



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE  

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COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Connecting to What Comes Next  
Post-Graduation Success as an Equity Imperative  
Texas Pathways Institute Opening Plenary

Josh Wyner, Executive Director, College  
Excellence Program at the Aspen Institute

Why do community college student graduation and employment outcomes matter so much for our communities?

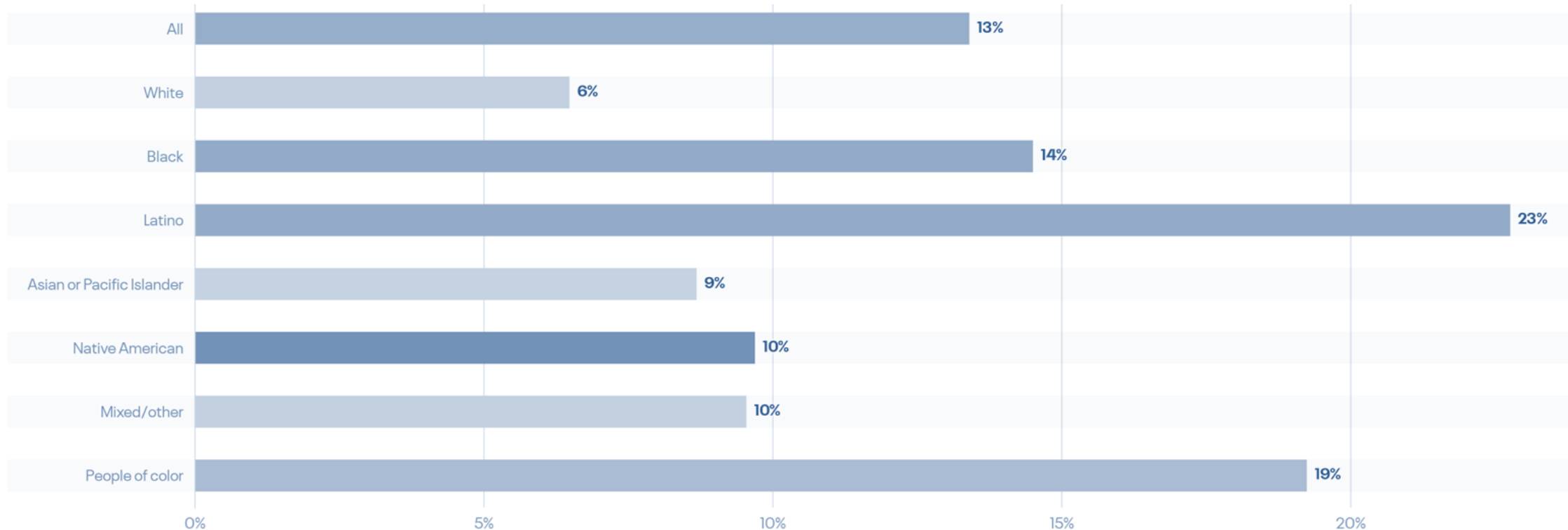
For the nation?



# Adults Have Been Stranded in Low-Wage Work

(Data from 2017)

Texas: Percent of Working Poor by Race/Ethnicity: 200% of federal poverty line, 2017



200% of the federal poverty level = approximately \$24,000 per year

Source: IPUMS, PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, [www.nationalequityatlas.org](http://www.nationalequityatlas.org)

# And Many Young Adults Cannot Make Ends Meet

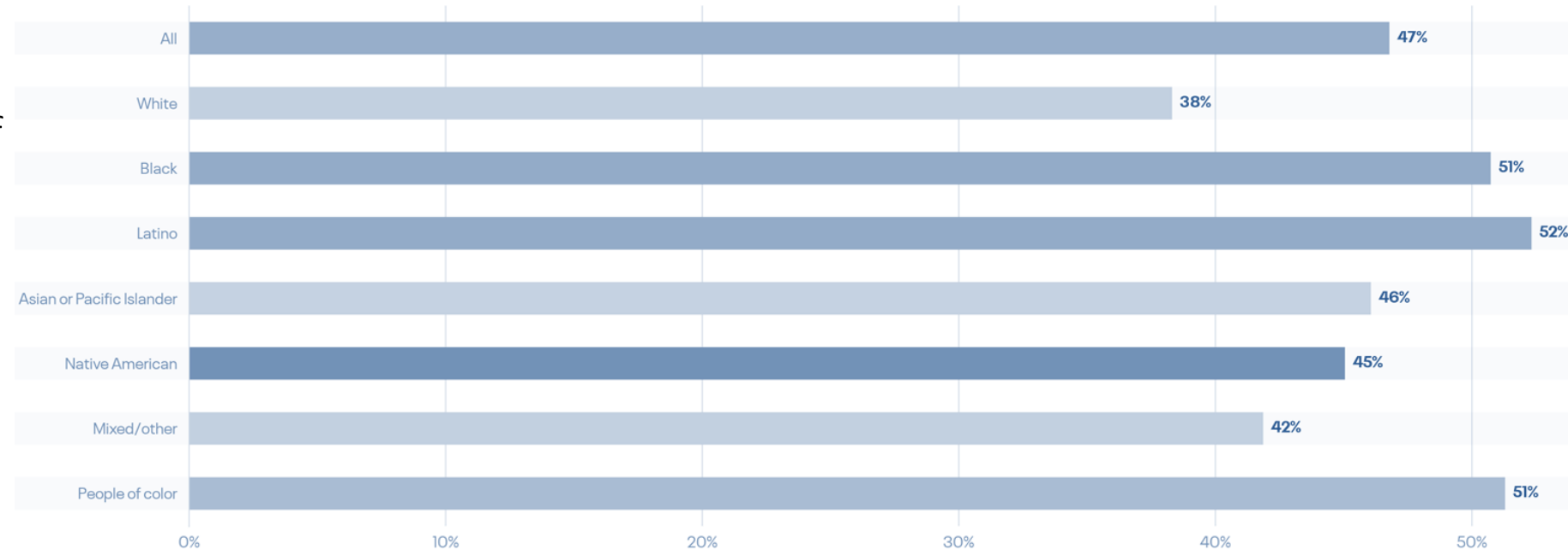
(Data from 2017)



**4.6 million** youth between the ages of 16 and 24 are disconnected from work and school.

(Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, 2018)

