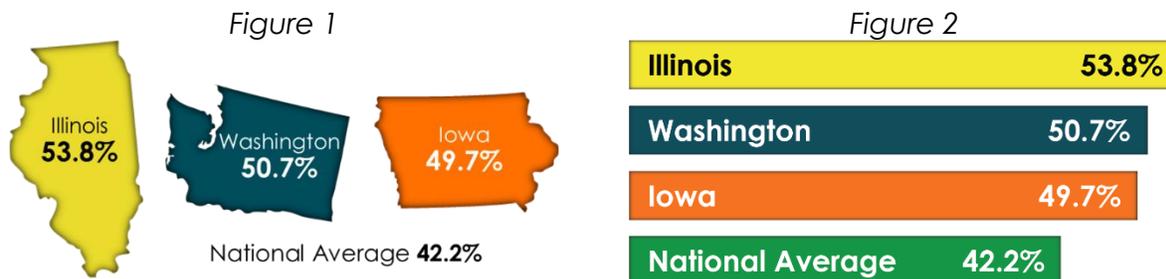


## Transfer Success in Illinois

Illinois now leads the nation in bachelor's degree completion rates among community college students who transfer to four-year colleges. With the latest cohort (students who entered a community college in 2010), Illinois is not only the national leader but it exceeds the national average by a noticeable margin. In fact, 53.8% of Illinois community college students who transferred to four-year colleges completed a bachelor's degree within six years. As shown in *Figure 1*, this bachelor's degree completion rate was 11.6 percentage points higher than the national average of 42.2%.

Washington, Iowa, and Illinois have recently been among the top states for bachelor's degree completion among community college students who transfer to four-year colleges. In a previous iteration of this information<sup>1</sup> that used an earlier cohort of students, Illinois was a close third in the nation behind only Washington and Iowa. According to a report released by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)<sup>2</sup> Illinois has recently surpassed both Iowa and Washington by a noticeable margin (See *Figures 1 and 2*).

*Figures 1 and 2: Rates of Bachelor's Degree Completion among Community College Transfer Students*



Relative to the other national leaders, Illinois serves significantly more community college transfer students and has a more robust transfer system inclusive of significantly more higher education institutions (see *Table 1*). Illinois community college students also experience higher rates of transfer to four-year institutions (transfer-out rates) relative to their counterparts from public two-year colleges in Washington and Iowa. The success of transfer students in Illinois could be traced to two complementary statewide transfer

<sup>1</sup> Jenkins, D. & Fink, J. (2016). *Tracking transfer: New measures of institutional and state effectiveness in helping community college students attain bachelor's degrees*. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/tracking-transfer-institutional-state-effectiveness.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Huie, F., Wakhungu, P.K., Yuan, X., Nathan, A. & Hwang, Y. (2017, September). *Tracking Transfer: Measures of Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students to Complete Bachelor's Degrees (Signature Report No. 13)*. Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. <https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SignatureReport13.pdf>

tools that have been in existence for several years. Illinois has had the Illinois Articulation Initiative in place since 1993 and it currently serves as an overarching transfer agreement between 113 participating colleges and universities, both public and private. MyCreditsTransfer is a student-centered tool that provides detailed information on the transferability of coursework among Illinois institutions including how courses apply towards a bachelor's degree at one's desired transfer institution.

Table 1: State-wide Comparison of Illinois, Washington, and Iowa

	Illinois	Washington	Iowa
<b>Community Colleges</b>	48	33	14
Community College Cohort	33,267	17,371	10,267
Rate of Transfer-Out	35.0%	27.8%	30.5%
<b>Public Universities</b>	12	6	3
Transfer-in Students	6,233	3,600	1,845
<b>Private Nonprofit Colleges</b>	58	15	30
Transfer-in Students	4,072	514	1,158

Note: Two of the Illinois community colleges were not included in the NSC study. The NSC study did not include all of the private nonprofit colleges with operating authority in Illinois (Shapiro, et al., 2017).

It is also important to note that the cohort in the recent NSC study includes both full-time and part-time students and the inclusion of part-time students likely had a negative effect on the rate of degree completion. Also, the cohort does not include students who had taken dual credit or dual enrollment courses and this too likely suppressed the rate of bachelor's degree completion. Community college students who have participated in dual credit have a significantly higher likelihood of transferring to four-year institutions and earning a bachelor's degree when compared to their peers who did not participate in dual credit.<sup>3</sup> Therefore the community college students with arguably the highest likelihood of completion were not included from the study. This makes the results even more impressive.

<sup>3</sup> Blankenberger, B., Lichtenberger, E., and Witt, M.A. (2017). Dual credit, college type, and enhanced degree attainment. *Educational Researcher* (46)5, 259-263. <https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X17718796>