Opportunities: Adult Education and Community Colleges

Kristina Flores, MS
Director of Research and Analysis, Texas Success Center

Tamara Clunis, PhD
Vice President of Academic Affairs, Amarillo College

Michelle Lamons
AEL Project Director, Amarillo College

Texas Success Center

Texas Pathways

The Texas Success Center

Dedicated to socio-economic mobility,
we support community college strategies
that will empower Texans to rise out of poverty and
achieve better life outcomes.

90%
1945

70%
1955

Percent of children earning more
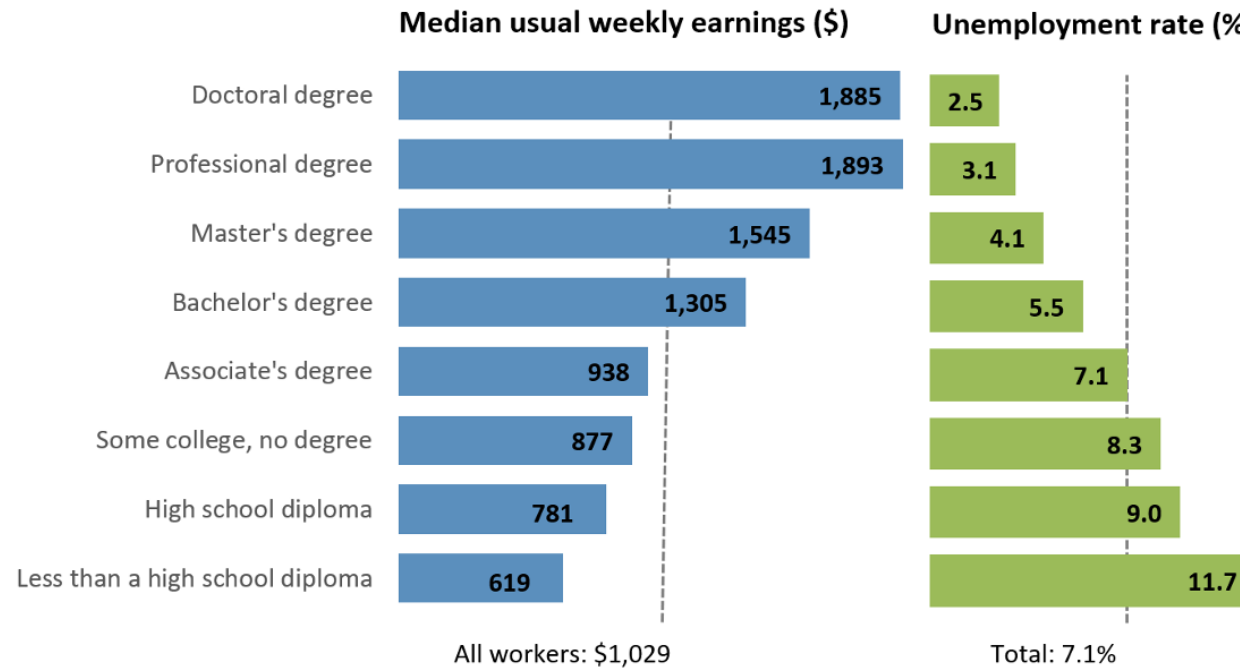than their parents, by year of birth

59%
1965

The Fading American Dream

The defining feature of the American Dream is upward social and economic mobility – the
aspiration that all children have a chance at economic success, no matter their background.
However, research shows that children's chances of earning more than their parents have been
declining. 90% of children born in 1940 grew up to earn more than their parents. Today, only
half of all children earn more than their parents did.

57%
1975

50%
1985

– Opportunity Insights

Why We Need Bold Change:
Texans need ongoing education to get good jobs.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2020

Educational attainment	Median usual weekly earnings ($)	Unemployment rate (%)
Doctoral degree	1,885	2.5
Professional degree	1,893	3.1
Master's degree	1,545	4.1
Bachelor's degree	1,305	5.5
Associate's degree	938	7.1
Some college, no degree	877	8.3
High school diploma	781	9.0
Less than a high school diploma	619	11.7

All workers: $1,029   Total: 7.1%

Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm

COVID-19 Context:

Share of Workers Unemployed by Education Level
Higher educational attainment is associated with lower unemployment rates.