Texas: Percent of Youth (Ages 18-24) In Poverty by Race/Ethnicity: 200%, 2017

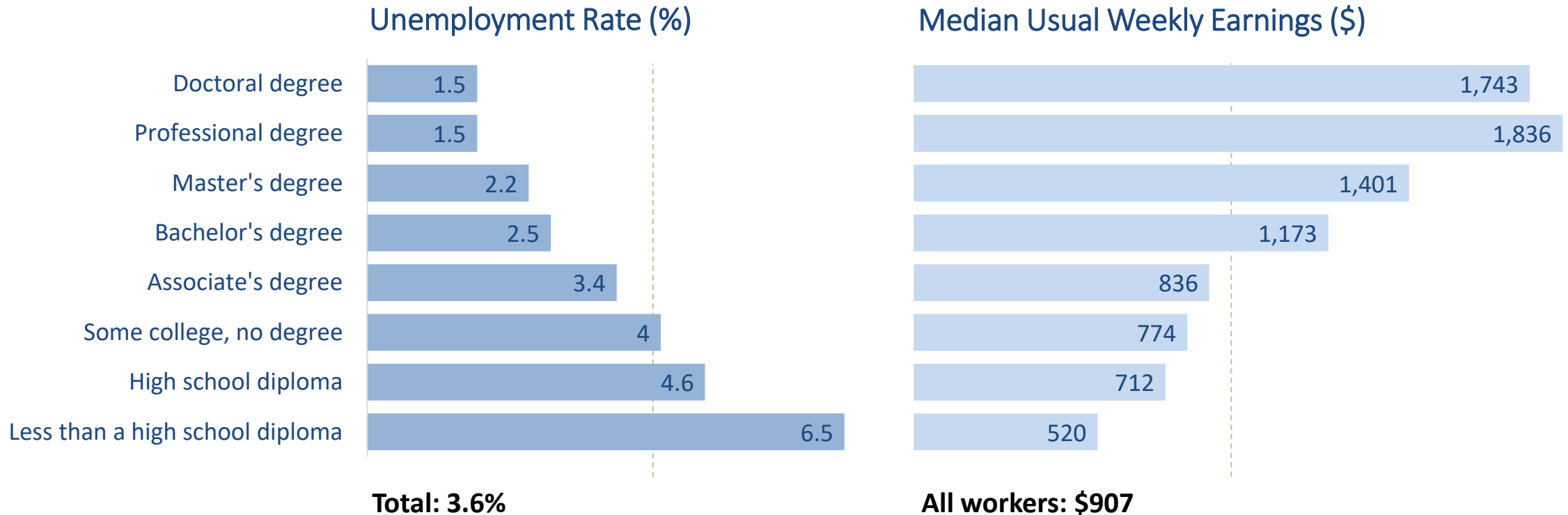


200% of the federal poverty level = approximately \$24,000 per year

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# Higher Education is the Surest Path to Living Wages

