Transfer Playbook 2.0

John Fink (CCRC) and Tania LaViolet (Aspen)

12.08.2025

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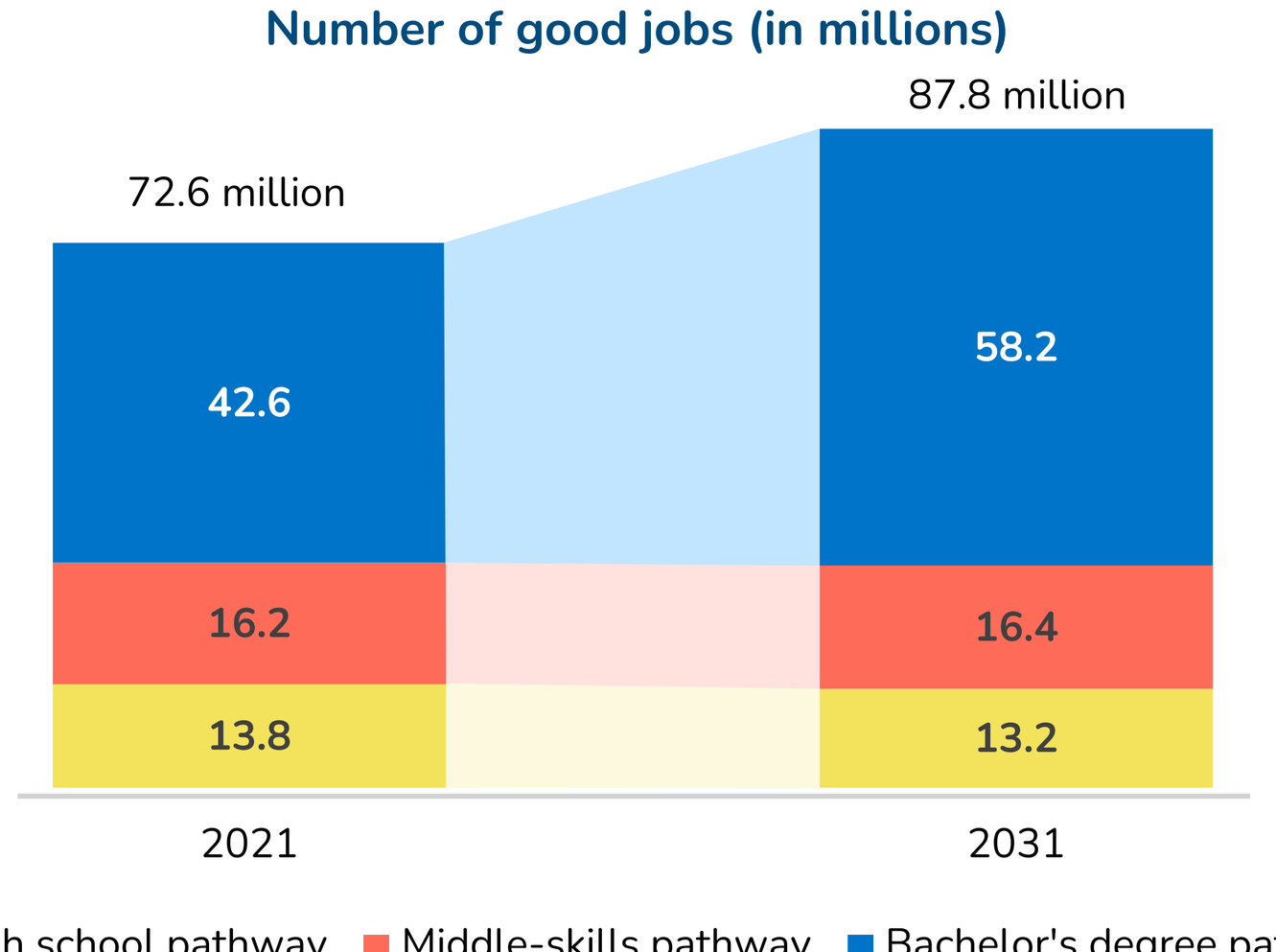
Two Thirds of Good Jobs Will Favor Bachelor's Degrees



By 2031, the number of good jobs for workers on the bachelor's degree pathway will grow by more than 15 million net new jobs, while the number of good jobs on the high school pathway will decline by nearly 600,000.

Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce

Jeff Strohl, Artem Gulish, and Catherine Morris. *The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2024. cew.georgetown.edu/goodjobsprojections2031.

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Massachusetts: Top 10 “Good Jobs” by Volume, 2024

Good jobs = jobs with a family-sustaining wage in Massachusetts

Description	2024 Jobs	Median Annual Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
General and Operations Managers	107,372	$123,521	Bachelor's degree
Registered Nurses	93,091	$101,864	Bachelor's degree
Postsecondary Teachers	76,559	$93,729	Doctoral or professional degree
Software Developers	55,644	$150,362	Bachelor's degree
Accountants and Auditors	49,298	$96,405	Bachelor's degree
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	38,915	$92,811	Bachelor's degree
Management Analysts	37,332	$130,219	Bachelor's degree
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	33,809	$80,664	High school diploma or equivalent
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	33,129	$83,046	Bachelor's degree
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	29,853	$88,930	Bachelor's degree

Source: Lightcast, December 02, 2025

~68% of family-sustaining wage jobs* in MA are associated with a bachelor’s degree or higher.

*MIT Living Wage Calculator: The living wage for one earner in a two adult/earner, two child household is $78,428 in MA

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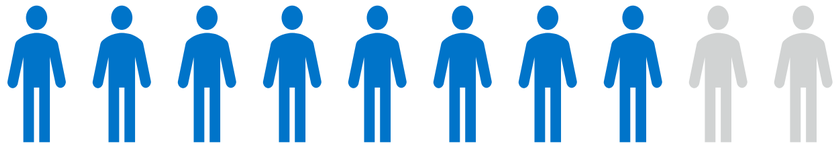
Broken transfer negatively impacts millions of students.

