

# MEASURING UP 2008

THE STATE REPORT CARD  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION



## What is Measuring Up?

The purpose of a state report card is to provide the general public and policymakers with information they can use to assess and improve postsecondary education in each state. *Measuring Up 2008* is the fifth in a series of biennial report cards.

The report card grades states in six overall performance categories: **Preparation:** How adequately does the state prepare students for education and training beyond high school? **Participation:** Do state residents have sufficient opportunities to enroll in education and training beyond high school? **Affordability:** How affordable is higher education for students and their families? **Completion:** Do students make progress toward and complete their certificates or degrees in a timely manner? **Benefits:** What benefits does the state receive from having a highly educated population? **Learning:** What is known about student learning as a result of education and training beyond high school?

Grades compare the current performance of each state with the best-performing states, but do not compare with past performance. Key indicators (back page) allow states to compare current performance with past performance.

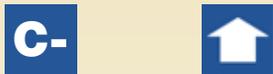


THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC POLICY AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# Arkansas



## PREPARATION

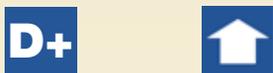


2008 Grade Change Over Time

Arkansas has made strides in preparing young people for college, though compared with other states its performance is only fair.

- High school students have improved substantially on Advanced Placement tests, but their scores remain low.
- Only 86% of blacks have a high school credential, compared with 91% of whites.

## PARTICIPATION

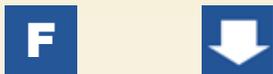


2008 Grade Change Over Time

Despite improvements, Arkansas' college opportunities for young and working-age adults remain poor.

- A very low percentage of working-age adults are enrolled in higher education, but the state's improvement on this measure is one of the highest in the nation.
- Thirty-two percent of black young adults are enrolled in college, compared with 36% of whites.

## AFFORDABILITY

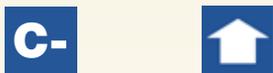


2008 Grade Change Over Time

Higher education has become less affordable for students and their families.

- Poor and working-class families must devote 24% of their income, even after aid, to pay for costs at public four-year colleges. However, Arkansas is the best-performing state in the share of income needed to pay for public two-year colleges.
- Financial aid to low-income students is low. For every dollar in Pell Grant aid to students, the state spends only 28 cents.

## COMPLETION



2008 Grade Change Over Time

Arkansas performs fairly well in awarding certificates and degrees relative to the number of students enrolled, but few students attain a bachelor's degree in a timely manner.

- Forty-three percent of college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years.
- Thirty percent of blacks graduate within six years, compared with 46% of whites.

## REPORT CARD

Preparation	C-
Participation	D+
Affordability	F
Completion	C-
Benefits	D+
Learning	I

## WHAT DO THE ARROWS MEAN?



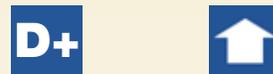
State has increased or remained stable on the key indicator in the category.



State has declined on the key indicator in the category.

See back page for key indicator by category.

## BENEFITS



2008 Grade Change Over Time

A very small proportion of residents have a bachelor's degree, and this substantially weakens the state economy.

- Fourteen percent of blacks have a bachelor's degree, compared with 22% of whites.
- If all racial/ethnic groups had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total annual personal income in the state would be about \$3 billion higher.

## LEARNING



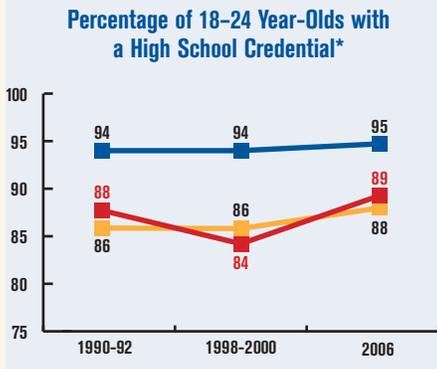
2008 Grade

Like all states, Arkansas receives an "Incomplete" in Learning because there is not sufficient data to allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

This page reflects Arkansas' performance and progress since the early 1990s on several key indicators.