## Unemployment Rates and Earnings by Educational Attainment, 2017

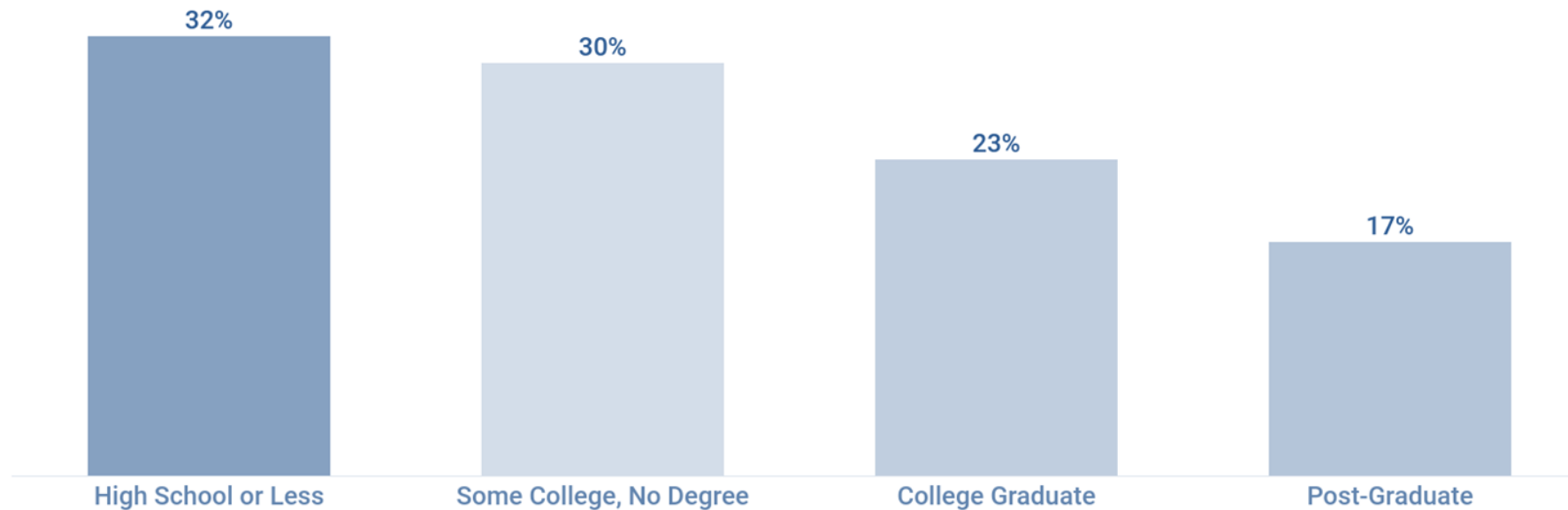


*Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.*

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

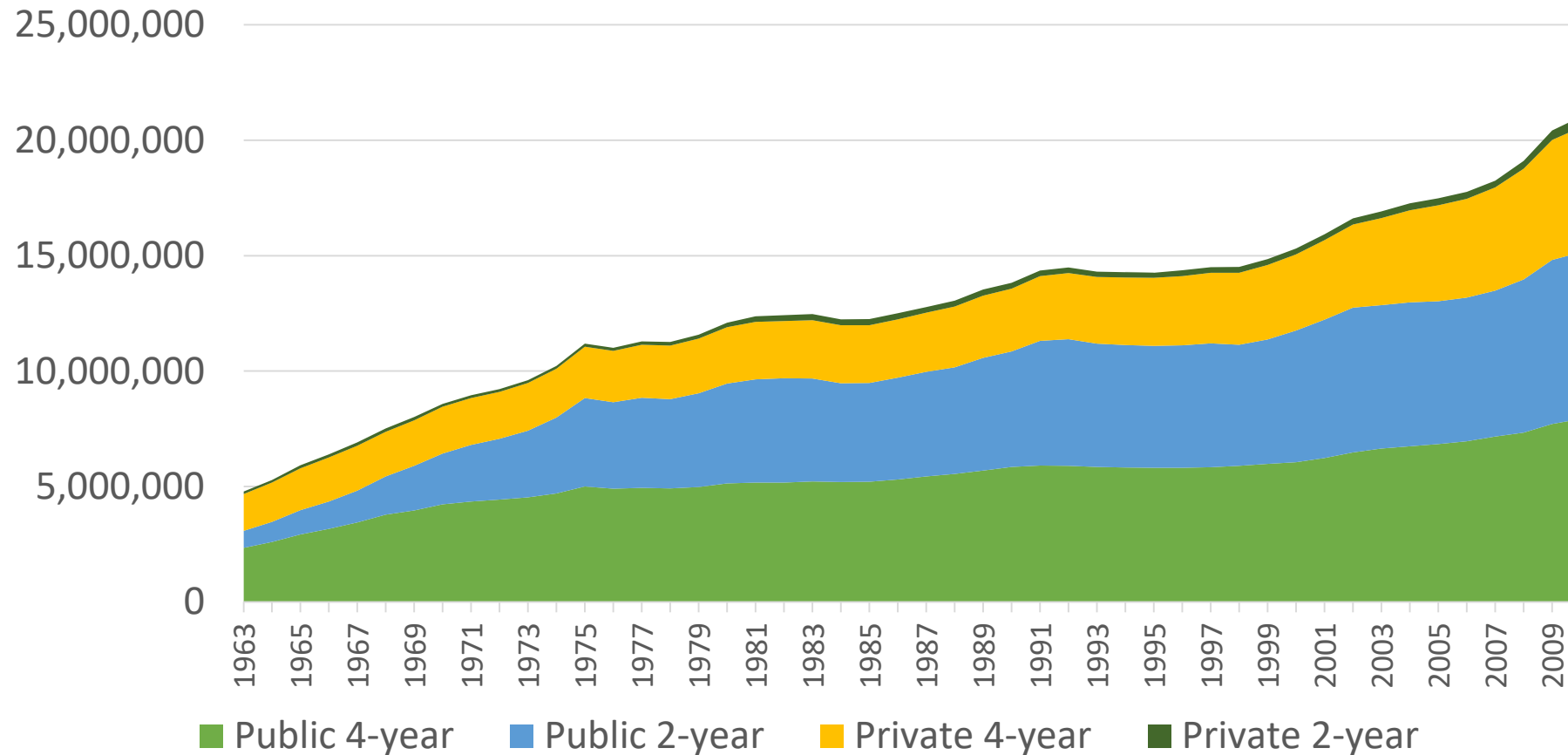
# Higher Education is the Surest Path to Job Security

Layoffs by Educational Attainment During First Month of COVID



Source: Pew Research Center's American News Pathways data tool. Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7 to 12, 2020.

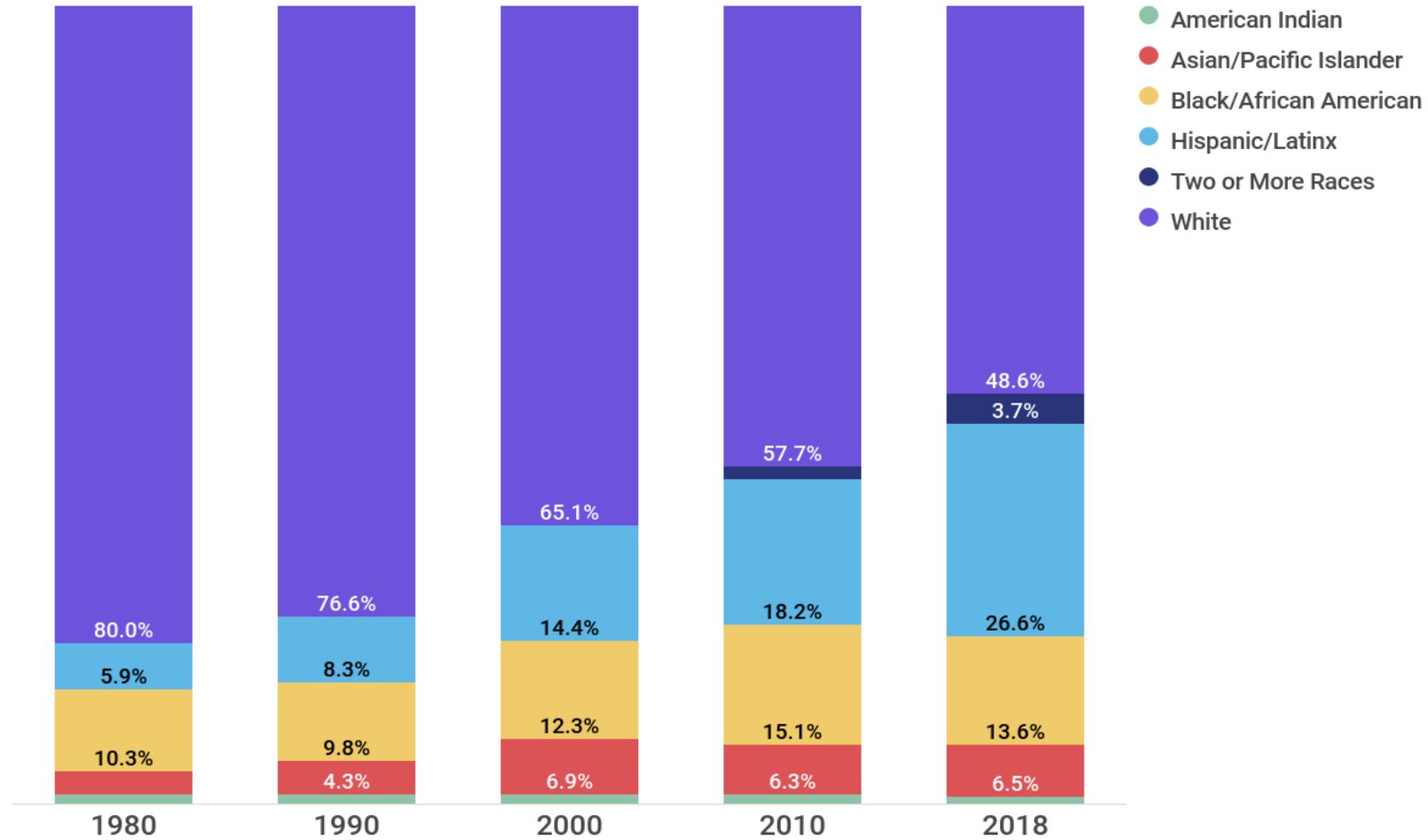
# Community Colleges Have Dramatically Expanded Access



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2011, Table 199.

