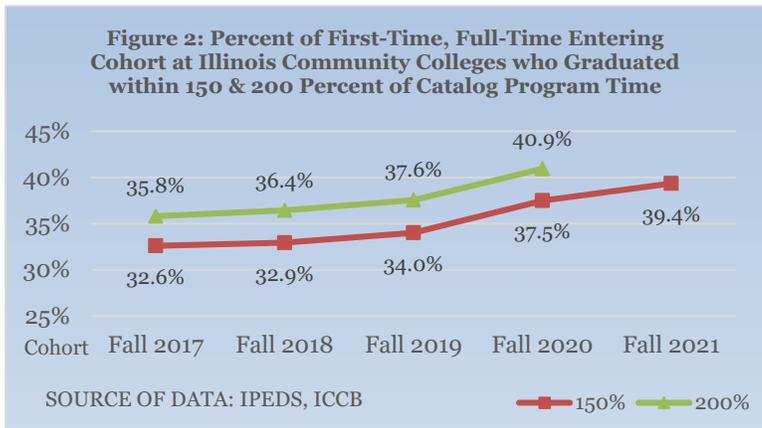
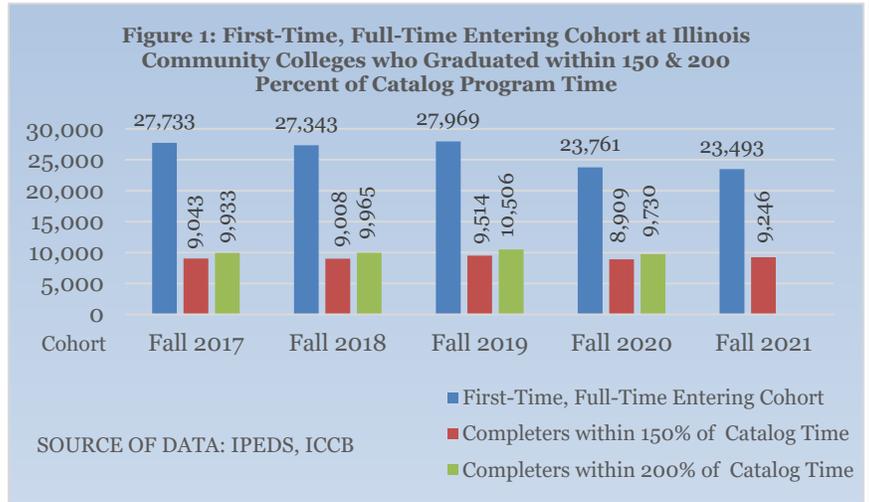




Illinois Community College Board Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE GRADUATION RATE FOR ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

Graduation rates provide one useful measure to help inform the public and policymakers about how colleges are performing in their efforts to graduate individuals who begin their studies pursuing a traditional enrollment pattern. The primary postsecondary graduation rate collected through the U.S. Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) provides the percentage of first-time, full-time students who graduate within 150% of catalog time (e.g., 3 years for an associate degree which could be completed in 2 years of uninterrupted full-time study—fall and spring semesters). IPEDS also collects a 200% of catalog time graduation rate (e.g., 4 years for an associate degree) to provide some additional time for graduates to emerge from the entering cohort. Figure 1 contains the number of first-time, full-time entrants and the graduates who emerge from that group at 150% and 200% of catalog time. Community college students often switch to part-time attendance or enroll on an intermittent basis.



The trend data in Figure 2 show that overall statewide **graduation rates** among first-time, full-time Illinois community college students continue to **increase** for both the 150% and 200% calculations. Over the past five years the **graduation rate** of Illinois community college students who completed within **150% of catalog time** increased from 32.6 percent for the Fall 2017 cohort to **39.4 percent for the Fall 2021 cohort**. That means nearly two in five (N = 9,246/23,493) who began their studies as

first-time, full-time students at Illinois community colleges in Fall 2021 graduated by Summer 2024. The number of graduates saw an increase to 9,246 from 8,909 in the previous year’s cohort, while the graduation rate increased 1.9 percentage points.

Focusing on the Fall 2020 cohort shows that when the length of time to graduate is increased to **200% of catalog time**, the statewide Illinois graduation rate increased 3.4 percentage points as 821 additional degrees or certificates were earned. For the Fall 2020 entering cohort, 37.5 percent completed by Summer 2023 (150% of program time), while **40.9 percent completed by Summer 2024** (200% of program time).

The most recent national data available from the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) shows that thirty percent of students at public 2-year institutions graduate with a certificate or associate degree within 150% of catalog time.

Visit the ICCB website to [locate a Community College near you](#) or for a [map of district boundaries](#).

Collaborating with the System to Inform Statewide Community College Issues