

Post-secondary Educational Attainment

5- and 10-Year STRATEGIC PLAN

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Created by: Wyoming’s Educational Attainment Executive Council¹ and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Attainment Task Force²

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¹ 2019 Session Laws Ch. 149 “Educational Attainment Executive Council”

² W.S. 21-16-201

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Post-secondary educational attainment refers to people obtaining credentialed education after high school. Higher education plays a critical role in diversifying the economy and ensuring a vibrant future for the state. Wyoming has identified five economic engines/economic pillars to ensure long-term economic vitality: Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Knowledge & Creative, Natural Resources, and Tourism & Recreation. In order to increase the level of higher education in our state's workforce, Wyoming leaders have worked together to establish statewide goals for increasing the number of degrees, certificates, and certifications, also called education credentials, held by Wyoming citizens. This document sets forth Wyoming's statewide goals with specificity and explains the actions various state entities will take over the next ten years to achieve them.

GOALS

Collaborative efforts by Wyoming governors, legislators, state and local agencies, business and industry, and education leaders have resulted in numerous laws and policies laying the groundwork for this plan.^{3,4} The primary goal of the attainment work was formally set forth as follows:

Educational Attainment Joint Resolution 2017

Wyoming Community College Commission and University of Wyoming Board of Trustees

Wyoming's higher education attainment goal is to increase the working population of 25-64 year olds that possess a valuable post-secondary credential (degree or certificate) to 60% by 2025 and 75% by 2040.

Further, a significant focus must be to reduce disparities and achievement gaps among underserved student populations including first generation, low income, minority, and adult students. Hereinafter referred to as the economic-level goals.

Educational Attainment Executive Council 2018 Executive Orders and 2019 SEA61

Develop the 5- and 10-year Education Master Plans (EMP) to achieve the educational attainment goals of 67% by 2025 and 82% by 2040 as outlined in the Executive Orders. The goals specifically address, "achievement gaps focusing on underserved populations, including first-generation, low-income, minority, and adult students" with emphasis on women, Native Americans, and the growing Hispanic sub-populations. Hereinafter referred to as the aspirational-level goals.

Collaboration by Design

Achieving these goals will be a collaborative effort in which each element will have multiple entities and areas of implementation. Progression or lack of progression for any one goal does not establish progress or success, but it is the cumulative effect over time and accelerating progression that will result in successful outcomes. Monitoring and progress as well as revisions will be managed as reported in the Implementation Action Plan on p. 8. The Attainment Council also recognizes that each percentage toward closing the attainment gap is a success. As such, the focus on the plan is not as much on the absolute calculations, but progress toward meeting the goals.

FOCUS AREAS AND METRICS THAT MATTER

Focus Areas

Primary areas of focus of the 5-year and 10-year Wyoming Statewide Educational Master Plans to achieve the attainment goals of 60-67% by 2025 and 75-82% by 2040 are:

³ <https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/initiatives/attainment/>

⁴ 2017 Session Law Ch. 120, Section 67, Footnote 11-recruitment and retention plan

- I. Alignment of Workforce, Workplace, and Post-Secondary Programs
- II. Access and Infrastructure for Recruitment, Retention, and Completion
- III. Funding and Affordability
- IV. College-Going Culture K-12, Adults, and Business/Industry

Metrics That Matter

The Metrics that Matter reflect the end metrics after the 10-year plan ends in 2030. Data based on 2018 baseline listed in parentheses.

1. Third grade reading level should increase by 10% in alignment with W.S. 21-3-410 (c) in which 85% of all third grade students should meet or exceed proficiency levels *{Current combined English Language Arts test: 54.8%}*
2. High school graduation of entering 9th grade students should increase by 10% *{Current: 81.7}*
3. High school to post-secondary credential program matriculation within one year of high school completion should increase by 20% *{Current: 42.7}*
4. Credential productivity rates (per 100 FTE) at the community colleges will increase by 100%; and university should increase by 70% *{Current: 30.3 community colleges; 25.1 university}*
5. Adult participation and completion of higher education will increase 300% *{Current: 17.8}*

Credential Defined

A certificate offered for credit or a degree at the associate or baccalaureate level OR non-credit credential that leads to state licensure or industry-recognized credential that earns a minimum living wage and has career progression capacity.

