



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# **STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AND COMPLETIONS IN THE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

## **FISCAL YEAR 2021**

Please access the following link for the full report:

[http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Annual\\_Enroll\\_Comp\\_2021\\_Final.pdf](http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Annual_Enroll_Comp_2021_Final.pdf)

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**Student Enrollments & Completions  
Fiscal Year 2021**

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## INTRODUCTION

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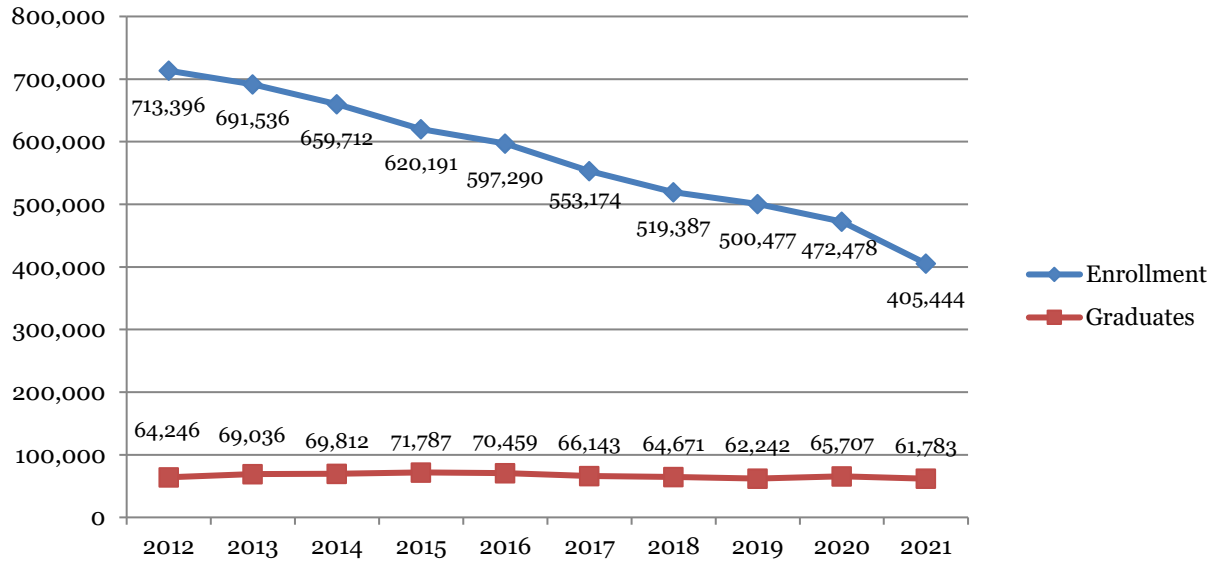
The Illinois Community College System meets both local and statewide needs for education and workforce development by providing high-quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities, programs, and services for a diverse student population. The system provides traditional and non-traditional students with smooth transitions into and across higher education and training for in-demand occupations with economic value. Community colleges create an educated and skilled workforce by increasing credential attainment, building quality career pathways, closing the skills gap, and addressing the future needs of the workforce. During the pandemic, faced with unprecedented challenges, all 48 Illinois Community Colleges implemented campus measures to ensure a safe instructional environment employing substantial adjustments to instruction by moving many courses to remote or online modalities to aid with mitigation efforts.

Beyond flexible course offerings, community colleges also extended fiscal resources to students through Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and philanthropic funding to mitigate financial constraints to the extent possible. Still, with community colleges being open access institutions and serving a significant number of at-risk students, the pandemic has exacerbated issues for that population such as fiscal and technological challenges, childcare and family constraints, as well as strains on mental health. Illinois Community College System enrollment in the prior year is reflective of the current pandemic challenges and consistent with national community college enrollment declines. The system remains well-positioned to offer all students, including those significantly impacted by the pandemic, education and training to meet workforce needs.

With 61,783 earned collegiate-level degrees and certificates, fiscal year 2021 had the tenth highest annual number of graduates ever recorded for the Illinois Community College System. As illustrated in Figure 1, the annual Illinois Community College System number of program graduates decreased nearly four percent from fiscal year 2012 to 2021. During the same timeframe, enrollments decreased by forty-three percent statewide.

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**Figure 1. Illinois Community College System Credit Enrollments and Graduates, FY 2012-2021**



Under the authority of the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act (105 ILCS 13/1 et seq.) (the “LDS Act”), ICCB is the State Education Authority responsible for collecting and maintaining enrollment, completion, and student characteristic information on community college students. The data within the Annual Enrollment and Completion Report derive from ICCB’s Centralized Data System. Illinois Community Colleges submit Annual Enrollment (A1) microdata for individuals who are officially enrolled at the college in credit coursework at any time during the specified fiscal year. Beginning in fiscal year 2014, the Annual Completions (A2) submission is the microdata source of student completions. This year’s Annual Enrollment and Completion Report is based on fiscal year 2021 enrollments and completions. Comparative information is supplied from four previous fiscal years (2017-2020). Detailed tables comparing fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021 credit headcount, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments, and graduates by college are included. FTE enrollments in this report are based on all credit hours attempted. Thirty credit hours equal one FTE.

