



June 2021

KENTUCKY

LABOR FORCE UPDATE

Postsecondary Enrollment during the Pandemic

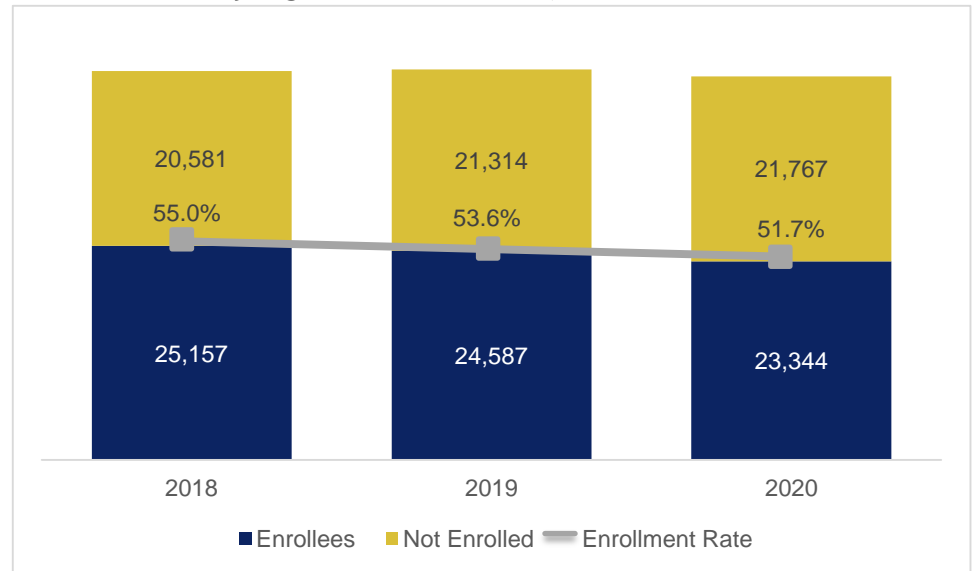
In March 2021, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center reported that immediate postsecondary enrollment of high school graduates decreased 6.8 percent nationwide from 2019 to 2020, 4.5 times the decrease from 2018 to 2019 (1.5 percent).¹ KYSTATS found that postsecondary enrollment among the Kentucky graduating high school class of 2020 also declined.

In this report, enrollments are defined as the immediate enrollment of high school graduates into postsecondary institutions. That is, enrollment in the summer or fall directly following high school graduation.² Data collected by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) include postsecondary enrollment at in-state public, private, and independent institutions, which is presented for 2016 through 2020. Additional data from the NSC include enrollment information for Kentucky high school graduates that attended postsecondary institutions out-of-state or proprietary schools in Kentucky for 2018 to 2020.

Immediate Postsecondary Enrollment of Kentucky High School Graduates, 2018 to 2020

In Kentucky, there were 1,813 fewer high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions in 2020 than in 2018. Much of that decline occurred between 2019 and 2020. Immediate postsecondary enrollment decreased 2.3 percent from 2018 to 2019 followed by a decrease of 5.1 percent from 2019 to 2020. Though enrollments in Kentucky fell, the rate of decline from 2019 to 2020 was less than the national average (5.1 percent versus 6.8 percent).

Total Immediate Postsecondary Enrollment Patterns and Enrollment Rates of Kentucky High School Graduates, 2018-2020



Sources: KLDS and NSC

The enrollment rate takes into account the size of the graduating high school classes. In 2020, there were 790 fewer students graduating high school in Kentucky than in 2019, a decline of 1.7 percent. The immediate postsecondary enrollment rate was 51.7 percent in 2020, down from 53.6 percent in 2019. The overall share of Kentucky high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution decreased 2.6 percent from 2018 to 2019 followed by a 3.4 percent decline from 2019 to 2020. According to NSC, college enrollment nationwide decreased 1.1 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively.

¹ https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021_HSBenchmarksCovidReport.pdf

² Note that immediate postsecondary enrollment differs from other definitions of postsecondary enrollment that include spring enrollment. The broader definition is used in the High School Feedback Report so comparisons should not be made with these findings.