Regional and Statewide Attainment Goals (Regions are the same as the Wyoming Workforce Development Council and Community College service areas to ensure alignment across efforts.)

Region/Counties	60% by 2025	67% by 2025	72% by 2030
Northwest Park, Washakie, Big Horn	59.6%	66.5	71.2
West Fremont, Teton, Hot Springs	66	73	78
Southwest Carbon, Sweetwater, Sublette, Unita, Lincoln	52.5	59.3	63.7
Central Natrona	53.9	60.8	64.4
Northeast Sheridan, Johnson, Campbell	56.2	63.1	67.8
East Goshen, Platte, Converse, Niobrara, Weston, Crook	55.3	62.1	66.9
Southeast Laramie, Albany	70.5	77.9	84
State of Wyoming	60	67	72

EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN

WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The #1 indicator of economic and social mobility is higher education attainment

The purpose of the state attainment effort is to better prepare our citizens for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The urgency was recognized across the state as an economic issue. The current post-secondary attainment stands at only 46% of the adult population having a post-secondary credential above a high school diploma. When the state goals were initially set in 2017 by Joint Resolution of WCCC and UW BOT, the goals were established as the working population of 25-64 year olds as 60% by 2025 and 75% by 2040, hereafter referred to as the economic-level goals. Through the economic diversification initiative through Governor Mead, Executive Orders set aspirational goals at 67% by 2025 and 82% by 2040. The 2019 Legislature codified in legislative action and was subsequently signed into law by newly elected Governor Mark Gordon, who stated, “*We are stronger together.*”

Attainment has measurable economic impact at the personal and state level. For example, individuals with a bachelor’s degree typically make about \$1.5 million more than high school graduates over their lifetimes and experience higher levels of employment, even through economic downturns. Associate’s degree holders also receive positive returns on their college investments, generally earning about \$400,000-\$800,000 more than high school graduates over the course of their lives⁵. Increasing post-secondary attainment through the baccalaureate degree is correlated with increased industry and job creation in local communities. Additionally, the baccalaureate-level attainment is correlated with entrepreneurship and new industry⁵.

Researchers have found that the financial benefits of a college degree are greatest for students who are least likely to enroll, such as students of color and individuals from low-income families. Empowered by their improved financial circumstances, college graduates make significant contributions to their local economies. As the share of college-educated workers in a community rises, employment levels and wages increase for non-college graduates as well. This generates more economic activity and greater tax revenue. In fact, researchers have found that for every \$1 a state invests in higher education, it receives up to \$4.50 in return⁶.

FOCUS AREA I

Alignment of Workforce, Workplace, and Post-secondary Programs: Wyoming’s public institutions will produce graduates with the necessary college credentials and will engage in research through the University of Wyoming to meet the high demand/high priority workforce needs of the state’s employers.

Objective 1. Gap Analysis. Conduct comprehensive gap analysis of projected job openings, potential skills profiles for future jobs, and post-secondary program credential generation (ENDOW report page 137). Include analysis of access/capacity for public institutions to deliver aligned programs with projected skills profile.

Metric

Number of projected job openings (demand) in high priority/high demand occupations/skills profiles (as identified by the Department of Workforce, WBC, and ENDOW) minus the number of credential/degrees (supply) that prepare individuals for either entry into these occupations or with the necessary skills profiles.

⁵ Center for Education and the Workforce. Georgetown University. 2018.

⁶ EMSI. Wyoming Higher Education Return on Investment. 2014.

Targets

The gap between demand and supply of employees in high demand/high priority occupations or skills will be reduced by 40% by 2025, 53% by 2030, and by 80% by 2040. Occupations or skills identified as high priority/high demand may change over this period of time.*

**These targets will be updated to reflect the information obtained from the gap analysis.*

Objective 2. Credentialed employees. Increase the number of incumbent workers with a post-secondary credential.

Metric

The number of 25-64 year olds employed in the state who have a post-secondary credential (ACS).

