



2021-22

Total Degrees & Credentials

Kentucky Public & Independent Institutions

About the Council on Postsecondary Education

The Council on Postsecondary Education is Kentucky's higher education coordinating agency committed to strengthening our workforce, economy and quality of life. We do this by guiding the continuous improvement and efficient operation of a high-quality, diverse and accessible system of postsecondary education.

Key responsibilities include:

- developing and implementing a strategic agenda for postsecondary education that includes measures of progress.
- producing and submitting a biennial budget request for adequate public funding of postsecondary education.
- determining tuition rates and admission criteria at public postsecondary institutions.
- collecting and distributing data about postsecondary education performance.
- ensuring the coordination and connectivity of technology among public institutions.
- licensing non-public postsecondary institutions to operate in the Commonwealth.



The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) annually produces a report examining degree and credential production in Kentucky in the previous academic year (July 1 through June 30) and over time. Using data from the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Data System (KPEDS), the report details the number and types of credentials earned at Kentucky's eight public universities, the 18 institutions of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities (AIKCU), and the sixteen campuses of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).

Degree production is the metric most directly tied to the Council's goal of raising the percentage of Kentuckians with a high-quality postsecondary credential to 60% by the year 2030. It is also a key component in the performance distribution model used to determine funding allocations to public universities each biennium.

This report disaggregates degrees and credentials by level, sector, underrepresented minority status, low-income status, in-state status and by working-age adults. Additional disaggregations, including institution-level data, are available via the interactive dashboards on CPE's data portal, which can be accessed at cpe.ky.gov/data/index.html

One-Year Trend (2020-21 to 2021-22)

Increasing

- Total degrees and credentials increased by **0.6%**.
- Total graduate degrees jumped **9.7%**, with master's/specialist degrees up **10.2%**, and doctoral degrees up **7.5%**.
- Total undergraduate degrees and credentials awarded to underrepresented minoritized students increased by **3.2%**.

Decreasing

- Total bachelor's degrees fell by **1.1%**.
- Total KCTCS credentials declined by **3.5%**, with associate degrees falling **5.8%**, certificates decreasing **2.1%**, and diplomas dropping **9.7%**.
- Total undergraduate degrees and credentials awarded to in-state students decreased by **1.4%**.
- Total undergraduate degrees and credentials awarded to working-age adult students declined by **4.0%**.

Five-Year Trend (2016-17 to 2021-22)

Increasing

- Total degrees and credentials have increased by **16.6%**.
- Total KCTCS credentials are up **10.4%**, with certificates increasing **18.8%**.
- Total graduate degrees rose by **62.2%**, with master's/specialist degrees growing **68.7%**, and doctoral degrees increasing by **33.6%**.
- Total undergraduate degrees and credentials awarded to underrepresented minoritized students increased by **30.8%**.

Decreasing or Flat

- Total undergraduate degrees and credentials awarded to working-age adult students have decreased by **4.5%**.
- Total bachelor's degrees awarded have remained essentially flat.



Highlights

Total degrees and credentials awarded in 2021-22 increased 0.6% over the previous year, following a slight dip at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2016-17, total degrees and credentials have risen 16.6%, impressive considering that total headcount enrollment grew by only 0.6% during that same time frame. Climbing retention rates suggest that campuses are increasing their efficiency in moving students through academic programs.

Over the last five years:

- Though small in number, the biggest percentage gain has been in postgraduate certificates, which have risen 176.7%, from 498 to 1,378.
- Master's/specialist degrees have grown by 68.7%, while doctoral degrees have increased by 33.6%
- Diploma/undergraduate certificates have grown by 17.9%.
- Total associate degrees have decreased by 2.8%, and bachelor's degrees have remained essentially flat.

