

# The Cost Of Catching Up In South Carolina

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Remedial education is costly. Nationally, students in remediation spend **approximately \$1.3 billion in yearly out-of-pocket costs** on remedial courses that build basic skills in reading and math but do not count toward a degree, dramatically contributing to their overall student debt load.<sup>1</sup> A better K-12 education would do much to address this issue.

## Why South Carolinians Should Be Concerned

Taking remedial courses extends the time and costs of obtaining a degree or certificate while reducing the likelihood of completion. This has a significant social and financial impact on students.

- Students in South Carolina spend a combined **\$15,552,000 out of pocket** on remedial courses.<sup>2</sup>
- **31 percent of incoming students** in Alaska had to take one or more remedial courses.<sup>3</sup>

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Nationally, the cost of remediation adds up. According to a report by Complete College America, the average total cost of an additional year of college for a two-year associate's degree nationally is **\$50,933 in cost of attendance and lost wages**.<sup>4</sup> An extra year for a four-year bachelor's degree costs students an average of **\$68,153 in cost of attendance and lost wages**.<sup>5</sup> Nationally, fewer than 50 percent of students complete their remedial programs and even less graduate with a degree or certificate.<sup>6</sup>

Increasing access to a college education must mean more than just increasing enrollment rates. To ensure that students stay in college and complete a degree, we must ensure that students have the skills they need to succeed.

## End Notes

1 Laura Jimenez and others, "The Cost of Catching Up." (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016), available at <http://genprogress.org/ideas/2016/08/11/44566/the-cost-of-catching-up/>

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Complete College America, "Four-Year Myth," available at <http://completecollege.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/4-Year-Myth.pdf>

5 Ibid.

6 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), "Improving College Completing-Reforming Remedial Education," available at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/improving-college-completion-reforming-remedial.aspx>