



Closing the College Participation Gap

State Profiles — Michigan

Our future well-being doesn't rest *solely* on whether we increase postsecondary participation. But if we don't, our chances for increased prosperity are greatly diminished. Access to affordable and high-quality education and training beyond high school (what we refer to here as "postsecondary education" or "college") is fundamental to our social and economic development, both as individuals and as a society.

Today's definition of a typical college student goes far beyond traditional images of the recent high school graduate who lives on campus and attends full time. It also includes:

- The low-wage or unemployed worker who wants to gain the skills and training necessary to lift her family out of poverty
- The recent immigrant who aspires to learn English and enroll in adult basic education classes so he can become a more productive citizen
- The teacher, scientist, legislator or manager who requires continuing education to advance his or her level of knowledge in a chosen field.

It's likely to include you and me.

But we, as individuals, aren't the only ones who benefit from our investment in education. States and the nation as a whole also reap substantial rewards from having a well-educated citizenry. Personal incomes tend to rise with each step up the education ladder. Among the many perks that flow to states are increased tax revenues, shrinking welfare rolls and reduced child poverty rates, to name a few.

Equally important as any statistic, though, is the immeasurable contribution advanced education makes toward our efforts at becoming a more humane, literate and civil society.

While none of the foregoing is really news to most people, it does serve as a sobering reminder of what we stand to lose if access to education and training is not protected beyond high school for all who want and need it.

The reality is that the opportunity for many men and women to obtain a postsecondary education — as well as states'

ability to provide access to one — is likely to be seriously challenged over the coming years. In some places, it's already happened. The growing ranks of poor or otherwise disadvantaged persons are the ones affected most when this occurs.

In a majority of states, the elements of a "perfect storm" are gathering. State budget deficits have accelerated a decrease in the proportion of state funds allocated for postsecondary education and training. Student tuition and fees are also on the rise, while financial aid for needy students wanes. These events are occurring at the same time that demand is projected to grow across all age groups as shifting demographics collide with the effects of a lagging economy.

State leaders are overloaded with urgent priorities right now, yet it remains vital to all our futures to protect access to postsecondary education.

The reasons will vary state to state, but it's likely every state will face mounting pressure over the next decade not only to preserve access at current levels but also to *expand* it to accommodate changing needs.

Clearly, state policy leaders are overloaded with urgent priorities right now — homeland security, welfare reform, health care and K-12 education, among them. State budgets in FY04 promise to be even leaner than in previous years.

Yet it remains vital to all our futures that states take steps to protect postsecondary access now and prepare to serve a larger and more diverse group of students during the years ahead. Closing the college participation gap that separates those with access from those without it is not simply a matter of good economics; it's about our quality of life as well.

How to get started? — With reliable information about performance and current conditions in your state. The state profile contained in this brochure is designed to help in that effort.

Ted Sanders, ECS President
April 2003



MICHIGAN

To reach benchmark by 2015, Michigan must provide *expanded* postsecondary access to:

students age 18–24 103,572
 students age 25+ 118,799

222,371
 new postsecondary students

What is the “Participation Gap”?

The total number of *additional* students the state would need to enroll by 2015, given demographic projections, if it were to match the participation rate of the best-performing (“benchmark”) states.

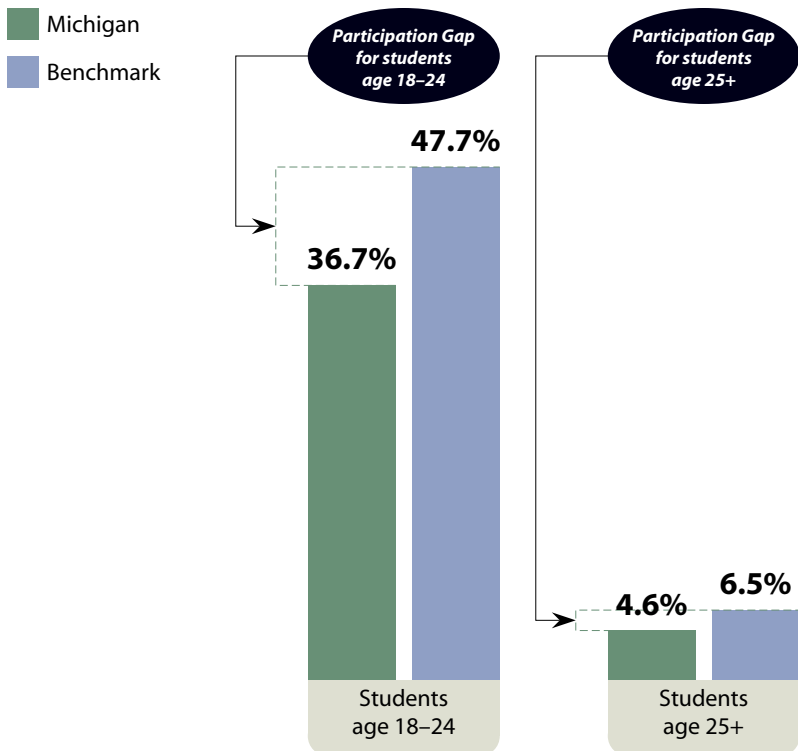
Participation Gap:

