

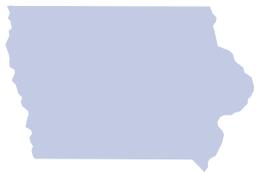
## Midwest at a glance: State efforts to promote educational attainment



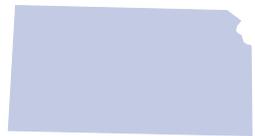
In **ILLINOIS**, Steps AHEAD (Attaining Higher Education Through Academic Development) aims to increase the number of low-income students who attend and succeed in higher education. Program components include early-intervention educational services, academic support, career exploration programs, college-preparation assistance and scholarships. The program also seeks to increase parental involvement and foster collaboration between colleges and local schools.



A number of campuses of **INDIANA**'s Ivy Tech College are piloting an Accelerated Associate's Degree Program, which allows students to obtain a two-year associate's degree in one year. The program, designed especially for students in low-income households, helps achieve the state's overall goals of improving on-time graduation rates and helping students keep down education-related costs and debt.



This year, **IOWA** community colleges banded together to begin the Iowa Community College Completion Initiative. The goal is to work collaboratively to increase the number of higher-education credentials earned by Iowa community college students. The initiative was formalized in April, and community college leaders first met in August to review and advance goals.



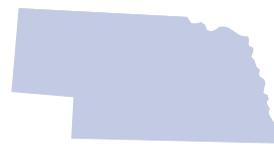
In **KANSAS**, nearly one-fourth of the adult population has some college education but has not earned a degree. The state mandated that the Board of Regents and other education leaders work to re-engage these college dropouts. The initiative will target working adults who have earned substantial credits but have not yet earned a credential or degree.



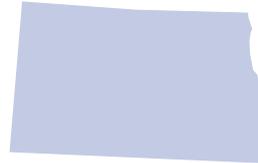
**MICHIGAN**'s 2011 education budget (HB 4325) encourages the state's community colleges to explore ways of increasing collaboration with universities on transferability of credits. It also creates a committee tasked with improving the transferability of core college courses between institutions. The bill calls on universities to work with community colleges to enable the awarding of credentials or associate's degrees through reverse-transfer agreements.



In 2010, the **MINNESOTA** State Colleges and Universities System implemented the RAPID (Returning Adults to Progress in Degree) Completion Program, a statewide outreach campaign for adult workers who never completed degrees. The program provides information on how students can complete degrees by taking online courses, enrolling in accelerated programs with flexible start dates and receiving course credits for work experience.



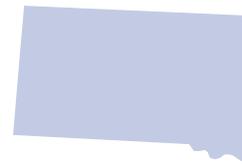
Until last year, many degree programs in **NEBRASKA** were requiring 125 credit hours or more. The unintended result of this "credit creep" was to increase the completion time and cost of obtaining a degree. A new policy guarantees that students can graduate with a bachelor's degree by taking a full course load of 120 credit hours.



Between legislative sessions, **NORTH DAKOTA**'s Interim Higher Education Committee studied issues affecting higher-education funding. The committee heard recommendations regarding performance-based models from the state Board of Education and a governor's task force. One of the recommendations was to allocate funding for a performance-based funding system beginning in 2015. Legislators will likely consider performance-based models during the 2013 session.



**OHIO**'s Statewide Efficiency Council was established by the state university system to share innovative business practices and establish efficiency standards across institutions. The savings generated from these moves, estimated to exceed \$100 million, will increase the capacity to graduate more Ohio residents and help control tuition costs.



**SOUTH DAKOTA**'s Board of Regents has adopted a performance-based funding pilot program. The Legislature approved \$3 million in state funds, which are to be matched with another \$3 million from the state's six public universities. The money will be reallocated based on the schools' graduation rates, as well as the number of higher degrees awarded and students graduating in high-priority fields.



In early 2012, **WISCONSIN** Gov. Scott Walker established the College and Career Readiness Council, which is tasked with better aligning the state's education system and workforce needs. At the end of the year, the council will release recommendations to reduce dropout and remediation rates; increase the overall number of degrees and certificates awarded; expand opportunities for high school students to earn college or workforce-training credits; design shorter, less-costly degree programs aimed at filling high-need positions; and ease transitions between systems and institutions, specifically through the transfer of credits and the awarding of credit for prior learning.