

The Cost Of Catching Up In Vermont

By Laura Jimenez and Maggie Thompson

September 2016

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.¹ A better K-12 education would do much to address this issue.

Why Vermonters 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 Vermont spend a combined **\$3,534,000 out of pocket** on remedial courses.²
- **34 percent of incoming students** in Vermont had to take one or more remedial courses.³

**Students in Vermont
spend a combined
\$3,534,000 on
remedial courses.**



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**.⁴ An extra year for a four-year bachelor's degree costs students an average of **\$68,153 in cost of attendance and lost wages**.⁵ Nationally, fewer than 50 percent of students complete their remedial programs and even less graduate with a degree or certificate.⁶

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>