



# Selected Findings on Public Support for Postsecondary Attainment

## Sample Details

220-6986-WT | N=613 | A/B SPLITS  
MARGIN OF SAMPLING ERROR  $\pm 4.0\%$   
95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL)

## Executive Summary

This new poll shows that Arizonans overwhelmingly support the Achieve60AZ goal; that at least 60 percent of adults ages 25–64 complete education beyond high school by 2030.

To reach the goal, Arizona needs an additional 500,000 citizens to earn a degree, certificate, or other credential before the 2030 deadline to avoid major economic challenges. And the upside is tremendous—economic forecasts project that if we increase postsecondary enrollment by just 20%, Arizona stands to benefit from more than \$5 billion in annual gains attributable to factors such as higher lifetime earnings, improved health, and increased workforce productivity.

This poll also shows that Arizonans of all political beliefs understand the value of postsecondary attainment for individuals and our communities—and they want our state’s leaders to do more to reach it. In a moment where consensus is harder than ever to achieve, this is a clear mandate to take action.

Education Forward Arizona hired FM3 Research and Highground to conduct a telephone poll<sup>1</sup> of Arizona adults and here are some of the key findings:

- 97% of Arizonans say postsecondary attainment improves our quality of life by reducing crime, training our future workforce, and strengthening our communities;
- 93% agree it is important to provide job retraining and new career paths for adults as well as students just leaving high school;
- 92% say Arizona must foster postsecondary opportunities that give students a chance to learn the skills to succeed in a career and obtain industry certification;
- 92% believe the benefits of postsecondary attainment produces well-rounded, informed citizens who make our community strong and improve quality of life by reducing crime and strengthening our communities.

These are selected highlights from the poll. Other data on the following pages shows that Arizona’s citizens understand our state has everything to gain by increasing the number of our citizens earning postsecondary degrees, certificates, and other credentials. Now it’s time to act.

**Methodology:** From November 20–27, 2023, the bipartisan team of FM3 Research (D) and HighGround Consulting (R) conducted a survey of a survey 613 randomly selected Arizona voters. Respondents were contacted via text messaging and telephones and interviews were conducted online and via landline and cell/mobile telephone by live interviewers. The sample margin of error for the results is  $\pm 4.0\%$  at the 95% confidence level; the margin of error for population subgroups will be higher. Due to rounding, some percentages may not sum to 100%.

## SECTION I: ARIZONA VOTERS' PERCEPTION OF EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Arizona voters were asked how highly they agree with a set of statements about education beyond high school.

**Ninety percent** or more of voters agreed with the following statements:

1. Since all students do not attend college, we must foster other postsecondary education opportunities that give students a chance to learn the skills to succeed in a career and obtain industry certification.
2. Every student should have access to a high-quality education regardless of their zip code.
3. It is important to provide job retraining and new career paths for adults as well as students just leaving high school.

**Eighty percent** or more of voters agreed with the following statements:

1. Some education beyond high school is necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world, whether that means attending a workforce certification program, a 2-year career-training degree or a 4-year degree.
2. People who have completed education or training after high school are usually better off financially than those who do not.
3. People who have completed education or training after high school usually have a better quality of life than those who do not.

See additional responses below:

	STR AGREE	SMWT AGREE	SMWT DISAG	STR DISAG	(DON'T READ) DK/NA	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAG
Every student should have access to a high-quality education regardless of their zip code	85%	11%	2%	1%	1%	96%	3%
It is important to provide job retraining and new career paths for adults as well as students just leaving high school	63%	31%	3%	2%	1%	93%	6%
Since all students do not attend college, we must foster other post-secondary education opportunities that give students a chance to learn the skills to succeed in a career and obtain industry certification	70%	23%	3%	3%	2%	92%	6%
People who have completed education or training after high school usually have a better <b>quality of life</b> than those who do not	47%	36%	9%	5%	2%	84%	14%
Some education beyond high school is necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world, whether that means attending a workforce certification program, a 2-year career-training degree or a 4-year degree	50%	32%	11%	6%	1%	82%	16%

