

Strengthening College to Career Pathways

*Insights from National Research on
Guidance and Work-Based Learning*

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EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Our Mission

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Strada supports programs, policies, and organizations that strengthen connections between education and employment in the U.S., with a special focus on helping those who have faced the greatest challenges securing opportunity through postsecondary education.



OPINION

Class of 2024, It's Not in Your Head: The Job Market Is Tough

April 29, 2024



Washington MONTHLY

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HIGHER EDUCATION

The Underemployed College Graduate and How Not to Become One

Choosing the right fields of study, the right school, and getting an internship can all make a big difference.



Half of College Grads Are Underemployed

Their jobs don't use their credentials or skills, study finds, testing implications

By Vanessa Posner
New Column Post

Despite half of college graduates end up in jobs where their degrees aren't needed, and that underemployment has lasting implications for their earnings and career paths.



Alexander Walsh, 33, worries that his first job after college won't use his degree. Marissa Glickman, 34, couldn't find work for more than a year after her degree.

The Shifting White-Collar Job Market

More college graduates than ever are underemployed as a result of a labor market in which a lot of jobs aren't using their degrees, according to a new report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The report says that the number of jobs that require a bachelor's degree has grown faster than the number of people with bachelor's degrees, and that the number of jobs that require a master's degree has grown faster than the number of people with master's degrees.

job doesn't stand out. The other reports taking an entry-level sales job is largely true after another year of job hunting following graduation. The thought is now better than working reception jobs or serving food in a local grocery store, but some reports writing over a graduate's lack of work experience is harder to find work elsewhere.

I would stress to someone like this, but as an employer, you can't be right for the right last time. You need to be prepared to give someone a second chance if you can't find a better one.

College is recognizing that it's highly important to make sure that students are prepared for the job market. It's not just about getting a degree, it's about getting a degree that will help you find a job.

Most graduates find jobs in their field, but some find jobs in other fields. Some find jobs in their field, but some find jobs in other fields. Some find jobs in their field, but some find jobs in other fields.

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and give it the attention it deserves," said Douglas Meacham, a business professor and chief economist.

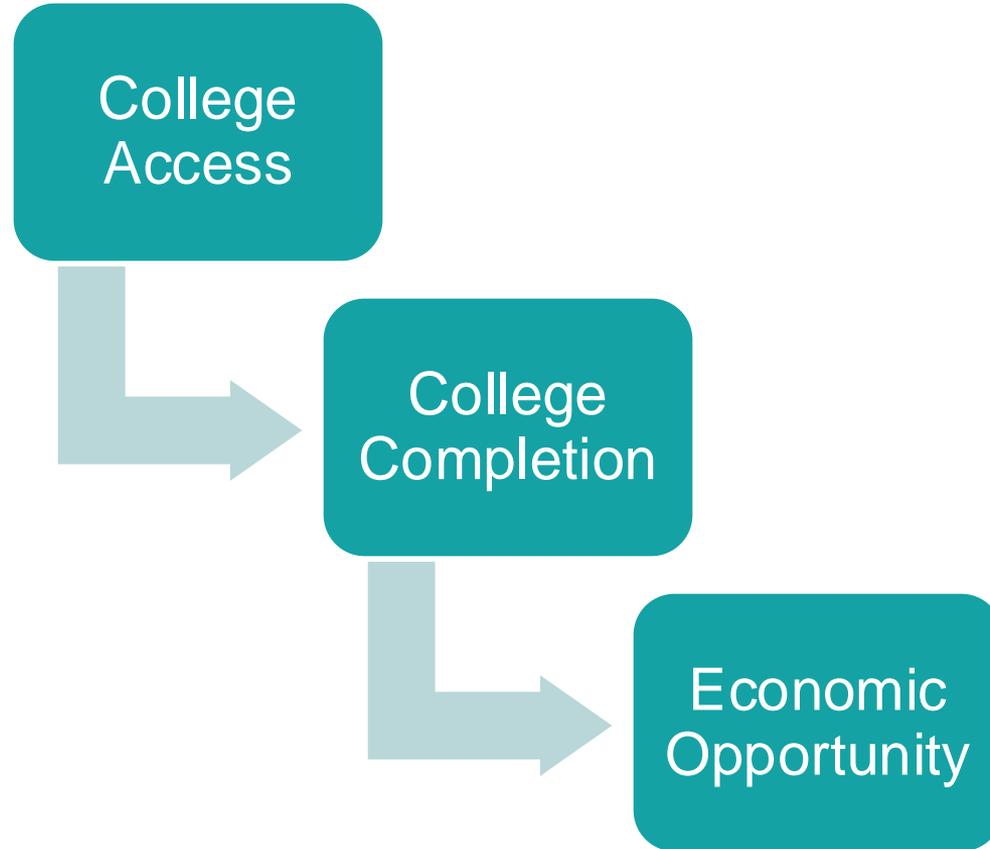
Increasing over one percent during college suggests that the job market is slowly improving, according to the report. The report says that the number of jobs that require a bachelor's degree has grown faster than the number of people with bachelor's degrees.

