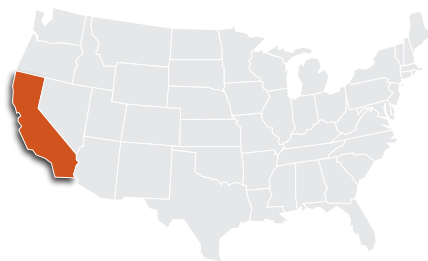


## The State of Higher Education in California

## AVERAGE WON'T DO

*Regional Profile — Los Angeles County*

California's future is directly linked to our ability to educate our residents and sustain a competitive workforce. Our community colleges and universities have provided the opportunity for millions of Californians to succeed, but our future is at risk. Industries in which California is considered a leader—technology, healthcare, agriculture, biotechnology, aerospace, and entertainment—are dependent upon an educated workforce yet, according to estimates in other studies, we are on track to be 2.3 million college degrees and certificates short of meeting the workforce demands of our economy by 2025.<sup>1</sup>

An economically and socially vibrant California requires dramatic gains in the preparation of students for college, access to an affordable college education, college-going rates, and college completion. And what happens in Los Angeles County significantly affects the entire state—**more than one out of every four people living in California calls Los Angeles County home.**

When compared to the rest of the nation, California performs no better than average in preparing and graduating students from college. Even more troubling, serious gaps across regions of the state and among racial/ethnic groups exist. This is simply unacceptable. California has never aspired to be just average. California can excel in higher education once again if, and only if, we have a plan for turning things around.

California's Current Performance	Category	Los Angeles County Compared to California <sup>2</sup>
worse than most states	Preparation <i>How prepared are students for college-level work?</i>	average
better than most states	Participation <i>How many students are going to college?</i>	average
average	Completion <i>How many students earn a certificate or degree?</i>	worse than the state average
better than most states	Benefits <i>What are the benefits of a college degree to students and the state?</i>	worse than the state average

Source: Moore, Colleen, Connie Tan, and Nancy Shulock. (2014). *Average Won't Do: Performance Trends in California Higher Education as Foundation for Action*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy—California State University, Sacramento, CA.

This brief, prepared by the Campaign for College Opportunity, highlights Los Angeles County regional key findings from the full report, *Average Won't Do: Performance Trends in California Higher Education as a Foundation for Action*, by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy, as well as findings from other sources where noted.

<sup>1</sup> California Competes. (2012). *The Road Ahead: Higher education, California's promise, and our future economy*. San Francisco, CA. Retrieved from [http://californiacompetes.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CaCompetes\\_Report\\_Final-2.pdf](http://californiacompetes.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CaCompetes_Report_Final-2.pdf).

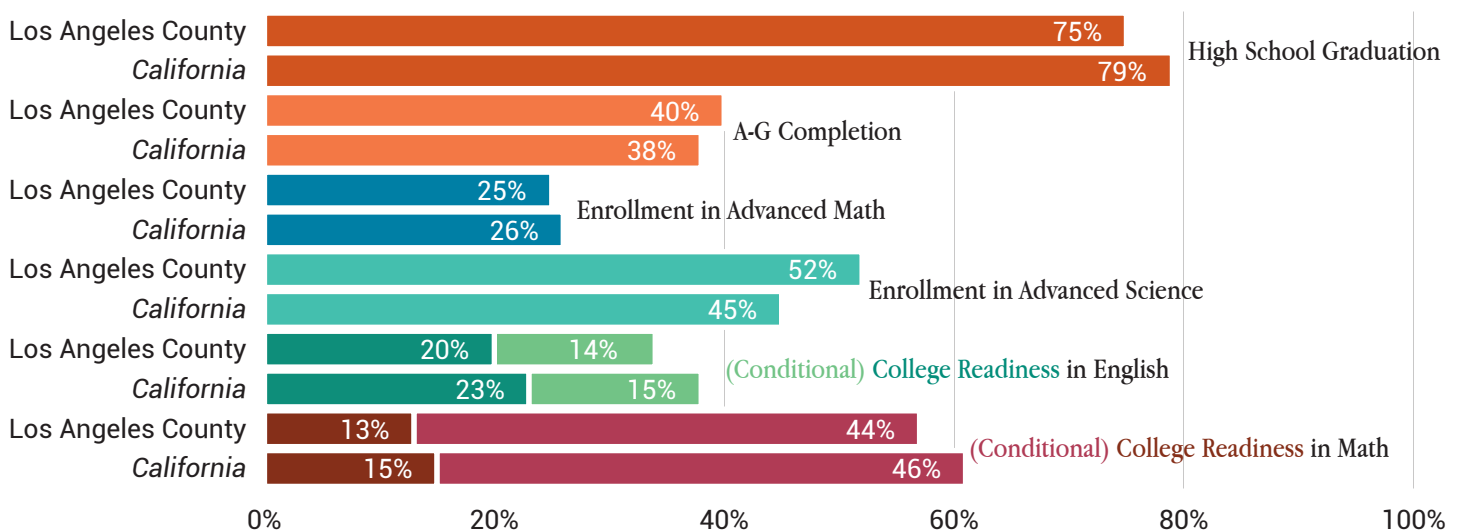
<sup>2</sup> California's performance compared to other states was prepared by IHELP while the comparison between Los Angeles to California was made by the Campaign for College Opportunity.

