



2025 Fall Enrollment

Iowa Community Colleges



Department of Education

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Executive Summary

The Iowa Department of Education (Department) collects enrollment information from all 15 community colleges. This report summarizes several aspects of community college enrollment.

- Total Fall 2025 enrollment increased 2.2 percent over Fall 2024, reaching a pre-COVID-19 pandemic level, while part-time and full-time student enrollment increased by 2% and 2.7%, respectively.
- Part-time enrollment stayed greater than full-time enrollment with 66.7 percent of total fall enrollment. Part-time enrollment has been around the same record-breaking high levels the last three years.
- The share of enrollment of nontraditional college-age students in total enrollment decreased by 0.8 percent.
- Building on last year's 2.3 percent growth, joint enrollment rose by an additional 4.9 percent, continuing its upward trajectory.
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollment increased 0.5 percent.
- Online enrollment increased 4.2 percent and online credit hours increased 5.3 percent. Online enrollment as a percentage of total enrollment increased to 51.7 percent, which is 0.9 percent higher than in Fall 2024. Notably, during the fall of AY 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the share of online enrollment was significantly lower (38.2 percent). This upward trend has been consistent the last several years.
- The proportion of economically disadvantaged students increased from 23.9 percent to 24.3 percent. The percentage of students with disabilities decreased from 3.4 percent to 3.3 of the total student population.
- Compared to last fall, the proportion of enrolled minority students increased by 0.8 percent, to 26.5 percent. These numbers demonstrate a return to pre-pandemic percentages in the fall of AY 2019. This overall increase was reflected in all sub-categories. Students declaring multiple races and Black students had the biggest rates of increase, 15.3 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively. Number of Hispanic students increased by 3.8 percent while American Indians increased by 3.9 percent. In addition, numbers of Pacific Islander and Asian students increased by 3.8 percent and 2.0 percent, respectively.
- In Iowa, female and male enrollment increased by 2.3 and 1.7 percent, respectively.
- Similar to last year, students with no program of study comprised the largest group (37.9 percent) of total enrollment, followed by students in college parallel programs (32.3 percent).
- Percentages of new enrollments (19.5 percent of all), and new enrollments immediately after high school completion ("immediate enrollees", 8.7 percent of all), demonstrate continuous stability in proportion of all enrolled students, though it is 0.1 percent lower than last fall 2024. Nationwide, new postsecondary enrollments went down by over 5.0 percent [4]. Percentages of males among immediate enrollees (44.8 percent) are higher than in general enrollment (42.7 percent). Meanwhile, percentages of racial/ethnic minority students immediately enrolling (25.7 percent) is a bit lower than those for general enrollment (26.5 percent).



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Students

Many post-secondary education institutions across the nation have been showing increased enrollment despite the prior financial pressures as a result of uncertain state and federal support [1]. Iowa community college enrollment is following this trend as well. In Fall 2025, 88,530 students enrolled, a 2.2 percent increase from last fall. This overall increased demand in higher education was also surprising since total international student enrollment dropped 15% across the nation due to the change in international visa policies [2]. However, Iowa community college international student enrollment in 2025 is 7.4% higher compared to the previous year. Moreover, majority of community colleges in Iowa (12 out of 15) showed an increase in enrollment compared to last year (Table 1).

Figure 1 displays the change in full-time, part-time and total enrollment in Iowa community colleges from 1965 to 2025. It should be noted that Fall 2025 is the first year when Fall enrollment reached and surpassed pre COVID-19 levels (Fall 2019, 88,375).