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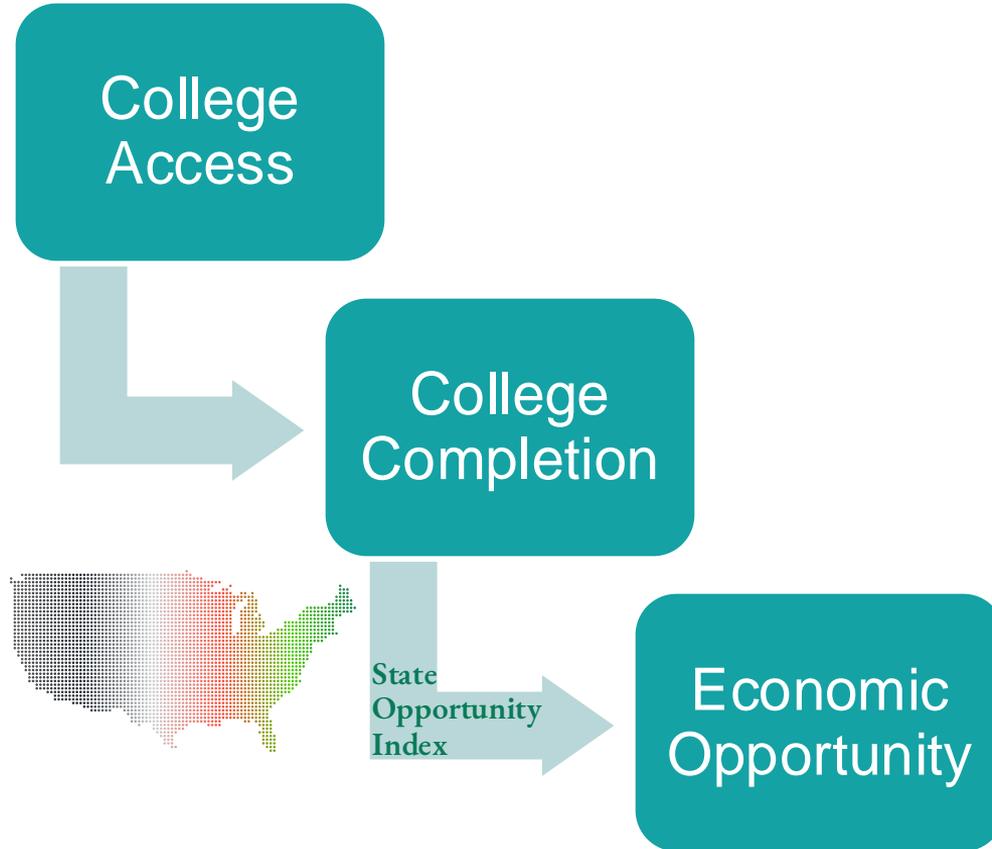
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From Access to Completion to Opportunity



From Access to Completion to Opportunity : How do we get there?

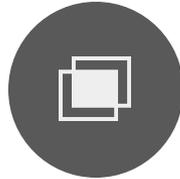


State Opportunity Index

The State Opportunity Index was developed to help states develop stronger, more equitable pathways to opportunity. Based on **five priority areas**, the Index gives education leaders, policymakers, and the business community a framework for helping students achieve their education and career goals.



