




Priced Out: Rural Students

On Illinois' Disinvestment In Higher Education & What Can Be
Done About It

Kyle Westbrook, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Partnership for College Completion

Our Mission

The **Partnership for College Completion (PCC)** is a nonprofit organization launched in 2016 dedicated to increasing college completion rates in Illinois, particularly for low-income students, first generation college goers, and Black and Latinx students. PCC champions policies, systems, and practices that ensure all students in Illinois graduate from college.



Our Approach

Public Policy

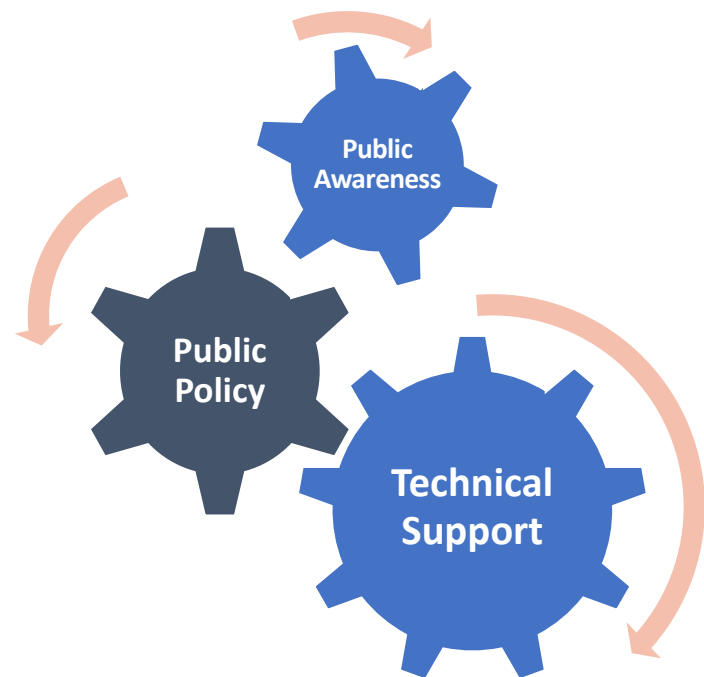
Public Policy efforts are informed by data, research, and our direct engagement with colleges. It prioritizes creating the state policy conditions for our work to have maximal impact on improving equity and college degree attainment in Illinois.

Public Awareness

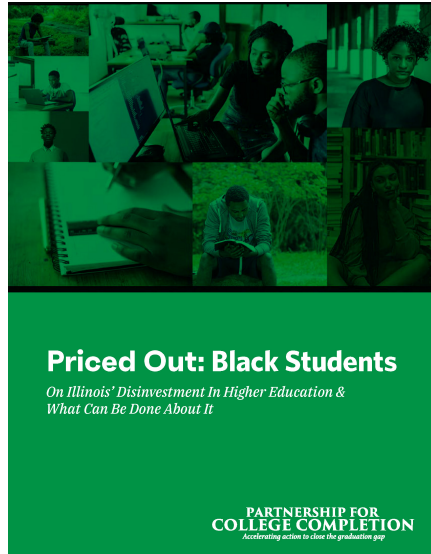
Public Awareness efforts lift up research, data, and the narrative of the importance of a robust higher education system in the state to spur action for colleges & policymakers, while elevating solutions and directing resources to action.

Technical Support

Technical Support efforts put us in close partnership with two and four-year colleges to deploy and scale evidence-based approaches, use data to better serve students, convene institutions, and provide resources and targeted supports around a common goal of eliminating inequities in college degree completion for African-American, Latino and low-income students. Our signature piece of work is the Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative.



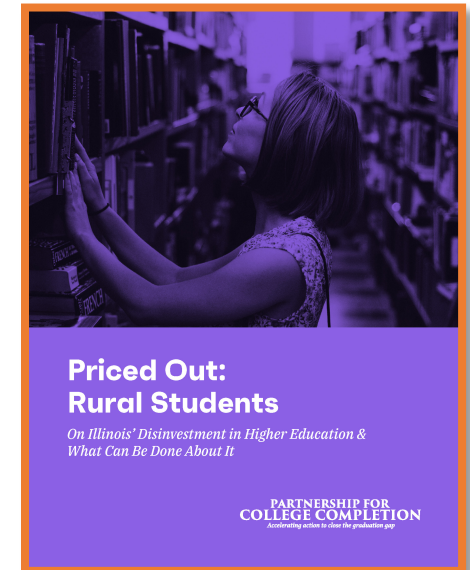
Priced Out: On Illinois' Disinvestment In Higher Education & What Can Be Done About It



**Black Students
Report**
October 22
2019



**Latinx Students
Report**
October 29th
2019



**Rural Students
Report**
November 6th
2019

Website and interactive data features

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College Affordability for Students in Illinois

On Illinois' Disinvestment In Higher Education & What Can Be Done About It

A Brief History of Coll...
Vision for the Future
Improving Access
Decreasing the Cost of...
Increasing Students' A...
Improving Degree Pay...
Realizing Our Vision T...

