# Florida C.A.N.! Taskforce

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SUMMARY

The following report has been created by request of the Florida College Access Network (Florida C.A.N.!) Taskforce with the goal of capturing the college degree attainment needs of present and future Floridians. In doing so, indicators such as Florida’s current and projected population growth, demographics, K-20 student attrition, adult degree attainment, current and projected workforce demand were explored to give the taskforce information needed to make informed and well-researched decisions throughout the strategic planning process.

The data outlines four general trends that should be of interest to those interested in higher education access and success, (1) Florida is one of the fastest growing states in the nation, (2) Florida’s low-income and minority populations are increasing in significant numbers, (3) these groups have traditionally underperformed in a variety of academic indicators that are used to evaluate success within the state’s education system and (4) that projections of college productivity show that the supply of degree earners will fall short of what Florida’s future economy will demand of its workforce. Below are specific data points that reinforce these trends:

POPULATION GROWTH
- Florida is currently the fourth most populated state in the nation behind California, Texas and New York. It is projected that as soon as 2015, Florida will pass New York as the third most populated state in the nation.
- Based on U.S. Census projections, Florida will gain 6.85 million residents from July 2011 to July 2025, which is the largest increase of any state during this time and accounts for over 18-percent of all the growth projected to take place in the United States during that span.
- Only Texas is projected to see more growth within its population of minors (ages 0-18) between the year 2000 and 2030. Minors within the state will grow by 2.12 million or by 58.2-percent during this span.
- Since the 1999-2000 school year, Florida has seen steady increases of its percentage of low-income students attending public schools, which currently stands at 53.5-percent (U.S. average, 45.9-percent).
- Black and Hispanic groups are projected to outgrow all other ethnicities in Florida from 2005-2025.

FLORIDA’S EDUCATION PIPELINE
- Florida underperforms nationally and ranks 34th among other states in the progression of its ninth graders through college completion. Out of 100 high school freshman, only 16 will earn a 2-year or 4-year degree within 150-percent time of their program of study.
- The high school graduation rate for Florida public schools is 68.8-percent, which is 44th among other states and behind the national average of 75.5-percent. Black (55.7-percent) and Hispanic (63.9-percent) students are outperformed by all other ethnicities in the state.
- On college entrance exams, graduating high school seniors scored an average 19.6 composite score on the ACT and a 1447 combined score on the SAT, which ranked 49th and 46th among other states in the nation.
- Six-year Graduation rates vary among Florida’s state universities. The University of Florida graduates 82-percent of its full-time, first-time-in-college students while only 38-percent of Florida Atlantic University students.

ADULT DEGREE ATTAINMENT
- Just under 37-percent of the working-age adult population in Florida has a 2-year or 4-year degree (U.S. average, 41-percent).
- There are significant degree attainment gaps among Black (25-percent) and Hispanic (31.9-percent) working-aged adults compared to White (40.7-percent) and Asian (55.6-percent) working aged-adults in Florida.
- Over 2.1 million adults in Florida have some college but no degree.

FUTURE WORKFORCE DEMAND
- It is projected that 59-percent of all jobs in Florida will require a postsecondary education by the year 2018.
- Based on current degree attainment rates, it is projected that Florida will need more than 1.6-million workers with postsecondary credentials to fill new and vacant jobs.
POPULATION GROWTH

Florida is currently the fourth most populated state (19.05 million) in the nation behind California (37.69 million), Texas (25.67 million) and New York (19.46 million). Based on U.S. Census projections, Florida will gain 6.85 million residents from July 2011 to July 2025, which is the largest increase of any state during this time and accounts for nearly 20-percent of all growth projected to occur in America during this span. It is projected that as soon as July 2015, Florida will pass New York as the third most populated state in the nation.

Figure 1: Estimated change in population for all states: 2011 to 2025

![Population Growth Chart]

Over 18% of all growth in the United States from now until 2025 is projected to take place in Florida

The growth of 6.85 million residents in Florida accounts for a 26.5-percent increase in its 2011 population, which is the third largest projected increase in the nation behind Arizona and Nevada.

