



# ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE:

## STRATEGIC VISION STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT 2016

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# ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE: 2016 STRATEGIC VISION STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011 Arizona's community colleges embarked upon a long-term Strategic Vision to significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university. **In order to measure progress toward the three major goals outlined in the Strategic Vision, the colleges have implemented a rigorous self-assessment and accountability process centered around the annual collection and distribution of data related to 28 key indicators.**

Data presented in the 2016 Strategic Vision Student Progress and Outcomes Report identify areas of strength, as well as places where Arizona Western College (AWC) will need to focus its efforts in order to improve student access, retention, and completion. **For some of the retention and completion measures, a specific group of students called the "Credential-Seeking Cohort" was tracked; this group is defined as full- and part-time learners who earned at least 12 credit hours by the end of their second year.** Tracking this sub-cohort aligns AWC's data collection and accountability strategies with those of national community college initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA). Furthermore, analysis of retention and completion outcomes within this sub-cohort provides a more accurate gauge of community college student success, as it takes into account learners' diverse educational and training goals.

**The 2016 outcomes presented in this report can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge.** However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making long-term projections difficult at best.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF AWC'S 2016 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

### Access

- At Arizona Western College, the percentages of learners from racial or ethnic groups traditionally underserved in higher education or who are Pell recipients both exceed statewide and national averages.

### Retention

- More than three quarters of all student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by AWC's 2013 New Student Cohort were successfully completed.
- At 78%, AWC's fall-to-fall retention rate is substantially higher than the national comparison (53%).

### Completion

- The number of students transferring from AWC to an in-state or university has increased by nearly 19% over the past 5 years.
- 82% of AWC's 2009 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within six years.

# BACKGROUND

## ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION

In 2011 Arizona's community colleges published a long-term strategic plan, which has since been incorporated into strategic planning processes at community colleges across the state. This plan outlined a clear vision for Arizona's ten community college districts and identified 28 key indicators of progress toward 3 major goal areas: access, retention, and completion. **Many of these indicators are aligned with those included in the American Association for Community Colleges' Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) initiative, which will allow for comparisons with national norms in years to come.**

A major function of the Strategic Vision is the collection, analysis, and publication of data pertaining to the 28 key indicators of progress, as well as the sharing of best practices and successful program models across the state. This document is the fifth in a series of annual reports providing data related to student progress and outcomes at Arizona Western College (AWC). Where available, comparable state and national data are also shown.

**As 2016 represents the fifth full year of Strategic Vision data collection, the outcomes presented in this document can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge.** However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making long-term projections difficult at best.

The Strategic Vision, as well as a Technical Guide that provides detailed definitions of each key indicator of progress, can be found online at: [www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org](http://www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org).

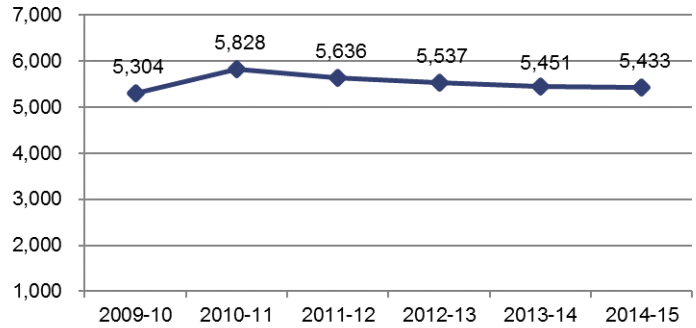
**OUR VISION: Arizona's community colleges, through a collaborative effort with education, business, and community partners, will significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university.**

# ACCESS INDICATORS

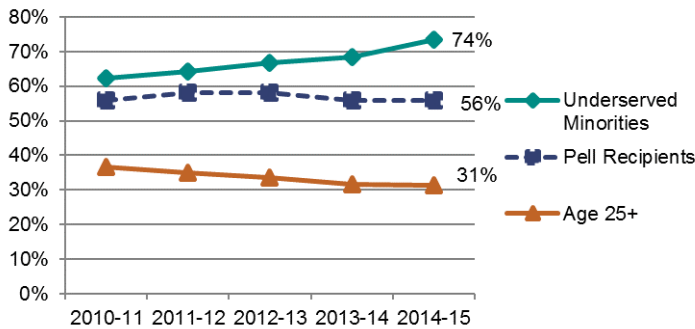
## Indicator 1. Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment

