

# CHE Adult Learner Report: Data Preview

Lee Rathbun  
Assistant Director of Data Analytics  
Indiana Commission of Higher Education

# Objectives

- Present high level findings from CHE's upcoming Adult Learner Report
- Observe the status of *and* challenges facing Indiana Adult Learners
- Compare and Contrast to Traditional Students
  - Academically and demographically

# Outline

1. Definitions and Characteristics
2. Historic Enrollment Trends
3. Academic Profile
4. Demographics
5. Key Takeaways

01

# Definitions and Characteristics

# Definitions & Characteristics

## Report Definitions

- An Adult Learner is a student 25 years of age or older
  - 25-34, 35-49, 50 and older
- Enrolled in an Indiana public institution at the undergraduate level
- Timeline: Fall 2012-Spring 2021

## Characteristics

- Has delayed entering postsecondary education after high school
- Has career experience upon entering higher education
- Has dependents or other external familial responsibilities
- Is financially independent for the purposes of financial aid

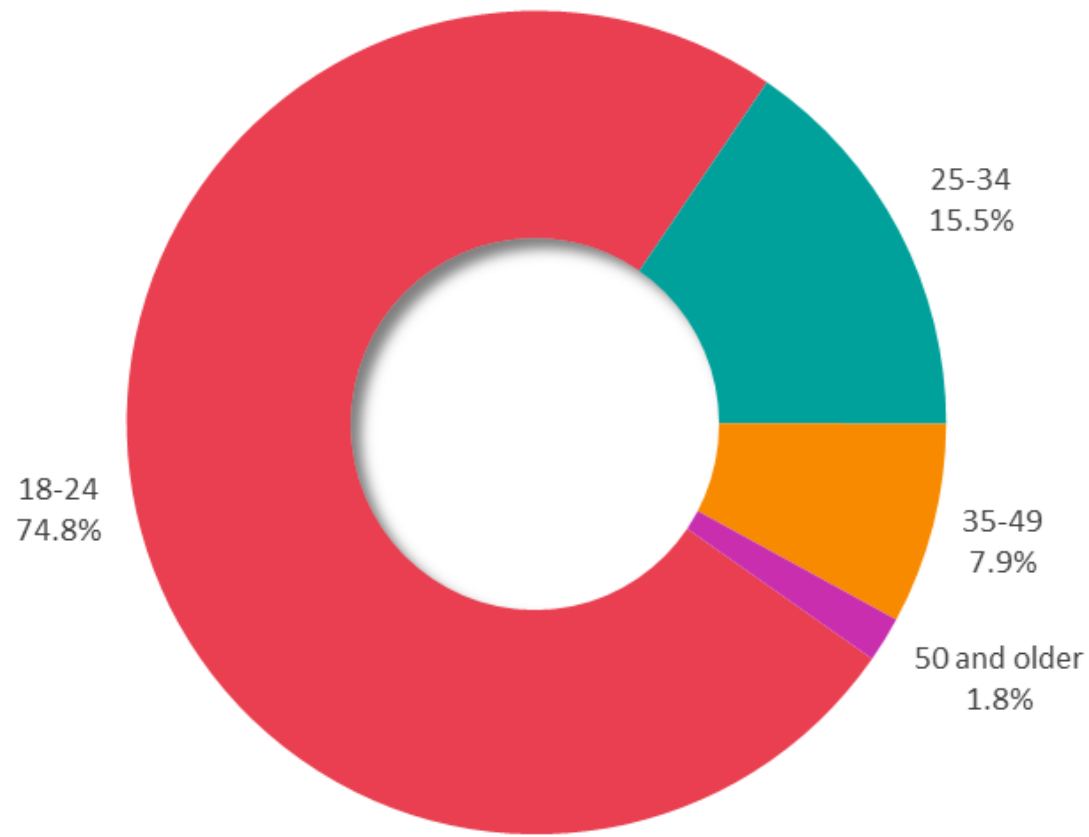
02

# Adult Enrollment Trends

# Enrollments

- ❑ 1 out of every 4 undergraduate students is an adult learner
- ❑ 1 out of every 7 students is age 25-34
- ❑ 10 years of decline in adult learners
  - ❑ 2012: 35% of student body
  - ❑ Headcount growth rate in the negative

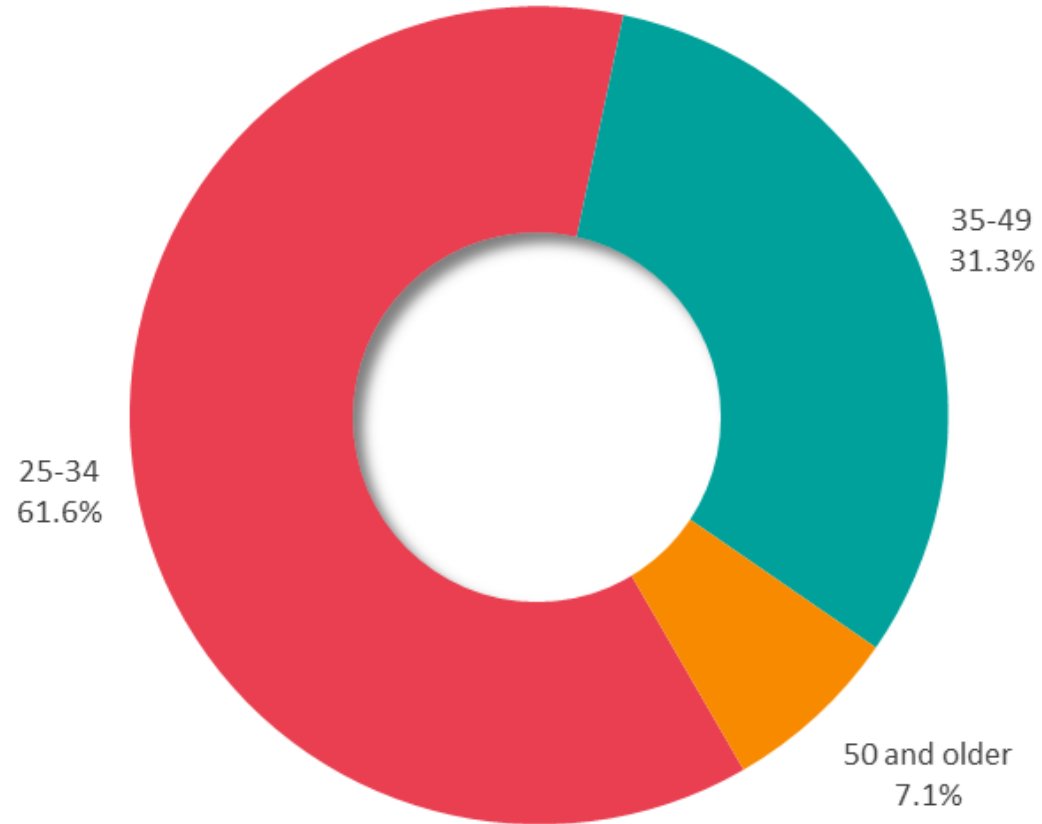
2021 Indiana Statewide Enrollments by Age Group