Affordability



**Employer
Alignment**



**Quality
Coaching**



**Work-based
Learning**



**Clear
Outcomes**

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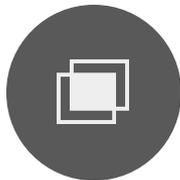
IPEDS, ACS



Affordability

How much would a student need to work to pay for school?

IPEDS, Job Postings



Employer Alignment

Do graduates' qualifications match talent needs?

Student Survey



Quality Coaching

Do students receive guidance, information, and support to choose their pathway?



Work-based Learning

Do students participate in paid internships?

State Offices, JEDx



Clear Outcomes

Do decisionmakers have and use robust data on education to career outcomes?



Work-Based Learning

All learners should have access to work-based learning experiences, including paid internships, that help connect their education to their career aspirations

Paid Internships

Internship

Did you have an internship while you were enrolled in your educational program?

✓ Yes

No



Pay

Was the internship paid or unpaid?

✓ Paid

Unpaid

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Linked to Employment Outcomes

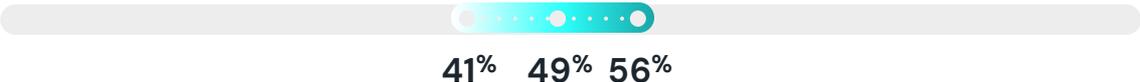
First job required a degree



Satisfaction with first job



Satisfaction with progress toward long-term career goals



- No Internship
- Unpaid Internship
- Paid Internship

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Results

Paid internships

CLASSES OF 2020-2023,
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

- Leading** 61 – 100%
- Advanced** 41 – 60%
- Developing** 21 – 40%
- Foundational** 0 – 20%



