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Noncredit Data Taxonomy 2.0 and Implementation Guide for States : Lessons Learned from Phase 2 of the State Noncredit Data Project

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Introduction

Project Background

Interest in noncredit education has been mounting as many Americans seek educational pathways other than a four-year college degree. Shorter-term noncredit education and the non-degree credentials (NDCs) to which noncredit education can lead (e.g., certificates, certifications, licenses) are increasingly viewed as possible alternative pathways. Recent surveys have found that 29 percent of adults think that getting a four-year college degree is not worth the time, money, and effort involved,[1] and more than two-thirds of adults interested in a postsecondary option want to pursue a non-degree pathway—up from about one-half in the year prior.[2] At the same time, state funding for short-term educational programs has been increasing, approaching $4 billion in investments.[3] An estimated 4.1 million community college students are enrolled in noncredit offerings, accounting for 40 percent of all enrollments.[4] This number may continue to grow as interest rises in shorter-term options and NDCs.

Despite the important role that noncredit instructional activity plays in higher education, data on noncredit education is not fully captured at the national level or even in most state-level data collection.[5] For example, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) does not capture data on noncredit programs and enrollments.[6] Collection and analysis of noncredit program data at the state level is inconsistent, and the at-times scant data available are challenging for policymakers to use. Only three-quarters of states collect any

[1] Fry, R., Braga, D., & Parker, K. (2024). *Is college worth it?* Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2024/05/23/is-college-worth-it-2/

[2] Strada. (2020, September 16). *Public viewpoint: Interested but not enrolled: Understanding and serving aspiring adult learners*. https://cci.stradaeducation.org/pv-release-september-16-2020/

[3] HCM Strategists. (2023). *HCM Strategists releases first-ever analysis of state investments in short-term credentials*. https://hcmstrategists.com/news-updates/hcm-strategists-releases-first-ever-analysis-of-state-investments-in-short-term-credentials

[4] AACC (2024). *Fast Facts 2024*. https://www.aacc.nche.edu/research-trends/fast-facts/; Jacoby, T. (2021). *The indispensable institution: Taking the measure of community college workforce education*. Opportunity America. https://opportunityamericaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL-survey-report.pdf

[5] Erwin, M. (2019). *Noncredit enrollment and related activities*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/NPEC/data/NPEC_Paper_Noncredit_Enrollment_and_Related_Activities.pdf

[6] Erwin, M. (2019). *Noncredit enrollment and related activities*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/NPEC/data/NPEC_Paper_Noncredit_Enrollment_and_Related_Activities.pdf

data on noncredit offerings,[7] though many states are making strides to improve data collection.[8] Noteworthy challenges faced by states include inconsistent definitions (across and within states), lack of outcomes data (educational and labor market), and often poor data quality.[9] Collection and analysis of NDC data at the state level is perhaps even more complex and less consistent than that of noncredit data more broadly because data that combine NDCs and noncredit education originate from multiple sources, some of which are non-governmental. In fact, no US state has comprehensive data on all types of NDCs.[10]

Limited state-level noncredit data poses a range of problems:

- Noncredit students often are undercounted or, more often, not included at all in national data, which can result in a major activity of community colleges—and, thus, a major driver of enrollment—being overlooked. This can lead to overestimates of the per-student funding provided to these institutions.[11]

- Data limitations also affect the ability of institutions to understand and strengthen their noncredit programs. At the most basic level, very little is known about the characteristics of noncredit programs, such as their instructional time, instructional format, requirements for entry, linkages to further education, awarding agencies, cost, and credential types awarded. High-quality data are needed to determine noncredit program quality, which hinges on analyzing outcomes data for students who participate in noncredit offerings.[12] Program-level data on noncredit offerings at community colleges will help inform ongoing measurement efforts at the institutional and state levels and ensure these efforts are more grounded in the realities of those educational offerings.[13]

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[7] Mullin, C. M. (2024). *Aligning certificates, diplomas, degrees, and emerging forms of credentials: Macro, micro, and maintenance credentials*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/NPEC/data/Aligning-Certificates-Diplomas-Degrees-and-Emerging-Forms-of-Credentials-Macro-Micro-and-Maintenance-Credentials.pdf

[8] Erwin, 2019.

[9] Erwin, 2019; D'Amico, M., Van Noy, M., Srivastava, A., Bahr, P., & Xu, D. (2023). *The state community college noncredit data infrastructure: Lessons from Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia*. Education and Employment Research Center, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. https://sites.rutgers.edu/state-noncredit-data/wp-content/uploads/sites/794/2023/08/The-State-Community-College-EERC-8.2023.pdf

[10] D'Amico, M. M. (2017). Noncredit education: Specialized programs to meet local needs. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 180, 57–66. https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20281; Erwin, 2019; Romano, R. M., & D'Amico, M. M. (2021, July/August). How federal data shortchange the community college. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 53(4), 22–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2021.1930978

[11] Leventoff, J. (2018). *Measuring non-degree credential attainment: A 50-state scan.* National Skills Coalition. https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/measuring-non-degree-credential-attainment-a-50-state-scan/

[12] Romano and D'Amico, 2021.

