

# Advocating for One Mission: Iowa's Community College Legislative Agenda

**COMMUNITY  
COLLEGES**  
*for* **IOWA**

# About Us

*Our Vision:* To advocate with ONE VOICE for accessible excellence in education

*Our Mission:* To support the Community Colleges as they educate Iowa's workforce



Statewide

Service



60 years!



# Scale of Impact

Credit students (2023)

**117,172**

Iowa Student Outcomes

Noncredit students (2023)

**157,464**

Iowa Student Outcomes

Credit enrollment (2024)

**119,310**

Enrollment +1.8% vs. prior year

## Credit awards (AY 2018–2022): 73,865 total

- Breakdown in the statewide outcomes report:
  - • 49,950 associate degrees
  - • 11,969 diplomas
  - • 1,653 long-term certificates
  - • 10,293 short-term certificates

### Why it matters for the economy

More completers → more employed alumni → higher earnings and productivity (largest component of statewide impact).

# Employment Outcomes

Credit completers show high employment rates in the year after graduation (when not still enrolled).

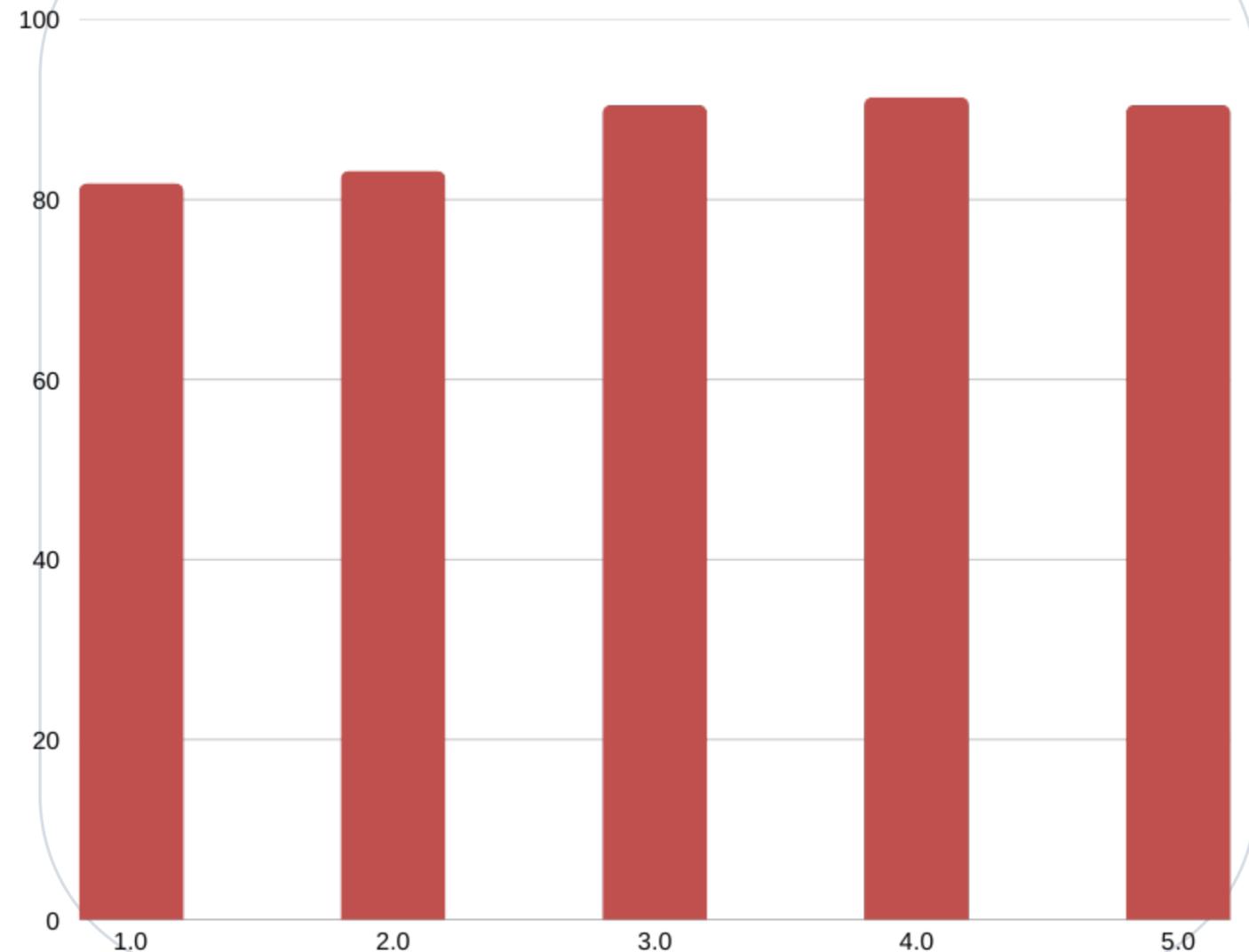
## 90.0% employed

of credit program completers in the first year following graduation

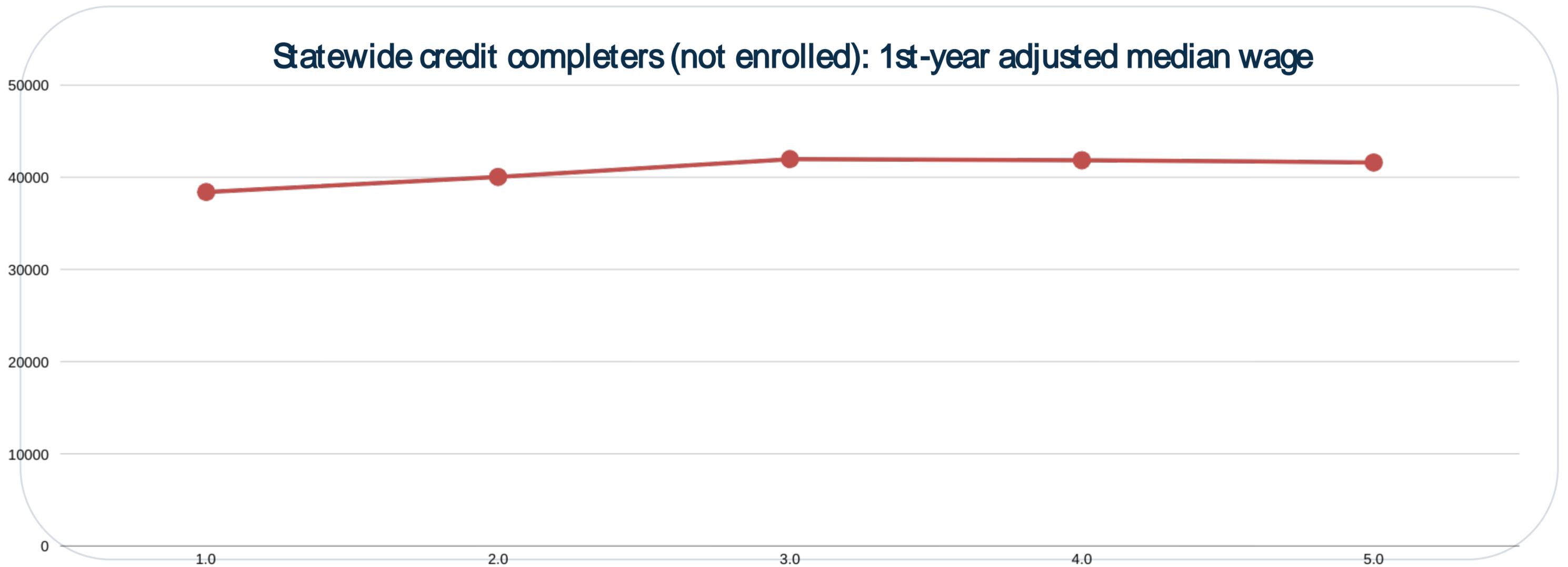
### What this implies for the economy

- Rapid transitions into employment boost regional labor supply.
- Higher employment translates into higher earned income and tax receipts.
- High placement rates help employers fill middle-skill roles where shortages are common.

Employment rate by cohort (Statewide)



# Earnings



Report highlight: adjusted median wage rose from \$40,180 (AY2018 cohort) to \$42,331 (AY2022 cohort) in the first year after award.

# Richmond Fed Community College Success Rate

**Table 1: 2025 SCCO School Coverage**

State	# of Community Colleges	SCCO Data Provider(s)
Maryland*	14	Individual institutions
North Carolina	58	State community college system
South Carolina	16	State community college system
Virginia	23	State community college system
West Virginia	9	State organization
Arkansas	22	State higher education agency
Iowa	15	State higher education agency
Massachusetts	15	Individual institutions
New Jersey*	15	Individual institutions
Texas**	2	Individual institutions

\*States for which we have a subset of community colleges in our sample. See Data Description and Coverage for details.

\*\*Because we have data on only two Texas community colleges, we generally do not present Texas aggregate data.

# Richmond Fed Success Rate

=

Students who earned a degree, diploma,  
certificate or industry recognized credential

+

Students who transferred without an award

+

Students who persisted and are in good standing

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Students in cohort

**Credit cohort:** Measured 4 years after student entry

## Richmond Fed Success Rate vs. Traditional Graduation Rates

The Richmond Fed Success Rate offers a more comprehensive view of community college student success by including more educational pathways and a broader cross-section of students.