80% of community college students **want a bachelor's degree**



32% of community college students **transfer to a four-year institution**

16% of community college students will **graduate with a bachelor's degree** within six years of starting college

Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2025), Tracking Transfer Entering Community College Cohort Dashboard.
Tracking Transfer – Entering Community College Cohort Dashboard

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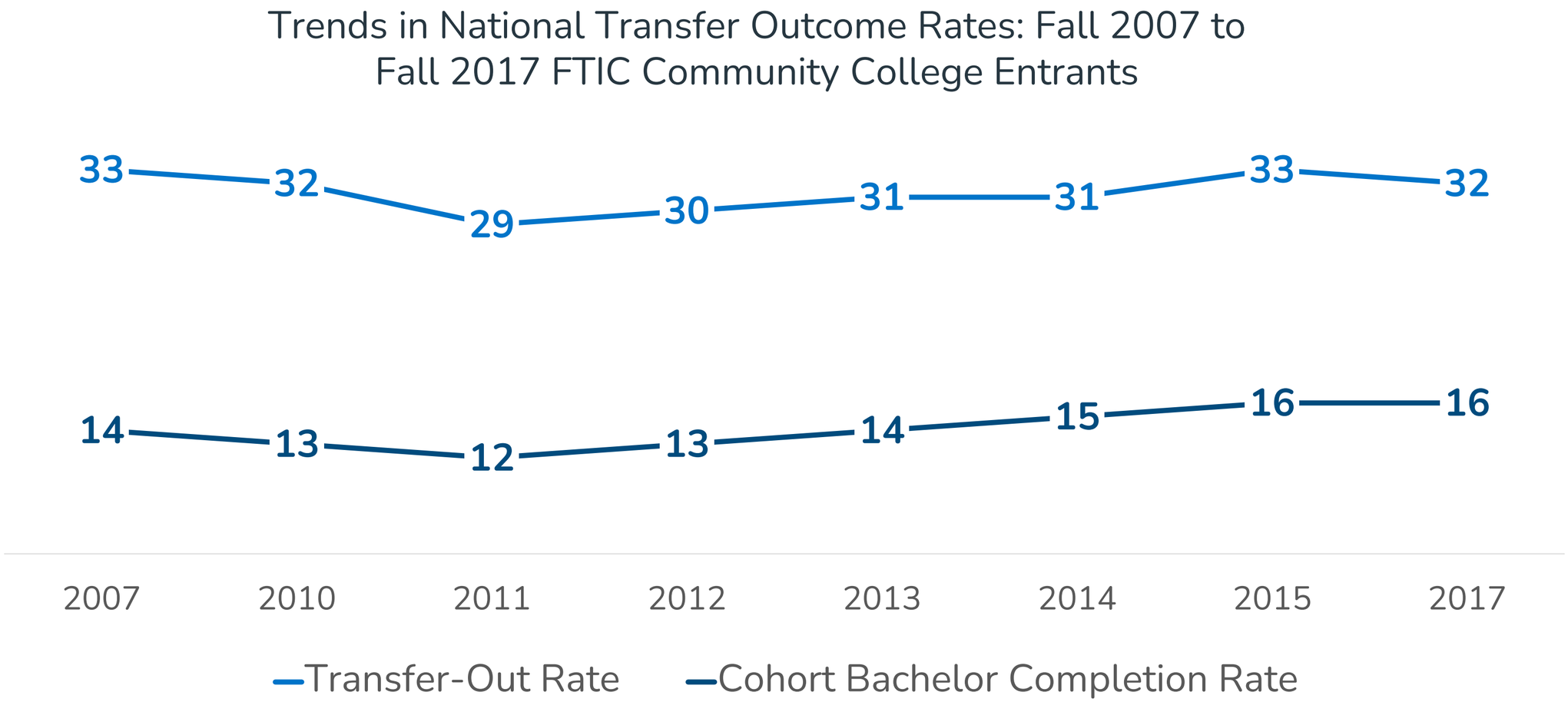
Transfer outcomes have improved slightly but remain too low.



Velasco et al (2024, February). In https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/Tracking-Transfer-Community-College-and-Four-Year-Institutional-Effectiveness- in-Broadening-Bachelors-Degree-Attainment.html.

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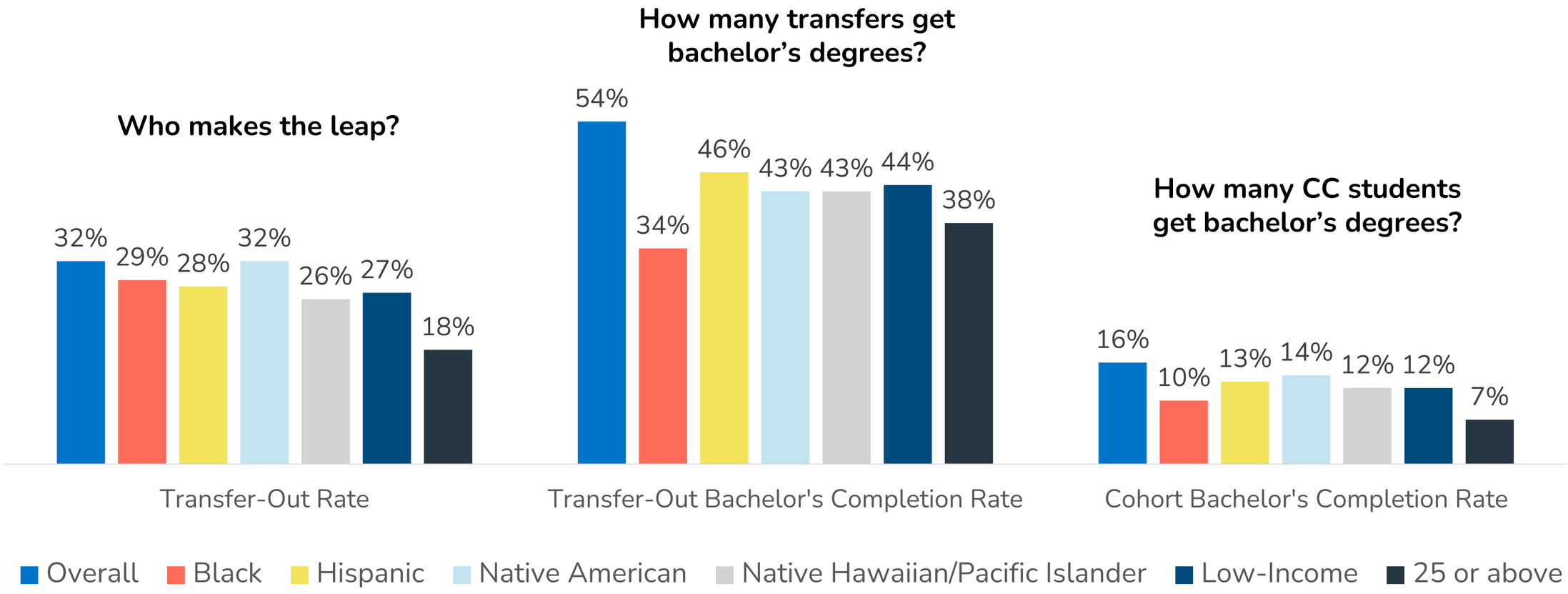
Transfer: Low Outcomes, High Disparities