[13] Van Noy, M., Hughes, K., & Bjorn, G. (2023). Its own standard: Approaches to quality in community college noncredit workforce education. Education and Employment Research Center, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers,

- Inconsistencies in the availability and consistency of data on noncredit education and associated labor market outcomes make direct cross-state comparisons difficulty, thus presenting additional challenges to understanding the value and quality of short-term training.

To address these limitations, the Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center (EERC) and key partners at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Michigan, and University of California–Irvine are working with state leaders across the country as part of the State Noncredit Data Project (SNDP), with support from the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES)/National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The SNDP seeks to examine noncredit data in the service of three key goals:

- Develop an inventory of and consistent operational definitions for state-level noncredit data elements to better understand the noncredit data infrastructure.

- Collect and examine noncredit course/program-level data to explore noncredit offerings and their associations with enrollment rates, outcomes, instructional characteristics, and financial arrangements.

- Uncover the drivers of noncredit offerings and produce relevant policy implications.

The project has undergone two phases. The first phase was conducted in partnership with states with established noncredit data systems (Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia), and the second phase included five state partners engaged in the process of improving or restructuring their state-level noncredit data (Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee). Thus far, the project has focused primarily on data from community colleges and state-level data from the New Jersey Department of Labor. In future iterations, we will expand the scope of the project to include other holders of noncredit data (e.g., university systems, institutions, longitudinal data systems).

In This Report

This report provides state-level entities and institutions with a practical guide for improving their noncredit data infrastructure through (1) the presentation of a noncredit data taxonomy, (2) operational definitions of data elements included in state datasets, (3) a how-to guide for entities interested in improving noncredit data collection, and (4) implications for multiple sectors seeking to improve their noncredit data. The taxonomy and how-to guide included in this report is a refinement of the original versions based on work with the SNDP's second phase of states.

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the State University of New Jersey. https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/EERC/Its%20Own%20Standard%20-%20Approaches%20to%20Quality%20Final%20Formatted%206.14.23.pdf

Noncredit Data Taxonomy

Original Taxonomy

Phase One: Development

The original noncredit data taxonomy[14] (i.e., Taxonomy 1.0) was based on work with the project's first three partner states (Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia), each well-established in terms of their noncredit data collection.[15] After reviewing states' existing data elements, considering the policies and practices in each state that required noncredit data, and developing and refining categories and data elements across states, the original taxonomy was organized into four primary sections with data subcategories:

- *Purpose and Design* captures the data elements that pertain to an offering's focus and how it is delivered to students:
  - Field of study
  - Noncredit type
  - Program length
  - Program delivery
  - Associated credentials

- *Outcomes* captures the data elements covering participants' academic, labor market, and non-degree credential outcomes:
  - Academic outcomes
  - Labor market outcomes
  - Non-degree credential outcomes

- *Demographics and Enrollment* includes the data elements pertaining to the identities of noncredit program participants as well as the enrollment intensities for offerings.
  - Student demographics
  - Enrollment
  - Student identifiers

[14] D'Amico, 2017; Erwin, 2019; Romano & D'Amico, 2021.

[15] D'Amico, M., Van Noy, M., Srivastava, A., Bahr, P., & Xu, D. (2023). *Collecting and understanding noncredit community college data: A taxonomy and how-to guide for states.* Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. https://sites.rutgers.edu/state-noncredit-data/wp-content/uploads/sites/794/2023/11/State-Noncredit-Taxonomy_EERC_11.17.23.pdf

- *Finance* holds the data elements that have to do with the way that participants and offerings are funded.
  - Tuition
  - State funding
  - Federal funding

Phase Two: Field Testing

The second phase of the project included states with emerging or developing noncredit data at the state level (Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee). While none had data as robust as the first three partner states, each had maintained data on some elements related to noncredit education and planned to expand further. SNDP's 2023 cross-state report chronicles the states' data and relevant drivers of data collection.[16] Working with these five emerging or developing partner states provided an opportunity to apply the noncredit data taxonomy to their state-level data.

Lessons Learned from Applying the Original Noncredit Data Taxonomy

The second phase of the State Noncredit Data Project validated the framework of the first taxonomy. Each data element captured by partner states on noncredit offerings fit within the four primary categories. However, nuances with each state led to some key lessons learned within each major section of the taxonomy.