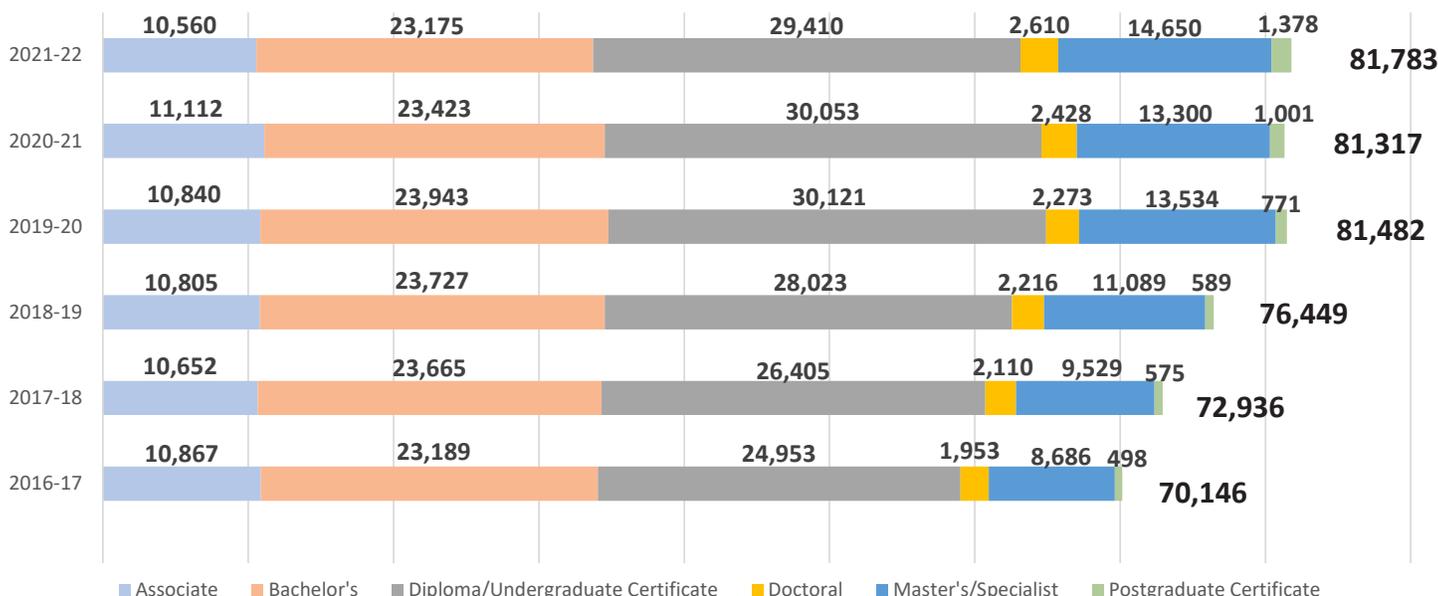
Over the last year:

- Postgraduate certificates were up 37.7%, master's/specialist degrees were up 10.2%, and doctoral degrees were up 7.5%.
- Associate degrees were down 5.0%, diploma/undergraduate certificates were down 2.1%, and bachelor's degrees were down 1.1%.

Technical Notes

Total degrees and credentials awarded include diplomas, undergraduate certificates, associate degrees, postgraduate certificates and bachelor's, master's, specialist and doctoral degrees awarded by public and AIKCU institutions. Counts include all credentials awarded during the academic year, even if a student earned multiple credentials or two bachelor's degrees, as is the case with some double majors (a duplicated count).

Total Degrees & Credentials Awarded by Credential Level





Total Bachelor's Degrees

Highlights

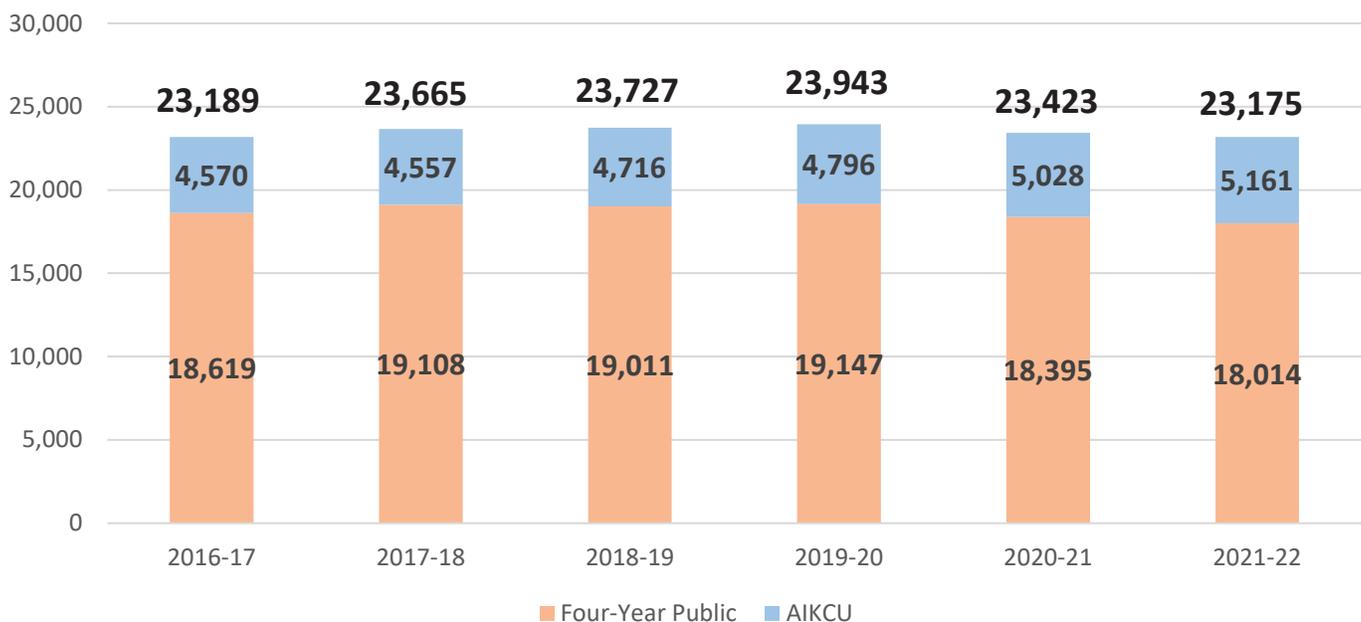
Total bachelor's degrees fell 1.1% from the previous year and have remained essentially flat over the last five years. AIKCU campuses have seen bachelor's degrees grow 2.6% since 2020-21, and 12.9% since 2016-17. Public universities, on the other hand, experienced a 2.1% decline in bachelor's degrees over the previous year and a 3.2% decline over the last five years.

