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To: Governor Janet T. Mills  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
From: David J. Daigler, President, Maine Community College System  
RE: *2023 Annual Free College Report*  
Date: October 1, 2023

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It is my pleasure to submit the annual report on the Maine Free College initiative at Maine’s community colleges.

This report is in response to *LD 1995*, a Supplemental Budget bill signed by the governor on April 20, 2022 establishing the Free College Scholarship. The law requires the Maine Community College System to submit a report to the Governor and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs on the use and success of the program.

This report profiles the Maine Free College initiative in 2022-23, the first academic year the scholarship was available. The state’s charge was to use the state’s \$20 million investment to provide tuition-free community college to at least 8,000 pandemic-era students from 2020-23, and we are on track to meet those goals by the end of the academic year 2023-2024.

- In 2022-23, MCCS enrolled 6,577 Free College students, with 2023-24 enrollment still to come.
- Of the \$20 million, MCCS distributed \$10.2 million in Free College Scholarships.

And while overall 2022-23 enrollment was up 12 percent, it remained short of pre-pandemic 2019-20 enrollment. While Free College certainly played a role in increasing enrollment, the scholarship was not the only factor.

The 2022-23 academic year is also when Maine’s community colleges:

- Doubled our nursing program capacity, adding 200 spaces, and expanded or added other high-demand programs.
- Eased pandemic-related dampers and expanded housing capacity by reverting dorm rooms limited to singles due to COVID back to doubles. Nationwide, pandemic-era students began returning to college: Enrollment at public two-year colleges increased about half a percent, while enrollment at four-year colleges was down 1.2 percent.
- Experienced a 300 percent increase in enrollment in short-term workforce training programs, to 12,000 students in 2022-23, up from 3,000 students in 2021-22.

- Added new scholarships for short-term workforce graduates who subsequently enroll in degree and certificate programs. In 2022-23, 723 scholarships were awarded.

In all, Maine's community colleges are welcoming students in greater numbers across all our programs. That's excellent news for the students, who are learning the skills they need for good-paying jobs, and for the state, which is getting more skilled workers entering the workforce faster.

The community colleges are proud to be the stewards of this transformational scholarship program that has already benefitted so many students, families, and communities. It would not have happened without the vision and determination of the Mills administration and the bipartisan support of the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature. We look forward to continuing this worthy and valuable partnership.



## FREE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted to the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature's Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and Governor Janet T. Mills

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maine Free College initiative was a major success in its first year: re-engaging pandemic-impacted high school graduates who didn't enroll in college after graduation back to higher ed, hitting financial targets, and returning M CCS systemwide enrollment to near pre-pandemic levels. Created and launched when two-year college enrollments were crashing nationwide, the promise of tuition-free college was a hopeful, powerful incentive for high school graduates to emerge from the pandemic and return or start college for focused, purposeful, low-cost academic programs that prepare them for either a good job or transfer to a four-year college, saving half the cost of a four-year degree. The outcomes include:

- **Increasing overall enrollment** 12 percent in 2022-23, returning enrollment to near pre-pandemic (2019-20) levels. Free College students accounted for 46 percent of degree-seeking students, or 6,557 students out of 14,159.
- **Successfully re-engaging pandemic-era students** who had not enrolled anywhere after graduating high school. National Student Clearinghouse data shows that 749 Free College students from the classes of 2020 and 2021 had never attended college anywhere before enrolling at a Maine community college in Fall 2022.
- **Attracting more “direct-from-high-school” graduating seniors:** Pre-pandemic, M CCS enrolled about 2,200 direct-from-high-school students each fall. In Fall 2022, M CCS enrolled 2,481 direct-from-high-school graduates, a gain of 281 students.
- **Keeping Maine dollars in-state**, benefiting Maine students and families: 95 percent of Free College students were from Maine, the same as for non-Free College students.
- **Increasing Student Success:** Fall-to-spring retention rates were higher for Maine Free College students (74 percent) than for non-Free College students (72 percent.)

## OVERVIEW

The Maine Free College initiative was intended to benefit high school graduates most severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic—those in the classes of 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023—by allowing them to attend Maine’s community colleges without paying any tuition or mandatory fees.

In 2023, the Legislature extended the Free College Scholarship to the classes of 2024 and 2025 and made minor program adjustments to increase access and retention.

