engineering Tech program would be expected to out-earn students who earn certificates in other fields by thousands of dollars five years after graduation. Whereas fields such as health and business professions show earnings that are similar to each other five years after graduation. **(Figure 7)**

Other considerations for valuing the return on investment of certificates include:

- Older students may earn certificates on their way to changing careers, offering the potential for more meaningful career opportunities that may also pay more.
- Certificates are often less expensive than other two- or four-year credentials, thus the return on investment from increased earning potential is often greater immediately after the certificate is awarded, offering a boost to the state or local economy in the short-term.





**NextLevel Jobs**  
INDIANA  
**CERTIFICATES REPORT**  
RESULTS SINCE 2017

**FREE JOB TRAINING**  
**FOR HOOSIERS**

# Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant

Through the **Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant**, Indiana provides free job training for Hoosiers in five high-value industries: health and life sciences; IT and business services; advanced manufacturing; transportation and logistics; and building and construction.

Administered in partnership by Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, the Workforce Ready Grant is offered in both a credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing format. Data shown in this section is a combined measurement of Workforce Ready Grant-eligible postsecondary certificates and industry-recognized non-credit certifications.

## Data:

- Workforce Ready Grant impact on postsecondary credential landscape over time: (FIGURE 1)** Since Indiana launched the Next Level Jobs program in 2017, nearly 18,000 Hoosiers have earned a Workforce Ready Grant-eligible certificate. More than 38,000 Hoosiers are enrolled in these programs today. Prior to 2017, far fewer Hoosiers enrolled in and completed similar certificate programs. Hoosiers who earn the Workforce Ready Grant realize a median annual wage gain of \$6,800.

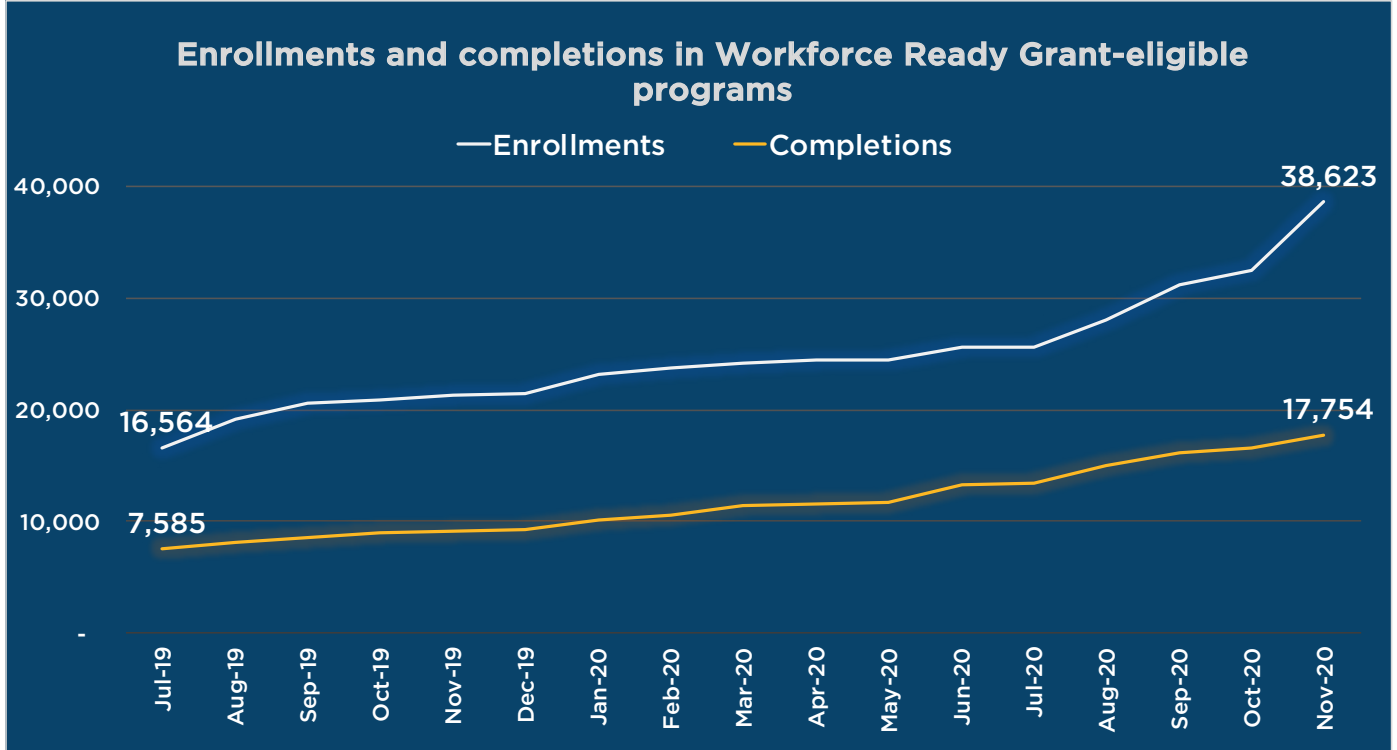


Figure 1

In response to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet launched the **Rapid Recovery for a Better Future** initiative in June 2020 to assist with Hoosiers’ economic recovery. Because of the existing Next Level Jobs framework, Indiana was able to quickly scale up the programs with federal funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This temporarily expanded the eligibility criteria of the Workforce Ready Grant, allowing Hoosiers with an existing college degree to enroll, resulting in a large enrollment spike between June-November 2020.

Eligibility for the Workforce Ready Grant program includes—among other factors—being an Indiana resident and holding no previous degree or certificate (as noted earlier, the degree requirement was temporarily waived for the state’s Rapid Recovery for a Better Future initiative in the wake of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery efforts).