National Six-Year Transfer Outcomes Rates:
Fall 2017 FTIC Community College Entrants



Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2025), Tracking Transfer Entering Community College Cohort Dashboard.
Tracking Transfer – Entering Community College Cohort Dashboard

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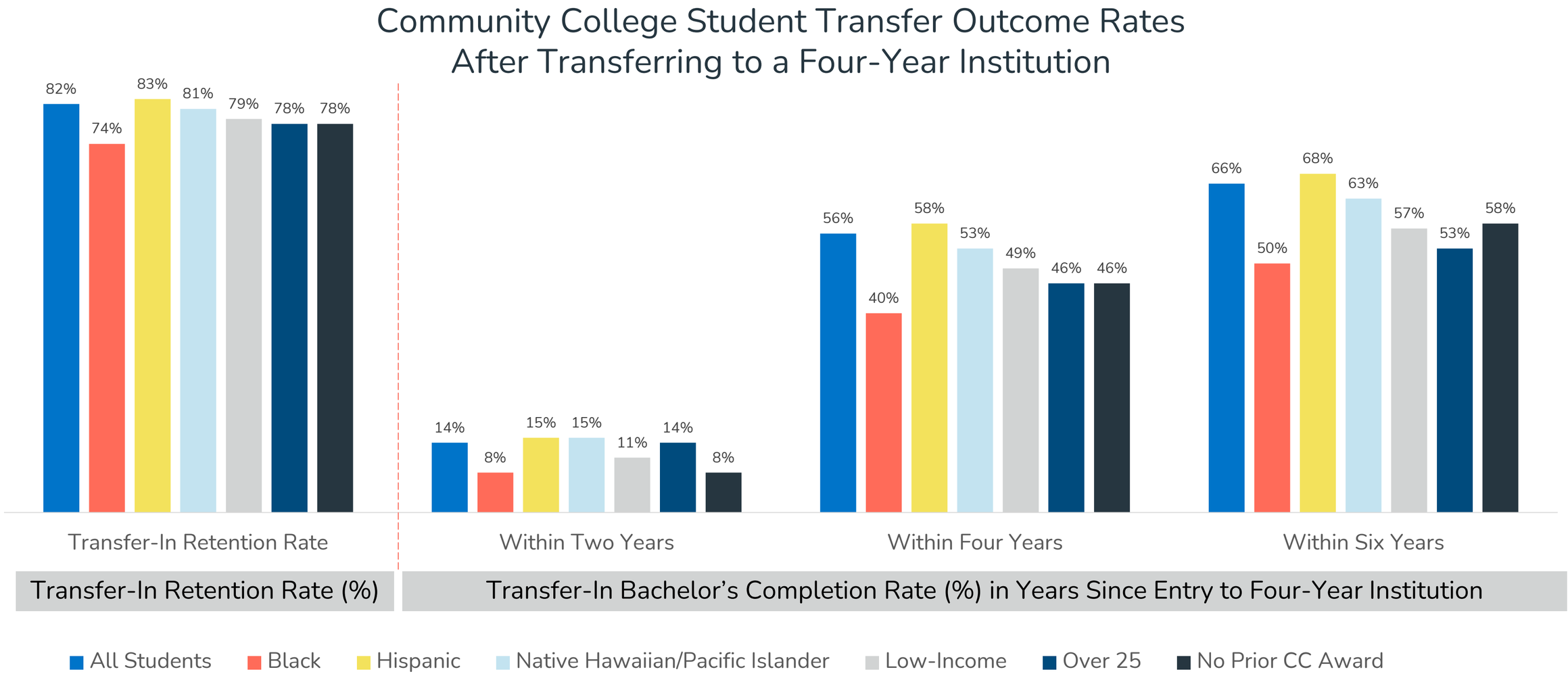
Strong Start Fails to Translate Into Timely Completion



Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2025), Tracking Transfer Entering Four-Year Cohort Dashboard.
[Tracking Transfer – Entering Four-Year College Cohort Dashboard]

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Transfer Outcomes in Massachusetts

A tale of notable improvement and continued room for growth

31%

Transfer rate in 2017 vs. 31% in 2007 and 32% nationally in 2017

46%

Bachelor's completion rate for transfer students in 2017 vs. 35% in 2007 and 50% nationally in 2017

14%

Bachelor's attainment rate for community college students in 2017 vs. 11% in 2007 and 15% nationally in 2017

Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2025), Tracking Transfer Entering Four-Year Cohort Dashboard. Tracking Transfer – Entering Four-Year College Cohort Dashboard
Velasco et al (2024, February). In https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/Tracking-Transfer-Community-College-and-Four-Year-Institutional-Effectiveness-_in-Broadening-Bachelors-Degree-Attainment.html.