Fall Enrollment Highlights



Enrollment
88,530
students



2.2%
increase
from last fall

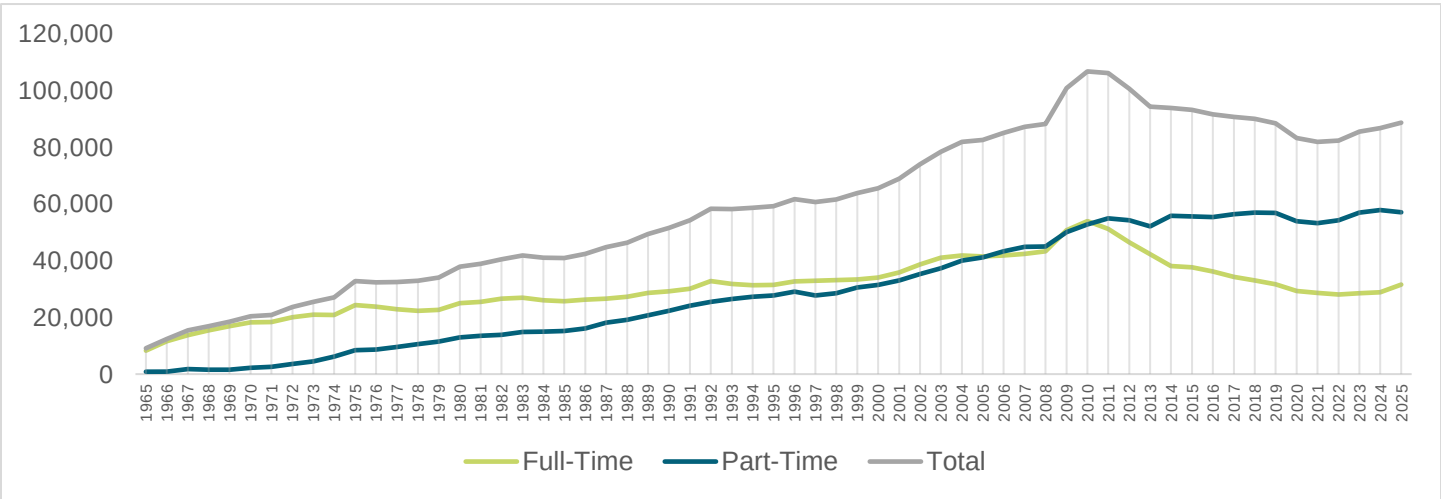


Enrollment increased
at **12 colleges**
and decreased at 3



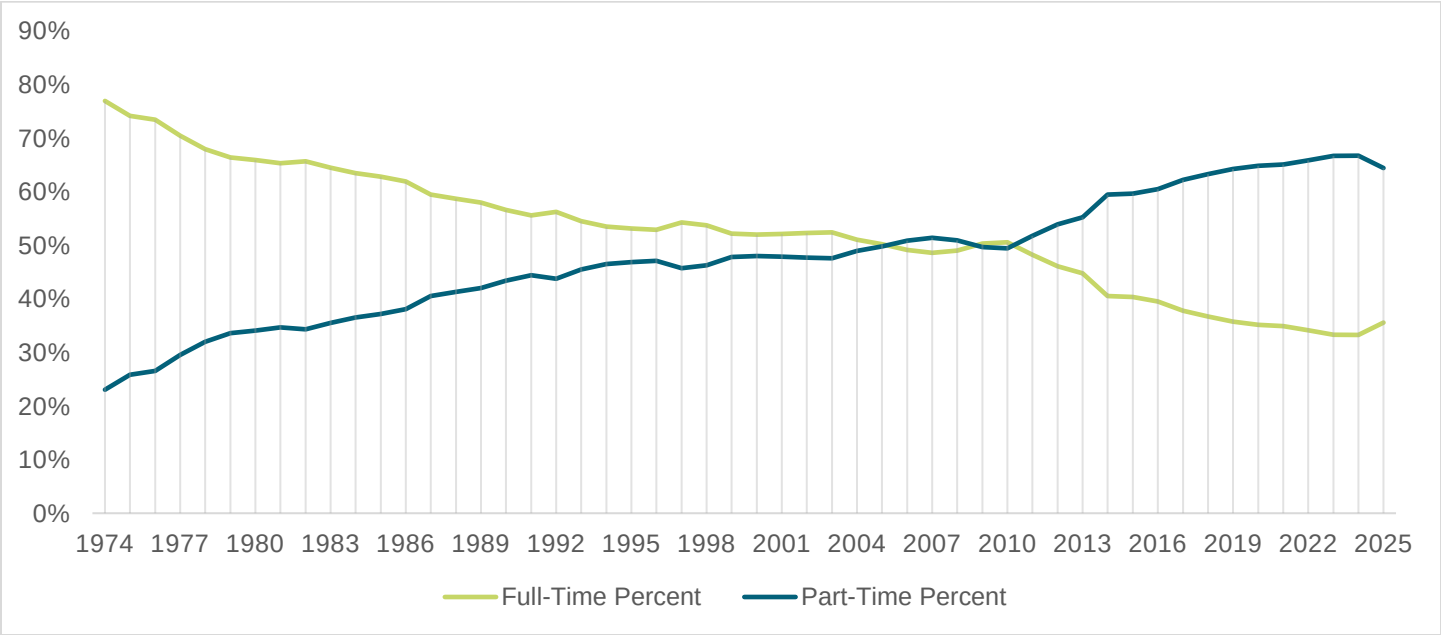
33.4% of
students enrolled
full-time

Figure 1. Fall Enrollment by Status: 1965-2025



The proportion of full-time and part-time students did not change significantly compared to last fall. The number of full-time students (i.e., students who enrolled in more than 12 credit hours) as a percentage of total fall enrollment has steadily declined from 82.3 percent in 1973 to 33.4 percent in 2025 (Figure 2). This fall, 29,588 of students enrolled full-time, compared to 28,808 students (33.3 percent) last fall.

Figure 2. Historical Enrollment of Full-time Students and Part-time Students as a Percent of Total Enrollment: 1974-2025



While the percentage of full-time students has been decreasing since 1973, the percentage of part-time student has increased steadily over the years. In Fall 2025, 58,942 students were enrolled as part-time students, which accounted for 66.6 percent of total enrollment, compared to 57,774 part-time students (66.7 percent of total enrollment) last fall. In terms of change from last fall, part-time enrollment and full-time enrollment increased by 2.0 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively. Table 1 shows a more detailed analysis of the full-time, part-time and total enrollment of each community college in 2025. Among all the community colleges in Iowa, Northwest Iowa observed the biggest increase in fall enrollment (8.2%) followed by Iowa Valley (5.6%) and Iowa Western (5.4%) while Hawkeye observed the biggest decrease (1.6%) which followed by Western Iowa Tech (-1.4%) and Iowa Lakes (0.4%).



Student Demographics

In Fall 2025, 56.9 percent of students enrolled were female, 42.4 percent were male, and 581 students did not report gender. Females have outnumbered males nationally in higher education since 1980. In terms of change, male enrollment in Iowa community colleges increased 1.7 percent while female enrollment increased 2.3 percent.

Fall Enrollment Highlights



56.9%
of students
are female



Median age
of students
18



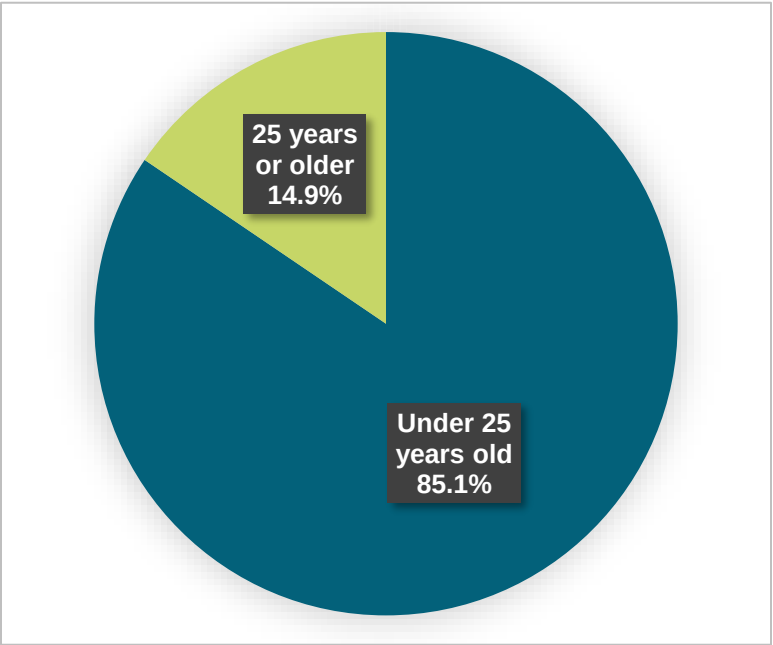
26.5%
of students
are minorities

This fall, the average student age is 20 years old, compared to 21 in Fall 2024 and Fall 2023 while the median age dropped down from 19 to 18 years old. Students under 18 (45.6 percent) and between 18 and 22 (35.9 percent) are the two largest age groups that Iowa’s community colleges serve, followed by students age between 23 and 26 (6.2 percent), and between 31 and 39 (5.2 percent). Other age groups in total comprised less than 10 percent of fall enrollment this year.

Disaggregated by traditional (under 25 years) and nontraditional college age (25 years and older) groups, enrollment percentages were 85.1 and 14.9 percent, respectively (Figure 3). Last fall, there was a 1.2 percent increase in the under 25 years age group. Figure 4 displays the change of Iowa community college data in terms of enrollment by age group from 2024 to 2025. Compared to 2024, 30 years old or older age group decreased the most by 5.3% while 17 years old or younger age group increased the most by 4.5%.

Around 92 percent of students enrolled in Iowa’s community colleges this fall were Iowans. Residents from other states accounted for 6.7 percent of enrolled students, and foreign nationals comprised 1.3

Figure 3. Traditional and Nontraditional College Age Enrollment



percent (Figure 5). Compared to last year, the number of foreign students in Iowa increased by 7.5 percent while the rest of the nation observed a sharp decline, 15%.

This fall, among the 82,742 students who reported their race and ethnicity, 26.5 percent were minorities, 0.8 percent higher than last fall. Hispanics were the second largest racial/ethnic group (11.1 percent), followed by African-Americans (8.4 percent) and Asians (2.7 percent). 3.5 percent indicated they were part of multiple racial and ethnic groups. American Indians and Pacific Islanders, respectively, constituted 0.6 percent and 0.2 percent. Figure 6 displays the change in enrollment by race/ethnicity from 2024 to 2025. It shows that Iowa community colleges had increase in enrollment in all race/ethnicity groups with the biggest increase in multiracial students by 15.3%.

This fall also saw year-over-year changes in some traditionally underserved student populations: single parents represented 2.3 percent of total enrollment (2.6 percent last year); economically disadvantaged students increased to 24.3 percent from 23.9 percent and students with disabilities decreased to 3.3 percent from 3.4 percent.