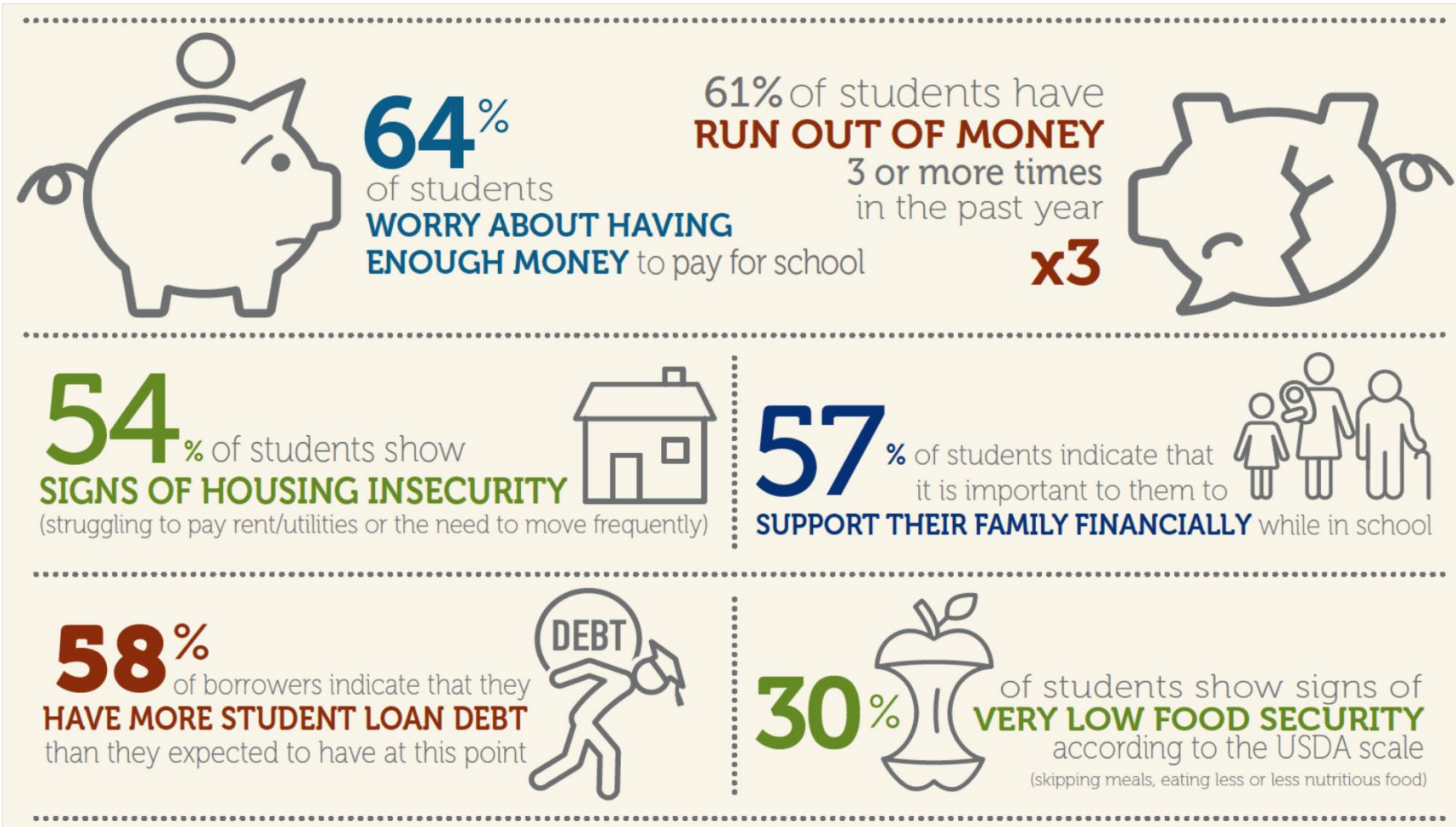# Why We Need Bold Change
Earnings inequalities persist after credential attainment.