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Data bright spots

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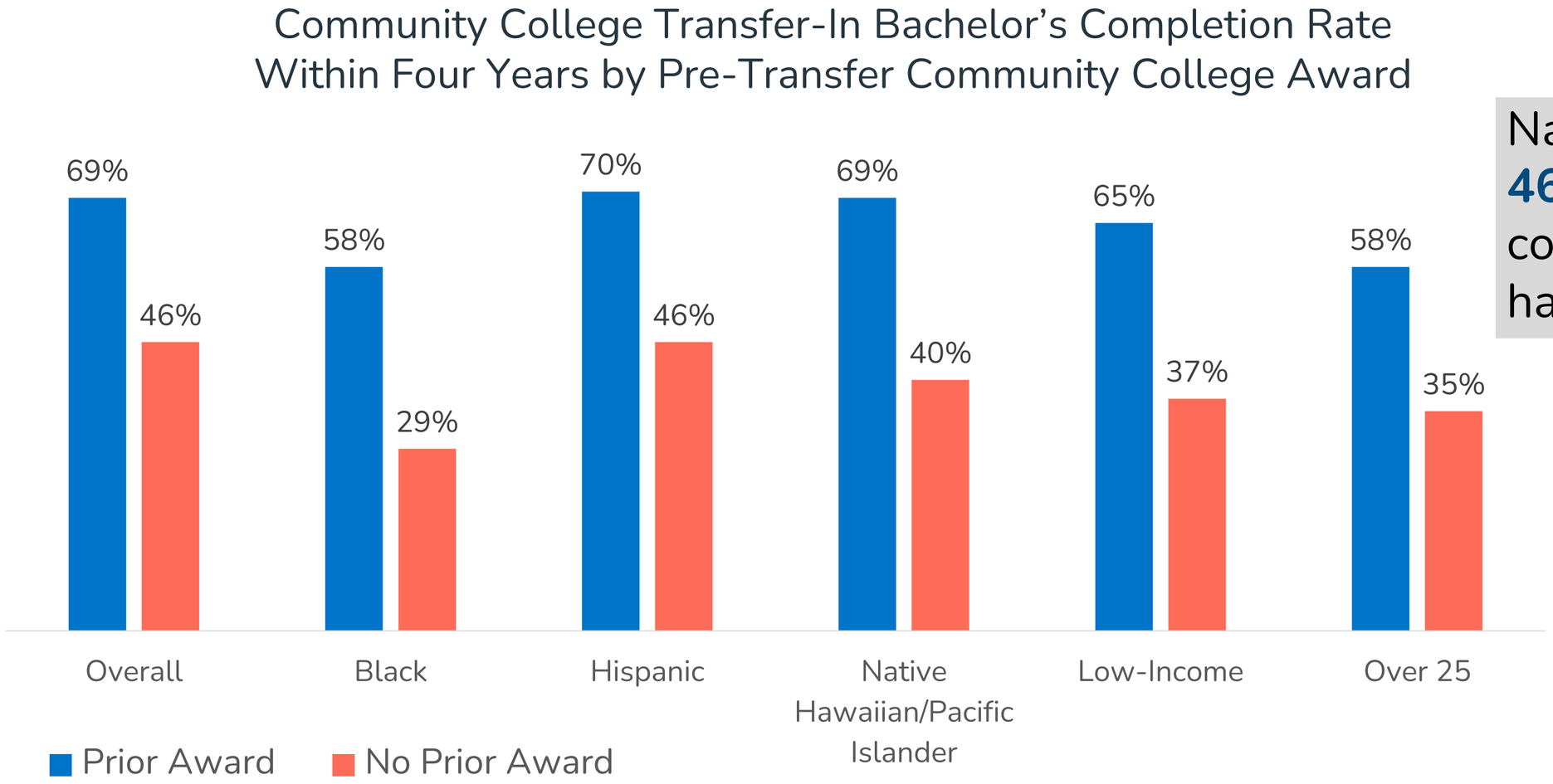
Prior award completion is associated with stronger outcomes.



Nationally, only **46%** of community college transfers have a prior award

Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2025), Tracking Transfer Entering Four-Year Cohort Dashboard.
Tracking Transfer – Entering Four-Year College Cohort Dashboard

