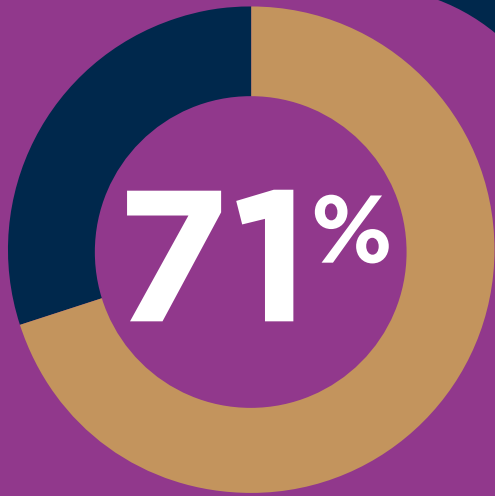




COLLEGE GOING is key to growing Nebraska's economy.



of future Nebraska jobs will require postsecondary educational attainment.



As of 2020, 71 percent of Nebraska jobs were projected to require postsecondary education.¹ However, Nebraska's two- and four-year postsecondary institutions have seen an 8.1 percent decrease in enrollment over the past 11 years, despite a .4 percent increase in college enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year.² In response, the Nebraska legislature set a statewide goal to increase the percentage of Nebraskans aged 25 to 34 with a degree, certificate, diploma, or credential with economic value from 58 percent in 2022 to 70 percent by 2030.³

Efforts supporting college going are critical not only in achieving Nebraska's educational attainment goal but also in strengthening the economy and improving Nebraska's ability to develop, attract, and retain a highly qualified workforce. College going and credential attainment benefit both individuals and local economies. College-educated adults earn more than their high school-educated peers, and that difference has been growing over the past few decades.^{4,5} There is also a benefit to local economies, given that the average degree holder contributes significantly more monetarily to local economies than the average high school graduate.⁶ Thus, increasing college-going rates is the first step in supporting long-term economic growth and workforce participation in Nebraska.

As evidenced by the research literature, efforts to increase college going rates have focused mainly on three areas: academic course taking, student support and coaching programs, and financial literacy and assistance programs.



ACADEMIC COURSE TAKING, including advanced math and dual enrollment, is positively associated with college enrollment. Taking Algebra I in middle school affords students the opportunity to take more advanced math courses through high school, thus increasing the likelihood that students will enroll in college.⁷ Students completing Algebra II are more likely to enroll in a two-year or four-year postsecondary institution than students who do not complete Algebra II.⁸ Dual enrollment courses allow high school students to earn college credits while still attending high school. Dual enrollment programs have a positive effect on college access and enrollment.⁹



STUDENT SUPPORT AND COACHING PROGRAMS can promote student self-efficacy and have positive effects on student college going. When counselors actively reach out to offer support to students about their college and career goals during summer counseling programs, students are more likely to enroll in college.¹⁰ Coaching programs that pair high school students with a coach in their senior year, with continued support through college, also have a positive impact on college enrollment.¹¹



FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, such as those related to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process or college promise programs, are positively associated with student college enrollment. Promise programs offer place-based, guaranteed college scholarships to all students who graduate from a certain school or district while meeting the minimum thresholds of the program. Students receiving place-based scholarships through promise programs are more likely to enroll in college.¹² Programs related to the FAFSA typically provide support to students and families in completing the financial aid application.¹² When students and families receive FAFSA assistance and information, participating students are more likely to enroll in college for the fall semester following high school graduation and receive more financial aid than nonparticipants.¹³

¹ Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2013, June). *Recovery: Job growth and education requirements through 2020*. Georgetown Public Policy Institute. https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/StateProjections_6.115_agc_v2.pdf

² Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. (2022). *2022 Nebraska higher education progress report*. <https://ccpe.nebraska.gov/higher-education-progress-report>

³ Legislative Resolution 335, 107th Nebraska Legislature (2022) (adopted). <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/107/PDF/Intro/LR335.pdf>

⁴ Webber, D. (2016) Are college costs worth it? How ability, major, and debt affect the returns to schooling. *Economics of Education Review*, 53(C), 296–310.

⁵ Oreopoulos, P., & Petronijevic, U. (2013). Making college worth it: A review of research on the returns to higher education. *The Future of Children*, 23(1), 41–65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23409488>

⁶ Rothwell, J. (2015). What colleges do for local economies: A direct measure based on consumption. *Brookings Institution*. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/what-colleges-do-for-local-economies-a-direct-measure-based-on-consumption/>

⁷ Spielhagen, F. R. (2006). Closing the achievement gap in math: The long-term effects of eighth-grade algebra. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 18(1), 34–59. <https://doi.org/10.4219/jaa-2006-344>

⁸ Byun, S. Y., Irvin, M. J., & Bell, B. A. (2015). Advanced math course taking: Effects on math achievement and college enrollment. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 83(4), 439–468. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2014.919570>

⁹ What Works Clearinghouse. (2017, February). *Transition to college: Dual enrollment programs* (Intervention Report). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_dual_enrollment_022817.pdf

¹⁰ What Works Clearinghouse. (2018, March). *Transition to college: Summer counseling* (Intervention Report). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_summer_counseling_032718.pdf

¹¹ What Works Clearinghouse. (2020, October). *Success Boston Coaching* (Intervention Report). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/WWC_SBC_Report_508.pdf

¹² Swanson, E., Watson, A., & Ritter, G. (2017). Promises fulfilled? A systematic review of the impacts of college promise programs. In L. Perna & E. Smith (Eds.), *Improving research-based knowledge of college promise programs* (pp. 33–68). American Educational Research Association.

¹³ Bettinger, E. P., Long, B. T., Oreopoulos, P., & Sanbonmatsu, L. (2012). The role of application assistance and information in college decisions: Results from the H&R Block FAFSA Experiment*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 127(3), 1205–1242. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjs017>



This is an NSWERS **EXPLORE** product, an overview and background of the current state of knowledge surrounding the factors that contribute to **College Going** in Nebraska.