

2025 PROGRESS REPORT



Progress Toward Kentucky's Statewide Strategic Agenda Goals

An Annual Report of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

About the Council on Postsecondary Education

The Council on Postsecondary Education is Kentucky's higher education coordinating agency committed to strengthening our workforce, economy and quality of life. We do this by guiding the continuous improvement and efficient operation of a high-quality, diverse and accessible system of postsecondary education.

Key responsibilities include:

- developing and implementing a strategic agenda for postsecondary education that includes measures of progress.
- producing and submitting a biennial budget request for adequate public funding of postsecondary education.
- determining tuition rates and admission criteria at public postsecondary institutions.
- collecting and distributing data about postsecondary education performance.
- ensuring the coordination and connectivity of technology among public institutions.
- licensing non-public postsecondary institutions to operate in the Commonwealth.



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Aaron Thompson, Ph.D.

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Each year, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education publishes a Progress Report to show how the state and campuses are faring on key performance indicators associated with the statewide strategic agenda for postsecondary education. Additionally, the report highlights activities CPE is leading to advance our key priorities: affordability, transitions, success, talent and value.

I'm pleased to report that Kentucky's public higher education system improved in several key areas in 2023-24:

- Undergraduate enrollment growth remained strong at KCTCS and public universities from fall 2023 to fall 2024. Overall, universities saw undergraduate enrollment rise 3.9%, while KCTCS enrollment climbed 6.8%. The number of underrepresented minority students enrolled in postsecondary education grew by 13.3% at KCTCS and 7.9% at public universities, narrowing the gap in college going between minority and majority students.
- KCTCS increased credential production by 7.5% overall. Certificates and degrees awarded to underrepresented minority students were up 16.5%, and credentials awarded to low-income students were up 5.7%.
- Public universities increased graduate degree production by 1.4%, from 9,460 degrees in 2022-23 to 9,590 in 2023-24. Graduate degrees awarded to URM students increased by 10.2%.
- Graduation rates rose by 1.3 percentage points at public universities and 3 percentage points at KCTCS. For the first time, the six-year graduation rate for public universities exceeds 60%, while the three-year graduation rate for KCTCS is nearing 50%.



On the other hand, Kentucky lost ground on two higher education affordability metrics. The average amount of unmet need for undergraduates at in-state public universities increased 9.2% in 2023-24, from \$9,359 the previous year to \$10,225. At the same time, the percentage of students completing a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) fell 11 points, from 88.6% to 77.6%. As rising inflation puts pressure on institutional budgets, CPE will work with campuses to find cost efficiencies and free up additional resources for student aid.

I am encouraged by Kentucky higher education's progress and feel confident that the Commonwealth is closing in on our educational attainment goal - for 60% of Kentucky's working-age adults to have a postsecondary credential by the year 2030.

Sincerely,

Dr. Aaron Thompson, President
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: AFFORDABILITY

Kentucky will ensure postsecondary education is affordable for all Kentuckians.



AFFORDABILITY

State-Led Initiatives

CPE is working to increase college access and affordability for all Kentuckians. Key strategies include limiting tuition and fee increases; recommending operational efficiencies; educating students and families about college savings programs, grants, scholarships and responsible borrowing; and advocating for additional state funding.

- **Tuition and Fee Ceilings:** CPE staff worked with Kentucky's public universities and KCTCS to determine new tuition and fee ceilings for 2025-26 and 2026-27. Due to historic inflation levels, as well as other factors increasing the resource needs of public institutions, CPE proposed a common-dollar increase approach (as opposed to an across-the-board percentage increase used in prior years) to address growing disparities in tuition and fee rates across institutions within each sector. The final tuition and fee ceilings allow for a \$675 increase at the two public research institutions, a \$630 increase at comprehensive institutions and a \$9.00 per credit hour increase for KCTCS in total over a two-year cycle. The new rates reflect CPE's continued commitment to balancing affordability for students and their families with the resource needs of institutions.
- **Monitoring Student Debt Levels:** CPE's Data and Advanced Analytics Unit (DAA) released the second iteration of the Student Debt Report examining trends affecting undergraduate students attending a KCTCS college or Kentucky public university. The report finds that the proportion of students graduating with loan debt fell nearly 14 percentage points over the last five years, from 54.8% in 2018-19 to 40.9% in 2023-24. The decline was even more pronounced over the decade, falling 24 percentage points. Additionally, among completers who graduated with debt, average loan balances fell from \$29,072 to \$26,115, a decline of \$2,957 or 10.2% since 2018-19.
- **Financial monitoring:** Staff continued to fine-tune a process for assessing the financial health of institutions. The analysis evaluates fiscal stability and sustainability, as well as gauging institutional susceptibility to market risk factors. Staff identified methods, metrics and data sources for assessing institutional viability in their respective markets and determined whether institutions are making efficient and effective use of state resources. CPE has worked with several institutions on a voluntary basis and is looking to expand this work as staff capacity allows.
- **FAFSA public awareness campaign:** In light of substantial changes to the 2024-25 FAFSA form, GEAR UP Kentucky and KHEAA conducted a public awareness campaign to prepare students for the new application process. The promotion included statewide TV and radio commercials via the Kentucky Broadcasters' Association Public Education Partnership program, a social media campaign, an online resource hub for students and a series of FAFSA office hours over the summer to offer hands-on assistance at more than 70 locations across the state.
- **Affordable Learning KY (ALKY):** This Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL) initiative facilitates efforts to expand the availability and use of low- or no-cost, high-quality educational resources in Kentucky. In March, the Affordable Learning Open Education Week symposium assembled over 50 state and national educators to discuss topics such as Open Educational Resource (OER) publishing platforms, adoption and adaptation of existing OER and how to find the best free resources for student learning. In the spring of 2025, ALKY surveyed Kentucky students about the effect of textbook costs on their lives and academic achievement. This second annual survey was completed by more than 1,700 undergraduate and graduate students from 18 in-state postsecondary institutions.
- **Innovative Scholarship Pilot Program:** In partnership with KHEAA, CPE piloted a program supported with General Fund dollars to provide college access and promote undergraduate student success for displaced students (foreign nationals displaced by war, natural disaster or political upheaval). CPE worked with the National Association of System Heads (NASH) to provide assistance and resources to faculty and other campus practitioners working with this population.
- **Futuriti:** CPE, working with KDE and KYSTATS, launched the Futuriti website to help prospective students and/or career seekers find information and resources about higher education and workforce opportunities in Kentucky. The site includes information to assist students in paying for college as well as average costs and undergraduate loan amounts for each Kentucky postsecondary institution. Financial information available on the Kentucky Students' Right to Know website has migrated to Futuriti for greater transparency and ease. From February to May 2025, Futuriti has received more than 18,000 individual visitors.



AFFORDABILITY

Key Performance Indicator

Unmet Financial Need

Unmet need is the average annual amount students pay out of pocket after financial aid and expected family contributions (EFC) are subtracted. The metric includes FAFSA filers only, which is nearly 90% of enrolled students. The metric is calculated by taking the cost of attendance and subtracting EFC and all federal, state, local and institutional scholarships or grants. Campuses did not set targets for this indicator. The statewide 2023-24 target was to decrease unmet financial need by 5% from 2020-21, the baseline year. The public universities missed the target of \$9,605 by \$620, while KCTCS missed the target of \$5,666 by \$14.

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Eastern Kentucky University						
Overall	\$9,787	\$9,461	\$9,320	\$7,805	\$7,369	\$9,131
URM*	\$12,097	\$11,767	\$11,476	\$9,662	\$9,277	\$10,920
Low-Income	\$12,484	\$12,441	\$12,437	\$10,605	\$9,484	\$11,685
Kentucky State University						
Overall	\$11,980	\$11,505	\$13,266	\$12,797	\$13,171	\$14,053
URM	\$12,266	\$11,774	\$13,604	\$13,153	\$13,365	\$14,428
Low-Income	\$12,768	\$11,943	\$13,964	\$13,813	\$15,177	\$15,903
Morehead State University						
Overall	\$9,312	\$8,931	\$8,902	\$8,270	\$7,385	\$7,030
URM	\$11,204	\$10,791	\$10,672	\$10,291	\$9,180	\$8,873
Low-Income	\$11,449	\$11,256	\$11,445	\$10,428	\$9,460	\$8,757
Murray State University						
Overall	\$8,364	\$8,747	\$8,275	\$8,166	\$6,920	\$8,252
URM	\$10,600	\$11,332	\$11,074	\$10,818	\$9,317	\$11,007
Low-Income	\$12,887	\$13,621	\$13,421	\$13,386	\$11,166	\$13,140
Northern Kentucky University						
Overall	\$10,192	\$10,652	\$10,883	\$10,404	\$11,206	\$11,961
URM	\$12,517	\$13,214	\$13,583	\$12,144	\$14,027	\$15,028
Low-Income	\$14,679	\$15,666	\$16,194	\$14,242	\$16,572	\$16,930
University of Kentucky						
Overall	\$11,909	\$12,012	\$11,219	\$10,805	\$10,485	\$11,901
URM	\$14,731	\$14,579	\$13,852	\$13,838	\$13,109	\$14,903
Low-Income	\$17,925	\$18,550	\$18,541	\$18,029	\$17,455	\$19,091
University of Louisville						
Overall	\$10,471	\$10,609	\$10,889	\$11,231	\$10,989	\$11,190
URM	\$12,249	\$12,456	\$12,770	\$13,623	\$13,079	\$13,374
Low-Income	\$14,607	\$15,091	\$15,345	\$15,661	\$14,906	\$14,271
Western Kentucky University						
Overall	\$9,200	\$8,926	\$9,054	\$8,782	\$8,426	\$8,936
URM	\$11,790	\$11,649	\$11,567	\$11,029	\$10,450	\$10,952
Low-Income	\$13,729	\$13,660	\$14,244	\$14,077	\$13,249	\$13,627

*Underrepresented minority students (URM) include Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and two or more races. Low-income students are Pell grant recipients during their year of entry.