Numerous studies document the economic and social benefits of bachelor's degree attainment to the Commonwealth. Over a lifetime, bachelor's degree recipients earn higher incomes, contribute more tax revenue to the state, vote more frequently, enjoy better health and are less likely to be on public assistance or incarcerated. Increasing bachelor's degree attainment assists the state's economy as well as the lives and livelihoods of Kentuckians. Therefore, it's important that colleges and universities improve their bachelor's degree production.

Technical Notes

Bachelor's degrees are awards that normally require at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the college or university undergraduate level. This includes all bachelor's degrees conferred in a five-year cooperative (work-study) program, as well as degrees in which the normal four years of work are completed in three years. Counts in the graph below are duplicated, meaning that multiple credentials may have been awarded to a student during an academic year.

Total Bachelor's Degrees Awarded by Sector





Total KCTCS Degrees & Credentials

Highlights

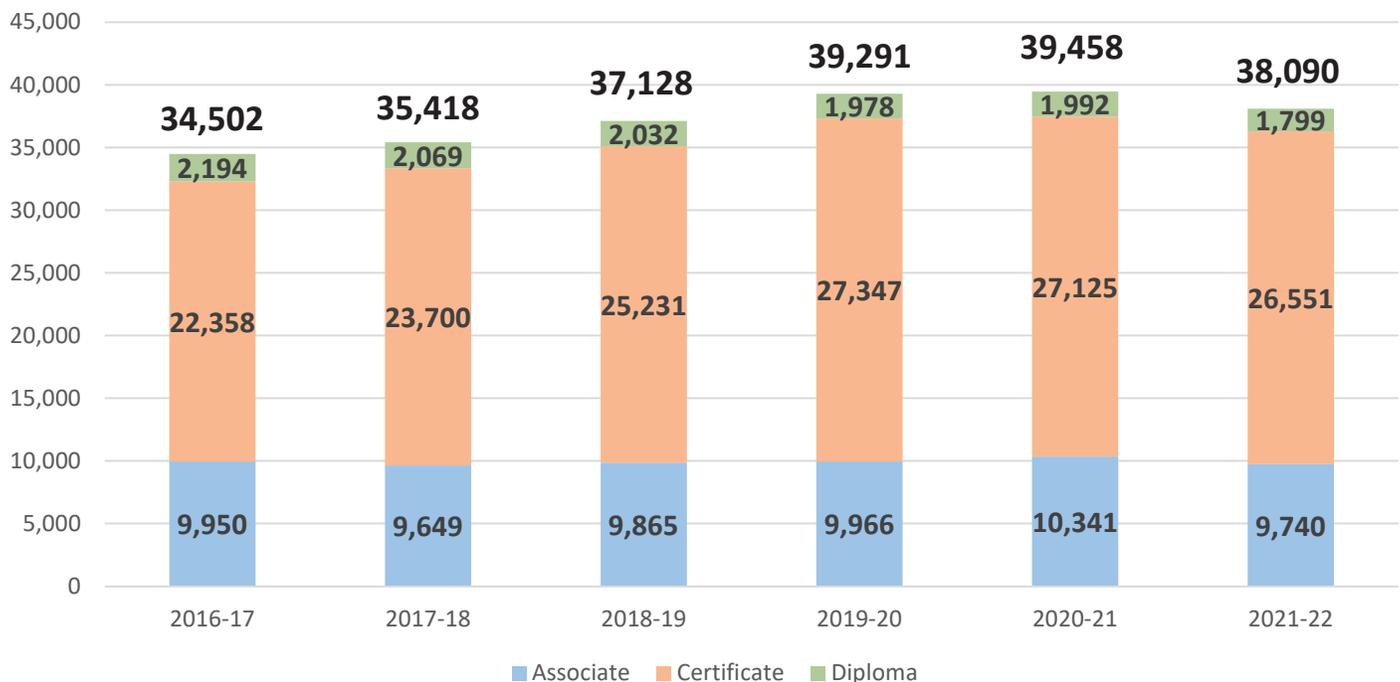
KCTCS awarded 3.5% fewer degrees and credentials in 2021-22 than in the previous year, although total credentials have risen 10.4% since 2016-17.

