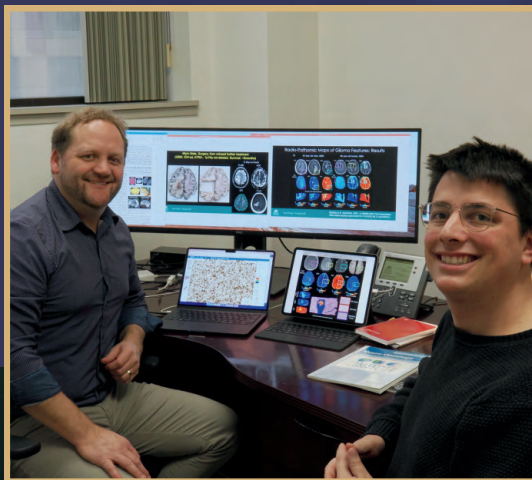




# WAICUPEDIA 2025

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Expanding Wisconsin's Workforce





# Message from Our President

Independent higher education in Wisconsin *plays a critical role in addressing workforce needs and fueling economic growth across the state*. WAICU-member institutions, comprising the state’s private, nonprofit colleges and universities, are uniquely positioned to deliver the best return on investment for Wisconsin’s future.

Every year, our institutions confer degrees upon 12,800 graduates—23 percent of all bachelor’s degrees and 33 percent of advanced degrees statewide—*all without direct operating support from taxpayers*.

Our twenty-two colleges and universities are attuned to the demands of the marketplace, offering innovative programs in high-need areas such as healthcare, artificial intelligence, and engineering. Graduates of WAICU-member institutions are educated with critical thinking skills to evaluate and respond to society’s challenges and are prepared to meet workforce demands. **Nearly 90 percent of our graduates are employed or in graduate school within a year of graduation.** Notably, two-thirds work in Wisconsin upon graduation, directly contributing to the state’s economy as active citizens and taxpayers.

The Wisconsin Grant Program amplifies this impact. *For every dollar the state invests in our students through this program, WAICU members provide \$24 in institutional financial aid*, ensuring access and affordability for students. *Independent higher education is a driving force for Wisconsin’s workforce readiness and vitality.* Our institutions are inextricably linked to the future success of our state.



Eric W. Fulcomer, PhD  
WAICU President



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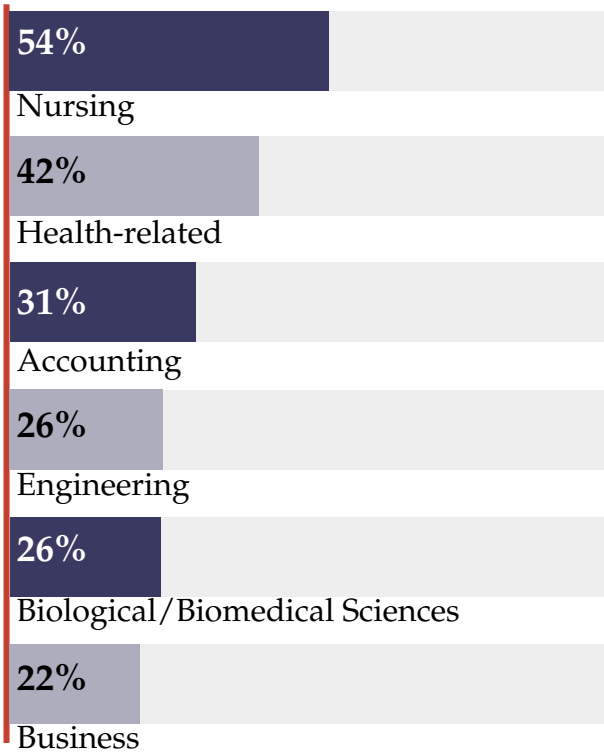
# Response to Workforce Needs