For nearly two decades, Illinois has gone through a period of disinvestment in higher education, seeing continued losses in higher education appropriations and underinvestment to student financial aid, effectively shifting the burden to pay onto students.

This study has three companion reports: Priced Out: **Black Students**; Priced Out: Latinx Students; and Priced Out: Rural Students. The reports provide insight into how disparities in access, cost, and ability to pay are creating barriers for Illinois students across the state and recommends policy action to start reversing these trends.



Affordability study findings in brief



Policy

17 years of disinvestment has given Illinois unique affordability issues

- Disproportionately affected rural, Black, and Latinx students
- Declining enrollment in less-resourced institutions

Black Students

Black student enrollment is at crisis levels, and wealth gaps contribute to both access and student debt

Latinx Students

Latinx four-year degree increases have not kept up with student growth, and debt aversion plays a role in access and outcomes

Rural Students

Rural students are divided by ability to afford 4-year college, but those attending often can't afford to return

Sections of each report

1 Access

2 Cost

3 Ability to Pay

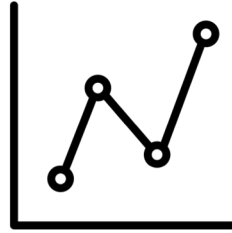
4 Payoffs





1. Survey data and research

- Classifications of urban, suburban, rural, town



2. Census: Percentage of county that is rural

- Mostly urban (>50% urban)
- Mostly rural (<50% urban)
- Completely rural (<1% urban)