Figure 4. Enrollment Distribution by Age Group

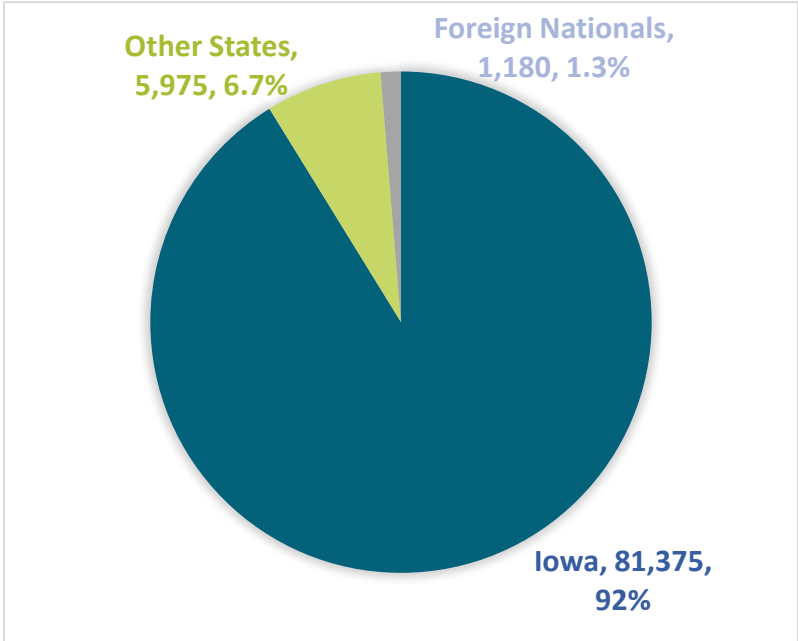
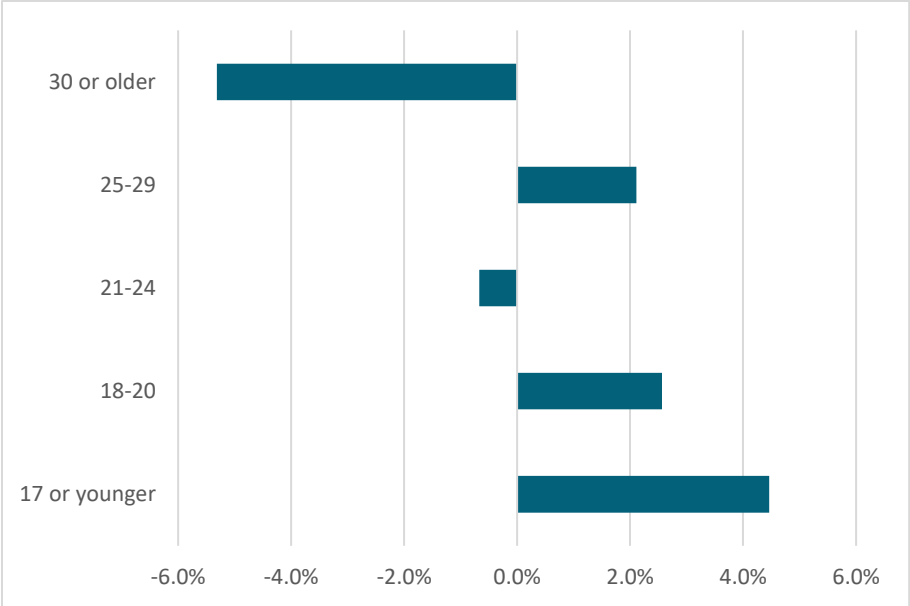
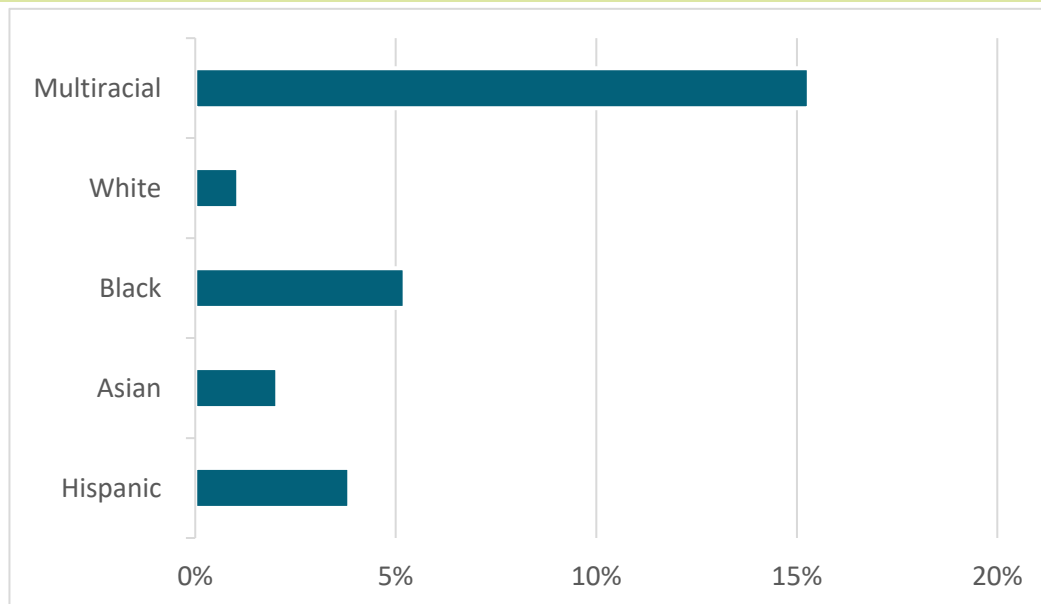


Table 1. Fall 2025 Enrollment by College

Community College	Total	Full-time #	Full-time %	Part-time #	Part-time %	Change from Last Year
Northeast Iowa	4,807	1,034	21.5%	3,773	78.5%	4.0%
North Iowa Area	2,722	1,296	47.6%	1,426	52.4%	2.3%
Iowa Lakes	2,018	844	41.8%	1,174	58.2%	-0.4%
Northwest Iowa	2,024	670	33.1%	1,354	66.9%	8.2%
Iowa Central	5,023	2,782	55.4%	2,241	44.6%	1.0%
Iowa Valley	2,708	1,333	49.2%	1,375	50.8%	5.6%
Hawkeye	5,040	1,916	38.0%	3,124	62.0%	-1.6%
Eastern Iowa	7,690	2,122	27.6%	5,568	72.4%	3.6%
Kirkwood	13,419	4,201	31.3%	9,218	68.7%	5.1%
Des Moines Area	23,891	5,708	23.9%	18,183	76.1%	0.8%
Western Iowa Tech	5,409	1,718	31.8%	3,691	68.2%	-1.4%
Iowa Western	5,889	2,416	41.0%	3,473	59.0%	5.4%
Southwestern	1,605	622	38.8%	983	61.2%	2.5%
Indian Hills	3,198	1,653	51.7%	1,545	48.3%	0.4%
Southeastern	3,087	1,273	41.2%	1,814	58.8%	1.9%
Total	88,530	29,588	33.4%	58,942	66.6%	2.2%

Figure 6. Percent Change in Enrollments from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025 by Race and Ethnicity

Academics

While total Iowa community college enrollment increased by 2.2 percent this fall, registered credit hours went up at higher rate of 2.9 percent. Students registered for 742,230 credit hours, compared to 721,586 credit hours last fall. On average, students enrolled in 8.4 credit hours in the fall semester, which is higher than last fall. Figure 7 displays the change of total credit hours, and the average credit hours registered per student over the last five years. It is noteworthy that although total credit hour enrollment has been increasing consistently, the average credit hours per student has remained relatively unchanged over the last five years.

Table 2 summarizes fall registered credit hours by college. Full-time students registered for 411,096 credit hours, accounting for 55.4 percent of total credit hours registered. This is a slight decrease from last fall, when full-time students comprised 55.5 percent of total registration hours. This fall, the average course load for full-time students was 13.9 credit hours which is the same as last fall.