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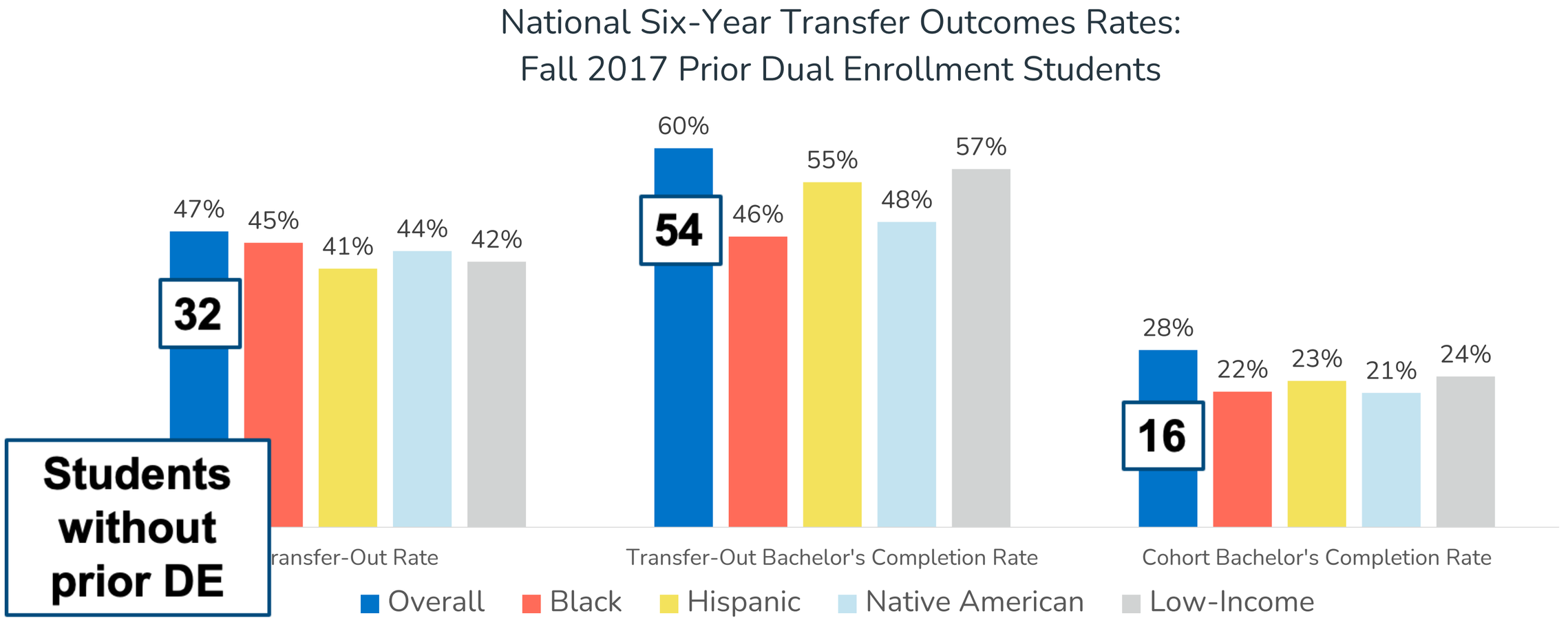
Prior Dual Enrollment Is Associated with Stronger Outcomes and Smaller Disparities



Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2025), Tracking Transfer Entering Community College Cohort Dashboard. [Tracking Transfer – Entering Community College Cohort Dashboard]

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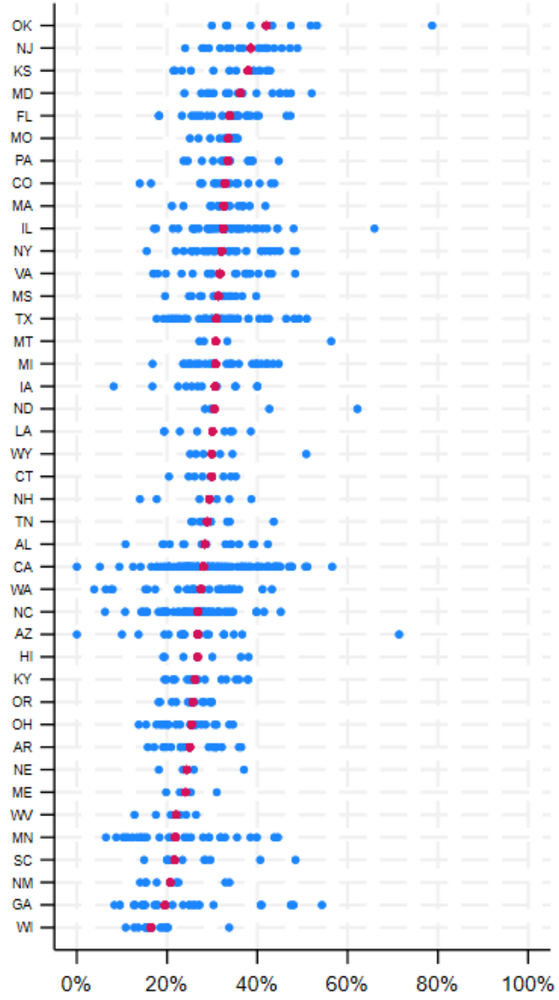
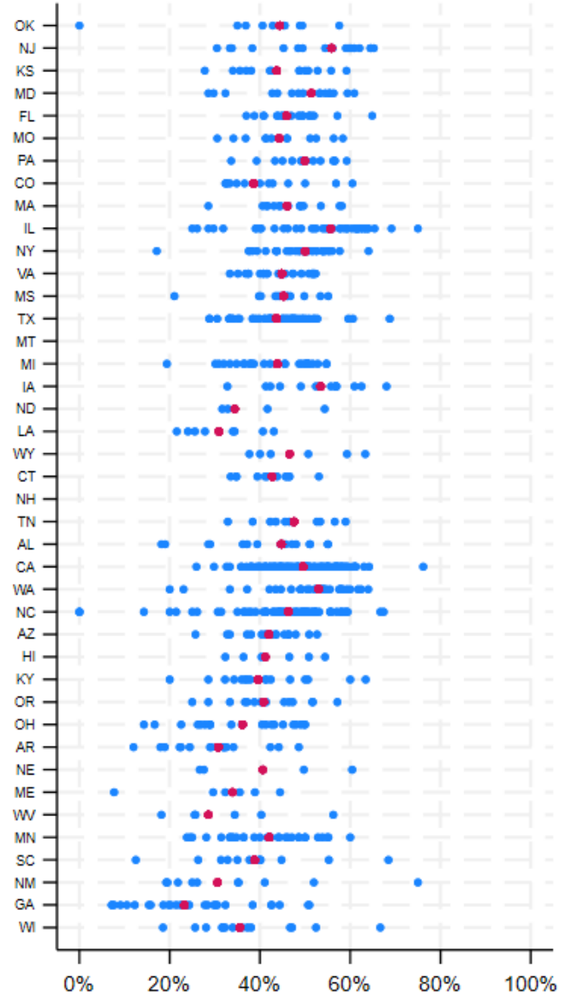
Institutional Variation is Substantial Everywhere

