

### 1.1.c College Continuation Rate

#### **Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education.**

One strategic approach to increasing the total number of students who enroll at Nebraska's postsecondary institutions is to increase the state's college continuation rate, or the percentage of Nebraska high school graduates who go to college.

The Commission estimates Nebraska's college continuation rates using data obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education. The Nebraska Department of Education provides the total number of Nebraska high school graduates in any given year. Estimates of the numbers of Nebraskans going onto college at degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions are based on data collected every two years by the NCES through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The latest available IPEDS data were reported by institutions for first-time freshmen in fall 2006, providing a basis for estimating the college continuation rate for students who graduated from Nebraska high schools during the 2005-2006 school year.

Given the data available from IPEDS, college continuation rates are estimated only for first-time freshmen who go to college within 12 months of high school graduation. Other students go to college for the first time more than a year after they finish high school. However, college continuation rates do not take these students into account because the NCES does not require institutions to report when each of the students in this category graduated from high school.

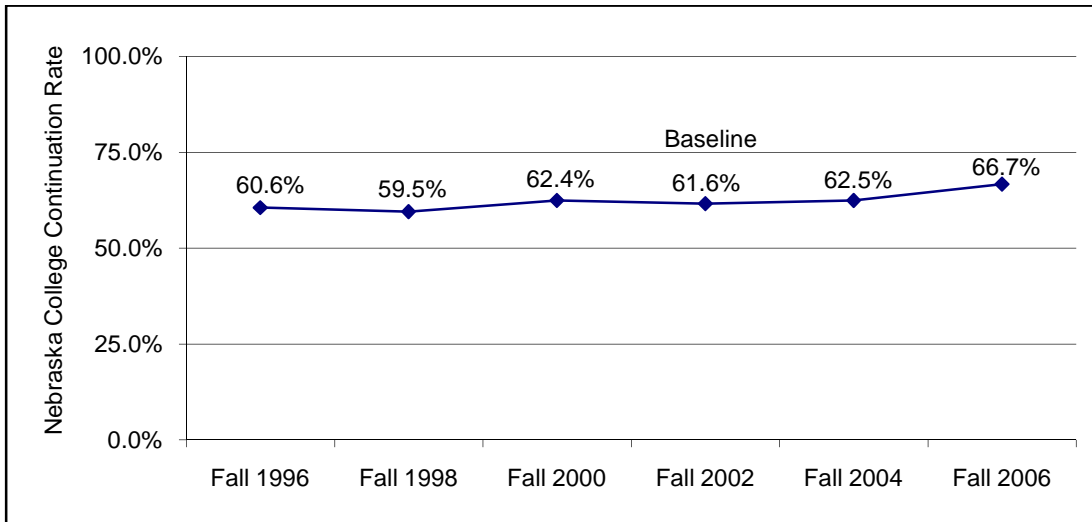
Estimates of Nebraska's college continuation rates based on IPEDS data for fall 2006 were reported in the *2008 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*. **Since more recent data are not yet available, the analysis of Nebraska's college continuation rates reported in 2008 is repeated in this section of the 2009 report.** Data to calculate the state's college continuation rate in 2008 will be available in mid-2009 and compared to previous rates in the *2010 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*.

#### **Nebraska College Continuation Rates**

- The college continuation rate is the number of Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen who graduated from high school within the past 12 months, divided by the number of students who graduated from Nebraska high schools during the previous school year.
- As evidenced in Figure 1.1.c.1 on the next page, the estimated college continuation rate for Nebraska high school graduates who attended degree-granting institutions anywhere in the United States rose from 61.6% in fall 2002, which is the baseline for this report, to 66.7% in fall 2004, an increase of 5.1%.
- The noticeably higher college continuation rate in 2006 resulted in a 5.9% increase in the number of Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen who attended degree-granting institutions within 12 months of graduating from high school, even though there was a 2.2% decrease in the number of Nebraska high school graduates between 2002 and 2006. (See Table A5.1 in Appendix 5 for supporting data.)