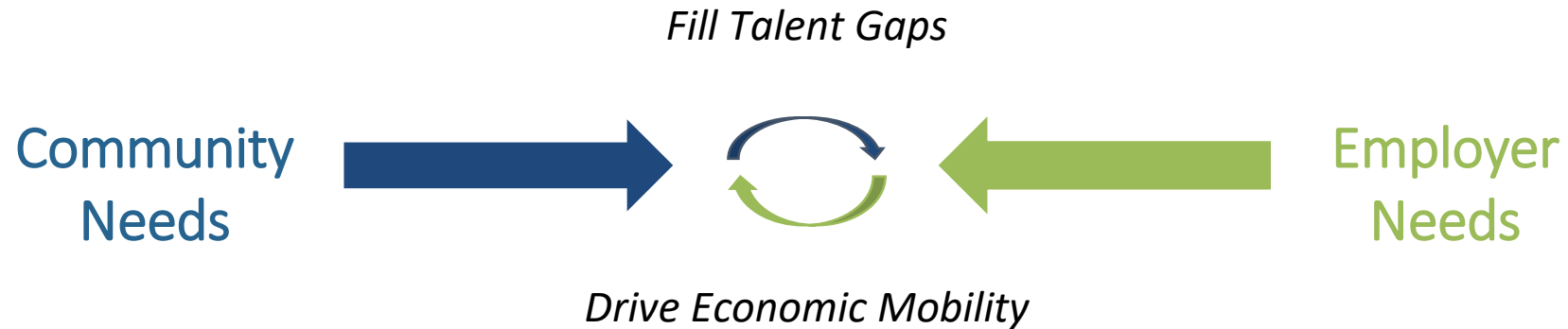
# Community Colleges Have Especially Expanded Access for Students of Color

Public 2-year college enrollment





# Community Colleges Are **Essential** to Economic Mobility and Talent Development



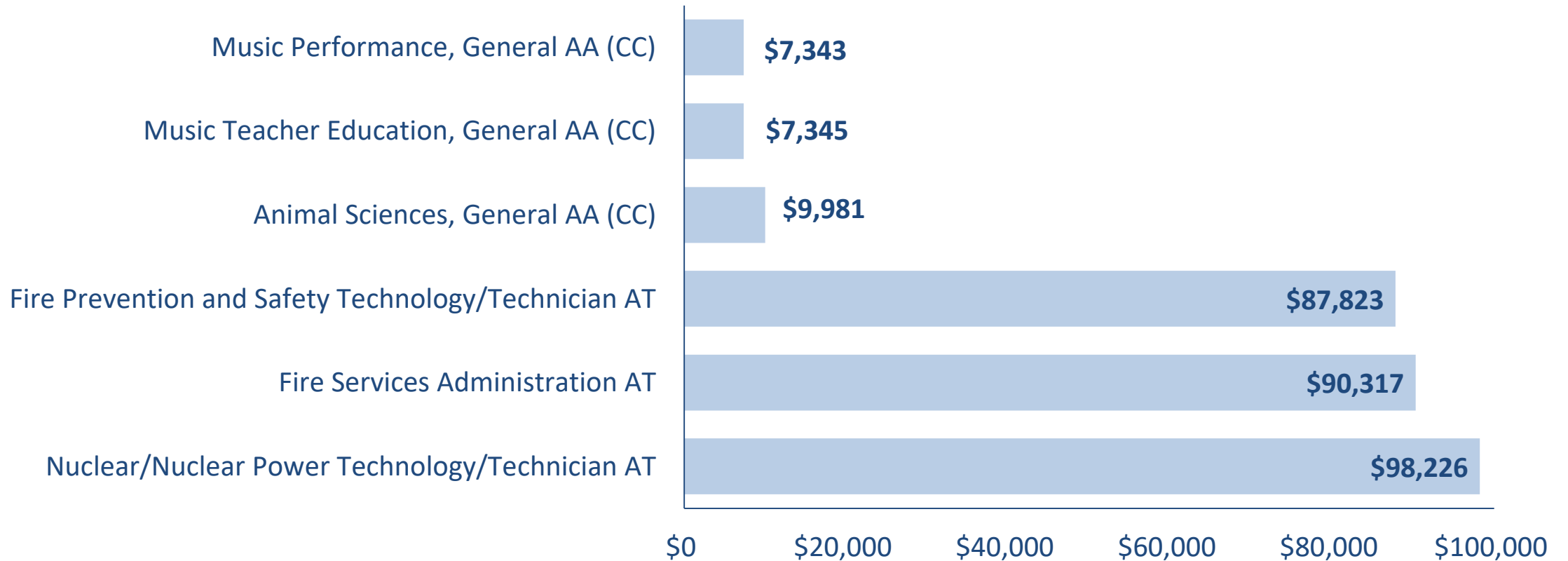
**~50%** of **students of color** start at community colleges

**~44%** of all **low-income students** start at community college

**10.3M** students, or **~45% of all undergraduates**, are enrolled in public community colleges

# But Not Every Credential Leads to Strong Outcomes

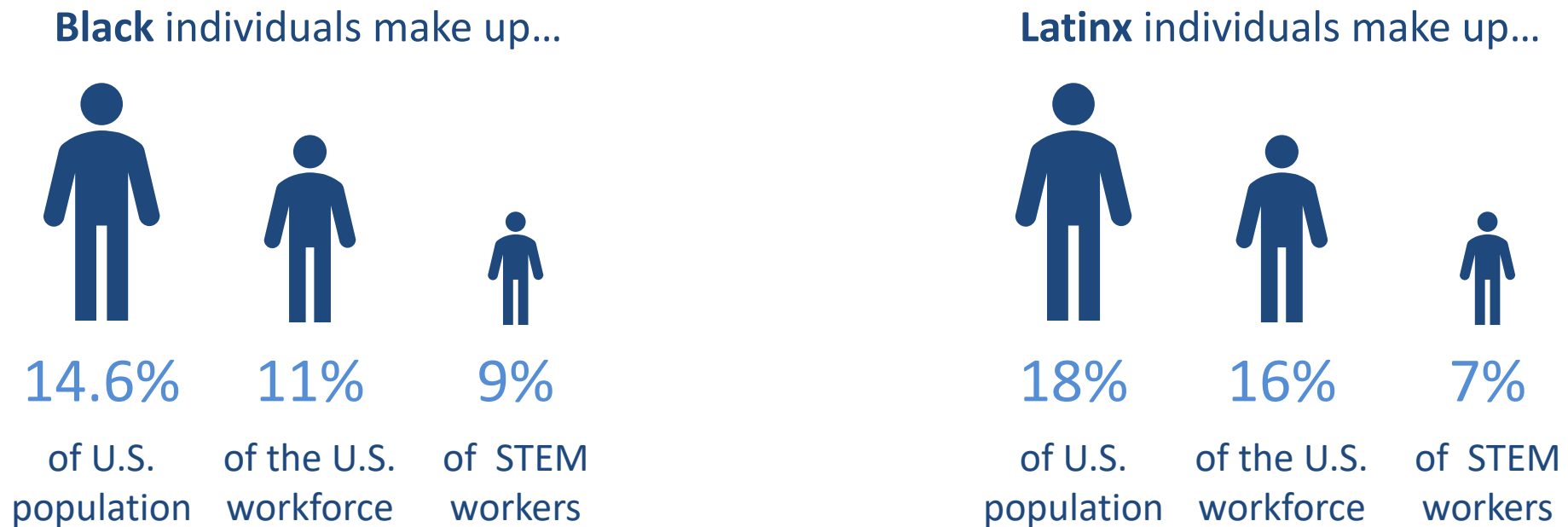
## Texas



Source: Mark Schneider. *Higher Education Pays: But a Lot More for Some Than For Others*. Sept. 2013.