AFFORDABILITY

Key Performance Indicator

Unmet Financial Need, Continued

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
KCTCS						
Overall	\$6,290	\$5,952	\$5,964	\$6,137	\$6,098	\$5,680
URM	\$7,243	\$6,871	\$6,865	\$6,938	\$6,803	\$6,126
Low-Income	\$7,303	\$7,001	\$7,046	\$7,367	\$7,431	\$6,781
Statewide (Public Universities)						
Overall	\$10,177	\$10,217	\$10,111	\$9,691	\$9,359	\$10,225
URM	\$12,615	\$12,649	\$12,672	\$12,390	\$12,003	\$12,956
Low-Income	\$14,137	\$14,472	\$14,689	\$14,018	\$13,500	\$14,297

Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Time to Degree

Students can save thousands of dollars by completing a degree on time, since extra semesters mean extra cost. This indicator measures the average total number of academic years students are enrolled prior to undergraduate degree completion. In general, the goal is to complete a bachelor's degree in four years and an associate degree in two years. Students seeking diplomas and certificates are not included in this measure. Targets were not established for URM and low-income populations, but progress is monitored.

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
Eastern Kentucky University							
Overall	4.32	4.25	4.17	4.12	4.12	4.04	4.00
URM*	4.45	4.45	4.41	4.50	4.29	4.12	No Goal
Low-Income	4.43	4.37	4.27	4.24	4.27	4.17	
Kentucky State University							
Overall	4.68	4.60	4.38	4.42	4.55	4.48	4.20
URM	4.78	4.76	4.42	4.45	4.54	4.44	No Goal
Low-Income	4.71	4.71	4.59	4.72	4.90	5.30	
Morehead State University							
Overall	4.24	4.20	4.14	4.09	4.16	4.09	4.00
URM	4.44	4.50	4.32	4.28	4.26	4.35	No Goal
Low-Income	4.37	4.36	4.20	4.17	4.31	4.19	
Murray State University							
Overall	4.30	4.17	4.13	4.05	4.05	4.01	4.00
URM	4.59	4.52	4.41	4.14	4.35	4.19	No Goal
Low-Income	4.56	4.35	4.22	4.19	4.12	4.12	

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AFFORDABILITY

Key Performance Indicator

Time to Degree, Continued

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
Northern Kentucky University							
Overall	4.47	4.36	4.36	4.24	4.24	4.23	4.20
URM	4.41	4.43	4.42	4.36	4.28	4.51	No Goal
Low-Income	4.63	4.38	4.44	4.34	4.41	4.38	
University of Kentucky							
Overall	4.15	4.14	4.13	4.08	4.06	4.05	4.10
URM	4.26	4.23	4.21	4.17	4.09	4.13	No Goal
Low-Income	4.28	4.21	4.18	5.25	5.40	4.16	
University of Louisville							
Overall	4.32	4.30	4.30	4.24	4.21	4.22	4.20
URM	4.39	4.39	4.32	4.25	4.27	4.33	No Goal
Low-Income	4.42	4.37	4.35	4.45	4.36	4.29	
Western Kentucky University							
Overall	4.22	4.18	4.14	4.08	4.06	4.03	4.10
URM	4.47	4.39	4.40	4.38	4.30	4.15	No Goal
Low-Income	4.40	4.29	4.30	4.19	4.10	4.17	
KCTCS							
Overall	3.18	2.99	2.93	2.92	2.94	2.88	2.70
URM	3.40	3.14	3.13	3.14	3.14	3.11	No Goal
Low-Income	3.25	3.03	3.01	3.01	3.10	3.06	
Statewide (Public Universities)							
Overall	4.26	4.22	4.19	4.12	4.12	4.10	4.10
URM	4.40	4.36	4.32	4.28	4.23	4.24	No Goal
Low-Income	4.42	4.32	4.28	4.29	4.27	4.21	

Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Highlights

- Average unmet financial need increased 9.2% for public university undergraduates in 2023-24, from \$9,359 the previous year to \$10,225. Unmet need for URM students increased 7.9% over the same period, from \$12,003 to \$12,956. Low-income students at public universities saw their unmet need increase by 5.9%, from \$13,500 to \$14,297.
- At KCTCS, average unmet financial need decreased by 6.9%, from \$6,098 the previous year to \$5,680. Unmet need for low-income KCTCS students fell by 8.7%, while unmet need for URM students fell by 10%.
- Finishing college in less time is an often overlooked affordability strategy. Undergraduates at public universities, on average, take 4.10 years to complete a degree, equal to the 2023-24 statewide target. Average time to degree for KCTCS is 2.88 years, narrowly missing the 2023-24 target of 2.70.

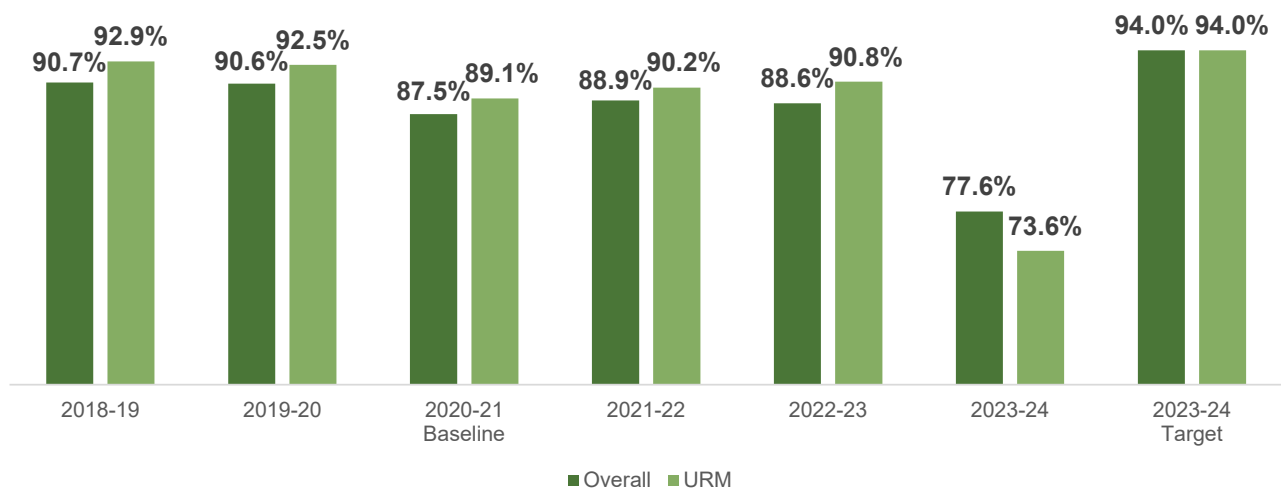


AFFORDABILITY

Key Performance Indicator

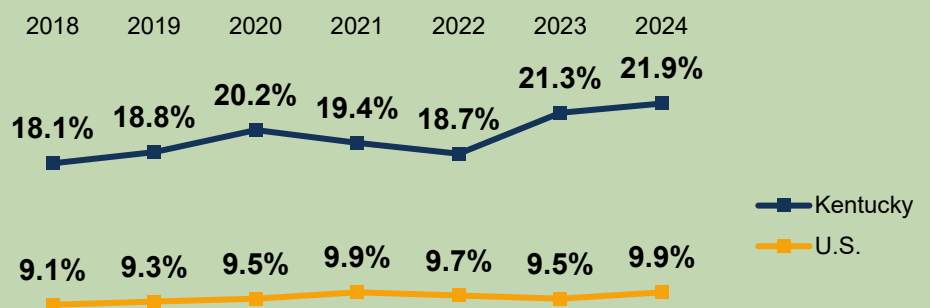
FAFSA Completion

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the form students fill out annually, beginning as high school seniors through their senior year of college, to determine eligibility for federal Pell Grants and other forms of financial assistance, like work-study, student loans and some scholarships. Completing the FAFSA is the best way to unlock available aid and ensure no federal dollars are left on the table. Federal efforts to roll out a simplified FAFSA form resulted in technical glitches and massive delays that impacted hundreds of thousands of students nationally. In light of these issues, Kentucky expects increased volatility in the percentage of students who complete the form, and has stepped up assistance efforts for students and families.



Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS). Underrepresented minority students (URM) include Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and two or more races.

Kentucky allocates a greater share of postsecondary funding to state financial aid than the U.S. average



Source: FY 24 State Higher Education Finance Report, SHEEO

In 2024, 21.9% of Kentucky higher education funding went directly to students in the form of state grants and scholarships. The average annual award per student was \$1,942, compared to the national average of \$1,155.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: TRANSITIONS

Kentucky will ensure more students transition to college prepared to succeed.