## Graduates from Wisconsin Private Colleges are Workforce Ready

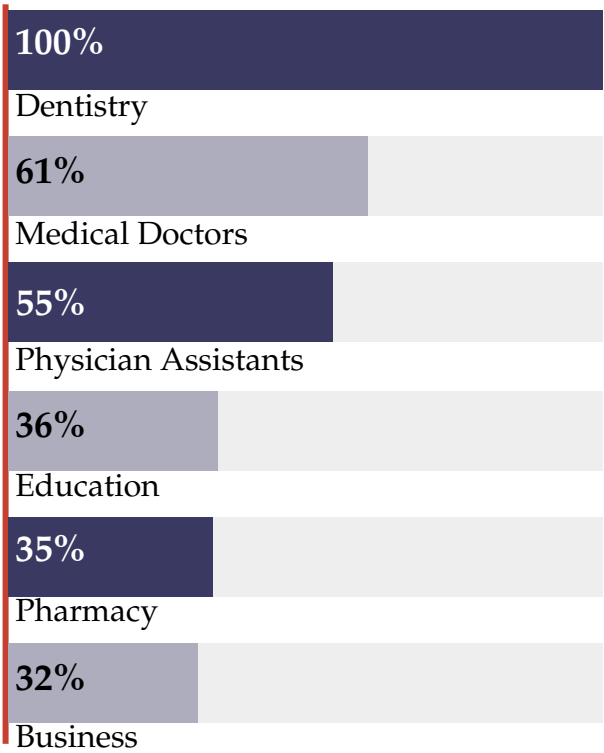
WAICU members produce more than **12,800** graduates annually, making up **23 percent** of bachelor's degrees and **33 percent** of advanced degrees in the state with no direct operating support from taxpayers.<sup>1</sup>

**Our colleges help expand the state workforce pipeline in high-demand occupations.**

### BACHELOR'S DEGREES<sup>2</sup>



### ADVANCED DEGREES<sup>3</sup>



In the spring of 2024, WAICU conducted comprehensive LinkedIn research and found:<sup>4</sup>

38,742

WAICU-member alumni

at 302

largest companies in Wisconsin



#### HEALTHCARE

13,099 alumni



#### MANUFACTURING

7,416 alumni



#### FINANCE & INSURANCE

4,788 alumni



#### WHOLESALE TRADE

3,914 alumni

9,525 alumni at other industries

Scan to  
learn more



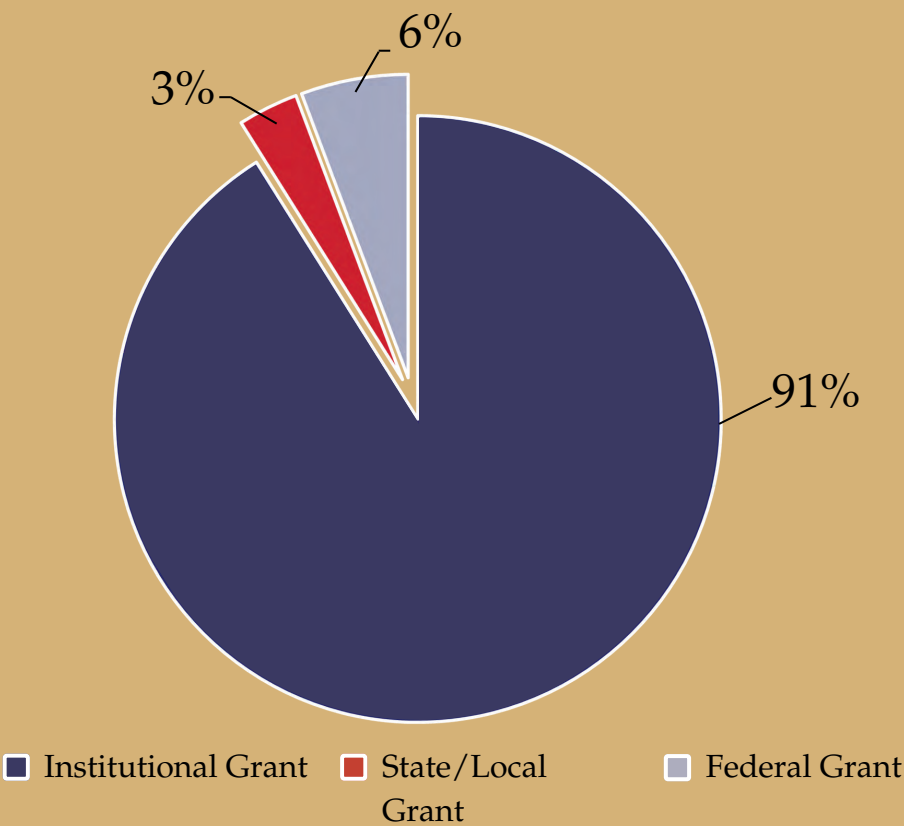
*This data represents a one-time snapshot sampling of WAICU-member alumni working at 302 largest companies in Wisconsin, as represented on LinkedIn.*

Source: 1. IPEDS, Completions survey, 2022-2023. 2 & 3. IBID. 4. WAICU LinkedIn Employment Research, 2024.