Also included in the Annual Enrollment and Completion Report is information about noncredit offerings for the current year (2021) and the four previous fiscal years (2017-2020). Noncredit courses provide another delivery method of education, training, and public service by community colleges to the communities they serve. Since fiscal year 1999, the Illinois community colleges have submitted Noncredit Enrollment (N1) annual microdata for students containing demographic and course information on the wide range of noncredit instruction.

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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### Student Enrollments

- The Illinois Community College System served 495,788 students in credit and noncredit courses during fiscal year 2021. Overall combined enrollments decreased compared to last year (-19.0 percent, N = -116,498).
- Credit-generating students accounted for 81.8 percent of the overall fiscal year 2021 headcount.
- During fiscal year 2021, the 48 public community colleges in Illinois enrolled 405,444 students in instructional credit courses. This is lower than the previous year (472,478). The full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment was 161,294, a decrease of 12.5 percent since fiscal year 2020.
- Statewide, 8,352 of 495,788 total students enrolled in both credit and noncredit courses during fiscal year 2021 (A1 and N1). While there is some overlap, these data suggest that credit and noncredit courses are meeting largely different student and community needs.
- Females comprised 57.3 percent of the fiscal year 2021 student population enrolled in credit-generating programs.
- Minority (non-white) students accounted for four in ten (46.7 percent) of the credit students enrolled. African American student representation decreased (18.9 percent) and accounted for 12.2 percent of all credit students. Latino student representation decreased (16.5 percent) and accounted for 24.9 percent of all credit students. Asian (5.5 percent), Two or More Races (3.0 percent), and Nonresident Alien (0.8 percent) student representation decreased from the previous year.
- The median age of credit-generating students was 21.9 during fiscal year 2021, a slight decrease from the previous year. The average age also decreased from the previous year to 26.4 years in fiscal year 2021.
- Transfer remained the largest credit instructional program area enrolling 57.1 percent of fiscal year 2021 Illinois Community College System students. Enrollments in Transfer programs decreased 7.0 percent compared to the previous year.
- Statewide, Career and Technical Education credit program enrollments accounted for one-quarter of all credit students (24.3 percent). Enrollments in Career and Technical Education programs decreased 17.3 percent from last year.

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- Students enrolled in Adult Education courses in community colleges comprised 7.8 percent of the credit-generating students. Enrollments in Adult Education decreased by 32.1 percent versus fiscal year 2020.
- Of the students in Adult Education, only 33.7 percent were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.
- Although 57.1 percent of the fiscal year 2021 credit student population was enrolled in the Transfer area, only 41.6 percent of all students indicated intent to transfer.
- One-half (46.2 percent) of the fiscal year 2021 credit students enrolled in the colleges indicated that they were not pursuing a degree, but attending to complete one or several courses. Participation in college to take courses instead of pursuing a degree or certificate remained similar compared to the previous year.
- More than two out of three credit students attended on a part-time basis during both the fall (67.3 percent) and spring (72.2 percent) semesters in fiscal year 2020.
- Twenty-two percent of the credit-generating students are known to already have earned some type of college certificate or degree. This includes 18,973 who earned a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Illinois community college students enrolled in 4,838,820 credit hours throughout fiscal year 2021 and earned 79.7 percent of those hours.
- Accumulated credit hours were available for 84.3 percent of the fiscal year 2021 student population. Just over one-third of them (38.9 percent) attained sophomore-level status by accumulating 30 or more college-level hours.
- Cumulative grade point average data was reported for 82.7 percent of the fiscal year 2021 students. One-half (54.6 percent) held an A-B average.
- In fiscal year 2021, one in nine (11.0 percent) Illinois community college students (not enrolled in ABE/ASE/ESL, Vocational Skills, or General Studies) were enrolled in at least one developmental course—a decrease from fiscal year 2020.
- In fiscal year 2021, Illinois community college students earned 66.5 percent of the developmental credits they attempted. This percentage is down slightly from 68.5 percent in fiscal year 2020.
- Fiscal year 2021 unduplicated noncredit headcount decreased 35.4 percent over last year to 90,344 students. The duplicated headcount or “seatcount” was 39.3 percent lower than the previous year.
- Statewide, 10,323 noncredit course sections were conducted during fiscal year 2021.