## Enrollments

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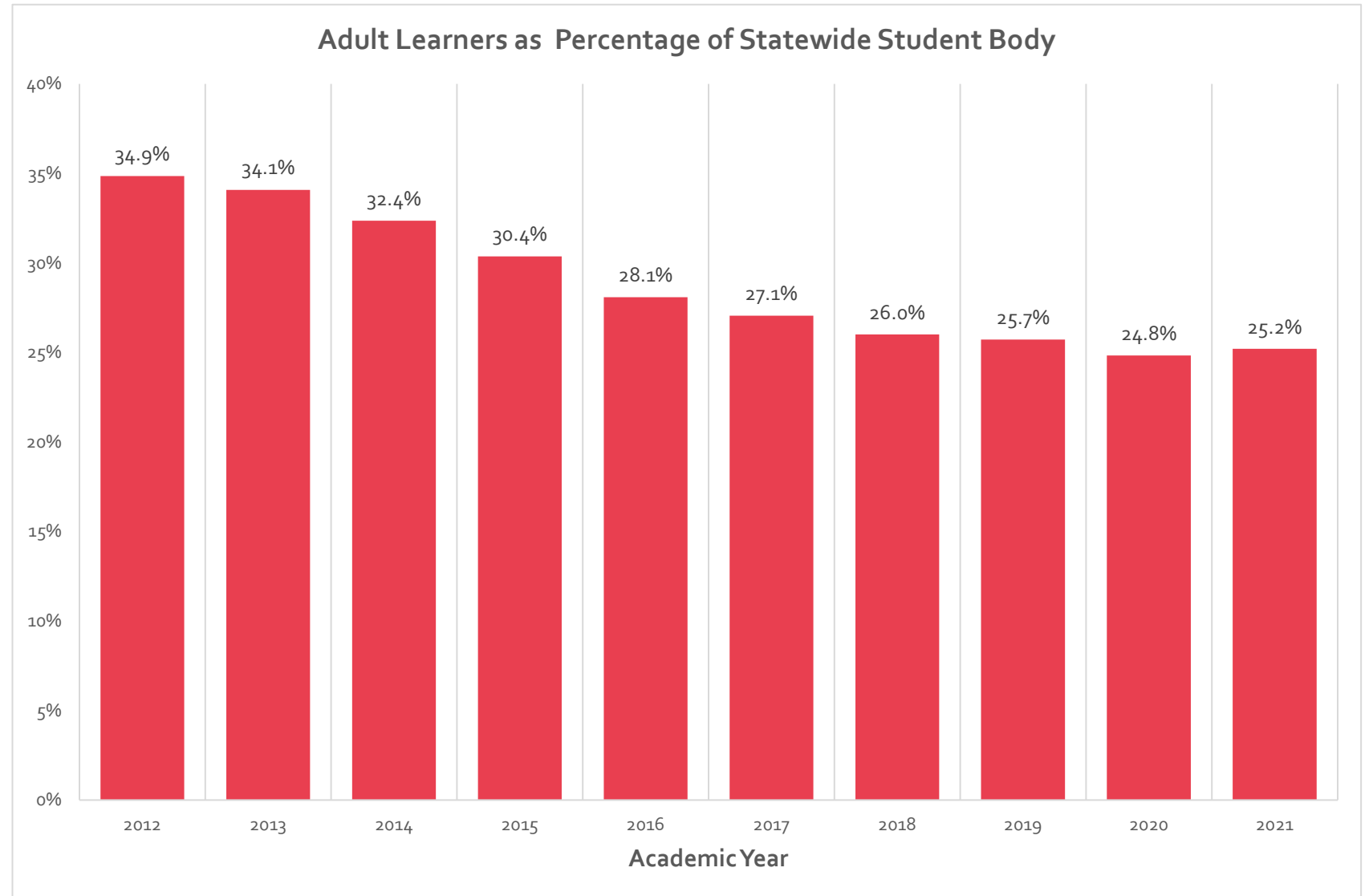
2021 Adult Learners by Age Group





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03

# Academic Profile

# Academic Profile

- ❑ Area of Study
- ❑ Degree Level Choice
  - ❑ Institutional Selection
- ❑ Courseload
- ❑ Delivery Method
- ❑ Financial Aid

- Adult learners approach higher education in contrary ways to traditional students:
- More likely to be in a transition period
  - Job loss or career change
  - Furthering an existing credential
  - Testing postsecondary education for the first time
- More likely to be embedded in a community
  - Established careers/families locally
  - External responsibilities such as child or parental care
- More likely to be financially dependent
  - Responsible for all associated expenses

# Academic Profile

- Area of Study
- Degree Level Choice
  - Institutional Selection
- Courseload
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Area of Study	Adult Learners	Traditional Students
Arts & Humanities	12.7%	13.6%
Business & Communications	16.8%	21.8%
Education	4.0%	6.2%
Health	31.6%	15.3%
STEM	16.2%	25.0%
Social Sciences	4.4%	11.8%
Trades	14.4%	6.3%

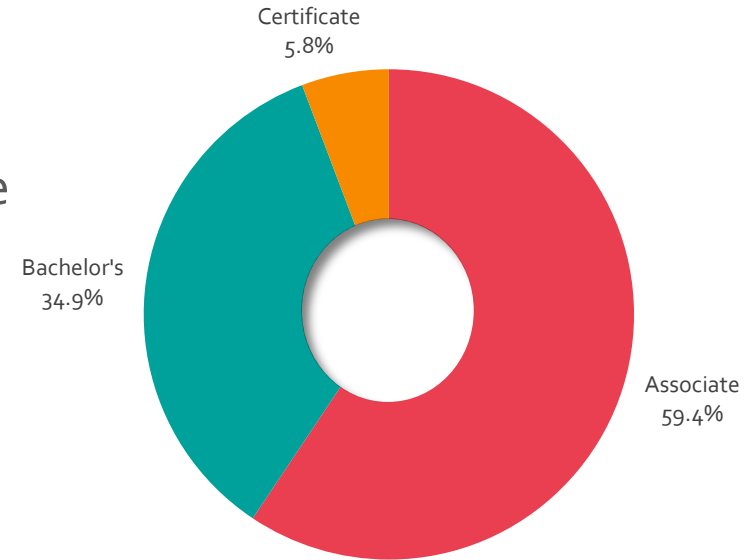
- Adult Learners are more likely to enter a health or trades credential than a traditional student
  - 16 and 8 pp more respectively
- These are fields that can build credentials and earn credit for prior learning
  - These fields are most likely to be at the associate's or certificate level
- 9 percentage points less likely to enter a STEM field

# Academic Profile

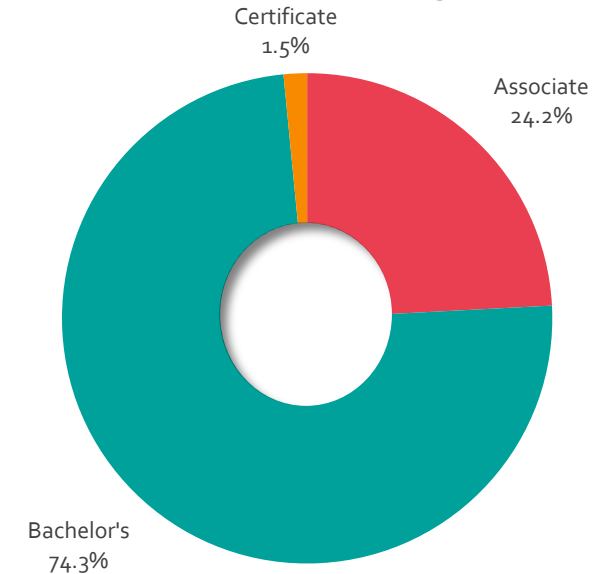
- Area of Study
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- Adult learners have historically made up a majority of associate's seekers.
- Over the last 5 years:
  - 59.4% have sought an associate's
  - 65.5% attended a 2-year campus
- While only ~6% of degree selections, Adult Learners make up a majority of certificate seekers.
- Those seeking a bachelor's are most likely to attend a regional campus.