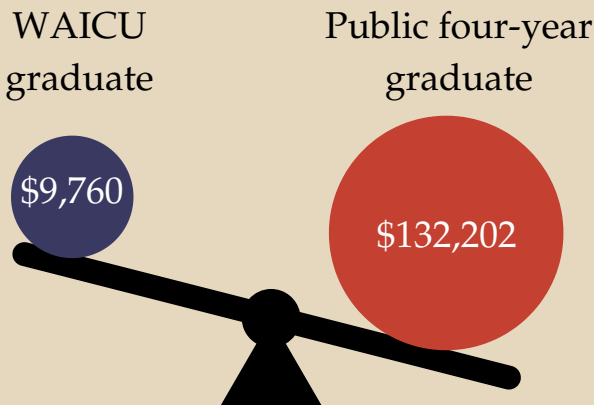
# Public Investment Pays Off

Investment in student aid, especially for low- and low-middle income students, is an investment in the state’s workforce. Unfortunately, Wisconsin’s investment in student aid has not kept pace with student needs. Given the state’s critical workforce shortages, it is more important than ever to invest in students seeking to earn a degree and contribute to Wisconsin’s workforce.

WAICU institutions provide the largest portion of grant aid awarded to first-time, full-time undergraduate students.<sup>1</sup>



WAICU members provide significant value to state taxpayers.



Cost to taxpayers per degree

On average, a four-year degree at Wisconsin private colleges costs state taxpayers **\$9,760**, significantly lower than **\$132,202** at public institutions.<sup>2</sup>



Students’ chances of graduating in four years are **31 percent** greater at WAICU-member colleges and universities than at four-year public institutions.<sup>3</sup>

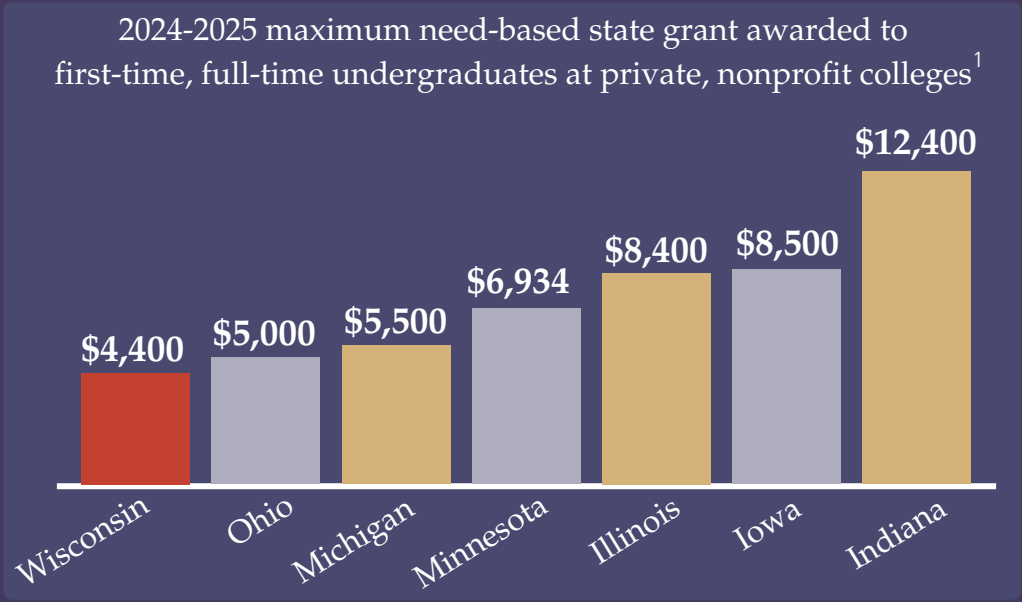
Graduating on time lowers the cost of college, with graduates entering the workforce sooner and supporting Wisconsin’s economy.