Following the statewide trend, annual full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment at Arizona Western College has declined slightly from its high of 5,828 in 2010-11. These enrollment numbers likely reflect an improved economy drawing more students into the workplace, as well as a greater number of students enrolling directly in the state's universities and/or private institutions.

## Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment



## Underserved Populations, as a Percentage of Enrollment



## Indicator 2. Enrollment of Underserved Populations

In 2014-15, 74% of AWC students were members of an underserved racial or ethnic group and 56% were Pell recipients. Both of these percentages are substantially higher than the corresponding national and statewide averages.

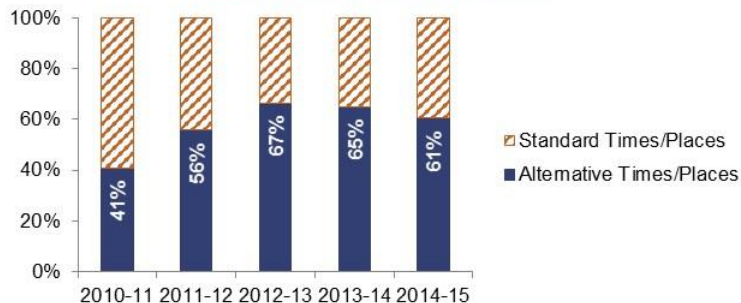
Furthermore, the 74% of AWCs students who were members of an underserved racial or ethnic group is higher than the percentage of underserved minorities residing in Yuma and La Paz Counties, which ranges from 38 to 65%.<sup>1</sup>

## Indicator 3. Percent of Student Credit Hours Earned via Alternative Delivery Methods and/or at Alternative Times and Places

At AWC, only 39% of instruction in 2014-15 occurred in traditional semester-length classes held on campus, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8am and 5pm.

Extending access to many diverse populations, 61% of all student credit hours were earned online, at night or on the weekends, in short-term or open-entry/open-exit courses, and in skills centers, American Indian reservations, Army bases, or prisons.

## Percent of SCH Earned at Standard and Alternative Times/Places



<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2016). 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Washington, DC: Author.

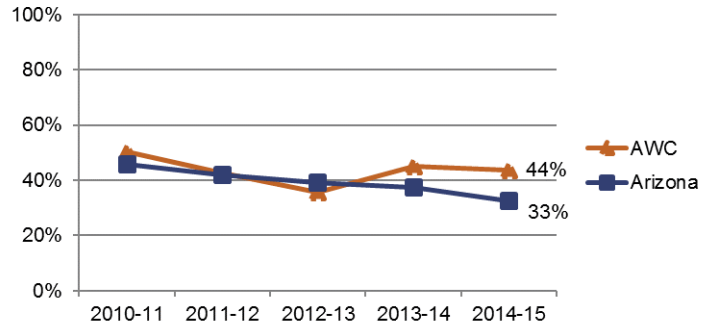
# ACCESS INDICATORS

## Indicators 4-5. Community College-Going Rate and Overall College-Going Rate

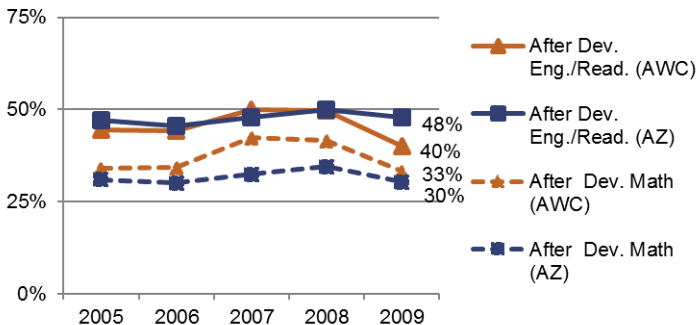
In 2014-15, AWC enrolled 44% of all recent high school graduates from the college's service area. The percentage of college-goers enrolling in community colleges has remained steady at AWC, while decreasing slightly across the state.

