

COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

COLLEGE COMPLETION SELF-ASSESSMENT

PURPOSE

COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA invites all Alliance States to utilize the attached *College Completion Self-Assessment*, a tool designed to guide states through essential elements of the college completion agenda, including:

- Setting a state completion goal
- Setting campus-level completion goals
- Shifting to performance funding
- Reducing time-to-degree and accelerating success
- Transforming remediation
- Counting certificates
- Restructuring delivery for today's students
- Demonstrating strong leadership commitment and engagement

The Self-Assessment will help establish the necessary framework for an effective completion plan and assess a state's readiness and capacity for implementation. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to delineate a state's college completion accomplishments to date and top completion priorities so that similarly situated Alliance States can be paired for efficient support from Complete College America.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

- **Friday, August 20, 2010**
States applying to participate in the Fall 2010 Completion Academy
- **Friday, September 24, 2010**
States applying to participate in the Spring 2011 Completion Academy

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Please submit your completed Self-Assessment to Dominique Raymond, Director of Alliance State Relations, at draymond@completecollege.org or 202.349.4145. Domy is also available to answer any questions.



Arkansas
Connecticut
Georgia
Hawai'i
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Louisiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Nevada
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
West Virginia



COLLEGE COMPLETION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Instructions:

Complete College America does not expect Alliance States to submit lengthy reports in response to the Self-Assessment; thoughtful summaries are welcomed. Most states will accomplish this in five to ten pages.

Please organize your responses according to the five principal sections:

Section I: Completion Goals

Section II: Common Completion Metrics

Section III: Completion Strategies

Section IV: Commitment to the Completion Agenda

Section V: Demonstrated Leadership

The Key Considerations delineated in each section are offered to inspire deeper thinking, not with the expectation that each demands a specific, point-by-point response.

SECTION I: COMPLETION GOALS

Resource: [Essential Steps for States: Set a State Completion Goal](#)

- 1. If your state has established a statewide college completion goal, please provide it and explain how it aligns with the following key considerations. If your state has not yet established a goal, please outline your timeline and strategy for its adoption.**

Key Considerations:

- Is the goal based on the number of additional degrees and certificates awarded annually?
- Can the goal be easily explained, with a clear rationale?
- Does the goal have a firm deadline?
- How does the goal anticipate future economic needs and demographic trends?
- Are certificates completed in one year or more valued and counted?
- Were the essential objectives of preserving access and closing attainment gaps considered?

- How will campus-level completion goals be established utilizing the state goal as the reference point?
- Was the goal adopted through a process that ensured broad-based support and inspired ownership and action by many?

2. Has your state established campus-level completion goals? If so, please attach and explain. If not, please outline your process and timeline for doing so.

Key Considerations:

- Do the campus-level goals “roll up” to the statewide completion goal?
- Have some of your institutions already established completion goals of their own? If so, how or will the state integrate institutional goal setting in the statewide goal?

SECTION II: COMMON COMPLETION METRICS

Resources: [Essential Steps for States: Uniformly Measure Progress and Success](#)
[Complete to Compete: The National Governors Association Chair’s Initiative](#)

1. Please share your state’s timeline for baseline data collection aligned with the CCA Common Completion Metrics.

Key Considerations:

- How will your state ensure that the Common Metrics serve as the backbone of a comprehensive accountability effort, annually reported and widely shared publicly?

Special Note: The National Governors Association Chair’s Initiative for 2010-2011, Complete to Compete, recommends that all states adopt the Common Completion Metrics developed by Complete College America.

2. Have you completed your analysis of the baseline data and key findings based on identified state needs? If so, please share your findings. If not, please indicate your timeline for doing so.

States intending to participate in the Fall 2010 Completion Academy must complete this step before the Academy convenes on October 20th.

Key Considerations:

- What is your process for reviewing the data collected for the Common Metrics? How will these data inform your college completion plan?

- Are there significant gaps in completion rates by race/ethnicity and income?
- How many first-time students enroll in remedial courses their first academic year? How many of those go on to complete a college-level course in the same subject?
- What is the average number of years it takes students to complete a four-year degree? What about a two-year degree?
- What percentage of attempted courses did students actually complete? How many credits did they accumulate during their first academic year?
- How many certificates of one year or greater did your public institutions award this year?

SECTION III: COMPLETION STRATEGIES

Resources: [Essential Steps for States: Shift to Performance Funding](#)
[Essential Steps for States: Reduce Time and Accelerate Success](#)
[Essential Steps for States: Transform Remediation](#)
[Certificates Count](#)
[Essential Steps for States: Restructure Delivery for Today's Students](#)

1. Does your state utilize performance funding or are you considering it as a means to drive reform and boost completion?

Key Considerations:

- Is your performance funding formula focused on the most critical completion metrics or is it unnecessarily complex?
- Does your formula compound performance increases annually in order to gradually increase accountability and ensure its sustainability?
- Are your performance funding measures undercut by “hold-harmless” provisions?
- Is progress as well as completion rewarded in your approach?
- How is performance funding utilized as an incentive to close attainment gaps?
- Is performance funding broadly supported in your state?

2. What strategies are you employing or considering to reduce time-to-degree and accelerate student success?

Key Considerations:

- Will your state require all students to have graduation plans and declare majors early?
- What are your plans to reduce unnecessary course taking?
- Do you have effective statewide articulation agreements so that credits easily transfer across all campuses?