# And Many Populations Continue to Be Underrepresented in Good Jobs, and the STEM Programs that Lead to Them

People of color are underrepresented in STEM majors that lead to high median wages.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Report, Pew Research Center

# There is a Mismatch between Employer Needs and the Opportunity Community Colleges Provide



The number of good jobs for workers with associate's degrees grew by 83% between 1991 and 2016 (but have not grown since).



Yet more than **half** of all workers without a BA don't have "good jobs," defined as jobs that pay at least \$35,000 for workers 25-44 and at least \$45,000 for workers 45-64.

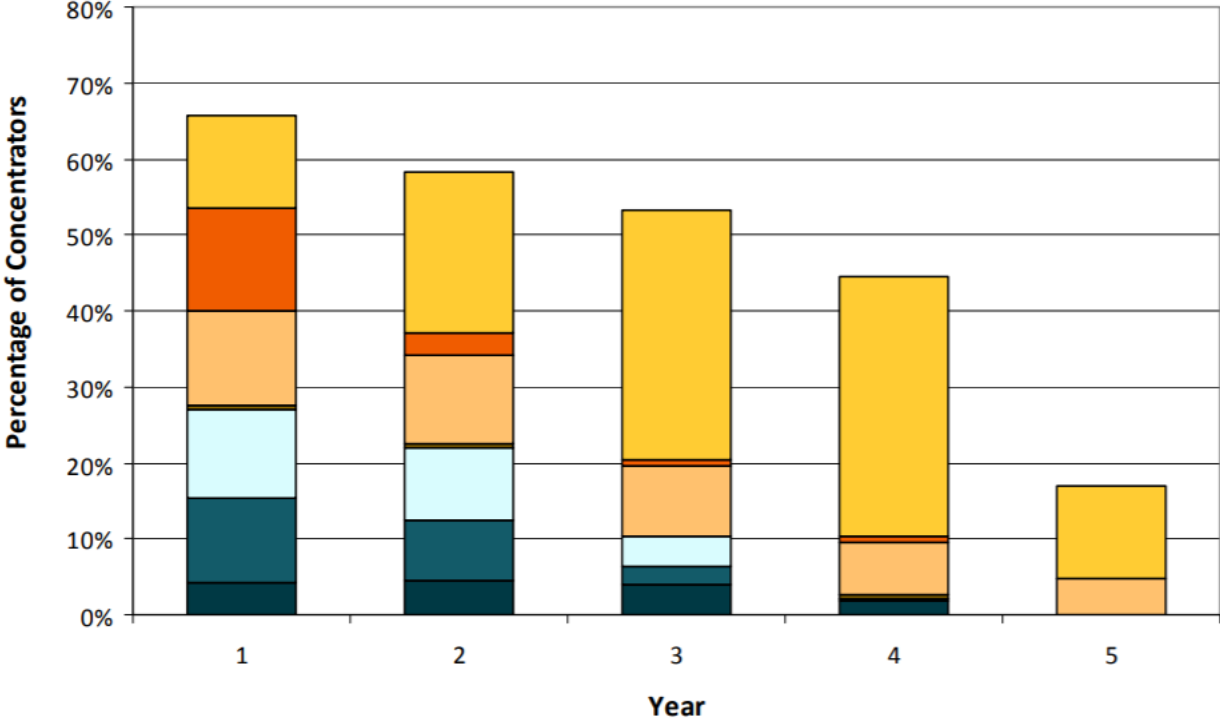
**46%** of employers reported difficulty filling positions due to available talent.

Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 2017.

# The Guided Pathways Movement Has Helped Make Clear the Connection Between Student Purpose and Degree Completion

Connecting students to a program **earlier** in their college career results in better educational outcomes.

Highest Educational Outcome Achieved Within Five Years by Year Student First Entered Concentration



- Certificate only
- Associate degree only
- Transfer with award
- Certificate or associate degree from other institution
- Transfer with no award
- Bachelor's degree
- Still enrolled with 30+ credits in year 5

Source: Davis Jenkins and Sung-Woo Cho. *Get With the Program: Accelerating Community College Students' Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study*. Community College Research Center, 2012.