Student Academic Highlights

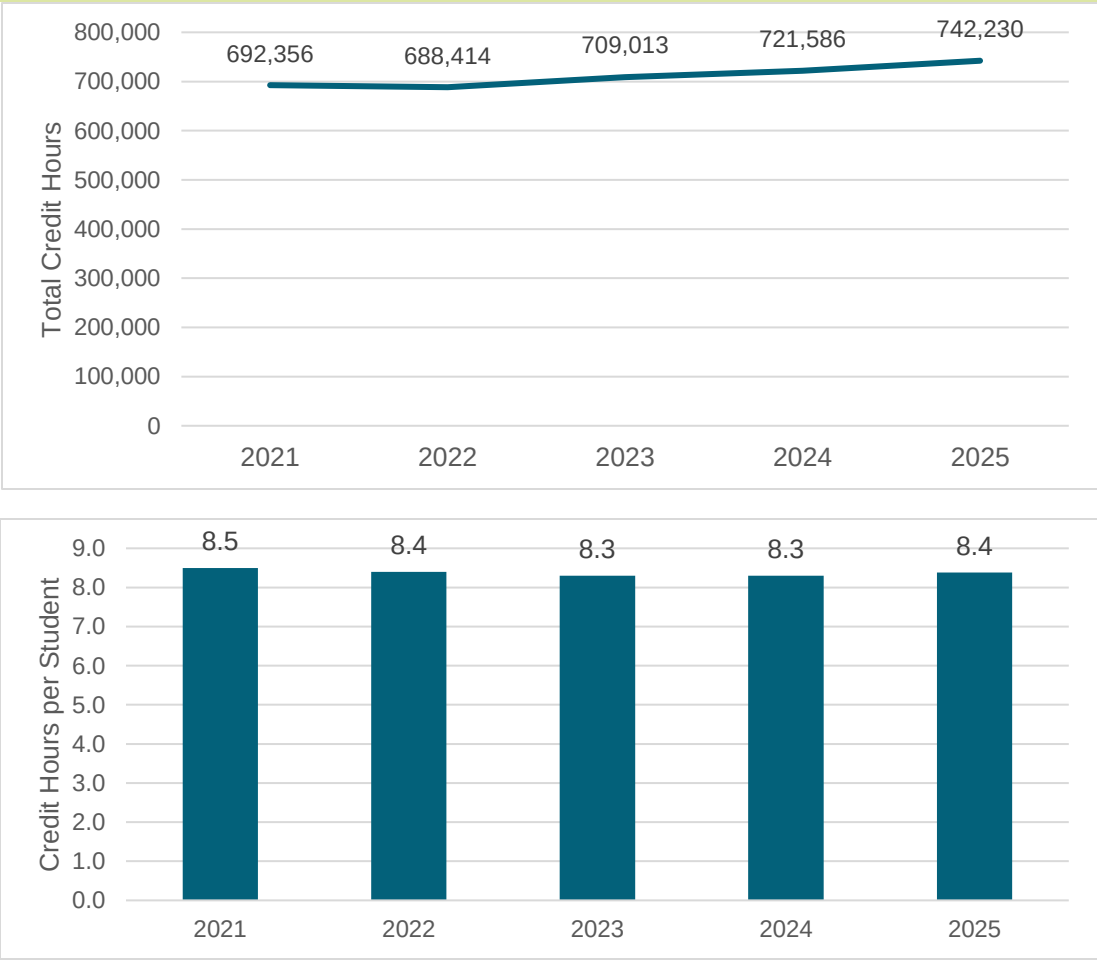


8.4
Average number of credit hours



Total Credit Hours up
2.9%
since last year

Figure 7. Total Credit Hours (Top) and Average Credit Hours Registered: 2021-2025



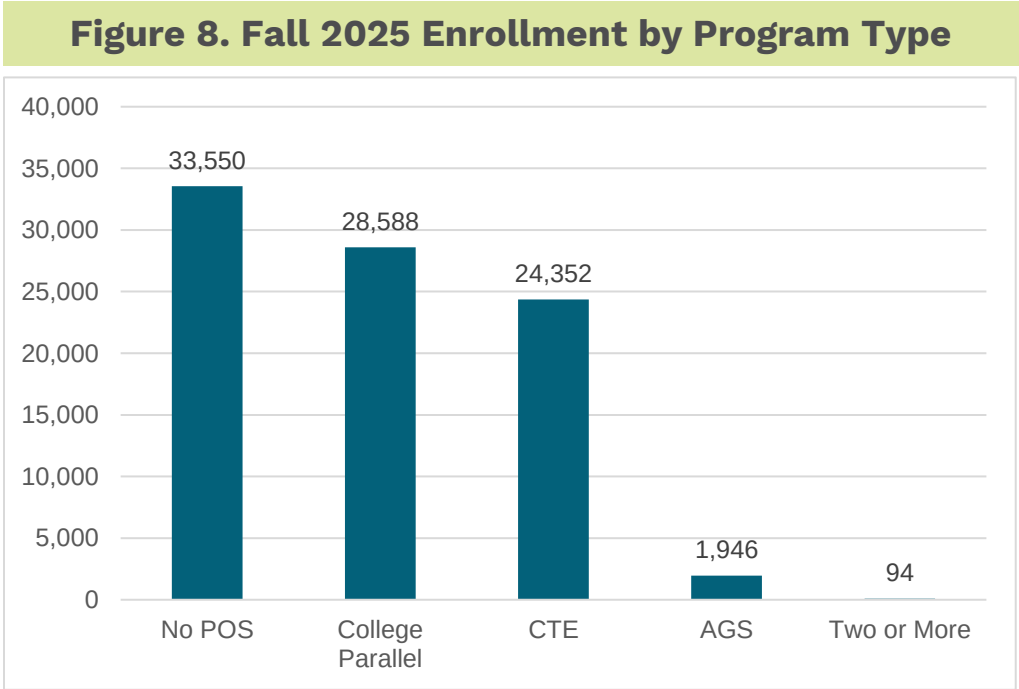
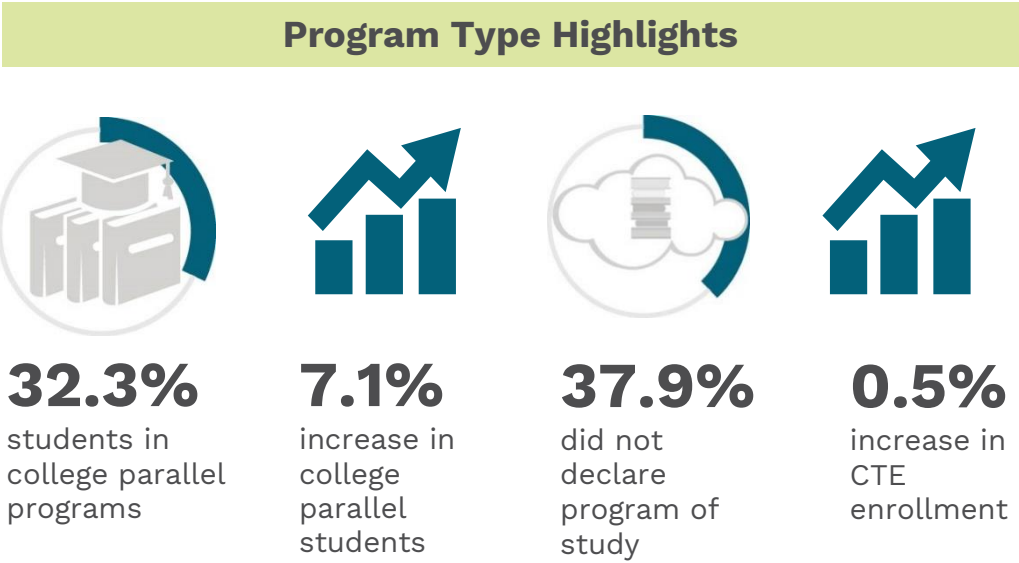
Meanwhile, part-time students registered for 331,134 credit hours this fall, accounting for 44.6 percent of total credit hours, a 0.1 percent increase from last fall. The average course load for part-time students remained unchanged from last year, 5.6.