FLORIDA DEMOGRAPHICS

As illustrated above, Florida’s population will grow significantly in the years to come. A more important question to answer when addressing the issue of college access and degree completion is the ways in which the population is expected to grow. For example, it is widely known that the average age of Floridians tends to be above the national average, due to the number of retirees and older persons that migrate south. These trends are projected to continue into the future, but the number of young people in the state is also projected to increase. As shown in Figure 2, the number of persons in Florida under the age of 18 is projected to grow by 2.12 million (58.2-percent) from 2000 to 2030. Only Texas is projected to see more growth in its total population of minors during this span. Based on these projections, Florida will have 5.77 million people under the age of 18 living in its state in 2030, which will represent 20-percent of the total population.
A current trend that warrants attention is the high number of students attending public schools in Florida who are considered low-income. The number is a problem for current administrators to deal with, but as demonstrated above, the problem will continue to compound itself as the number of students in Florida’s education system will only continue to grow. The percent of public school students who are low-income or eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in Florida was 53.5-percent in 2009-10, which is above the nation’s average of 45.9-percent. Only Texas and California have more students on the federal program that supports low-income students in the nation.

Source: U.S. Census population pyramids and demographic summary indicators for states

Figure 2: Population pyramids of Florida, percent of total population: 2000 and 2030

Figure 3: Percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, Florida and U.S.: 1999-2000 through 2009-2010

Source: U.S. Census population pyramids and demographic summary indicators for states
In addition to being a large and growing state, Florida is also one of the nation’s most diverse. According to U.S. Census calculations, Florida is one of the few states in the country that has 3 racial/ethnic groups that each make up at least 7.0-9.9-percent of the state’s population.

Figure 4: Map of most diverse states in the nation: 2009

Florida’s Black and Hispanic populations are projected to become more and more prominent. Figure 5 illustrates the changes projected to occur by the year 2025 by age and ethnicity.

Figure 5: Projected changes in Florida population by race/ethnicity: 2005 to 2025

Source: U.S. Census

Source: NCHEMS, estimates calculated using data from U.S. Census Bureau
Florida’s large and growing population of Black and Hispanic groups is important to degree attainment goals for the state. Nationwide, these are groups that are projected to increase their enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions. In Figure 5, it is projected that minority groups will increase their enrollment in college in substantial numbers, which should be expected to be reflected in Florida.

Figure 6: Projected enrollment increases by race/ethnicity in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in U.S.: 2008 through 2019

![Graph showing projected enrollment increases by race/ethnicity from 2008 to 2019. The graph indicates that Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native groups are projected to have the highest enrollment increases, followed by Black and Asian/Pacific Islander groups. The total enrollment increase is projected to be 17%, and white enrollment is projected to increase by 7%.]

Source: NCES Projections of Education Statistics to 2019

FLORIDA’S EDUCATION PIPELINE

The data that has been outlined up to this point has shown that Florida will grow at a rapid pace and will become more and more diverse as time goes on. What will be described next is the performance of Florida’s education pipeline, or how well Florida students navigate through its education system. When imagining what kind of solutions needs to be in place to educate Floridians in the future, it is important to capture the strengths and weaknesses that currently exist in Florida’s public education system.

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) calculated for every state the progression and educational attainment from ninth grade to college completion and shows strengths and weaknesses at each stage of transition in the education pipeline. Florida was behind the national average of ninth graders who earned college degrees and 34th of all states. In 2008, Florida lost 40-percent of its ninth graders before high school graduation and then went on to lose over 50-percent of its first-year college students before 150-percent of their program of study. These losses represent a significant number of students who drop-out of their institutions and likely not earn a college degree.
Figure 7: Florida’s education pipeline, ninth grade to college completion: 2008

Freshman High School Graduation Rates

The first indicator to be illustrated is the freshman graduation rate, seen in Figure 7. The most current data available indicates that only 68.8-percent of public high school freshman graduate in four years, which is 44th in the nation and far below the national graduation rate of 75.5-percent. The lowest performing state in the U.S. in the 2008-2009 school year was Nevada, graduating 56.3-percent of its high school freshman, and the highest performing state was Wisconsin at 90.7-percent. Figure 8 shows Florida graduation rates by ethnicity, which is only available for the 2007-08 school year. As you can see, there are disparities among Black and Hispanic students when compared to other ethnicities.