TRANSITIONS

State-Led Initiatives

CPE is working with its partners to help more high school students apply to college and make a successful postsecondary transition.

- **Commonwealth Education Continuum:** CPE continued to facilitate and manage the Commonwealth Education Continuum (CEC), a P-20 initiative that promotes statewide initiatives among P-12, postsecondary, community and workforce leaders aimed at strengthening Kentucky's education pipeline. Workgroups are focused on four areas: postsecondary affordability, K-12 educator workforce, P-20 competency framework and advising and transitional support.
- **Dual Credit and Early Postsecondary Opportunities:** CPE recently overhauled its dual credit policy, which now includes a statewide goal for 50% of Kentucky high school graduates to complete a dual credit course with a grade of "C" or higher by the year 2030. Dual credit courses are aligned to KDE's career and technical pathways or CPE's general education core requirements. Additional changes emphasize the importance of increasing dual credit access for underserved populations and ensuring postsecondary institutions accept dual credit to meet general education requirements. CPE held monthly webinars on dual credit and early postsecondary opportunities for high school and postsecondary advisors, created and continuously improved a dual credit toolkit and provided numerous onsite workshops throughout the year. CPE also facilitated the Dual Credit Advisory Committee to increase communication, collaboration and alignment.
- **The Great Admissions Redesign:** In early 2024, Lumina Foundation named CPE one of seven winners of The Great Admissions Redesign. Led by CPE's Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC), the agency received \$150,000 to facilitate a collaborative, student-centered, design-thinking continuous improvement approach to address long-standing barriers and untapped potential in admissions and financial aid processes. This work culminated in five strategic priorities: improving transcript accessibility, expanding dual credit, bringing transparency to financial aid, strengthening proactive communications in grades 9-12 and supporting seamless transfer.
- **Equitable and Accelerated Pathways:** In 2023, CPE joined a national initiative called "Launch: Equitable and Accelerated Pathways for All." CPE, the lead agency,

is working with 10 state partners to expand access to high-quality college and career pathways. During phase one, staff conducted needs assessments; participated in cross-state curated academies for each focus area (policy, data, partnerships and funding); convened stakeholder focus groups; and created a strategic action plan. In phase two, Kentucky will participate in a national community of practice and continue efforts to move the work forward.

- **Advising Outreach:** The Kentucky Advising Academy (KAA) continues to expand its work across the state. KAA provided webinars and connected educators to advising content through social media, email and in-person professional development sessions. KAA presented at national conferences hosted by the National College Attainment Network and the Association of Career and Technical Education. Through a partnership with Education Strategy Group (ESG), KAA launched the Kentucky Postsecondary Advising Framework and implementation guidance to support districts in building robust postsecondary advising systems. In March 2025, KAA awarded mini-grants reimbursable up to \$10,000 to six K-12 public schools and area technology centers. These grants supported new or expanded efforts to increase college advising capacity.
- **GEAR UP Kentucky (GUK):** GUK served nearly 6,000 students in 12 school districts and 9 postsecondary institutions in 2023-24, with a central goal of improving successful transitions between secondary and postsecondary education. Program staff provided 18,000 hours of student advising (an 18% increase from the previous year), 18,600 hours of college and career readiness curricula and 1,488 hours of student leadership development programs. To provide early exposure to postsecondary campuses, 737 high school students participated in 91 college visits during the school year, and 27 students participated in a three-week residential GUK Summer Academy at Northern Kentucky University, where they completed three hours of free college credit. As a result, GUK saw significant gains in key outcomes over the previous year. For the sixth year in a row, GUK's high school graduation rate (95%) exceeded the state's overall graduation rate (92%), and the percentage of high school seniors completing a college application increased an additional 14 percentage points (61% to 75%). GUK saw a significant 22 percentage-point jump in advising participation in the first year of postsecondary education, with 31% of GUK college freshman participating in at least three advising sessions during their freshman year.



TRANSITIONS

Key Performance Indicators

Undergraduate Enrollment

Undergraduate enrollment captures the total unduplicated number of students who enroll in an undergraduate program offered by one of Kentucky's public colleges or universities in an academic year, either full-time or part-time. Enrollment is a leading indicator, meaning that it provides an early indication of future degree production and educational attainment levels. After declines caused by the global pandemic, enrollment has returned to pre-COVID levels. Low-income enrollment data for fall 2024 is not yet available and will be reported next year.

INSTITUTION	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020 Baseline	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2023 Target
Eastern Kentucky University								
Overall	13,399	12,662	12,070	11,684	12,072	12,726	13,448	12,250
URM*	1,595	1,590	1,683	1,734	1,981	2,157	2,365	No Goal
Low-Income	5,168	4,817	4,533	4,412	4,587	5,163	N/A	
Kentucky State University								
Overall	1,666	2,029	2,148	2,135	1,610	1,546	1,932	2,212
URM	879	1,156	1,429	1,470	1,182	1,162	1,153	No Goal
Low-Income	801	876	990	1,011	907	871	N/A	
Morehead State University								
Overall	9,400	8,964	8,621	8,314	8,218	8,059	8,258	8,700
URM	729	716	700	735	758	783	899	No Goal
Low-Income	3,024	2,832	2,802	2,554	2,358	2,370	N/A	
Murray State University								
Overall	8,142	8,215	7,939	7,735	7,756	8,111	8,281	8,047
URM	881	935	909	851	908	944	1,030	No Goal
Low-Income	2,522	2,514	2,435	2,380	2,380	2,589	N/A	
Northern Kentucky University								
Overall	12,158	12,058	11,672	10,988	10,940	10,069	10,327	11,854
URM	1,580	1,613	1,632	1,540	1,547	1,523	1,667	No Goal
Low-Income	3,414	3,239	2,907	2,796	2,516	2,478	N/A	
Western Kentucky University								
Overall	17,035	15,907	15,287	14,729	14,442	14,593	14,153	15,746
URM	2,640	2,534	2,621	2,581	2,534	2,724	2,794	No Goal
Low-Income	4,973	4,645	4,524	4,267	4,147	4,441	N/A	

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TRANSITIONS

Key Performance Indicator

Undergraduate Enrollment, Continued

INSTITUTION	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020 Baseline	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2023 Target
University of Kentucky								
Overall	22,188	22,276	22,246	21,928	22,767	23,971	25,586	23,000
URM	3,655	3,682	3,752	3,810	3,932	4,157	4,558	No Goal
Low-Income	5,154	5,068	4,750	4,642	4,929	5,391	N/A	
University of Louisville								
Overall	15,834	16,074	16,118	15,830	16,121	16,397	17,248	16,500
URM	3,644	3,772	4,065	4,128	4,578	4,930	5,358	No Goal
Low-Income	4,599	4,594	4,426	4,565	4,595	4,963	N/A	
KCTCS								
Overall	77,809	78,484	70,233	69,978	73,956	78,771	84,122	74,517
URM	12,329	13,126	12,371	12,931	14,099	15,643	17,727	No Goal
Low-Income	30,413	29,700	26,532	25,463	25,254	27,141	N/A	
Statewide (4-Yr. Publics)								
Overall	99,822	98,185	96,101	93,343	93,926	95,472	99,233	129,981
URM	15,603	15,998	16,791	16,849	17,420	18,380	19,824	No Goal
Low-Income	29,655	28,586	27,367	26,627	26,419	28,266	N/A	

Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Highlights

- Total undergraduate enrollment at public universities increased 3.9% over the previous year, from 95,472 in fall 2023 to 99,233 in fall 2024. Enrollment at KCTCS rose 6.8%, from 78,771 in fall 2023 to 84,122 in fall 2024.
- URM undergraduate enrollment at KCTCS and public universities increased 13.3% and 7.9%, respectively, from the previous year. Enrollment numbers for low-income students in fall 2024 are not yet available.
- Every public university except WKU experienced enrollment gains in fall 2024, lead by KSU with a 25.0% increase, UK with a 6.7% increase, EKU with a 5.7% increase and UofL with a 5.2% increase.