Table 2. Summary of Fall 2025 Credit Hours by College

College	Total	Credit Hours Contributed by Full-Time Students #	Credit Hours Contributed by Full-Time Students %	Credit Hours Contributed by Part-Time Students #	Credit Hours Contributed by Part-Time Students %	Average Course Load for Full-Time Students	Average Course Load for Part-Time Students
Northeast Iowa	35,074	14,741	42.0	20,333	58.0	14.3	5.4
North Iowa Area	26,405	18,404	69.7	8,001	30.3	14.2	5.6
Iowa Lakes	18,839	12,557	66.7	6,282	33.3	14.9	5.4
Northwest Iowa	17,578	10,275	58.5	7,303	41.5	15.3	5.4
Iowa Central	52,672	39,402	74.8	13,270	25.2	14.2	5.9
Iowa Valley	27,832	20,063	72.1	7,769	27.9	15.1	5.7
Hawkeye	44,879	27,405	61.1	17,474	38.9	14.3	5.6
Eastern Iowa	62,065	28,652	46.2	33,413	53.8	13.5	6.0
Kirkwood	111,792	57,822	51.7	53,970	48.3	13.8	5.9
Des Moines Area	175,235	78,240	44.6	96,995	55.4	13.7	5.3
Western Iowa Tech	46,060	24,718	53.7	21,342	46.3	14.4	5.8
Iowa Western	56,426	34,308	60.8	22,118	39.2	14.2	6.4
Southwestern	14,866	8,996	60.5	5,870	39.5	14.5	6.0
Indian Hills	23,988	17,145	71.5	6,843	28.5	10.4	4.4
Southeastern	28,519	18,368	64.4	10,151	35.6	14.4	5.6
Total	742,230	411,096	55.4	331,134	44.6	13.9	5.6

Program Type

Programs offered by community colleges are generally categorized as “college parallel” (or general and transfer arts and sciences), CTE or general studies (Associate of General Studies, AGS). College parallel programs prepare students for matriculation into four-year colleges or universities, while CTE programs prepare students for the workforce. AGS allows students to receive a two-year degree with a custom-selected set of courses not leading to a specific occupation or direct transfer. Students who declared two or more different types of programs were reported as a separate group. Students who were not eligible, or were not willing to declare their programs of study for a variety of reasons (e.g., high school students taking college credits as joint enrollment), were identified as a group with no program of study (noted as “No POS” in Figure 8).



As shown in Figure 8, students with no program of study comprised the largest group, with 33,550 students, accounting for 37.9 percent of total enrollment. The next largest group of students declared college parallel programs (28,588, accounting for 32.3 percent), followed by students in CTE programs (24,352, 27.5 percent). This fall, 1,946 students enrolled in AGS programs (2.2 percent), and 94 students declared two or more different types of programs.

As compared to last year, number of students with no program of study decreased by 1.3 percent, students in CTE programs increased 0.5 percent and students with two or more programs decreased from 238 to 94. The number of students in college parallel increased by 7.1 while students in AGS programs increased by 35.9 percent.

Transfer Major Programs

In December 2017, the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents unanimously approved a Department proposal to establish a process to permit community colleges to adopt transfer majors. This process has now been authorized through Iowa Administrative Code 281 21.3. Transfer majors are designed to guide students to take program-specific coursework within their associate of arts (AA) or associate of science (AS) degrees that will transfer seamlessly into related majors at four-year institutions with the goal of:

- improving communication and transfer efficiency among institutions;
- providing students with a defined pathway toward their academic goals;
- supporting a more data-informed assessment/articulation process;
- avoiding excessive credits and decreasing time to degree completion and
- making postsecondary education more affordable, thus reducing student debt.

Student Academic Highlights



5,985
students enrolled in transfer major programs



1,309
students in business

This fall, there are 28 potential transfer major disciplines available to community college students, depending on which colleges are offering them. In the Fall 2025 enrollment data, there are 5,985 enrolled transfer major students across 28 of these disciplines (Figure 9), and across Iowa’s 15 colleges (Figure 10). The most popular transfer major disciplines for these students include: business, with 1,309 enrollments (21.9 percent); psychology, with 885 enrollments (14.8 percent); elementary education and training, with 719 enrollments (12 percent) and criminal justice with 436 enrollments (7.3 percent). These four disciplines represent 56 percent of Fall 2025 transfer major enrollments.

Figure 9. Distribution of Transfer Major Students by Discipline

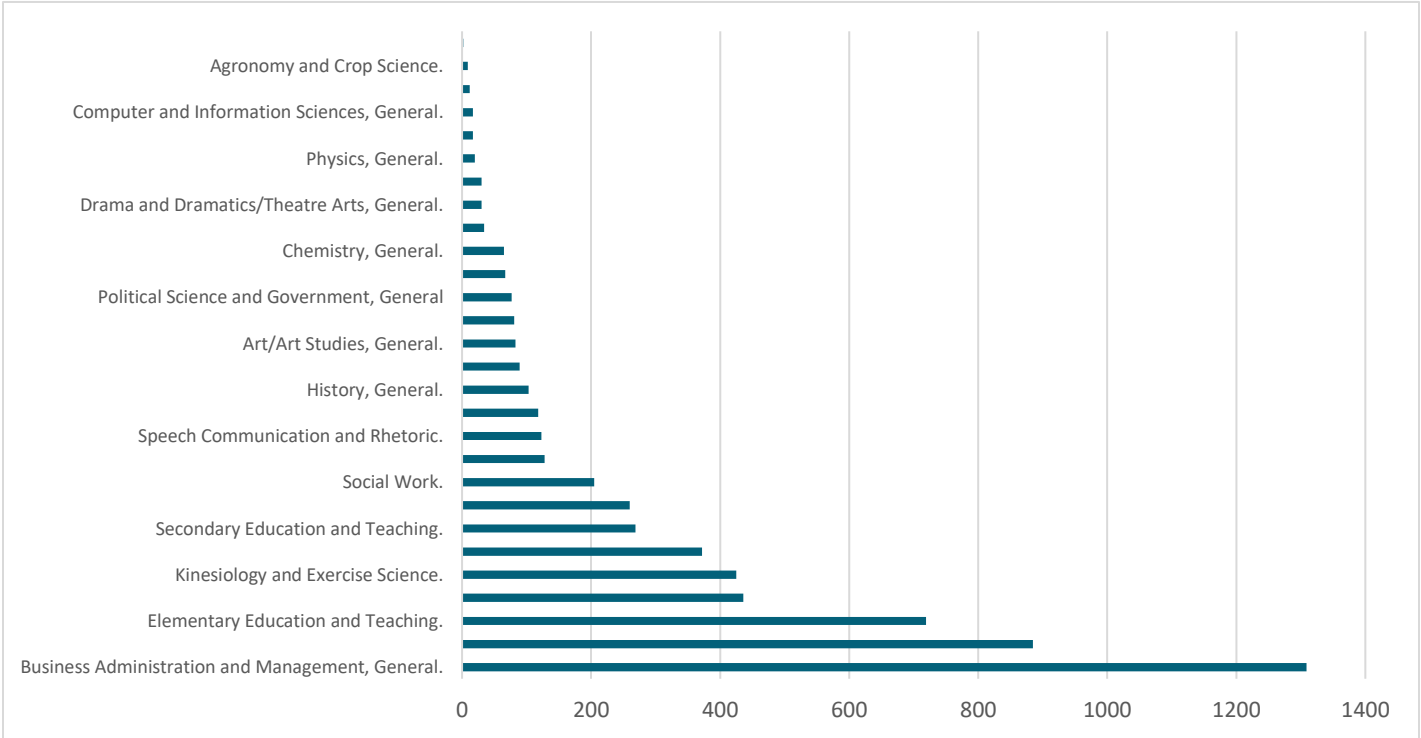
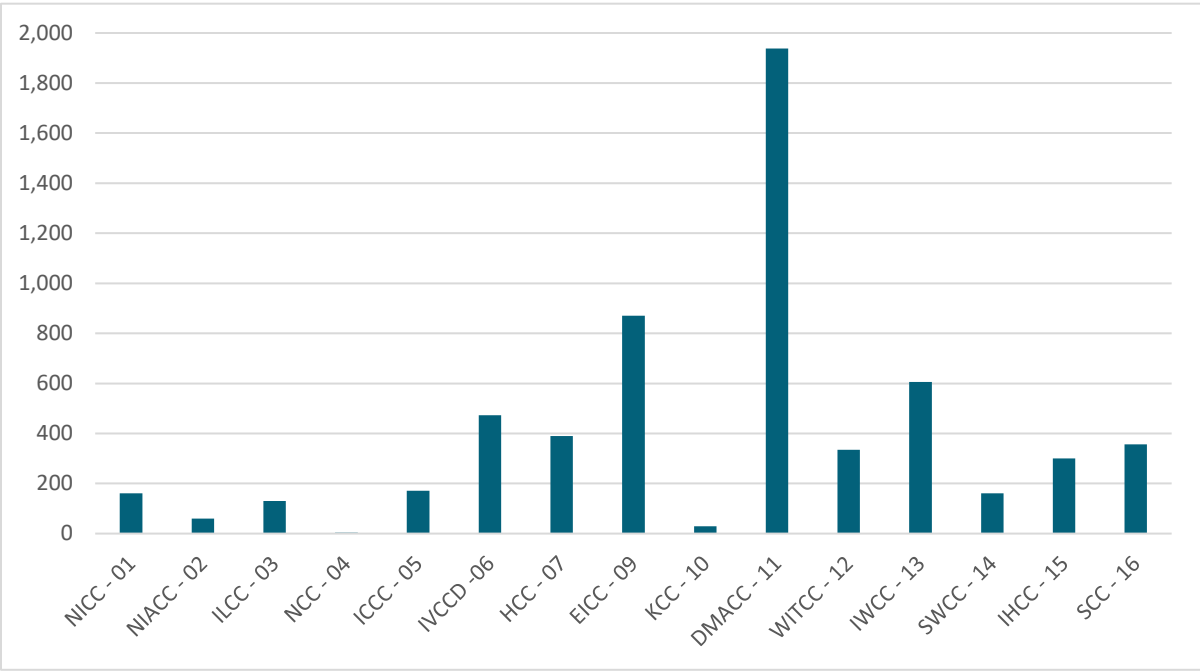