Figure 1.1.c.1

**College Continuation Rate for Nebraska High School Graduates  
Who Attended Degree-Granting Institutions in the United States  
within 12 Months of High School Graduation  
Fall 1996 – Fall 2006<sup>1</sup>**

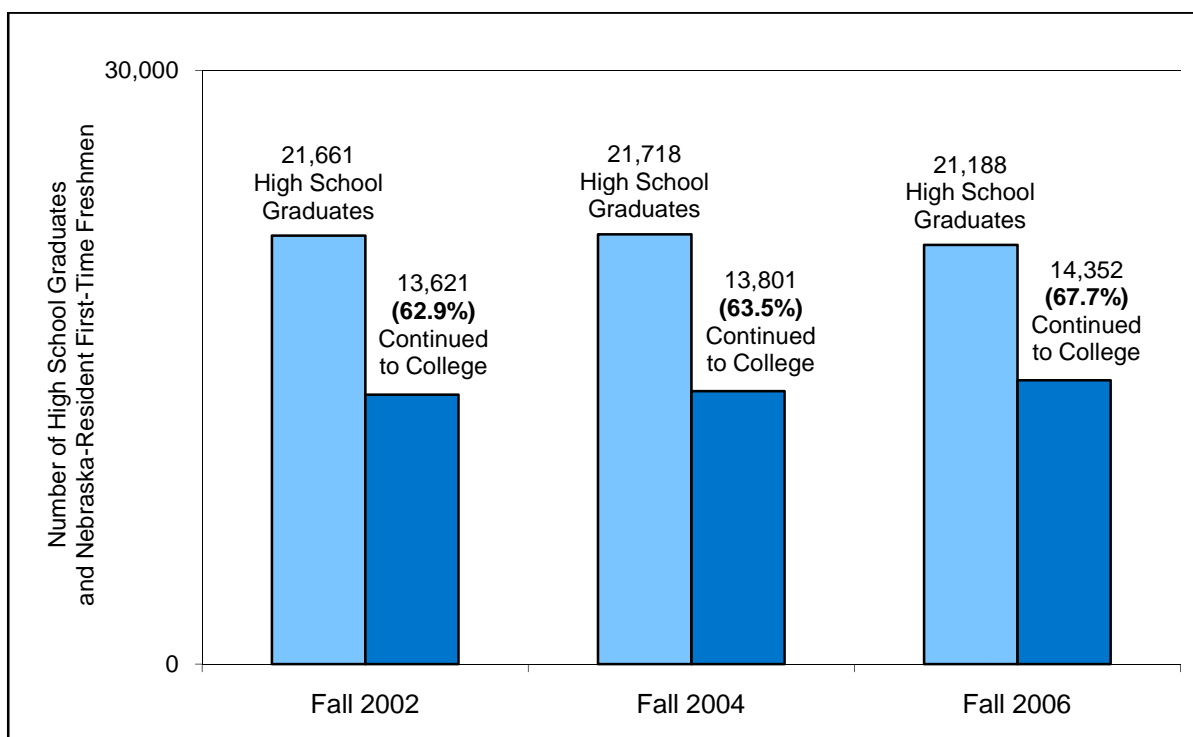


<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: Nebraska Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), surveys for fall 1996–2006. See [Table A5.1](#) in [Appendix 5](#) for supporting data and a technical note.

- Adding the number of high school graduates who attended non-degree-granting institutions only slightly increases the estimated college continuation rate for Nebraska.
- As illustrated in [Figure 1.1.c.2](#) on the next page, the college continuation rate for Nebraska students who graduated in the high school class of 2006 and attended degree-granting and non-degree granting colleges in fall 2006 was 67.7%, a 4.8% increase from the 62.9% continuation rate in 2002.<sup>1</sup>
- See [Table A5.1](#) and [Table A5.2](#) in [Appendix 5](#) for supporting data.

Figure 1.1.c.2

**College Continuation Rate for Nebraska High School Graduates  
Who Attended Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Institutions  
in the United States within 12 Months of High School Graduation  
Fall 2004 and Fall 2006 Compared to Fall 2002<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2007, and the National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS fall 2002, 2004 and 2006 surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students. See [Table A5.2](#) in [Appendix 5](#) for supporting data and a technical note.

