

College Eligibility in California

Percentage of High School Graduates Completing College Preparatory Courses: 2019; Showing Counties
Percentage of High School Graduates Completing College Preparatory Courses: 2019

| Locations | Percent |
|-----------------------|---------|
| California | 50.5% |
| Alameda County | 57.0% |
| Contra Costa County | 53.9% |
| Fresno County | 46.5% |
| Kern County | 38.0% |
| Los Angeles County | 56.6% |
| Orange County | 55.3% |
| Riverside County | 50.4% |
| Sacramento County | 44.9% |
| San Bernardino County | 44.1% |
| San Diego County | 58.5% |
| Santa Clara County | 56.5% |

Definition: Percentage of high school diploma earners among the graduating class completing all courses required for University of California or California State University admission with a grade of C or better (e.g., in 2019, 50.5% of high school graduates from the graduating class in California completed college preparatory courses).

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, [Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data](#) (Jun. 2020).

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, college eligibility is measured by the number and percentage of public school students graduating with their class (the four-year adjusted cohort) who complete all coursework required for University of California or California State University admission with a grade of C or better. These data are available for the state, counties, and school districts overall and, at the state and county level, [by race/ethnicity](#).

Why This Topic Is Important

Higher educational attainment generally leads to more employment opportunities, higher earning potential, and better health. However, college preparatory resources—such as quality curricula, teaching, advising, and test preparation—are not available equally to all students, and certain groups are consistently underrepresented in higher education, including Latinos, African Americans, and low-income students. While progress has been made, substantial inequities remain in these areas.

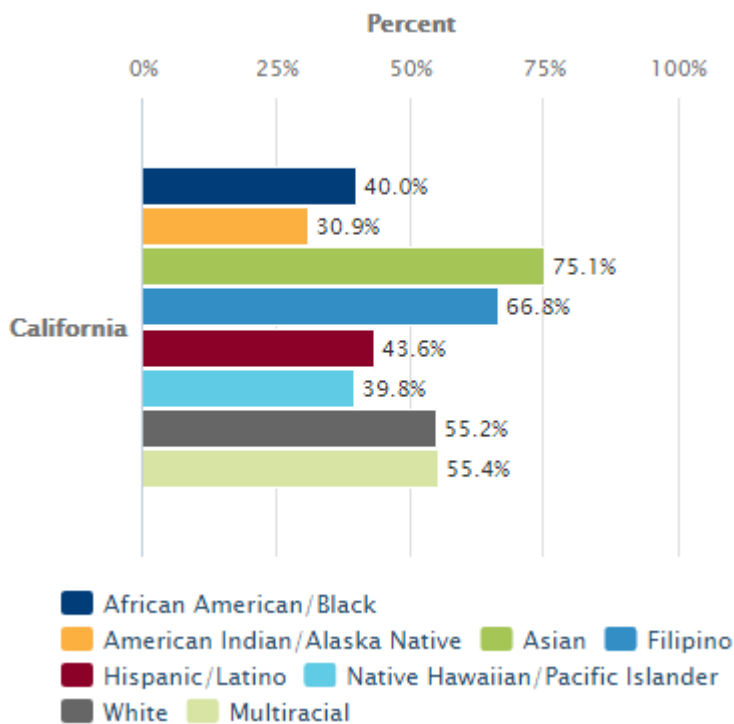
The benefits of college readiness, access, and completion extend beyond individuals to society overall. For example, California is projected to have a shortage of skilled workers in the near future, falling at least 1 million bachelor's degrees short of demand by 2030. Improving college access and completion also could benefit society by increasing tax revenue while reducing economic inequality, unemployment, poverty, incarceration, and demand for safety net programs.

How Children Are Faring

More than half (51%) of all high school diploma earners from California's 2019 graduating class completed the coursework required for University of California (UC) and/or California State University (CSU) admission with a grade of C or better. The share of graduates completing college preparatory coursework varies widely across regions with data. Between 2017 and 2019—the period for which comparable data are available—county-level figures ranged from consistently below 20% to consistently above 60%. In some school districts, percentages remained higher than 90% during this period.

Inequities persist in college eligibility across racial/ethnic groups. In 2019, 75% of Asian and 55% of white graduates statewide completed the course requirements for UC or CSU entrance, compared with fewer than 45% of their Hispanic/Latino (44%), African American/black (40%), and American

Percentage of High School Graduates Completing College Preparatory Courses, by Race/Ethnicity: 2019



Definition: Percentage of high school diploma earners among the graduating class completing all courses required for University of California or California State University admission with a grade of C or better, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2019, 43.6% of Hispanic/Latino high school graduates from the graduating class in California completed college preparatory courses).

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data (Jun. 2020).

Indian/Alaska Native (31%) peers.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/20/college-eligibility/summary>



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