

# The Need to Increase College Access and Attainment in Arizona



College Success Arizona is working to significantly increase the college attainment rate of students in Arizona, particularly for those who otherwise would not be able to attend or graduate, such as low-income, first generation, and Latino students. We advocate for long-term, sustainable policy solutions that address key challenges in Arizona. Our priorities include closing information gaps that limit college-going culture, working to improve college affordability and increase state financial aid, and advocating for increased attainment statewide to drive economic growth.

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Increasing attainment to 60 percent would add **\$3.5 billion** in personal income and tax revenue to the state economy

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**903:1**  
Arizona student to counselor ratio

**464:1**  
National average

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Reaching 50 percent FAFSA completion could lead to

**\$64 million**  
more in aid for Arizona students

## Information Gaps Limit College-Going Culture

Learning about college options, what it takes to be ready for college, and identifying and applying to the institution that best fits a student's needs can be a daunting process. This is particularly true for students and families who have limited access to resources and information about college. To improve college awareness, access, and attainment, Arizona can:

- **Address the school counselor crisis that leaves many students without effective guidance about their college options.**
- **Focus on providing broader access to information about all college options—including certificate, associate, and bachelor's degree programs—and the credentials required for careers in Arizona's economy that provide economic stability and mobility.**

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## -53.8%

Change in state spending per student on higher education from 2008-17

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## 90.9%

Tuition increase in Arizona for public 4-year institutions between 2008 and 2017

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## 45%

Of Arizonans have earned a college certificate or a 2- or 4-year degree

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## 7 out of 10

Jobs in AZ by 2020 will require some type of higher education

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## \$4.5 billion

The amount of money that comes into Arizona thanks to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

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## Lack of State Financial Aid Reduces College Affordability

Arizona does not have a meaningful state-sponsored financial aid program, meaning that all financial aid—which is vital for low-income students to be able to afford college—that comes into the state derives from the federal government and the Pell Grant program. To improve college affordability, access, and attainment, Arizona can:

- **Encourage and incentivize universal completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).**
- **Develop and fully fund a robust and sustainable need-based grant aid program.**
- **Establish a higher education funding strategy that restores funding and prioritizes college affordability, especially for students from underrepresented groups.**

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## Advocate for Increased Attainment to Drive Economic Growth

Expanding access to the variety of college options for students in Arizona and increasing attainment is not just a matter of educational and social equity, it is also a powerful engine for economic growth in Arizona. To improve college access and attainment, Arizona can:

- **Pursue talent development strategies that prepare students to graduate from high school college and career ready, provide multiple pathways to success, and cultivate initiatives that create pipelines to in-demand careers.**
- **Invest in programs that provide credentials and certificates that lead to sustainable employment and cultivate new approaches to delivering instruction at a reduced cost and in underserved rural areas of the state.**
- **Reach the statewide goal, set by Achieve60AZ, of ensuring that 60 percent of Arizonans age 25 and older have a college certificate or degree by 2030.**