4  
Source: 1. IPEDS, Student Financial Aid survey, 2022-2023. 2. WAICU calculation based on four-year trend data from LFB, HEAB, IPEDS. 3. IPEDS, Graduation Rates survey (2015-2016 cohort), 2023-2024.

# Double the Wisconsin Grant

Keep Talent in the State to Grow the Workforce





Wisconsin has fallen significantly behind its neighbors in state support to low-income college students.



## A Call to Action

The state appropriation for the Wisconsin Grant to students at private, nonprofit colleges and universities accounts for just **1.47 percent** of the total state investment in higher education.<sup>2</sup>

Doubling the Wisconsin Grant would:

-  Retain state talent and grow the local workforce
-  Keep Wisconsin competitive in the Midwest and nationwide
-  Strengthen a critical public-private partnership
-  Enable more students to access postsecondary education needed to fill in-demand jobs

Source: 1. WAICU research on other states' primary need-based grant program (the maximum MN State Grant here applies to the lowest-income students who receive a maximum Pell Grant award). 2. WAICU estimate based on data from HEAB's 2023-2024 Student Aid Expenditures report and State of Wisconsin 2023-2025 Biennial Budget.



### Jacob Couillard

Wisconsin Grant Recipient  
US Army Veteran  
Athletic Training Major  
Concordia University - Wisconsin

"I'm thankful for support like the Wisconsin Grant because it alleviates pressure that I'd have to maintain a job, plus sports, and school. I'm very fortunate to have the opportunities that I've been given."



### Morgan Imhoff

Wisconsin Grant Recipient  
Actuarial Science Major  
Milwaukee School of Engineering

"I am a first-generation college student, so it is even more special to be able to go to such a prestigious university. In receiving the Wisconsin Grant and other scholarships, I have been able to pay my way through college without having to worry as much."



# Wisconsin Needs More College Graduates



Wisconsin is facing a critical shortage of college-educated workers.



Job openings each year in Wisconsin that **require college degrees** for entry, as a result of job market exits, transfers, and growth, according to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development<sup>1</sup>



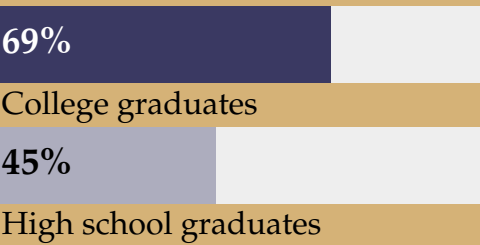
New graduates with an associate to doctoral degree in Wisconsin annually<sup>2</sup>

Wisconsin is now and will continue to be short **approximately 12,500 college-educated workers** each year to fill job openings that require postsecondary degrees.

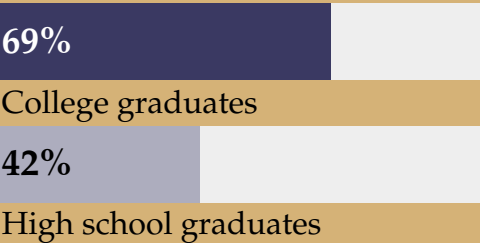
As the number of students going to college remains stagnant, without any immediate action, this gap is expected to expand significantly.

Wisconsin college graduates are engaged citizens.

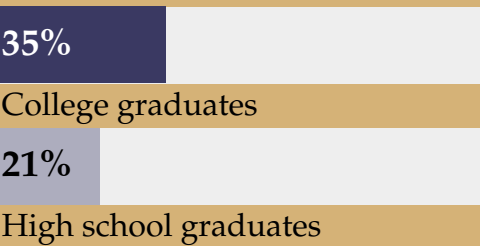
### VOTE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS<sup>3</sup>



### DONATE TO CHARITY<sup>4</sup>



### VOLUNTEER<sup>5</sup>



College graduates in Wisconsin generate job opportunities locally.