NATIONAL TWO-YEAR



NATIONAL FOUR-YEAR



CALIFORNIA FOUR-YEAR



FLORIDA FOUR-YEAR



NEW YORK FOUR-YEAR

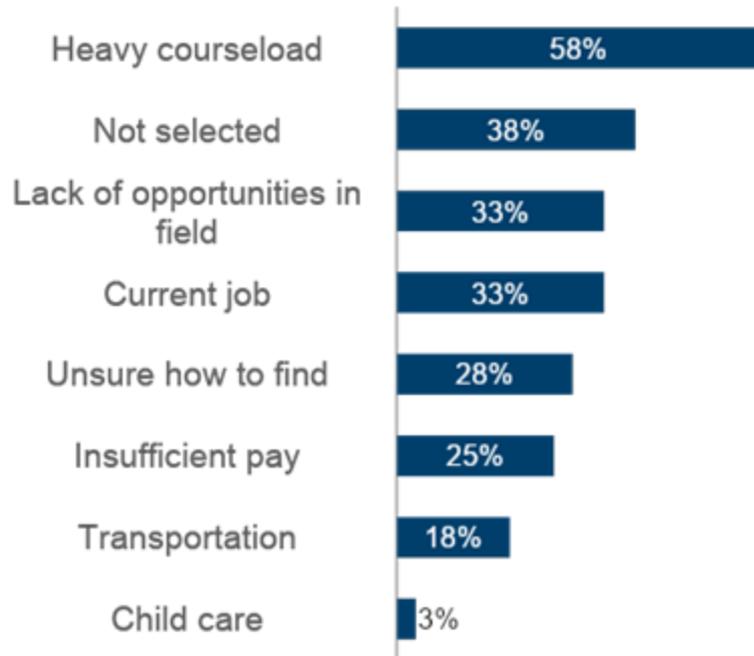


TEXAS FOUR-YEAR

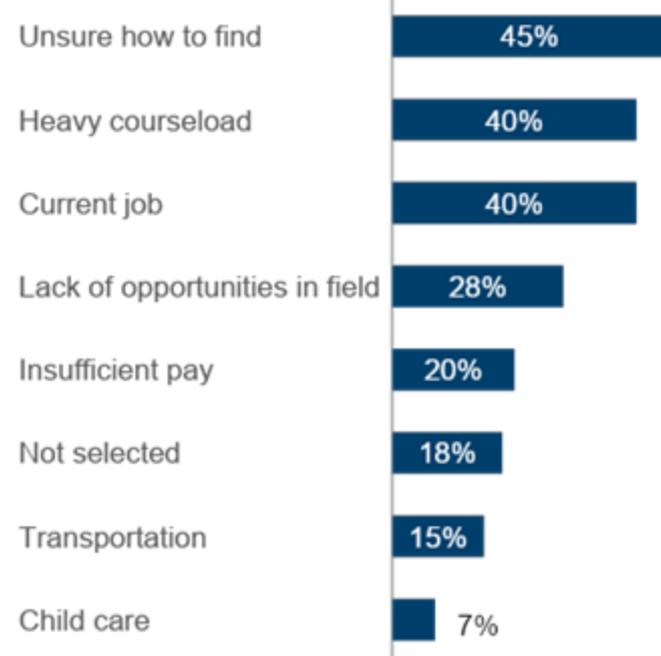
Why? Students Struggle to Find Internships or to Find Time to Participate

Reasons students were unable to participate in an internship

Four-Year Students



Two-Year Students

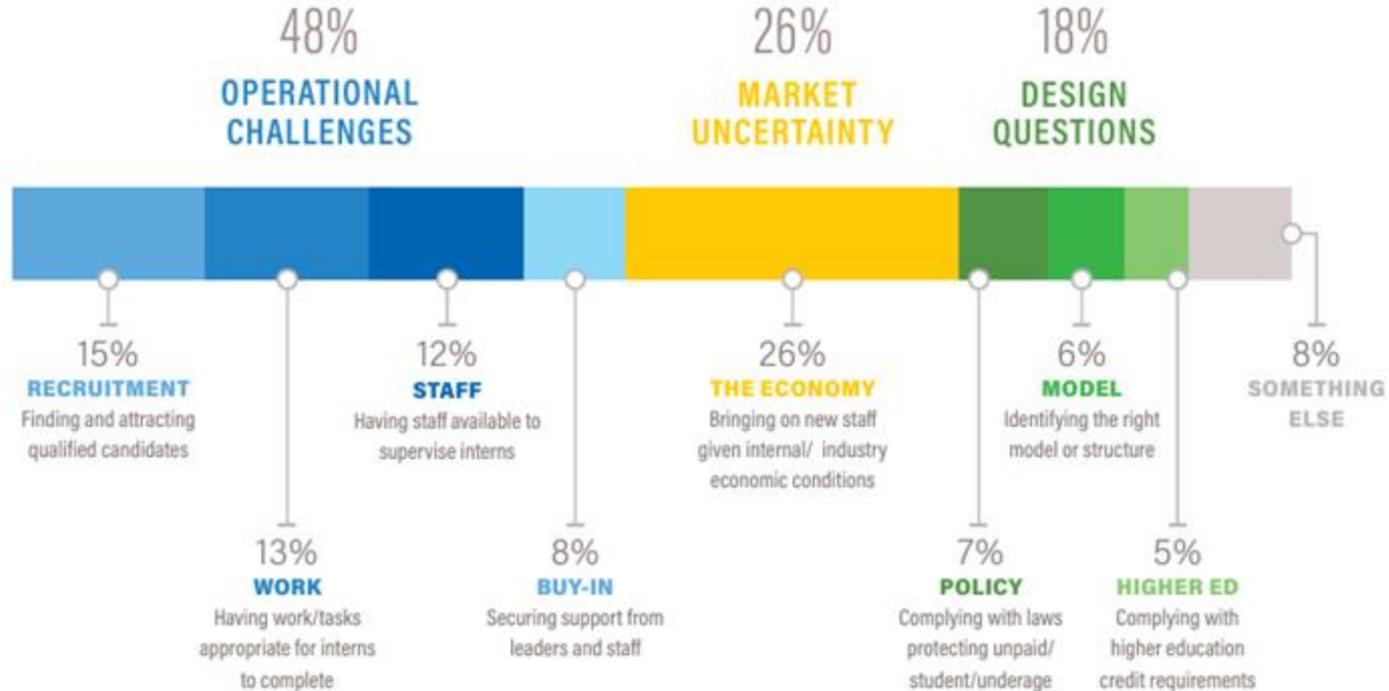


Source: Strada Education Foundation: National Survey of College Internships 2023, Weighted two-year n= 2531, four-year n=2824