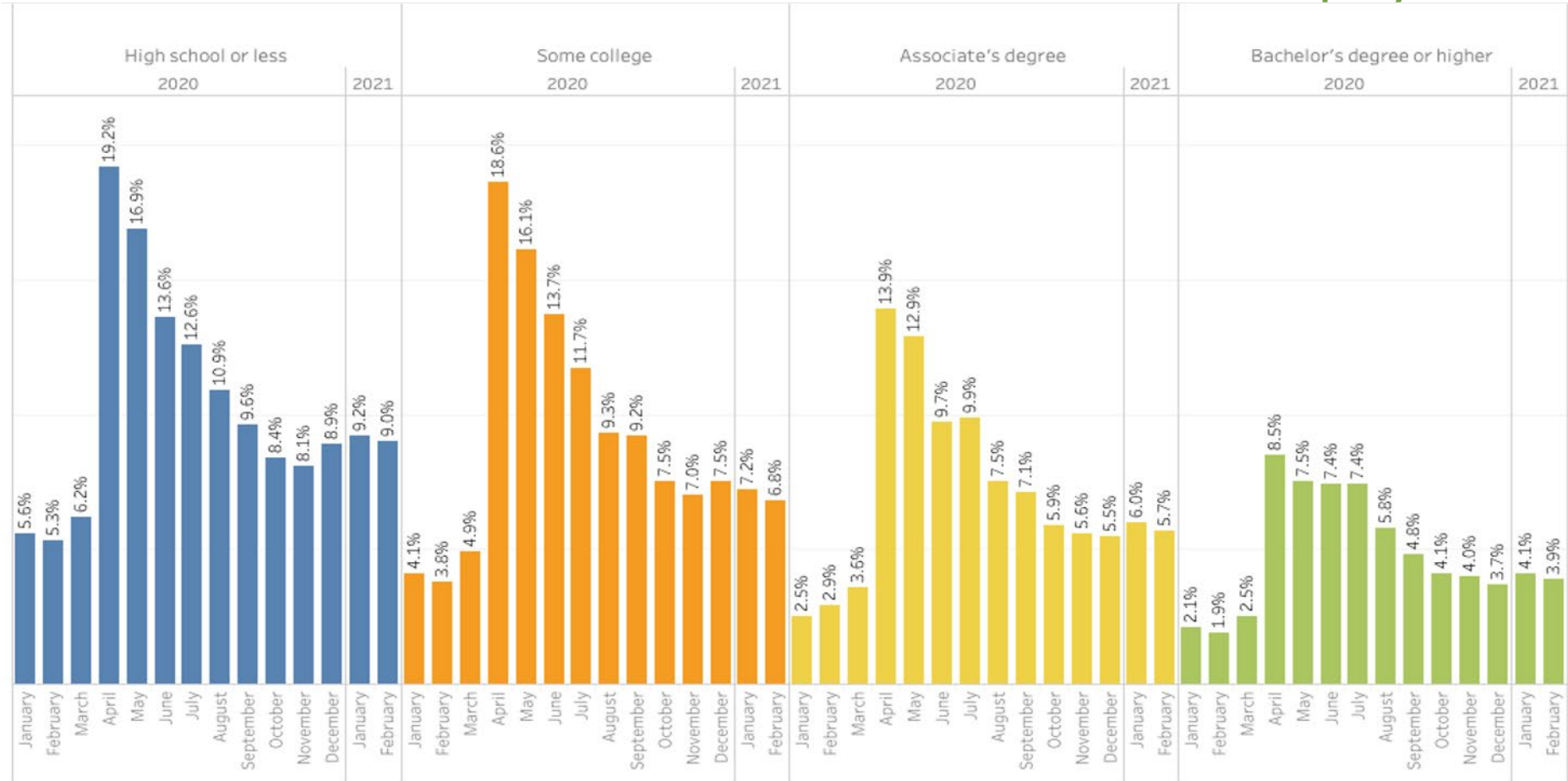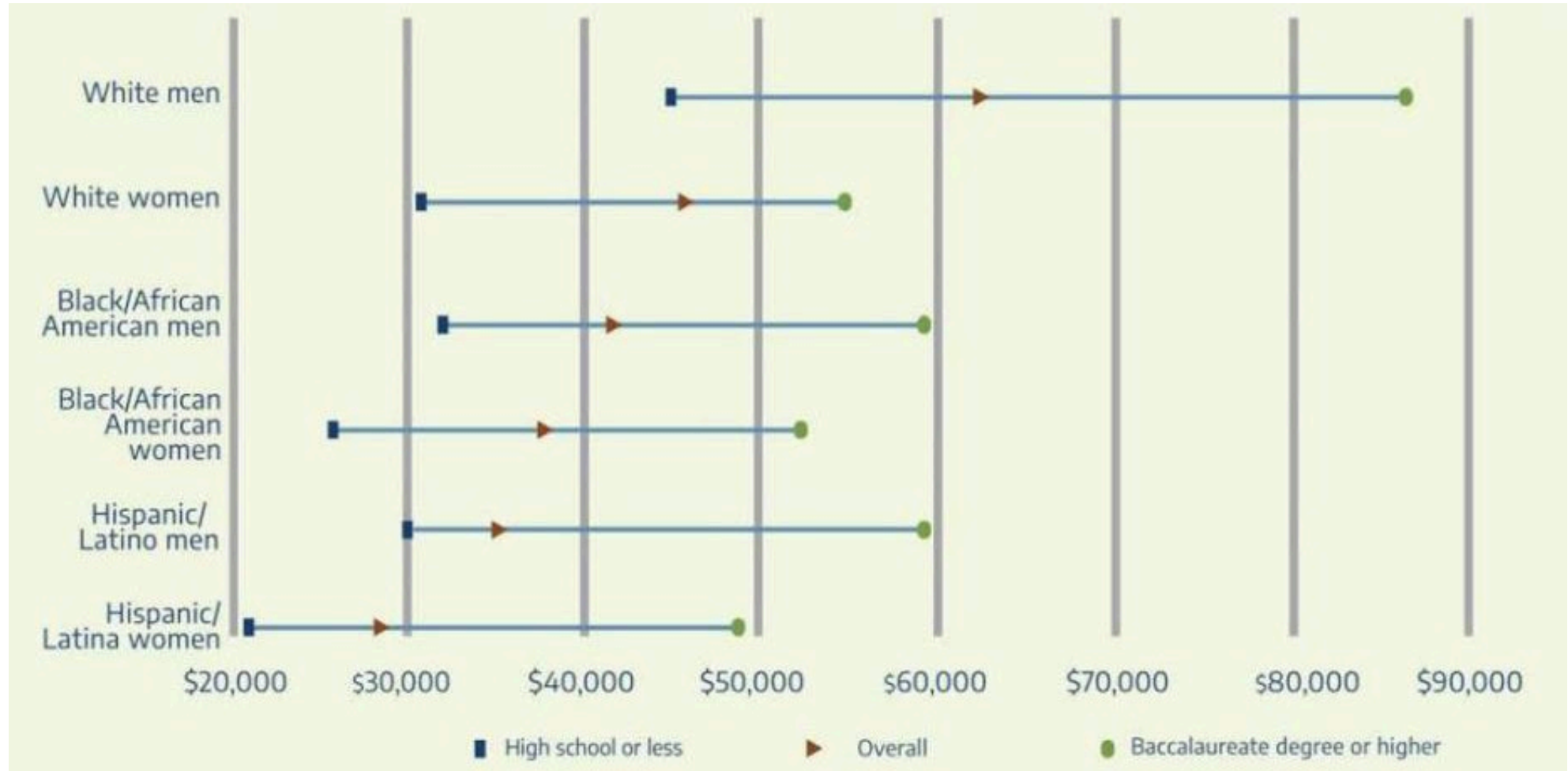
Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