Adult Learners by Degree Level



Traditional Students by Degree Level

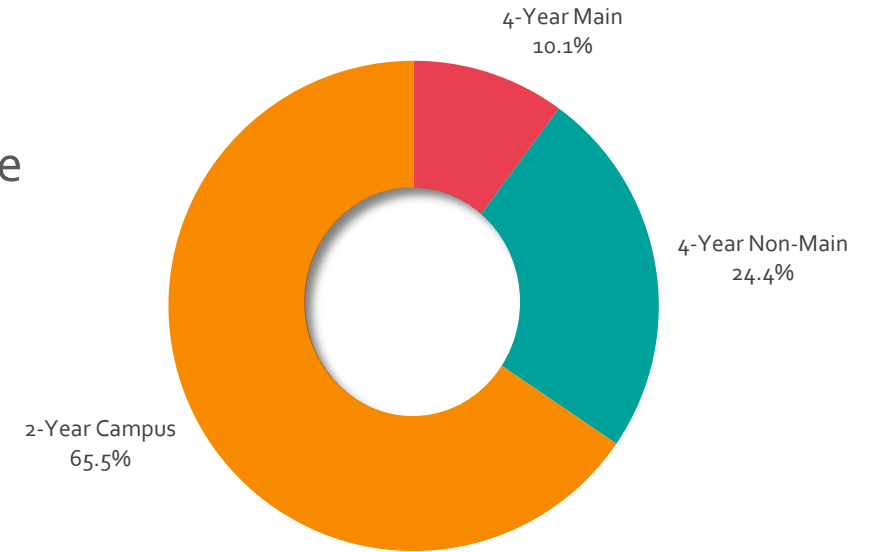


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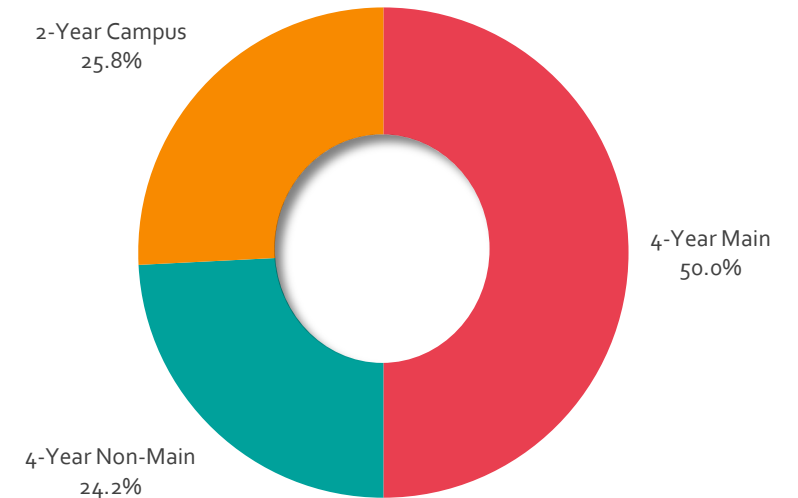
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Adult Learners by Institution Type



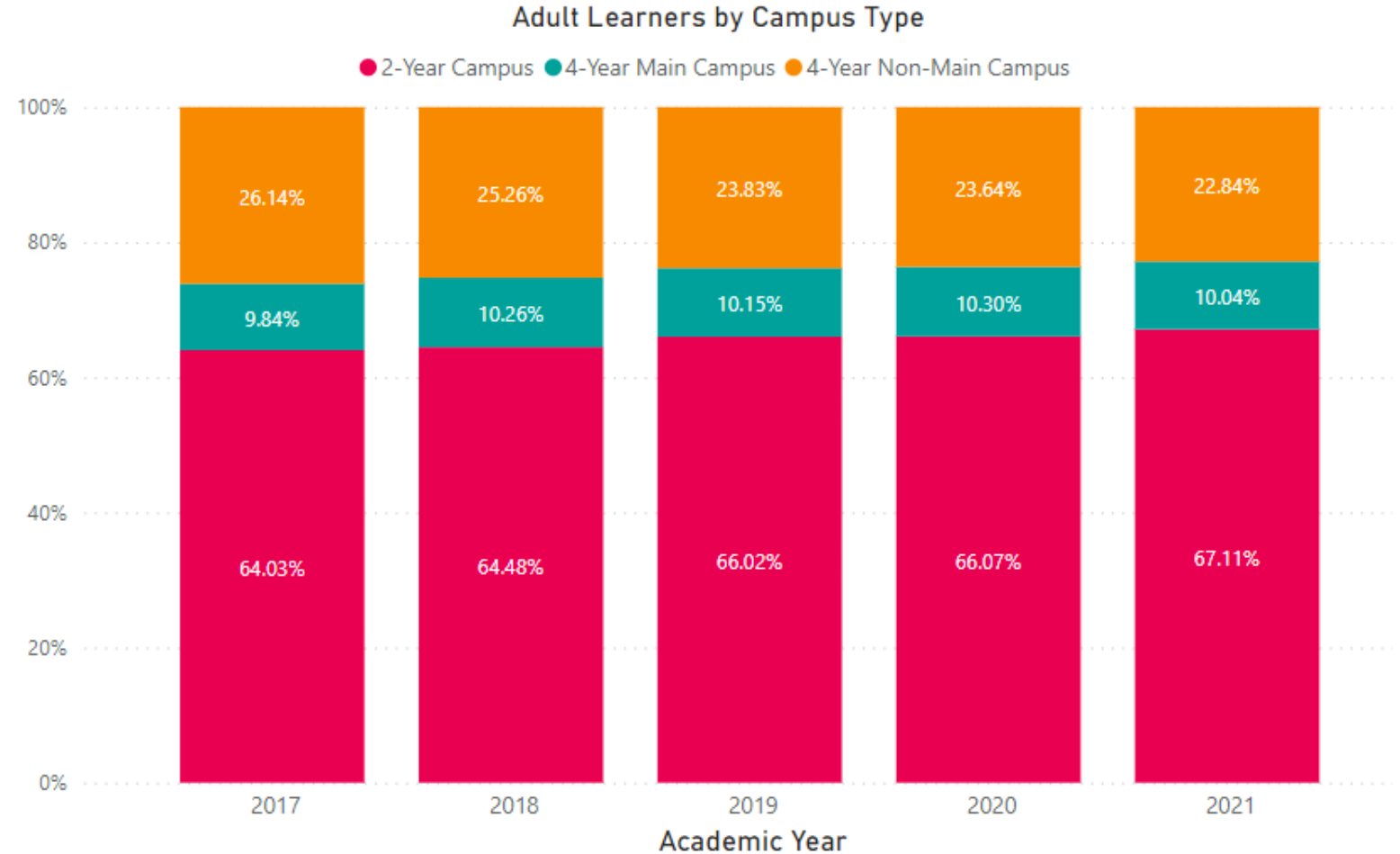
Traditional Students by Institution Type