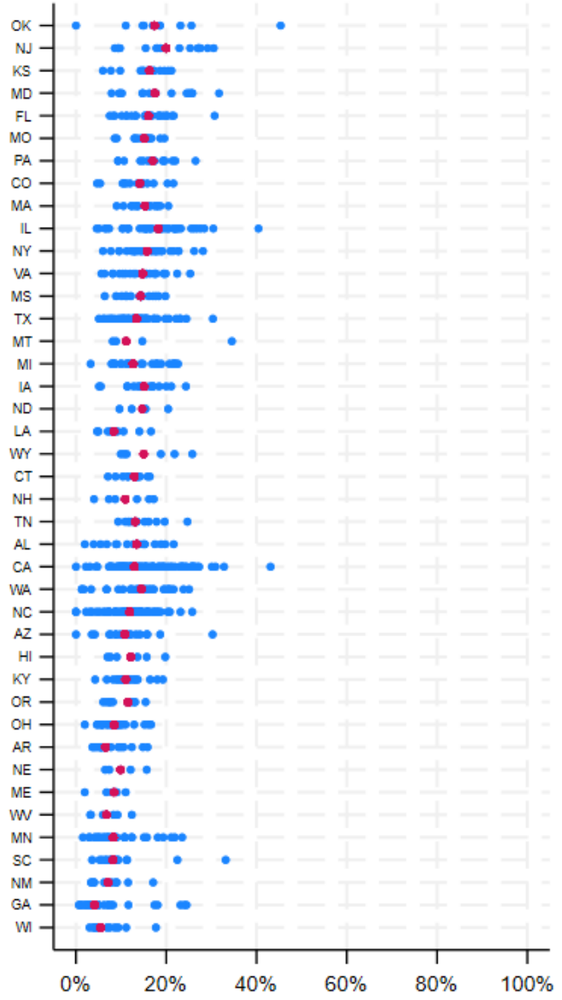
Community College Transfer Outcomes by State (All FTIC Students)



Transfer Out



Transfer Out BA Completion



Cohort BA Completion

- Community College rate
- Median rate

(Velasco et al., 2024)

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The Transfer Playbook 2.0

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Transfer Playbook 2.0 Framework

Practical Guidance from Our Fieldwork

Prioritize Transfer at the Executive Level to Achieve Sustainable Success at Scale

Align Program Pathways and High-Quality Instruction to Promote Timely Bachelor's Completion within a Major

Tailor Transfer Advising & Non-Academic Supports to Foster Trust and Engagement

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Strategy 1

Prioritize Transfer at the Executive Level to Achieve Sustainable Success at Scale

Essential Practice 1: President-led, team-based and well-resourced partnerships

Essential Practice 2: End-to-end (re)design of the transfer student experience

- Transformational transfer models that extend beyond credit articulation
- Strategies tailored to regional needs and demographics
- “Every student could be a transfer student” approaches
- Increased attention to affordability and financial aid

Essential Practice 3: Transfer student-centered systems and processes

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Transformational Transfer Models

College Plans for High Schoolers (Imperial Valley College): HS seniors complete an IVC application & FAFSA, develop with college counselor in spring of senior year an initial educational plan that can link to transfer.

Mason Virginia Promise: Pell-eligible ADVANCE students qualify for a last-dollar scholarship that covers tuition and fees.

Arkansas Transfer Achievement Scholarship: Associate degree completers pay the same tuition rate at U of A four-year campuses.

Arizona Western College + Northern Arizona University—Yuma: Co-located campus with programs designed to meet local workforce needs.

Start Transfer in High School

Simplify Admissions

Guarantee Affordability

Link Transfer to Careers

Develop Local Talent

ADVANCE (Northern Virginia Community College & George Mason University): Dual admissions, dedicated advising, four-year maps, co-enrollment.

CUNY Justice Academy (CJA) (John Jay College of Criminal Justice & six CUNY community colleges): Automatic enrollment in CJA for specific CC majors results in guaranteed admission to JJ upon associate degree completion.

Virginia Commonwealth University's Mellon Pathways to the Arts and Humanities; HHMI STEM Pathways: Career exploration and specialized advising, defined pathways, community building events, and financial guidance for prospective transfer students from **Reynolds and Brightpoint Community Colleges.**

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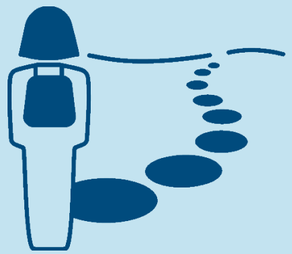
Strategy 2



Align Program Pathways and High-Quality Instruction to Promote Timely Bachelor's Completion within a Major

Essential Practice 1: Clear four-year sequences that promote learning and major progression

- Create and maintain clear, term-by-term, four-year maps within each major that set expectations for timely completion and are adjustable for part-time students
- Frontload courses that inspire early major exploration, commitment, or changes
- Expect at least one major-specific course each term in community college
- Embed college-level, program-specific math and English in the first year

Essential Practice 2: Systematized translation of maps into tailored educational plans

Essential Practice 3: Strengthened instruction, academic support, and curricular alignment

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CUNY-John Jay & Queensborough Community College

Clear, four-year maps create a seamless transfer experience and eliminate credit loss

CSIS Four-Year Academic Plan

Student Name:_____ **Student ID:**_____ **Major: Computer Science and Information Security AS/BS**

YEAR 1 at Queensborough Community College

Immersion Summer		Semester 1		Semester 2		Summer	
		G MA 440 (Pre-Calc)*	4	G ENGL 101	3		
		M ET 574	3	M MA 471 (Intro to Discrete Math)	3		
		M ET 704 (Networking Fundamentals I)	4	M ET 506 (Linux Operating System)	3		
		G Life and Physical Sciences**	3-4	M ET 575 (Intro to C++)	3		
		G Life and Physical Sciences Lab**	0-1	G World Cultures & Global Issues**	3		
		Total Hours	15	Total Hours	15	Total Hours	