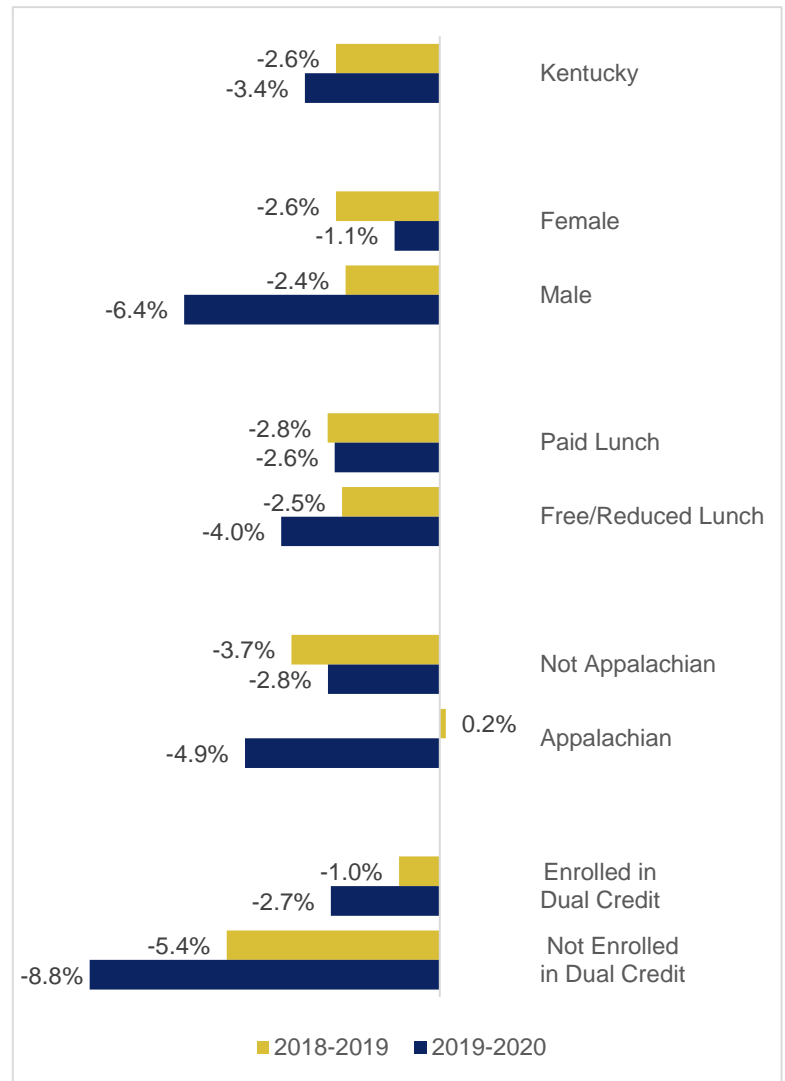


Postsecondary Enrollment during the Pandemic

Postsecondary enrollment rates dropped for most groups at similar rates between 2018 and 2019. There were sharper declines among some groups from 2019 to 2020. Lower income, Appalachian, and male students in Kentucky saw steeper declines in enrollment rates than their peer groups during the pandemic. The adjacent chart shows that overall, the postsecondary enrollment rate fell 3.4 percent from 2019 to 2020. For male high school students, enrollment fell 6.4 percent over the same period, 5.7 times the rate for female students.

The group with the largest decline in enrollment rates from 2019 to 2020 were students not enrolled in dual credit courses. These courses allow students to earn high school and college credit at the same time. Typically, those who enroll in dual credit enroll in postsecondary at higher rates. In 2019, 76.2 percent of dual credit students enrolled in postsecondary institutions while only 36.8 percent of non-dual credit enrollees pursued postsecondary. This divide widened in 2020 with enrollment rates of 74.2 percent versus 33.6 percent for dual credit enrollees and non-dual credit enrollees, respectively, a drop of 8.8 percent for those who did not enroll in dual credit courses compared to a 2.7 percent drop for those that did.

Percent Change in Immediate Enrollment Rates for Select Groups of Kentucky High School Graduates, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020



Sources: KLDS and NSC



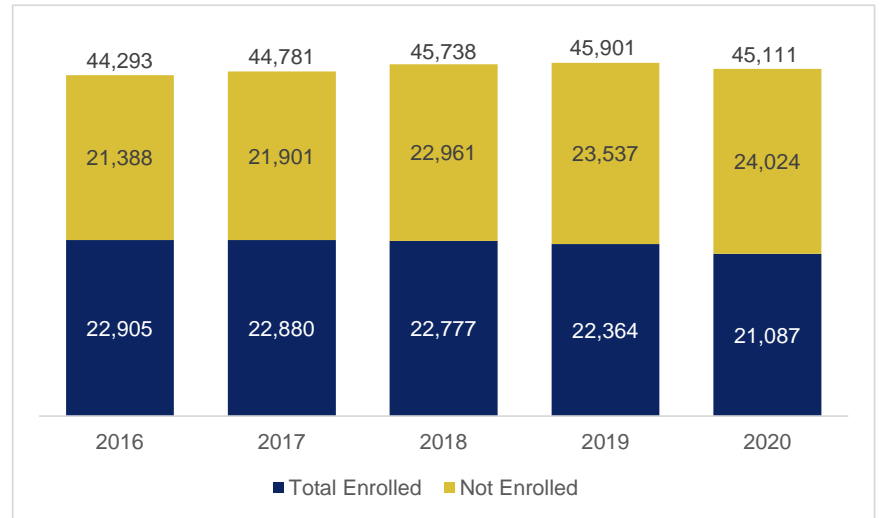
Postsecondary Enrollment during the Pandemic

Immediate In-State Postsecondary Enrollment of Kentucky High School Graduates, 2016-2020

Narrowing the focus to include only Kentucky postsecondary institutions allows for analysis of in-state, immediate enrollment trends from 2016 to 2020.