- Industry sectors sought by Hoosiers who are eligible for the Next Level Jobs program: (FIGURE 2)**  
 Hoosiers who are eligible for the Next Level Jobs program indicate the most interest in the fields of Health & Life Sciences (38 percent) and IT & Business Services (25 percent). The remaining interest breaks out as follows: Advanced Manufacturing (12 percent), Building & Construction (10 percent) or Transportation & Logistics (8 percent).

### Industry sectors sought by Hoosiers who are eligible for Next Level Jobs



Figure 2

**Workforce Ready Grant demographics: (FIGURE 3)**

- **Race/ethnicity:** Although race and ethnic data are more difficult to come by for certificates and certifications, certain demographics are overrepresented compared to the share of Indiana’s population. Workforce Ready Grant enrollments in 2018-2019 show overrepresentation for:
  - Black students: 15 percent of Workforce Ready Grant enrollments in 2018-19, compared to 9 percent of Indiana’s population
  - Men: 52 percent of Workforce Ready Grant enrollments in 2018-19, compared to 49 percent of Indiana’s total population

Hispanic and Latino Hoosiers, however, are underrepresented in the proportion of Workforce Ready Grant enrollments, with 4 percent enrolled, compared to 7 percent of the state’s total population. In 2019, the Commission’s Padres Estrellas (or “Star Parents”) initiative began in an effort to increase outreach about the state’s Workforce Ready Grant program and the 21st Century Scholars program to individuals and families in five communities designated as having a high Hispanic and Latino population.

- **Educational attainment:** Of the Hoosiers who are eligible for the Workforce Ready Grant, 49 percent (or about 60,000 Hoosiers) have at least a high school diploma, while 32 percent have some college but no degree.

<b>WORKFORCE READY GRANT ENROLLMENTS</b>			
2018-2019	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
ASIAN	1%	1%	2%
BLACK	9%	7%	15%
HISPANIC OR LATINO	1%	3%	4%
SMALL POPULATIONS	2%	2%	4%
WHITE	33%	38%	71%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 3 \*Does not include students who are “undeclared” by race and ethnicity\*\*Rounding of figures accounts for discrepancies in the totals

For more information on the state’s Next Level Jobs program or to apply, **visit [www.nextleveljobs.org](http://www.nextleveljobs.org)**.

## ABOUT THE DATA

### General Notes and Sources:

**Sources:** Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE); Indiana Department of Workforce Development; Indiana Management Performance Hub; Indiana Governor’s Workforce Cabinet; Ivy Tech Community College; Vincennes University; Lumina Foundation; Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce

**Educational Attainment Level:** Indiana’s educational attainment figures are published in Lumina Foundation’s **Stronger Nation Report**.

**Credit-bearing certificates:** Enrollment and completions calculated using data submitted by Indiana public institutions to ICHE through the CHE Data Submission System (CHEDSS).

**Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant certificates:** Except where noted, enrollment and completion figures are provided by a variety of sources including the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet, Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University. Industry sectors sought by eligible Hoosiers were provided by Indiana’s Next Level Jobs program. Data was compiled by ICHE staff.

**Wage outcomes:** Certificate wage outcomes come from data in ICHE’s **2020 College Value Report**, which in turn is based on data from ICHE and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Workforce Ready Grant-eligible certificate wage outcomes are provided by the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet.

### Demographics

**Race/Ethnicity:** Represents race/ethnicity as reported by Indiana public institutions to ICHE. Groups include six mutually exclusive race/ethnicity categories: Asian, Black, Hispanic or Latino, Small Populations, White, and Undeclared. The Small Populations race/ethnicity category includes Native American/Alaskan Native, Two or More Races, Native Hawaiian groups.

**Racial and Ethnic** breakdowns for Workforce Ready Grant enrollments are for credit-bearing certificates only and is sourced from CHEDSS. Small Populations includes Undeclared students.

**Age:** Age of student at the time of earning a certificate.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education builds a policy agenda on a commitment to using compelling data to increase transparency, inform practice and drive change for the benefit of all Hoosiers. By publishing a series of **consumer-friendly reports**, the Commission spotlights progress at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.



The **Certificates Report** dives deep into certificate completions and includes analysis of student demographics, certificate types and terminology. Special focus is given to the Workforce Ready Grant program results.

**Reaching Higher in a State of Change** is the Commission's fourth strategic plan. It is the guiding document for Indiana to reach the goal of at least 60 percent of Hoosiers with education and training beyond high school by 2025. With the priorities of completion, equity and talent, its "Blueprint for Change" outlines action steps to achieve Indiana's attainment goal.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The **College Value Report** provides a clearer picture of the returns a college degree yields after graduation and beyond, both to the individual and the state. These benefits include greater earnings, job security, enhanced social mobility, increased civic engagement, improved health and wellness, a higher quality of life and more.

The **College Readiness Reports** help schools and communities understand how students are performing in college, while informing state and local policies that increase college readiness, access and success.

The **College Completion Reports** provide a clearer and more comprehensive picture of college completion in order to advance Indiana's collective efforts to boost educational attainment.

The **College Equity Report** disaggregates demographic data from the Commission's College Readiness and Completion reports to highlight outcomes in Indiana for race and ethnicity, gender, geography and socioeconomic status. The report also tracks the state's progress in closing the educational achievement gaps in Indiana.

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# INDIANA COMMISSION *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

## MISSION

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education is a 14-member public body created in 1971 to define the missions of Indiana's colleges and universities, plan and coordinate the state's postsecondary education system, administer state financial aid, and ensure that Indiana's higher education system is aligned to meet the needs of students and the state.



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