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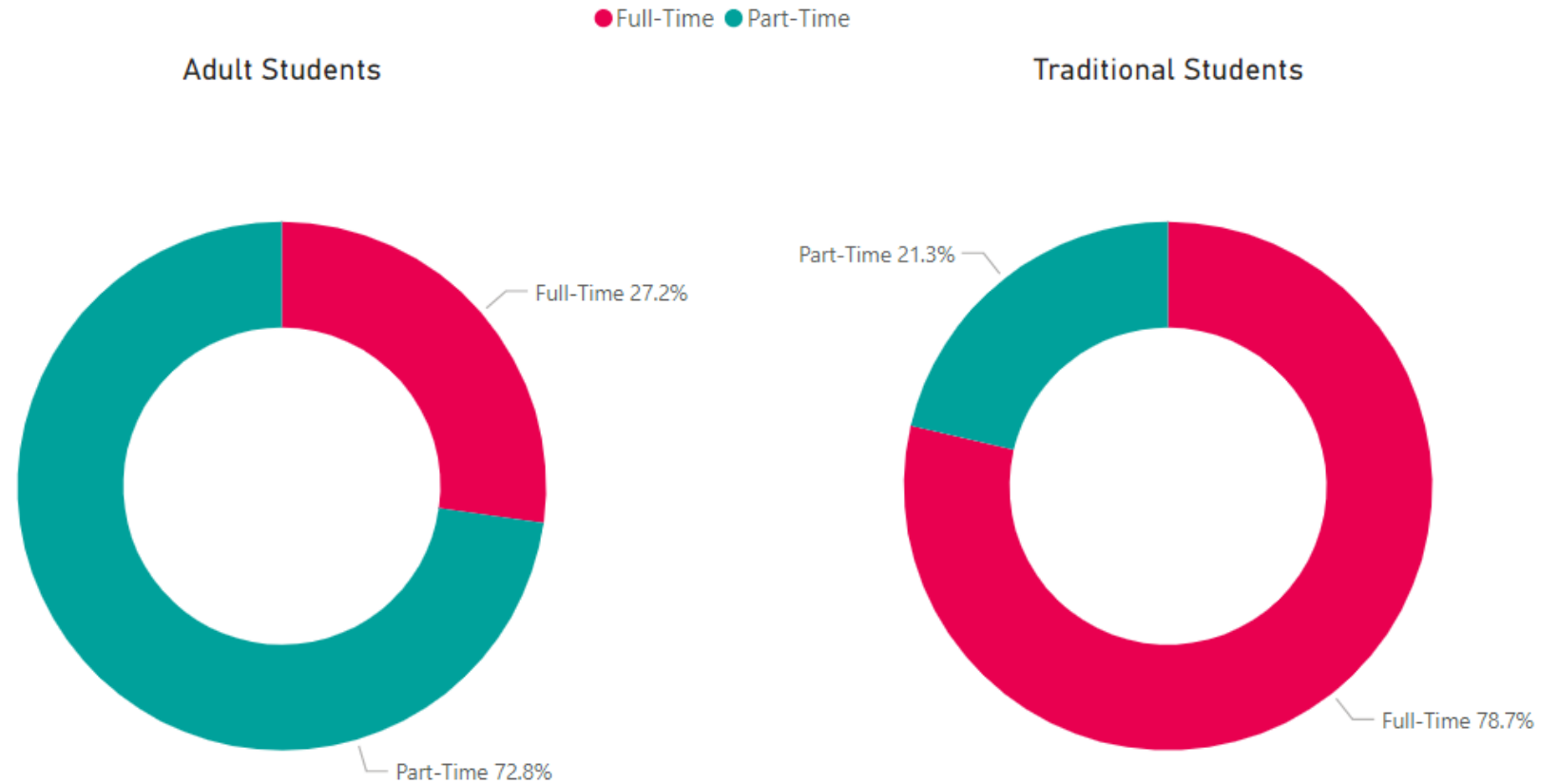
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- Nearly **3 in 4** Adult learners enroll part-time
  - Inverse relationship of traditional students
  - A plurality are Part-time seeking an associate's





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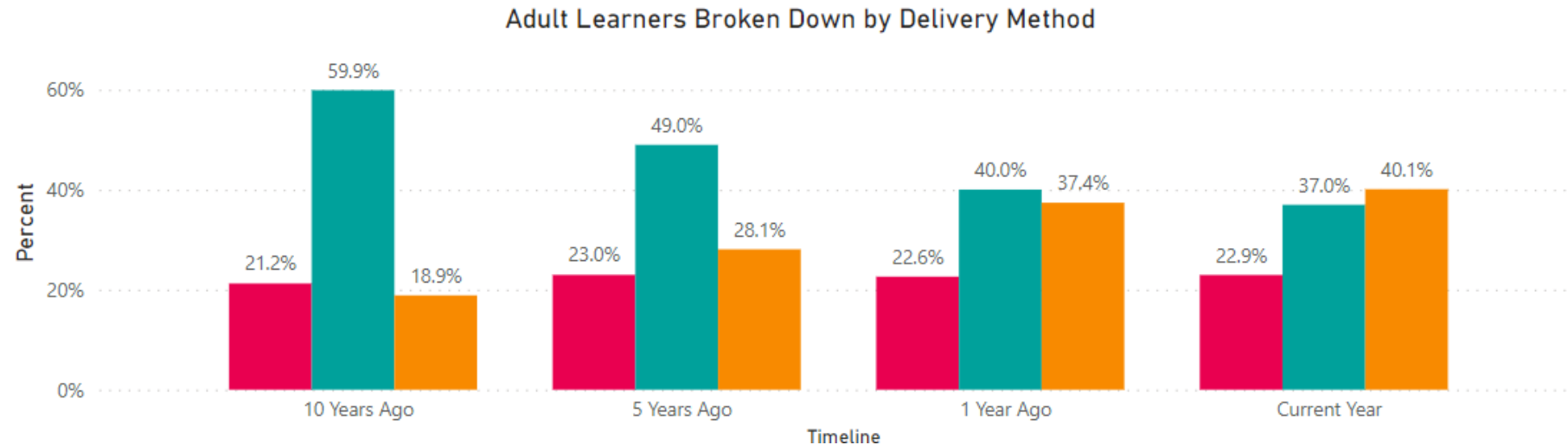
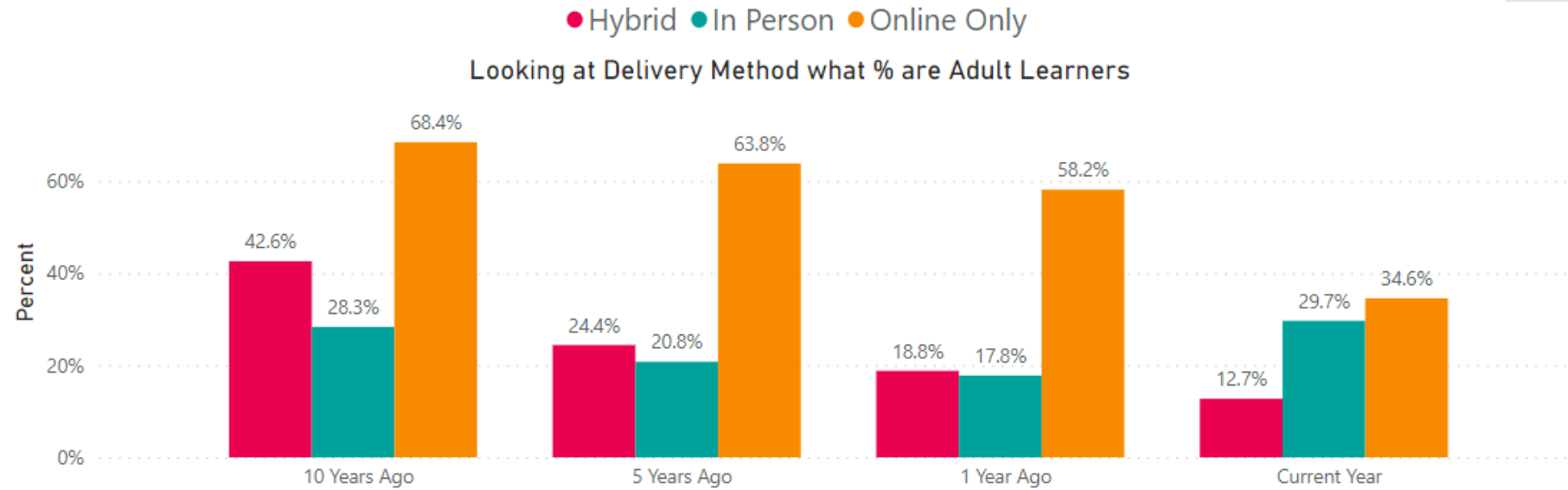
<u>Adult Students</u>			
Degree Level	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Associate's	12.3%	47.5%	59.8%
Bachelor's	14.7%	19.7%	34.4%
Certificate	0.9%	4.9%	5.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>72.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<u>Traditional Students</u>			
Degree Level	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Associate's	10.1%	14.2%	24.2%
Bachelor's	68.5%	5.7%	74.2%
Certificate	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.1%</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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- Adult learners have long been pioneers in online only education