For every additional postsecondary graduate in Wisconsin

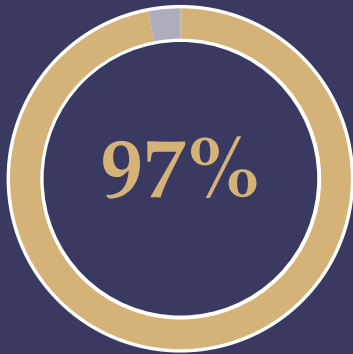


5.3 support jobs will be generated<sup>6</sup>

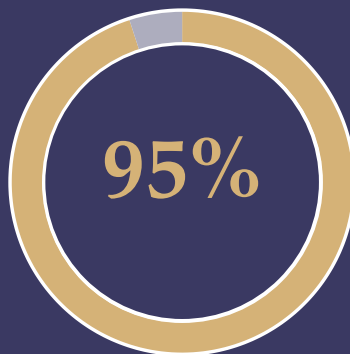
6  
Source: 1. DWD, Long-term Occupational Employment Projection, 2022-2032. 2. IPEDS Completions survey (three-year average), 2020-2021 to 2022-2023. 3,4,5. WAICU calculation based on CPS Volunteering and Civic Engagement Supplement, September 2023 (Wisconsin, 25 to 64 year-olds). 6. NCAN, The Effects of Post-Secondary Educational Attainment in Wisconsin, 2023.

# WAICU Members Invest in Students

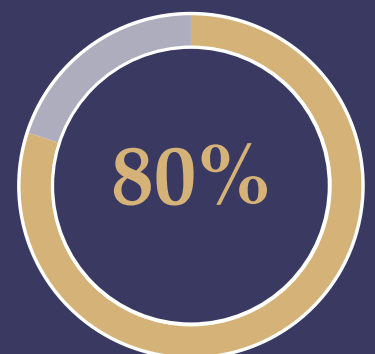
## Through Public-Private Partnerships



of WAICU full-time undergraduate students receive financial aid.<sup>1</sup>



of undergraduates receive grant/scholarship aid at WAICU-member institutions.<sup>2</sup>



of average financial aid packages at WAICU members are grants and scholarships that **do not** need to be paid back.<sup>3</sup>



For every **\$1 in state grants**, students at WAICU members receive **\$24 in institutional aid**.<sup>4</sup>

## Through Cost-Saving Collaborations

- In 2023, WAICU saved its members **almost \$18 million** through **more than 45** collaborative, cost-saving programs.
- The cumulative savings from the lifetime of the programs (since WAICU began reporting) now total **\$286 million**.
- WAICU collaborative services help to control college costs and are in keeping with WAICU's long-standing efforts to keep college affordable.
- With combined purchasing power, members secure preferred pricing.

**Dollars saved can be directed toward student aid and instruction.**



Source: 1. Full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates, WAICU Institutional Survey, 2023-2024.

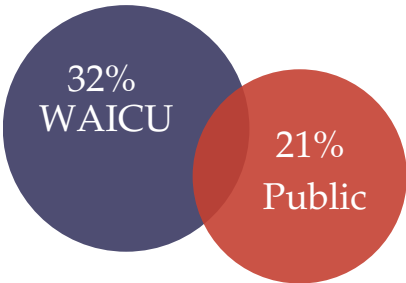
2. Degree-seeking undergraduates, IPEDS, Student Financial Aid Survey, 2022-2023.

3. WAICU Institutional Survey, 2023-2024. 4. IBID.

# Expanding Educational Opportunities

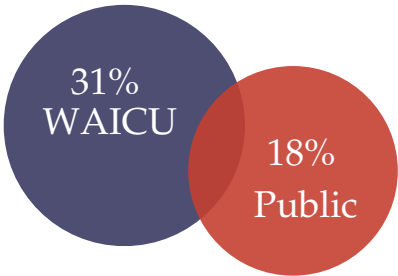
## Students of Color

WAICU's undergraduate student body has a larger percentage of students of color (**32 percent**) than Wisconsin's public four-year universities (**21 percent**).<sup>1</sup>



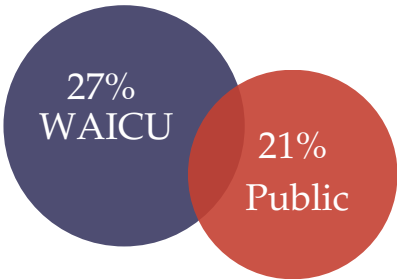
## Non-Traditional Students

Students **over the age of 25** make up **31 percent** of all students in WAICU, compared to **18 percent** at Wisconsin's public four-year universities.<sup>2</sup>



## Low-Income Students

**27 percent** of WAICU undergraduates qualify for federal Pell Grants, compared to **21 percent** at Wisconsin's public four-year universities.<sup>3</sup>