	STR AGREE	SMWT AGREE	SMWT DISAG	STR DISAG	(DON'T READ) DK/NA	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAG
People who have completed education or training after high school are usually better off <b>financially</b> than those who do not	46%	34%	11%	6%	2%	80%	17%
Student loan debt is preventing many people from getting ahead in life	50%	25%	11%	11%	3%	75%	22%
Students who must take out loans or increase work hours to pay for school are more likely to drop out	35%	30%	20%	9%	6%	65%	29%
Almost anyone who needs financial help to get an education beyond high school can get loans or financial aid	26%	32%	17%	18%	7%	58%	35%
The vast majority of Arizona students who want to go to college have the opportunity to do so	20%	30%	26%	16%	8%	50%	43%
A college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today's 21st Century economy	11%	26%	31%	30%	2%	37%	61%

## SECTION II: ARIZONA VOTERS' PERCEPTION OF POST-HIGH SCHOOL BENEFITS

Voters were presented statements about the benefits of education after high school and were asked to determine how important the benefit was to them.

Of all the benefits listed, **95 percent** or more of Arizona voters said the following benefits were important or most important to them:

1. Helping people get better-paying jobs that can support a family
2. Providing real world experience to students wanting to enter industries such as healthcare, computer science, aviation and construction
3. Addressing severe shortages of qualified workers, including classroom teachers, nurses, information technology and for other high-demand industries
4. Improving our quality of life by reducing crime, training our future workforce, and strengthening our communities

Additionally, all other benefits included in the survey were supported by **80 percent** or more of Arizonans.

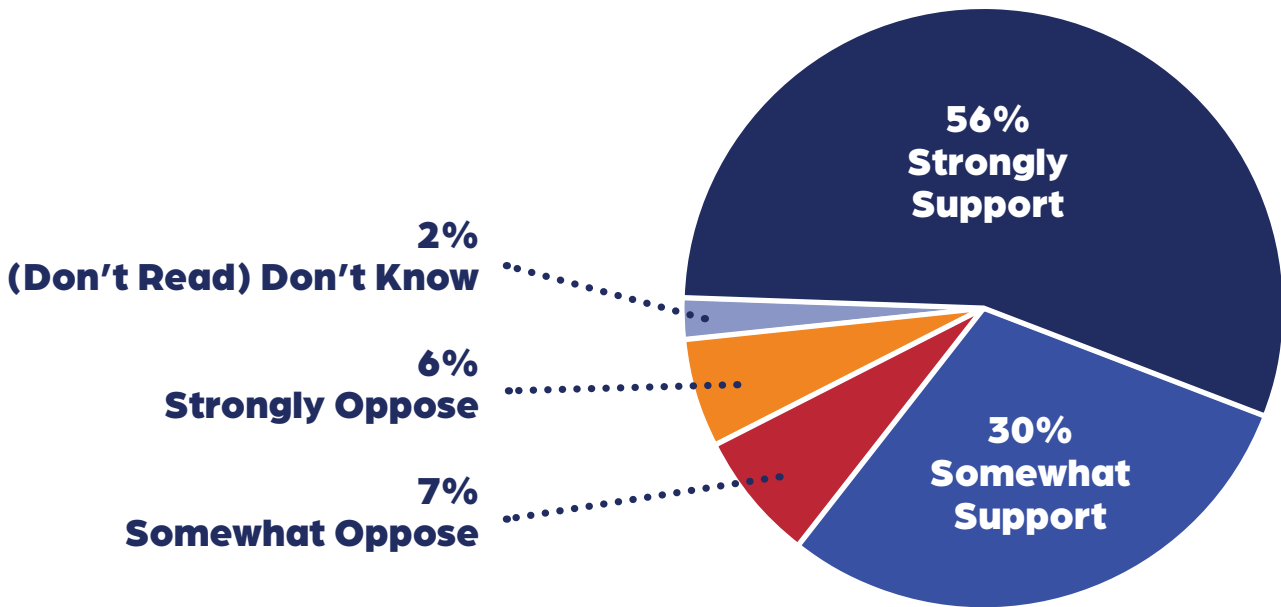
See all responses below:

	VERY IMP	IMP	LOW IMP	NOT IMP	DK / NA	VERY IMP / IMP
Improving our quality of life by reducing crime, training our future workforce, and strengthening our communities	75%	22%	1%	1%	1%	97%
Helping people get better-paying jobs that can support a family	75%	21%	2%	1%	1%	96%
Providing real world experience to students wanting to enter industries such as healthcare, computer science, aviation and construction	70%	25%	2%	2%	1%	95%
Addressing severe shortages of qualified workers, including classroom teachers, nurses, information technology and for other high-demand industries	68%	27%	1%	3%	1%	95%
Helping Arizona students from low-income backgrounds get the skills they need to succeed in today's economy	63%	31%	3%	2%	1%	94%
Providing a pool of qualified workers to attract and retain businesses to Arizona	59%	34%	3%	2%	1%	93%
Producing well-rounded, informed citizens who make our communities strong	71%	21%	4%	3%	2%	92%
Helping students find work that is rewarding and meaningful to them and putting them on track for a good career	67%	25%	6%	1%	1%	92%
Reducing the number of people who rely on Arizona's welfare system and other government programs by making sure they have the skills to get good-paying jobs	65%	27%	4%	2%	1%	92%
Helping people get jobs that provide benefits like health insurance and retirement plans	62%	28%	6%	3%	1%	90%
Providing job retraining and new career paths for adults	54%	34%	9%	2%	1%	88%
Ensuring people who grow up in Arizona can stay in Arizona by being trained and qualified for local jobs	47%	36%	11%	5%	1%	83%

### SECTION III: ARIZONA VOTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE STATEWIDE ATTAINMENT GOAL

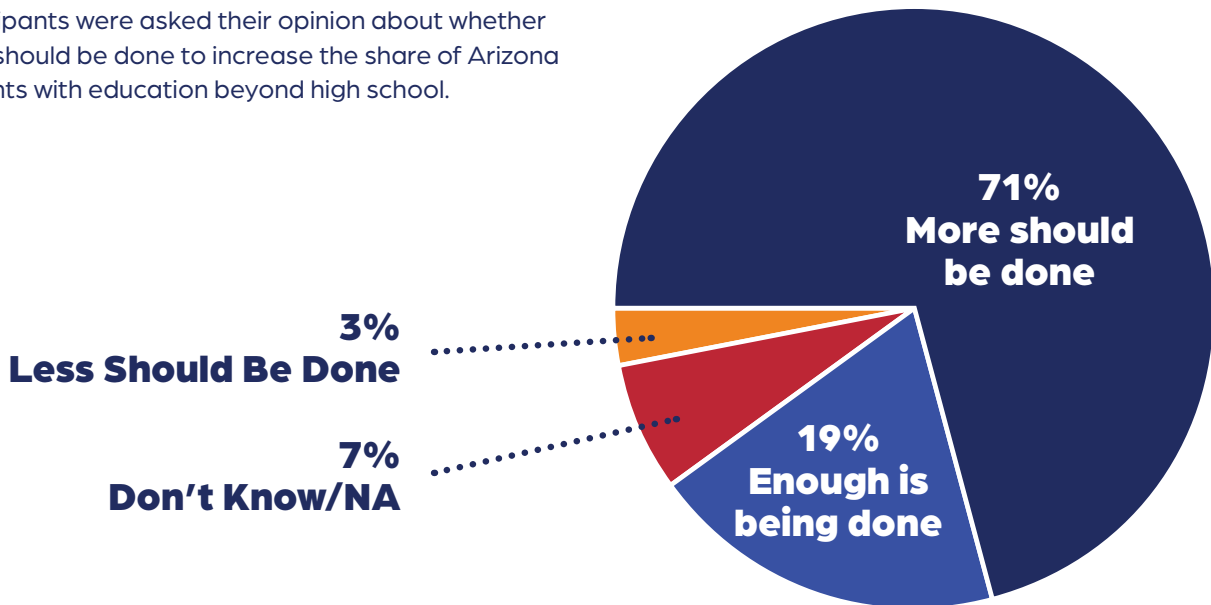
Arizona is working toward a goal that by 2030, at least 60 percent of Arizonans ages 25–64 will complete education beyond high school, including a degree, apprenticeship, or an industry-specific workforce certification program. This goal is directly related to projections that 70 percent of Arizona’s job openings will require completion of education beyond high school.

**WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE GOAL, 86 PERCENT OF ARIZONA VOTERS WERE IN SUPPORT.**



Currently, only 48 percent of Arizonans ages 25–64 are projected to have earned some type of workforce certification or degree after high school. This includes four-year college, community college, apprenticeship, or a workforce certification program.

Participants were asked their opinion about whether more should be done to increase the share of Arizona students with education beyond high school.



## SECTION IV: ARIZONA VOTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW TO ACHIEVE THE STATEWIDE ATTAINMENT GOAL

Arizona voters were given a list of proposals that focused on different ways to achieve the statewide attainment goal. They were asked how effective they believed the proposals to be in reaching the goal.

More than **90 percent** of Arizonans believe the following proposals would be very or somewhat effective in achieving the statewide attainment goal:

1. Expanding access to technical training and education programs during high school that lead to a credential
2. Expanding dual-enrollment programs that allow high school students to earn college credit while still in high school

Additionally, more than **80 percent** of Arizonans believe the following proposals would be very or somewhat effective in achieving the statewide attainment goal:

1. Ensuring every high school in Arizona has college and career advisors/counselors to help students plan their path after high school
2. Expanding pre-high school services to help students and families identify interests, strengths and aptitudes that will inform their education choices
3. Increasing academic counseling and support services at community colleges to help students transfer to 4-year colleges and universities

See all responses below:

	VERY EFF	SMWT EFF	NOT TOO EFF	NOT AT ALL EFF	(DON'T READ) DK/NA	VERY / SMWT EFF
Expanding access to technical training and education programs during high school that lead to a credential	78%	18%	2%	1%	1%	96%
Expanding dual-enrollment programs that allow high school students to earn college credit while still in high school	66%	28%	3%	1%	2%	94%
Ensuring every high school in Arizona has college and career advisors/counselors to help students plan their path after high school	56%	32%	6%	3%	2%	88%
Expanding pre-high school services to help students and families identify interests, strengths and aptitudes that will inform their education choices	50%	37%	5%	5%	3%	87%
Increasing academic counseling and support services at community colleges to help students transfer to 4-year colleges and universities	37%	44%	9%	5%	5%	81%
Providing financial support for students for non-tuition expenses such as housing, technology, transportation and food	45%	30%	12%	10%	4%	75%
Providing two free years of college or career training to every Arizona public high school student	50%	22%	10%	15%	3%	72%

## SECTION V: MESSAGES THAT RESONATE WITH ARIZONA VOTERS

In an effort to understand which messages resonate with Arizona voters and convince them to support the statewide attainment goal, participants were asked to evaluate a series of statements.

**Eighty percent** or more of Arizona voters believe the following messages are convincing:

<p><b>Arizona Economy</b></p>	<p><b>Arizona has billions to gain by promoting higher education</b>—increasing the number of people who continue their education beyond high school by 20 percent would add five billion dollars to the state’s economy every year. A well-educated workforce will help Arizona retain and attract good companies who need trained and skilled employees, and creating more pathways to higher education can help to encourage more innovation and investments that lead to new economic opportunities and good-paying jobs.</p>
<p><b>Technical Education</b></p>	<p>Like apprenticeships in the past, certification and technical education programs provide the educated and trained workforce companies need and want to hire. Arizona’s long-term economic success and competitiveness are directly tied to our ability to educate our workforce to attract and retain good companies and jobs.</p>
<p><b>Skills Gap</b></p>	<p>There are currently thousands of unfilled jobs in Arizona—with massive shortages in teaching, nursing, the sciences and healthcare—because our state’s workforce does not have the right skills to fill those jobs. We need to produce more highly-skilled workers in these fields to reduce the unemployment rate, save the state money, and keep our economy moving. We must expand opportunities for higher education and support low- and middle-income students as they train for the jobs our state’s economy needs.</p>
<p><b>Career Connection</b></p>	<p>It’s important for Arizona to invest in career focused learning programs that give students and young adults the opportunity to gain real-world skills and explore careers through apprenticeships, internships, mentorship, certificates and training. Career-connected learning gives students the opportunity to earn money as well as high school and college credit, launching them towards college and a career.</p>
<p><b>Lifetime Income</b></p>	<p>The economic benefits of education after high school are undeniable. On average, lifetime earnings for individuals with bachelor’s degrees are nearly three times greater than individuals whose education stops after high school. Lifetime earnings for people who attend a two-year community or technical college or a workforce certification program are also significantly higher.</p>
<p><b>Future Beyond High School</b></p>	<p>For generations, workers could find steady employment with a high school education. But today, most good paying jobs require completion of some education beyond high school. Increasing access to job training and career education programs beyond high school will help to make sure Arizona students have the skills and education to get good paying jobs.</p>
<p><b>Intel/TSM Jobs</b></p>	<p>Arizona has had a great deal of economic success with massive investments by companies like Intel, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, and others. Instead of bringing in employees from other places, we need to ensure that Arizona can provide the well-trained workforce needed by these high-wage employers, and that the people of Arizona benefit the most.</p>