Figure 10. Distribution of Transfer Major Students by College



CTE and Career Clusters

Enrollment in CTE programs increased 0.5 percent compared to Fall 2024, comprising 27.5 percent of all enrollments (down by 0.5 percent from Fall 2024). While total enrollment intensity (measured as number of students) increased this fall by 0.5 percent, intensity of CTE enrollment (measured in credit hours of taken courses) increased by 2.2 percent.

The programs’ demographic composition has slightly changed compared to Fall 2024 as well. This fall, males comprise 46.9 percent of CTE enrollments, 0.1 percent lower than last fall. CTE enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students increased from 29 percent to 29.8 percent.

The Department reports CTE programs by the 16 National Career Clusters Framework, which aligns academic programs with occupational fields. Information on career clusters can be found at <https://careertech.org/what-we-do/career-clusters/>.

Three Largest Career Clusters



7,541
students in
health
science



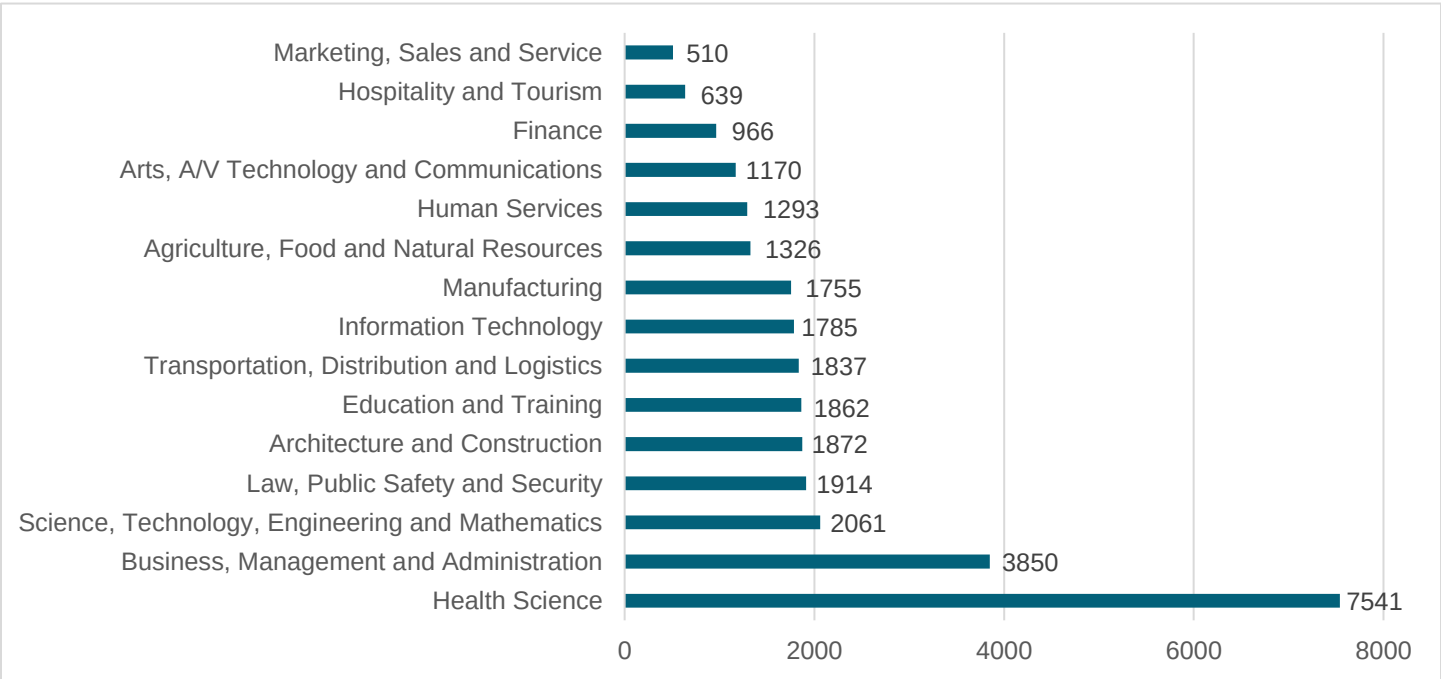
3,850
students in
business



2,061
students in
S.T.E.M.

Figure 11 displays the distribution of CTE enrollment by career clusters. Historically, the cluster categories with the largest enrollments have been health science; manufacturing; and business, management and administration. This fall the top three cluster categories with the largest enrollment are health science (7,541 students, a 9.1 percent increase from last fall), business, management and administration (3,850 students, a 3.6 percent increase) and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (2,061 students, a 2.1 percent increase). Significant decreases also appeared in architecture and construction (19.9 percent) and in law, public safety and security (17.9 percent).

Figure 11. Fall 2025 CTE Enrollment by Career Cluster



Online Enrollment

Online enrollment at Iowa’s community colleges is broken down into two categories: online classes and blended classes. An online class is defined as instruction delivered completely on the internet. In a blended class, at least half of the instruction is delivered via the internet, and the remainder of the class is delivered in a face-to-face context.