3. Colleges serving areas with few/no public alternatives

- “Broad-access” alternatives accept more than 75% of applicants

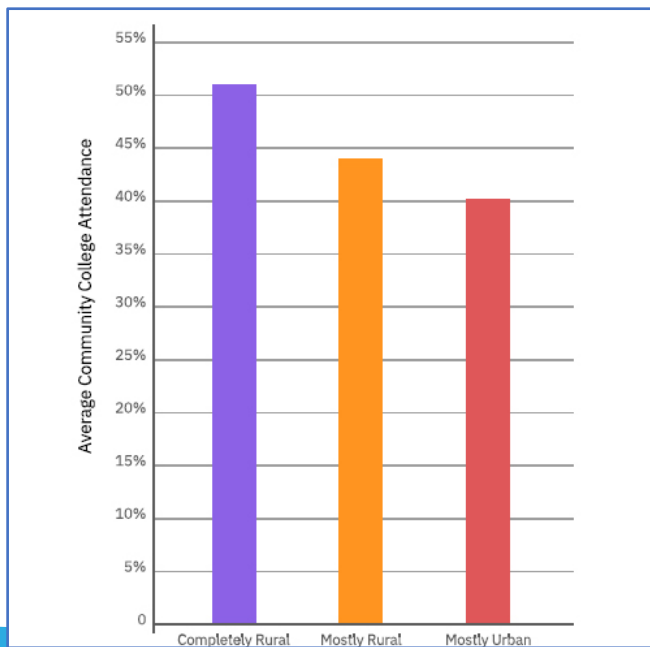


Access

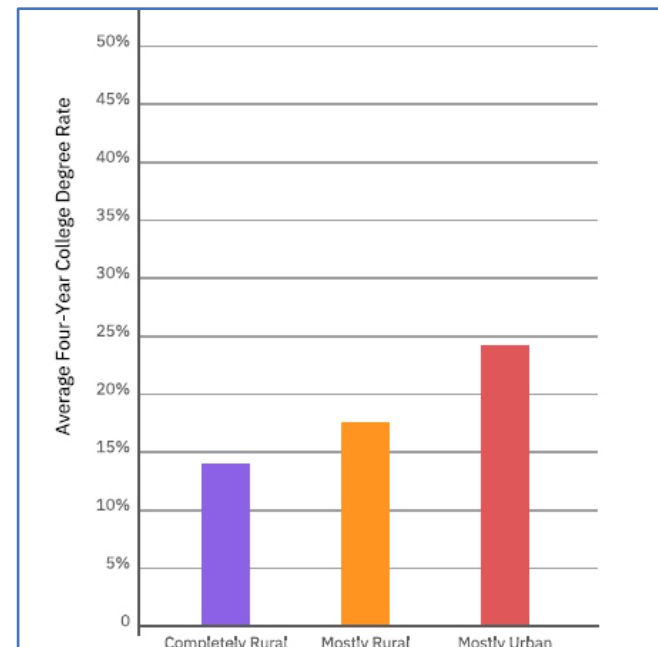
High-Level
Findings

Rural students largely attend CCs

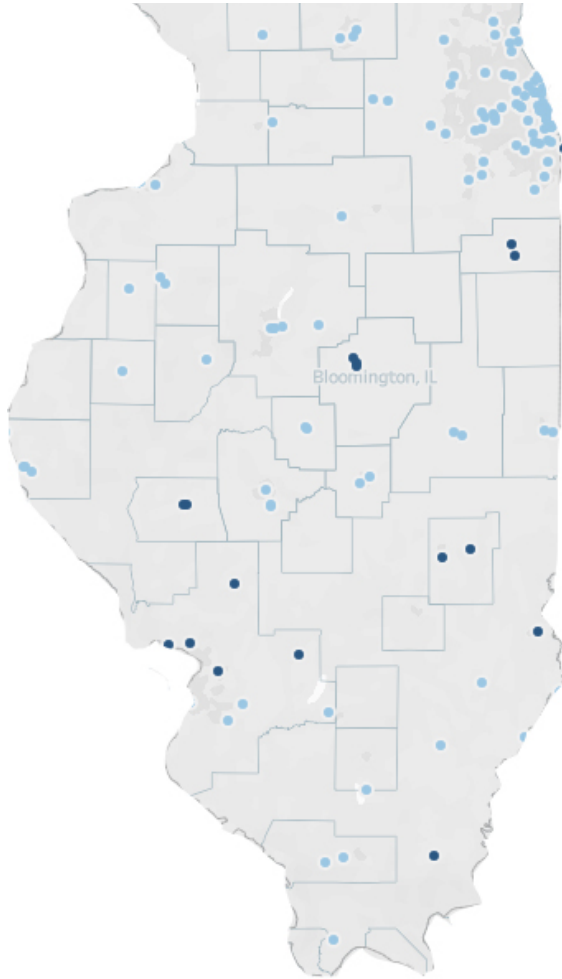
- Lower bachelor's attainment rates, higher associate attainment rates
- Rural CC students complete at higher rates, transfer at lower rates
 - But more transfer to public universities than urban students
 - Fewer transfer to for-profit colleges



Associate Degree Enrollment



Bachelor's Degree Attainment



- Colleges and universities serving areas with few/no public options more selective, serve lower percentages of adult students
 - Larger completion gaps by race and income
 - Facing declining enrollment
- Rural community colleges serve more first-time, full-time students
- Private colleges are least accessible sector for students outside Chicago

College-going population declining in more rural areas

- 2011-2016 High school senior population
 - Mostly urban areas: no change
 - Mostly rural areas: 6% decrease
- Lower income correlated with high school population loss
 - Inequitable affects of high costs of college
- Rural students disproportionately attend public colleges and universities