Purpose and Design

Many of the purpose and design facets of the taxonomy remained applicable, with some lessons learned about expanding and/or amending the existing categories and corresponding data elements. Some of the differences observed across state data collections were minor, such as Maryland's categorization of noncredit offerings using state-specific codes rather than CIP or SOC codes as well as the state's inclusion of a program description beyond the title of offerings.

The greatest learning, however, occurred with the addition of a non-community college provider, the New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL). The NJDOL data included expanded data elements related to 1,476 noncredit offerings across 192 providers on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). These data differ from those collected by state-level community college entities, which may only capture information on institutions in their systems.

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[16] D'Amico, M., Van Noy, M., Srivastava, A., Bahr, P., & Xu, D. (2023). *The state community college noncredit data infrastructure: Lessons from Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia.* Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. https://sites.rutgers.edu/state-noncredit-data/wp-content/uploads/sites/794/2023/08/The-State-Community-College-EERC-8.2023.pdf

With the inclusion of NJDOL, the primary gaps that emerged in the first edition of the taxonomy were related to accessibility, provider information, and student services. Accessibility included data elements such as evening offerings, transportation information, disability access, and language of instruction. Each of the missing data elements seems to have broader applicability across sectors. Provider information was also unique to the NJDOL data; as a state-level entity, NJDOL works with a range of providers, including community colleges, private providers, and others. Finally, one of the areas in greatest need of expansion in the original taxonomy was student services. In that taxonomy, a single data element for student services was included under the heading of "delivery"; however, Phase 2 research demonstrated that breaking the category down by career advising, academic advising, childcare assistance, and other, more specific elements would offer a more specific framework for stakeholders wishing to capture data about how students are supported outside of the classroom.

Outcomes

As the federal government considers Workforce Pell Grants and as states increase investments in shorter-term training opportunities, data on student and course/program-related outcomes are critical to evaluating such offerings. However, with outcomes data being mostly aspirational in the Phase 2 states there seems to be little need to expand the outcomes portion of the data taxonomy.

While key initiatives, particularly in Virginia and Iowa, led to the inclusion of outcomes as a central category of the noncredit data taxonomy, outcomes were unavailable for many of the Phase 2 partners with emerging or developing data systems. There were some pockets of traction, including a few notable examples. Maryland's workforce sequence completers dataset included information on quarterly earnings and license or industry certification earning, for each student completing a workforce sequence. They have since launched an additional dataset that captures similar data, but for all noncredit course enrollees, not just those who complete sequences. NJDOL's data included completion and credential outcomes for all participants. Oregon had data on whether students enrolled in a noncredit offering continued to credit-bearing programs across program areas, along with some data on college-issued certificates and apprenticeships. Tennessee Community Colleges included data on the alignment of industry certifications with many of their offerings. South Carolina had plans to begin capturing student-level completion data with their next collection cycle.

Demographics and Enrollment

Without national efforts to collect noncredit enrollment data through IPEDS, the optional nature of demographic reporting (e.g., sex/gender), and inconsistent funding for noncredit enrollments, dataset basics like enrollments and student demographics are historically inconsistent for noncredit education. Despite these elements seeming quite basic in the original taxonomy, significant gaps emerged in the availability of demographics and enrollment data among the Phase 1 established states. Data collection from entities observed in Phase 2 also showed significant gaps; availability on these elements ranged from none to all noncredit offerings.

While data collection on headcount and contact hours was generally consistent other than for New Jersey Customized Training data, collection of demographic information and student identifiers (e.g., Social Security Numbers) was much less consistent. Nonetheless, these three additional subcategories—enrollment, demographics, and identifiers—seemed relevant to the revised model. The inclusion of NJDOL in Phase 2 once again sparked ideas for additional data elements, including citizenship, residency, WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) eligibility, disability status, English as a Second Language, foster-care youth, driver's license number, and many more. Although many of these data elements were only present in the one dataset, they may be applicable to other datasets over time and thus informed the revised taxonomy.

Finance

The initial taxonomy included a few data elements related to tuition, state and/or federal funding availability, WIOA eligibility, and economic development support for new and expanding businesses. Consistent with general findings in the literature, data from the Phase 2 states were relatively sparse. None of the state higher education sectors or systems maintained tuition data, and few maintained data on WIOA eligibility. Some of the higher education entities in Phase 2 included noncredit in state funding formulas (Maryland, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee TCAT), and a few showed some eligibility for state grants and economic development incentive funding. Once again, the NJDOL maintained more robust records in terms of student costs (e.g., financial aid, books) in addition to more robust data in ETPL eligibility dates and timelines.