- The most recent national study of college continuation rates is limited to students who attended degree-granting institutions as first-time freshmen. Based on the state-to-state comparisons reported in the study, Nebraska's college continuation rates have been above the national rates and higher than the rates for many other states.<sup>1</sup>

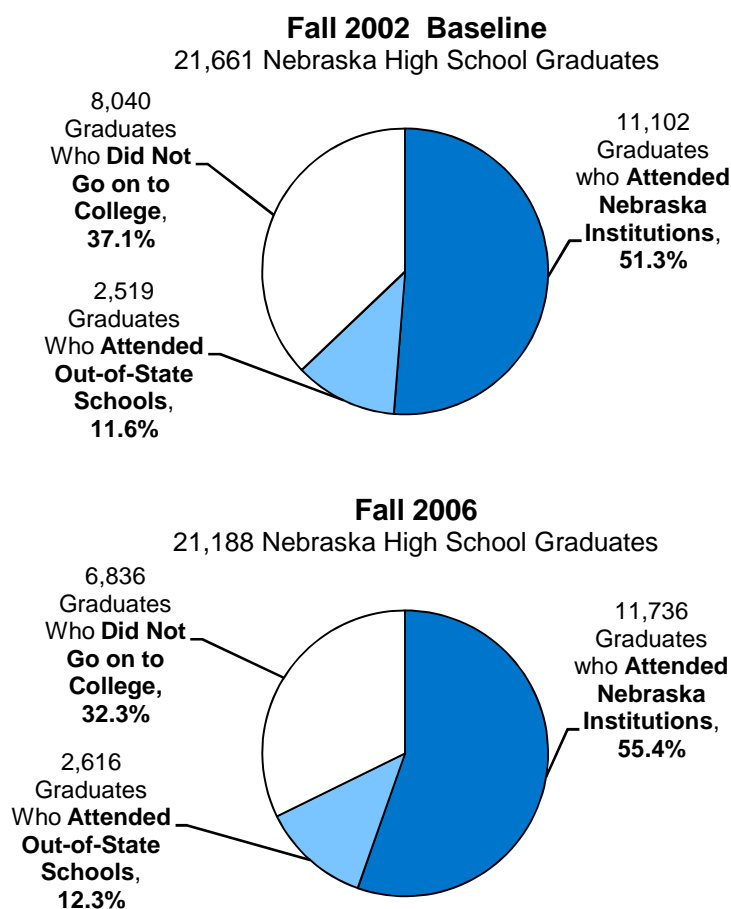
<sup>1</sup>Source: Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY, [www.postsecondary.org](http://www.postsecondary.org), 2002, 2004 and 2006 College Continuation Rate Comparisons by State included in the Spreadsheet for Chance for College, updated in September 2008. Based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), this source calculated that Nebraska's college continuation rate for students attending degree-granting institutions in fall 2006 was 64.5% or the 19<sup>th</sup> highest in the United States. However, the estimated numbers of high school graduates used in computing Nebraska's college continuation rates for 2002, 2004 and 2006 are higher than the official numbers from the Nebraska Department of Education, resulting in underestimated rates. Since it is not known whether the rates reported for other states are underestimated to the same degree, it is only safe to say that Nebraska's college continuation rates in 2002, 2004 and 2006 were above the corresponding national averages and higher than the rates for many other states.