College-going Rate for High School Graduates

In total numbers, Florida sends the fourth most high school students directly to college than any other state in the nation. Conversely, this accounts for only 58.8-percent of all high school graduates. This college-going rate is 34th among all states in the United States and is below the national average of 63.8-percent and can be seen in Figure 9. Raising this rate would make a significant difference in total numbers of young people who have a chance to attain a degree.
Figure 8: Average freshman graduation rates for public high schools for Florida and U.S.: 1999-2000 through 2008-2009

Source: NCES, Common Core of Data State Dropout and Completion Data File

Figure 9: Average freshman graduation rates for public high schools for Florida by ethnicity: 2007-2008

Source: NCES, Common Core of Data State Dropout and Completion Data File
Performance on Standardized College Admissions Exams

As a state, Florida does not have a mandated college admissions exam for entrance in the state universities. Colleges and universities that require this as an admissions requirement typically accept either the SAT, the ACT or both. Graduating high school seniors in Florida performed near the bottom of all states in the nation on both exams.

Florida’s graduating high school seniors scored an average 19.6 composite score on the ACT in 2011, which was the 4th lowest of all states. The lowest performing state was Mississippi (18.7) while the highest, Massachusetts, had an average score of 24.2. The national average, as well as performance of all other states can be seen on Figure 9. The ACT breaks down their scores by ethnicity, which can be seen on Figure 10. Black and Hispanic students have consistently performed lower than the state’s average over the last five years.

On SAT exam performance in 2011, graduating high school seniors scored a 1447 combined score, which was 6th lowest among the United States is shown in Figure 11. Florida ranked below the national average in each of the SAT subject tests in 2011. Florida college-bound seniors had a mean score of 487 in critical reading (44th of all states, national average = 497), 489 in math (48th of all states, national average = 514), and 471 in writing (46th of all states, national average = 471) for a combined score of 1447 (46th of all states, national average = 1500). Figure 12 shows SAT subject test scores by ethnicity in 2011.
Figure 11: Performance on ACT composite score by state: 2011

Source: ACT, Inc., Data for the Class of 2011

Figure 12: Performance on ACT by ethnicity in Florida: 2007 through 2011

Source: ACT Profile Report, Graduating Class of 2011, Florida
Figure 13: Performance on SAT combined score by state: 2011

![Combined SAT Score by State](image)

Source: ACT, Inc., Data for the Class of 2011

Figure 14: Performance on SAT subject tests by ethnicity in Florida: 2011

![Subject Test Scores by Ethnicity](image)

Source: College Board State Profile Report 2011, Florida
College Graduation Rates

Florida has eleven state public universities that belong to the State University System (SUS). Figure 13 illustrates the 6-year graduation rates for all full-time, first-time in college students seeking degrees for the last available Common Data Set. There is a wide range of performance within our state’s universities, with the University of Florida graduating 82-percent of its students and Florida International University graduating only 38-percent in 6-years. The average graduation rate for all SUS students was 59.8-percent. Florida leads all universities in the aggregate family income of its students ($103,663) and is well above the average of the ten other public universities, which is $66,410 according to IRS data collected last year. The University of Florida is one of the largest in the country and accounted for over one-third of all graduates for the 2003 cohort of students that attended an SUS. Figure 14 shows how graduation rates at SUS institutions have changed since 2001. There is no consistent, state-wide trend that can be observed when looking at overall or within institution data.

Figures 14 through 18 indicate data collected from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for graduation rates for students attending 4-year and 2-year degree granting institutions within the state. The performance of our students is compared nationally, by ethnicity, and by control of institution. Florida students tend to outperform national averages at 2-year institutions and tend to perform right at, or below national averages at 4-year institutions.