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- Adult learners were pioneers in online only education
- COVID-19 only accelerated a trend towards online coursework

	<u>Adult Learners</u>					Traditional Students				
<u>Timeline</u>	Hybrid	In Person		Online		Hybrid	In Person		Online	
10 Years Ago	21.2%	59.9%		18.9%		15.3%	80.1%		4.6%	
5 Years Ago	23.0%	49.0%	▼	28.1%	▲	26.1%	68.1%	▼	5.8%	▲
1 Year Ago	22.6%	40.0%	▼	37.4%	▲	31.8%	59.6%	▼	8.7%	▲
Current Year	22.9%	37.0%	▼	40.1%	▲	49.1%	27.5%	▼	23.4%	▲

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- Adult learners are likely to be financially independent
  - Responsible for all associated expenses
  - 11.6 percentage points less likely to receive financial aid over the last five years

<u>Financial Aid</u>	<u>Adult Learners</u>	<u>Traditional Students</u>
No Aid	41.1%	29.8%
Received Aid	58.6%	70.2%

Sample includes all enrollments at Indiana public institutions between fall 2017 and spring 2021

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  - However, they are 10 percentage points more likely to receive the Pell Grant

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<u>Pell Grant Aid</u>	<u>Adult Learners</u>	<u>Traditional Students</u>
Received Pell	40.6%	30.7%
Did Not Received Pell	59.4%	69.3%

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No Aid	X	41.4%
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<u>Traditional Students</u>	Received Pell	No Pell
Received Aid	30.7%	39.6%
No Aid	X	29.8%
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04

# Demographics



# Demographics

- ❑ Gender
- ❑ Race & Ethnicity
- ❑ Parental Status
- ❑ Residency

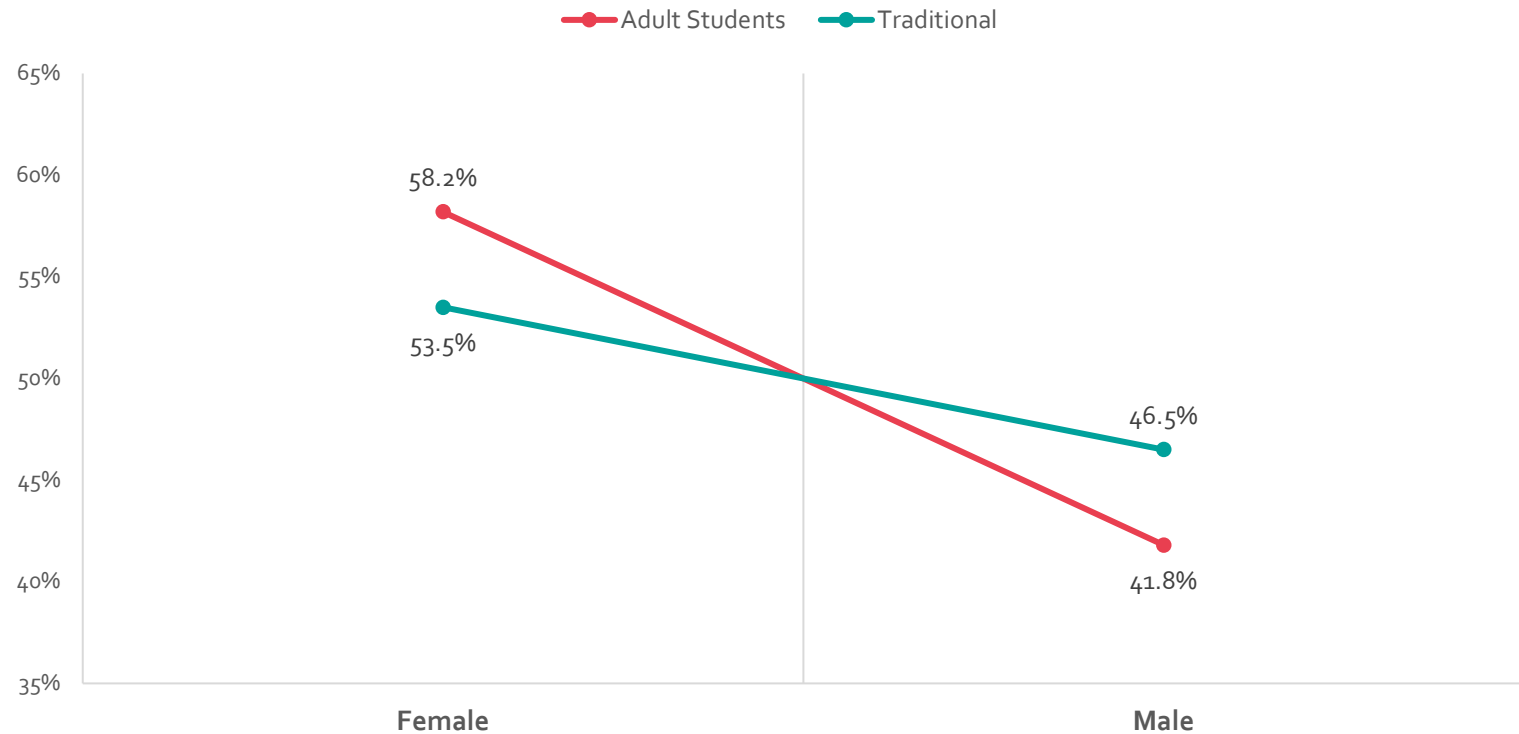
- Adult learners widen some equity while closing others.
  - Gender
  - Race
- Demographics have a correlation with unemployment rates
  - Higher unemployment rates increase enrollments
  - Pandemic unemployment- [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- Unique characteristics such as Parental Status
  - Student services
  - Academic performance
- Adult learners are more likely to be from Indiana
  - Hoosier focused policies

# Demographics

- Gender
- Race & Ethnicity
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- Across higher education, there is a gap in the college-going and completion rate between men and women
  - These significant gaps widen with age
  - 16 percentage gender gap for adults