# Three Types of Programs to Consider Under Guided Pathways

1

Medium- to High-  
Wage CTE



2

Transfer and  
Attainment of a BA



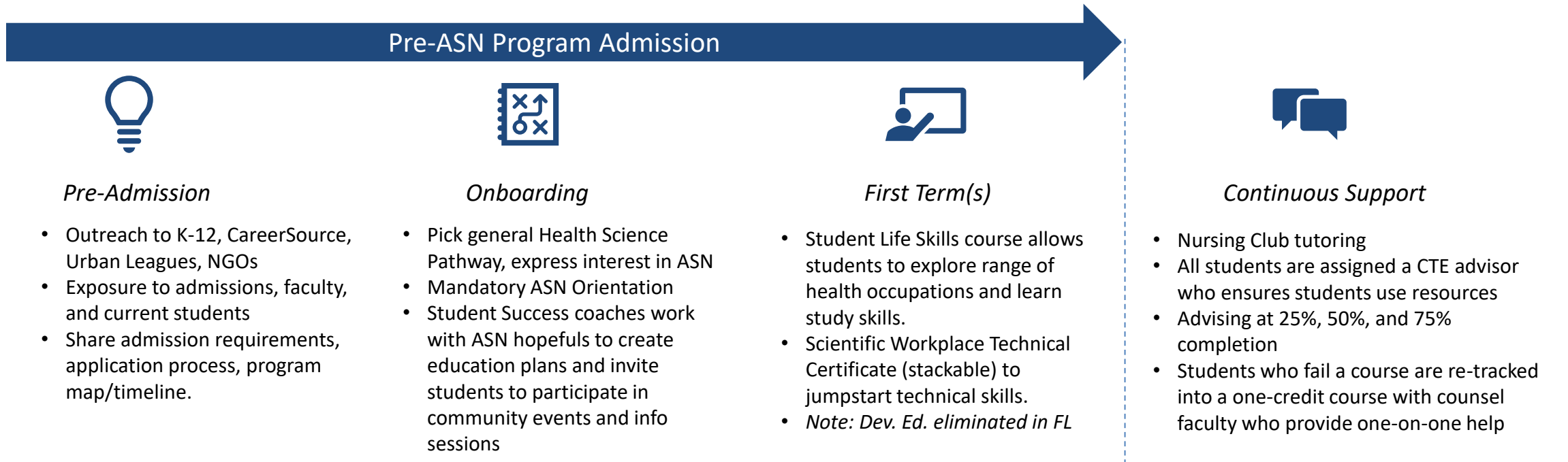
3

High-Value, Short-  
Term Programs



# Proactive On-Ramps in CTE Expand Access: Reduce Leakage in Nursing at Broward College

## Early Career Exploration and Clear Expectations Usher Underrepresented Students Through Pipeline



### The Results



**15%**

Increase in completion rates between 2016 – 2017. Retention rates also reached 97% due to intentional pathways, onboarding, and supports.