Figure 15: Six-year graduation rates for students attending Florida State University System institutions with family’s aggregate household income

Source: SUS figures are from most recent Common Data Sets (11/2011) and IRS data from 2008 income tax returns
Figure 16: Undergraduate 6-year graduation rates for FTIC cohorts by SUS institution: 2001-2011

![Bar chart showing 6-year graduation rates for FTIC cohorts by SUS institution from 2001 to 2011.](chart16.png)

Source: Florida State University System of Florida Board of Governors 2010-2011 Annual Report

Figure 17: Percentage of students graduating with a bachelor’s degree within 6 years of entry from the degree-granting institutions where the students started as full-time, first-time students by ethnicity: Cohort year 1998 and 2003

![Bar chart showing graduation rates by ethnicity and cohort year from 1998 to 2003.](chart17.png)

Source: United States Education Dashboard, IPEDS
Figure 18: Percentage of students graduating with a bachelor’s degree within 6 years of entry from the degree-granting institutions where the students started as full-time, first-time students by control of institution: Cohort year 1998 and 2003

Source: United States Education Dashboard, IPEDS

Figure 19: Percentage of students graduating with an associate’s degree within 150 percent of normal time of entry from the 2-year degree-granting institutions where the students started as full-time, first-time students by ethnicity: Cohort year 2001 and 2006

Source: United States Education Dashboard, IPEDS
**Figure 20:** Percentage of students graduating with an associate’s degree within 150-percent of normal time of entry from the degree-granting institutions where the students started as full-time, first-time students by control of institution: Cohort year 2001 and 2006

Source: United States Education Dashboard, IPEDS

**ADULT DEGREE ATTAINMENT**

The number of adults with college degrees for a geographic region is a useful indicator for many variables and tends to be related to higher life-time earnings, lower poverty rates, higher employment rates, higher literacy reading rates, a higher likelihood to vote and a healthier life-style.

Figure 21 is a chart that features the United States standing among economically developed nations in adult degree attainment. The U.S. has been steadily losing ground among this group and currently ranks 15th (down from 2nd in 2004) among the 32 nations shown. America’s overall ranking is around the middle of the group, but it is an outlier in two areas. First is the number of older adults aged 55-64 with college degrees – the U.S. ranks 2nd among all other nations (behind Israel). The second piece that is different than other nations is the number of 25-34 year olds with degrees. For almost all other nations, this population has the highest degree attainment rate. For the U.S., this age group is nearly the same as all others. This is an indication of productivity and achievement across all education sectors in the country. Figure 22 depicts how powerful the effect family income level is on the attainment of bachelor’s degree attainment for young people ages 24-35.

In the U.S., the degree attainment rates for adults aged 25-34 was 41-percent. Figure 23 shows Florida among all other states in its proportion of 25-34 year olds with college degrees at around 36-percent. A look among Florida’s most populated counties shows a disparate view of degree attainment among adults which can be seen in Figure 24.

Figure 25 shows the highest level of educational attainment for the adult population. Just under 37-percent of adults have a 2-year degree or higher, which is just below the national average. Over 21-percent of all adults have attended college without finishing – a rate which represents over 2-million Floridians aged 25-64. Figure 26 represents adult degree attainment rates by ethnicity. Black and Hispanic adults had lower than average
proportions of college degrees, which is an important trend to be aware of because of how quickly they are projected to grow over the next two decades (seen in Figure 5).

**Figure 21:** Percentage adults with 2- or 4-year degree by economically developed nation, by age group

![Figure 21: Percentage adults with 2- or 4-year degree by economically developed nation, by age group](image)

Source: OECD Education at a Glance by way of the Lumina Foundation

**Figure 22:** Percentage of population (age 25-34) with a tertiary type A degree with U.S. bachelor’s degree attainment by 24 by upper and lower income half

![Figure 22: Percentage of population (age 25-34) with a tertiary type A degree with U.S. bachelor’s degree attainment by 24 by upper and lower income half](image)

Figure 23: Percentage adults with 2- or 4-year degree by economically developed nation and state: ages 25-34

Source: OECD Education at a Glance by way of the Lumina Foundation

Figure 24: Percentage adults with 2- or 4-year degree by Florida county: ages 25-64

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey by way of the Lumina Foundation
FUTURE WORKFORCE DEMAND

As stated above, adult degree attainment rates have strong relationships with living a healthy and happy lifestyle. The next indicator that will be discussed is the future workforce demand, which will tell us more about the overall health of the State of Florida in the future. Workforce projections involve complex calculations but are based on the simple supply and demand model which the field of economics was founded upon.