## **In-State and Out-of-State College Continuation Rates**

- The statewide college continuation rate for Nebraska high school graduates can be partitioned in to two rates:
  - the in-state college continuation rate, which is the percentage of Nebraska high school graduates who attend postsecondary institutions in Nebraska within 12 months of high school graduation
  - the out-of-state college continuation rate, which is the percentage of Nebraska high school graduates who continue on to college at out-of-state institutions within 12 months of graduating from high school.
- The Commission estimates that the in-state college continuation rate for degree-granting institutions was 54.5% for Nebraska high school graduates in 2005-2006, up from 50.0% of the 2001-2002 high school graduates who attended degree-granting institutions in Nebraska.
- In comparison, the out-of-state college continuation rate increased from 11.6% for the graduating class of 2002 to 12.2% for 2005-2006 Nebraska high school graduates who attended degree-granting institutions in other states.
- As illustrated in Figure 1.1.c.3 on the next page, the Commission estimates that Nebraska's in-state college continuation rate was 55.4% for the state's 2005-2006 high school graduates who attended degree-granting or non-degree-granting colleges, up 4.1% from fall 2002 when 51.3% of Nebraska's 2001-2002 high school graduates enrolled at colleges and universities in Nebraska.
- Over the same period, the out-of-state college continuation rate for both degree-granting and non-degree-granting schools increased from 11.6% of the high school graduating class of 2001-2002 to 12.3% of Nebraska high graduates in 2005-2006, an increase of 0.7%.
- The net effect of these increases is that the estimated percentage of Nebraska high school graduates who do not go on to college within 12 months decreased from 37.1% of the high school class of 2001-2002 to 32.3% of the graduates in 2005-2006.
- See Table A5.3 in Appendix 5 for supporting data.

Figure 1.1.c.3

**In-State and Out-of-State College Continuation Rates for Nebraska High School Graduates Who Attended Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Institutions and the Percentage Who Did Not Go on to College within 12 Months of High School Graduation Fall 2006 Compared to Fall 2002<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Date Sources: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2007, and the National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002 and fall 2006 IPEDS surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students. See Table A5.3 in Appendix 5 for supporting data.

**Percentages of Students Who Continue Their Education at Public and Private Institutions**

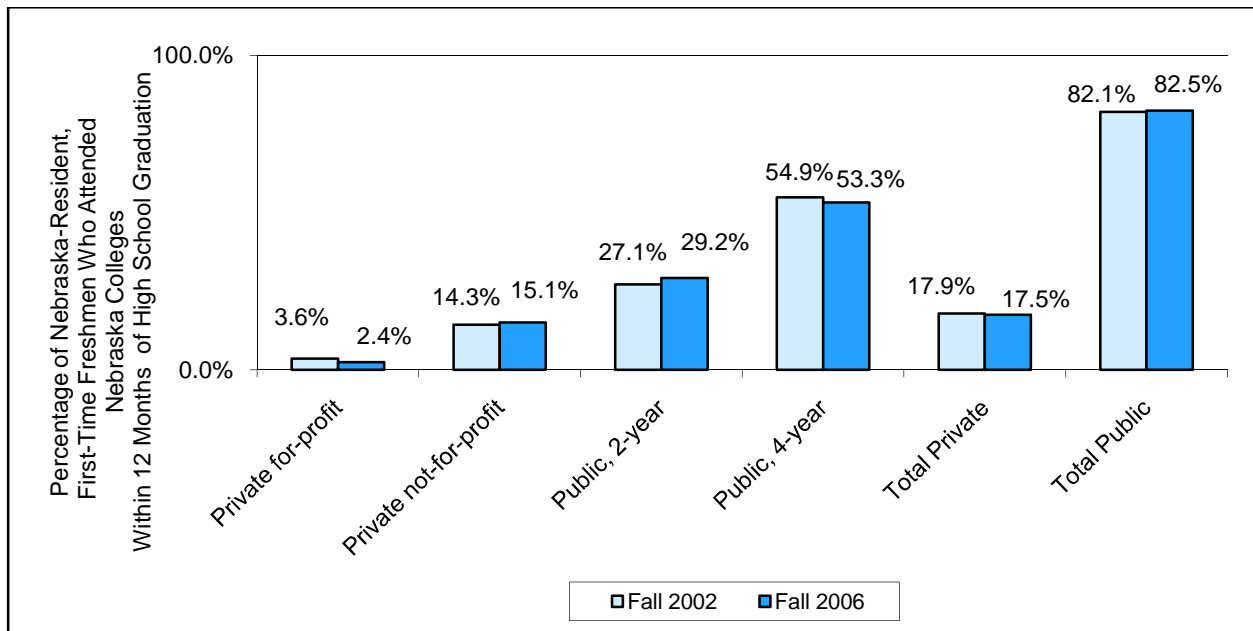
- Of related interest are the types of postsecondary institutions attended by recent graduates of Nebraska's high schools.
- As shown in Parts A and B of [Figure 1.1.c.4](#) on the next page, the pattern of attendance of Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen who go to college in Nebraska within a year of graduating from high school is different from the pattern of Nebraskans who go out of state to school their freshman year.
- Part A of [Figure 1.1.c.4](#) shows that more than 80% of the first-time freshmen who stay in state attend Nebraska's public colleges or universities, compared to 15% who go to private, non-profit institutions within the state.