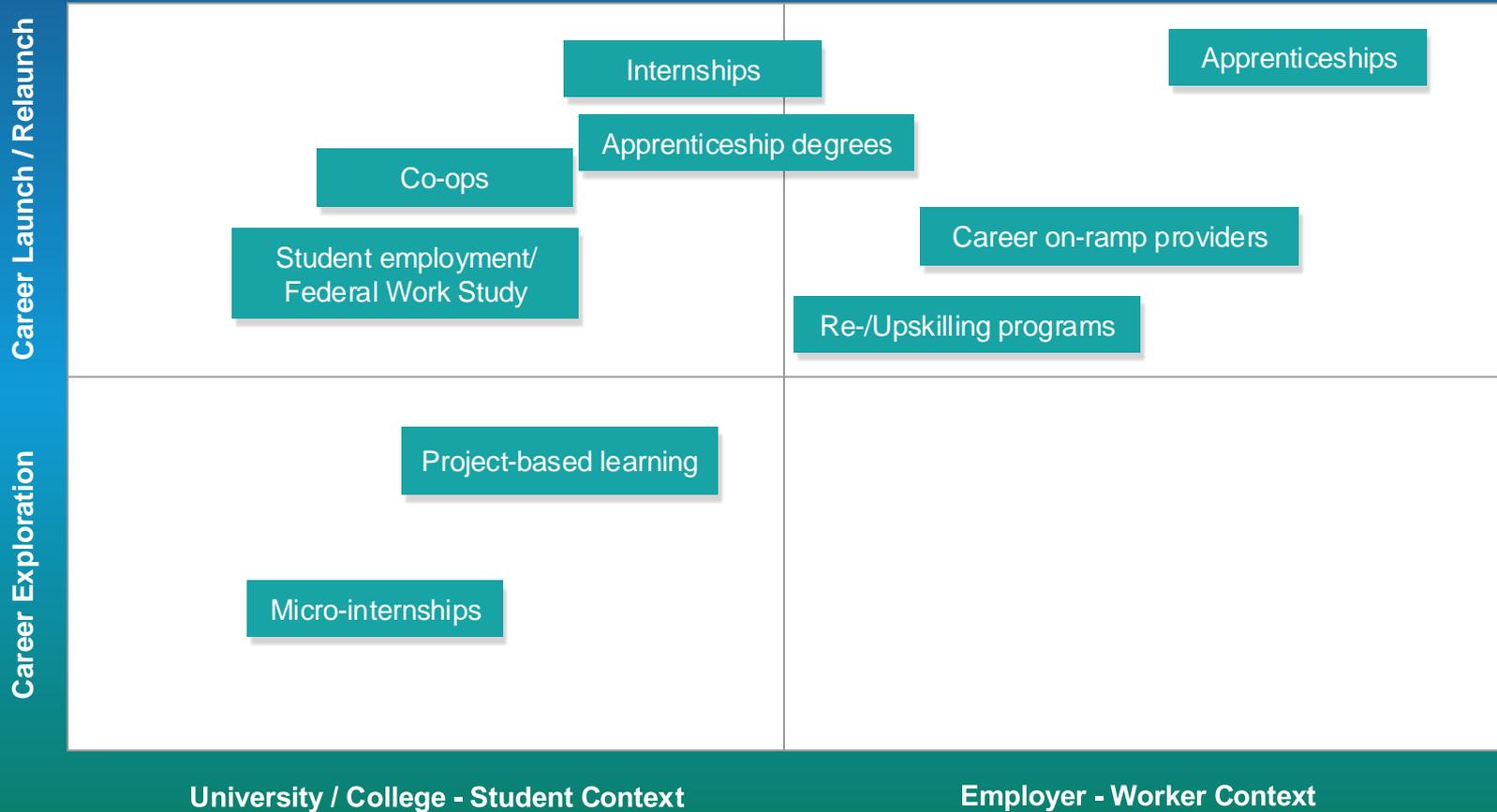


And, employers struggle with **operational costs** of internships

Percent of employers by primary reason for not offering (or potentially scaling back) internships