To qualify for the scholarship today, students must graduate from high school or earn the equivalent of a diploma in a qualifying year, pursue a two-year associate degree or a one-year certificate at least part-time, live in Maine while enrolled, fill out the FAFSA, and accept any state or federal grant aid before the Free College scholarship is applied.

The Free College Scholarship benefits only a limited number of the people we serve. The average age of Maine community college degree-seeking students is 25 years old, and 34 percent of our non-Early College students are 25 or older.

In total, MCCC serves more than 29,000 people a year through a broad range of two-year degree programs, one-year certificate programs, advanced certificates, continuing education, and short-term workforce training courses.

A long-time high school counselor described the scholarship’s impact this way:

*“As school counselors, we have talked about community colleges more in the past year than perhaps the previous (sometimes considerable) years in the field combined. **Kids that never saw themselves as “college material” are legit going to college.** Undecided students can now proudly proclaim “I don’t know what I want to do, but I am going to community college to figure it out.” **First generation kids and families are finally able to consider being the first to pursue education after high school because they know it won’t be a money pit that leads to financial ruin.** “Four-year college kids” who have no interest in a four-year college program now have cover to make the decision that is best for them without undue outside influence. And financially savvy kids are taking advantage of 2+2 transfer programs to cut costs, and therefore amassing less student loan debt.”*  
– Camden Hills Regional High School Counselor Piet Lammert

# KEY GOALS AND STRATEGIES

## **1. Remove financial barriers to college for students most affected by the pandemic**


Community colleges largely serve first-generation, low-income students. Even pre-pandemic, these students and families were the least able to consider or afford college. The pandemic made a bad situation worse, with job losses hitting lower-income families hardest – and jeopardizing the futures of teenagers in those households. Between 2019 and 2021, nationwide enrollment at two-year public colleges dropped 17.5 percent, compared to less than 1 percent at four-year colleges. Graduate enrollment *increased* 5.4 percent over those same two years.

## **2. Motivate high school students to graduate and stay in Maine, attract working families to Maine**

The promise of tuition-free college provides high school students with good reason to not just graduate high school, but to stay in Maine instead of leaving to pursue college or work elsewhere. It's also a benefit for Maine employers looking to attract out-of-state workers by offering a free in-state college benefit for their children. The scholarship, by being open to out-of-state high school graduates, encourages in-migration of young people to Maine, where they contribute to the economy during their college years and likely stay for work after graduation. Traditionally, 90 percent of Maine community college graduates stay in Maine after graduation.

## **3. Increase the number of skilled workers entering the Maine workforce**

Some students can flounder when they go to college, taking random classes without a clear goal in mind and struggling to find a unifying theme to their education. The Free College scholarship onboarding process requires students to enroll in a specific one-year certificate or two-year associate degree program, meet with an advisor, and map out a clear academic pathway. Students cannot get the scholarship if they are “undeclared.” This ensures students benefit from up-front advice from trained advisors, know what student support is available to them, and maximizes their chances of success.



*“Personally, I considered nurses the heroes of the pandemic, and this inspired me to want to pursue becoming a nurse. **The Free College Scholarship is a call to action, and I am answering that call to step up, and be what my state needs me to be.** I am very appreciative of the opportunity and will not let it go to waste.” – Kierstyn Lyons, CMCC*

#### **4. Maximize the state's investment**

Intentionally making the scholarship a so-called “last dollar” scholarship is intended to stretch the state’s investment over the longest period. By tapping into state and federal grant aid first, many Free College students do not even need any funds from the \$20 million Free College Scholarship allocation because the \$3,700 annual cost of tuition and mandatory fees is covered by grant aid.

In 2022-23, MCCS distributed \$10.2 million in Free College scholarship money, after Free College students collected \$11.4 million in federal Pell Grants and \$4.9 million in State of Maine Grants. Of the 6,577 Free College students, 3,826 received Free College scholarships, for an average amount of \$2,671.

*“I was not really sure what I wanted to do when it came to college. Spending thousands of dollars to figure it out really made me nervous, especially with all the talk around the country about student loan debt. **The Free College Scholarship really gave me the peace of mind and the extra bump in the right direction to start college.** – Mikenzie Melendez, CMCC*

Many lower-income students don’t even apply to college because they presume they can’t afford it – not realizing they would be eligible for federal and state grants that cover the low costs of a community college education. Requiring the FAFSA, which unveils what aid students qualify for, was an important element of the initiative. Admissions officers say many Free College students and families were surprised to learn that they qualified for grant aid.

