



TALENT STRONG TEXAS

HALFWAY THROUGH TEXAS' DECADE-LONG EDUCATION PLAN, MOST STUDENTS ARE NOT EARNING A COLLEGE DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL OF VALUE

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The Talent Strong Texas statewide strategic plan (formerly known as TX 60 x 30) launched at the beginning of this decade with the goal of 60% of Texans earning a degree or credential by 2030. To support policy decisions to reach this goal, the state has updated its 8th Grade Cohort Longitudinal study, which was renamed the Texas Talent Trajectory (T3) in 2021.¹ This dashboard provides policymakers, advocates, and parents, with three years of cohort data to paint a picture of the state's success in preparing young Texans for the workforce.

2025 DATA RELEASE

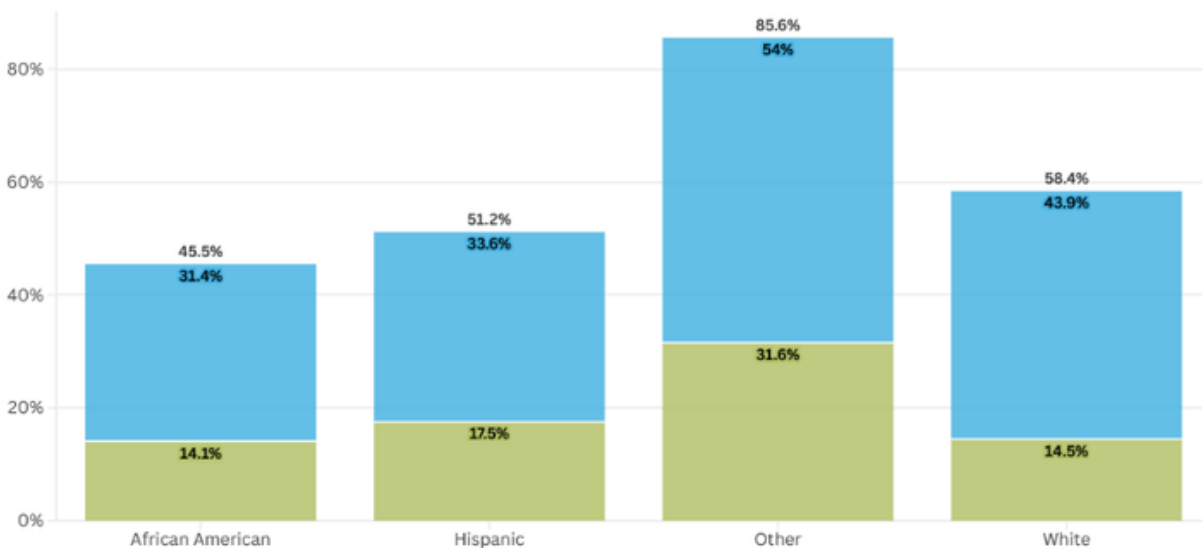
The most recent update provides a look at how well the state is educating and preparing young people for our current and future workforce.

More than 70% of students who started 8th grade in the Fall of 2014 did not complete a certificate or college degree. Of those students, more than 80% of white, Black, and Hispanic economically disadvantaged students failed to earn a college degree or credential. Black students fared the worst of all groups, with 55% of the 2014 8th grade cohort without a college degree or credential at the end of the 11-year study period.

Texas and Out of State Credential & Degree Attainment

2014 8th Grade Cohort by Economic Status

■ Economically Disadvantaged ■ Not Economically Disadvantaged

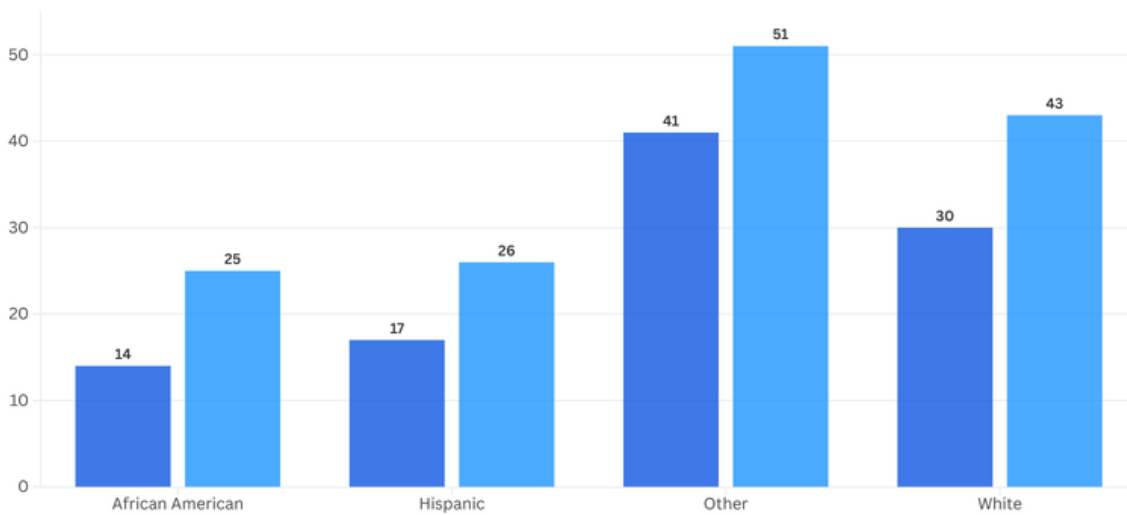


Source: Texas Talent Trajectory

Male & Female Credential or Degree Attainment

FY14 8th Grade Cohort

Male Female



Source: [Texas Talent Trajectory](#)

