

MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of  
Higher Education

Current State of  
Community College  
Transfer Outcomes

Landscape Review for  
MassTransfer Steering Committee

October 3, 2025

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Transfer matters.

80%

of entering community college students aspire to transfer and complete a bachelor's degree, according to national estimates

Source: Tracking Transfer: Community College Effectiveness in Broadening Bachelor's Degree Attainment (CCRC, 2024)

61%

of Massachusetts high-demand, high-value occupations require a bachelor's degree or higher

Source: DHE analysis of Massachusetts Department of Economic Research (DER) Opportunity Star list (2025)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Fewer than 1 in 4 MA CC students transfer to a baccalaureate institution

Transfer to Baccalaureate Rate Trend Since Fall 2011 Cohort

Fall Cohort	Transfer to Baccalaureate Rate
Fall 2011	21%
Fall 2012	22%
Fall 2013	22%
Fall 2014	23%
Fall 2015	23%
Fall 2016	23%
Fall 2017	23%
Fall 2018	22%
Fall 2019	23%
Fall 2020	24%

Fall 2011

Community College Entering Cohort  
Share of Transfer-Outs by Sector

Sector	Share of Transfer-Outs
Private and/or Out-of-State Institution	41%
Urban Campus	32%
Mid-State University	27%

Fall 2020

Community College Entering Cohort  
Share of Transfer-Outs by Sector

Sector	Share of Transfer-Outs
Private and/or Out-of-State Institution	48%
Urban Campus	30%
Mid-State University	21%

Metric

- Cohort: All first-time and new transfer students who enrolled in Massachusetts community colleges in a fall term
- Outcome: Percent who transferred to any baccalaureate institution in the U.S. within four years
- Source: DHE analysis of HEIRS and NSIC data

Key Takeaways

- The percentage of community college students transferring to a four-year institution declined slightly during the period of COVID disruption but increased for the cohort that entered community colleges in fall 2020.
- Comparing the transfer out students from the fall 2020 community college entering cohort with their peers in the fall 2011 cohort, a greater percentage of the fall 2020 transferred to private and/or out-of-state institutions.

---

---

---

---

---

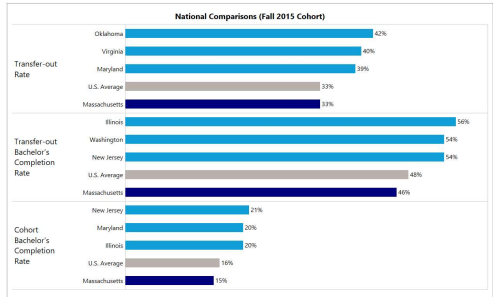
---

---

---



**Compared to nation, MA post-CC transfer outcomes are average**  
**Community College Research Center (CCRC) Metrics** Massachusetts vs. U.S. Average & National Leaders



**Metrics**

- Cohort: All first-time students who enrolled in community colleges in fall 2015, excluding those who were previously dual enrolled
- Transfer-out rate: Percent who transferred to any baccalaureate institution in the U.S. within six years
- Transfer-out bachelor's completion rate: Percent who earned a bachelor's degree within six years after entering community college
- Cohort bachelor's completion rate: Percent of community college starting cohort who earned a bachelor's degree within six years
- Source: Tracking Transfer: Community College Effectiveness in Broadening Bachelor's Degree Attainment (CCRC, 2024)

**Key Takeaways**

- Based on CCRC's set of key metrics reporting on the fall 2015 cohort (measuring outcomes by 2021), Massachusetts' performance on post-community college transfer outcomes is on par with the national average.
- National leaders in these metrics (shown in red) include Illinois, Maryland, and New Jersey.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---