**49.8%**

Richmond Fed Success Rate

**33.8%**

Traditional Graduation Rate



## 2025 Survey of Community College Outcomes

State Aggregate Results

Success Rates by Gender		Success Rates by Enrollment Status	
Female	Male	Full-Time	Part-Time
55.0%	53.4%	58.8%	48.8%

**State**  
Iowa

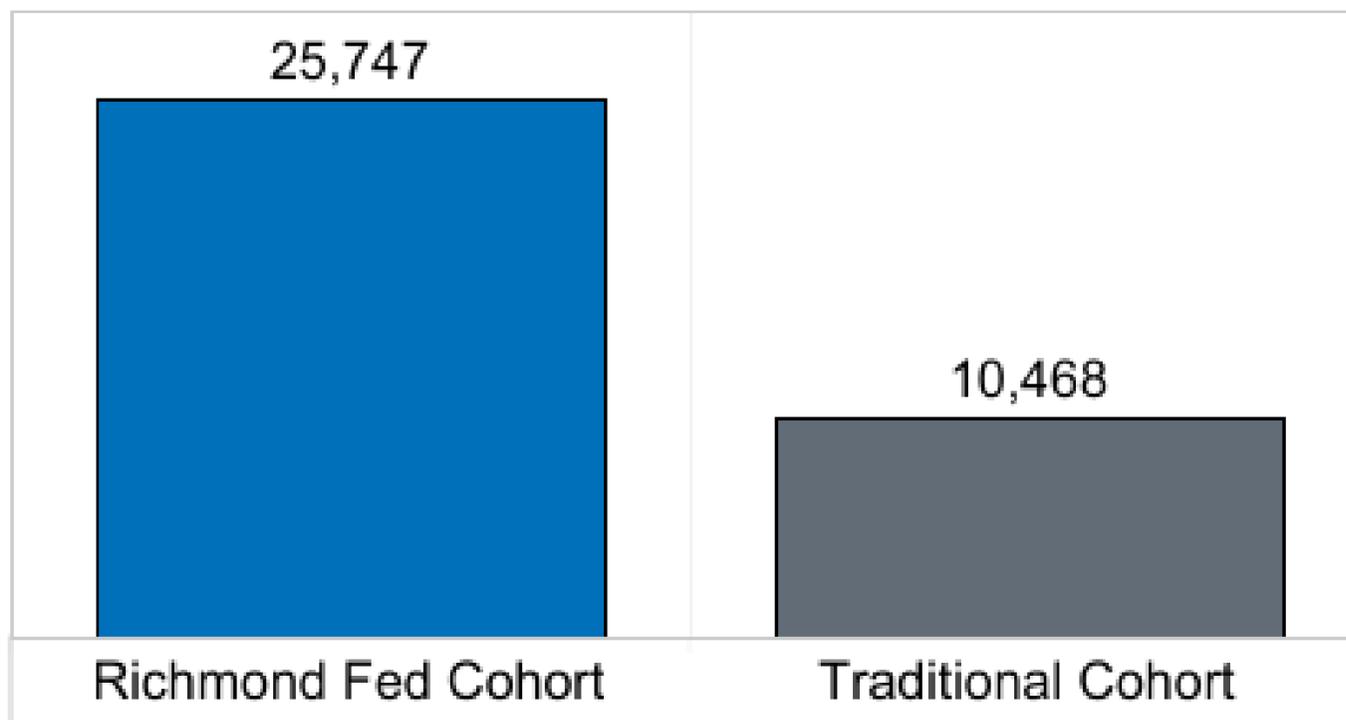
Richmond Fed  
Success Rate

**54.3%**

Traditional  
Graduation Rate

**42.0%**

### 2025 Richmond Fed Cohort vs. Traditional Graduation Cohort



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond Survey of Community College Outcomes (2025), and NCES IPEDS Graduation Rate cohorts (2023-2024 average) and graduation rates (2023-2024 pooled)