See additional responses below:

	VERY CONV	SMWT CONV	NOT CONV	DON'T BEL	(DON'T READ) DK/NA	VERY / SMWT CONV
(CAREER CONNECT) It's important for Arizona to invest in career focused learning programs that give students and young adults the opportunity to gain real-world skills and explore careers through apprenticeships, internships, mentorship, certificates and training. Career-connected learning gives students the opportunity to earn money as well as high school and college credit, launching them towards college and a career.	55%	37%	5%	1%	1%	92%
(TECHNICAL EDUCATION) Like apprenticeships in the past, certification and technical education programs provide the educated and trained workforce companies need and want to hire. Arizona's long-term economic success and competitiveness are directly tied to our ability to educate our workforce to attract and retain good companies and jobs.	51%	39%	7%	1%	2%	90%
(INTEL/TSM JOBS) Arizona has had a great deal of economic success with massive investments by companies like Intel, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, and others. Instead of bringing in employees from other places, we need to ensure that Arizona can provide the well-trained workforce needed by these high-wage employers, and that the people of Arizona benefit the most.	47%	37%	8%	6%	2%	84%
(LIFETIME INCOME) The economic benefits of education after high school are undeniable. On average, lifetime earnings for individuals with bachelor's degrees are nearly three times greater than individuals whose education stops after high school. Lifetime earnings for people who attend a two-year community or technical college or a workforce certification program are also significantly higher.	41%	41%	11%	4%	2%	82%
(BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL) For generations, workers could find steady employment with a high school education. But today, most good paying jobs require completion of some education beyond high school. Increasing access to job training and career education programs beyond high school will help to make sure Arizona students have the skills and education to get good paying jobs.	44%	38%	9%	6%	2%	82%



	VERY CONV	SMWT CONV	NOT CONV	DON'T BEL	(DON'T READ) DK/NA	VERY / SMWT CONV
(SKILLS GAP) There are currently thousands of unfilled jobs in Arizona—with massive shortages in teaching, nursing, the sciences and healthcare—because our state’s workforce does not have the right skills to fill those jobs. We need to produce more highly-skilled workers in these fields to reduce the unemployment rate, save the state money, and keep our economy moving. We must expand opportunities for higher education and support low- and middle-income students as they train for the jobs our state’s economy needs.	46%	35%	11%	6%	2%	81%
(AZ ECONOMY) Arizona has billions to gain by promoting higher education—increasing the number of people who continue their education beyond high school by 20 percent would add five billion dollars to the state’s economy every year. A well-educated workforce will help Arizona to retain and attract good companies who need trained and skilled employees, and creating more pathways to higher education can help to encourage more innovation and investments that lead to new economic opportunities and good-paying jobs.	44%	36%	14%	3%	2%	80%
(SOCIAL IMPACT) The value of higher education goes beyond higher salaries and more tax revenue for the government. As a population’s level of education increases there are significant social benefits that include higher levels of entrepreneurship and new business startups, fewer people relying on welfare and government programs, and lower rates of crime and drug use.	42%	37%	14%	5%	3%	78%
(INEQUALITY) Growing income inequality is one of the biggest challenges we face in Arizona today, and lack of access to a higher education contributes to the widening gap between rich and poor. Making in-state college, training and workforce certification programs more accessible to low- and moderate-income students will help ensure Arizona students in need are not left behind.	40%	33%	15%	9%	2%	73%