Why We Need Bold Change

Community college students in Texas have immediate needs.

64% of students **WORRY ABOUT HAVING ENOUGH MONEY** to pay for school

61% of students have **RUN OUT OF MONEY** 3 or more times in the past year **x3**

54% of students show **SIGNS OF HOUSING INSECURITY** (struggling to pay rent/utilities or the need to move frequently)

57% of students indicate that it is important to them to **SUPPORT THEIR FAMILY FINANCIALLY** while in school

58% of borrowers indicate that they **HAVE MORE STUDENT LOAN DEBT** than they expected to have at this point

30% of students show signs of **VERY LOW FOOD SECURITY** according to the USDA scale (skipping meals, eating less or less nutritious food)

Texas Context

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs are managed by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

The governor of Texas has initiated a statewide tri-agency workforce initiative that includes the **Texas Workforce Commission**, the **Texas Education Agency**, and the **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
September 2017

State-Administered Adult Education Program Eligible Agencies
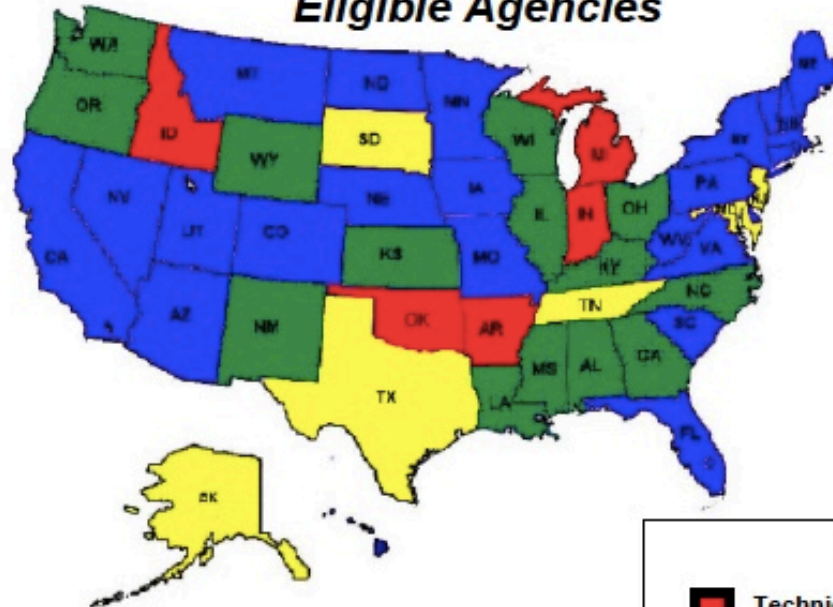
State Eligible Agency Types