# 2026 Legislative Priorities



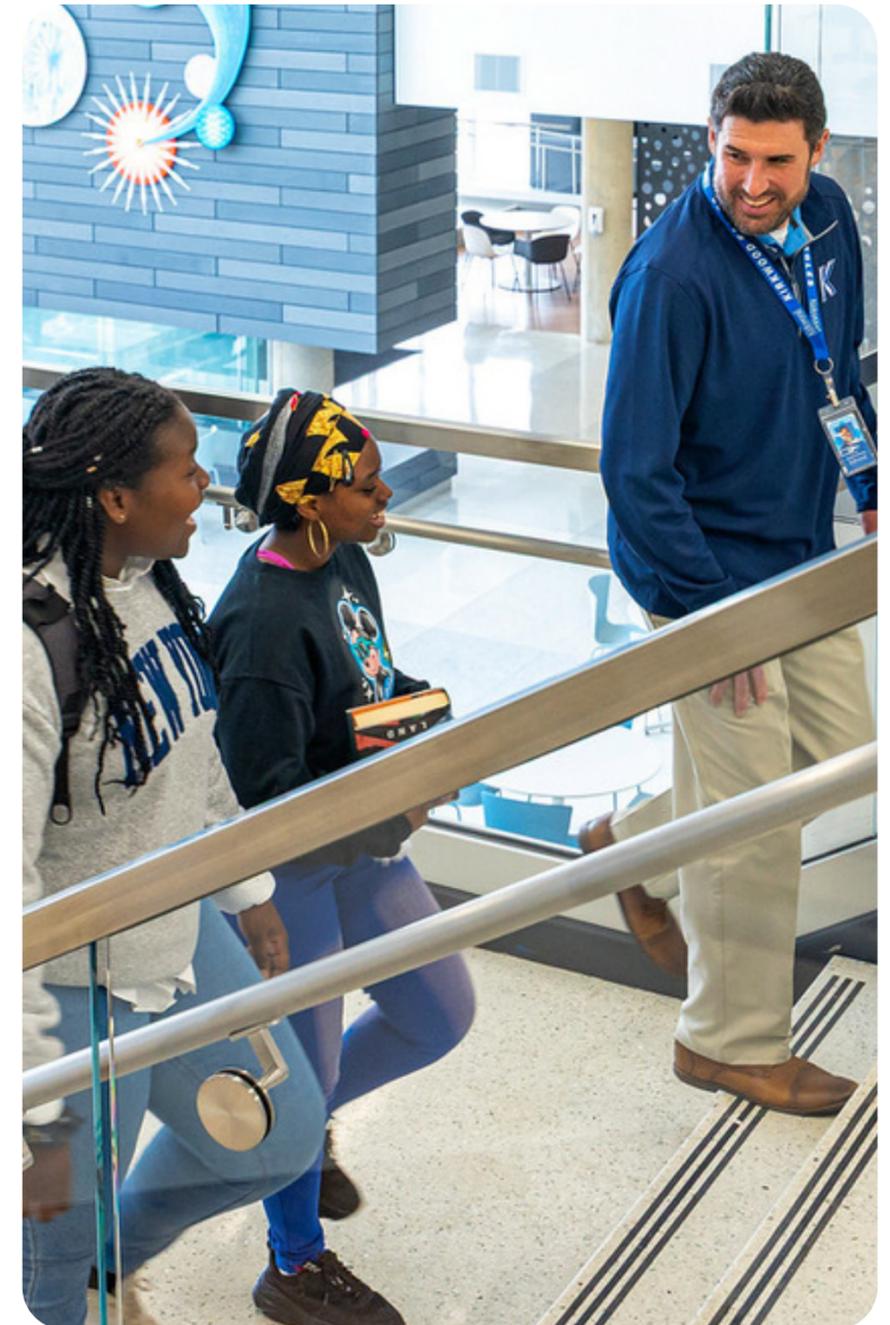
## FUNDING

Community colleges are known for doing a lot with a little. Unfortunately, everything is getting more expensive, and every dollar is getting stretched further and further. To continue to offer lowans affordable tuition and have a sustainable community college system, we are asking the legislature for an increase to match today's costs of \$12 million State General Aid.

# 2026 Legislative Priorities

## PROGRAMS

Legislators shape programs that open doors for more lowans to be able to enroll in higher education. The Last Dollar Scholarship is a state initiative to cover the gap for lowans studying for high-demand jobs, and legislators choose the criteria for who is eligible, such as age, level of enrollment, and financial need. We are asking the legislature to ensure the funds for this program are all spent by expanding who can use it. We will work with the legislature on innovative paths and programs to serve students and grow Iowa's workforce.



# 2026 Legislative Priorities



## EFFECTIVENESS

As public entities, there are many ways the government guides how community colleges function. The model for the Iowa community college system is unique to our state, envisioned by state legislators. Its foundation allows for each institution to maintain local focus while providing the statewide coordination needed to ensure all 99 counties are being served effectively. We will work with legislators to assess processes and review our measured outcomes to maximize value.

## Value of Workforce Investment

- Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund
- Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund (WTED)
- Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE)

“For every dollar of public money invested in Iowa’s community colleges, taxpayers will receive a cumulative value of \$2.50 over the course of the students’ working lives”

## Student Perspectives

- Marshall Zeien, North Iowa Area Community College
- Masa Pilcevic, Des Moines Area Community College
- Allen Byrne, Eastern Iowa Community Colleges



Questions?