- Associate degrees fell 5.8% from last year and have decreased by 2.1% over the last five years.
- Although certificates were down 2.1% from the prior year, growth has been strong over the last five years at 18.8%. Certificates account for the biggest portion of credentials awarded by KCTCS.
- Diplomas dropped 9.7% from last year and have fallen 18.0% over the last five years.

Technical Notes

Total credentials awarded by the sixteen KCTCS campuses include associate degrees, which normally require at least 60 credit hours or the equivalent at the undergraduate level; certificates, which are short-term credentials (from less than one year to up to four years) at the undergraduate level; and undergraduate diploma programs, courses of study often leading to professional credentials in vocational fields. Counts in the graph below are duplicated, meaning that multiple credentials may have been awarded to a student during an academic year.

Total KCTCS Credentials Awarded by Level





Highlights

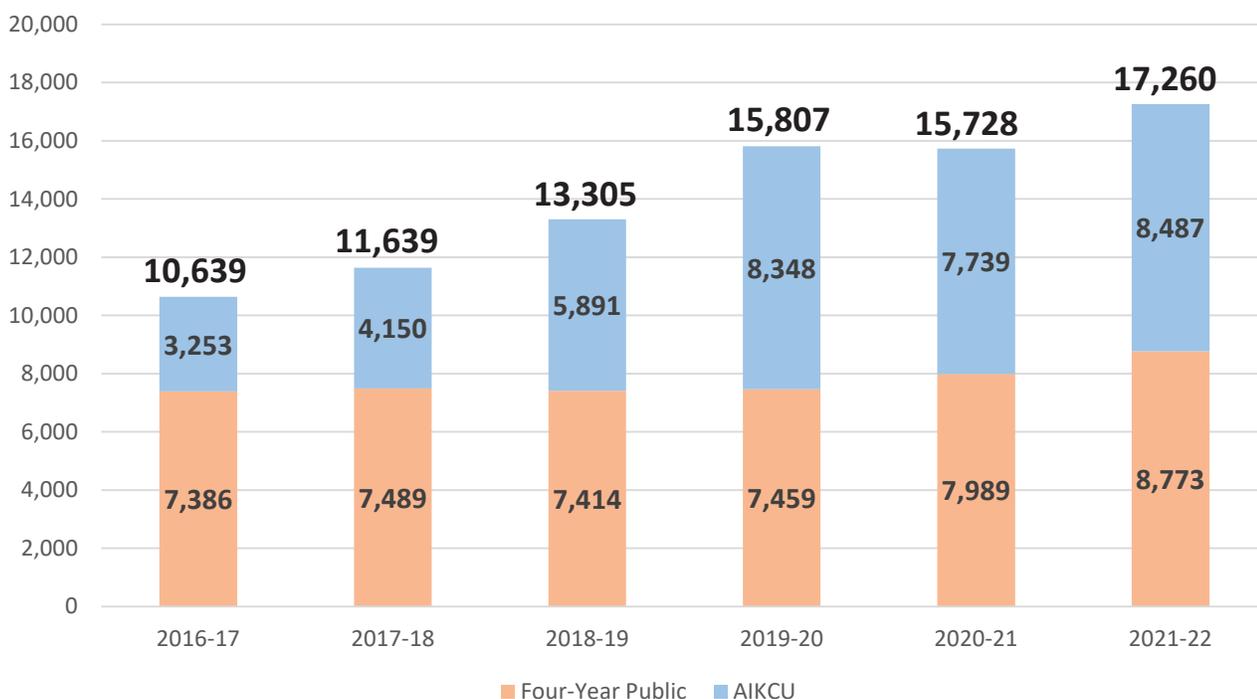
Total graduate degrees jumped 9.7% from the previous year and have risen 62.2% over the last five years. Most of this growth occurred at AIKCU institutions, which increased their graduate degree production 9.7% from 2021-22 and 160.9% since 2016-17. Public universities awarded 9.8% more graduate degrees over the previous year and 18.8% over the last five years.