# PREPARATION

*Los Angeles County performs at about the state average*

- According to California’s Department of Education, high schools in Los Angeles County graduate 75% of their students within four years, the second lowest rate among the 14 regions across the state. In 2012, more than 19,400 Los Angeles area high school students dropped out—that’s enough people to fill the entire Staples Center.
- The share of high school graduates who complete the A-G requirements in Los Angeles County (40%) is slightly higher than the state average (38%), yet, more than 63,000 high school graduates in 2012 were ineligible for California’s public four-year universities—that is enough students to fill Dodger Stadium, and then some.
- Los Angeles County ranks 5th and 2nd among the 14 regions across the state for the largest share of students enrolled in advanced math and science, respectively.
- Los Angeles County is ranked in the bottom half among the state’s regions for college readiness. About two-thirds of 11th graders are not ready for college English and almost one half is not ready for college math.

## College Readiness of High School Students



Sources: High School Graduation rates are taken from the California Department of Education while all other data points are from *Average Won't Do*.

Notes: High school graduation rates are for the 2011-12 academic year.  
 A-G completion is a share of 2012 high school graduates.  
 Enrollment in advanced math is a share of 11th-12th grade enrollment in the 2011-12 academic year.  
 Enrollment in advanced science is a share of 11th-12th grade enrollment in the 2011-12 academic year.  
 The first percentage (darker color) in the (conditional) college readiness measures indicates that a student is college-ready; the second percentage (lighter color) indicates that a student is conditionally ready (see below for further information).  
 College and conditional college readiness in English is a share of 11th graders taking the Early Assessment Program exam in 2013.  
 College and conditional college readiness in math is a share of 11th graders taking the Early Assessment Program exam in 2013.  
 Measures are drawn from different years due to availability of data.

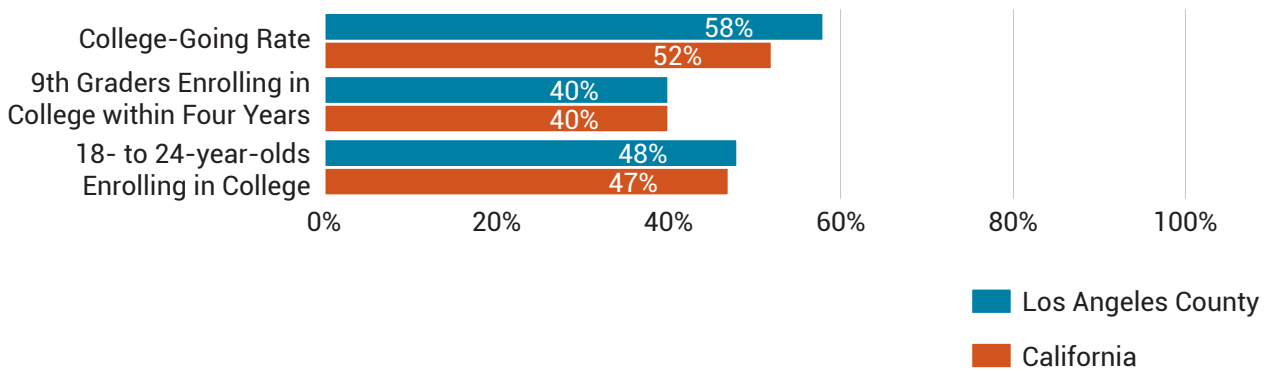
The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is a program of the California State University (CSU) system in which high school juniors have the option of completing some additional items on California Standardized Tests (CST) to determine their college readiness. Students who are determined to be college ready according to the EAP exam are allowed to enroll in college-level coursework without further assessment tests upon enrollment in the CSU. Students who are determined to be “conditionally” ready will not be required to take further assessment tests at the CSU as long as they take specified courses in their senior year or earn a specific score in the relevant subject on a national standardized test (SAC, ACT, or AP).