Postsecondary Participation

Student age	# of students in 2000	projected # of students in 2015 at current rate	% change 2000–15 at current rate	projected # of students in 2015 at benchmark rate	% change 2000–15 to reach benchmark	Participation Gap in 2015
18–24	341,047	343,321	+1%	446,893	+31%	103,572
25+	293,160	301,119	+3%	419,918	+43%	118,799
All (18+)	634,207	644,440	+2%	866,811	+37%	222,371

Based on the U.S. Census 2000 questionnaire, **postsecondary participation** means a person residing in the state attended a public or private degree-granting college or university at any time since February 2000.

Current Participation Rates



By closing the Participation Gap,
 the number of students age 18+ enrolled in college in Michigan would grow

37% in 15 years

All students in 2000: **634,207**
 All students by 2015, at current rate: **644,440**
 All students by 2015, at benchmark rate: **866,811**



"Chance for College" in Michigan



39.5%

That means for every 100 students who enter 9th grade, about **40** are likely to graduate high school four years later and enroll in college within a year.

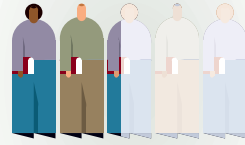
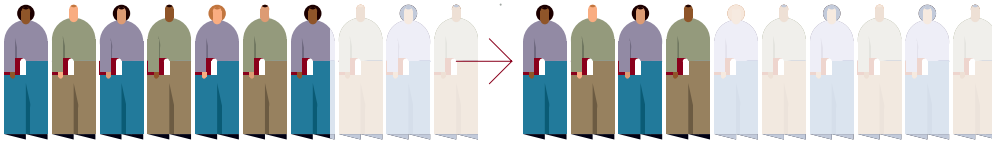
"Chance for College" in Michigan for low-income students = **23.3%**

MI

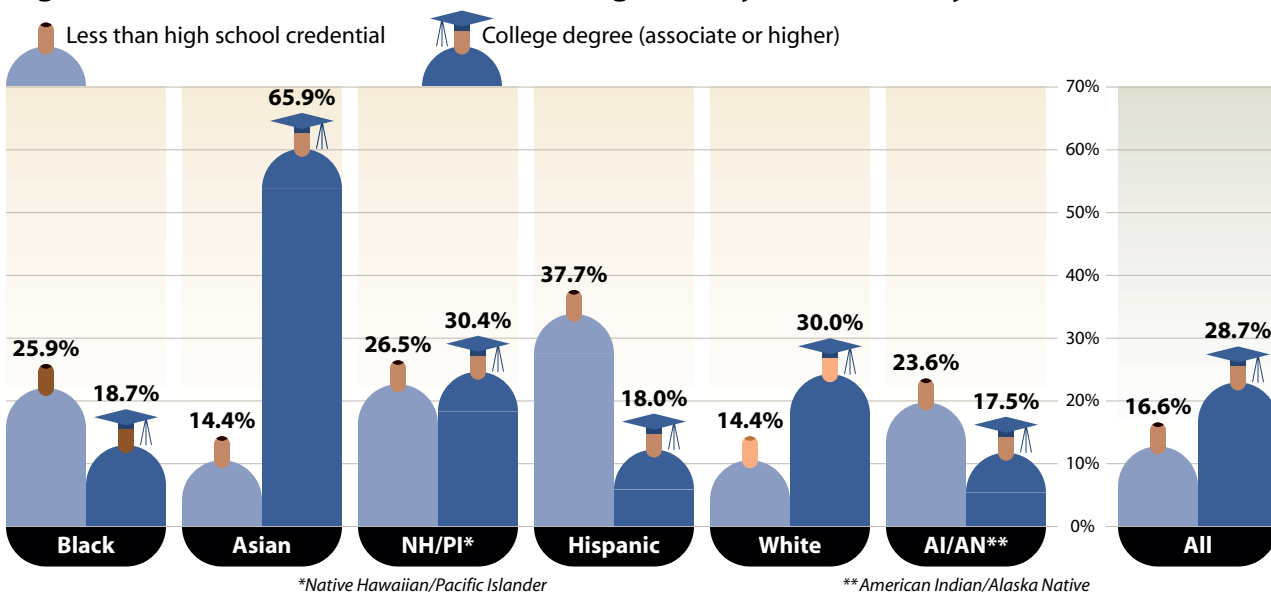
Here's how "Chance for College" is measured:

For every 100 students who enter 9th grade, about **69** are likely to graduate high school four years later.