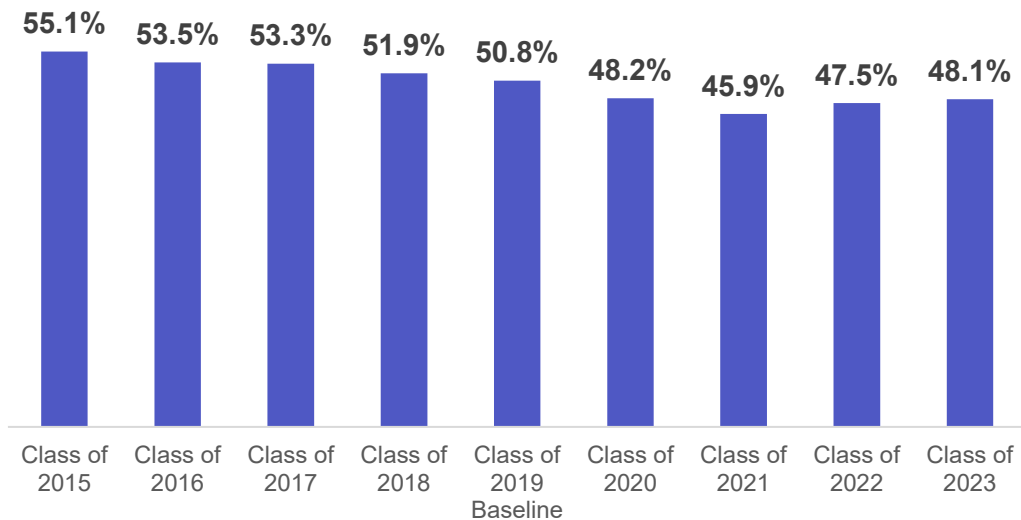


TRANSITIONS

Key Performance Indicator

Immediate College-Going Rate, In-state Only

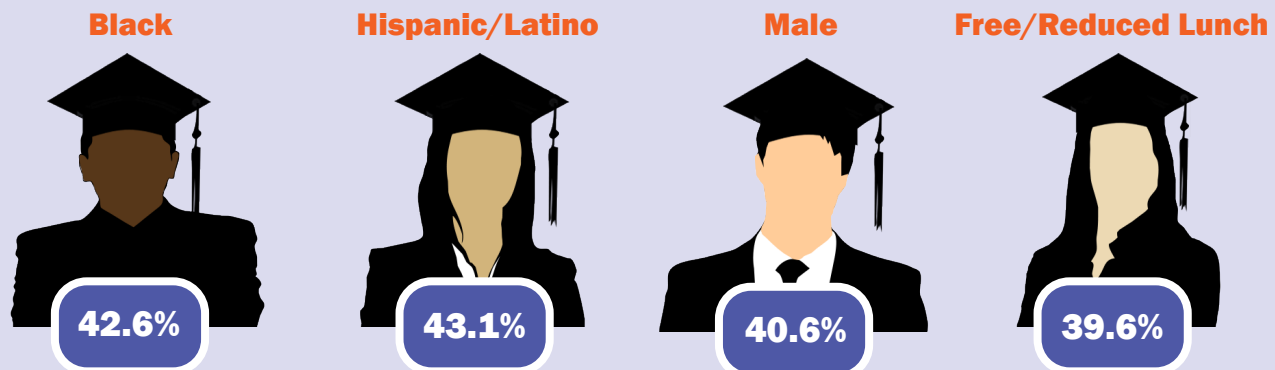
The immediate college-going rate is the percentage of recent Kentucky high school graduates who attend any in-state postsecondary institution in the summer, fall or spring following high school graduation. The year corresponds to the first year of postsecondary enrollment (i.e., 48.1% of students who graduated high school in 2023 were enrolled in college the following academic year (2023-24).



Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)

Students underrepresented in college enroll at lower rates.

Overall, **48.1%** of Kentucky's high school class of 2023 went directly to an in-state college, but college going varied by race, ethnicity, gender and income.



Source: Kentucky High School Feedback Report, Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SUCCESS

Kentucky will ensure more students earn high-quality degrees and credentials.



SUCCESS

State-Led Initiatives

CPE promotes high-impact practices that research has proven to be effective in increasing student persistence and completion. Staff works with campuses to implement both academic and non-academic policies and services to support holistic student development and workforce readiness.

■ **Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC):**

KYSSC is a unit of CPE funded by a grant from the James Graham Brown Foundation. KYSSC leads strategy development and implementation for admissions redesign, transfer partnerships, gateway course success, student basic needs, mental health and adult attainment. For each priority, KYSSC facilitates communities of practice to provide professional development, foster cross-institutional and community collaboration and drive continuous improvement of promising and best-practice implementation. In September 2024, KYSSC launched the Kentucky Leadership exChange, a professional development program to train campuses to lead student-centered change. KYSSC also promotes resource sharing through the Impact exChange, an online platform for faculty and practitioners.

■ **Student Basic Needs:** In partnership with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), Kynectors have been placed at all KCTCS campuses and are actively helping students meet their basic needs by accessing federal, state and community resources. Planning is underway to extend Kynector coverage to Kentucky's public universities, with targeted onboarding and technical assistance provided to institutional partners throughout the summer and fall of 2025. KYSSC was selected to represent Kentucky in the inaugural SHEEO Basic Needs Academy, a national initiative that supports state systems in advancing student basic needs policy and infrastructure.

■ **Improving Transfer:** In 2024, KYSSC expanded its capacity to lead transfer partnership work by hiring a transfer strategy lead and five part-time senior fellows, as well as establishing a transfer guiding team comprised of KCTCS and university partners. Key initiatives include the development of a transfer data dashboard, a student voice research project to explore barriers to transfer, the launch of a transfer community of practice and expansion of transfer improvement communities.

■ **Gateways to Opportunity:** CPE and KYSSC released a report on actions taken to improve the corequisite developmental education model and ensure it works equally well for all students. Current priorities include the development of a dashboard to track disaggregated data

on student enrollment and success in gateway courses and facilitating a related community of practice.

■ **2024 Student Success Summit:** The 14th annual Kentucky Student Success Summit was held February 10-11, 2025, at the University of Kentucky Gatton Student Center. The theme was "Transformational Leadership." While inclement weather derailed programming on day two, those sessions were provided at a later date by webinar format to all registrants. Over 470 faculty, staff and administrators from Kentucky's public and private colleges attended the convening.

■ **Mental Health & Suicide Prevention:** In February 2025, KYSSC released the statewide mental health strategy, marking a significant milestone in Kentucky's commitment to supporting student mental wellness. KYSSC hosted its second statewide Mental Health Convening in May 2025, bringing together a diverse group of practitioners, educators and decision-makers from across the Commonwealth. Over 70 campus partners engaged in collaborative planning, shared promising practices and began shaping institution-specific and system-level approaches to advance mental health outcomes for all students.

■ **Focus on Adult Learners:** In October 2024, the KYSSC hosted an Adult Attainment Convening welcoming 200+ partners from across the state to discuss common priorities and challenges to support adult learner degree completion. Additionally, CPE teamed up with Ithaka S+R, a non-profit educational research and consulting organization, to identify and reduce barriers that prevent adults from completing a postsecondary credential.

■ **Kentucky Faculty Leadership Academy:** The inaugural cohort of 25 participants from community and technical colleges and universities met from October 2024 through May 2025. These full-time, mid-career faculty worked with campus mentors and CPE staff to gain a deeper understanding of not only what leadership entails, but also their institutions' place within state and national postsecondary landscapes.

■ **Kentucky Graduate Profile:** The Graduate Profile is the state's higher education learning framework identifying ten essential skills for undergraduate mastery. CPE is working with campus representatives to create a statewide implementation plan by fall 2025 and provided grants to help institutions fully implement Graduate Profile-related work by the end of academic year 2027-28.



SUCCESS

Key Performance Indicator

Undergraduate Degrees & Credentials

Degrees and credentials awarded is the key indicator most directly tied to Kentucky's 2030 educational attainment goal. For KCTCS institutions, the measure captures the total number of diplomas, certificates and associate degrees awarded in an academic year. If a student received more than one credential in an academic year, all awards are counted. For public universities, the measure includes bachelor's degrees only (again, if a student earned multiple degrees, all are counted).

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
Eastern Kentucky University							
Overall	2,690	2,634	2,406	2,426	2,264	2,199	2,500
URM*	249	284	262	278	310	321	275
Low-Income	1,327	1,360	1,249	1,220	1,171	1,123	1,300
Kentucky State University							
Overall	212	137	154	150	153	291	166
URM	157	105	124	119	130	254	135
Low-Income	158	103	111	115	115	223	121
Morehead State University							
Overall	1,260	1,139	1,153	1,102	992	940	1,200
URM	101	73	70	109	79	73	73
Low-Income	708	634	669	620	584	532	696
Murray State University							
Overall	1,577	1,659	1,614	1,480	1,603	1,561	1,675
URM	144	183	146	155	142	150	151
Low-Income	680	753	737	669	703	659	763
Northern Kentucky University							
Overall	2,134	2,222	2,223	2,076	1,962	1,931	2,300
URM	256	253	304	279	244	243	315
Low-Income	954	947	986	892	800	764	1,021
Western Kentucky University							
Overall	2,984	3,042	2,843	2,794	2,526	2,735	3,000
URM	383	386	388	348	393	419	414
Low-Income	1,298	1,339	1,270	1,211	1,074	1,228	1,341

*Underrepresented minority students (URM) include Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and two or more races. Low-income students are Pell grant recipients during their year of entry.



SUCCESS

Key Performance Indicator

Undergraduate Degrees & Credentials, continued

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
University of Kentucky							
Overall	5,105	5,202	5,011	5,062	5,238	5,055	5,406
URM	740	777	734	723	800	781	792
Low-Income	1,501	1,499	1,452	1,507	1,441	1,427	1,581
University of Louisville							
Overall	3,049	3,112	2,991	2,923	2,938	2,787	3,200
URM	553	646	644	620	714	666	689
Low-Income	1,200	1,232	1,204	1,217	1,242	1,156	1,288
KCTCS							
Overall	37,128	39,291	39,458	38,090	39,920	42,910	41,600
URM	4,367	4,679	4,878	5,205	5,897	6,870	5,263
Low-Income	22,733	23,982	23,784	22,641	23,053	24,369	25,020
Statewide (Public Universities)							
Overall	19,011	19,147	18,395	18,013	17,676	17,499	19,477
URM	2,583	2,707	2,672	2,631	2,812	2,907	2,823
Low-Income	7,826	7,867	7,678	7,451	7,127	7,112	8,111

Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Highlights

- Total bachelor's degrees awarded by public universities in 2023-24 fell 1.0% over the previous year, from 17,676 to 17,499, missing the 2023-24 target by 1,978 degrees. Undergraduate degrees awarded to underrepresented minority (URM) students at public universities increased by 3.4%, exceeding the 2023-24 target by 84 degrees. Undergraduate degrees awarded to low-income students decreased slightly over the same period (0.2%), missing the target by 999 degrees.
- The number of credentials awarded increased across all categories at KCTCS from 2022-23 to 2023-24. Overall credentials were up 7.5%, credentials awarded to URM students were up 16.5% and credentials awarded to low-income students were up 5.7%.
- Only KSU and WKU increased bachelor's degree production in 2023-24, up 90.2% and 8.3%, respectively. Morehead was down 5.2%, UofL was down 5.1%, UK was down 3.5%, ECU was down 2.9%, Murray was down 2.6% and NKU was down 1.6%.
- None of the public universities met their overall degree targets for 2023-24. KCTCS surpassed its degree and credential targets for all students and URM students, but missed its low-income target by 651 credentials.