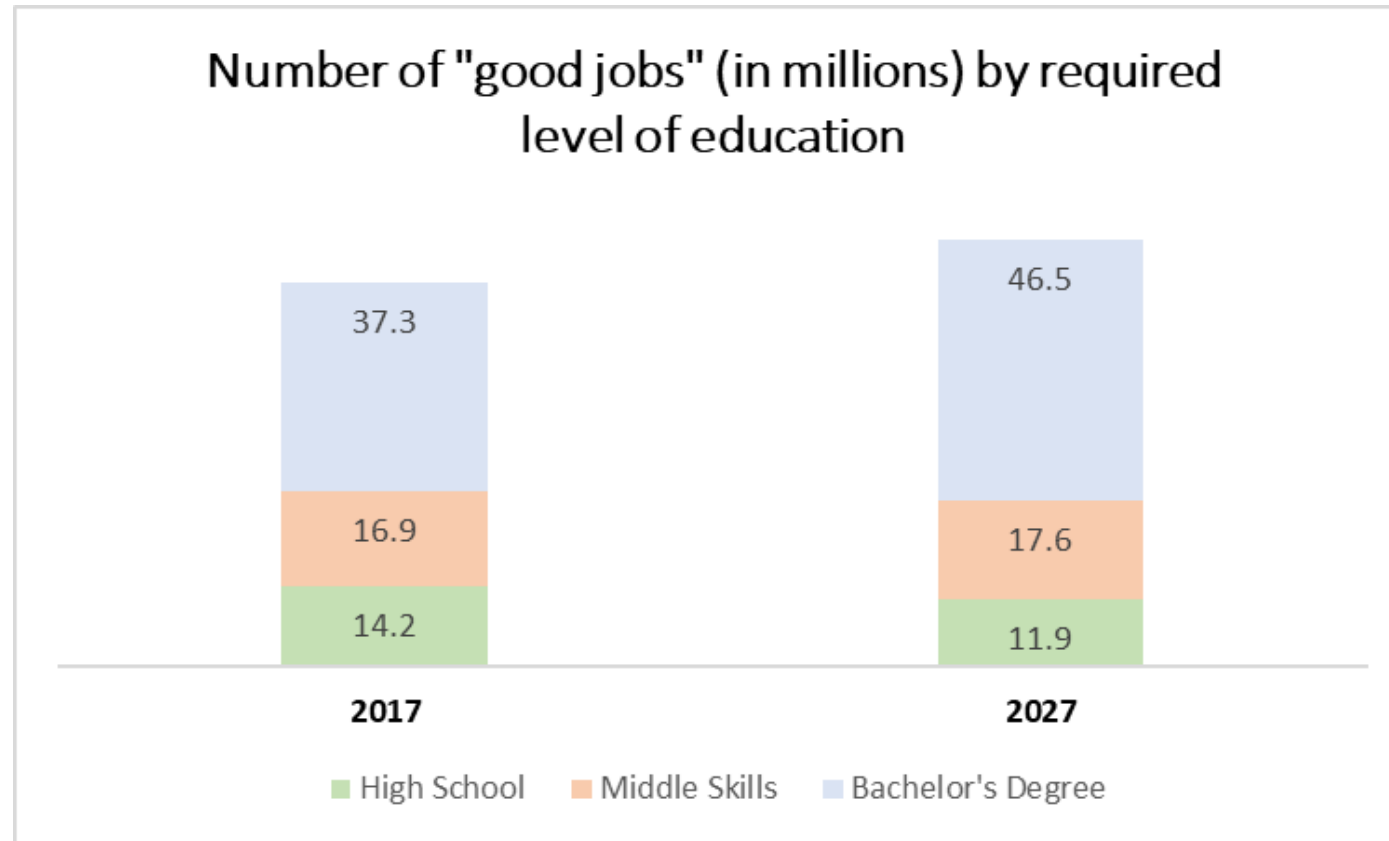
**78%**

Underrepresented minorities in 2015 cohort

**63%**

Low income students in 2015 cohort

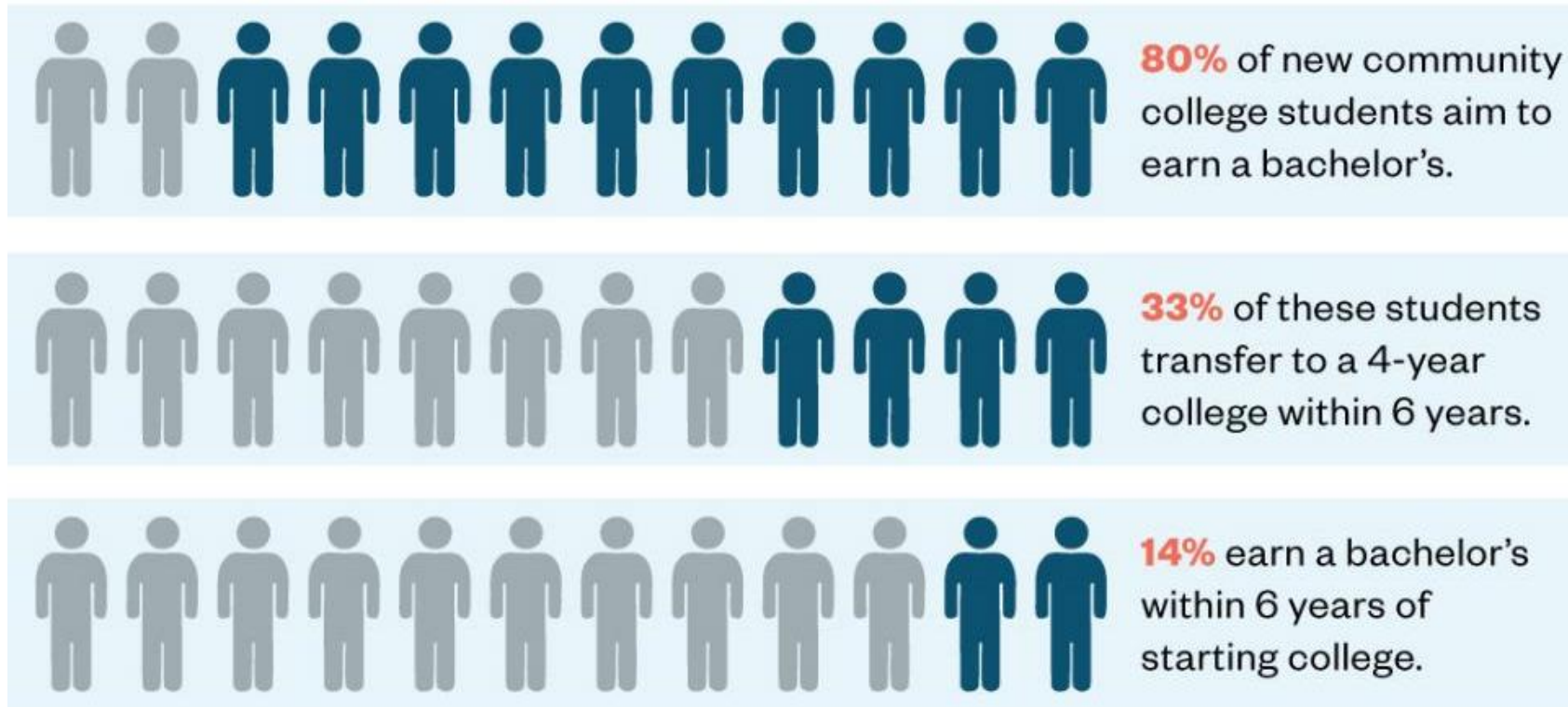
# More and More Good Jobs Will Require a Bachelor's Degree



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce projections based on Current Population Survey data, 2017 (projected for 2027).



# But Transfer Outcomes Don't Meet Students' Aspirations



For more information, see *Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor's Degrees* (New York, NY: Community College Research Center).

# Community Colleges and Four-Year Universities Can Partner to Commit to Delivering BAs Aligned to Labor Market Needs



## Northern Virginia Community College. VA

*ADVANCE Dual Admission Program with George Mason University*



- Jobs in the Northern Virginia region skew significantly toward positions requiring a bachelor's degree, especially in technology and health care
- GMU saw an opportunity to increase enrollment through a more diverse student body



## ADVANCE Partnership: Dual Admission to NOVA and GMU

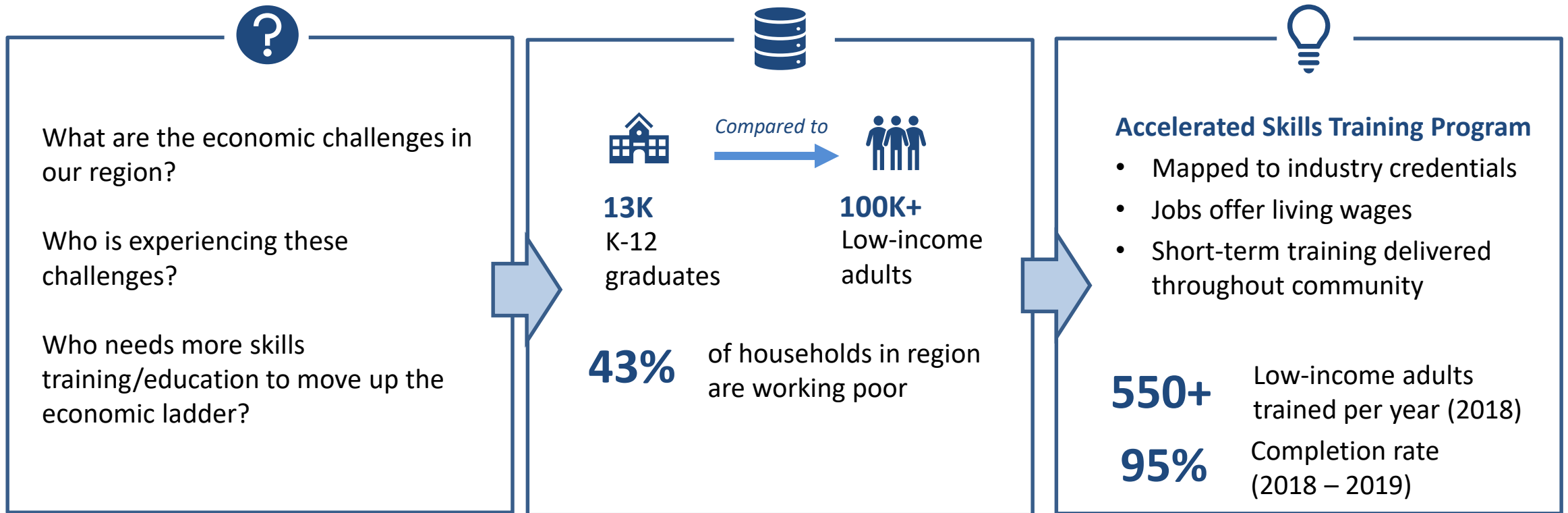
- Program maps built for 100 pathways through the collaborative work of faculty from both institutions
- Focus on science, health-related, and education programs
- Colleges share advising and information about student progress
- Both institutions work closely with employers in the region
- Heavy focus on internships and curricular/co-curricular development of workplace competencies

# Short-Term Training Can Meet More Immediate Needs of Individuals and the Region



**Valencia College, Orlando, FL**  
*Accelerated Skills Training Programs*

*“We need to address the whole economic ladder...”* —President Shugart



# Caution: Most Short-Term Training Doesn't Lead to Good Jobs

“[O]btaining a certificate **can** have a positive labor market value...and health certificates appear to drive much of the positive benefit.”

“The labor market evidence on stackable credentials is (at best) modestly positive.”

Source: Thomas Bailey & Clive R. Belfield. *Stackable Credentials: Do They Have Labor Market Value?* CCRC Working Paper No. 97. Community College Research Center, November 2017.

