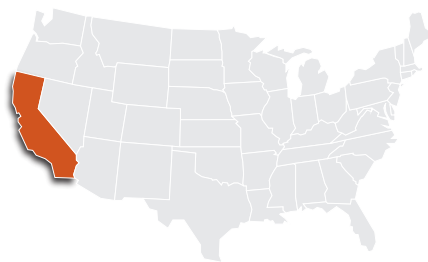


The State of Higher Education in California

AVERAGE WON'T DO



Regional Profile — Orange 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 2025.¹

An economically and socially vibrant California requires dramatic gains in the preparation of students for college, access to an affordable college education, rates of college-going, and college completion across all regions. **Orange County consistently ranks among the top regions in the state on college preparation, participation and the benefits experienced as a result of higher educational attainment, but only average in rates of college completion.**

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

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

This brief, prepared by the Campaign for College Opportunity, highlights Orange County 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.

¹ 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.

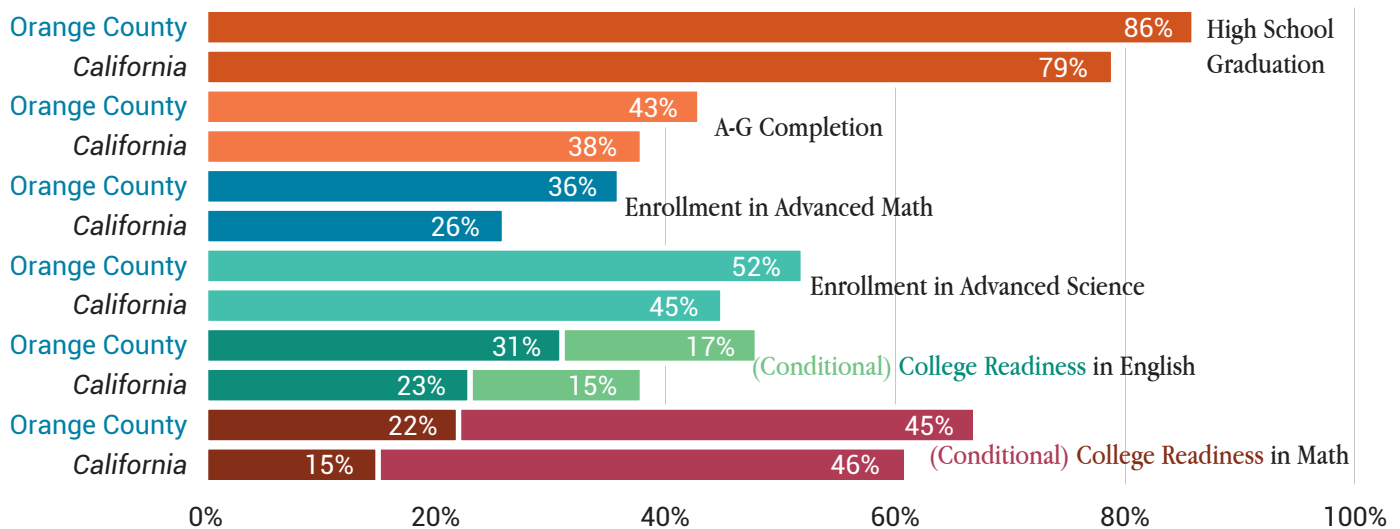
² California's performance compared to other states was prepared by IHELP while the comparison between Orange County to California was made by the Campaign for College Opportunity.