SUCCESS

Key Performance Indicator

Graduation Rate

Three-year graduation rate is the indicator public community and technical colleges report to the United States Department of Education through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). This measure reflects the percentage of first-time, full-time associate or credential-seeking students entering in the fall semester who graduate with an associate degree or credential within three years of entry, or 150% of the normal time frame. A six-year graduation rate is reported to IPEDS by public universities and reflects the percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students who receive a bachelor's degree within six years of entry, or 150% of the normal time frame. As with the three-year rate, part-time and transfer students are excluded from the cohort, as are students who begin in the spring semester. Despite these limitations, graduation rates are a useful way to compare the success of public institutions across the country in fulfilling their core undergraduate mission - ensuring students complete a credential in a timely manner.

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
Eastern Kentucky University							
Overall	50.0%	52.3%	52.3%	53.5%	55.0%	54.7%	56.0%
URM*	34.0%	38.2%	38.3%	40.5%	45.9%	37.0%	42.3%
Low-Income	38.3%	43.4%	44.0%	44.4%	45.3%	46.4%	48.0%
Kentucky State University							
Overall	25.8%	30.3%	38.2%	33.3%	28.4%	34.8%	40.0%
URM	24.2%	27.3%	41.1%	32.7%	27.7%	34.3%	33.0%
Low-Income	21.5%	29.2%	37.3%	34.2%	26.4%	31.1%	34.3%
Morehead State University							
Overall	45.9%	42.6%	44.7%	49.0%	49.3%	52.4%	48.5%
URM	43.4%	34.4%	33.1%	38.2%	41.0%	41.7%	36.9%
Low-Income	36.9%	32.9%	35.6%	39.0%	41.9%	45.9%	39.4%
Murray State University							
Overall	54.6%	53.1%	56.0%	61.7%	62.8%	64.0%	60.0%
URM	37.2%	33.3%	39.9%	47.6%	48.8%	49.3%	44.9%
Low-Income	38.6%	40.3%	41.3%	53.7%	50.9%	53.3%	46.3%
Northern Kentucky University							
Overall	47.7%	48.2%	49.7%	51.7%	49.5%	54.1%	54.0%
URM	38.0%	39.8%	41.1%	43.9%	39.3%	47.0%	45.9%
Low-Income	36.7%	36.4%	36.9%	38.3%	38.4%	45.6%	41.7%
Western Kentucky University							
Overall	51.6%	55.1%	57.4%	54.0%	56.1%	57.9%	59.0%
URM	34.7%	36.9%	40.7%	33.3%	36.1%	39.0%	43.0%
Low-Income	38.3%	41.5%	43.2%	40.4%	42.3%	45.1%	45.0%

*Underrepresented minority students (URM) include Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and two or more races. Low-income students are Pell grant recipients during their year of entry.



SUCCESS

Key Performance Indicator

Graduation Rate, continued

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
University of Kentucky							
Overall	66.1%	66.0%	67.9%	68.5%	69.7%	71.2%	70.0%
URM	56.0%	53.0%	58.2%	57.2%	54.9%	58.0%	60.6%
Low-Income	54.5%	52.9%	55.2%	54.3%	54.3%	56.9%	58.3%
University of Louisville							
Overall	58.6%	60.4%	61.6%	62.2%	59.9%	60.5%	63.0%
URM	54.3%	53.7%	53.9%	57.2%	51.6%	51.1%	56.3%
Low-Income	48.3%	50.3%	50.6%	52.6%	48.2%	51.6%	53.1%
KCTCS							
Overall	33.9%	36.3%	40.4%	41.5%	44.2%	47.2%	43.2%
URM	22.7%	24.3%	28.7%	29.7%	31.8%	40.0%	32.4%
Low-Income	31.5%	32.7%	37.9%	38.0%	41.4%	43.7%	40.9%
Statewide (Public Universities)							
Overall	54.9%	56.4%	58.2%	59.2%	59.9%	61.2%	60.0%
URM	43.4%	44.0%	48.3%	48.4%	45.9%	48.4%	51.7%
Low-Income	41.5%	43.1%	44.9%	46.1%	46.6%	49.2%	48.4%

Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Highlights

- Overall, public universities increased the average six-year graduation rate by 1.3 percentage points, from 59.9% in 2022-23 to 61.2% in 2023-24, exceeding the 2023-24 target. The six-year graduation rate for low-income students increased by 2.6 percentage points, exceeding the target. The URM rate rose by 2.5 percentage points but fell shy of the target by 3.3 percentage points.
- KCTCS increased the average three-year graduation rate by 3 percentage points, from 44.2% in 2022-23 to 47.2% in 2023-24. The three-year graduation rate for URM students increased by 8.2 percentage points, while the rate for low-income students increased by 2.3 percentage points over the same period. KCTCS exceeded all of its 2023-24 graduation rate targets.
- All the public universities except EKU increased their graduation rate from the previous year. KSU was up 6.4 points, Morehead was up 3.1 points, Murray was up 1.2 points, NKU was up 4.6 points, WKU was up 1.8 points, UK was up 1.5 points and Louisville was up six-tenths of a percentage point.
- Morehead, Murray, NKU and KCTCS surpassed all of their 2023-24 graduation rate targets. KSU achieved its target for URM students, WKU achieved its target for low-income students and UK achieved its overall graduation rate target, the first Kentucky public to exceed 70%.



SUCCESS

Key Performance Indicator

Retention Rate

This indicator captures the percentage of first-time, degree- or credential-seeking students enrolled in the summer or fall of their first year who are still enrolled at the same institution the following fall, or, in the case of KCTCS students, have completed a credential. A high retention rate suggests that students are satisfied enough with their first-year experience to return for a second year. Student support services like advising, mentoring and financial aid are factors that can positively influence a school's retention rate.

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
Eastern Kentucky University							
Overall	75.1%	79.5%	73.9%	77.0%	79.6%	76.9%	77.0%
URM*	65.5%	80.2%	70.3%	72.7%	78.5%	72.0%	73.6%
Low-Income	70.2%	76.7%	69.9%	72.6%	75.3%	72.8%	73.2%
Kentucky State University							
Overall	65.6%	78.5%	70.4%	52.9%	60.8%	63.2%	73.0%
URM	67.0%	78.1%	70.7%	53.8%	61.2%	64.5%	75.0%
Low-Income	69.5%	81.0%	73.5%	51.1%	60.6%	62.9%	75.0%
Morehead State University							
Overall	73.2%	75.8%	69.8%	68.3%	69.5%	65.0%	75.0%
URM	68.5%	71.1%	63.0%	57.3%	58.9%	62.4%	68.2%
Low-Income	67.3%	73.1%	67.3%	63.4%	66.1%	62.5%	72.5%
Murray State University							
Overall	79.3%	81.1%	74.7%	77.4%	76.1%	75.7%	81.0%
URM	70.4%	75.3%	60.0%	71.4%	64.8%	67.9%	67.3%
Low-Income	73.6%	72.1%	67.1%	68.9%	71.6%	67.8%	73.4%
Northern Kentucky University							
Overall	72.1%	74.5%	70.0%	77.5%	77.8%	75.4%	78.0%
URM	69.1%	69.0%	60.2%	74.2%	75.1%	67.8%	68.7%
Low-Income	65.6%	69.1%	61.6%	69.0%	74.6%	69.9%	70.1%
Western Kentucky University							
Overall	72.9%	76.8%	72.8%	76.6%	78.0%	78.3%	76.0%
URM	59.5%	73.0%	65.9%	72.8%	74.7%	71.2%	70.1%
Low-Income	64.7%	69.9%	65.8%	71.3%	69.8%	73.4%	70.0%

*Underrepresented minority students (URM) include Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and two or more races. Low-income students are Pell grant recipients during their year of entry.



