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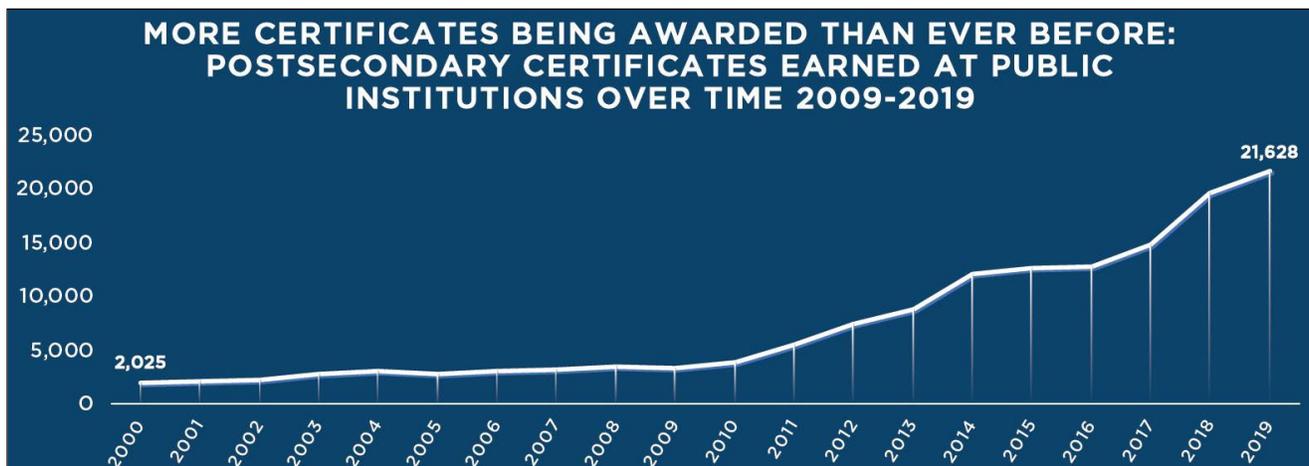
Report shows more Hoosiers are earning certificates to skill up quickly

Workforce credentials give Indiana big gains toward education attainment goal

(INDIANAPOLIS) – The number of Hoosiers earning certificates has increased by 500 percent over the last decade, according to Indiana’s [2020 Certificates Report](#) released today by the [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](#). This growth coincides with the state’s recent emphasis on short-term credentials to get more Hoosiers into high-demand, good paying jobs quickly—particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the increase in Hoosiers earning postsecondary certificates is helping Indiana make progress toward its big goal of at least 60 percent of working-age individuals with quality education and training beyond high school by 2025—increasing the state’s education rate by nearly 10 percent, according the Lumina Foundation’s latest [Stronger Nation](#) report. At 48.5 percent, Indiana moved from 38th to 35th in the nation for educational attainment earlier this year.

“While two- and four-year degrees are the right fit for many of Indiana’s learners, a high-value certificate may be the best option for others, particularly those who are looking to upskill to keep up with an evolving economy, or others who are looking to change careers,” Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers said.



One option driving much of the recent growth is Indiana’s [Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant](#), a program that in most cases covers 100 percent of tuition costs for workforce education and training in some of the state’s highest-demand industry sectors—including Health & Life Sciences, IT & Business Services, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation & Logistics, and Building & Construction. Since 2017, almost 18,000 Hoosiers have earned a Workforce Ready Grant-eligible certificate and more than 38,000 are enrolled in the program today.

“The success of the Workforce Ready Grant has everything to do with Indiana’s targeted approach to funding high-value certificates,” Lubbers said. “By focusing state resources to support the sectors and programs we know will have the greatest benefit for individual Hoosiers, in terms of job placement and earning potential, we also ensure the greatest return on investment to drive our economy forward through and far beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Encouragingly, the high-demand sectors targeted by Indiana’s Workforce Ready Grant closely mirror the most popular fields for all certificate earners. The No. 1 most popular certificate in 2019 was business administration, followed by nursing assistant, clinical specialist, electrician and medical assisting services.

Return on investment

The 2020 Certificates Report shows that earning potential varies by industry sector and Hoosiers who are strategic with their academic program and stack degrees over time are likely to see a greater return on their investment.

Individuals who earn certificates in certain high-demand sectors, such as those targeted through the Workforce Ready Grant, see the greatest benefits in earnings. The median annual wage gain for those with a Workforce Ready Grant-eligible certificate is \$6,800.

Data show certificate holders earn different wages depending on the field. A student with a certificate in an engineering technology field, for example, is expected to out-earn students in other fields by thousands of dollars five years after graduation.

Introducing Indiana’s College Ready Core

One non-workforce-aligned certificate makes up a significant portion of the state’s certificate earners: the Statewide Transfer General Education Core or “Transfer Core.” This is a 30-credit-hour block of college-level, general education coursework that transfers seamlessly from high school to college as well as between Indiana’s higher education institutions.

Indiana recently renamed the Statewide Transfer General Education Core (or STGEC) the College Ready Core to target high school students, educators and families. Of the more than 5,300 of these certificates awarded in 2019, nearly 1,300 of them were awarded to high school students. Earning a College Ready Core in high school helps students academically prepare for college through dual credit coursework and can save them time and money when they get there.



Unlike the other certificates outlined in the 2020 Certificates Report, most of which are designed to help Hoosiers skill up start a new job fast, the College Ready Core is designed to help students build a solid foundation for future postsecondary coursework as well as to help them save time and money through seamless transfer to and among Indiana colleges.

The Commission’s 2020 Early College Credit Report, which will be released in a few weeks, will have more background and data on the College Ready Core since its creation by state lawmakers in 2012.

Data in the [2020 Certificates Report](#) primarily come from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Indiana Department of Workforce Development, the Indiana Department of Education, Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University. Read the full report and other Commission reports at www.che.in.gov/reports. Explore resources available to help students plan, prepare and pay for college at www.LearnMoreIndiana.org.

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About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Created in 1971, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education plans, coordinates and defines Indiana’s postsecondary education system to align higher learning with the needs of students and the state. The Commission also administers Indiana’s financial aid programs, including the [21st Century Scholars](#) early college promise scholarship, which celebrates 30 years in 2020. Learn more about the Commission’s *Reaching Higher in a State of Change* strategic plan at www.in.gov/che.