### **To meet these goals, we embraced the following strategies:**

**Keep it simple:** Many prospective students have little to no experience or resources when enrolling in college, and the experience can be daunting. Minimal requirements, a streamlined process, strong advisory support, and clear guardrails emerged as high priorities in shaping the scholarship requirements.

**Include adult learners:** Not everyone gets a high school diploma. The scholarship is available to adult and alternative learners who have proven they have the desire and ability to pursue their education by passing the Hi-SET or its equivalent. This is particularly important for re-capturing people who left high school but returned to education later in life, and New Mainers establishing a local education record.

**Provide tailored support to Free College students:** Many pandemic-era students missed out on “college prep” and needed more help choosing a college and classes. Each Free College student is assigned an advisor to assist them with onboarding, resources, and mapping out academic pathways.

**Increase transfer opportunities to four-year colleges:** The colleges have hundreds of existing transfer opportunities, and the Free College Scholarship makes this work even more vital. A block transfer agreement with the University of Maine System, established in 2015, guarantees that up to 35 general education credits in an Associate of Arts program will transfer to any of our 15 public institutions. Every year, about 600 community college students transfer to the UMS system. This year, Maine is joining the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) New England Transfer Guarantee program, streamlining the path for community college graduates with an eligible GPA to transfer to four-year colleges in Maine.

**Work closely with partners:**

Across the state, many people and organizations helped spread awareness of the scholarship. We are particularly grateful to the many Maine high school counselors, teachers, coaches, and other leaders who told their students about this opportunity; the Adult Education community; the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME); the governor's office, legislators and the state departments of education, labor, and economic and community development; and education partners across the state. The success of Free College this year was truly a team effort!



*Commissioner Heather Johnson was at a store in Skowhegan when a young woman and her mother got in line behind her. **They'd just come from Kennebec Valley Community College orientation, and the young woman was so excited that she qualified for free college.** "They were both so happy. They said they weren't sure what she was going to do before but with this as a choice she can go to school. She's going to live at home and can work around classes and can make it all work."*

**Improve the scholarship program where possible:** In keeping with our commitment to being nimble and responsive, Maine's community colleges closely review the Free College student experience. Just weeks into the Fall 2022 semester, advisors and instructors noted that some students were struggling to meet the full-time enrollment requirement and feared losing the scholarship if they needed to drop a class. That led to a recommendation, later adopted by the Legislature, to allow scholarship students to attend part-time. Students must now graduate within 200 percent of completion time, which is two years for a certificate, and four years for an associate degree. Another change was allowing high school graduates to enroll up to two years after high school, since many students need to experience "real life" for a few years before realizing the value of a degree.

**Keep Maine competitive:** Free College is now in place in more than half the states, and Maine doesn't want to be left behind or be less competitive in attracting workers. Data show college graduates have higher earning power, enter a career track faster, are more "recession-proof," and earn significantly more money over their careers than high school graduates. It's a smart investment, with considerable ROI, and will help support a strong state economy.



# **MAINE FREE COLLEGE REPORT DATA**

## **Appendix I**

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## 2022-2023 Enrollment Highlights

### *How many Free College students were enrolled?*

<b>Headcount</b>	Annual (Deduplicated)	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
<b>TOTAL Headcount</b>	<b>23,661</b>	<b>17,012</b>	<b>14,152</b>	<b>5,586</b>
Degree-Seeking Headcount	14,159	11,272	10,191	4,031
<b>Maine Free College Headcount</b>	<b>6,557</b>	<b>5,550</b>	<b>4,926</b>	<b>1,719</b>
% of Degree-Seekers who were Free College Students	46.3%	49.2%	48.3%	42.6%

### *How many credits did Free College students take?*

<b>Total Credits</b>	Annual	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
<b>ALL Student Total Credits</b>	<b>293,675.4</b>	<b>142,951.5</b>	<b>120,731.4</b>	<b>29,992.5</b>
Degree-Seeking Total Credits	246,051.0	118,250.5	104,253.0	23,547.5
<b>Maine Free College Total Credits</b>	<b>137,161.0</b>	<b>68,815.5</b>	<b>58,450.5</b>	<b>9,895.0</b>
% of Degree-Seeker Credits that were Free College	55.7%	58.2%	56.1%	42.0%