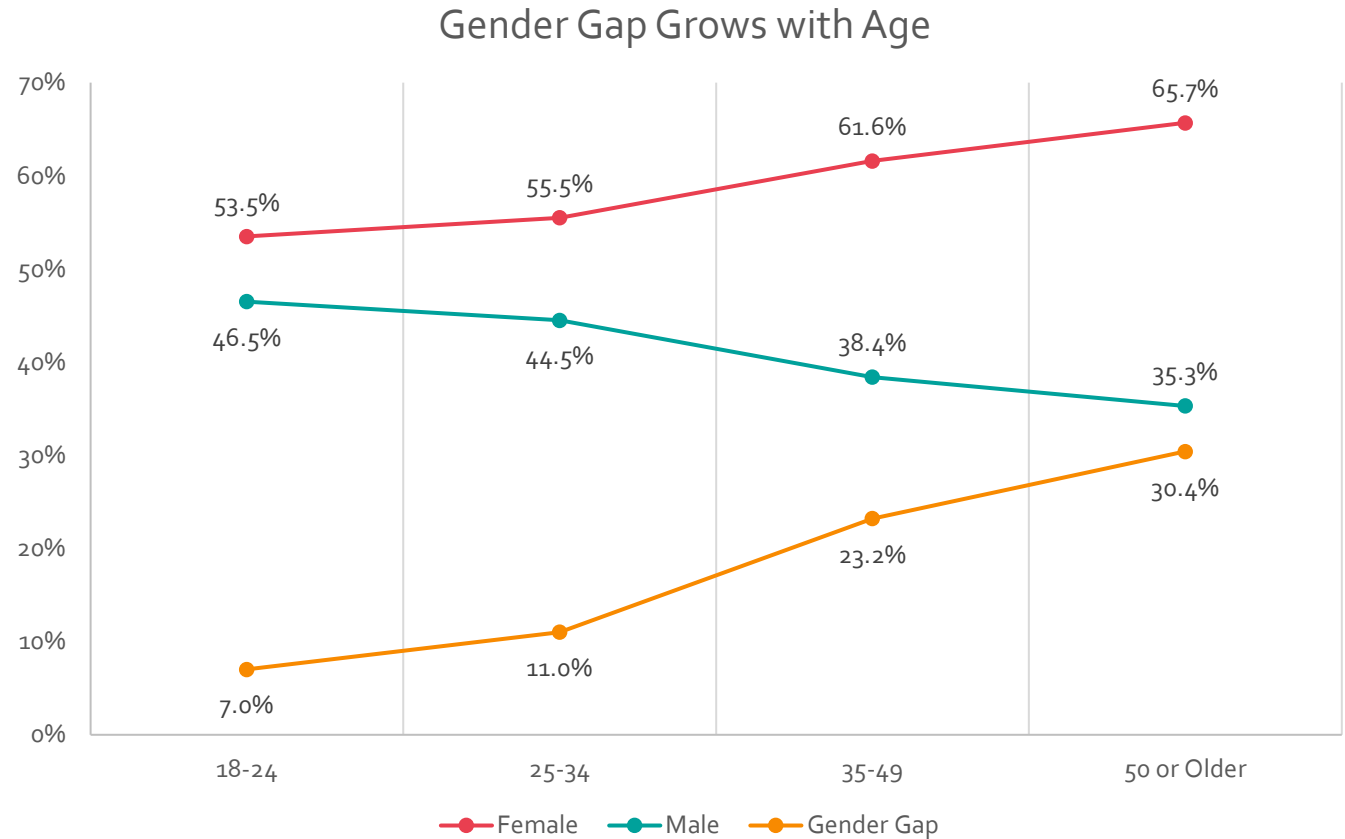
Student Type Gender Gap Comparison



# Demographics

- Gender
- Race & Ethnicity
- Parental Status
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- Across higher education, there is a gap in the college-going and completion rate between men and women
  - Gaps widen further when broken down by age group
  - Older men are both less likely to attend and to complete

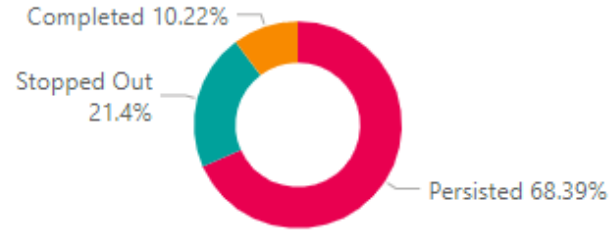


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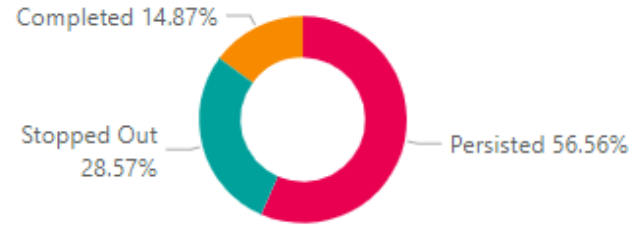
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## Female

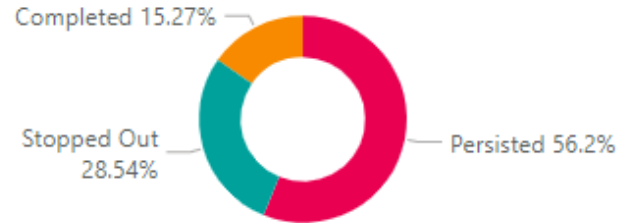
18-24



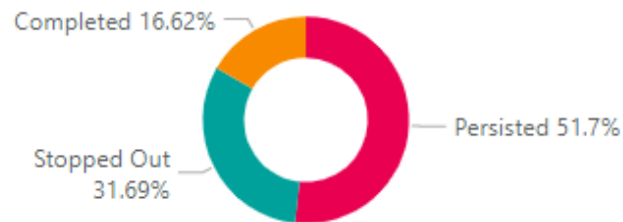
25-34



35-49

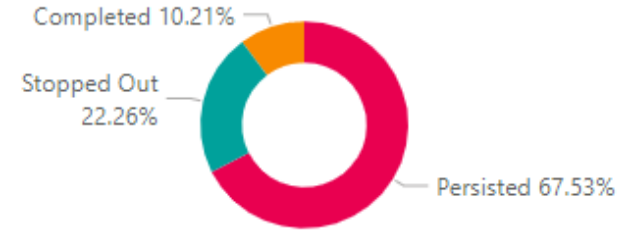


50 and older

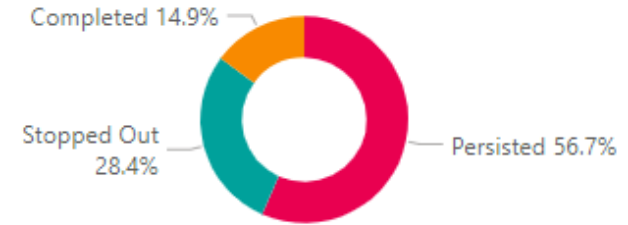


## Male

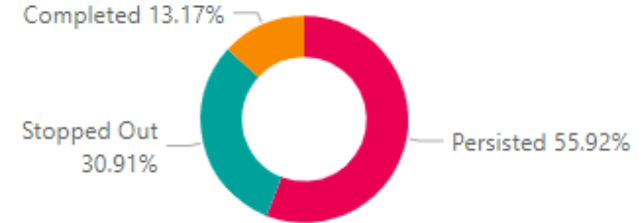
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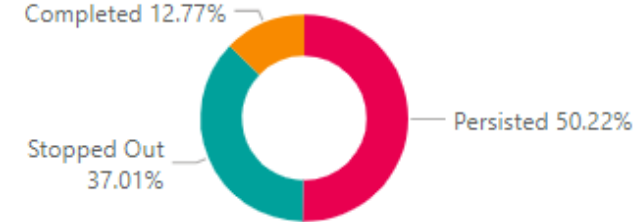
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35-49



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- ❑ Gender
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- A higher proportion of adult learners are black (16.8%) than traditional students (8.3%).
- This concurs with student age calculations in which undergraduate black students are 5 years older than white students at median.
- Among minority adult learners, 60.3% are black
- Other minority groups skew younger in median age

<u>Race</u>	<u>Adult Students</u>	<u>Traditional Students</u>
Asian	2.3%	4.2%
Black	16.1%	8.3%
Latinx	5.3%	7.7%
Two or More	3.0%	4.4%
White	73.3%	75.4%

Sample includes all enrollments at Indiana public institutions between fall 2017 and spring 2021