# PARTICIPATION

*Los Angeles County performs at about the state average*

- Los Angeles County has the second highest share of students who enroll in college directly after graduating from high school (58%) compared to other regions in the state.
- Los Angeles County performs average compared to the state in the share of 9th graders who enroll in college within four years (40%) and the share of 18- to 24-year olds enrolled in college (48%). Students 18- to 24-years old in the Central Coast enrolled in college at a higher rate than any other region in the state (54%).

## College Participation, 2012

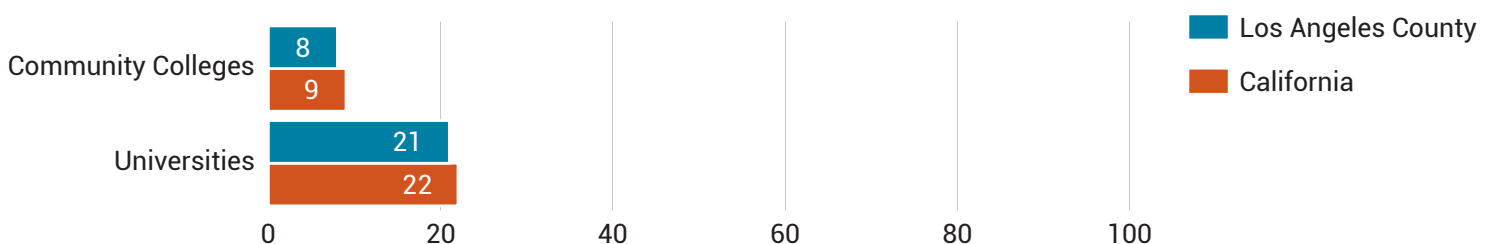


# COMPLETION

*Los Angeles County performs worse than the state average*

- More than 400,000 students attend a community college in Los Angeles County every fall—more than any other region in the state. Community colleges located in Los Angeles County awarded a certificate or degree to only eight out of 100 enrolled undergraduates in 2012. While this figure is only slightly lower than the state average, Los Angeles County ranks dead last on this measure. For comparison, several regions award more than 11 per 100 undergraduates.
- Approximately 21 baccalaureate degrees are awarded for every 100 students from Los Angeles County who enroll in four-year public universities; this is similar to the state average of 22 but lower than the high of 26 in the Upper Sacramento Valley.