YEAR 2 at Queensborough Community College

		Semester 1		Semester 2		Summer	
		G ENGL 102	3	M MA 442 (Analytical Geometry & Calculus II)	4		
		G MA 441 (Analytical Geometry & Calculus I)	4	M ET 585 (Computer Architecture)	3		
		M ET 580 (Object Oriented Programming)	3	G Creative Expression**	3		
		M ET 725 (Computer Network Security)	3	G Additional Flexible Common Core**	3		
		G U.S. Experience in Its Diversity**	3	G CRIM 101	3		
		Total Hours	16	Total Hours	16	Total Hours	

YEAR 3 at John Jay College from Queensborough

Semester 1		Semester 2		Summer	
M MAT 301 (Prob. & Math. Statistics I)	3	M CSCI 360 (Cryptography and Cryptanalysis)	3		
M CSCI 373 (Advanced Data Structures)	3	M CSCI 374 (Programming Languages)	3		
M CSCI 375 (Operating Systems)	3	M PHI 216 (Ethics and Information Technology)	3		
M CSCI 377 (Computer Algorithms)	3	E Elective or Learning from the Past/Communications*	3		
G 300-Level Justice Gen. Education	3	E Elective	3		
Total Hours	15	Total Hours	15	Total Hours	

YEAR 4 at John Jay College from Queensborough

Semester 1		Semester 2		Summer	
M CSCI 400 (Capstone I)	3	M CSCI 401 (Capstone II)	3		
M CSCI 411 (Computer Security and Forensics)	3	E Elective	3		
E Elective	3	E Elective	3		
E Elective	3	E Elective	3		
E Elective	3	E Elective	3		
Total Hours	15	Total Hours	15	Total Hours	

G GenEd M Major E Elective

Comments:

This plan assumes that students are transferring to John Jay College with 60 credits. Students are required to earn 120 total credits in order to graduate with the BS degree.

Total credit hours = 122

CUNY JUSTICE ACADEMY

JOHN JAY COLLEGE
in partnership with
BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CUNY Justice Academy, Your Four-Year Academic Plan: https://resources.jjay.cuny.edu/cja/acad_plan.php

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Strengthening Exposure to Major-Specific Course Work

Supporting deeper learning and timely degree completion

A sample of A2B pathways

Pathway	Communications	Sociology	History
Average major-specific credits per year at the four-year institution	6.75	9-10	9
Average major-specific credits per year at the community college	3	3 to 6 (counting gen ed)	7.5

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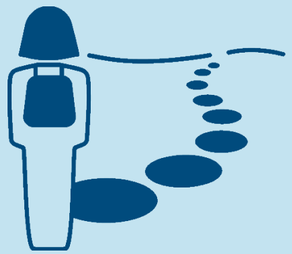
Strategy 2



Align Program Pathways and High-Quality Instruction to Promote Timely Bachelor's Completion within a Major

Essential Practice 1: Clear four-year sequences that promote learning and major progression

Essential Practice 2: Systematized translation of maps into tailored educational plans

- Set systems to ensure plan development within the first term
- Create customized plans that support timely completion while balancing students' work and family responsibilities
- Embed maps and plans into student information and degree audit systems
- Adjust course schedules and modalities to enable plan completion

Essential Practice 3: Strengthened instruction, academic support, and curricular alignment

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Tallahassee State College

Overview:

Systematic new student onboarding to create full tailored education plans by the end of the first year

Reforms:

- Based on application information, major-specific four-year pathways (developed with partners) pre-populate first-term plans/schedules for discussion with advisors
- Advisors work with students to develop full plans based on major and transfer destination(s)
- Advisors can show the impact of different course loads on time to degree
- Direct registration from tailored plans

Results:

- 90 percent of new students have a tailored plan

TSC TALLAHASSEE STATE COLLEGE

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Strategy 3

Tailor Transfer Advising & Non-Academic Supports to Foster Trust and Engagement

Essential Practice 1: Early, sustained, and inevitable advising systems

- Make advising inevitable throughout community college
- Engage transfer students before, during, and after they transition to a university
- Start transfer outreach and advising in high school

Essential Practice 2: A trained, knowledgeable, and caring advising corps

Essential Practice 3: A transfer-specific approach to holistic success

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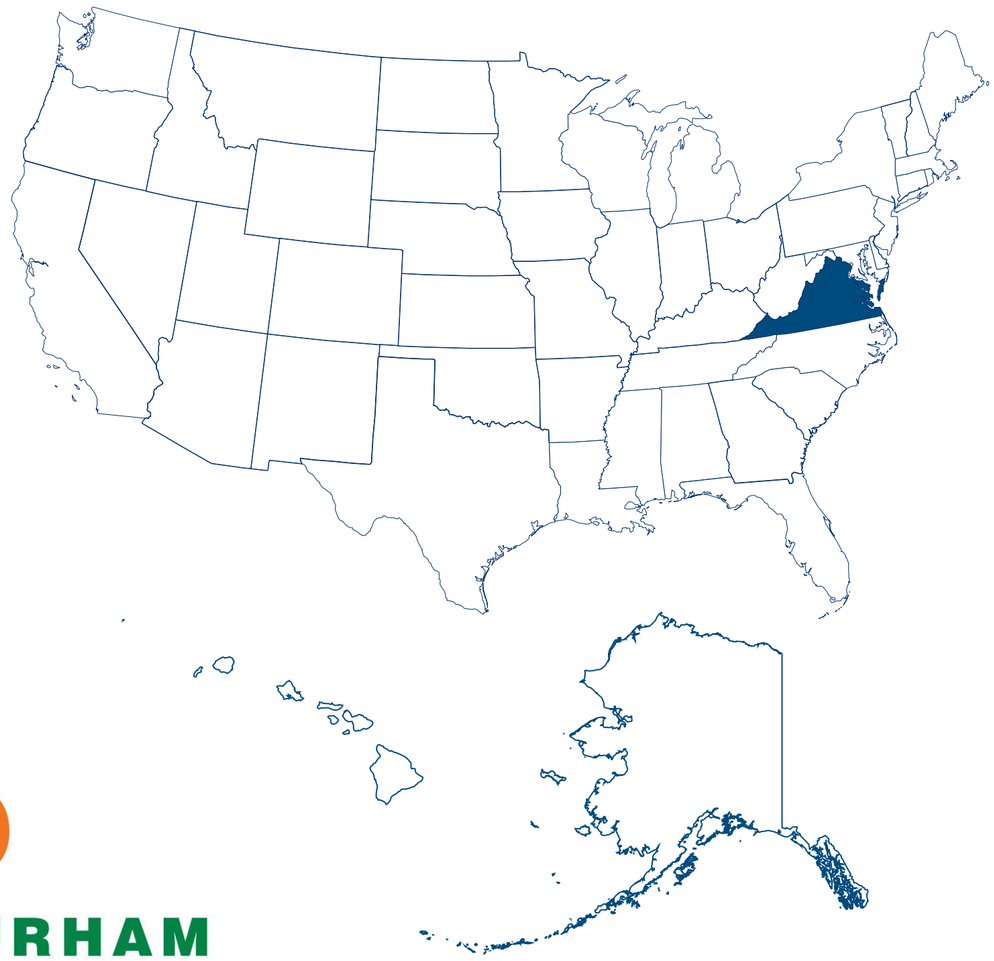
Durham Technical Community College