The additional nuance observed in Phase 2 necessitates an expansion of the taxonomy to more completely represent tuition and student costs, state and federal funding, as well as WIOA information. In addition, the Finance section may be more appropriately named Finance and Policy, since policy drives the funding priorities. As of January 2025, WIOA reauthorization has failed to advance in Congress despite bipartisan support in late 2024. If it were to move forward soon, one of the proposed provisions is to automatically include community colleges on the ETPL, which would make WIOA data elements more applicable to higher education datasets. This addition and the accompanying data elements would therefore be driven by policy as much as funding sources.

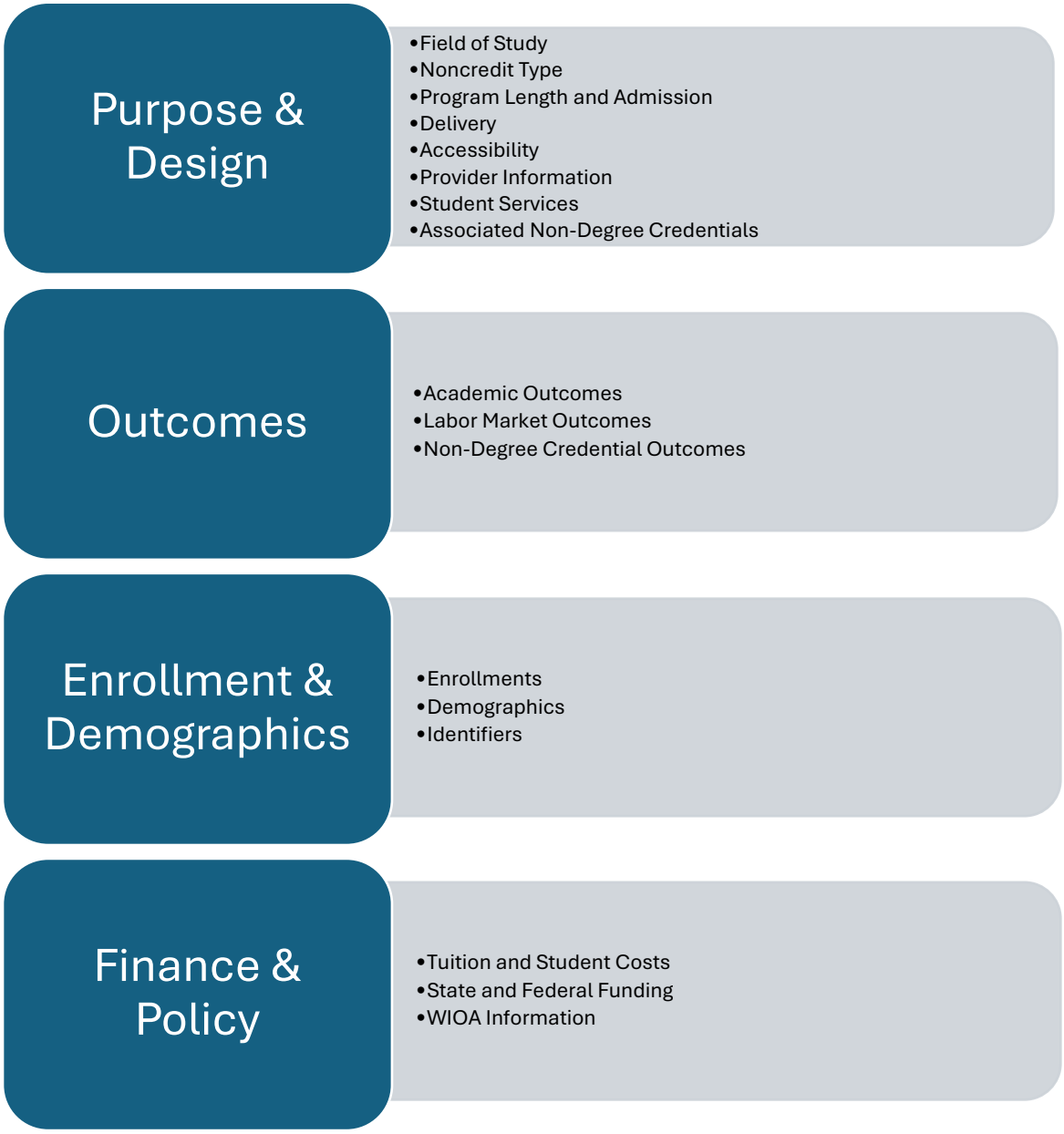
Revised Noncredit Data Taxonomy

Based on the lessons learned in SNDP's work with the eight research partners engaged across Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project, we advance the Noncredit Data Taxonomy 2.0. Notably, the 2.0 edition retains the four primary noncredit data sections but includes the following updates:

- The addition of policy to the finance section.
- Expanded data categories within the primary sections, including more detailed elements related to accessibility and student services; provider information; more specific delineation of enrollment, demographics, and identifiers; and an expansion of student costs and WIOA information.