Although not shown on the graph, Arizona's community colleges and universities together enroll 53 percent of all recent high school graduates.<sup>2</sup>

## Service Area Community College-Going Rates



## Success After Remediation (2005-09 New Student Cohorts)



## Indicators 6-7. Success after Remediation

After six years, 40% of all developmental English or reading learners in AWC's 2009 New Student Cohort completed a college-level English course and 33% of developmental math learners in the same cohort successfully completed a college-level math course.

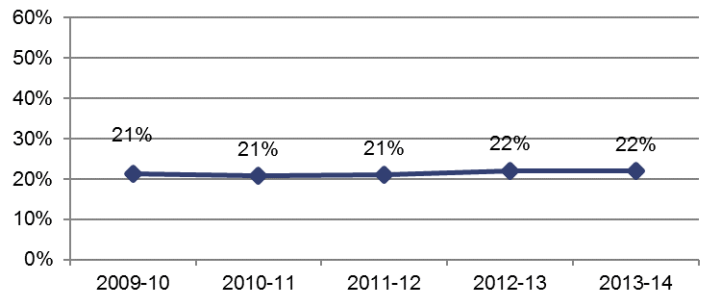
The downturn in success after remediation rates may be linked to an improved economy and more developmental students opting for the workforce over higher education.

## Indicator 8. Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Arizona Median Household Income

At just over \$9,000 per year, the net price of attending Arizona Western College is just 22% of the median household income in Yuma and La Paz counties, making the institution an excellent and affordable option for postsecondary education and training.

Arizona Western College's net price is reported by the National Center for Education Statistics and is based on new full-time students.

## Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Median Household Income in Yuma and La Paz Counties



<sup>2</sup>Postsecondary Education Opportunity. (2016). *Chance for college by age 19 by state, 1986-2012*. Oskaloosa, IA: The Mortenson Seminar on Public Policy Analysis and Opportunity for Postsecondary Education.

# RETENTION INDICATORS

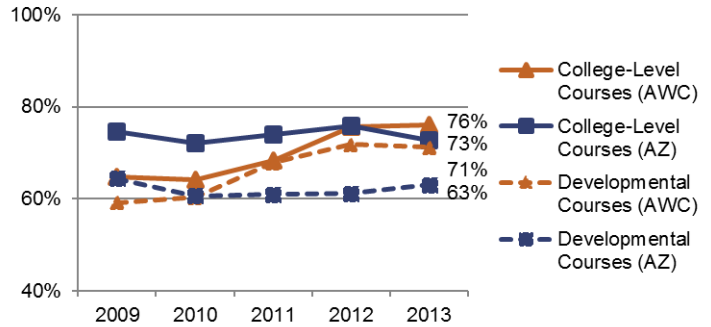
## Indicators 9-10. Course Success Rates

Over two years, 76% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by AWC's 2013 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

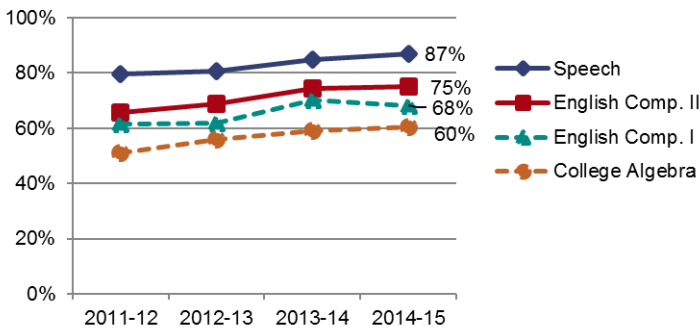
In that same time period, 71% of student credit hours attempted in developmental courses by AWC's 2013 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

AWC's college-level and developmental course success rates exceed the statewide averages (73% and 63%, respectively).