🔴	Technical and Adult Education Workforce	05
🟡	Department of Labor	06
🟢	Community, Technical College or University	17*
🔵	State Education Agency	29**

*Includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marinas College
**Includes District of Columbia, Palau, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Texas Context

Community Colleges (18)

ISDs (5)

44 community colleges

Educational Service Centers (7)

Non-Profits (2)
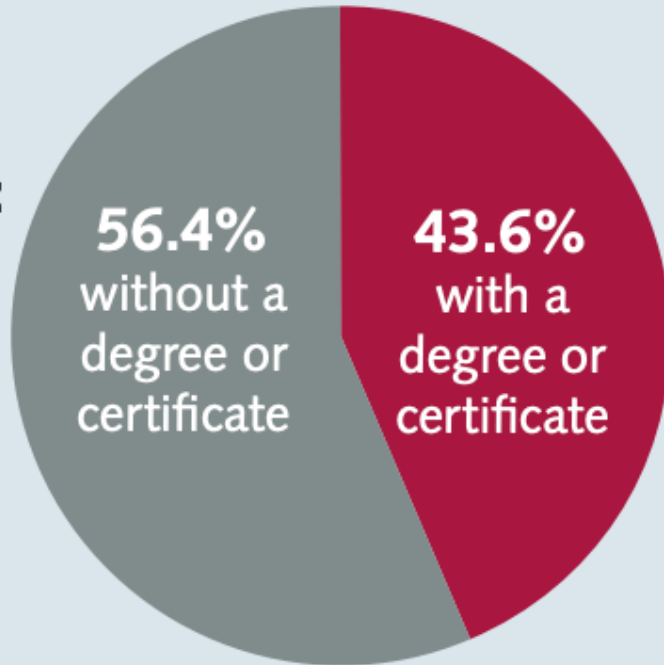
Workforce Boards (4)

Texas Success Center

Texas Context:

60x30TX: By 2030, at least 60% of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

Completion	Marketable Skills	Student Debt

Educated Population, Ages 25–34: 2018

56.4% without a degree or certificate
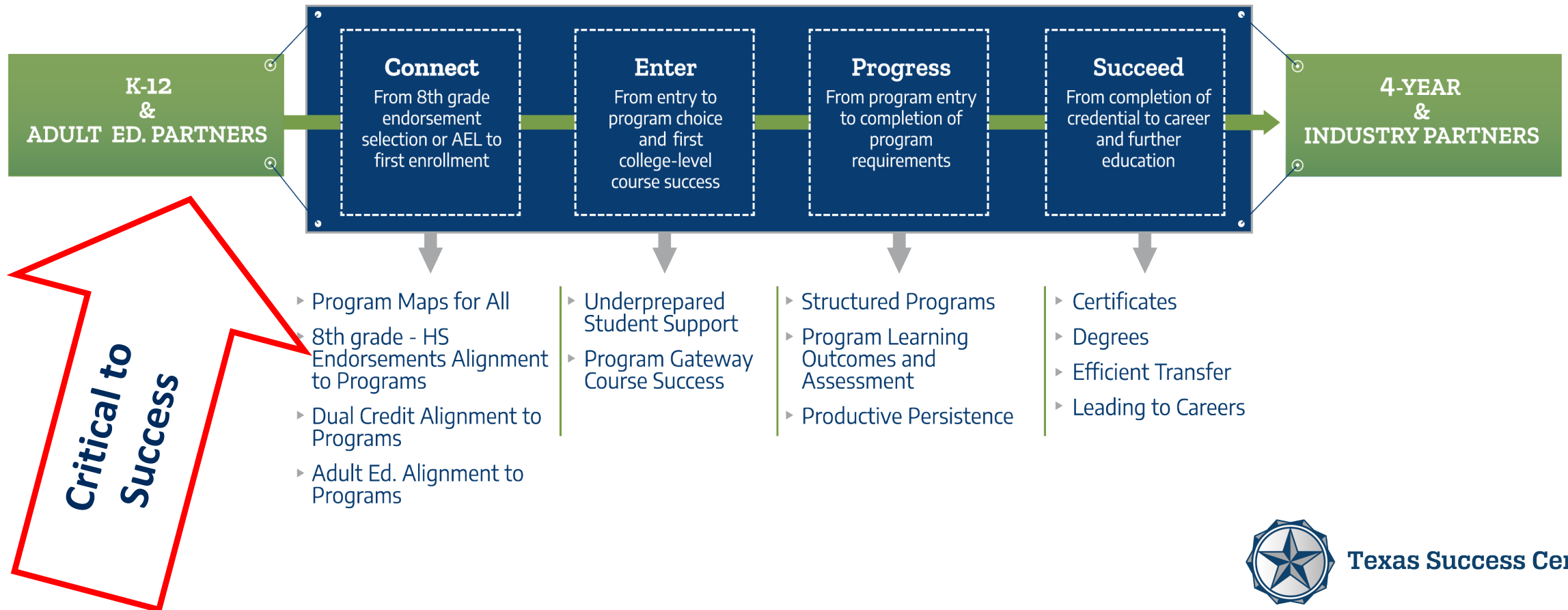
43.6% with a degree or certificate

- Over half of the nearly 1.7 million students in higher education in Texas are enrolled in community colleges. Texas needs to support community college students to meet 60x30TX goals.