SUCCESS

Key Performance Indicator

Retention Rate, continued

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
University of Kentucky							
Overall	85.0%	85.9%	85.7%	84.5%	86.7%	86.8%	87.0%
URM	78.5%	82.2%	79.8%	78.5%	81.1%	83.7%	81.7%
Low-Income	77.7%	81.2%	78.1%	77.8%	80.3%	81.2%	80.6%
University of Louisville							
Overall	80.1%	80.9%	76.6%	78.2%	80.5%	81.5%	83.0%
URM	75.4%	79.2%	74.3%	75.0%	77.3%	78.6%	81.3%
Low-Income	75.1%	78.0%	71.6%	72.2%	78.7%	77.9%	78.5%
KCTCS							
Overall	55.5%	57.1%	55.5%	57.3%	60.8%	61.9%	58.5%
URM	49.5%	50.9%	47.9%	51.8%	53.9%	57.0%	51.9%
Low-Income	54.5%	55.8%	55.3%	55.7%	58.4%	60.1%	58.5%
Statewide (Public Universities)							
Overall	78.2%	80.7%	76.9%	78.2%	80.7%	80.2%	80.0%
URM	71.5%	77.9%	71.5%	72.3%	75.7%	76.2%	76.6%
Low-Income	71.1%	75.5%	69.9%	70.7%	74.7%	73.9%	75.1%

Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Highlights

- First-year to second-year retention at public universities was down half a percentage point, from 80.7% in 2022-23 to 80.2% in 2023-24. Nevertheless, the 2023-24 target was achieved. The retention rate for URM students was up half a percentage point to 76.2%, just shy of the 76.6% target. The retention rate for low-income students fell eight-tenths of a percentage point, missing the 2023-24 target by 1.2 points.
- At KCTCS, retention increased 1.1 percentage points, from 60.8% in 2022-23 to 61.9% in 2023-24, exceeding the 2023-24 goal of 58.5%. Retention rates for URM and low-income students increased by 3.1 and 1.7 percentage points, respectively, surpassing the 2023-24 targets.
- Four public universities (KSU, WKU, UK, UofL) increased overall retention in 2023-24; of these, only WKU exceeded their 2023-24 target. ECU, Morehead, Murray and NKU experienced declines in their overall retention rate from last year.

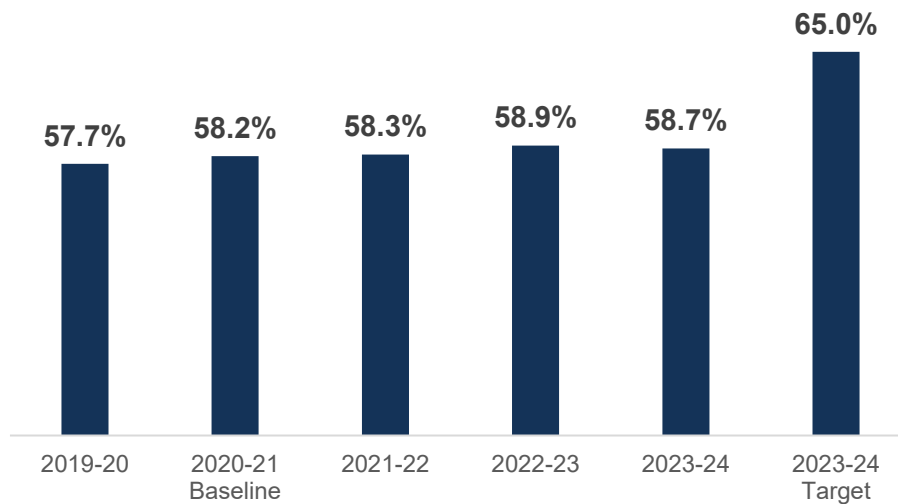


SUCCESS

Key Performance Indicator

2-Year to 4-Year Transfer

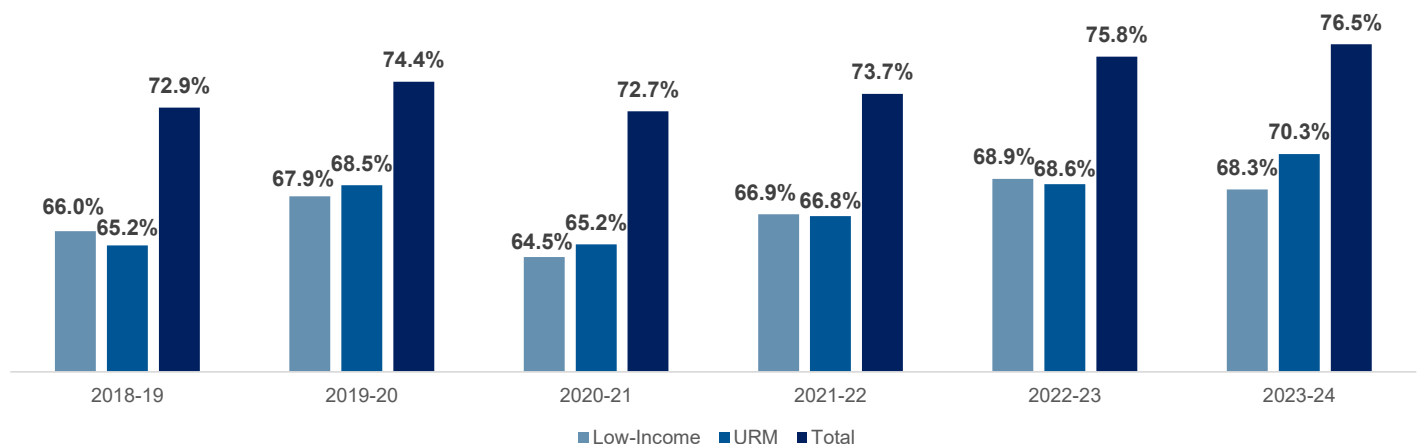
Part of KCTCS's core mission is providing general education requirements at an affordable price to students wishing to start at a community or technical college and transfer to a four-year program. This indicator measures the percentage of first-time, full-time credential-seeking students entering KCTCS in the fall semester who earn an AA or AS degree and transfer to any in-state, four-year public or private institution within the next academic year. The transfer rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point to 58.7% from the previous year, missing the 2023-24 target by 6.3 points.



Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS).

Persistence Rate

Persistence rate is a statewide indicator that examines the percentage of first-time, credential-seeking students enrolled in a public or independent postsecondary institution in the summer or fall who are still enrolled the following fall at any in-state postsecondary institution, or, in the case of KCTCS students, have completed a credential. The persistence rate provides a more complete understanding of whether students are still enrolled in postsecondary education than the retention rate, which only examines whether students are still enrolled at their native institution. Average persistence rate increased by seven-tenths of a percentage point in 2023-24, exceeding the 2023-24 target of 75%.



Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS). Underrepresented minority students (URM) include Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and two or more races. Low-income students are Pell grant recipients during their year of entry.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: TALENT

Kentucky will increase talent and innovation to support our communities, employers and economy.



TALENT

State-Led Initiatives

A primary purpose of postsecondary education is to produce adaptive, highly skilled workers to fuel the economy. CPE collaborates with government, education and workforce partners to ensure Kentucky's graduates earn high-value credentials that lead to professional employment opportunities.

- **Healthcare Workforce Collaboratory:** On October 30, 180 participants from across healthcare and education sectors, including providers, educators, policymakers and industry leaders, attended the collaboratory. The conference was focused on tackling workforce shortages, strengthening public-private partnerships and exchanging best practices in healthcare training and retention.
 - **Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund (HWIF):** HWIF matches private donations with public funding to increase Kentucky's pipeline of healthcare practitioners. During its first year, 46 healthcare partnership proposals were awarded funding, totaling a public/private investment of \$13.3M. A total of 27 healthcare partners invested in a HWIF partnership, and 35 healthcare training programs across 21 institutions/training sites were awarded funds. The awarded funds will provide full-tuition scholarships for one or two years to an estimated 794 Kentucky students. Additionally, CPE was able to provide a \$150,000 incentive award to ECU's school of nursing, with the private portion (\$75,000) donated by Humana.
 - **Healthcare Summer Bridge Grants:** CPE awarded a total of \$473,501 in seed grants to public and private universities to support summer bridge programs. These grants, up to \$56,300 each, helped institutions develop or expand summer programs to introduce high school students to healthcare careers and related postsecondary education opportunities.
 - **Aerospace, Aviation and Defense Investment Fund:** The AERO Act is a new statute that facilitates public-private partnerships to address workforce development challenges in Kentucky's aerospace, aviation and defense sectors. Administered by CPE, the fund accepts donations, and requires all donations to be matched, dollar for dollar, by General Fund disbursements. The fund supports student scholarships and/or equipment for programs to meet emerging workforce demands.
 - **Kentucky Community Learning Network:** CPE is leading the transition of Department for Community-Based Services (DCBS) training from Eastern Kentucky University to a consortium of regional institutions:
- Morehead State University, Northern Kentucky University, and Brescia University. In the interim, CPE will provide governance, financial oversight, curriculum modernization and institutional coordination, supporting over 5,000 DCBS employees and affiliated partners like foster parents and kinship caregivers. The program delivers training across virtual, hybrid and in-person formats, emphasizing regulatory compliance, adult learning best practices and workforce readiness. Training content includes over 400 specialized courses tailored to family support and protection services.
- **Kentucky Opioid Abatement Grant:** The Collegiate Recovery Resource Center (CRRRC) program, led by CPE and funded by the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission, is a statewide initiative to expand recovery support services on college campuses. Beginning July 1, 2025, the program will fund up to five public colleges or universities to establish campus-based CRRRCs serving students in recovery from substance-use disorders. Each CRRRC will provide trauma-informed peer recovery support, academic navigation and workforce readiness services through a dedicated physical space and campus coordinator. This funding is awarded through the Opioid Abatement Grant Division and totals \$500,000.
 - **Heroes to Healers:** Authorized under Kentucky HB 303, CPE oversees H2H, which transitions military-trained healthcare personnel into Kentucky's civilian healthcare workforce. The program requires KCTCS to develop academic career pathways and bridge programs that award academic credit for military medical experience toward licensure and certification in civilian healthcare roles.
 - **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Grant:** CPE, in partnership with the University of Kentucky, is leading a statewide initiative to expand artificial intelligence (AI) research capacity among new and emerging researchers, particularly in rural-serving and minority-serving institutions. Supported by the National Science Foundation, this effort focuses on increasing access to the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource Pilot, building institutional readiness, and fostering a sustainable AI ecosystem in Kentucky. CPE's role includes coordinating faculty engagement, hosting regional AI training workshops and establishing a Research Coordination Network to support cross-institutional collaboration.