FOCUS AREA II

Access and Infrastructure for Recruitment, Retention, and Completion: Wyoming will develop a credentialed workforce to support the expansion and diversification of its economy in ways that make it more competitive in a 21st century global economy. The mix of credentials will be appropriate to the needs of Wyoming's economy.

Targets

- Of the 60%, 27% will have a baccalaureate degree or higher and 33% an associate degree or certificate by 2025 {Current: 46% postsecondary credential above high school diploma; 21% certificate/associate degree; 17% baccalaureate; 8% graduate}
- Of the 67%, 30% will have a baccalaureate degree or higher and 37% an associate degree or certificate by 2025
- Of the 72%, 32% will have baccalaureate degrees and 40% an associate degree or certificate by 2030.

Objective 1. Economic Impact and ROI. Wyoming will conduct an economic impact study and ROI for post-secondary education by region based on achieving the economic-level of 60% and aspirant-level 67% by 2025 and cumulative impact by 2030.

Objective 2. Out-of-state student imports. Wyoming public institutions will enroll 10% more out-of-state students by 2025, 15% more by 2030, and 30% more by 2040.

Objective 3. Credentialed state in-migration. Wyoming will become a net importer of working-age adults 25-44 years old with postsecondary credentials by 2025 to achieve the balance of the attainment goals.

Objective 4. Post-secondary credential completion. By 2025 the six-year graduation rate at the University of WY will be 63%, 65% by 2030, and 70% by 2040.

By 2025, the three-year graduation rates at the WY Community Colleges (collectively) will be 43% by 2025, 46% by 2030, and 50% by 2040.

Graduation rates will be as reported to IPEDS initially. Once fully implemented, Wyoming's SLEDS will track this for adults, part-time students, etc. and will begin monitoring these data immediately.

Objective 5. Post-secondary credential time-to-completion. By 2025, 60% of the graduates of the University of Wyoming will have completed bachelor's degrees within 6 years. The rate will be 63% by 2030.

By 2025, 25% of graduates with associate's degrees will have completed at Wyoming's Community Colleges (collectively) within 3 years. The rate will be 27% by 2030.

Objective 6. Workplace Learning: By 2025, Wyoming post-secondary institutions will provide access to credential programs through distributed and/or workplace learning for incumbent workers for 50% of high demand/high priority programs. Distributed and workplace learning will incorporate mentorships, internships, apprenticeships, cohort groups, and/or asynchronous on-line delivery. By 2030, this amount will increase to 60%.

FOCUS AREA III

Funding and Affordability: Wyoming higher education will be affordable to both students and taxpayers.

Objective 1. Higher Education as nearly free as possible. Students of all income levels should be able to complete a community college education without incurring unreasonable debt. Students of all income levels should be able to complete a baccalaureate degree program at the University of Wyoming without incurring a median cumulative debt of more than \$10,000 and at the community colleges with no more than \$2,500 debt.

Metric

Median unmet need as defined by total cost of attendance minus state, federal, and institutional grant aid minus earnings from reasonable work (e.g., 15 hrs/week for 48 weeks) minus estimated family contribution (EFC).

Targets

Community College resident students: median unmet need should be no more than \$2,000 per year by 2025, \$1400 by 2030, and \$0 by 2040.

University of Wyoming resident students: median unmet need should be no more than \$4,000 per year by 2025, \$3500 by 2030, and \$2,500 per year by 2040.

Objective 2. Increased productivity

Metric

Credentials produced (weighted by level) per 100 FTE.

Targets

The University of Wyoming and the Community Colleges collectively will increase the number of credentials such that credential production per 100 FTE increases by 10% by 2025 and by 25% by 2030.

*Credential weights suggested are 0.25 for certificates, 0.5 for associates, 1.0 for baccalaureate, 1.5 for masters, and 3.0 for Ph.D. and first professional.

Objective 3. Wyoming will establish a need-based state aid program and a scholarship program for adults including working adults.

Metric

Proportion of enrollees (both traditional students and adults) in programs identified as high priority who receive scholarships from a program that is funded by integrating an innovative funding mechanism such as, but not limited to public/private partnership.

Targets

Wyoming will develop a Hathaway-like program for low-income and/or working Wyoming adults.