PREPARATION

Orange County performs better than the state average

- According to California’s Department of Education, high schools in Orange County graduate 86% of students within four years.
- The share of high school graduates who complete the A-G requirements in Orange County (43%) is the second-highest among the 14 regions across the state.
- Orange County ranks 1st and 3rd among the 14 regions across the state for the share of high school students enrolled in advanced math and science courses, respectively.
- While the college readiness rates in Orange County are the highest in the state, more than half of juniors tested are still not ready for college English and about one-third are 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. A-G is a sequence of courses that are the minimum requirement to be eligible to attend a California State University or University of California. 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.*

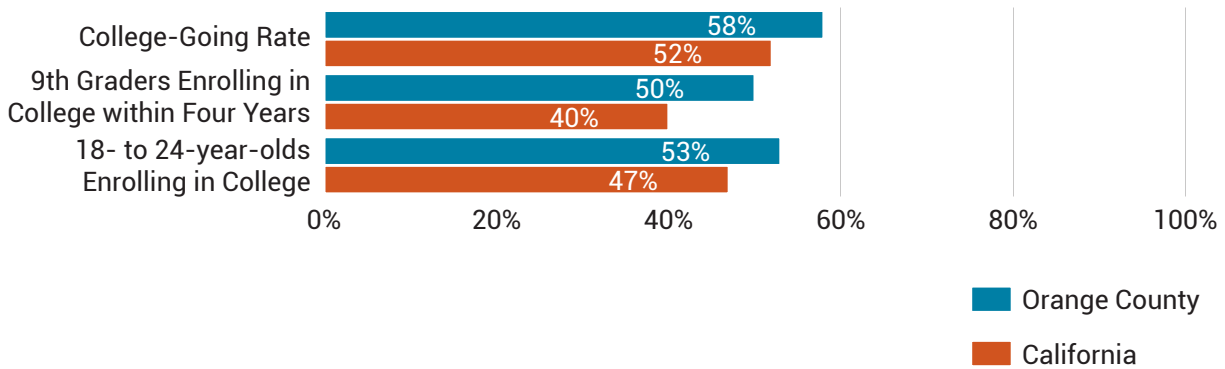
The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is a program of the California State University (CSU) system in which high school juniors have the option of completing some additional items on California Standardized Tests (CST) to determine their college readiness. Students who are determined to be college ready 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

Orange County performs better than the state average

- Almost 58% of Orange County high school graduates immediately enroll in college after graduation—six percentage points higher than the state average.
- Approximately half of 9th graders enroll in college within four years and 53% of 18- to 24-year olds are enrolled in college.

College Participation, 2012

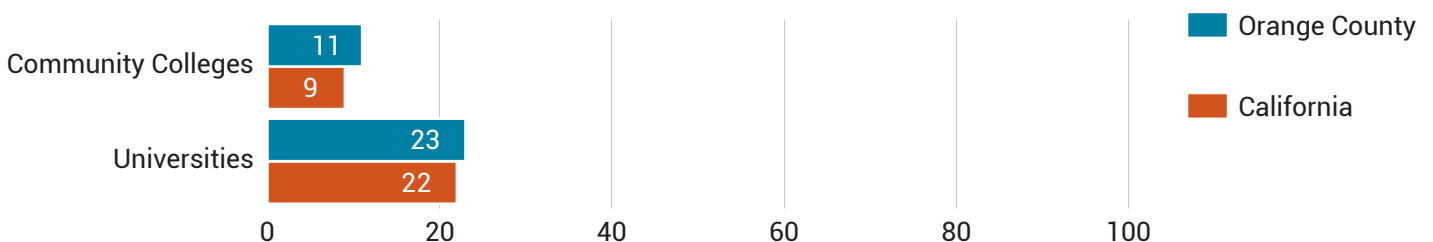


COMPLETION

Orange County performs at about the state average

- Community colleges located in Orange County awarded a certificate or degree to slightly more than 11 out of 100 enrolled undergraduates in 2012. This is the fifth-highest rate in the state.
- Twenty-three baccalaureate degrees are awarded for every 100 students from Orange County who enroll in four-year public universities. This is only slightly higher than the average for California and ranks the region seventh in the state for completion.