The appendix offers a complete list of all data elements and operational definitions, more than 90 in all, which approximately doubles the number of data elements and definitions compared with the prior version.

Figure 1. Noncredit Data Taxonomy 2.0



How-To Guide for Engaging the Noncredit Data Journey

Engagement with data leaders from eight states across two phases of the State Noncredit Data Project yielded valuable lessons on how to build the state-level noncredit data infrastructure. While the lessons learned were primarily based on state-level community college data, the project team hopes that the noncredit data taxonomy provides useful insights for institutional leaders, state leaders, and other stakeholders across sectors ranging from community colleges and universities to governmental bodies and labor agencies. The following five steps offer guidance for implementing the Noncredit Data Taxonomy 2.0 to enhance noncredit data collection. (States that have not yet begun noncredit data collection should begin at Step 2.)

Step 1: Inventory current noncredit data.

States currently collecting noncredit data should begin with a complete inventory of all data elements as aligned with the revised noncredit data taxonomy. Next, examine the data for completeness, and determine whether operational definitions are consistent across institutions. Finally, evaluate policy to ensure that clear guidelines are in place for data collection.

Step 2: Begin with essentials and build over time.

After determining what is currently collected, develop an agenda to incrementally add data elements over time—SNDP refers to this process as the *Noncredit Data Journey*. The following are key principles to guide your plan:

- Identify key data elements within the four primary sections of the noncredit data taxonomy 2.0 (Purpose & Design, Outcomes, Enrollment & Demographics, Finance & Policy).

- Align each of the data elements with a specific desired purpose. For example: (1) state funding and accountability mandates, (2) strategic goals to pursue additional resources, (3) alignment with state economic development priorities, (4) preparation for potential policy movements, such as Workforce Pell or IPEDS data collection.

- Prioritize headcount and contact-hour enrollments, which will be the foundation of all data collection.

- Consider consistent naming conventions for courses/programs statewide. While statewide or local course/program names may or may not be viable, connections with an established categorization system like noncredit types and/or CIP codes provide opportunities for consistent classifications.

- Strive to include outcomes, e.g., completion rates, labor market outcomes, non-degree credentials.

Step 3: Choose a data platform that allows for interconnectivity.

Noncredit data platforms vary across institutions and states. While some institutions may still use simple solutions like spreadsheets and local databases, others, such the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, consolidate an array of data on all credit and noncredit students into a single, unified student information system. Consider goals in your state. If the intent is consistent and streamlined data reporting, then a consistent system for all noncredit data may fit that need. If the intent is to implement noncredit-to-credit articulation, then a robust student information system across missions may be needed.

Step 4: Build data partnerships to collect outcomes data.

The collection of outcomes data, particularly for labor market outcomes and non-degree credentials, can be challenging because community colleges typically do not serve as central repositories for such data. Information on licensures, for example, tends to be maintained through state agencies for fields like health care and commercial driving, and industry groups often award industry-based credentials. As a result, measuring outcomes requires the development of data partnerships.

Step 5: Engage statewide and national data ecosystems.

With efforts underway to enhance noncredit data nationally, now is a good time for institutions, higher education systems, and state agencies to engage in data improvement together. SNDP leads a National Learning Community for state-level entities interested in improving noncredit data, but that is not the only avenue. Institutions can collaborate with their state leaders, state agencies can engage in State Longitudinal Data System work, and all can remain aware of other national efforts. One of these efforts is CredLens (https://www.credlens.org/), a national hub for non-degree credential data that has the potential to accelerate the acquisition of credential data for states. No single agency or organization can successfully build a comprehensive noncredit data system; this is a goal that requires collaboration.

Toward the Future: Applying the Taxonomy Across Levels and Sectors

While the State Noncredit Data Project began as an endeavor to document and advance data collection within state-level community college agencies and systems, engagement with eight states across two project phases uncovered broader implications. In addition, the work of the nearly 40 states involved in the project's National Learning Community, has resulted in interest and potential applicability well beyond community college data repositories. For example, some major stakeholders in the noncredit data space include community and technical colleges, universities, state agencies and higher education systems, state departments of labor and workforce, and state longitudinal data systems. Due to varied governance structures, diffuse locations of credentials and labor market outcomes, independent data systems, and the lack of cross-institutional or agency policy, assembling coherent and consistent noncredit data statewide can be a challenge in such a fragmented environment. One remedy is to consider all involved entities and the applicability of the noncredit data taxonomy in each data environment (see Table 1).