- In contrast, Part B of [Figure 1.1.c.4](#) reveals that about 53% of the first-time freshmen who go out of state attend public institutions, while 42% go to non-profit private institutions.

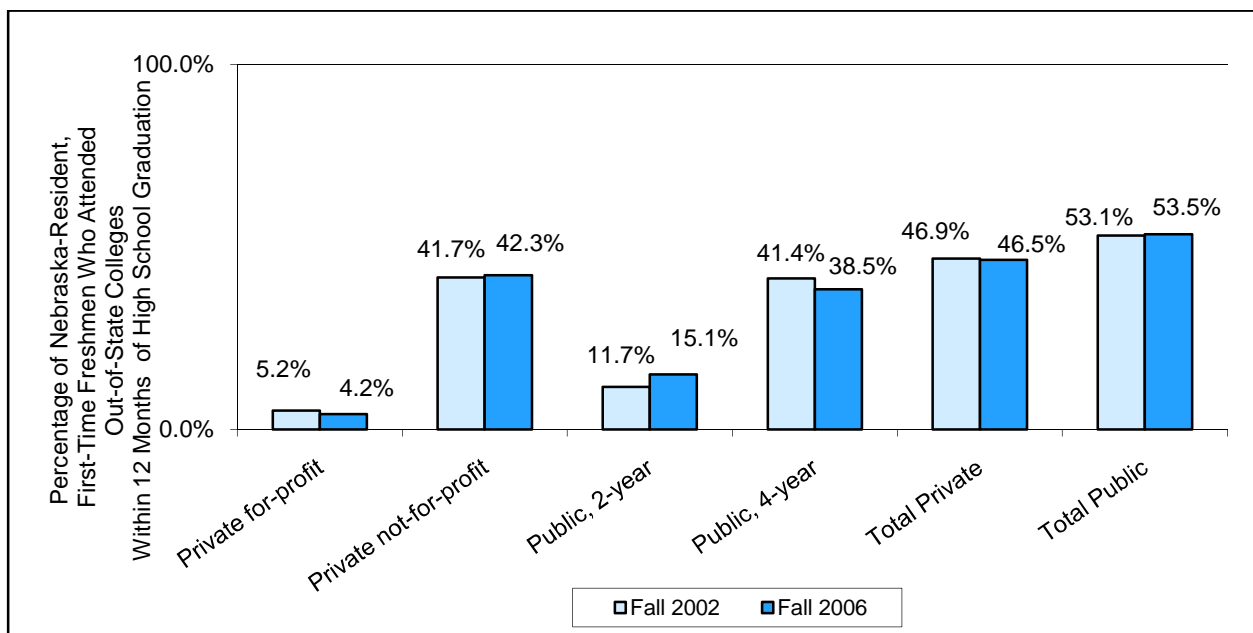
**Figure 1.1.c.4**

**Percentages of First-Time Freshmen with Nebraska Residency Who Attended Nebraska and Out-of-State, Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Institutions Within 12 Months of High School Graduation Fall 2006 Compared to Fall 2002<sup>1</sup>**

**Part A: Nebraska-Resident Freshmen Who Attended Nebraska Institutions**



**Part B: Nebraska-Resident Freshmen Who Attended Out-of-State Institutions**



<sup>1</sup>Date Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002 and fall 2006 IPEDS surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students. See [Table A5.4](#) in [Appendix 5](#) for supporting data.