Certificates and Degrees Awarded per 100 Undergraduates, 2012

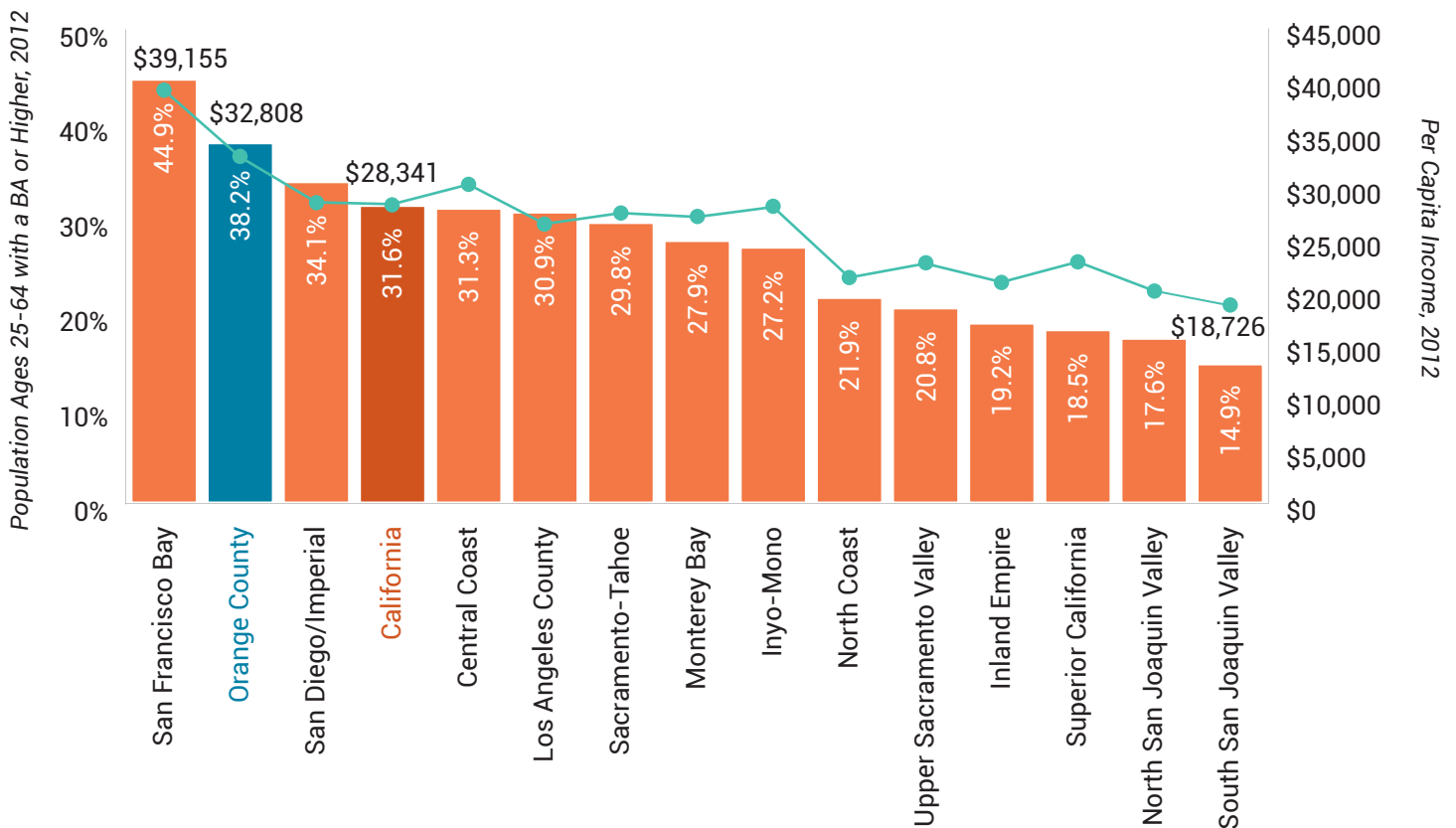


BENEFITS

Orange County performs better than the state average

- Slightly more than 38% of the working-age population in Orange County has a bachelor's degree or higher. This is the second-highest proportion in the state.
- Per capita income in Orange County (\$32,800) is also higher than the state average of \$28,340.