Work-Based Learning Models



Elements of quality work-based learning

- **Pay:** The gold standard is an employer-paid, quality internship or work-based learning experience that is both affordable and accessible to a wide range of students.
- **Credit:** Ideally, all internships and work-based learning experiences should be for credit and/or embedded into a course and aligned to the student's major and field of study.
- **Mentorship & coaching:** Students should have supervised, human-supported mentorship and coaching from both the educational institution and the employer that includes guidance, feedback, and career planning.
- **Skills and competencies:** Internships and work-based learning experiences should provide in-demand, transferable skills and related disciplinary knowledge that connect to a student's education and career goals, as well as their talents and interests.
- **Accessible:** Internships and work-based learning experiences should be designed and measured so they are accessible to all interested individuals, regardless of the financial, logistical, and systemic barriers they face.
- **Employer engagement:** Quality internship and work-based learning opportunities are deeply informed by employer talent needs and necessitate that employers allocate enough time and resources to develop quality experiences.

Action steps to consider

State leaders

- Measure baseline and determine data collection approach.
- Convene institutional and employer champions who will lead the way.
- Braid funding to ensure dedicated capacity for internships within institutions and intermediaries.

Employers

- Embed internships in your talent pipeline strategy.
- Ensure experiences of value by offering pay, strong supervision, skill development, and mentoring.
- Consider both traditional and “lower dose” models (e.g. micro-internships) to meet varying needs.

Educators and Institutional Leaders

- Consider multiple work-based learning models including campus employment, co-op, and internships.
- Prepare students to secure and thrive in internships.
- Designate specific staff and faculty capacity to focus on work-based learning.



2025

State Opportunity Index Survey

Opportunity to Participate in the 2025 Report

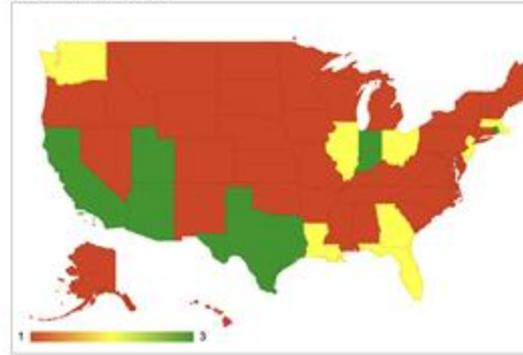
2024

- National alumni panel
- Reporting nationally and in 4 largest states

2025

- National student panel
- Reporting nationally and in up to 50 states
- Institutional participation (no public reporting)
- Expanded spectrum of work-based learning
- Robust demographic information for additional analysis

SOI Expected Completions by State
2-Year Institutions ONLY



*Red (1) = Less than 500; Yellow (2)= 500-999; Green (3) = 1,000 or more

SOI Expected Completions by State
4-Year Institutions ONLY



*Red (1) = Less than 500; Yellow (2)= 500-999; Green (3) = 1,000 or more

How to get involved

Public institutions are invited to participate in the spring 2025 State Opportunity Index

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Trellis
Strategies

Benefits

- Receive reports on the education-to-career guidance and work-based learning experiences of your students.
- Apply insights about your students' experiences to optimize future efforts and programs.
- Institution-specific results remain confidential.
- Trellis handles IRB process and on-boarding for institutions.
- **100% FREE to participate.**

What states and institutions receive

- A customized summary report with comparisons to peer and national benchmarks.
- A one-page infographic to highlight important key findings from the survey.

Institutions also receive

- A de-identified data file to assist evaluation and program improvement efforts.



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Trellis
Strategies



Timeline

**Dec 2024 –
March 2025**
Sign up
period,
agreements
signed

**Feb – Apr
2025**
Trellis invites
students to
participate,
data are
collected

June 2025
Institutions
receive de-
identified
results from
their campus

Oct 2025
Institutions
receive
reports

For more information about how to participate in the 2025 survey, contact Trellis Strategies:
surveys@trellisstrategies.org | (512) 219-2859

Thank You

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