- With more than 80,000 students enrolled in AEL programs statewide, community colleges must also provide viable pathways for AEL students to attain postsecondary credentials to meet goals.

Texas Success Center

TEXAS PATHWAYS

Systemic Transformation Dedicated to Socioeconomic Mobility

K-12 & ADULT ED. PARTNERS

Connect
From 8th grade endorsement selection or AEL to first enrollment

Enter
From entry to program choice and first college-level course success

Progress
From program entry to completion of program requirements

Succeed
From completion of credential to career and further education

4-YEAR & INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Critical to Success

- ▸ Program Maps for All
- ▸ 8th grade - HS Endorsements Alignment to Programs
- ▸ Dual Credit Alignment to Programs
- ▸ Adult Ed. Alignment to Programs

- ▸ Underprepared Student Support
- ▸ Program Gateway Course Success

- ▸ Structured Programs
- ▸ Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment
- ▸ Productive Persistence

- ▸ Certificates
- ▸ Degrees
- ▸ Efficient Transfer
- ▸ Leading to Careers

Texas Success Center

TRUE Pathways (https://tacc.org/tacc/texas-reskilling-upskilling-through-education-true)

Learners From Multiple Entries

Connect

Adult Students & Displaced Workers

Easily shop and select career pathways that include industry-based certifications

Enter

Community Colleges

Onboard with a clear initial completion plan of less than 6 months

Progress

Texas Employer

Career Pathways & Credentials

Gain skills and work-related experiences

Succeed

STRONGER TEXAS ECONOMY
GREATER 60X30TX SUCCESS

Complete credentials and enter high-demand occupations with family sustaining wages

Good Careers & Further Education

Essential Pathways Practices

1. Clarify Paths to Students' End Goals

2. Help Students Choose and Enter a Path

3. Help Students Stay on the Path

4. Ensure Students are Learning

A National Movement

Colleges across the country are implementing Guided Pathways
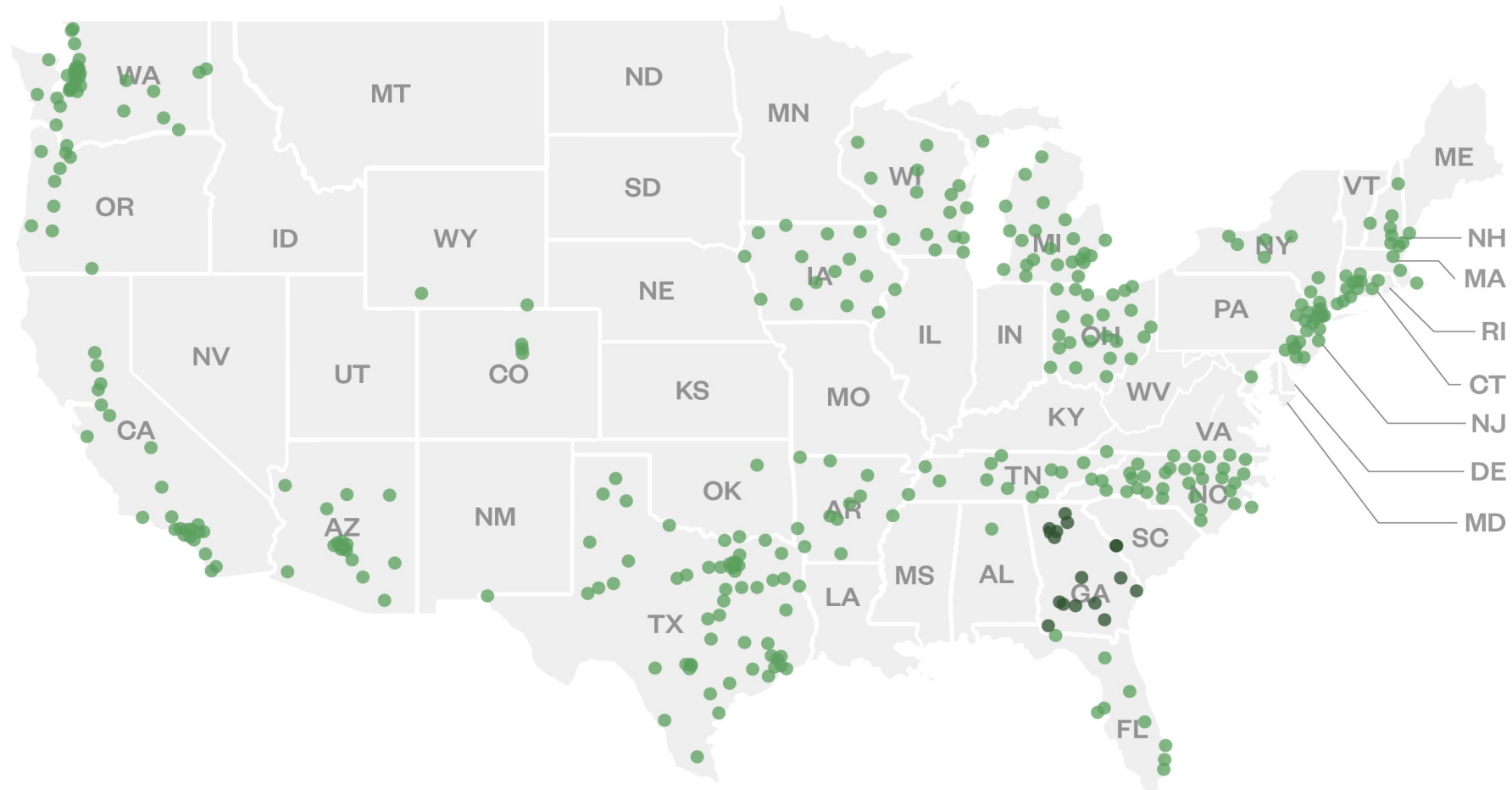
Community colleges implementing guided pathways as part of formal state or national initiatives