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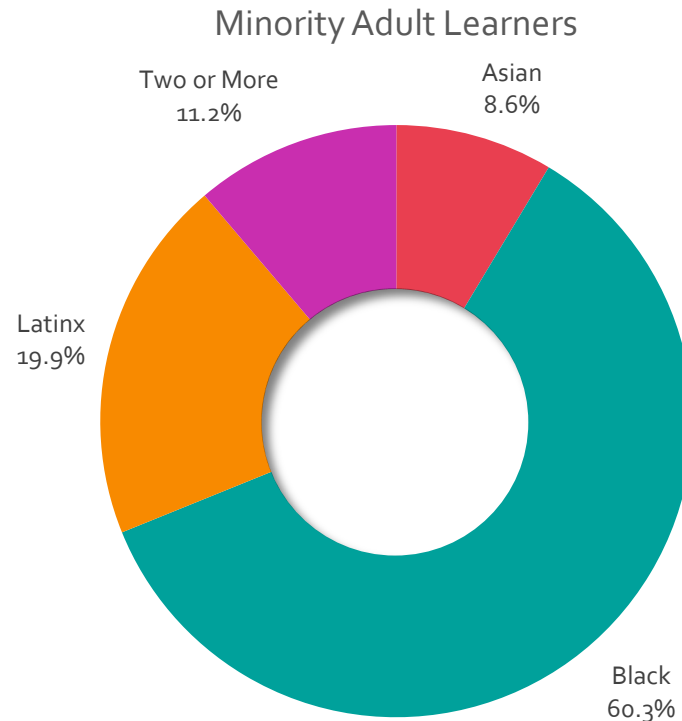
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Latinx	19.9%	31.3%
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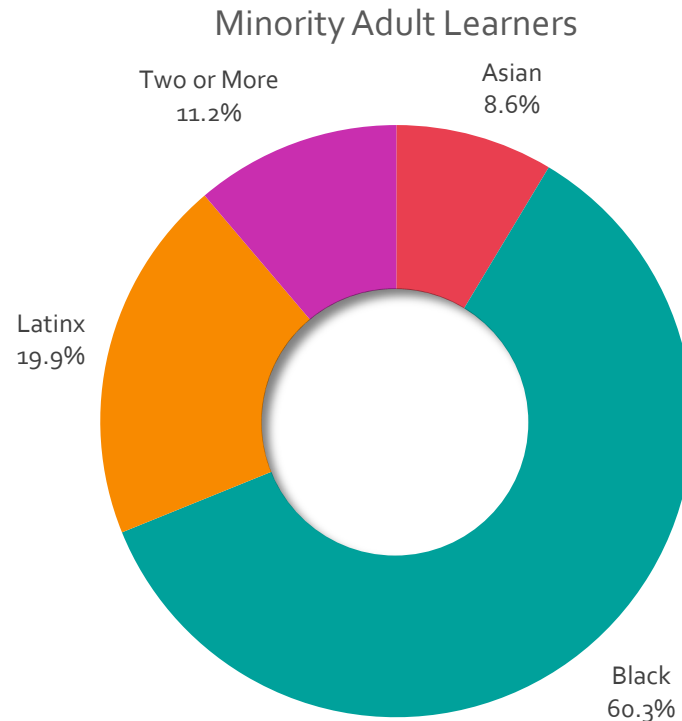
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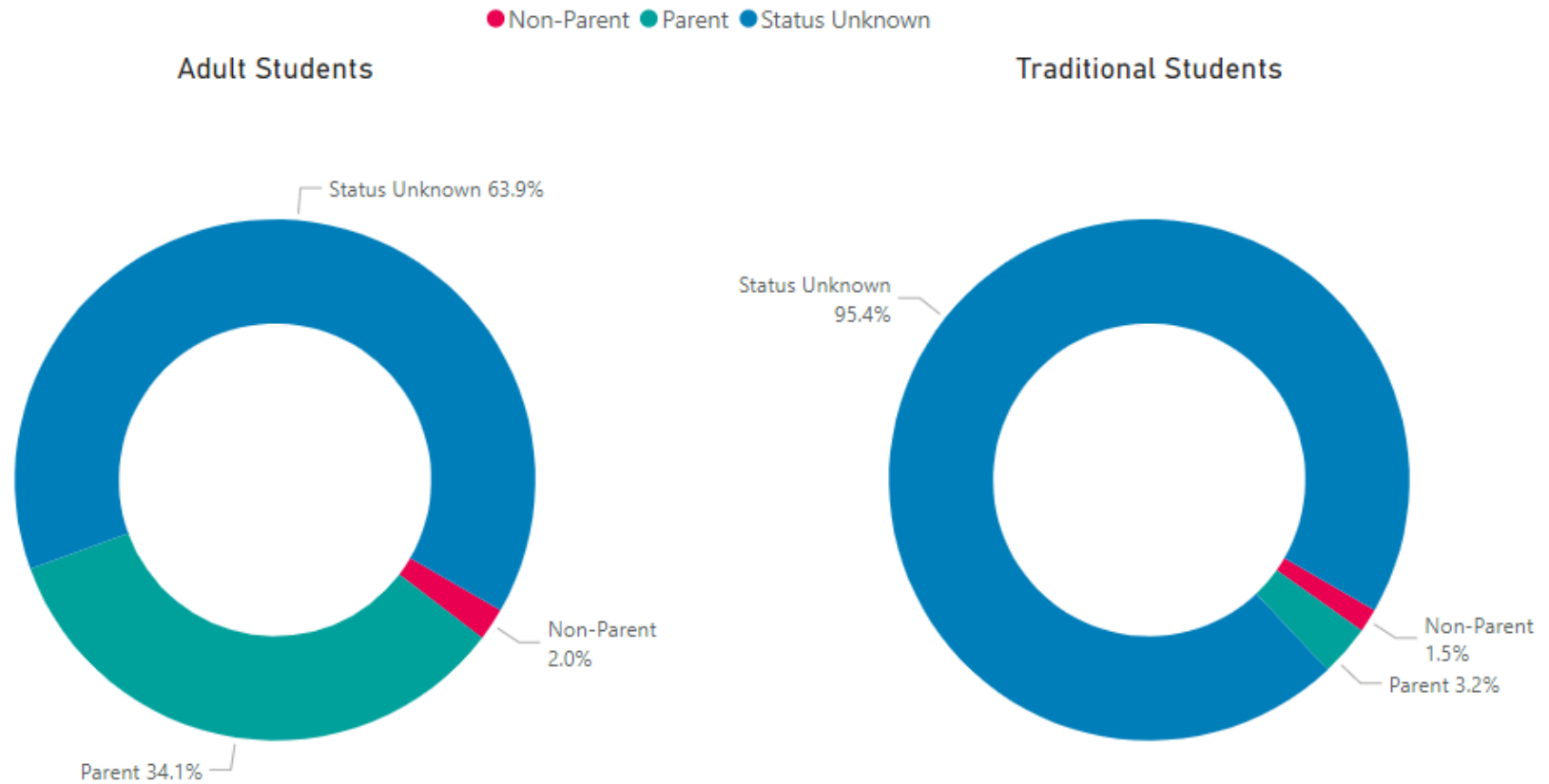