### *Which high school graduating classes did they come from?*

<b>Headcount</b>	Total	Class of 2022	Class of 2021	Class of 2020
<b>Headcount</b>	<b>6,557</b>	<b>2,857</b>	<b>2,160</b>	<b>1,540</b>
Percent of Total	100%	44%	33%	23%

MCCS DataMart

# College-Going Enrollment Trends

## ***What are the statewide college enrollment trends?***

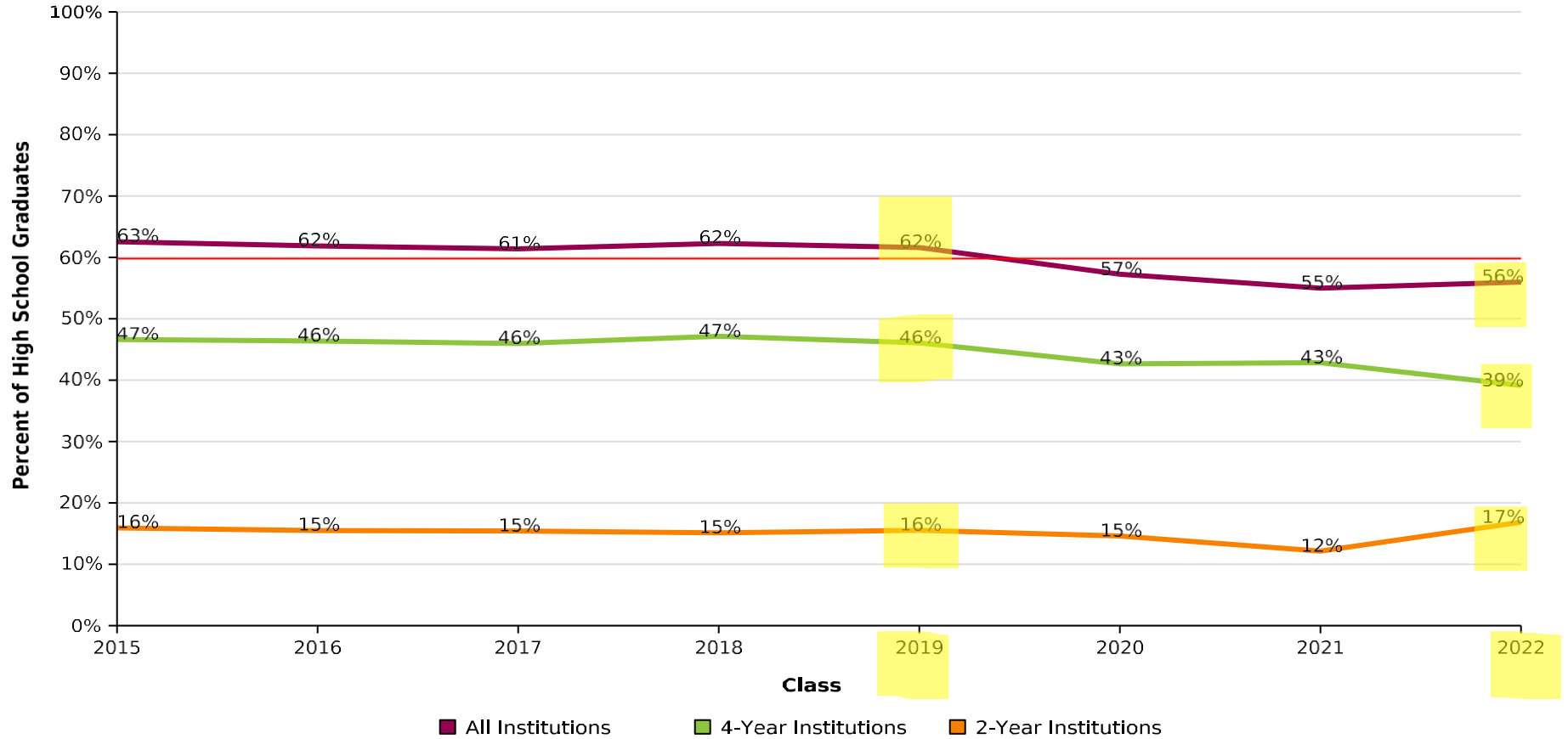
The following charts show National Student Clearinghouse data on how many Maine high school graduates go to college, and whether those colleges are in Maine or out-of-state, and whether they are two-year or four-year colleges.