Four-year colleges implementing pathways practices as part of state initiatives

Updated October 2019

All 50 Texas Community Colleges are Committed to Texas Pathways

West
Amarillo
Clarendon
El Paso
Frank Phillips
Howard
Midland
Odessa
South Plains
Western Texas

South
Alamo
Coastal Bend
Del Mar
Laredo
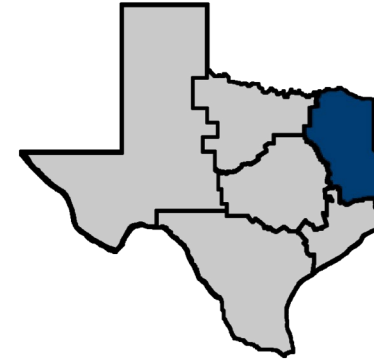South Texas
Southwest Texas
Texas Southmost
Victoria
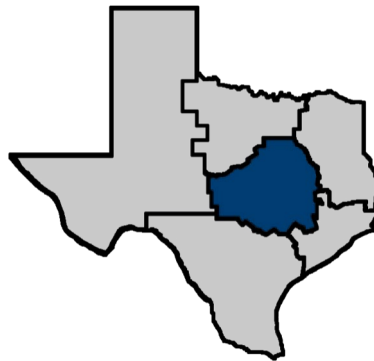
Central
Austin
Blinn
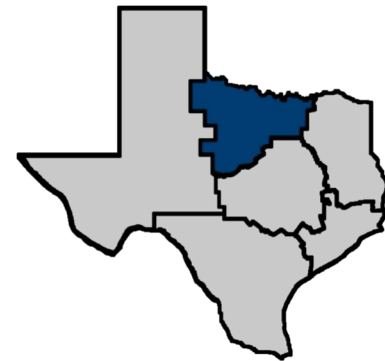Central Texas
Cisco
Hill
McLennan
Navarro
Temple

Southeast
Alvin
Brazosport
College of the Mainland
Galveston
Houston
Lee
Lone Star
San Jacinto
Wharton

East
Angelina
Kilgore
Northeast Texas
Panola
Paris
Texarkana
Trinity Valley
Tyler

North
Collin
Dallas
Grayson
North Central
Ranger
Tarrant
Weatherford
Vernon

Texas Pathways supports student success

Category	KPI	2015 %	2017 %	2019 %	Change from 2015-2019
Enter	Earned 6+ credits in Term 1	57%	60%	66%	+9%*
	Completed Math in Year 1	29%	30%	37%	+8%*
	Completed Reading in Year 1	54%	56%	60%	+6%*
	Completed Writing in Year 1	46%	49%	54%	+8%*
	Completed All Subjects in Year 1	20%	21%	27%	+7%*
Progress	Persisted from Term 1 to 2	76%	76%	75%	-1%*
	Earned 15+ credits in Year 1	44%	46%	49%	+5%*

Source: Texas Success Center KPIs (N=50 community colleges) Notes: Percentages are rounded; * indicates statistical significance $p<0.001$.