# Colleges Need to Create Guardrails and Provide Information about Where Pathways Lead



**San Jacinto College, Pasadena, TX**

New programs are only approved if these questions can be answered with a **strong “yes”**:

- ✓ Is there employer demand for graduates?
- ✓ Are the jobs this program prepares students for located in this region?
- ✓ Do the jobs provide a living wage?
- ✓ Must students have this training and credential in order to get these jobs?

## **What About Existing Programs that Lead to Low-Wage Work?**

San Jacinto also considers the value that a particular job brings to a community. For jobs like early childhood education, which do not pay well but is deeply needed in the community, the college provides students with a clear view of additional education needed to **earn higher wages** and **move up the career ladder**.

# *The Workforce Playbook: A Community College Guide to Delivering Excellent Career and Technical Education*



1. **Advance a vision** for talent development and economic mobility



2. **Deliver high-quality programs** aligned to regional needs



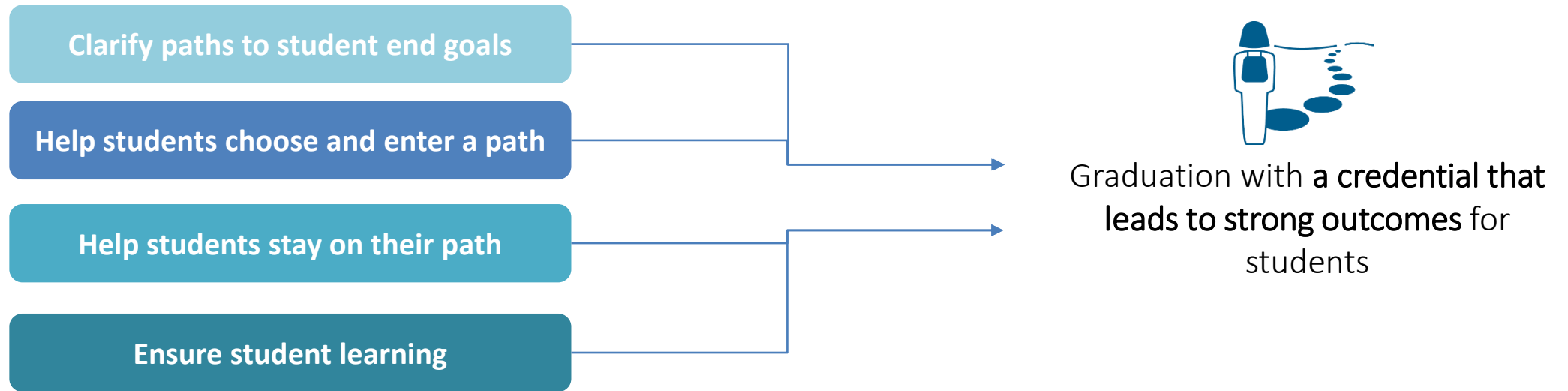
3. **Support students' career goals** and success from pre-matriculation through post-graduation



4. Build responsive, mutually beneficial **employer partnerships**

# Guided Pathways Need to Connect to What's Next for Students

Institutions that adopt Guided Pathways as a theory of change work to...

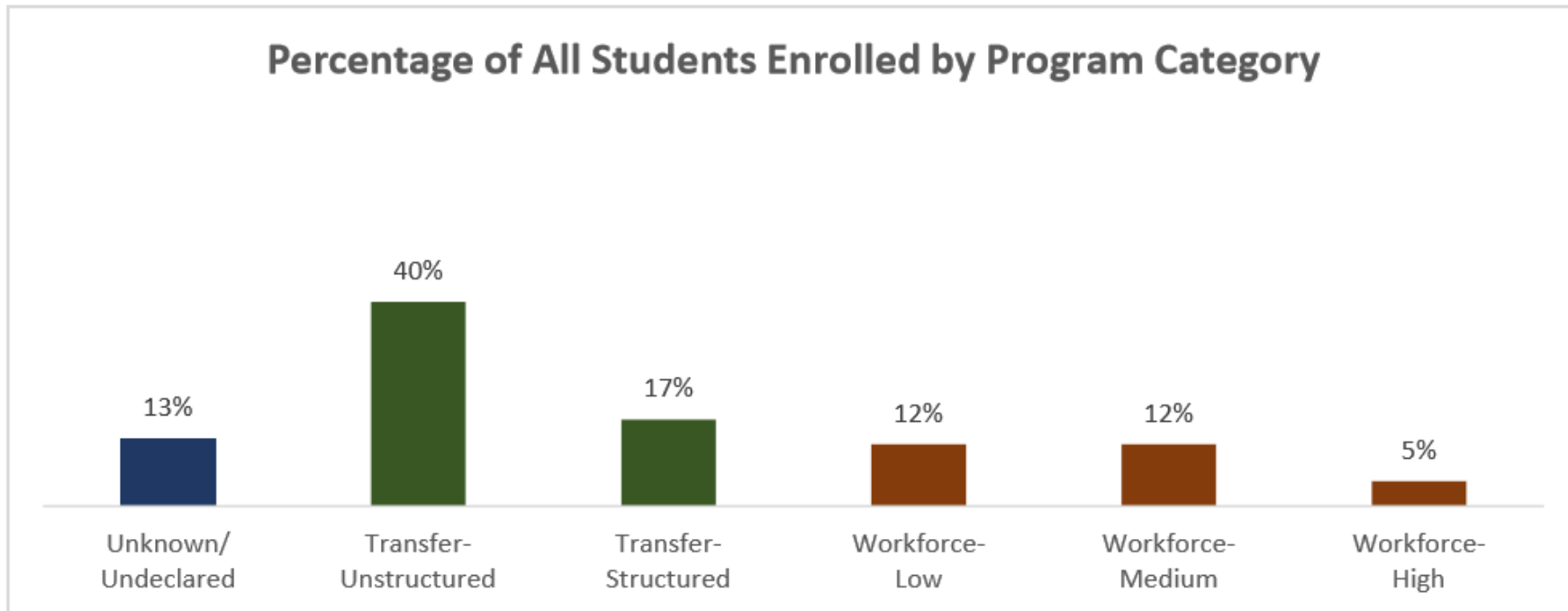


## Consider CTE and Transfer

Some good jobs can be attained through CTE program pathways while others may require a bachelor's degree. Effective Guided Pathways models will consider equitable transfer and bachelor's attainment rates as well as equity gaps in CTE program access and outcomes.

# Colleges Need to Create Guardrails and Information about Where Pathways Lead

## 1. Program Enrollment by CCRC Workforce/Transfer Categories



Sample data from the data workbook all teams will receive during this Institute.



Better, more equitable post-graduation outcomes are within reach for all colleges, no matter the geographic context.

Colleges need to make equitable post-graduation success a priority in Pathways work.

