

Media Release

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Contact:

Greg Hyland

602.595.9392 / 928.580-4751 (cell)

ghyland@collegesuccessarizona.org

New Research Finds Gap Between Postsecondary Certificate and Degree Holders and Projected Workforce Requirements

College Success Arizona Releases Policy Brief on Increasing the Postsecondary Degree Attainment Rate in Arizona

(Phoenix, AZ, August 27, 2015) – College Success Arizona released a [new policy brief](#) today highlighting the critical need to increase the percentage of Arizonans that hold postsecondary certificates and degrees, and the benefits associated with increased educational attainment. The brief has national implications as it spotlights five other states (Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas) serving as aspirational examples of states that have put strategies in place to improve college attainment for their students.

“Unlike the majority of other states in the country, Arizona has not set a statewide college attainment goal aligned to its future labor needs,” said Rich Nickel, President and CEO of College Success Arizona. “There is great potential value in setting a state supported goal to act as a beacon for higher education leaders, policymakers and hundreds of education-focused programs to aspire to as we work to improve postsecondary access and success.”

This report provides our state education leaders, legislators and policymakers with the essential information they need to understand the importance of increasing the number of college graduates in our state. It also arms them with the tools they need to effectively advocate for setting a statewide attainment goal—a goal that is vital to our future economy and society.

“Setting an attainment goal and closing the college attainment gap between Arizona and other competing states will not only increase opportunities for

all Arizonans—including low-income and minority students—but it will also create a significant economic opportunity for the state,” said Nickel. “Expanding our educated workforce has the potential to bring businesses and good jobs to our state, keeping more of Arizona’s homegrown talent, and developing higher-earning citizens who will generate greater tax revenue and utilize fewer social support programs.”

This brief is the first in a series of non-partisan and evidence based policy briefs that will be produced by College Success Arizona over the next year. Future reports will focus on: the economic impact generated by increasing Arizona’s attainment rate and what that rate could look like; understanding and overcoming barriers to higher education success; and highlighting personal success stories of those that have overcome obstacles to reach their postsecondary goals.

About College Success Arizona

College Success Arizona is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, building public will for college completion and providing a unique combination of scholarships and mentoring that increase college graduation rates among low-income and first-generation students across the state. Their work is done by: providing scholarships and [mentoring support services](#), building [partnerships](#) with college access programs and scholarship programs, raising awareness of the [importance of college completion](#) and the support of more than [200 college access and success organizations throughout the state](#). For more information about College Success Arizona and its partners, [visit www.collegesuccessarizona.org](http://www.collegesuccessarizona.org).

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