By 2025, Wyoming will have established a structure for an adult scholarship program that incorporates public/private participation or other innovative funding mechanisms, and 5% of traditional-aged students enrolled in high-priority programs, and 10% of adults (aged 25+) will be funded by the scholarship program. By 2030, Wyoming will be a national leader in combining public and private funding to support grants and scholarships for traditional and adult learners aligned with long-term economic priorities, and 10% of traditional-aged students and 15% of adults enrolled in high-priority programs will receive funds from the scholarship program.

FOCUS AREA IV

College-going Culture: In order to ensure that its citizens are prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world and that they have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a 21st century global economy, Wyoming's adult population (ages 25-64) will have post-secondary education attainment levels among the top 5 states in the nation.

Metric

No. of individuals aged 25-64 holding Credit Certificates, Associates, Baccalaureates, Masters, Doctoral degrees, or first professional degrees (from the American Community Survey) plus an estimate of the number of credential holders using the Georgetown Center's methodology and identified Wyoming credentials, divided by the total population aged 25-64 as provided by Wyoming's credential definition.

Targets

- 60% of the 25-64 population will have a post-secondary credential of value by 2025 to meet minimum economic-level need. 67% for aspirant-level need. By 2030, this will be 65% economic-level and 72% for aspirant-level.
- 75% will have such a credential by 2040 to meet minimum economic-level need. 82% for aspirant-level need.
- Special populations of adults, women, minorities, first generation, and low income will complete within 5% of peer group by 2025, 3% by 2030, and at the same rate by 2040.

Objective 1. High School Graduation Rate. By 2025, Wyoming's high school graduation rate based on entering 9th graders will 85%, 87% by 2030, and 92% by 2040.

Objective 2. College Matriculation Rate. By 2025, the college participation rate of recent WY high school graduates will be 60%, 63% by 2030, and 70% by 2040.

Objective 3. College Adult Participation Rate. By 2025, the college participation rates of first-time attending adults (20-49 years old) will be 53.5 (for every 10,000 adults without a credential), 60 by 2030, and 72 by 2040.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ENSURING THE STATE'S NEEDS ARE MET

The Educational Attainment Executive Council and its WICHE Attainment Taskforce and Support Staff did not wait for the plan to be completed before beginning implementation of elements of the plan. Additionally, the body received significant feedback and public comment that there must be assurances that the plan would be implemented and that a structure was in place to monitor efforts and ensure accountability. Listed below are three separate lists that outline: efforts accomplished during 2018-2020; priorities established for 2020-2021; and, partner/entity implementation and accountability planned for 2021-2023. Included in the last component regarding partner/entity implementation and accountability is the specific requirement that agencies and institutions/entities incorporate appropriate activities and develop strategic plans that will support Wyoming State Educational Attainment Strategic Plan implementation. These efforts vary from establishing tracking mechanisms such as the DWS credential tracking and integrating existing efforts such as WDE ESSA assessments to inclusion in organizational strategic plans such as the WCCC Statewide College System Strategic Plan or the community college and university institutional strategic plans.

Progress on the Focus Areas, Goals, Metrics, and Targets of this plan as well as the implementation strategies and accountability listed below will be monitored and tracked with progress reported annually beginning in 2020 by the WCCC as required in Wyoming Statutes. Updates and revisions to the plan based on current efforts, data, and economic changes will be reported as well.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018-2020