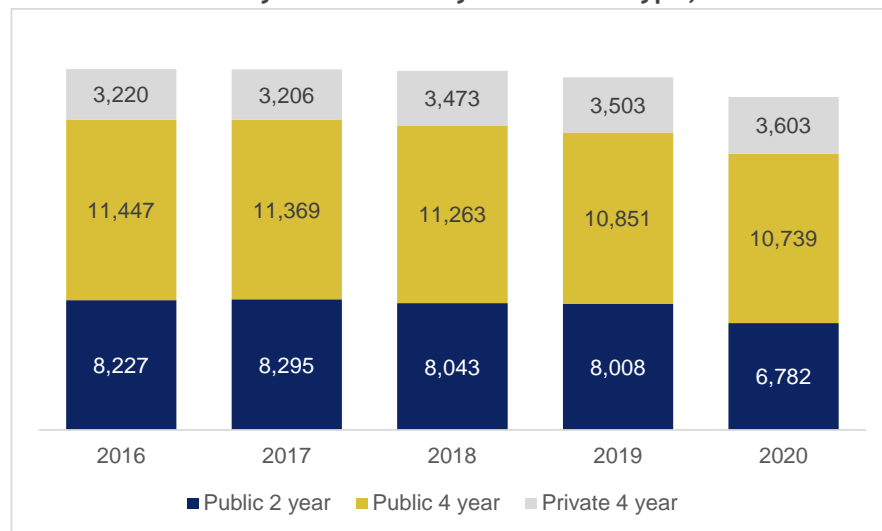
The number of high school graduates in Kentucky fell by nearly 800 students (1.7 percent) between 2019 and 2020 and the number of high school graduates who did not immediately enroll in a postsecondary institution in Kentucky increased by almost 500 students (2.1 percent) during the same period. As a result, the in-state enrollment rate fell from 48.7 percent in 2019 to 46.7 percent in 2020, a drop of 4.1 percent. Enrollment in Kentucky's postsecondary institutions by Kentucky high school graduates was steady from 2016 through 2018 with a slight decline in 2019 (1.8 percent) and a steeper decline in 2020 (5.7 percent). There were 1,277 fewer students enrolled in 2020 than in 2019.

Immediate Enrollment Patterns of Kentucky High School Graduates at In-State Postsecondary Institutions, 2016-2020



Source: CPE

Immediate Enrollment of Kentucky High School Graduates at In-State Postsecondary Institutions by Institution Type, 2016-2020



Source: CPE

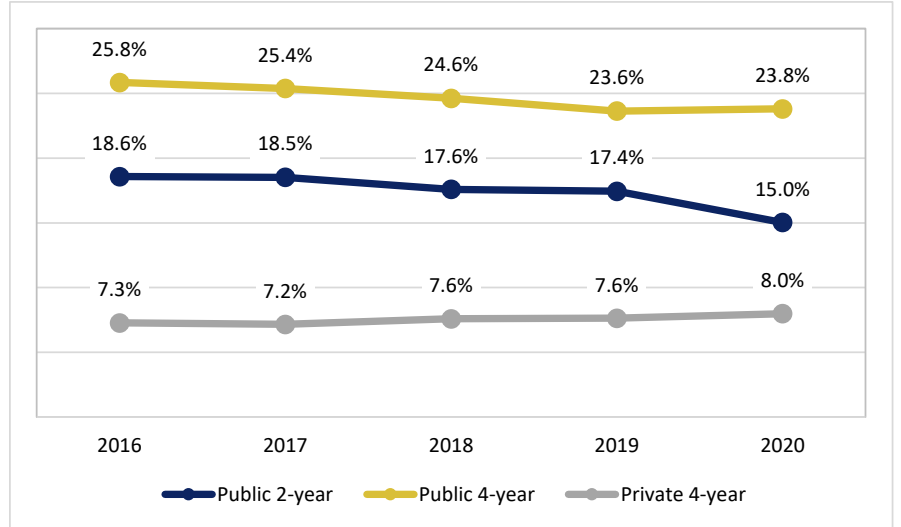
Nearly all of this decrease occurred in the state's two-year public community and technical colleges. Enrollment at the community and technical colleges throughout Kentucky dropped by more than 1,200 students, 15.3 percent, from 2019 to 2020. Enrollment at Kentucky's private four-year institutions has been growing since 2017 and continued to do so in 2020.