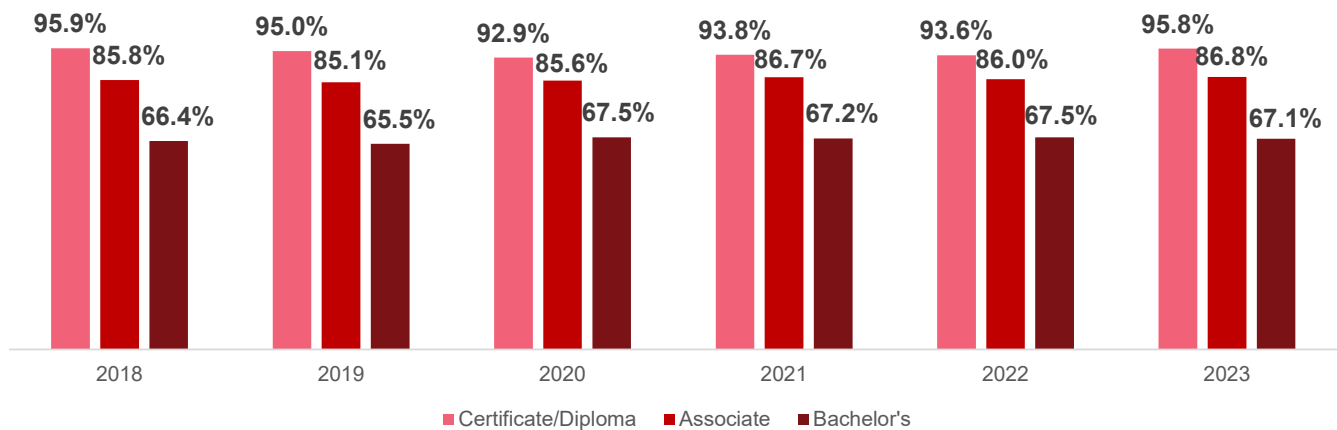


TALENT

Key Performance Indicator

Graduates Working or Pursuing More Education

This indicator tracks the percentage of certificate, associate and bachelor's degree graduates working in Kentucky or pursuing additional education one year following graduation. Working status is determined by Kentucky wage records. Percentages for reporting year 2023 represent the percent of 2023 college graduates who were employed or seeking advanced degrees in 2024. Data needed to calculate these percentages are not available until the spring of 2025, which accounts for the lag time in reporting.



Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)

Median Annual Wages After Graduation in Kentucky

	Cert. Grads	Associate Grads	Bachelor's Grads	Master's Grads
3 Years Out:	\$28,017	\$42,840	\$43,976	\$61,153
5 Years Out:	\$30,303	\$45,899	\$49,407	\$63,828
10 Years Out:	\$35,457	\$52,359	\$59,863	\$68,937



Source: 2024 KY Postsecondary Feedback Report, Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)



TALENT

Key Performance Indicator

Graduate & Professional Degrees

Although graduate degree production does not assist Kentucky in meeting its educational attainment goal, it does prepare Kentuckians to work in high-demand occupations like engineering, medicine, law and business management, helping the state meet workforce demands in critical areas. Graduate and professional degrees include the following categories: master's, specialist, doctoral - research/scholarship, doctoral - professional practice and doctoral - other. Targets were not established for URM populations, but progress is monitored. CPE does not collect financial aid data for graduate students, so low-income degrees are not available.

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
Eastern Kentucky University							
Overall	926	862	827	825	818	814	900
URM*	78	80	98	120	109	119	No Goal
Kentucky State University							
Overall	51	30	29	37	49	30	50
URM	17	9	13	16	24	17	No Goal
Morehead State University							
Overall	312	293	237	247	203	174	250
URM	19	35	23	21	20	11	No Goal
Murray State University							
Overall	470	500	623	610	672	718	680
URM	32	41	53	63	76	80	No Goal
Northern Kentucky University							
Overall	617	717	1,218	1,485	1,659	1,808	1,300
URM	72	105	151	215	293	317	No Goal
Western Kentucky University							
Overall	834	868	796	791	762	767	825
URM	119	107	120	112	113	125	No Goal

*Underrepresented minority students (URM) include Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and two or more races. Low-income students are Pell grant recipients during their year of entry.



TALENT

Key Performance Indicator

INSTITUTION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Baseline	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24 Target
University of Kentucky							
Overall	2,212	2,244	2,182	2,509	2,961	3,042	2,300
URM	220	237	277	323	405	490	No Goal
University of Louisville							
Overall	1,992	1,945	2,077	2,269	2,336	2,237	2,150
URM	323	327	364	503	485	522	No Goal
Statewide (Public Universities)							
Overall	7,414	7,459	7,989	8,773	9,460	9,590	8,455
URM	880	941	1,099	1,373	1,525	1,681	No Goal

Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Highlights

- Public universities increased graduate degree production by 1.4%, from 9,460 in 2022-23 to 9,590 in 2023-24, exceeding the statewide target. Graduate degrees awarded to URM also increased by 10.2%. Institutions do not collect financial aid data for graduate students, so degrees awarded to low-income students are not available.
- Four of the eight public universities awarded more graduate degrees in 2023-24 than in the previous year: Murray (up 6.8%), NKU (up 9.0%), UK (up 2.7%) and WKU (up 0.7%). Of these, Murray, NKU and UK achieved their 2023-24 targets.
- Four public universities experienced declines in graduate degree production: ECU (down 0.5%), KSU (down 38.8%), Morehead (down 14.3%) and UofL (down 4.2%). Despite declining, UofL still surpassed its 2023-24 degree target by 87 degrees.

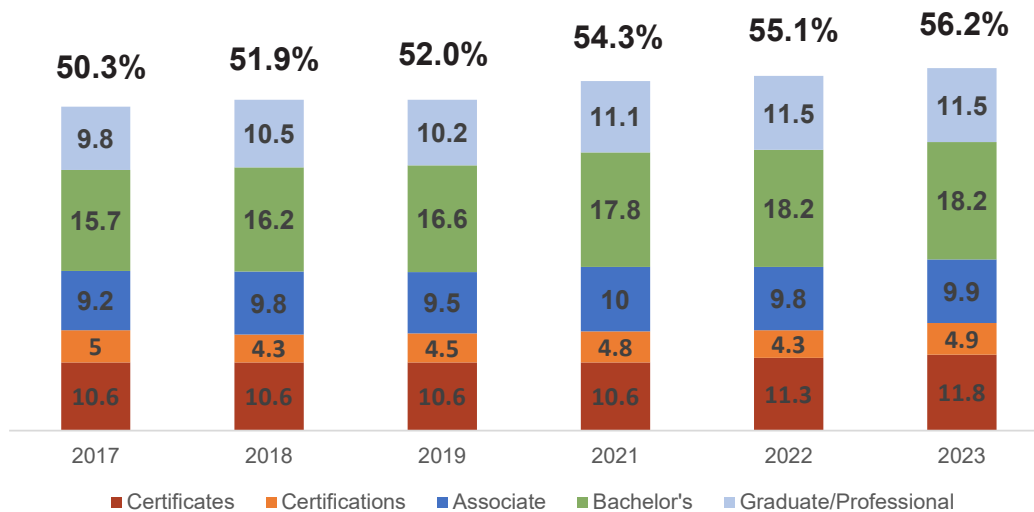


TALENT

Key Performance Indicator

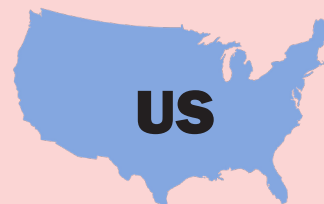
Statewide Educational Attainment Rate

Once a leader in educational attainment beyond high school, the U.S. has fallen behind other industrialized nations in the percentage of adults with a postsecondary credential. When Lumina Foundation established a goal for 60% of Americans to have a certificate or degree by the year 2025, many states followed suit with their own attainment goal. Kentucky's goal is to increase postsecondary attainment among 25-64 year olds to 60% by the year 2030.



Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System using annual data from the American Community Survey (ACS), Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Data and the Current Population Survey.

Kentucky Educational Attainment versus the Nation



Associate Degree	9.9%	9.1%
Bachelor's Degree	18.2%	23.4%
Graduate Degree	11.5%	14.6%



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: VALUE

Kentucky will improve public understanding that postsecondary education is key to greater opportunity and economic growth.



VALUE

State-Led Initiatives

People are increasingly questioning the value of higher education, despite numerous studies showing that college graduates earn higher salaries, enjoy better health and are much less likely to be unemployed or on public assistance. CPE is committed to increasing higher education's value proposition through public awareness and education efforts and other statewide activities.