Of note:

- Pre-pandemic, Maine's college-going rate was consistently at 62 percent, with a steady 71 percent attending a Maine college. Of those college-going grads, a steady 75 percent enrolled at a four-year college and 25 percent enrolled at a two-year college.
- In 2022, the college-going rate remained stubbornly low at 56 percent. The number of graduates enrolling in four-year colleges or two year-colleges shifted five percent, from 75%-25% in 2019 to 70%-30% in 2022. In whole numbers, that five percent difference represents a total of 351 additional students who chose to attend a two-year college instead of a four-year college.

# Percent of Students Enrolled in College the Fall Immediately After High School by Institutional Level

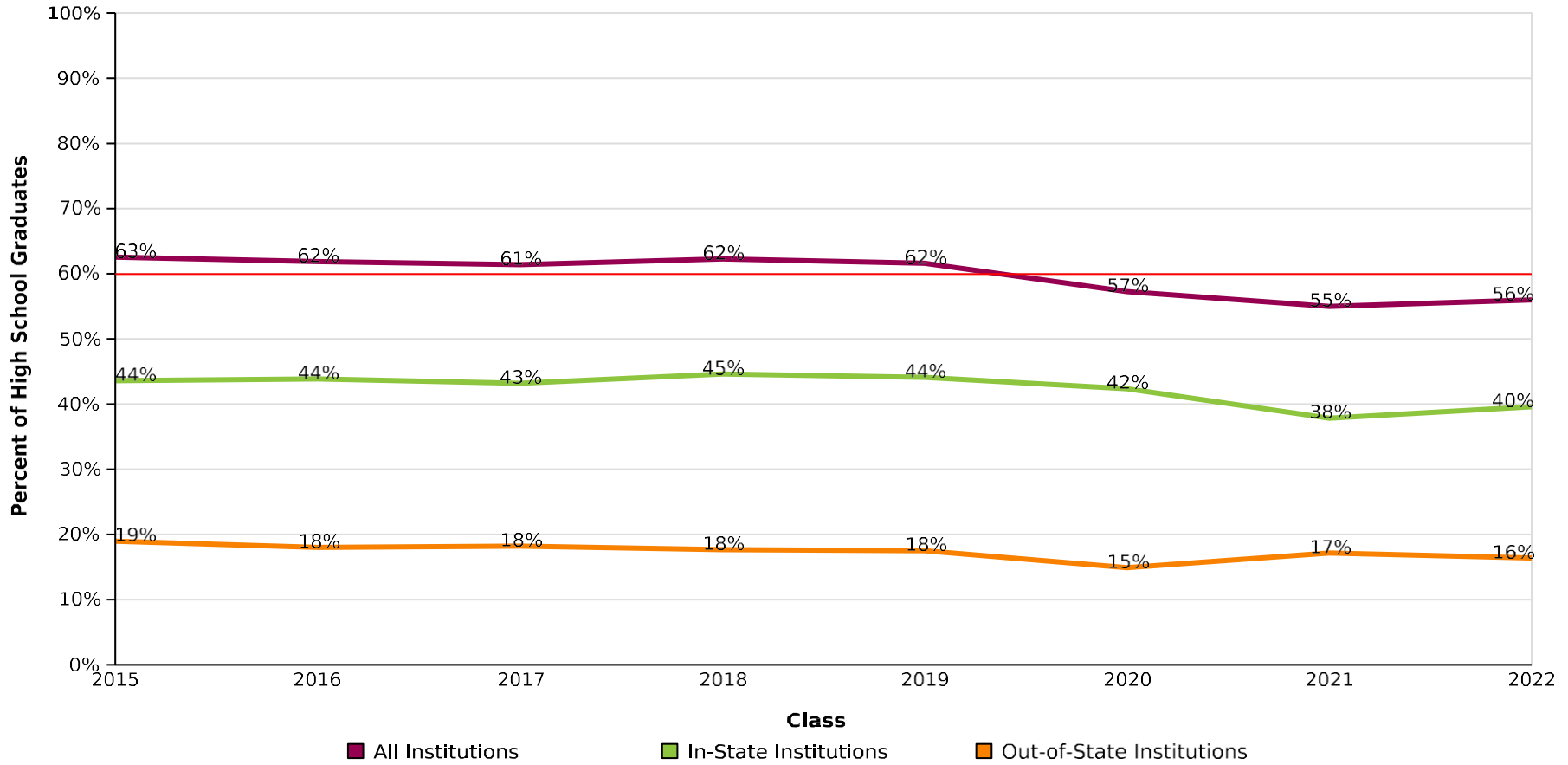
Effective Date = April 27, 2023



National Student Clearinghouse

# Percent of Students Enrolled in College the Fall Immediately After High School by Institutional Location

Effective Date = April 27, 2023



## College-Going Trends of Maine's High School Graduates

***How many Maine high school graduates went to college? Did they attend a public or private college? Did they attend a 4-year or 2-year college? Did they attend college in Maine or out-of-state? What are the differences between pre-pandemic 2019 figures and 2022?***

Class of	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	# change 2019-22	% change 2019-22
<b>Total # Maine HS graduates</b>	12,659	12,737	12,573	12,665	12,901	12,440	12,250	12,289	<b>&lt;612&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;4.7%&gt;</b>
<b>Total enrolled in college</b>	7,918	7,880	7,719	7,887	7,948	7,123	6,736	6,880	<b>&lt;1,068&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;13.4%&gt;</b>
<b><i>PUBLIC V. PRIVATE?</i></b>										
<b>Total in Public colleges</b>	5,199	5,110	5,022	5,116	5,382	4,797	4,450	4,709	<b>&lt;673&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;12.5%&gt;</b>
<b>Total in Private colleges</b>	2,719	2,770	2,697	2,771	2,566	2,326	2,286	2,171	<b>&lt;395&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;15%&gt;</b>