In 2021-22, 17,260 graduate degrees were awarded by AIKCU and public institutions, and 84.9% of these degrees (14,650) were at the master's/specialist level. The remaining 2,610 degrees were doctorates.

Technical Notes

Total graduate and professional degrees include master's, specialist and doctoral degrees awarded in an academic year (July 1 through June 30). Multiple awards received by the same student in an academic year are all included. A master's degree is an award that requires the successful completion of an academic program of at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate or professional level. A specialist degree normally requires 60 semester hours of concentrated and approved graduate coursework beyond the bachelor's degree. It is generally offered in the field of education to acknowledge completion of advanced graduate study designed to help individuals meet licensure requirements or develop additional knowledge and skills beyond the master's degree, but not at the doctoral level. A doctoral degree requires advanced work beyond the master's level. CPE recognizes four classifications for doctoral degrees (doctor's degree, completed all coursework and dissertation; doctor's degree, completed all coursework but working on dissertation; doctor's degree, professional practice; and all other doctor's degrees that are not research/scholarship or professional practice degrees).

Total Graduate Degrees Awarded by Sector





Undergraduate URM Degrees & Credentials

Highlights

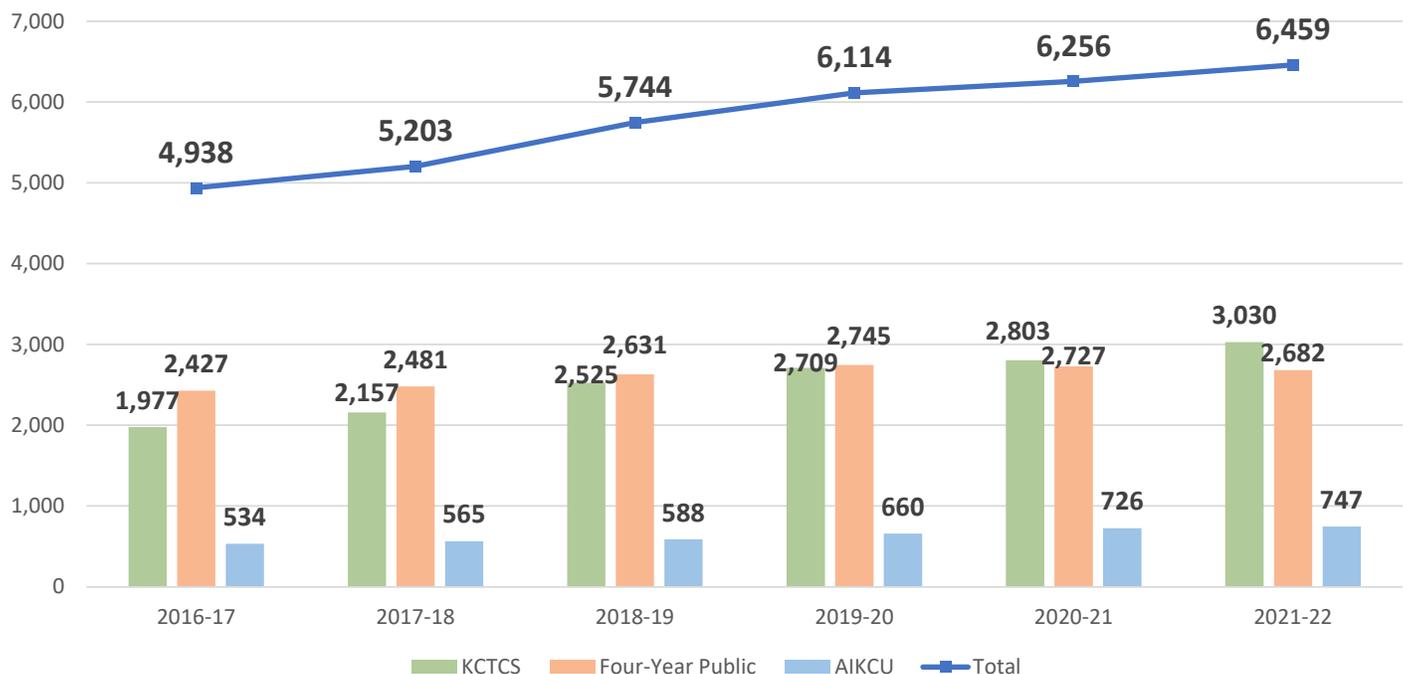
Total degrees and credentials awarded to underrepresented minoritized students increased 3.2% from last year. Since 2016-17, total URM credentials are up 30.8%.