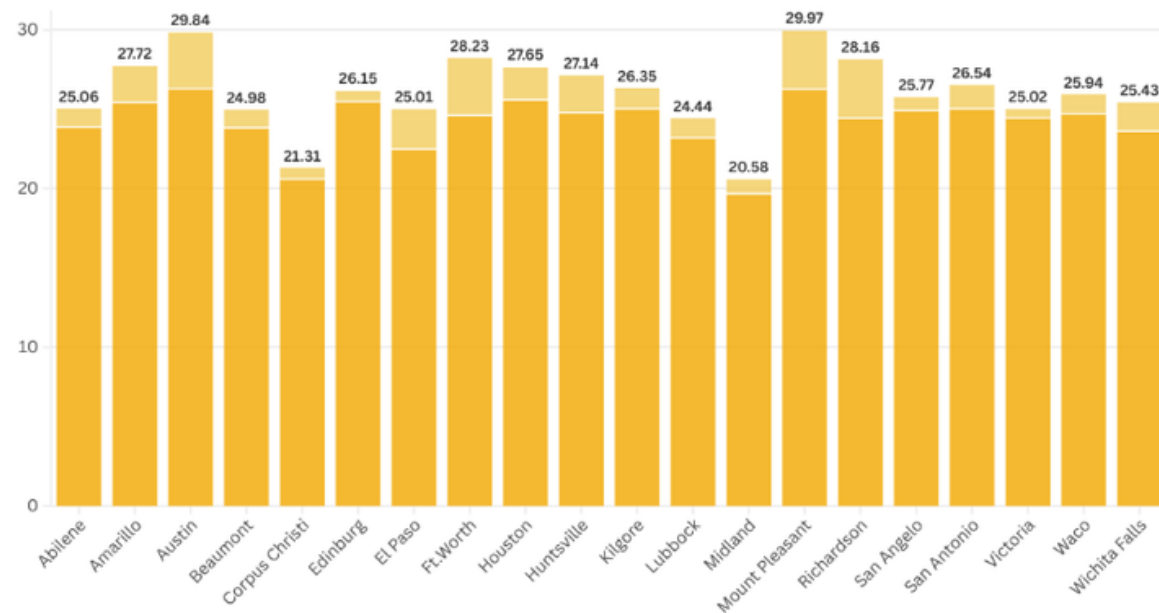
Male students across all groups were 10 percentage points less likely to have a credential or degree than their female peers. African American and Hispanic males are at the bottom of all groups.

Not one of the 20 education service center regions had more than 30% of students in the 2014 cohort earn a credential or degree. Corpus Christi (Region II) and Midland (Region XVIII) have the worst credential or degree completion rates at 21.3% and 20.6%, respectively.

TEA Region Credential & Degree Attainment

FY14 8th Grade Cohort

Higher Ed Degree or Certificates Texas Higher Ed Degree or Certificates Out of State



Source: [Texas Talent Trajectory](#)

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR TEXAS

Texas recognized that effectively targeting academic resources and achieving desired statewide outcomes requires an understanding of how many students are moving through critical middle and upper grades toward college and career achievement. Unfortunately, demographic trends and policy choices that eliminate immigration as a source of labor will increasingly reduce the pool of available workers in Texas in the near and long-term future.²

There is already a need for highly skilled workers in the Texas economy, and the state's failure to support credential or degree achievement of more than two-thirds of all students will continue to keep Texas from meeting its workforce goals. This is opportunity leakage, and it needs to be addressed.

Policymakers looking ahead to the 90th Texas Legislative Session should consider how their choices will serve students who, for example, are economically disadvantaged or located in areas with significant burdens to overcome. Every Texan consistently advocates for increasing base-level school funding, employing enrollment-based funding, and, at the college and university level, meeting the full need of those qualifying for financial aid.

While much has been done to maximize the effectiveness of schools, colleges, and universities, pathways to economic opportunity are still obscured by lingering structural issues like poverty and proximity to resources. Further investments should start by meeting basic fiscal requirements, such as addressing current inflation, the lived needs of students, and the ancillary costs of operating institutions in uncertain economic times.

1. The Texas Talent Trajectory; <https://databridge.highered.texas.gov/the-texas-talent-trajectory/>
2. Cheremukhin, A., Wilson, D., & Zhou, X. (2026, March 31). Break-even Employment Declines as Unauthorized Immigration Outflows Continue. Dallas Fed Economics. [https://www.dallasfed.org/research/economics/2026/0331:After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031](https://www.dallasfed.org/research/economics/2026/0331:AfterEverything:ProjectionsofJobsEducationandTrainingRequirementsthrough2031). (n.d.). McCourt School of Public Policy Center on Education. Retrieved April 21, 2026, from https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Projections_2031-State-Report.pdf