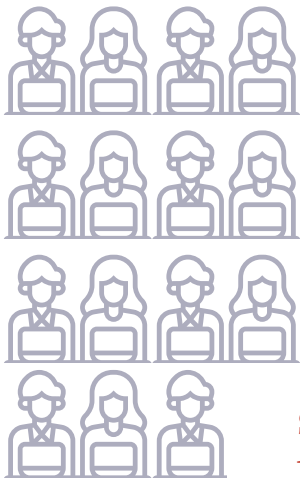


## First-Generation Students

**26 percent** of all WAICU undergraduates are first-generation students.<sup>4</sup>



## Average Class Size



**15**  
students  
per class<sup>5</sup>



**Suzanne Stiverson**  
Parent of Two Wisconsin Private  
College Students

"One thing my older daughter loves is the small class sizes. I know my girls are succeeding both academically and socially. They are not just surviving, they are thriving."



# Partnering for Postsecondary Success

## Supporting Our Veterans

The **Wisconsin Veterans Grant for Private Nonprofit Students** provides financial assistance to eligible veterans and their dependents who are attending private, nonprofit colleges and universities in Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin grant covers tuition costs up to \$2,000 per semester with a required matching grant from the participating institution.



## Leading in Nursing Graduates

WAICU members produce **54 percent** of bachelor's degrees and **84 percent** of the advanced degrees in nursing in the state.<sup>1</sup> WAICU members support the expansion of the **Wisconsin Nurse Educator Program** designed to recruit and retain nursing faculty in Wisconsin. The program provides loan forgiveness to individuals who commit to teach nursing in a Wisconsin-based educational institution.



## Offering College Opportunities in High School

WAICU works collaboratively with middle and high school partners to provide information about dual credit opportunities at Wisconsin's private colleges and universities.

### Early College Credit Programs

Courses taken on a college campus for high school and/or college credit.

### Concurrent Enrollment Programs

College level courses taken at high school for high school and/or college credit.

### College Opportunity Programs

Programs aimed at providing underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students with a college experience.

WAICU-member institutions have **dual-enrolled high school students** from more than

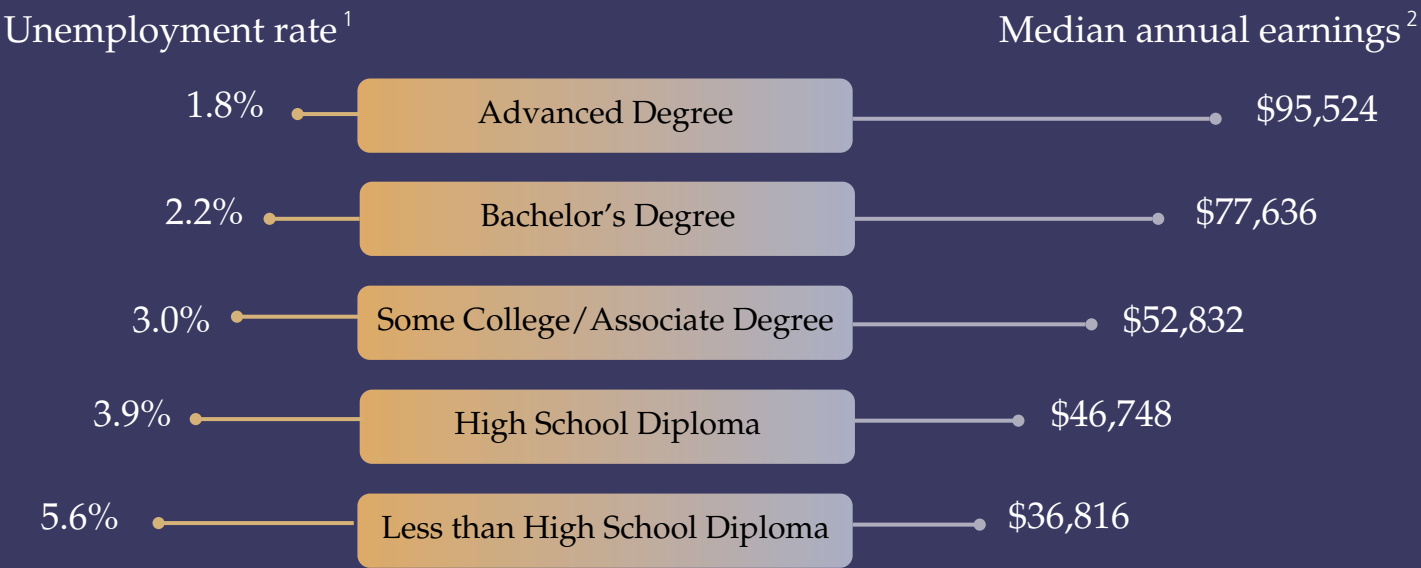
**120**

public school districts and private schools throughout Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup>