- At KCTCS campuses, URM credentials were up 8.1% from last year and have increased 53.3% over the last five years.
- At public universities, URM credentials were down 1.7% from last year but have increased 10.5% over the last five years.
- At AIKCU institutions, URM credentials were up 2.9% from last year and have increased 39.9% over the last five years.
- The largest number of URM students in 2021-22 were Black (3,048), followed by Latinx (1,863).
- Total degrees and credentials awarded to Black students were down 0.8% over last year but have increased 10.4% over the last five years.
- Total degrees and credentials awarded to Latinx students were up 5.0% over last year and have increased 59.9% over the last five years.

Technical Notes

The graph below represents an unduplicated count of credentials awarded to underrepresented minoritized students (multiple credentials earned by the same student are not counted). “Underrepresented minority” (URM) refers to students whose race or ethnicity is Black; American Indian or Alaskan Native; Hispanic or Latinx; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; or two or more races.

Undergraduate Degrees & Credentials Awarded to URM Students by Sector (Unduplicated)





Undergraduate Low-Income Degrees & Credentials

Highlights

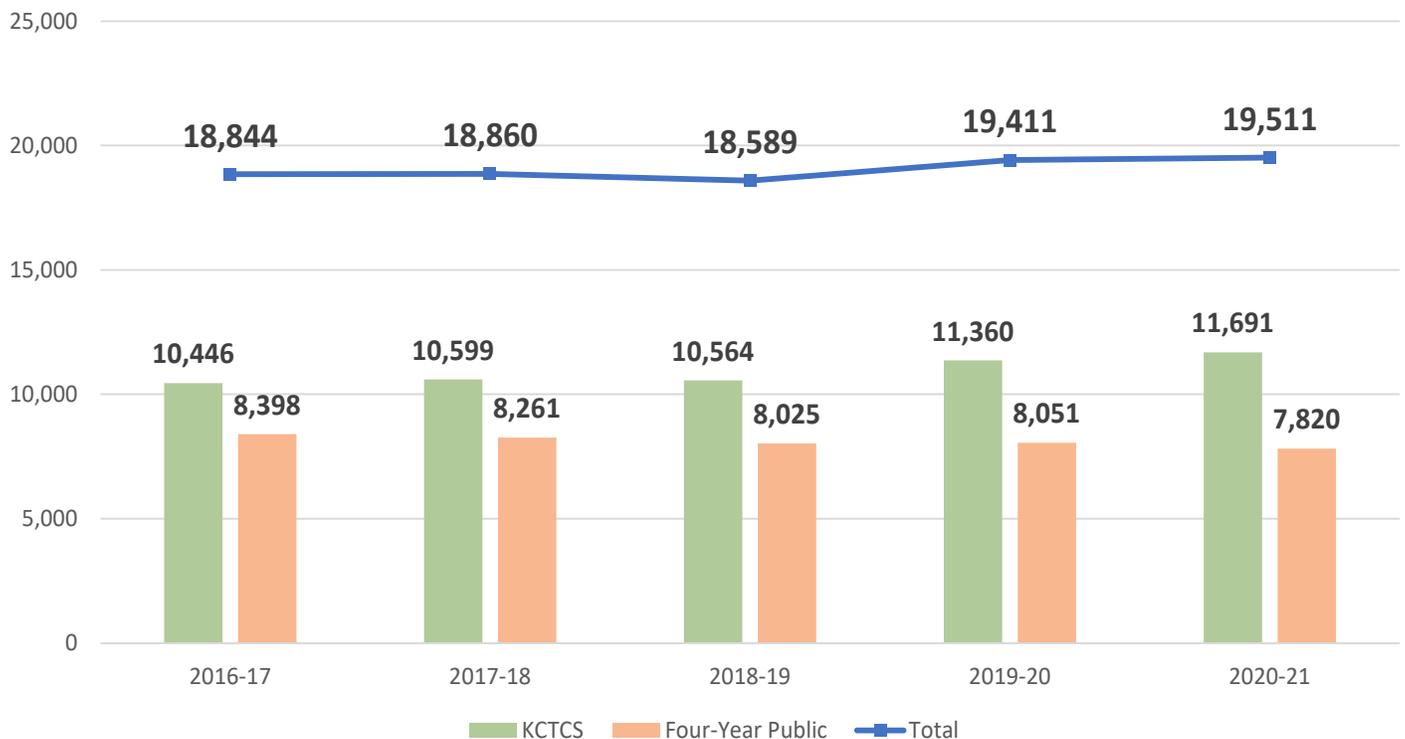
CPE collects undergraduate degrees awarded to low-income students at public institutions only, so the graph below does not include AIKCU institutions. Due to the way data is collected, low-income degree counts for 2020-21 are not yet available.