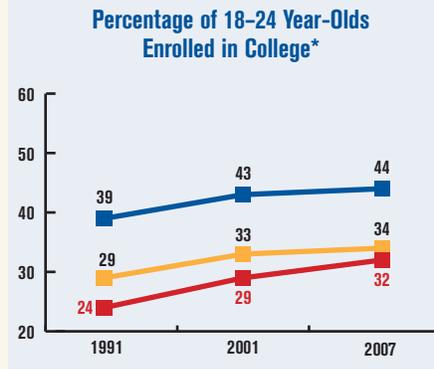
## PREPARATION

The percentage of young adults in Arkansas who earn a high school diploma has increased slightly since the early 1990s. High school completion is slightly above the U.S. average but below the top-performing states.

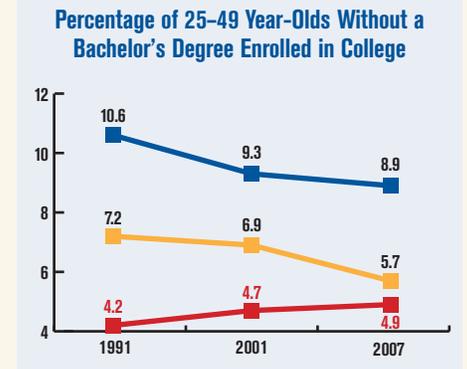


## PARTICIPATION

College enrollment of young adults in Arkansas has improved substantially since the early 1990s. The state is slightly below the national average and well below the top states in the percentage of young adults enrolled.

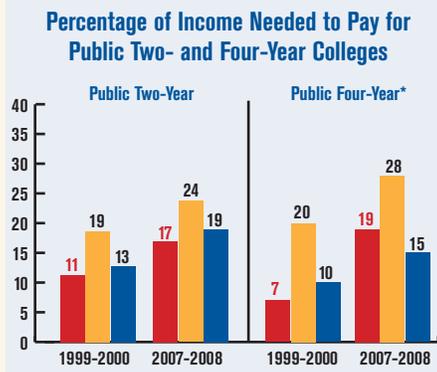


The enrollment of working-age adults, relative to the number of residents without a bachelor's degree, has increased slightly in Arkansas. In contrast, it has declined nationally and in the best-performing states. The percentage attending college in Arkansas is below the U.S. average and well below the top states.



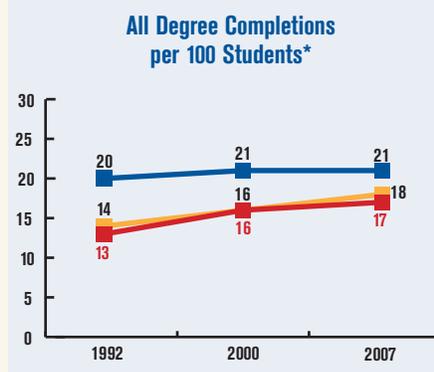
## AFFORDABILITY

The share of family income, even after financial aid, needed to pay for college has increased. However, Arkansas is the best-performing state in the share of income needed to pay for public two-year colleges. To attend public four-year colleges in Arkansas, students and families pay less than the U.S. average but more than those in the best states.



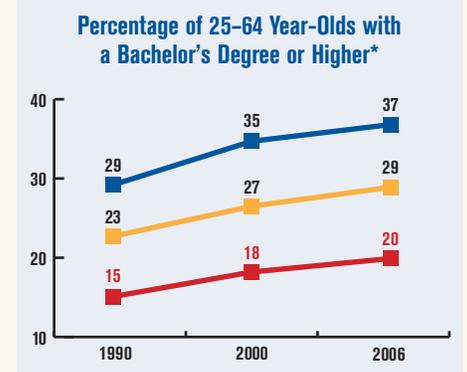
## COMPLETION

The number of undergraduate credentials and degrees awarded in Arkansas, relative to the number of students enrolled, has increased since the early 1990s. Arkansas performs near the U.S. average but below the top states on this measure.



## BENEFITS

The percentage of residents who have a bachelor's degree has increased slightly in Arkansas, but is well below the U.S. average and the top states.



\*Key indicator for the category.

### LEGEND:

- & ■ = Arkansas
- & ■ = United States
- & ■ = Median of Top Five States



152 North Third Street, Suite 705  
 San Jose, California 95112  
**Telephone:** 408.271.2699  
**Fax:** 408.271.2697  
**center@highereducation.org**  
**www.highereducation.org**