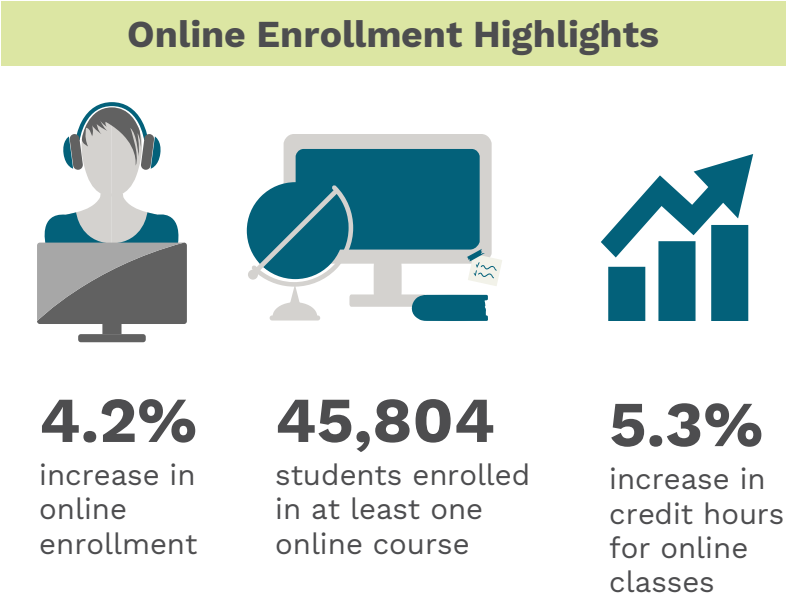


Table 3 summarizes the number of students enrolled in online and blended classes, and the number of credit hours attributed to online and blended classes. In Fall 2025, 45,804 students enrolled in at least one online course (a 4.2 percent increase from last year), and 12,762 students enrolled in at least one blended course (a 1.1 percent decrease from last year). Online course students registered for 263,363 credit hours. Compared to 249,998 credit hours last fall, this volume represents a 5.3 percent increase. This fall, students registered for 56,273 credit hours in blended classes, compared to 55,913 credit hours last fall, representing a 0.6 percent increase.

Table 3. Fall 2025 Online and Blended Hours and Enrollment by College

Community College	Online Course Hours	Online Course Headcount	Online Course % Change in Credit Hours	Blended Course Hours	Blended Course Headcount	Blended Course % Change in Credit Hours
Northeast Iowa	12,019	2,133	2.7%	1,263	372	-4.2%
North Iowa Area	10,474	1,995	18.9%	3,742	793	-2.5%
Iowa Lakes	6,703	1,239	0.3%	146	42	124.6%
Northwest Iowa	8,167	1,342	11.0%	273	78	-25.4%
Iowa Central	14,600	2,356	12.5%	760	162	-41.7%
Iowa Valley	9,611	1,825	12.6%	2,620	612	9.1%

Community College	Online Course Hours	Online Course Headcount	Online Course % Change in Credit Hours	Blended Course Hours	Blended Course Headcount	Blended Course % Change in Credit Hours
Hawkeye	12,718	2,444	5.6%	8,145	1,644	7.5%
Eastern Iowa	25,210	3,868	2.5%	3,054	648	130.0%
Kirkwood	36,603	6,562	8.3%	13,217	2,791	4.9%
Des Moines Area	60,257	10,618	4.8%	16,840	3,821	-9.7%
Western Iowa Tech	19,001	3,242	-7.7%	2,522	846	-4.3%
Iowa Western	24,587	3,888	9.4%	1,127	247	-17.5%
Southwestern	5,793	1,016	3.5%	329	92	-4.9%
Indian Hills	5,510	1,341	-4.1%	676	225	7.6%
Southeastern	12,110	1,935	4.5%	1,559	389	4.2%
Total	263,363	45,804	5.3%	56,273	12,762	0.6%



Joint Enrollment

Iowa’s community colleges offer joint enrollment opportunities to high school students. Such students may earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously, which is applicable toward a one- or two-year award, or to transfer to a four-year institution. There are three ways joint enrollment is provided to Iowa students: 1) postsecondary enrollment option (PSEO), which is rare, and only used in the absence of a contractual agreement between high schools and community colleges; 2) contractual agreements between high schools and community colleges and 3) direct payment of tuition. Students may choose to participate in more than one joint enrollment program during an academic year.

This fall, 42,896 high school students (unduplicated headcount) participated in at least one joint enrollment course, compared to 40,882 participants last fall, which represents a 4.9 percent increase. Students participating in joint enrollment programs accounted for 48.5 percent of total enrollment, and 30.7 percent of all credit hours.

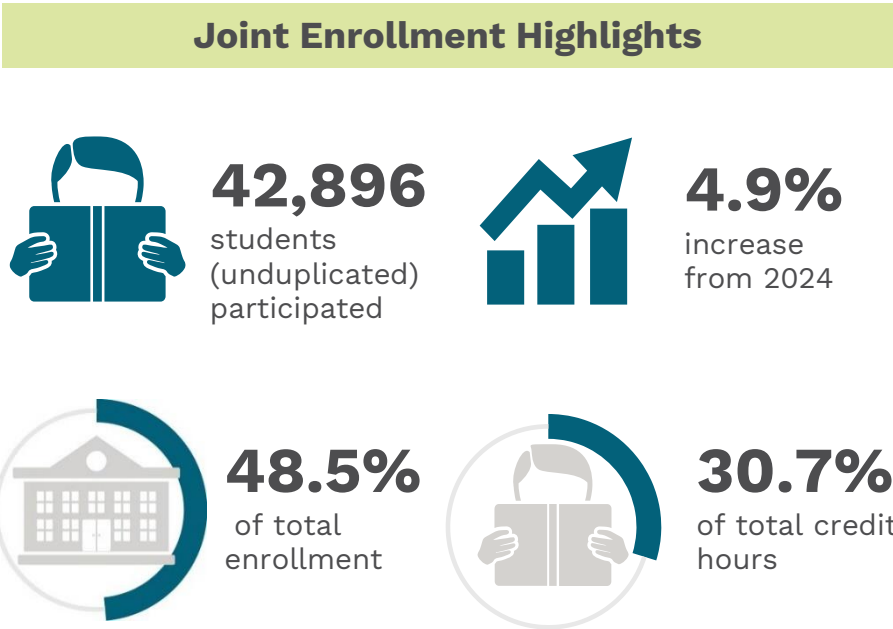
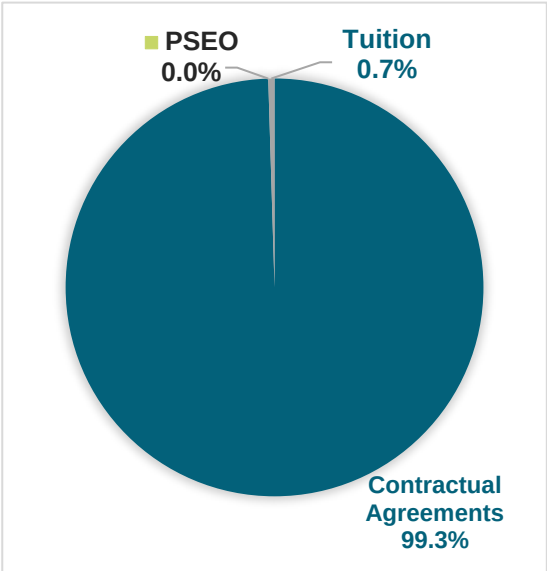