■ **Legislative Outreach:** President Thompson and his leadership staff engaged in numerous conversations with the Governor, executive branch staff, legislators, legislative staff and members of state and federal education organizations on issues affecting higher education in Kentucky. Additionally, throughout the 2025 legislative session, CPE served as a key resource to legislators and LRC staff on several bills, including Senate Bill 77, a bill that opens up opportunity for comprehensive universities to offer certain doctoral degrees, provided they meet established criteria and financial benchmarks outlined in the legislation. After the 2025 session, CPE staff worked with campus presidents and chief budget officers to identify high-priority funding components and request amounts for the upcoming biennium, including additional appropriations for campus operations, the Postsecondary Education Performance Fund (PEPF) and capital investment priorities, such as new capital construction projects and asset preservation. The list of budget priorities was developed at the request of leadership in the General Assembly.

■ **Community Outreach:** President Thompson and CPE leadership have engaged in numerous meetings and events across the state to champion the value of higher education and gain firsthand insights into evolving workforce needs. These efforts are expanding CPE's visibility and impact and strengthening strategic partnerships with workforce leaders, community organizations, philanthropic groups and local governments.

■ **Social Media and Digital Outreach:** CPE's expanding digital presence, driven by the social media accounts of CPE and President Thompson, continues to elevate the Higher Education Matters message and strategically promote the work of CPE. Engagement rates across platforms consistently outperform industry benchmarks for both government and higher education, reflecting a

highly effective outreach strategy. A cornerstone of this effort is the weekly #KYHigherEdMatters infographic, which delivers timely, data-driven insights on state and national higher education trends. This content reaches nearly 6,000 email subscribers and 7,000 social media followers through CPE channels, with additional amplification to over 10,000 users via President Thompson's accounts.

■ **News Coverage and Speaking Engagements:** President Thompson and senior leadership staff have been prominently featured in high-profile stories across both state and national media platforms. Additionally, agency staff have served as featured speakers and expert panelists at major state and national conferences and events this past year, further elevating the agency's visibility and influence. CPE staff presented at the SHEEO annual convening, Complete College America's annual convening and the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships' summit for dual credit programs, among others.

■ **Research and Publications:** CPE released several key research reports this year, including a study on undergraduate student debt and the annual progress report. In partnership with the University of Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research, CPE released a comprehensive return on investment report focusing on the economic benefits of Kentucky's higher education investments for students and the state. These publications continue to solidify CPE's reputation as a trusted and reliable provider of higher education content.

■ **External Funding:** CPE's reputation as an organization that creates value is corroborated by an increase in external funding in recent years. Grants from the James Graham Brown Foundation, ECMC Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Save the Children, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Education and Labor Cabinet and NASH enhance CPE's ability to affect change in Kentucky higher education. In total, CPE has been entrusted with several multi-year grants from national, state and community organizations totaling over \$36 million.

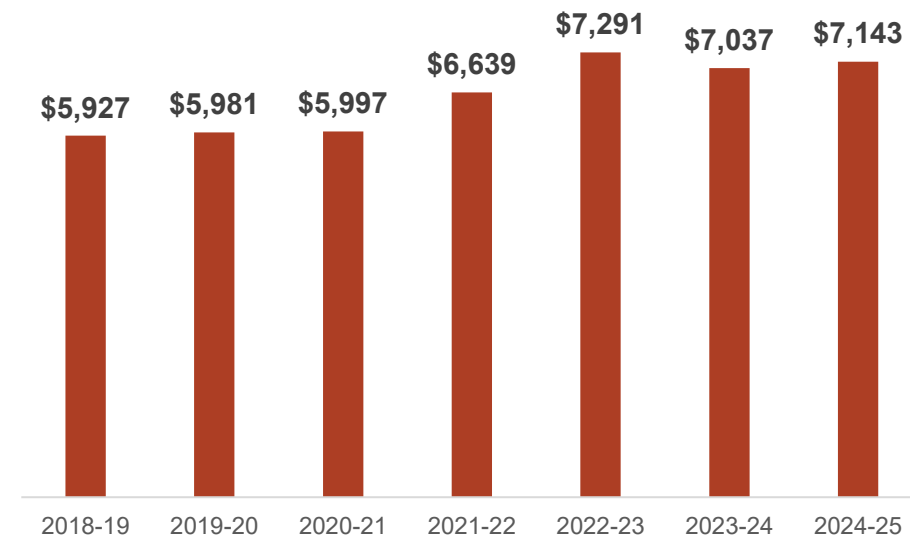


VALUE

Key Performance Indicator

Net General Fund Appropriations per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Student

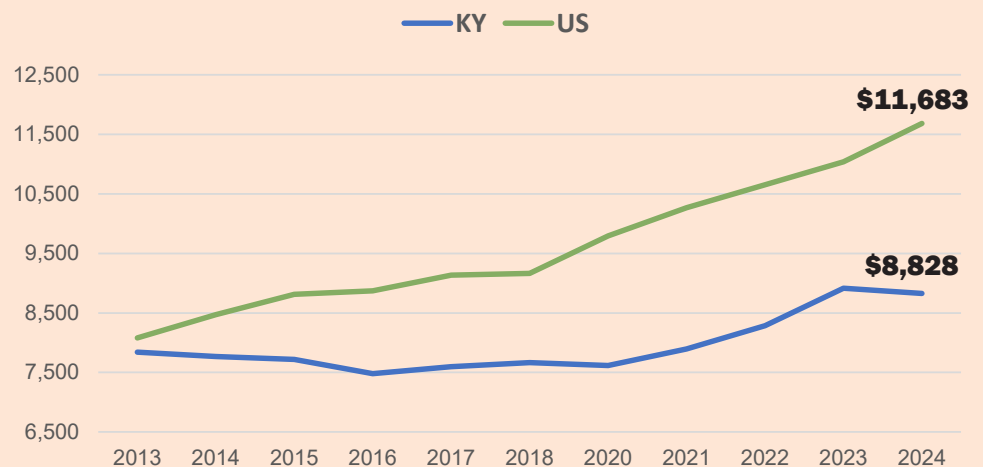
This indicator looks at funding for public in-state postsecondary institutions per full-time equivalent (FTE) student. Unlike the figure reported by SHEEO in its “State Higher Education Finance Report,” this calculation does not include state financial aid provided directly to students or state monies allocated for debt service. Net General Fund appropriations per FTE student in 2024-25 increased 1.5% from the previous year.



Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

Per Student State Higher Education Appropriations Over Time

Because colleges and universities can raise revenue by increasing tuition, higher education typically experiences cuts when budgets are tight. Nationally, higher education funding per full-time equivalent student fell dramatically during the Great Recession of 2008, but by 2013, most states had begun reinvesting in higher education. Kentucky's state appropriations per FTE has only recently begun to rebound; as a result, funding is about 76% of the U.S. average.



Source: SHEEO, “State Higher Education Finance Report,” 2024.



AIKCU DATA

Association of Independent KY Colleges & Universities

The Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities serves as the voice of Kentucky's private, nonprofit, four-year colleges and universities. AIKCU's 18 member institutions serve nearly 60,000 students and play a critical role in Kentucky's postsecondary education system, awarding over 15,000 degrees annually. AIKCU institutions are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and licensed by the Council on Postsecondary Education.

METRIC	2015-16 Baseline	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Fall Total Headcount Enrollment										
Undergraduate	27,598	27,831	28,626	29,833	31,066	30,931	30,700	31,232	32,986	34,200
Graduate	8,320	10,491	15,532	22,346	25,222	26,336	24,650	23,171	26,042	25,219
Six-Year Graduation Rate										
Overall	47.4%	48.1%	49.0%	51.3%	50.8%	51.2%	49.6%	51.0%	50.9%	NA
URM	32.4%	32.9%	34.6%	39.2%	37.1%	39.6%	36.5%	44.3%	40.5%	NA
1st Year to 2nd Year Retention										
Overall	67.6%	68.4%	69.7%	69.7%	71.3%	64.5%	70.1%	69.0%	68.0%	NA
URM	63.5%	60.4%	65.6%	67.4%	67.2%	58.1%	65.6%	63.0%	64.9%	NA
Degrees Awarded										
Bachelor's - Total	4,704	4,570	4,557	4,716	4,718	5,028	5,161	5,252	5,597	NA
Bachelor's - URM	577	519	546	570	633	701	721	767	801	NA
Bachelor's - STEM	1,169	1,187	1,176	1,275	1,301	1,386	1,278	1,292	1,301	NA
Graduate Degrees	2,864	3,253	4,150	5,891	8,348	7,739	8,487	7,925	9,435	NA

Source: Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS)

AIKCU Member Institutions

- Alice Lloyd College, Pippa Passes
- Asbury University, Wilmore
- Bellarmine University, Louisville
- Berea College, Berea
- Brescia University, Owensboro
- Campbellsville University, Campbellsville
- Centre College, Danville
- Georgetown College, Georgetown
- Kentucky Christian University, Grayson

- Kentucky Wesleyan College, Owensboro
- Lindsey Wilson College, Columbia
- Midway University, Midway
- Spalding University, Louisville
- Thomas More University, Crestview Hills
- Transylvania University, Lexington
- Union Commonwealth University, Barbourville
- University of Pikeville, Pikeville
- University of the Cumberlands, Williamsburg



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