For economically developed nations, postsecondary institutions provide advanced workforce training for jobs that require heuristic tasks like problem solving, critical thinking and the dynamics of communication. It has been
projected by Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce that Americans and Floridians alike will be underprepared for the jobs that will exist in the year 2018. Figure 27 shows the change in jobs by education level in Florida, which shows the need for more college educated workers in 2018. Figure 28 demonstrates the gap between the rate of adults who are currently college educated and with the rate of adults that are needed to meet workforce demands projected for 2018. This gap represents a shortfall of 1.6 million postsecondary credentials.

The research cited above goes on to further capture the future workforce needs by occupation for each state in America. This data can be found in Figure 29. Due the population growth that was outlined in Figure 1, many occupations are projected to grow within the state. The chart outlines within each occupational area, what level of education will be needed to fill the job openings. There is projected to be a total of 5.6 million jobs that will require postsecondary education. Occupations such as business management and operations, financial specialties, computer science, engineering, education, community and social services, as well as life and physical science are some of the jobs that will require a higher share of postsecondary training. Blue collar and food/personal services occupations are projected to grow in numbers in Florida by 2018 but not require college degrees.

Figure 27: Change in jobs by education level in Florida: 2008 and 2018

Figure 28: Projected degree attainment gap for Florida: 2008 to 2018
Figure 29: Where jobs will be in 2018, by occupation and education level: Florida

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<td>1,769</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>9,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018
METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

This goal of this report was to capture the past and present trends related to college access and success in the state of Florida. The National College Access Network manual\(^1\) was used to guide the scanning of the absorbent amount of data to include in this report, and the following elements of relevance, clarity, detail, robustness, acceptence and accuracy\(^2\) were considered to inform which sources of data to use and understand performance in this area.

In doing so, the following limitations should be kept in mind while interpreting the data presented in this report\(^3\).

**Old data:** Within each area of performance reported in this study, the most current data was sought after. Educational research depends on the release of institutional data from states and education systems. For many reasons, this data tends to lag behind at least a year and sometimes longer, which is a limitation when attempting to understand what is happening in the most present contexts of education.

**Different “denominators”:** Denominators are used when calculating rates such as high school and postsecondary graduation. Not all rates are calculated the same, meaning different groups or cohorts of students can be used to do so. These calculations are not perfect and many times “leaves out” entire groups of students, making generalizations about broad populations a challenge. It is acknowledged that there are ongoing debates and controversies among education researchers and other entities as to what the best way is to accurately capture the performance of students. As better data is made more available and consensuses are reached, Florida C.A.N.!’s data collection will reflect those changes.

**Most data is descriptive:** The data that is used in this report is mostly descriptive, meaning they describe very basic features (i.e. student/institutional characteristics, performance). Descriptive data is useful for benchmarking, the observation of patterns, and understanding performance gaps, but readers should caution themselves to drawing conclusions about root causes about student, institutional or system behaviors. Further analysis is needed to make judgments about the phenomenon observed by descriptive data, which is one goal of Florida C.A.N.!’s policy briefs.

**Lack of metro/community data:** Higher education data especially is difficult to report locally without the use of the National Student Clearinghouse, which we did not have access to at the time of this report. Without micro-data, one can only hypothesize the impact broader measures of higher education access and success has on local communities.

**Broad, not comprehensive scan of data:** This report was limited in the amount of time and resources available to scan all of the possible sources of data that exists in databases, reports, websites, etc. It is acknowledged that it is highly likely that sources of data were not considered as a part of this report. Investigation of the available data is ongoing and as better data becomes accessible and attainable it will be considered by the Florida C.A.N.! research team to inform its efforts catalyzing a state-wide network. Among some of the indicators of higher education access and success that are not a part of this report but future efforts will include measures of quality, learning, rigor, affordability, credentials and career preparation.

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3. For any questions or inquiries regarding the limitations of this report or data sources, please contact the Florida C.A.N.! Senior Researcher & Policy Analyst, Troy Miller at tmiller@usf.edu.
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