- Will you be developing a common “transfer core” of courses and a common course numbering system?
- Are you considering strategies to encourage more full-time attendance?
- How is your state utilizing summer, technology and early college credit to accelerate success?

3. Most states recognize the failings of current remediation programs. Is your state engaged in or considering large-scale efforts to transform remediation? If so, please describe your approach to reform and timeline for implementation.

Key Considerations:

- What efforts have been made to improve placement assessments to more precisely diagnose academic shortcomings?
- How is your state tailoring remediation by utilizing customized modules which focus students on filling specific academic gaps instead of reviewing material they already know?
- Are your remediation reform efforts designed to assist students in getting up to speed in the shortest amount of time possible, including making better use of opportunities during the summer, the 11th and 12th grade years, or embedding remediation in standard courses?
- Has your state clarified and communicated what constitutes readiness for success in the first year of college? If so, has this resulted in standardized placement policies across all campuses?
- Can your state answer how placement policies relate to success rates? Have efforts been made to standardize placement policies?

4. Certificates often produce incomes that exceed many associate and even some Bachelor’s degrees. Does your state do a good job of counting certificate completions, especially those earned in one year or more at public institutions? Is your state considering factoring certificates into your state completion goals?

Key Considerations:

- Will certificates be a part of any strategies you will consider to increase completions, especially among working adults?
- Is your state taking steps to strengthen articulation of certificates to associate degree programs?
- Are more structured delivery programs being utilized to shorten the time it takes to accomplish a credential and boost the number of completions?
- What steps are your state taking to promote greater consistency in certificate program design and delivery and more effective employer linkages?
- How does your state ensure quality and labor market value of certificates?

5. **A new American majority of students has emerged: most students today must balance the job they need with the higher education they desire. Is your state interested in considering new delivery structures to help students better balance work and school?**

Key Considerations:

- Block scheduling and student cohorts are proving to be effective tactics to boost completion by providing more predictable daily planning and peer support. Is your state interested in exploring this kind of restructuring across institutions, especially low-performing campuses?
- Has your state conducted outreach to students to better understand the conflicting demands on their time and devise new approaches to assist them in accomplishing their higher education aspirations more quickly and efficiently?

SECTION IV: COMMITMENT TO THE COMPLETION AGENDA

A state should involve policymakers and campus leaders — elected officials, employers, civil rights groups, college and university leaders and faculty, and others — in the effort to establish and accomplish its college completion goal, being certain to honor the input of all and widely communicating the collective commitment.

1. **Gubernatorial commitment is essential to establish and implement effective college completion strategies at scale. Please demonstrate your Governor's commitment to the college completion agenda.**

Key Considerations:

- What steps are being taken to ensure sustained commitment to the college completion agenda should there be a change in gubernatorial leadership? Are candidates for Governor aware and engaged in the college completion issue? Are key advocacy groups calling on candidates for Governor to focus on completion?
- How will your Governor make college completion a signature initiative in your next legislative session, including featuring it in the next State of the State Address?
- What communications strategies will your Governor employ to build public awareness and support for college completion?

2. Legislative leadership is critical to move and sustain completion strategies, especially those that demand accountability for results. How has your state engaged key legislative leaders and other elected officials in the completion agenda?

Key Considerations:

- How are key leaders and committee chairs committed to moving and supporting measures to boost completion?
- Please describe the nature of legislative support for performance funding?
- What process has been employed to engage legislators and ensure their support? Has the Governor led these efforts?

3. Ultimately, a state's commitment to completion must become deeply rooted in the culture of higher education, including the campus and classroom levels. What efforts have been made or are being considered to build support for the completion agenda among higher education campus leadership and faculty?

Key Considerations:

- How are university and college presidents involved in your state's college completion agenda and planning?
- How has outreach occurred at the faculty level?
- Does your state anticipate support by higher education leaders and faculty for its college completion strategies? Are there specific strategies that are more likely to be supported than others?

4. Significant and meaningful engagement between K-12 and higher education is critical to align college readiness expectations and outcomes. What has your state done to strengthen this vital relationship?

Key Considerations:

- How do your K-12 and higher education systems consider themselves as a connected academic pipeline essential for the state's future success?
- Does your state have a recommended or required college preparatory curriculum? Does it include four years of math and/or senior year math? Is your state an active participant in the American Diploma Project Network?
- How does your state intend to leverage the opportunities provided by the Common Core State Standards to align K-12 and higher education?
- Is your state currently administering college-ready anchor assessments in high school?
- Do your higher education institutions provide student feedback reports to high schools?

5. Substantial support for the college completion agenda from outside of education can make the difference between failure and sustained success. How have key issue advocacy groups been included in state completion planning and implementation efforts?

Key Considerations:

- Business advocacy groups are likely supporters of college completion efforts. How is your state’s business leadership committed to assist and petition for your completion strategies? Does completion rank high as a priority?
- How is your philanthropic community engaged and supportive of the completion agenda?
- How are state civil rights and anti-poverty groups involved and committed?

SECTION V: DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP

The Alliance of States is founded on the principle that significant improvement in college completion is not possible without the strong partnership of the Governor and higher education leadership. As assurance that the analysis and implementation strategies contained in your College Completion Self-Assessment are the product of that partnership, please attach to your response a cover page that includes the signatures of the following:

- *Governor’s Office Representative*
- *Higher Education System Leader/SHEEO*
- *Alliance State Liaison*

###