Table 1. Noncredit Data Taxonomy Implications and Opportunities Across Levels and Sectors

Entity	Role in Noncredit Data Ecosystem	Current and Potential Contributions to the Noncredit Data Taxonomy	Potential Uses of the Noncredit Data Taxonomy
State Agencies and Associations (e.g., Community College and University Systems, SHEEOs, Higher Education Associations)	Govern, regulate, monitor, and/or organize community college noncredit data collection across the state	Taxonomy is based on state-level community and technical college data and related policy. Project expansion to include university systems and/or higher education associations would add additional sector nuances.	Establish operational definitions and policy at the state level to ensure consistency across institutions.
Community/ Technical College: Institutions	Deliver the majority of noncredit offerings through various types of courses and programs Report data to state-level entities	Institutional data are typically more complete than state-level data. Taxonomy is informed by community college data reported to state-level entities in eight states. Institutional input could help to refine the taxonomy and	Engage in predictable and equitable state-level data reporting. Prepare for potential IPEDS reporting. Ensure data are available for potential Workforce Pell opportunities.

		identify additional data elements.	
State Departments of Labor and Workforce	Oversee state ETPL and WIOA Collect data on workforce education providers May be central repository of labor market outcome data	Taxonomy 2.0 is informed by one state's DOL (NJ). Close ties to workforce boards, labor unions, and industry may help to widen the scope of available data.	Consistent data could help with WIOA connections between Labor and higher education. Achieve beneficial data connections should WIOA reauthorization occur and include community/ technical colleges as approved providers.
Universities	Deliver offerings through executive education and professional studies	University input would help ensure applicability to the sector and identify additional data elements.	Engage in predictable and equitable state-level data reporting. Prepare for potential IPEDS reporting.
State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS)	Can be a repository for outcomes data useful across sectors Can draw from preexisting SLDS agreements among sectors to share data	Taxonomy 2.0 is informed by input from one state's SLDS in collaboration with their Higher Education Commission (MD).	The application of a noncredit taxonomy across sectors could help with data alignment across state agencies.
State Apprenticeship Agencies and Offices of Apprenticeship (Could be integrated with state Departments of Labor or Community College Systems)	Collect and oversee apprenticeship data through the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS) and other state-specific systems	RAPIDS items may inform future iterations of taxonomy.	Taxonomy may help to align RAPIDS data and state-specific apprenticeship data systems.
Private Training Providers	Deliver noncredit offerings	May collect different or additional information on noncredit students when compared to the public providers.	Expand or refine noncredit data collection processes.
Other State Government Entities (e.g., Governor's Offices)	Manage initiatives related to noncredit data collection and analysis in some states	May be positioned to bring together data from across different agencies, which could help refine future versions of the taxonomy.	Taxonomy may be able to guide data alignment across state agencies and training providers.

Future work on the taxonomy for the State Noncredit Data Project will include insights from other sectors, offering even more universal approaches that consider nuanced governance and policy and the varied data needs across institutions, sectors, and agencies.

Appendix: Noncredit Data Elements and Operational Definitions by Taxonomy Section

Section 1: Purpose and Design

Table 2. Purpose & Design: Data Elements and Definitions

Category	Subcategory	Operational Definitions
Field of Study	Course/Program Name	College- or state-level name for noncredit course
	Course/Program Description	Narrative description of a noncredit offering
	CIP Code	2-, 4-, or 6-digit CIP Codes
	SOC Code	Standard Occupation Code (SOC)
	Career Cluster	Course/program alignment with 16 Career Clusters
	State-Specific Code	State code, if different from CIP or SOC
Noncredit Type[17]	Occupational Training	"Noncredit occupational training is geared toward individuals seeking to gain or improve job skills leading to initial or better employment. These courses are most often available through an open registration process, do not follow a typical semester schedule, and are paid for by individuals through either their own resources or through third-party funding for which they are eligible."
	Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training	"… similar to occupational training … arranged by special contract with organizations … can be specific training developed for an organization, or it can lead to some particular industry-based standard … delivered in a way most convenient for the contracting organization … responds directly to local area needs"
	Pre-College	"Primary courses/programs delivered include ABE, ESL instruction, GED preparation, and even some aspects of developmental studies. These are typically offered at no charge to the student other than testing fees, supplies, etc."
	Personal Interest	"Common examples include ballroom dancing, cake decorating, and the like … are demand-driven, because students likely self-pay, and often reflect the needs, interests, and priorities of local communities."
Program Length and Admission	Number of Courses if Multi-Course Program	Number of noncredit courses required to complete a noncredit program

[17] D'Amico, 2017; D'Amico, M. M., Morgan, G. B., Robertson, S., & Houchins, C. (2014). An exploration of noncredit community college enrollment. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 62*(3), 152-162. https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2014.953438