<b><i>4-YEAR V. 2-YEAR?</i></b>										
<b>Total in 4-Year colleges</b>	5,902	5,907	5,780	5,972	5,944	5,306	5,248	4,809	<b>&lt;1,135&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;19.1%&gt;</b>
<b>Total in 2-Year colleges</b>	2,016	1,973	1,939	1,915	2,004	1,817	1,488	2,071	<b>67</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
<b><i>IN-STATE V. OUT-OF-STATE?</i></b>										
<b>Total In-State colleges</b>	5,518	5,586	5,430	5,650	5,690	5,269	4,635	4,866	<b>&lt;824&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;14.5%&gt;</b>
<b>Total Out-of-State colleges</b>	2,400	2,294	2,289	2,237	2,258	1,854	2,101	2,014	<b>&lt;244&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;10.8%&gt;</b>

*National Student Clearinghouse*

## Total College Enrollment in Maine

***How many college students are there in Maine? Do they attend public 2-year colleges, public 4-year colleges or private nonprofit 4-year colleges?***

Estimated Total Enrollment	Fall 2017	Fall 2018		Fall 2019		Fall 2020		Fall 2021		Fall 2022	
	Enrollment	Enrollment	% Change from Previous Year	Enrollment	% Change from Previous Year	Enrollment	% Change from Previous Year	Enrollment	% Change from Previous Year	Enrollment	% Change from Previous Year
<b>Maine Total Enrollment</b>	<b>72,407</b>	<b>73,120</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>73,298</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>70,772</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>	<b>69,087</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>	<b>73,093</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
Maine Public 4-year	31,075	31,712	2.1%	31,826	0.4%	31,673	-0.5%	31,022	-2.1%	31,086	0.2%
Maine Public 2-year	16,532	16,631	0.6%	17,104	2.8%	15,847	-7.4%	14,970	-5.5%	17,054	13.9%
Maine Private nonprofit 4-year	24,801	24,777	-0.1%	24,367	-1.7%	23,251	-4.6%	3,095	-0.7%	24,953	8.0%

*National Student Clearinghouse  
<https://nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/> Fall 2022 Appendix*