Postsecondary Enrollment during the Pandemic

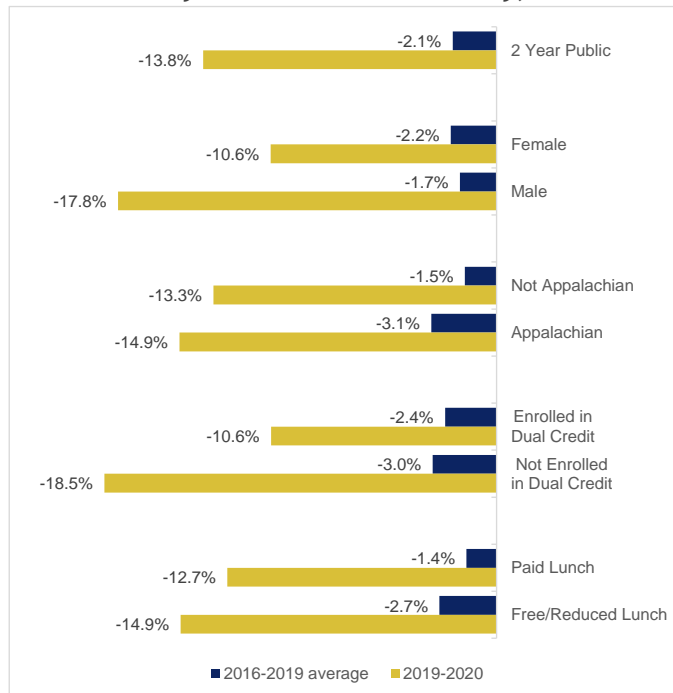
Enrollment rates decreased by an average of 2.0 percent per year across Kentucky institutions from 2016 to 2019 while decreasing by 4.1 percent from 2019 to 2020. The variation among postsecondary institution types was large. The enrollment rate at both public and private four-year institutions actually increased from 2019 to 2020. However, the enrollment rate at public four-year institutions decreased from 25.8 percent in 2016 to 23.6 percent in 2019. At private four-year institutions, the enrollment rate increased from 2016 to 2019, an average of 1.6 percent per year. Enrollment rates declined most significantly at two-year public institutions from 18.6 percent in 2016 to 15.0 percent in 2020, similar to national trends as reported by the NSC.

Immediate Enrollment Rates of Kentucky High School Graduates at Postsecondary Institutions in Kentucky, 2016-2020



Source: CPE

Immediate Enrollment Rates of Select Kentucky High School Graduates at 2-Year Public Postsecondary Institutions in Kentucky, 2016-2020



Source: CPE

A closer look at enrollment rates for several specific student populations at Kentucky’s two-year public institutions shows where the largest declines occurred. Between 2016 and 2019, enrollment rates at these institutions declined an average of 2.1 percent per year and dropped 13.8 percent between 2019 and 2020. The enrollment rate for Kentucky’s male high school graduates who enrolled in two-year public institutions dropped an average of 1.7 percent per year from 2016 to 2019 but fell at a rate 10 times that from 2019 to 2020 (17.8 percent). Among students who did not enroll in dual credit courses in high school, there was a decrease in enrollment at two-year public institutions of 18.5 percent from 2019 to 2020.

Future research by KYSTATS might include examining the student make up of immediate enrollees at each institution type. Other avenues of exploration might be to examine the impacts of changing policies and environment such as test-optional admissions, on-campus residence, and changes to online or in-person classes. Extending the work to include spring enrollment could provide more context as well.



IN THE NEWS



Kentucky Students' Right to Know

https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/2021_KCSRK

This report was designed to help prospective students make more informed decisions about their futures and ensure that they are adequately aware of career paths, employment outcomes, and the cost of college. The dashboard links college majors to the most in-demand jobs in the state along with typical education requirements, wages, and institutions offering these majors.



Employment Trends for Spring Credential Earners

https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/2021_ETSC

This report shows third quarter employment of spring credential earners (high school and beyond) during their respective completion years. The third quarter employment of spring 2020 earners (pandemic year) is compared to the prior four years of spring credential earners (pre-pandemic years).



Evolve 502

https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/2021_Evolve

This dashboard was built to help inform decisions and outcomes for the Evolve 502 population. The goal at Evolve 502 is to support students as they pursue the dream of a college education. The Evolve 502 Scholarship, open to all eligible 2021 graduates of Jefferson County Public Schools, will allow students to attend any Kentucky Community & Technical College or Simmons College of Kentucky tuition free toward an associate degree, workforce credential, or as a pathway to earn a four-year degree.



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Kentucky Labor Force Update

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