## Certificates and Degrees Awarded per 100 Undergraduates, 2012

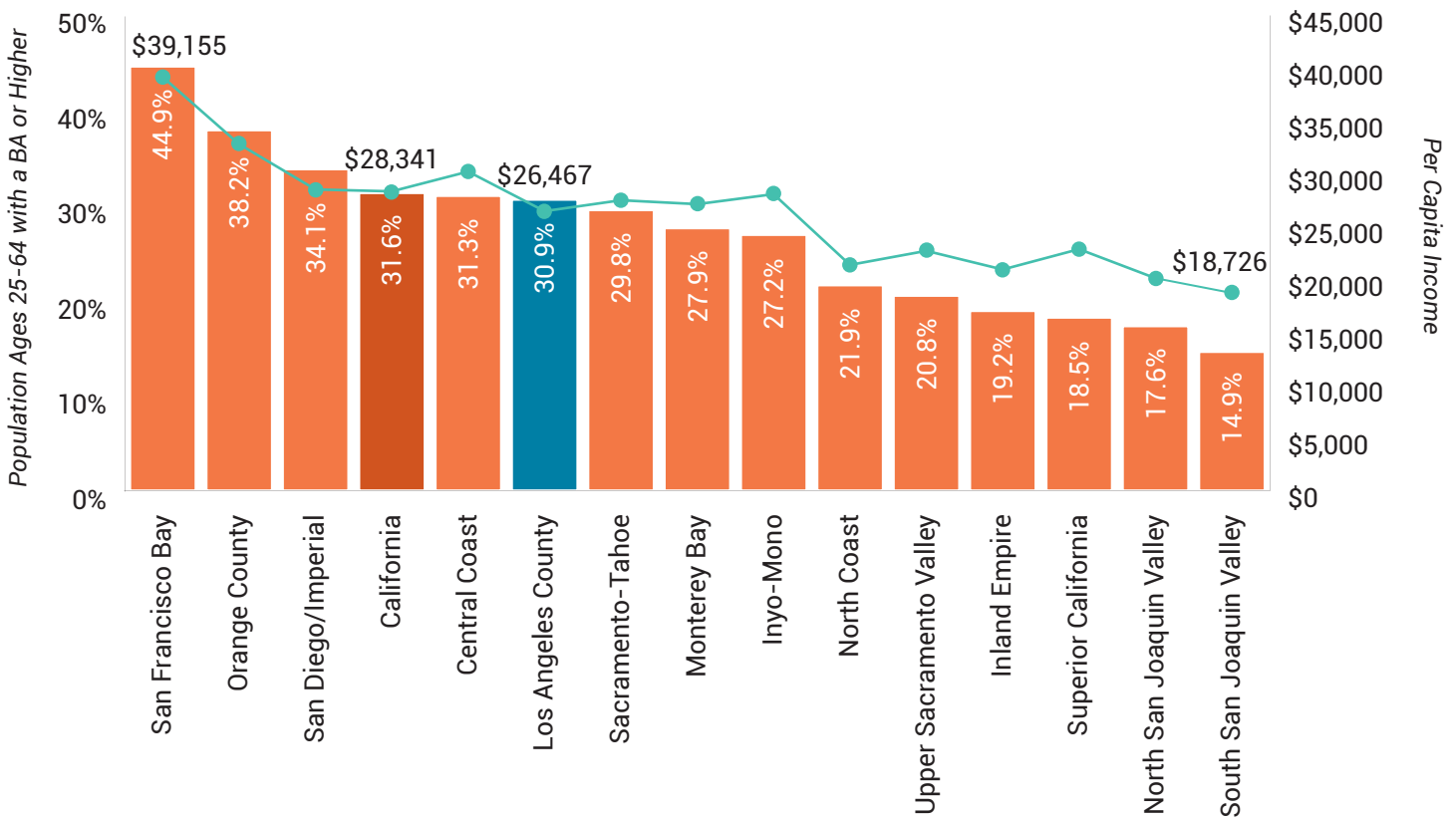


# BENEFITS

*Los Angeles County performs worse than the state average*

- Almost 31% of the working-age population in Los Angeles County has a bachelor's degree or higher. This is slightly lower than the state average of 32% and ranks the region fifth from the top with San Francisco Bay first: 45% of the working-age population possesses a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Not surprisingly, per capita income in Los Angeles (\$26,467) is almost \$2,000 less than it is for the state average (\$28,341).

## Educational Attainment and Per Capita Income by Region, 2012



If Los Angeles County was its own country, it would be the 21st largest economy in the world

# A NOTE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY AND FINANCE IN CALIFORNIA

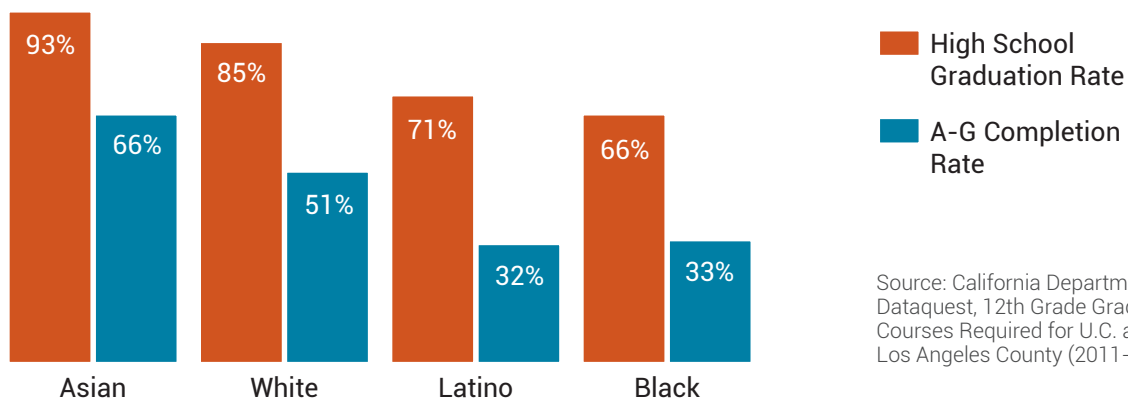
- Tuition and fee increases have been on the rise. In the last decade, UC tuition has risen at a rate of 139% and CSU tuition at a rate of 157%, in comparison to the national rate of 91%.
- California Community Colleges fees are still only 42% of the national average for two-year public colleges. But the cost of living in California is much higher compared to other states, resulting in a higher-than-average cost to community college students, and requiring a larger share of family income to pay for college.
- The number of federal student loan borrowers in California increased by 75% from 397,497 in 2003-04 to 696,349 in 2011-12 while the number of undergraduates increased by only 10% during that same period.<sup>1</sup>