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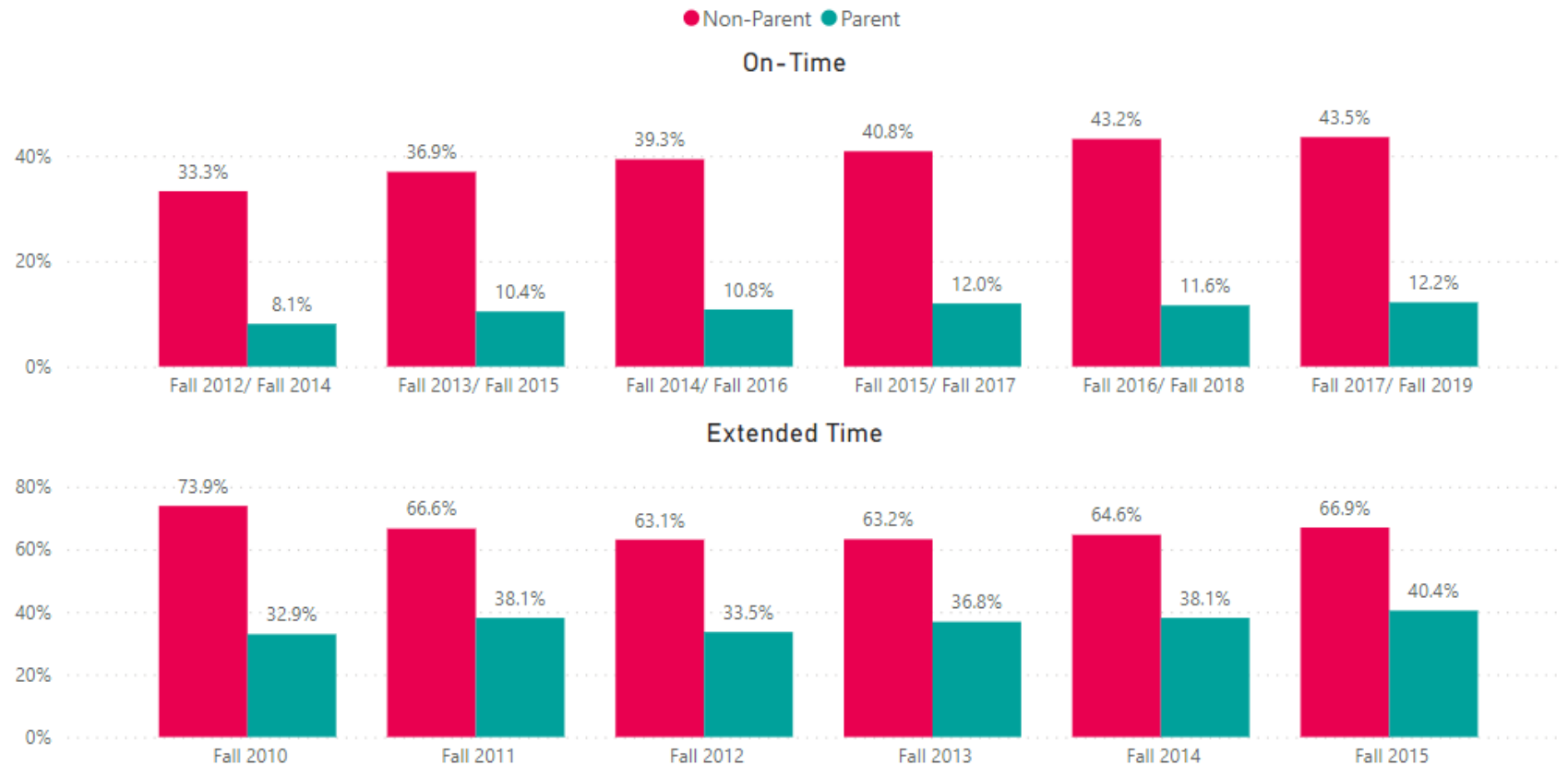
- **1 in 3** (34%) of adult learners are parents compared to 3% of those 18-24
  - **44%** of those between 35-49 have children
    - Self-reported parental status on FAFSA (47 & 48)



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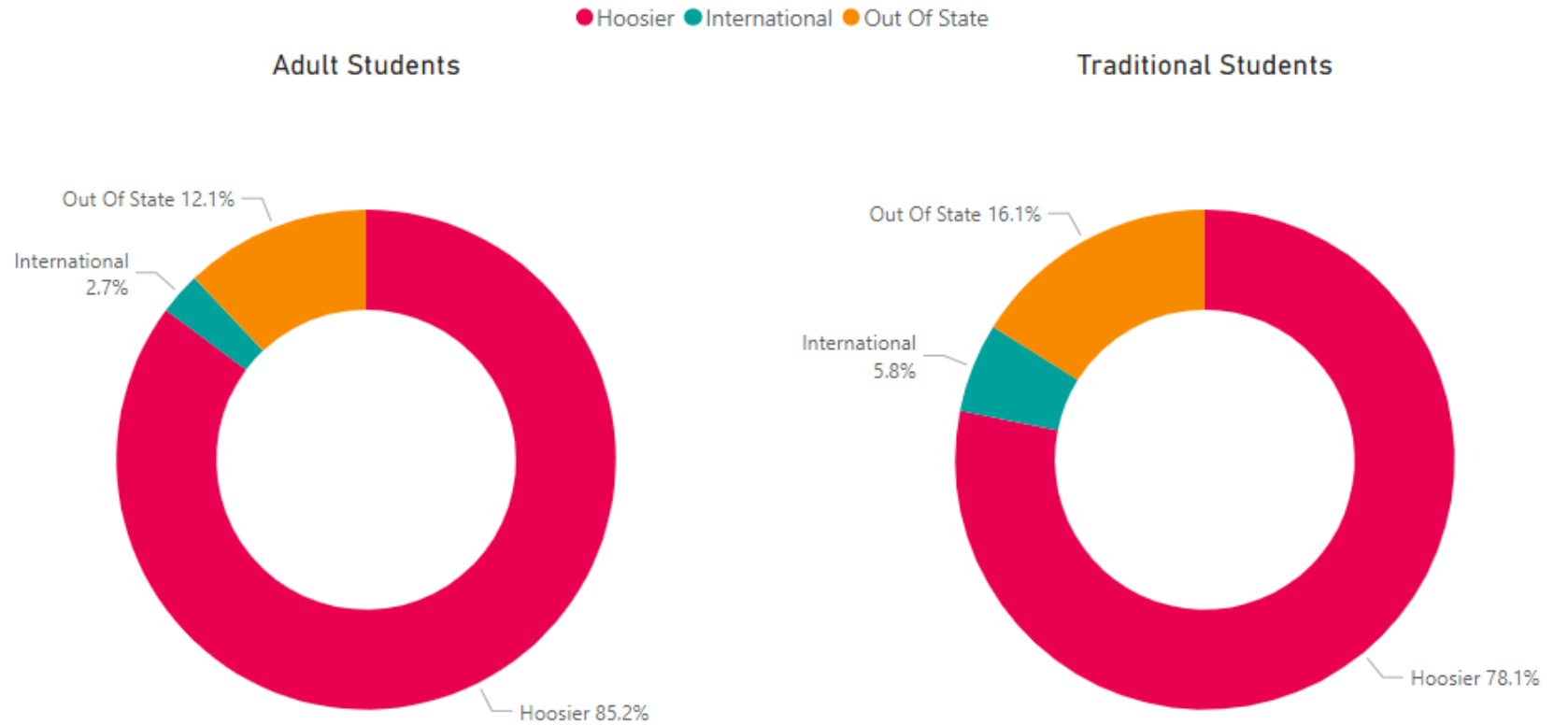
- On-time and extended completion rates for parents fall short of their non-parent peers.
- Only 12.2% of parent students complete on-time
  - Only 4 in 10 complete within 6 years



# Demographics

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- **Greater than 85%** of adult learners are Hoosiers
  - Reinforcing that adult learners have established career and family lives
  - This is a statistically significant greater portion than traditional students
  - Policies that prioritize adult learners help fellow Hoosiers



05

# Key Takeaways

- ❑ Enrollment Trends
- ❑ Academic Profile
- ❑ Demographics

- Adult learners have declined in headcount and proportion
  - 1 in 4 undergraduates is older than 25; 1 in 7 is 25-34
- Most attend a part-time at a two-year campus
  - Health and Trades are popular fields
  - Greater than 60% take at least one online course
  - 40% attend fully online; COVID-19 only accelerated the online trend
  - Less likely to receive other forms of financial aid except the Pell grant
- Preexisting gender gaps widened by age group
  - Older males are both less likely to attend and complete
- Black students may delay entering higher education
  - Median age is higher; 60% of adult minority students
- Adult learners have established careers and families in Indiana communities
  - Parent student completion rates lag behind non-parents

- ❑ Enrollment Trends
- ❑ Academic Profile
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### A larger proportion are:

- Associate's or Certificates
- Female
- Black
- Health or Trades
- Hoosiers
- Online Learners
- Parents
- Part-Time
- Regional or Two-Year

### A smaller portion are:

- Asian, Latinx, or Two+
- Financial Aid Recipients
- Four-year Main Campus
- Male
- STEM

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# Questions & Comments