## Free College Students: Demographics

Residency	All Degree-Seeking		Maine Free College	
	#	%	#	%
In-State	13,476	95.2%	6,256	95.1%
Out-of-State	683	4.8%	321	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,159</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,577</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Gender	All Degree-Seeking		Maine Free College	
	#	%	#	%
Female	8,255	58.3%	3,357	51.0%
Male	5,805	41.0%	3,155	48.0%
Other	99	0.7%	65	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,159</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,577</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Race / Ethnicity	All Degree-Seeking		Maine Free College	
	#	%	#	%
2 or More Races	422	3.0%	222	3.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	90	0.6%	38	0.6%
Asian	249	1.8%	100	1.5%
Black or African American	1,200	8.5%	536	8.1%
Hispanic/Latino	535	3.8%	251	3.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	14	0.1%	5	0.1%
Unknown	390	2.8%	204	3.1%
White	11,259	79.5%	5,221	79.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,159</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,577</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*MCCS Datamart*



## Free College Students: Areas of Study

*What kind of programs did Free College students pursue?*

Level of Study	All Degree-Seeking		Maine Free College		Fall 2019 Degree-Seeking	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1-Year Certificate	1,401	9.9%	566	8.6%	950	7.8%
2-Year Associate Degree	12,758	90.1%	6,011	91.4%	11,154	92.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,159</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,577</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>12,104</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Type of Study	All Degree-Seeking		Maine Free College		Fall 2019 Degree-Seeking	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Career/Technical	11,156	78.8%	4,945	75.2%	8,541	70.6%
Liberal Arts/Studies	3,003	21.2%	1,632	24.8%	3,563	29.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,159</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,577</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>12,104</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Which degree and certificate programs were most popular?*

### TOP 10

#### Associate degree programs (2-year)

General Studies/Liberal Studies.....	1,220
Business Administration.....	641
Health Care.....	298
Criminal Justice.....	187
Education.....	170
Early Childhood Education.....	169
Human Services.....	151
New Media.....	149
Automotive.....	144
Network and System Administration.....	117

### TOP 10

#### Certificate degree programs (1-year)

Electrician.....	102
Health care.....	79
Welding.....	48
Plumbing.....	28
Lineworker.....	17
Small Business Administration.....	15
Human Services.....	13
Medical/Clinical Assistant.....	13
Machine tool Technology.....	10
Construction.....	10

*MCCS Fall 2022 DataMart*

## Top Sending Maine High Schools (Classes of 2020, 2021, 2022)

	Free College Students
GED / HiSET / Adult Diploma	252
Lewiston High School	181
Thornton Academy	112
Edward Little High School	107
Bangor High School	96
South Portland High School	95
Noble High School	90
Bonny Eagle High School	87
Home Schooled	83
Sanford High School	82
Leavitt Area High School	76
Massabesic High School	76
Portland High School	75
Messalonskee High School	74
Oxford Hills Comp High School	73
Biddeford High School	72
Windham High School	71
Westbrook High School	70
Brewer High School	66
Skowhegan Area High School	66
Deering High School	64
Hampden Academy	62
Hermon High School	59
Gray-New Gloucester High School	58
Old Town High School	57
Nokomis Regional High School	56
Oak Hill High School	56
Gorham High School	53
Lawrence High School	52
Brunswick High School	51
Marshwood High School	49
Mount Ararat High School	48
Poland Regional High School	48
Baxter Academy for Technology & Science	46
Cony High School	46
Lake Region High School	45
Morse High School	45
Scarborough High School	45
Freeport High School	43
Spruce Mountain High School	42

	Free College Students
Kennebunk High School	41
Freeport High School	43
Spruce Mountain High School	42
Kennebunk High School	41
Fryeburg Academy	40
Mount Blue High School	40
Erskine Academy	39
John Bapst Memorial High School	37
Wells High School	37
Casco Bay High School	35
Greely High School	34
Lincoln Academy	34
Lisbon High School	34
Waterville Senior High School	34
Ellsworth High School	31
Gardiner Area High School	30
Washington Academy	30
Bucksport High School	29
Camden Hills Regional High School	29
Maine Virtual Academy	29
Winslow High School	29
Falmouth High School	27
Mount View High School	27
Dirigo High School	26
Calais High School	25
Monmouth Academy	24
Belfast Area High School	23
York High School	23
Medomak Valley High School	22
Oceanside High School	22
Sacopee Valley High School	22
Maranacook Community School	21
Mountain Valley High School	21
Orono High School	20
Robert W Traip Academy	20
Cape Elizabeth High School	19
Mattanawcook Academy	19