Educational Attainment and Per Capita Income by Region, 2012



Orange County has the second highest rate of baccalaureate attainment in the state

A NOTE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY AND FINANCE IN CALIFORNIA

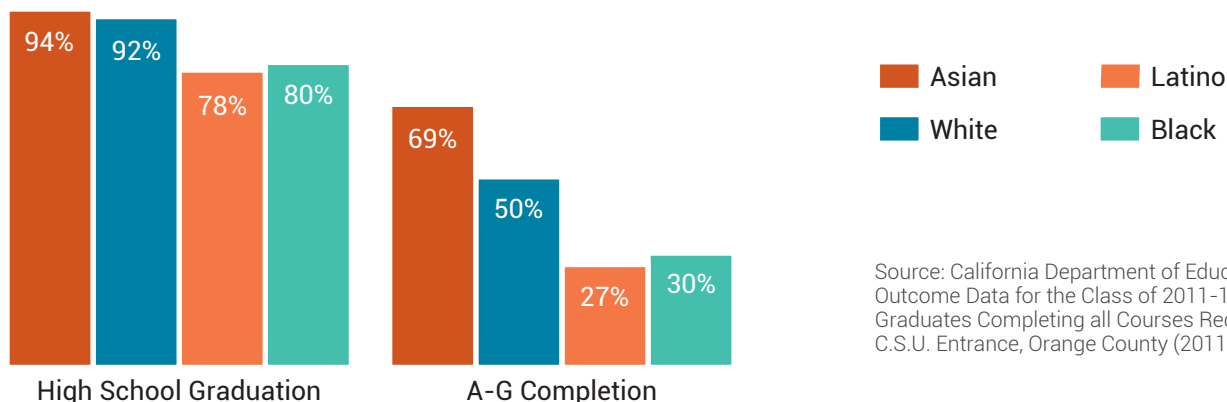
- Tuition and fee increases have been on the rise. In the last decade, UC tuition has risen at a rate of 139% and CSU tuition at a rate of 157%, in comparison to the national rate of 91%.
- California Community Colleges fees are still only 42% of the national average for two-year public colleges. But 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.¹

A NOTE ON RACIAL/ ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

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

- Graduation rates in Orange County are more equitable than those in other counties but gaps still exist: high schools within Orange County graduate 94% and 92% of Asians and Whites, compared to 78% and 80% of Latino and Black students, respectively.
- Greater gaps are seen across A-G completion rates: 27% of Latino and 30% of Black students complete the A-G coursework required for admission to California's four-year universities, compared to 69% of Asians and 50% of whites.
- Across the state, Latinos and Black students are less likely to attend four-year universities, tend to enroll in community colleges when they do pursue a higher education, and have lower rates of persistence and college completion.

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



Source: California Department of Education, Dataquest, Cohort Outcome Data for the Class of 2011-12 and 12th Grade Graduates Completing all Courses Required for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance, Orange County (2011-12).

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

² 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/>.

CONCLUSION

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.

California's success depends on the success of every region in our state. Orange County is a bright spot in an otherwise dim California. Orange County performs better than the majority of other counties in the state on measures of college preparation, participation, and the benefits of earning a baccalaureate degree. Unfortunately, performance is sluggish in college completion. And while high school graduation differences across race/ethnicity are smaller in Orange County than in other regions, gaps still exist, particularly with regards to A-G completion rates. Orange County is currently experiencing excellent economic growth in its professional and business sectors¹—the region needs an educated workforce that will be able to continue to fill these roles to keep its strong economy moving forward.

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**

¹ Lopez, R. (2013, April 02). "Orange County economy expected to accelerate through 2015." The Los Angeles Times. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/apr/02/business/la-fi-oc-forecast-20130402>.