	Total Contact (Clock) Hours for Offerings	Required contact hours for each single-unit course/program and for multi-course programs: "A period of time consisting of (1) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period; (2) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or (3) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course"[18]
	Calendar Length	Dates of offering and/or calendar duration
	Admission Requirements	Prerequisites, test scores, and/or age required for enrollment
Delivery	Face-to-Face	Course/program is offered face-to-face
	Face-to-Face Location	Location where course/program with face-to-face component is offered: on campus, industry site, or other off campus location
	Online	Course/program is offered online
	Blended	Course/program is offered in blended/hybrid format
	Competency-Based	Course/program is competency-based
	Work-Based Learning	Work-based learning required for course/program completion
	Faculty Data	Course/program instructors: permanent faculty who teach both credit and noncredit, permanent faculty who teach noncredit only, adjunct faculty, and/or external/contract faculty
Accessibility	Evening Courses	Course/program is offered in the evenings
	Transportation	Transportation availability (e.g., bus/train routes)
	Access for Disabled	Format of offering is disability accessible
	Language of Instruction	Offering is available in languages other than English
Provider Information	Provider Name	Name of training provider's organization or institution
	Provider ID	ID number of training provider
	Provider Type	Type of training provider (e.g., community college, private)
Student Services	Career Advising	Availability of career advising for enrolled noncredit students
	Academic Advising	Availability of academic advising for enrolled noncredit students
	US Department of Labor (US DOL) One-Stop Services	Availability of US DOL One-Stop services for enrolled noncredit students
	Personal Counseling	Availability of personal counseling for enrolled noncredit students
	America's Job Bank (AJB)/America's Talent Bank (ATB)	Availability of AJB/ATB for enrolled noncredit students
	Childcare Assistance and Services	Availability of childcare assistance and services for enrolled noncredit students

[18] IPEDS Glossary 2021–22 for "Clock Hour." Available at https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/survey-components-glossary/7

Associated Non-Degree Credentials	Industry Certification	Industry certifications are "awarded by industry certification bodies" and "awarded for third-party, independent competency assessment."[19]
	Occupational Licensure	Licenses are "awarded by government agencies" and "awarded for meeting requirements of an occupation."[20]
	College-Issued Certificate	Certificates are offered by many entities, including education providers (e.g., community colleges). Certificates can be awarded for participation, completion, achievement, or by assessment.[21]
	Microcredentials	"Microcredentials verify, validate, and attest that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved. They differ from traditional degrees and certificates in that they are generally offered in shorter or more flexible time spans and tend to be more narrowly focused."[22]
	Apprenticeship	Noncredit offering is part of the *related instruction* provided for a DOL-registered apprenticeship[23]

[19] Workcred. (2021). *How do credentials differ?* https://workcred.org/Documents/How-Do-Credentials-Differ.pdf

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Apprenticeship USA. (2015). *A quick-start toolkit: Building registered apprenticeship programs*. US Department of Labor. https://apprenticeshipusa.workforcegps.org/resources/2015/04/20/10/20/A_Quick_Start_Toolkit_Building_Registered_Apprenticeship_Programs

Section 2: Noncredit Outcomes

Table 3. Noncredit Outcomes: Data Elements and Definitions

Category	Subcategory	Operational Definitions
Academic Outcomes	Noncredit-to-Credit Transitions	Whether noncredit student enrolls in credit courses/programs
	Completion	Course/program completion data and type of available data (pass/fail, grades, complete/not complete, credential earned)
	Exit Date (Non-Completers)	Non-completers' date of last attendance
Labor Market Outcomes	Pre-Enrollment Employment	Student employment status before enrolling in offering
	Post-Enrollment Employment	Student employment status after enrolling in offering
	Pre-Enrollment Salary/Wage	Student salary/wage before enrolling in offering
	Post-Enrollment Salary/Wage	Student salary/wage after enrolling in offering
Non-Degree Credential Outcomes	Industry Certification	Student attainment of industry certification(s) "awarded by industry certification bodies" or "awarded for third-party, independent competency assessment"[24]
	Occupational Licensure	Student attainment of license(s) "awarded by government agencies" or "awarded for meeting requirements of an occupation"[25]
	College-Issued Certificate	Student attainment of certificate(s) offered by any entity (e.g., education providers). Certificates can be awarded for participation, completion, achievement, or by assessment.[26]
	Microcredentials	Student attainment of microcredential(s), which "verify, validate, and attest that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved. They differ from traditional degrees and certificates in that they are generally offered in shorter or more flexible time spans and tend to be more narrowly focused."[27]
	Apprenticeship	Student attainment of DOL-registered apprenticeship credential[28]

[24] Workcred, 2021.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Educause (2025). *Earn and display your microcredentials*. https://www.educause.edu/microcredentialing/earn-and-display-your-microcredentials

[28] Apprenticeship USA, 2015.