Figure 12. Fall 2025 Joint Enrollment by Options



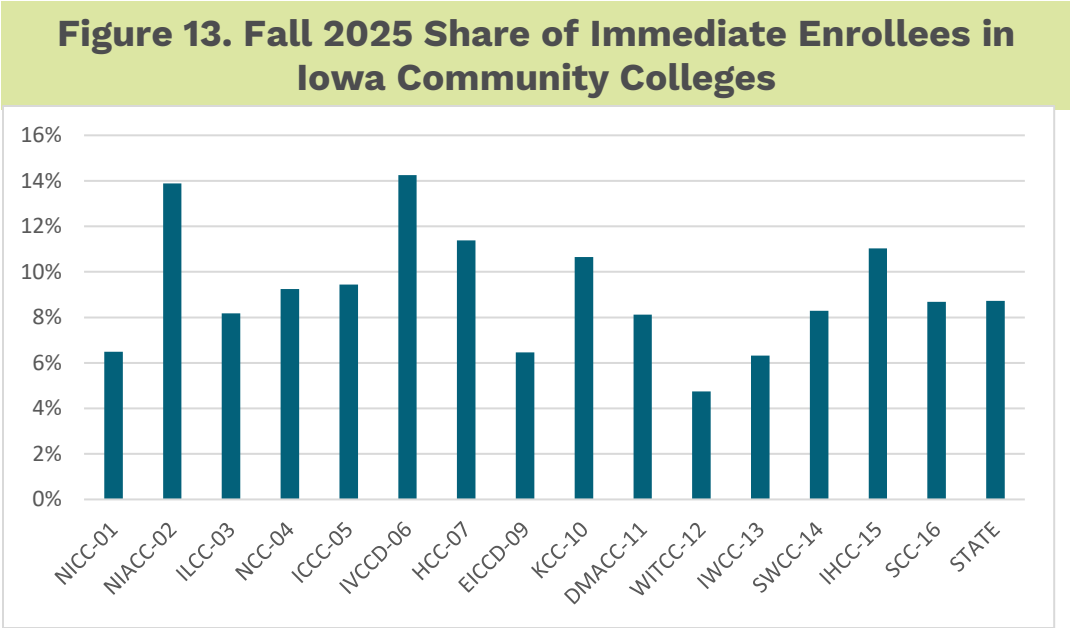
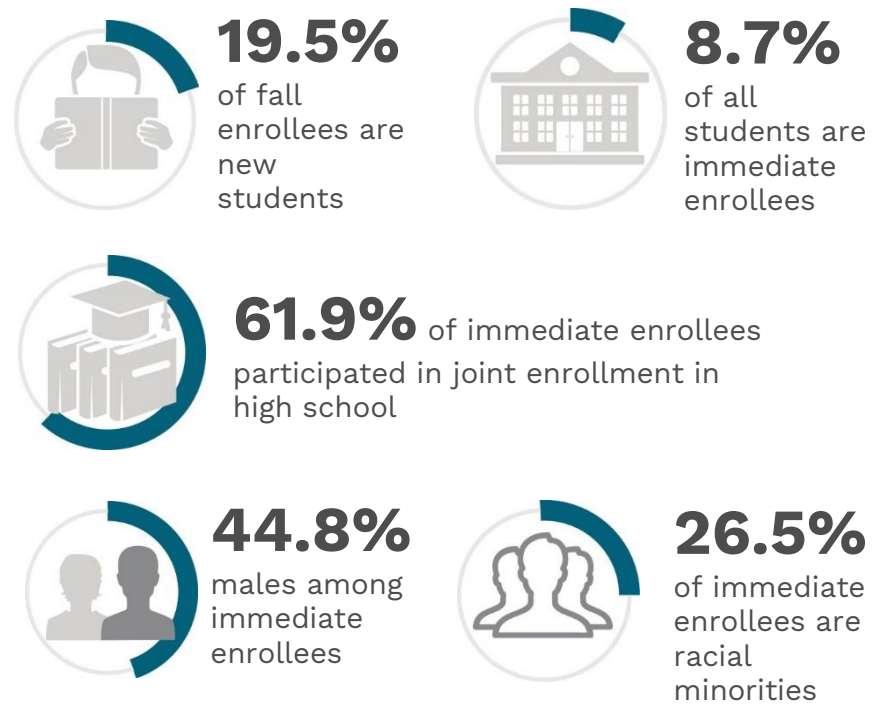
High school students participating in joint enrollment programs this fall registered for 227,639 credit hours, compared to 215,003 credit hours last fall, a 5.9 percent increase. The number of credit hours attributed to joint enrollment programs this fall accounted for 30.7 percent of total registered credit hours, compared to 29.8 percent last fall. On average, students enrolled in 5.3 credit hours which was the same last fall.

In terms of joint enrollment type, 99.3 percent of high school students participated in joint enrollment through contractual agreements (Figure 12), 0.7 percent through direct payment of tuition and no student participated in jointed enrollment through PSEO. These percentages present a slight decrease (by 0.4 percent) of directly paying students, and a slight increase (0.4 percent) of contractual agreement students, compared to last fall. No enrollment in PSEO is expected, as the rules for types of joint enrollment changed as of academic year 2017-2018 [3].

Immediate Enrollment

Every fall, Iowa community colleges enroll a large number of new, non-high school students. This fall, such students comprised 19.5 percent of total enrollment (1.1 percent less than last year), with 39.2 percent of them having previous joint enrolled experience (up 3.2 percent from last year). A sizable portion of the first-time, non-high school community college population is comprised of students directly out of high school. According to long-term, annually stable patterns, this cohort of “immediate enrollees” comprises one-quarter to one-third of all Iowa high school graduating classes, and around one-tenth of Iowa community colleges’ total fall enrollment. This year, first-time, non-high school students accounted for 8.7 percent of total fall 2025 enrollment, a 0.1 percent decrease from last fall.

Immediate Enrollment Highlights

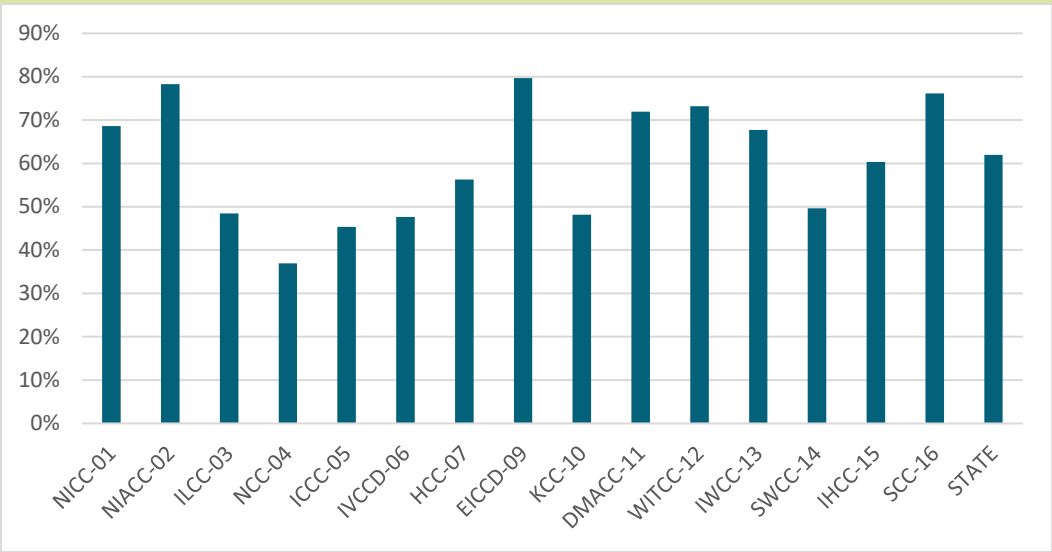


Every fall, the Department uses a state identification number to match Iowa high school students to community college enrollees. This fall, the matching procedure identified 7,724 students who entered Iowa community colleges directly after graduating from their Iowa high schools. Distributed by community college, these students represent a range of 4.8 percent to 14.3 percent of total fall enrollment (Figure 13).

Over 61.9 percent of immediate enrollees (4,783) took some college-level courses through joint enrollment opportunities while in an Iowa high school. This is a 1.8 percent increase from last fall. Distributed by college, those percentages range from 36.9 to 79.7 (Figure 14).

With the exception of age, the demographics of immediate enrollees is similar to all fall 2025 enrollees. However, males comprise a higher proportion of immediate enrollees, at 44.8 percent (a decrease of 2.4 percent over fall 2024). The percentage of racial minority immediate enrollees is somewhat lower, at 25.7 percent (a 1.0 percent increase from last fall). Most of the immediate enrollees (96.6 percent) are between 18 and 20 years old; 3.3 percent are under 18 and 0.2 percent are over 20 years old.

Figure 14. Percentage of Immediate Enrollees with Prior Joint Enrollment Experience by Community College



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