

Holding South Carolina Community Colleges Accountable for Program Outcomes

Today, South Carolina funds public colleges for getting students in the door rather than ensuring they are successful when they complete their studies.

Some programs at South Carolina’s community and technical colleges provide tremendous value for their students, but many others do not even give students a positive return on their investment.

Programs that lead to great careers should be funded more generously than those that lead most students to nothing but a dead end. **States should reward colleges when their students succeed and redeploy funds elsewhere when students do not.**



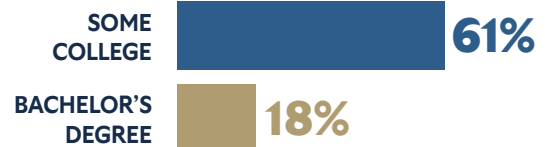
Enrollment in South Carolina’s two-year colleges **plunged by nearly 20 percent** from 2014 to 2019, more than almost any other state in the South.

The percent of SC high school graduates entering postsecondary education in SC within one year of graduating has decreased from

56% 2015  **44%** 2020



Approximately **61% of adults in SC have at least some college** while only approximately **18% of adults in SC have a bachelor’s degree.**



South Carolina had **170,000 job openings** in December 2023.

THE SOLUTION

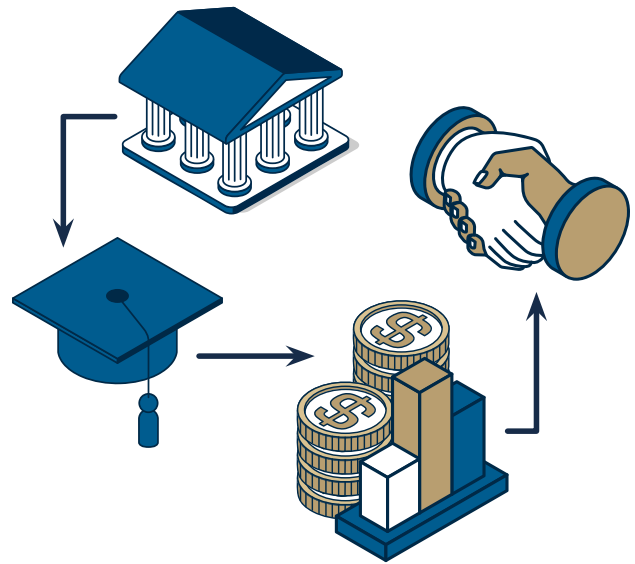
Community and technical colleges and students alike need to have buy-in when it comes to the cost of higher education.

South Carolina should require public community and technical colleges to compete for funding based on how well they prepare students for careers.

The Rewarding Workforce Readiness Act **funds community and technical college programs based on their alumni's wages** by rewarding schools when low-income students see increased wages after graduation.

WHY IT MATTERS

When alumni success matters to community and technical college administrators, they focus more on retention, graduation, workforce relevance, and job placements.



THE BOTTOM LINE:

Unlike canceling student loans or providing free college, tying state funding to program performance incentivizes schools to prepare students for in-demand jobs and holds them accountable when they fail to deliver.

SOURCES:

1. <https://www.sccsc.edu/news/2022/sc-tech-enrollment.php>
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3. [https://rfa.sc.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/Education and Workforce Report 2022.pdf](https://rfa.sc.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/Education%20and%20Workforce%20Report%202022.pdf)
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