Section 3: Enrollment and Demographics

Table 4. Enrollment and Demographics: Data Elements and Definitions

Category	Subcategory	Operational Definitions
Enrollment	Headcount	Duplicated and unduplicated enrollment by course/program
	Sections Delivered	Number of sections delivered for each offering
	Enrollment Date	Student enrollment dates
	Contact Hours	Student contact hours
	Registrations	Student course/program registrations for each offering
Demographics	Race/Ethnicity	Student race/ethnicity
	Age	Student age
	Sex/Gender	Student sex/gender
	Citizenship	Student citizenship status
	Zip Code	Student zip code
	State of Residence	Student state of residence
	County of Residence	Student county of residence
	Disability Status	Student documented disability
	WIOA Participant	Student WIOA eligibility
	English as a Second Language	Student designated as an English Language Learner
	Formerly Incarcerated	Student status as former incarcerated
	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Student TANF eligibility
	Foster-Care Youth	Student status as a former foster-care youth
	Housing Status	Student housing status
Identifiers	Social Security Number	SSN of enrolled student
	Driver's License/State ID	Student state driver's license or state identification number
	Institutional Identification Number	Institutional ID assigned to enrolled student
	Name	Student name
	Birth Date	Student birth dates

Section 4: Finance and Policy

Table 5. Finance and Policy: Data Elements and Definitions

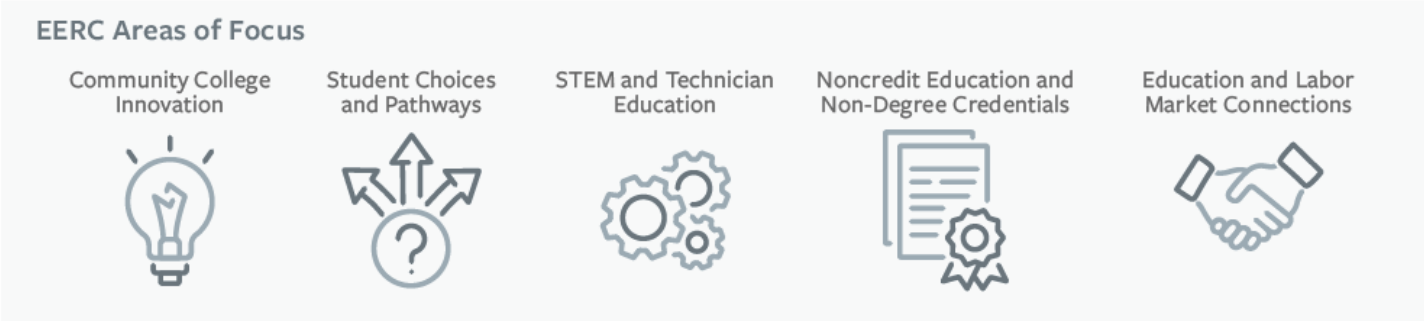
Category	Subcategory	Operational Definitions
Tuition and Student Costs	Course/Program Tuition	Tuition for each offering
	Financial Aid	Financial aid availability for each offering
	Books and Supplies	Books and supplies required for each offering
	Fees	Fees charged for each offering
	Other Costs	Other costs for each offering
	Total Costs	Total costs for each offering
State and Federal Funding	State Reimbursement	Course/program eligible for state funding through formula, enrollment, or similar funding
	Economic Development Incentive	Course/program offered as an economic development incentive for new and/or expanding businesses
	Other Federal Grants	Course/program eligible for federal funding
	Other State Grants	Course/program eligible for other state funding
WIOA Information	WIOA-Eligible Training Provider by Course/Program	Course/program eligible for WIOA funding. WIOA is a federally funded program "designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in a global economy"[29]
	ETPL Agency	Approval agency for ETPL
	ETPL Submission	Date offering submitted for ETPL consideration
	ETPL Approval	Date offering approved for ETPL
	ETPL Expiration	Data of ETPL expiration for offering

[29] US Department of Labor. (n.d.). *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*. https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa

About

The Education and Employment Research Center

Rutgers' Education and Employment Research Center (EERC) is housed within the School of Management and Labor Relations. EERC conducts research and evaluation on programs and policies at the intersection of education and employment. Our work strives to improve policy and practice so that institutions may provide educational programs and pathways that ensure individuals obtain the education needed for success in the workplace, and employers have a skilled workforce to meet their human resource needs. For more information on our mission and current research, visit smlr.rutgers.edu/eerc.



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