## **Student Enrollments & Completions Fiscal Year 2021**

- Female students accounted for 53.1 percent of 2021 noncredit enrollments for which gender data were reported.
- Minority students accounted for nearly one-third (30.0 percent) of the individuals enrolled in noncredit courses who supplied racial/ethnic data.
- The median age of noncredit students was 33.8 during fiscal year 2021. The average age was 37.5 years.
- Two-fifths (39.9 percent) of the noncredit students were 40 years of age or above among the individuals who supplied this information.
- Over half of the noncredit offerings (duplicated) were in the Personal and Social Development category of activity. More than two-fifths of the noncredit coursework were dedicated to developing workplace skills: Professional/Vocational (33.5 percent) and Business and Industry Contractual training (7.2 percent).
- Across all categories of activity, eight broad course enrollments (two-digit CIP) had over 5,000 noncredit students enrolled. These eight areas accounted for nearly four-fifths of the students enrolled in noncredit courses with CIP data (79.2 percent). Approximately six out of ten enrollments in these large CIPs were in work-related courses: Security and Protective Services (14.6 percent), Business Management (13.5 percent), Health Professions (11.4 percent), Transportation (9.5 percent), Computer and Information Sciences (6.3 percent), and Education (5.5 percent).
- Noncredit enrollments by term were 47.1 percent in Spring, 35.1 percent in Fall, and 17.8 percent in Summer in fiscal year 2021.
- Nearly one-third of the 2021 noncredit courses were held on main college campuses (30.7 percent) and two-fifths were held via distance education (40.2 percent).

### **Student Completions**

- A total of 61,783 collegiate-level degrees and certificates were awarded to Illinois community college students in fiscal year 2021.
- The number of community college completions in fiscal year 2021 is the tenth highest count ever reported.
- The number of degrees and certificates awarded decreased 6.0 percent from fiscal year 2020 (-3,924 completers). Taking a longer view—compared to fiscal year 2017—the total number of fiscal year 2021 completions decreased 6.6 percent.

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- Career and Technical Education accounted for the largest number of graduates (N = 32,313) in fiscal year 2021. Just over half of the earned degrees and certificates were in Career and Technical Education programs during fiscal year 2021 (52.3 percent). Career completions decreased 7.4 percent from last year.
- Transfer completions accounted for the second largest group of completers in fiscal year 2021 (N = 26,969). Four out of ten graduates earned Transfer completions (43.7 percent). The number of Transfer completions decreased 4.3 percent (-1,199) from last year. Nearly three out of ten Transfer graduates earned the General Education Core Curriculum Credential
- Thirty percent of the Career and Technical Education awards in fiscal year 2021 were AAS degrees.
- Females accounted for 57.9 percent of all 2021 completions.
- Career and Technical Education Certificates of Nine to less than Thirty Semester Hours accounted for the largest number of male completers (N = 6,355), and Associate in Arts accounted for the largest number of female completers (N = 8,649) of a specific degree or certificate.
- Although small in number, the Associate in Engineering Science (N = 328) had the highest proportion of male graduates (84.8 percent, N = 278).
- Minority students earned 40.4 percent of the collegiate-level degrees and certificates awarded in the Illinois Community College System during fiscal year 2021. Latino students earned 22.1 percent, African American students earned 9.9 percent, and Asian students earned 4.4 percent of all degrees and certificates.
- Minorities accounted for 43.4 percent of total Transfer degree and certificate recipients.
- Similar numbers of minority graduates completed Career and Technical Education degrees and certificates (N = 12,009) and Transfer degrees and certificates (N = 11,694).
- Among the largest minority groups, Latino (N = 13,684) students completed more than twice as many collegiate-level awards than African American students (N = 6,131).
- Twenty-four percent of the students who were awarded degrees and certificates during fiscal year 2021 were less than 21 years of age. The other age groups with the largest percentages of graduates were 21 to 24 (35.9 percent), 25 to 30 (18.0 percent), 31 to 39 years of age (12.2 percent), and 40 to 55 years of age (8.1 percent).



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- Seven out of ten Transfer degree and certificate completers in 2021 indicated intent to transfer to a four-year institution.
- Approximately 16.5 percent of fiscal year 2021 Associate in Applied Science degree graduates indicated goals to complete some courses or finish a certificate.

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## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

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Demand for the programs and services delivered by Illinois community colleges remain strong. During fiscal year 2021, the Illinois Community College System provided education and training to 495,788 students in credit and noncredit courses. More than four-fifths of these students were in credit courses. The 61,783 degrees and certificates awarded in fiscal year 2021 were the tenth highest number ever reported for Illinois Community College System graduates. This is a decrease of 6.0 percent over last year and 6.6 percent from 2017.

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