# College Education Yields High Returns

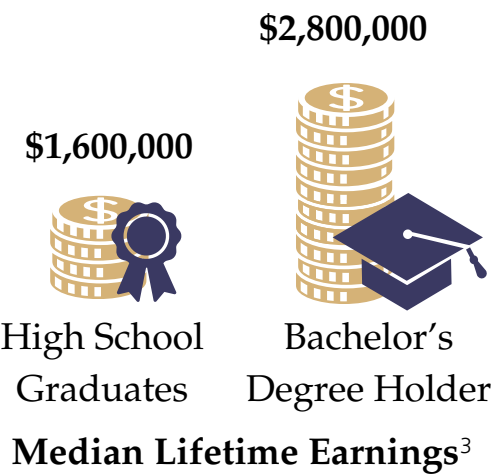
## Higher Annual Earnings and Stronger Job Security

With the knowledge and skills obtained from their postsecondary education, college graduates have much better earning prospects and significantly lower unemployment rates compared to their peers with only a high school diploma or less.

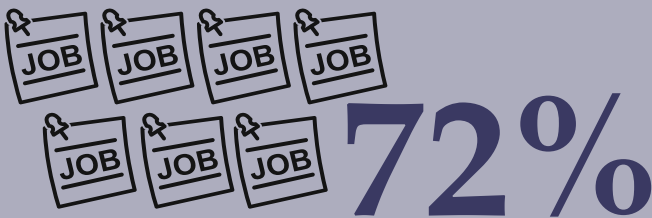


## Outstanding Lifetime Earnings

Adults with a bachelor's degree earn **\$2.8 million** during their careers, **\$1.2 million or 75 percent more than** the median lifetime earnings of workers with a high school diploma.



## Booming Career Opportunities



Labor markets will continue to favor college educated workers. By 2031, **72 percent** of all jobs will be held by those with at least some postsecondary education.<sup>4</sup>

# From College to Career



**Connie Coon**

Vice President of Human Resources

C.D. Smith Construction

"Since the Construction Management program's beginning, we've had the pleasure of working with Sam Schaefer, a student at Marian University. We're excited to see him graduate and look forward to the possibility of him becoming a full-time core member of our team at C.D. Smith Construction."

"At MSOE, all our majors—from computer science and software engineering to biomedical engineering, business, and nursing—are incorporating artificial intelligence technologies into the curriculum. This enables students to graduate with practical, highly demanded skills."



**Dr. Derek Riley**

Professor & Computer Science Program Director

Milwaukee School of Engineering

## Private Education, Better Outcomes

An estimated **92 percent** of the Class of 2023 from private, nonprofit colleges were employed or in graduate schools within six months after graduation, as compared to **81 percent** of their peers from public institutions.<sup>1</sup>

