PUTTING DATA TO WORK

**Achieve60AZ** is committed to ensuring that 60% of adults, age 25-64, hold a certificate, license, or degree by 2030. Educational attainment is critical for Arizonan’s prosperity and the State’s economic future. In our October 2018 Issue Brief, we laid out four pillars of attainment: workforce and business development, postsecondary access and success, early childhood through high school, and systems and structures.

Systems and structures are inherently embedded in the work we do at a local and state level to increase attainment across all other pillars. Within systems and structures, we have identified two strategies to reach our goal, one of which is:

Utilize metrics and data systems to support thoughtful partnerships and collaboration in pursuit of the 60% post high school attainment goal.

ARIZONA FAFSA® CHALLENGE

One of the first benchmarks towards reaching our attainment goal is to increase FAFSA® completion through the Arizona FAFSA® Challenge. The goal is to have 50 percent of high school seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) by the end of the 2018-19 academic year.

FAFSA® completion is a critical indicator to attainment because it closely correlates with application, enrollment, and attendance in postsecondary programs following high school. Simply, **FAFSA® completion equates to greater attainment**. FAFSA® completion can also have real impact on the state’s economy. According to the Arizona Governor’s Office of Education, if 50 percent of high school seniors submit the application, we could see **an additional $64 million** impact for Arizona students.

Reaching 50 percent completion is only the first step. The overall goal is to increase FAFSA® completion by five percentage points each year until 2030 to become one of the top states. This challenge was created by the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education, and supported by the Arizona Governor’s Office of Education, Achieve60AZ, College Success Arizona, the AZ College Access Network, Helios Education Foundation, and many other key supporters.
Consider This
To combat their own low FAFSA® completion rates, Louisiana set FAFSA® completion as a requirement to high school graduation. How might a similar policy in Arizona influence FAFSA® completion, postsecondary enrollment and completion, and the economy? What other policies or systems could influence more Arizona high school seniors to complete the FAFSA®?

What Comes Next
Once we have a goal, targeted collaboration, and data to support this work, we can start to realize change in our state attainment. The Arizona FAFSA® Challenge is just one approach we are taking in a geographically and socially diverse state. Promising practices are happening at all levels to increase attainment, from local to statewide initiatives. By making connections between and within our work, and supporting our actions with relevant and targeted data, we can grow our efforts and outcomes.