1. Statewide focus groups for feedback on the big areas and draft metrics the week of September 16, 2019 in Cheyenne, Laramie, Torrington, Sheridan, Casper, Riverton, Rock Springs, and Powell.
2. Rules process and implementation for Wyoming Works and Bachelors of Applied Science degrees were completed and implemented. Revised Wyoming Works statutes per 2020 Legislative Session removed barrier to returning students.
3. Implementation of BAS and new General Studies BA at the community colleges and UW have resulted in the UW General Studies BA producing graduates in December 2019 with more anticipated May 2020. Five of the community colleges have been granted authorization by the WCCC to proceed with developing BAS degrees. Four have been given BAS program approval by the WCCC. Two colleges have already conducted their accreditation site focus visits with Higher Learning Commission (HLC). One college has already received HLC approval to offer the BAS beginning Fall 2020.
4. Articulation Summit October 2019 Launching Graduate Wyoming Articulation was conducted in October 2019 with a focus on post-secondary educational attainment and the launch of Graduate Wyoming.
5. Common Transcript/Transfer Process development and implementation including reverse transfer has resulted in the selection of a software vendor to articulate across higher education institutions. The process through which the WCCC will receive the UW data for the state-level submission per the statute is in development.
6. First Quarter 2020, statewide public comment on draft plan, modify based on public comment, and final plan adoption has resulted in the modifications to the draft plan and adoption on May 19, 2020.
7. Conduct Gap Analysis to include a Skills Profile and Program Skills Gap and Economic Impact Study/ROI and subsequent inclusion in a revised plan has resulted in the EMSI being hired to complete the Skills Profile and Program Skills Gap studies. The remaining aspect needed is the Economic Impact Study/ROI.
8. SLEDS continue to develop the data governance structure and become operational and NGA Grant Metrics that Matter implementation. The state was successful in competitive SLDS national grant for \$3.2 million to move the SLEDS effort forward.

Priorities Established for 2020-2021: IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES ACROSS ENTITIES

1. Completion of the Gap Analysis via Economic Impact/ROI Study.
2. Wyoming's Tomorrow Task Force will continue to meet throughout the next biennium to monitor, update, and recommend legislation to the JEIC on educational attainment in Wyoming with particular focus on adult learners.
3. Develop opportunities to increase apprenticeships, internships, and externships integration statewide across post-secondary credential programs utilizing the expanded IRAP rules for apprenticeships.
4. Implement Adult Readiness Assessment at the university and community colleges including Prior Learning Assessment that incorporates testing such as CLEP, work experience, specialized expertise, micro-credentials, competency-based, or industry-recognized credentials
5. Develop partner entities including the education entities and state agencies Strategic Plans or other appropriate entity agency document aligned with attainment plans
6. Systematic study/audit of public policy on the barriers to implementation and success of the educational attainment goals
7. Communicate plan with Wyoming citizens, business leaders and other interested parties

Priorities Planned for 2021-23: Agencies, Entities, and Institutions Implementation and Accountability
Development of Partner Strategic Plans, Assessment Plans, and Credential Tracking

1. Pursuant to W.S. 21-18-202 and 9-12-1402, the Wyoming Community College Commission shall develop and implement a new statewide community college system strategic plan that, in part, integrates the appropriate aspects of this Educational Attainment Plan. The status of the plan development and implementation shall be required in advance of biennial and supplemental budget requests.

2. Pursuant to W.S. 21-18-202 and 9-12-105 and 9-12-1402, the seven community colleges shall develop their next college strategic plans, in part, in alignment with the statewide community college system strategic plan. Each college shall identify how it will create action plans and implement the attainment goals at the local and regional level consistent with this Educational Attainment Plan. Status updates shall be reported to the WCCC on a biennial basis in advance of the WCCC biennial and supplemental budget requests.

3. Pursuant to W.S. 21-17-108 and 9-12-105 and 9-12-1402, the University of Wyoming shall develop its next university strategic plan, in part, in alignment with this Educational Attainment Plan. The University shall identify how it will create action plans and implement the attainment goals. Status updates shall be reported to the WCCC on a biennial basis in advance of the UW biennium budget request.

4. The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) and State Board of Education (SBE) shall develop a monitoring structure that integrates the ESSA or other state required accountability measures that, in part, align with this Educational Attainment Plan. The WDE shall develop a mechanism to involve the K12 districts in developing the monitoring process.

5. The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) shall develop a monitoring structure for state licensure and credentials earned outside the community college and university systems in alignment with the attainment plans at the regional and statewide levels. Status updates shall be reported to the WCCC on a biennial basis in advance of the DWS and WCCC biennium budget request. Wage data will be tracked for those with each level of credential and those without a credential by region.

6. As the coordinating agency, the WCCC shall monitor progress and provide status updates to the Governor's Office, and all collaborating entities, annually through 2023. All information will be publicly available on the WCCC website.