92%  
private,  
nonprofit  
graduates

81%  
public  
graduates

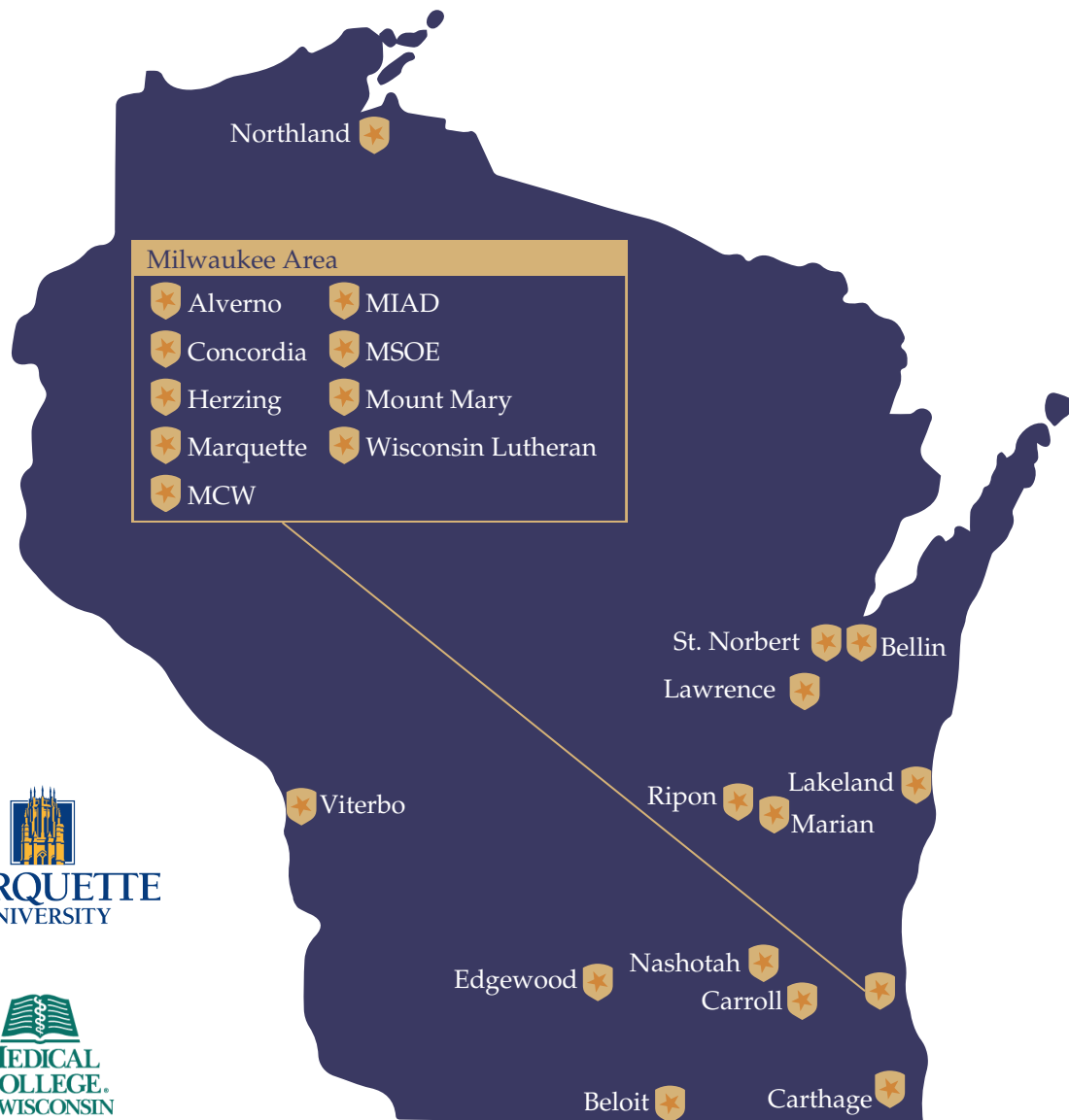


"My main lesson was the importance of hands-on experience and how that can really aid in learning. Throughout our summer camp programs and working with schools, I saw how much people can learn from getting to see history themselves and experience it whether it is learning how to sew, blacksmithing, or getting to step into the historical village."

**Madelyn L.**

Manitowoc Historical Society Intern  
WAICU Nonprofit Internship Program  
Carthage College





## WisconsinsPrivateColleges.org

WAICU is recognized in state statutes (§§ 15.185(5)(c), 15.377, 15.67, 15.675(1)(c), 16.979, 36.31(2m)(a), 39.285, 39.30, 39.395, 39.41, 39.435, 39.437(2)(a)1, 39.49, 115.297, 118.19(1c)(a), 118.55, 440.52(11)(d)) and 2011 Governor's Executive Order #37, 2012 Governor's Executive Order #59, 2013 Governor's Executive Order #97, 2015 Governor's Executive Order #147, 2018 Governor's Executive Order #270, 2019 Governor's Executive Order #37, 2021 Governor's Executive Order #151, and 2023 Governor's Executive Order #213 as the official organization of Wisconsin's private, nonprofit colleges and universities.



**Photo Credits:** WAICUPEDIA 2025 photos were provided by Wisconsin's Private Colleges.