- Overall, total degrees and credentials awarded to low-income students were up 0.5% from 2019-20 and have increased 8.6% since 2015-16. These gains are due to increases in credentials awarded to KCTCS low-income students.
- At KCTCS campuses, low-income credentials were up 2.9% from the previous year and have increased 21.0% since 2015-16.
- At public universities, low-income credentials were down 2.9% from the previous year and have decreased 5.8% since 2015-16.

Technical Notes

The graph below represents an unduplicated count of credentials awarded to low-income students (multiple credentials earned by the same student are not counted). A low-income student is one who has been a Pell recipient at any point during their enrollment. Federal Pell Grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need and have not earned a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree. A Pell grant, unlike a loan, does not need to be repaid.

Undergraduate Degrees & Credentials Awarded to Low-Income Students by Sector (Unduplicated)





Undergraduate Credentials to In-State Students

Highlights

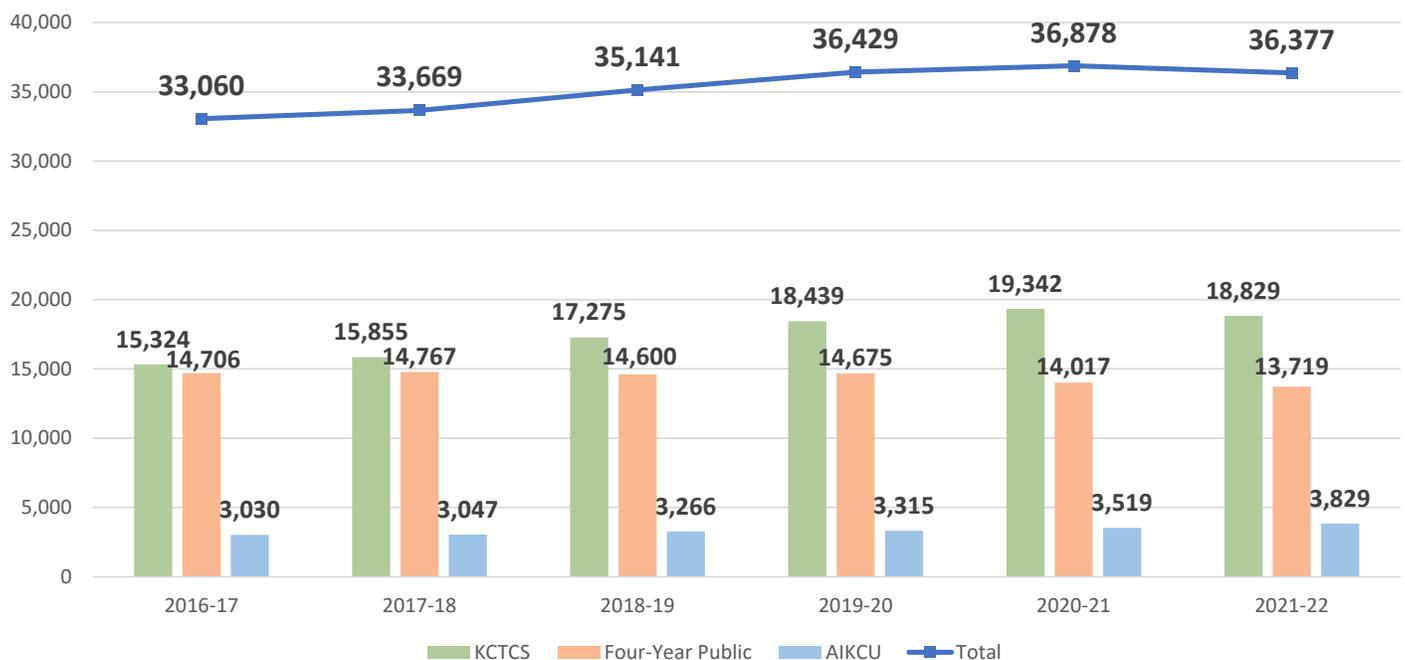
Educating in-state students is an important mission of Kentucky’s postsecondary institutions. Total degrees and credentials awarded to in-state students fell 1.4% from the previous year, from 36,878 in 2020-21 to 36,377 in 2021-22. Over the last five years, total awards to in-state students have increased 10.0%.