Mandatory student success course for building a tailored plan



Context: Technical college located in the North Carolina Research Triangle, where the majority of good jobs require a bachelor's degree.

Reforms: Durham Tech requires all students to complete ACA 122, the North Carolina student success course, in their first semester, even if they are in a non-transfer program.

Results:

- The course teaches students how to maximize credit transfer, explore career goals and university options, and evaluate their own learning skills
- Most importantly, students build an individualized education plan for transferring within a specific major to a specific transfer destination

DURHAM TECH

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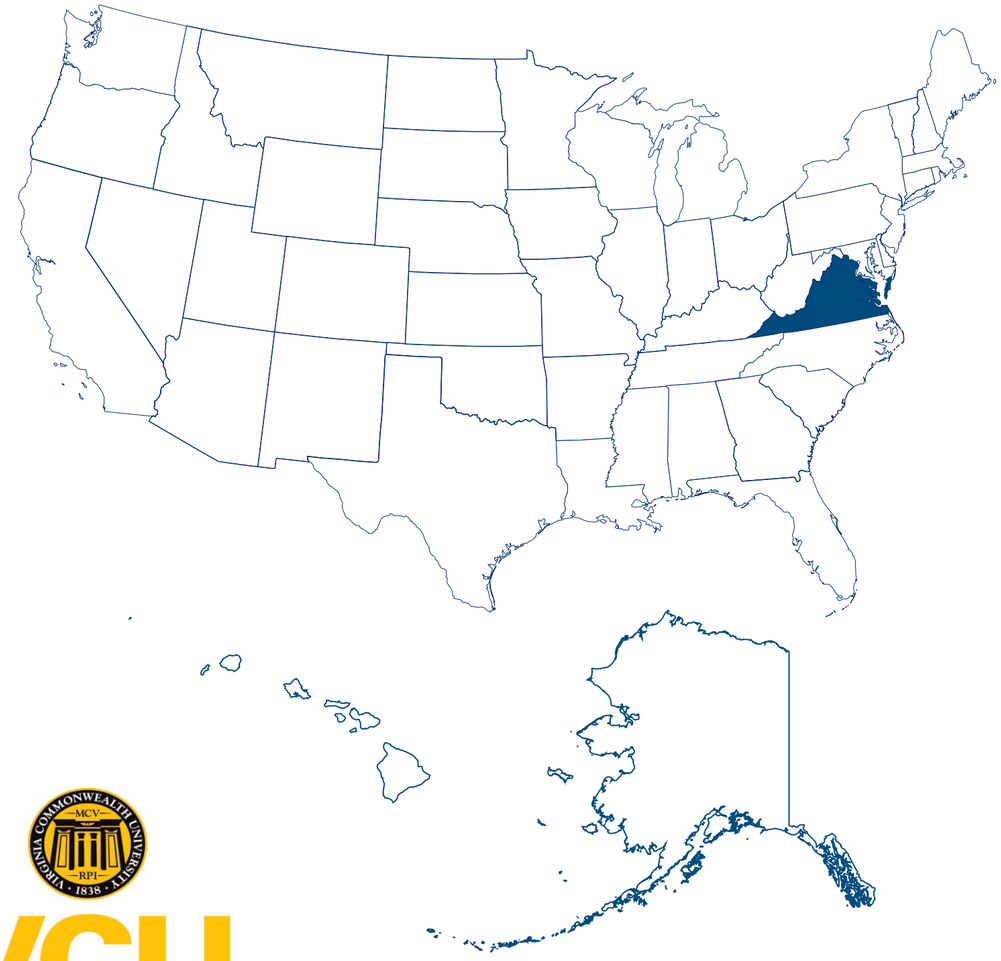
Virginia Commonwealth University

Investments in advising and clear programmatic pathways



Reforms:

- Dedicated admissions counselors are based on two-year campuses (or frequently travel) and work with students before they reach VCU to connect them with resources, including the Transfer Center's pre-transfer advising
- Transfer students have their first one-on-one advising appointment before orientation, and then meet again once classes start to craft a full graduation plan
- Professional advisors have specific targets: Meet with 30 percent of their caseload of 200 to 300 students by the end of the first month of the semester, 60 percent by the second, and 90 percent by the third month.

Results: 80 percent of new transfer students access advising in their first term—with an even higher share for historically underserved groups

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Q&A

What reflections or questions do you have about the Playbook's findings?

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