## A NOTE ON RACIAL/ ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

As the Campaign reported in our *State of Higher Education in California* series,<sup>2</sup> there are significant variations and gaps among rates of college preparation, participation, and completion across racial/ethnic groups.

- Latino and Black students are also less likely to attend four-year universities, usually enroll in community colleges when they do pursue a higher education, and have lower rates of persistence and college completion.
- Los Angeles County high schools graduate 66% of Black students and 71% of Latino students, compared to 85% and 93% of Whites and Asians, respectively.
- Only a third of Black and Latino students complete the A-G coursework required for admission to our four-year universities, compared to 51% and 66% of Whites and Asians, respectively.

### High School Graduation & A-G Completion by Race/Ethnicity, 2011-12



Source: California Department of Education, Dataquest, 12th Grade Graduates Completing all Courses Required for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance, Los Angeles County (2011-12)

<sup>1</sup> Campaign for College Opportunity. (2014). *Borrowing for College*. Retrieved from <http://www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/>.

<sup>2</sup> Campaign for College Opportunity. (2013). *State of Higher Education in California*. Retrieved from <http://www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/the-state-of-higher-education-in-california/>.

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# CONCLUSION

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Californians with a college education experience higher than average earnings, reinforcing the enormous personal benefit of getting a college education. But California as a state, and all of us as its residents, benefit too. In fact, for every dollar invested in higher education, the state recoups \$4.50 through increased tax revenues and decreased social service costs.<sup>1</sup>

California's success depends on the success of every region in state. As the most populous region in California, Los Angeles County matters a great deal. If Los Angeles County was its own country, it would be the 21st largest economy in the world.<sup>2</sup> Yet, we are failing our youth in large numbers. Students in Los Angeles County are less prepared to succeed in higher education than those in the state overall. And while a larger share of students in Los Angeles are pursuing higher education compared to the state, a much smaller share are actually earning degrees and certificates. Institutions must do a better job of graduating our students and doing so in a timely fashion.

California used to be the epitome of quality, affordable, and effective higher education. Now, we have become mediocre. California's students are less prepared for higher education than those in most states. And too few actually walk across a college graduation stage.

Our policymakers and college leaders have more work to do to change these trends. We need our state leaders to create, and our college leaders to implement, an actionable statewide higher education plan that addresses the shortcomings outlined above. This plan must set goals for increasing rates of college preparation, college-going, and college completion along with establishing clear targets for closing the persistent gaps in educational attainment by race/ethnicity. When the Governor and Legislature act on such a plan, students will be more successful and we will all benefit. The time for action is now.

**When the Governor and Legislature act on a plan for higher education, students will be more successful and we will all benefit**

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<sup>1</sup> Stiles, Jon, Michael Hout, and Henry Brady. (2012). *California's Economic Payoff: Investing in College Access & Completion*. Berkeley, CA. Retrieved from [http://www.collegecampaign.org/index.php/download\\_file/view/641/91/](http://www.collegecampaign.org/index.php/download_file/view/641/91/).

<sup>2</sup> The Kyser Center for Economic Research. *2013-2014 Mid-Year Economic Forecast & Industry Outlook*. (July 2013). Retrieved from <http://cdn.laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/LAEDC-2013-2014-Mid-Year-Economic-Forecast2.pdf>.