*MCCS DataMart*

## Top Sending Maine High Schools – Annually

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Lewiston High School	81	77	82	84	77	60	89
Thornton Academy	52	46	37	44	57	43	55
Edward Little High School	39	57	47	47	40	40	54
Noble High School	36	30	41	32	39	30	51
Sanford High School	56	43	42	48	36	27	48
Bonny Eagle High School	45	54	36	37	31	35	45
Biddeford High School	21	28	41	36	28	28	44
South Portland High School	40	34	36	47	41	37	42
Bangor High School	29	30	23	39	16	23	40
Westbrook High School	25	28	43	35	40	25	40
Portland High School	33	33	27	32	29	17	39
Massabesic High School	43	38	46	39	28	22	37
Windham High School	42	29	31	36	24	29	37
Leavitt Area High School	31	22	29	44	25	28	34
Deering High School	35	25	27	30	33	19	33
Hermon High School	32	25	12	21	15	15	32
Messalonskee High School	35	25	31	25	28	26	31
Brewer High School	33	21	28	26	18	27	30
Mount Ararat School	30	29	25	16	22	18	30
Nokomis Regional High School	26	28	25	23	13	15	29
Old Town High School	12	13	12	12	8	18	29
Gray-New Gloucester High School	27	18	23	20	18	14	28
Lawrence High School	23	34	22	22	24	25	28
Oxford Hills High School	33	35	31	50	28	24	28
Baxter Academy for Technology and Science	7	11	8	9	6	11	26
Brunswick High School	13	17	21	19	10	13	26
Gorham High School	21	21	23	12	22	14	26
Lake Region High School	30	23	25	20	6	22	26
Fryeburg Academy	10	6	7	12	9	8	25
Oak Hill High School	19	21	24	33	33	12	25
Skowhegan Area High School	26	22	28	28	40	29	25
Marshwood High School	25	25	28	22	22	23	23
Scarborough High School	48	17	15	25	35	15	23
Lisbon High School	11	13	22	13	11	3	22
John Bapst Memorial High School	8	7	4	6	5	4	20
Morse High School	18	25	28	24	23	13	20
Mount Blue High School	22	15	19	18	18	12	20
Presque Isle High School	16	17	20	21	18	16	20

*MCCS DataMart*

# Free College Students: Success Metrics

## *How academically successful were Free College students?*

Fall to Spring Retention	All Degree-Seeking	Maine Free College	Non-Maine Free College
Fall 2022 -Spring 2023	71.6%	74.3%	69.1%

*MCCS DataMart*

With only two semesters of data, it is too soon to draw many conclusions on the academic success of Maine Free College students. However, data from the first two semesters shows a strong level of semester-to-semester persistence and academic progress.

To help these students succeed, the colleges require Maine Free College students to choose one of eight clustered academic pathways and enroll into a two-year degree or one-year certificate program in that pathway. These pathways provide clear, coherent routes semester-to-semester that, coupled with guidance from a dedicated pathways advisor, helps the student stay on track for successful completion.

The pathways' structure is a national educational model that has demonstrated higher retention and higher success outcomes for students.

At Maine's community colleges, the eight pathways are:

- Arts, Humanities, Digital Media and Communication
- Business and Hospitality
- Computer Science and Information Technology
- Education, Human Services, and Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Health Sciences
- Industrial Technology and Transportation
- Public Safety
- Sciences, Engineering, and Mathematics

## Free College Students: Financial Disbursements

***How much federal and state grant aid was distributed to Free College students? How many needed the “last-dollar” Free College Scholarship?***

Aid Disbursed 2022-2023	Pell Grants			State of Maine Grants			Free College Scholarship Grants		
	Students	Total disbursed	Average grant	Students	Total disbursed	Average grant	Students	Total disbursed	Average grant
Fall 2022	2,388	\$5,816,478	\$2,436	2,492	\$2,737,536	\$1,099	3,119	\$5,087,804	\$1,631
Spring 2023	2,063	\$4,899,048	\$2,375	2,134	\$2,242,601	\$1,051	2,682	\$4,253,519	\$1,586
Summer 2023	466	\$676,631	\$1,452	0	\$0	\$0	1,138	\$877,338	\$771
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>2769</b>	<b>\$11,392,157</b>	<b>\$4,114</b>	<b>2821</b>	<b>\$4,980,137</b>	<b>\$1,765</b>	<b>3826</b>	<b>\$10,218,661</b>	<b>\$2,671</b>

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