**Course Success Rates  
(2009-13 New Student Cohorts)**



**Percent of Gateway Math and English  
Credit Hours Successfully Completed**



## Indicator 11. Percent of Gateway (First College-Level) Math and English Credit Hours Successfully Completed

In 2014-15, between 60 and 87 percent of student credit hours attempted in College Algebra, English Composition I and II, and Speech were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

These rates have improved over time and are similar or higher than statewide averages. College-level math courses pose the greatest challenge to students, both at Arizona Western College and throughout the nation. AWC will continue working to improve the percentage of its learners successfully completing gateway (first college-level) courses.

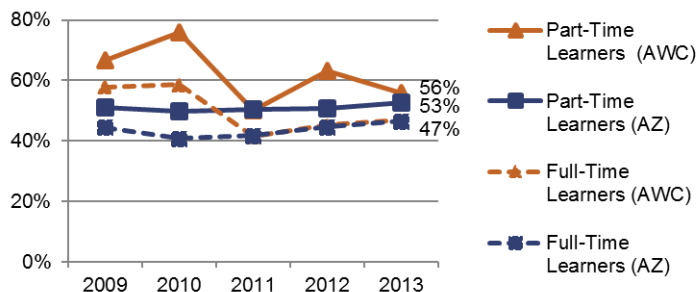
# RETENTION INDICATORS

## Indicator 12. Percent of Full-Time Learners Completing 42 Credits and Percent of Part-Time Learners Completing 24 Credits within Two Years

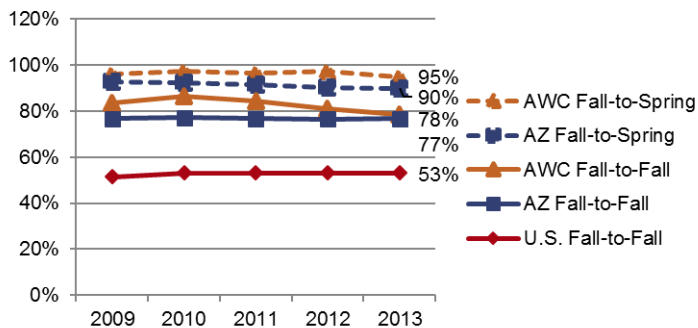
By the end of their second year, 56% of part-time learners in AWC's 2013 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 47% of full-time learners in the same cohort had completed 42 credits. These rates meet or exceed statewide averages.

Although there is room for improvement, these rates are notable, as research has linked attainment of credit thresholds (roughly equivalent to 20 credits per year for full-time students) to higher retention and completion rates.<sup>3</sup>

## Percent of Learners Reaching Credit Thresholds within Two Years (2009-13 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## Retention Rates (2009-13 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## Indicators 13-14. Retention Rates

Ninety-five percent of learners in AWC's 2013 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who successfully transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted at their college to spring 2014, and 78 percent of them returned for classes the following fall.

AWC's fall-to-spring retention rate exceeds the statewide average, as does its fall-to-fall rate. Furthermore, it is substantially higher than the 53 percent fall-to-fall retention rate reported as a national comparison,<sup>4</sup> as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, national community college accountability initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability are beginning to track and analyze retention among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

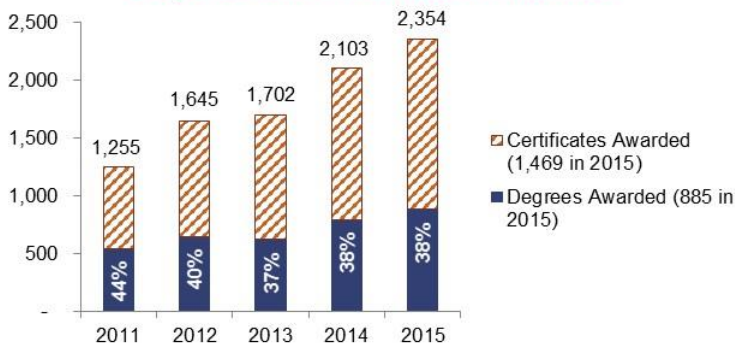
<sup>3</sup>Moore, C., Shulock, N., & Offenstien, J. (2009). *Steps to success: Analyzing milestone achievement to improve community college student outcomes*. Sacramento: California State University, Sacramento, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy.

