

Illinois Community College Board

60% by 2025 Graduation Goal

Community colleges have been identified as pivotal in addressing the Illinois and national priority to increase the number of college graduates. Additional college graduates are needed to strengthen the economy and improve the United States’ competitive position in the world marketplace. Recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED) international comparisons show the United States continues to slip and is now 12th in the world in college attainment – share of adults age 25 to 34 holding degrees (OECD, 2014). To compete in the world economy and again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world, President Obama called for America to once again lead the world in college credentials by having 5 million additional community college graduates by 2020, including students who earn certificates and Associate Degrees or who continue on to graduate from four-year colleges and universities ([White House, 2009](#)).

Fiscal Year	Graduate Goal	Actual Graduates	Progress
2009	53,053	53,053	--
2010	55,253	56,884	+1,631
2011	57,453	61,538	+4,085
2012	59,653	64,246	+4,593
2013	61,853	69,036	+7,183
2014	64,053	69,812	+5,759
2015	66,253	71,787	+5,534
2016	68,453	70,459	+2,006
2017	70,653		
2018	72,853		
2019	75,053		
2020	77,253		
2021	79,453		
2022	81,653		
2023	83,853		
2024	86,053		
2025	88,253		

Source: ICCB Centralized Data System

Figure 1. Statewide Graduation Goal For Illinois Public Community Colleges Fiscal Years 2009-2025

To meet state and national workforce needs, **Illinois has committed to a goal of 60 percent of all adults – between 25 to 64 years of age – with a college certificate or degree by 2025.** According to the 2013 Census figures, 43.0 percent of Illinois’ adult population hold an Associate’s Degree or higher compared to 40.8 percent in 2008 ([Lumina Foundation, 2015](#)). NCHEMS utilizes US Census data which currently does not capture certificate-level credentials. Credentials at the certificate-level will be essential in meeting state and national postsecondary credential completion goals.

Utilizing 2009 as a baseline, ICCB and Illinois public community colleges set annual postsecondary credential benchmarks through 2025 to track educational attainment progress and ensure the state meets workforce demand for higher education certificates and degrees. ICCB has created action plans, collaborated with state partners including the Illinois Governor’s Office, Illinois P-20 Council, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), and Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and evaluated policy to meet the need for increased certificate and degree credentials.

As depicted in Figure 1, the Illinois Community College System is annually exceeding the statewide Illinois Community College Graduation Goal. With 70,459 earned collegiate-level degrees and certificates, fiscal year 2016 had the second highest annual number of graduates recorded from the Illinois Community College System. Compared to fiscal year 2012 the total number of fiscal year 2016 completions increased 9.7 percent.

To continue progress, ICCB and local community college officials have initiated an array of innovative approaches to increase the production of degrees and certificates. The Illinois Community College System is well positioned to help additional students graduate and meet the Graduation Goal at the state and local levels.

More detailed graduate college-level and credential-type data by community college are available through ICCB’s Annual Report (Appendix C) and Data Book (Section III) on ICCB’s website.