Texas Peer Mentor NETWORK*

Working together to put Texans to work

Tenets

Leadership & Culture

Student Services

Curriculum & Instruction

Professional Learning

Faculty Engagement

Digital Integration

Texas Peer Mentor NETWORK*

Working together to put Texans to work

Equity institute - Community College Research Center

Davis Jenkins
Senior Research Scholar

Dev Ed Reform

Jessica Brathwaite
Senior Research Associate

Equity Framework

Maria Scott Cormier
Senior Research Associate

Equity Career Pathways

Equity Institute

Teaching

- Contextualizing Curriculum

Supports

- Career Navigation
- IBEST

Career Paths

- ATB
- Perkins

Career Pathways Options

Adult Education- Ability To Benefit

TX-PMN and TALAE

Building AEL to Community College Pathways

Lessons Learned

Findings from the Texas Pathways and Texas Peer Mentor Network collaboration

1. Texas community colleges and AEL providers are working to create viable pathways for AEL completers, but there is still work to be done.

2. Opportunities exist to address silos within and across institutions.

3. Information barriers exist, such as:
   - Understanding AEL innovations across the state
   - Understanding higher education systems and reform efforts
   - Navigating funding structures and options for student support

4. Engaging community college CEOs is imperative to systematic change

5. Engaging the state tri-agency partnership is necessary

Texas Success Center

Building AEL to Community College Pathways

Recommendations

Charge a leadership team with integration.

Community College Representatives

- CEO and CAOs
- Academic and Workforce Deans
- Continuing Education Leaders
- Equity/Diversity Officer
- Math/English Faculty, Learning Framework Course Faculty
- Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Testing Services
- Student Success , Student Support Services

AEL Representatives

- Directors, Coordinators, Transition Specialists
- Administrative Support Staff
- Math/English Instructors
- Career Pathway Instructors
- Instructional Coordinators
- Career Navigators, Tutors, Advisors, Mentors

Texas Success Center

Align program offerings.

1. **Use the TX-PMN Tenets** to design and align AEL and college programs.
2. **Develop coherent program maps** from AEL programs to Texas Pathways programs aligned to community college meta-majors.
3. **Streamline college readiness assessments** for AEL completers transitioning to college-level programs.
4. **Integrate** AEL students and program information into community college systems.
5. **Mirror** AEL content courses with credit-bearing college-level courses, including an AEL and credit-bearing college-level Learning Framework course.

Texas Success Center

Accelerate transitions to college-level programs.

1. Systematically inspect transition points, **identify and remove barriers,** simplify enrollment processes.

2. Enact placement policies using **multiple measures of readiness** to ensure college-ready students have access to credit-bearing coursework, and students needing support have access to appropriate corequisite supports.

3. Design clear and consistent **student-facing messaging.**

4. Develop a **transition experience or orientation** prior to start of the college program to introduce AEL completers to college life.

5. Support **student service partnerships** between AEL Career Navigators and college staff to provide wraparound support services.

Texas Success Center

Explore funding options.

Explore a variety of existing funding options to:

1. Encourage AEL completers to continue to a stackable credential.

2. Offset the cost of developmental education.

3. Ensure all students have access to aid.

Funding options in Texas include:

- Jobs & Education for Texans (JET) grants defray start-up costs associated with the development of career and technical education programs

- Ability to Benefit (ATB) funds certain AEL students without a high school diploma or equivalency

- Skills Development Fund (SDF) grants from TWC support business programs

Texas Success Center

Seek continual improvement.

1. **Engage AEL faculty in professional development led by college partners** to understand how to prepare AEL students for success in community college programs.

2. **Engage college faculty in professional development led by AEL partners** to be able to recognize and address the challenges faced by AEL students as they navigate Pathways.

3. Participate in healthy **college-to-college mentoring.**

4. Communicate new program initiatives and **broadcast student success stories** to highlight innovative changes.

5. **Collect and share data** to monitor, reflect, and adjust program alignment for student success.

Texas Success Center

Integrating AEL and community college programs is not just another new initiative,

but a new way to think about who we are becoming together:

changed organizations that are systematically better at serving students.

Texas Success Center

Thank you!

Kristina Flores
kflores@tacc.org

ttclunis@actx.edu

dmlamons@actx.edu

Texas Success Center
https://tacc.org/tsc

TX-PMN
https://www.txpmn.org/

Amarillo College
https://www.actx.edu/

Dr. Tamara Clunis

Michelle Lamons