- At KCTCS campuses, credentials awarded to in-state students were down 2.7% from last year but have increased 22.9% over the last five years.
- At public universities, credentials awarded to in-state students were down 2.1% from last year and have decreased 6.7% over the last five years.
- At AIKCU institutions, credentials awarded to in-state students were up 8.8% from last year and have increased 26.4% over the last five years.

Technical Notes

The graph below represents the unduplicated number of undergraduate credentials awarded to in-state students at public, KCTCS and AIKCU institutions. Since AIKCU does not report degrees awarded to in-state students, CPE applied the state/country of origin filter to total degrees awarded to obtain this count.

Undergraduate Degrees & Credentials Awarded to In-State Students by Sector (Unduplicated)





Undergraduate Credentials to Adult Students

Highlights

Not only are fewer Kentucky high school graduates directly enrolling in college, the population of 18-24 year olds in Kentucky is declining. As a result, re-engaging working-age adults (ages 25-64) into postsecondary education is vital to achieving our educational attainment goal of 60%.

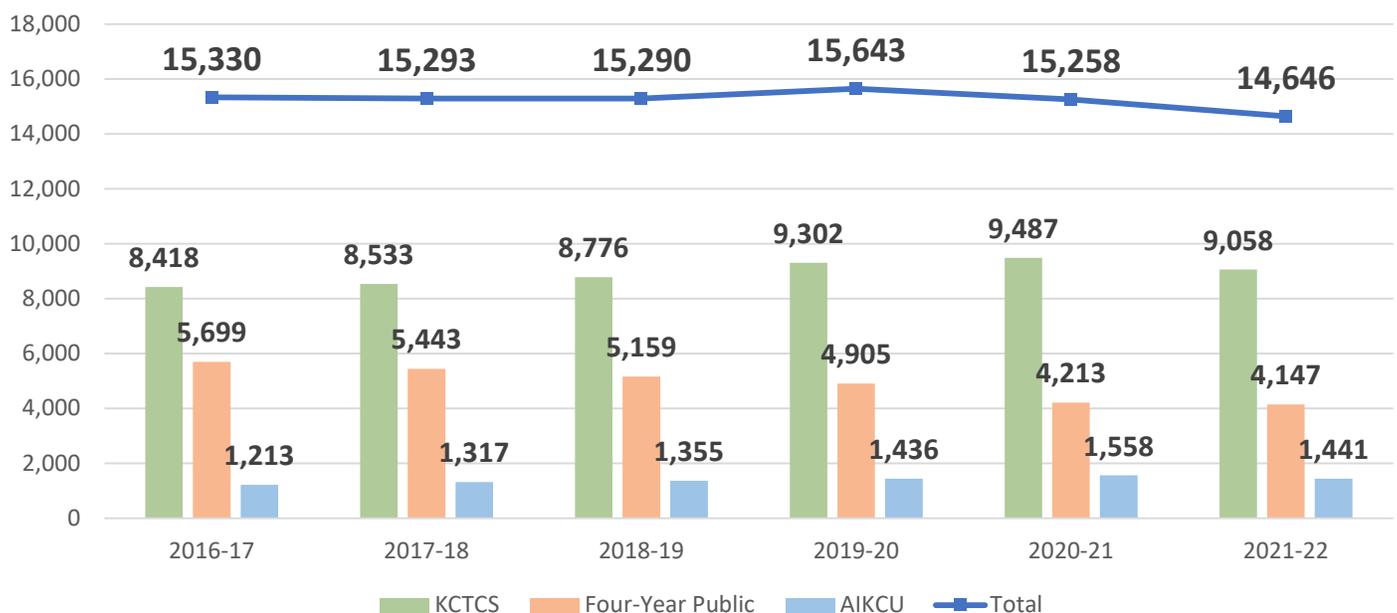
Unfortunately, Kentucky postsecondary education is moving in the wrong direction with respect to non-traditional adult students. Total degrees and credentials awarded to working-age adults declined 4.0% from the previous year, from 15,258 in 2020-21 to 14,646 in 2021-22. Over the last five years, total awards to adult students have fallen 4.5%.

- At KCTCS campuses, credentials awarded to adult students were down 4.5% from last year but have increased 7.6% over the last five years.
- At public universities, credentials awarded to adult students were down 1.6% from last year and have decreased 27.2% over the last five years.
- At AIKCU institutions, credentials awarded to adult students were down 7.5% from last year but have increased 18.8% over the last five years.

Technical Notes

The graph below represents the unduplicated number of undergraduate credentials awarded to working-age adult students at public, KCTCS and AIKCU institutions. Working-age adults are defined as students between the ages of 25 and 64.

Undergraduate Degrees & Credentials Awarded to Working-Age Adult Students by Sector (Unduplicated)





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