<sup>4</sup>NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates – First-time college freshmen returning their second year*. Boulder, CO: Author.



# COMPLETION INDICATORS

## Degrees and Certificates Awarded



## Indicator 15. Number of Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Between 2011 and 2015, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Arizona Western College increased by 88% to 2,324 in the latter year.

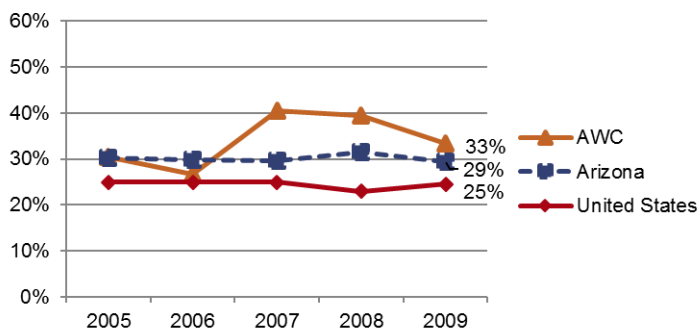
Of the 2015 total, 38% were degrees and 62% were certificates. Arizona Western College is making a concerted effort to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials, especially in high-demand fields.

## Indicator 16. Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (Graduation Rate)

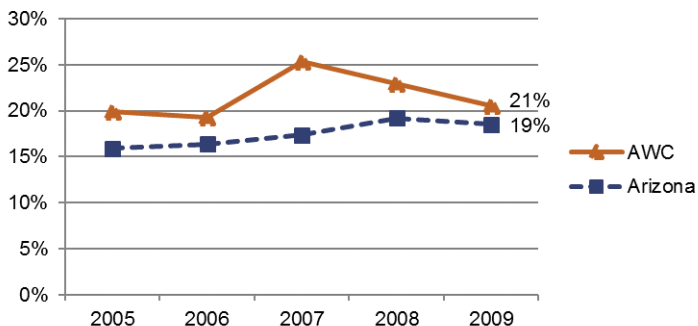
After six years, 33% of AWC's 2009 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate, a substantial drop from previous years, which likely indicates a growing number of students leaving college for the workforce.

AWC's graduation rate is higher than the statewide average of 29%, and substantially higher than the 25% reported as a national comparison,<sup>5</sup> although the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. Nonetheless, the Voluntary Framework of Accountability is beginning to track and analyze completion among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

## Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (2005-09 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## AGEC Completion Rate (2005-09 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



## Indicator 17. AGEC Completion Rate

Twenty-one percent of AWC's 2009 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) within 6 years. This rate has varied over the past five Credential-Seeking Cohorts.

Increasing AGEC completion rates—a key priority for all of Arizona's community colleges—will not only ease transfer to Arizona's public universities but should help to improve bachelor's degree completion in the state.

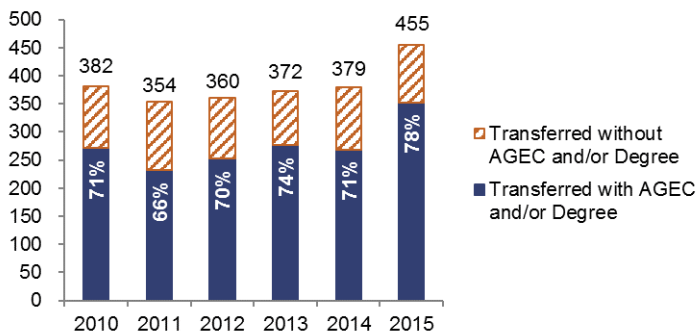
<sup>5</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