Of those 69 students who graduate high school, about **40** (or 59%) are likely to enroll in college within a year.



Highest Level of Educational Attainment, Age 25+, by Race/Ethnicity



In Michigan among adults age 25+:

17%

have less than a **high school credential**

29%

hold a **college degree**

Michigan Snapshot

Population Characteristics

Median family income	\$53,457
% in poverty	10.5
% high school dropout	8.7
% minority	21.5
Immigration since 1990	235,269
Ratio of rural:urban	1:2.9

Population Projections

	2000	2015	% change
Total population	9,938,444	9,916,812	-0.2%
Age 0-17	2,595,767	2,390,568	-7.9%
Age 18-24	932,137	936,107	+0.4%
Age 25-64	5,191,522	5,168,216	-0.4%
Age 65+	1,219,018	1,421,921	+16.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002, except for Chance for College (Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY, 2002). See www.ecs.org for more detail.



Every Picture Tells a Story

This state profile is intended to provide you with a better understanding of the nature and extent of postsecondary participation in your state and to relate that information to certain state-specific characteristics.

Individual profiles were prepared for each of the 50 states, based on readily available information from 50-state data sources. With the exception of *Chance for College*, all data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, in particular, Summary File 3 of Census 2000, released in mid-2002. (*Chance for College*, which is calculated by the organization, Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY, uses U.S. Department of Education data sources.)

Highlights of what's contained in the profile:

On the left-hand page...

...**postsecondary participation** is the focus. This page provides information about current performance and projected demographic changes in the state for two age groups — 18-to-24-year-olds and 25 years and older. We also identify a potential enrollment target for expanded access and increased participation.

The **Participation Gap** is defined as the total number of new students that a state would need to enroll between 2000 and 2015 if it were to match the participation rate of the best-performing states. Rhode Island is the top performer for individuals between the ages of 18 and 24. California is tops for those ages 25 and older.

The proportion of the population enrolled in some form of postsecondary education or training is the basis for calculating

participation rate. Participation rate is a measure used internationally to gauge both the accessibility of college as well as the perceived value placed on attendance.

We chose the rate of the best-performing state in each age group to establish a high, but realistic, **benchmark** for states and the nation. This is not prescriptive: each state will want to determine the appropriate level of access to which it will aspire. Other ways to set enrollment targets include, for example, a comparison to one's peer states or to the national average.

On the right-hand page...

...**state characteristics** are profiled. The page is designed to help identify who is — and who is not — being served by the state's postsecondary system and to provide clues as to where unmet needs may reside.

In *Chance for College*, for example, state concerns about college participation of 18-to-24-year-olds might be traceable to problems that exist with public high school graduation rates or in getting recent graduates to enroll in college. **Educational Attainment** levels, on the other hand, are not fixed in young adulthood, and are the yardstick used throughout the world to measure economic growth potential. The **State Snapshot** offers state-specific indicators and a glimpse of the projected effects of the demographic process at 2015.

We encourage state policymakers to use the information contained in this profile as a catalyst for planning the future of their states. Since significant disparity can exist between counties or regions, policymakers will also want to consider carefully the varying effects that a given state policy or practice can have on performance across the state.

Ultimately, it's important to remember that expanded access and increased participation rates are not ends in themselves. The true meaning of "access" is that all prospective students will be prepared for college, be able to afford the costs of attendance and be successful in achieving their learning goals.

Closing the College Participation Gap: State Profiles is a product of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), Center for Community College Policy (CCCP). This work is a component of New Colleges for New Times, an ECS initiative supported through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The initiative's aim is to assist state policymakers and other state leaders in their efforts to expand opportunities for postsecondary access and to increase participation, particularly among underserved and disadvantaged populations. A related objective is to examine the role of the community college sector in helping to inform and respond to states' postsecondary education and training needs, particularly those that occur at the less-than-baccalaureate level.

To learn more about the state profiles or other components of this initiative, visit the ECS Web site at www.ecs.org or the CCCP Web site at www.communitycollegepolicy.org.

For further information or to find out how to order additional copies of individual state profiles, contact Sandra Ruppert, program director, at sruppert@ecs.org or at 303.299.3691.



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