Access Takeaways

1. Rural access to four-year degrees is a growing challenge

- Improve enrollment and transfer pipelines

2. Share outreach and access successes

- Test-optional
- Rural outreach
- University-college partnerships





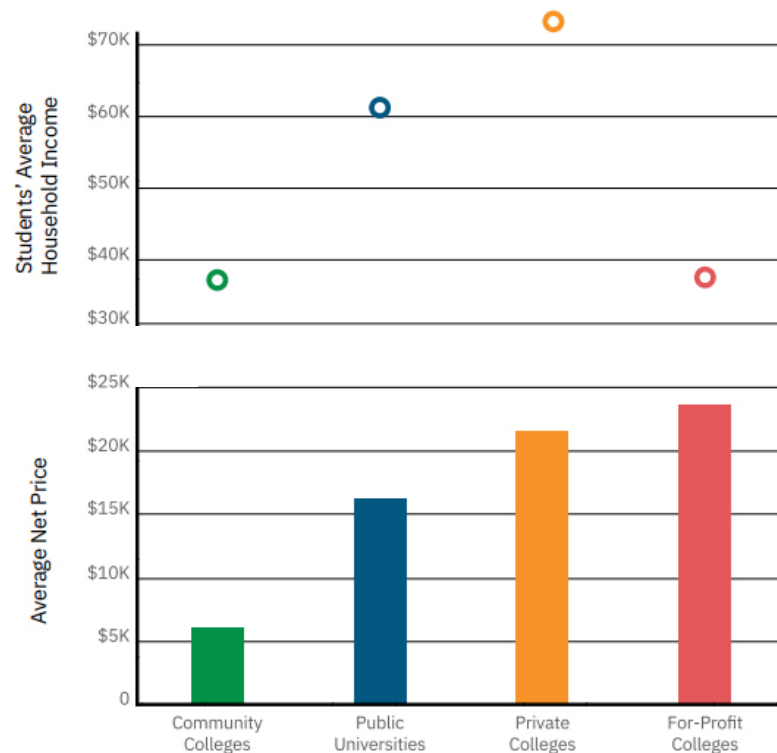
Cost and
Ability to
Pay

High-Level
Findings

IL universities are costly after 17 years of disinvestment

- 50% higher net price than Midwest average
- Higher net price for universities with few nearby options
- Sticker price and “undermatching”
- For-profit college enrollment and high costs
- Opportunity cost reflected in distance students travel

Students with lower income disproportionately attend community colleges and for-profit colleges



Source: The College Scorecard and data on FAFSA-filers household income from ISAC

Correlation between county being rural and lower average income

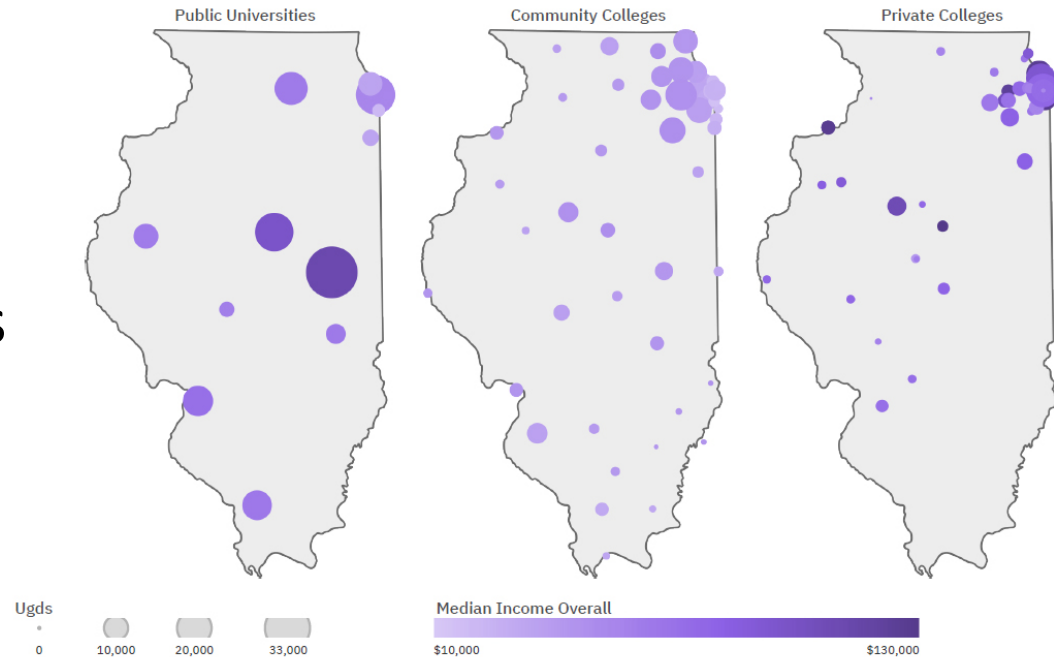
- Rural/urban income gaps affect access

Rural students owe more debt for bachelor's degrees

Rural residents have more financial stability

- This can be an opportunity cost

FAFSA-Filing students at public universities and private colleges have greater household incomes



Cost and Ability to Pay Takeaways

1. **Cost affects access early in pipeline**
2. **Substantial reinvestment is needed**
 - MAP
 - Appropriations
3. **Reinvestment should also be targeted**



High costs exacerbate rural economic challenges

- Inequitable: low-income areas' population declining faster
- Degrees have higher payoffs in cities
 - Rural graduates move to cities to repay debt
- Rural communities develop faster with better educated residents

Vision for the Future



More equitable access

- Funding improves equity
- Students go into college with more information
- Clear pathways to success



Increase ability to pay

- Student aid adequate and targeted



Lower costs

- Institutions serving under-represented students have resources
- For-profit institutions not supplemented with state aid
- Students have funds to complete



Increase payoffs of a degree

- Graduates not inequitably burdened with debt

Thank You!

Don't hesitate to email
mabrahamson@partnershpfcc.org
with any suggestions, questions, or
feedback.