# COMPLETION INDICATORS

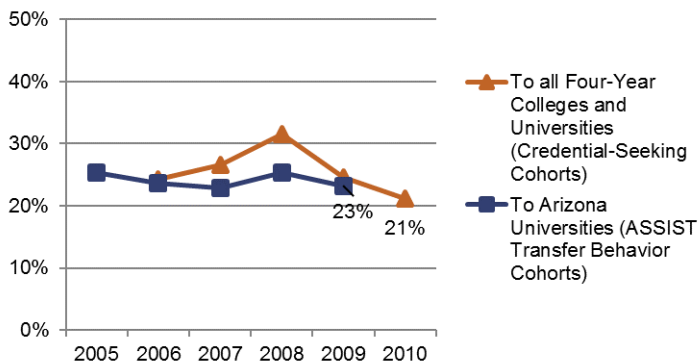
## Indicators 18-19. Number of In-State University Transfers, and Percent with an AGEC and/or Degree at Time of Transfer

Between 2010 and 2015, the number of students transferring from AWC to an in-state, public university has increased by nearly 19% to reach 315 in the latter year. Over three-quarters of transfers in these cohorts had earned an AGEC and/or degree prior to transferring, a sign that the transfer process is relatively efficient and cost effective for both students and the state.

## Number of In-State University Transfers and Percent with AGEC and/or Degree



## Transfer Rates



## Indicators 20-21. In-State and Overall Transfer Rates

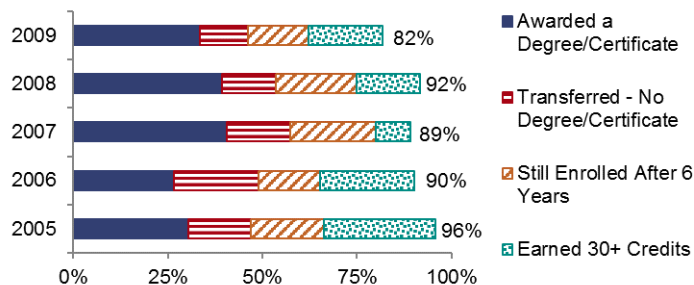
AWC's transfer rates among ASSIST Transfer Behavior Cohorts have fallen from 25% to 23% in recent years. Additionally, the overall transfer rate has dropped from a high of 32% in 2008 to just 21% in 2010. However, these rates are similar to the most recent national average (25%).<sup>6</sup>

## Indicator 22. Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Community College Outcome

Eighty-two percent of learners in AWC's 2009 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within 6 years; over one-third of these earned a degree or certificate.

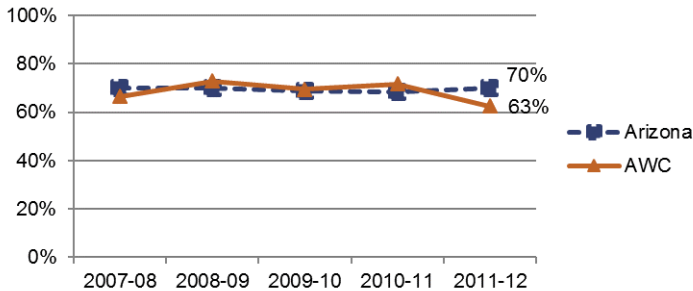
Because community college learners enter college with diverse education and training goals, and because they often attend part-time and/or earn credits from more than one community college, the VFA and other national accountability initiatives have broadened the definition of a successful community college outcome to include: earning a degree or certificate; transferring to another two- or four-year college or university; continued enrollment; and/or leaving the institution after earning 30 or more credits.

## Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Outcome (2005-09 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



# COMPLETION INDICATORS

## Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Universities Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



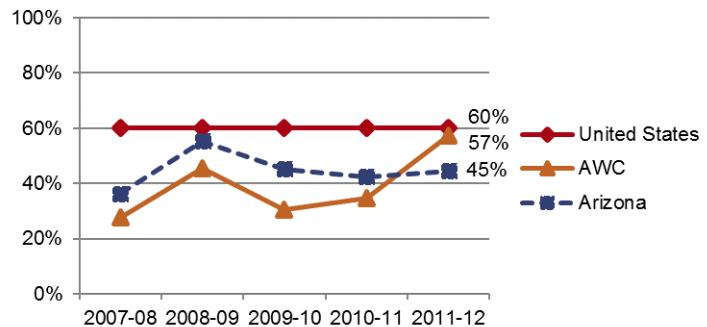
## Indicator 23. Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Public Universities who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

Sixty-three percent of all 2011-12 full-time transfers from Arizona Western College to in-state universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years. While slightly lower than the statewide average (70%), this rate indicates that most full-time transfers from AWC are graduating from the state's public universities in a timely manner.

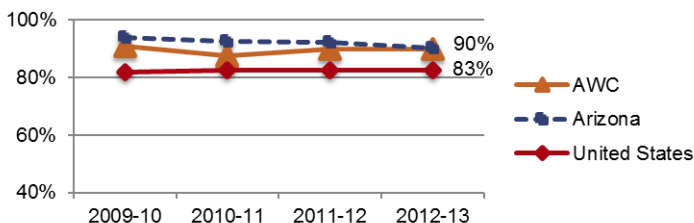
## Indicator 24. Percent of all Transfers who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

Fifty-seven percent of 2011-12 transfers from AWC to all four-year institutions—public and private, in-state and out—earned a bachelor's degree within four years. Although higher than the statewide average (45%), this rate is somewhat lower than the national number (60%)<sup>7</sup> and may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer.

## Percent of all Transfers Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



## Percent of Learners Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential (2009-13 Occupational Completers/Leavers)



## Indicator 25. Percent of Occupational Program Completers/Leavers Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential within One Year

Out of all learners in AWC's 2012-13 Occupational Completers/Leavers Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment aligned with industry-recognized standards up to one year after college exit, 90% passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. This level of performance exceeds the 2011-12 national average of 83%,<sup>8</sup> and is similar to the statewide number.

Examples of occupational programs leading to industry-recognized credentials include, among others, aviation technology, building and construction, dental hygiene, education, emergency medical technician, fashion, fire science, nursing, solar technologies, and veterinary technologies.

<sup>7</sup>National Student Clearinghouse. (2012). *Snapshot report: transfer outcomes (four years after transfer)*. Herndon, VA: Author.

<sup>8</sup>Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. (2014). *Core indicator report :1P1 Technical Skill Attainment , 2011-12*.

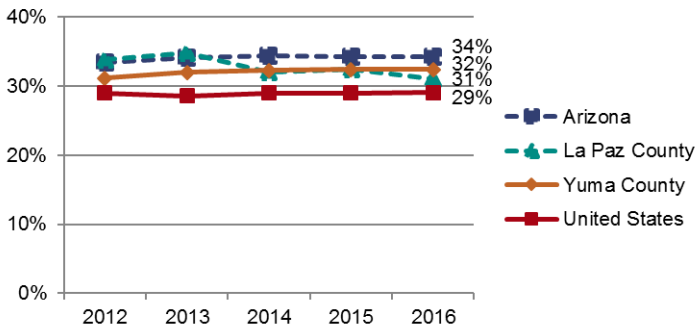
Washington, DC: Author.

# COMPLETION INDICATORS

## Indicator 26. Wage Growth of Occupational Completers

This indicator will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision pending a statewide agreement for sharing wage data.

### Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree



## Indicator 27. Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree

Thirty-two percent of adults age 25 or older in Yuma county and thirty-one percent in La Paz county have attended some college and/or have earned an associate degree.

This rate lags behind the the statewide average (34%) but is substantially higher than the national number (29%).<sup>9</sup>

## Indicator 28. Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree

Only 14 percent of adults in Yuma county and ten percent of adults in La Paz county hold a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 27% statewide and 29% nationally.<sup>10</sup>

By continuing to provide education leading to transfer and bachelor's degrees, and by partnering with the state's public universities, AWC and other community colleges across the state are well on their way toward helping the Arizona Board of Regents reach their goal of raising the percentage of Arizona adults holding a bachelor's degree to 28% by 2017.

### Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree

