EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH CENTER

State Noncredit Data Infrastructure Cross-State Report

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Introduction

Interest in noncredit education has been mounting as many Americans seek pathways for social mobility other than a four-year college degree. Noncredit education and the non-degree credentials (NDCs) to which noncredit education can lead (e.g., certificates, certifications, licenses, badges, and microcredentials) are increasingly viewed as possible alternative pathways. Recent surveys have found that 29% of adults think that getting a four-year college degree is not worth the time, money, and effort involved,[1] and that 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% of all enrollments.[4] This number may continue to grow as interest rises in such programs and the potential paths they offer to NDCs. The most recent comprehensive nationwide survey of NDCs—the *2016 Adult Training and Education Survey* (ATES)—found that about one-third of working age adults hold non-degree credentials.[5]

Despite the important role that noncredit instructional activity plays in higher education, particularly for community and technical colleges, data on noncredit education is not fully captured at the national level or even in most state-level data collection.[6] For example, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) does not capture data on the vast majority of NDCs or on noncredit programs and enrollments.[7] Collection and analysis of noncredit program data at the state level is inconsistent, and the scant data available are challenging for policymakers to use. Only three-quarters of states collect any data on noncredit

[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] Cronen, S., McQuiggan, M., Isenberg, E., & Grady, S. (2018*). Adult training and education: Results from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2016* (NCES 2017-103rev). U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017103rev.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

[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

offerings,[8] though some states are making strides to improve data collection.[9] 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.[10] 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. In fact, none of the fifty states has comprehensive data on all types of NDCs.[11]

The small quantity and poor quality of noncredit data poses problems for a range of higher education stakeholders, particularly those associated with public community colleges. 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 being overlooked and can lead to overestimates of the per-student funding provided to these institutions.12 This is especially salient when community colleges are requesting additional funding within their states but lack the data to show the impact of their noncredit programming.13 Further, inconsistencies in the availability and quality of data on noncredit education and associated labor market outcomes make direct cross-state comparisons daunting.

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 that participate in noncredit offerings.[14] The research that does exist indicates that noncredit program quality and outcomes vary widely depending on a range of factors (e.g., length, field, provider, student demographics), highlighting the need for comprehensive, high-quality data on outcomes.[15] Program-level data on noncredit offerings at community

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[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.* Washington, DC: 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] Peterson, E. K., Vinton, J., & Van Noy, M. (2024). *A snapshot of state practices and plans for collecting industry and certification data*. 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/794/2024/08/Snapshot-of-State-Practices_EERC_04.2024.pdf

[14] 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, 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

[15] Strada Education Foundation, Gallup, & Lumina Foundation. (2019). Certified value: When do adults without degrees benefit from earning certificates and certifications? https://go.stradaeducation.org/certified-value; Ositelu, M. O., McCann, C., & Laitinen, A. (2021). The

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.[16]

With growing interest and investment by both public and private funders in opportunities for short-term flexible options to prepare individuals for the workforce, it is essential to cultivate a better understanding of noncredit education and NDCs through data. To address this need, 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.

In addition to this analysis, the SNDP convenes a Learning Community of states on data for noncredit education and NDCs. The Learning Community is designed to bring together state leaders to share current practices related to state noncredit data. Through our research and convening, SNDP seeks to lay the groundwork for common definitional language for future data collection and analysis efforts to improve the understanding of the value and quality of noncredit programs and NDCs. These efforts will not only aim at enhancing our understanding of the noncredit data infrastructure across multiple states but also seek to provide actionable insights that policymakers can use to foster equitable funding, data collection, and workforce alignment in noncredit education.

short-term credentials landscape: What we see and what remains unseen. New America, Center on Education and Labor. http://newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/the-short-term-credentials-landscape/; Bahr, P. R., & Columbus, R. (2023). Labor market returns to community college noncredit occupational education [Ed Policy Research Working Paper 23-1]. University of Michigan, Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. https://www.edpolicyresearch.org/noncredit

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

Methods

This report shares findings from the states in Phase II of this project. Phase I of the project explored the noncredit data infrastructure through a series of state-level and cross-state reports on Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia and culminated with a newly developed taxonomy for noncredit data collection and a how-to guide for state-level organizations and institutions seeking to establish or grow their noncredit data collection.[17] The current report expands on this ongoing work following the second cohort of states that represent our Phase II research partners from Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Table 1 lists the state and collaborating agencies that provided data and key insights into policy and practice for this report.

Table 1: State Data Sources Used in Phase II of the State Noncredit Data Project

State	State-Level Partners	Noncredit Data Included
Maryland	Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)	Community College Workforce Training Completers System Dataset
New Jersey	New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL)	Training provider data, including community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and private training providers
	New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (NJOSHE)	New Jersey Student Unit Record (SURE) and customized training data for county colleges
Oregon	Oregon Higher Education Commission (HECC)	Community college noncredit data
South Carolina	South Carolina Technical College System (SCTCS)	Technical and community college noncredit data
Tennessee	Tennessee Board of Regents	Noncredit data from Tennessee Community Colleges and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT)

The descriptive analysis presented throughout the report synthesizes results across our five partner states. Using a collaborative approach, research team members worked closely with state leaders to identify data elements pertaining to noncredit education captured at the state level. Further, the research team gathered information on the policy context for noncredit offerings, including state-level data collection, that frame what data are available and why. Examining the data elements on noncredit education available in each state within the data taxonomy allowed the research team to develop both a data inventory and a set of common operational definitions for collecting and interpreting noncredit data. It also gave them a better understanding of the similarities and differences in noncredit programming and data availability across states.[18]

[17] 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. https://sites.rutgers.edu/state-noncredit-data/wp-content/uploads/sites/794/2023/11/State-Noncredit-Taxonomy_EERC_11.17.23.pdf

[18] D'Amico et al., 2023, Collecting and Understanding.

The following section discusses the policy context for noncredit education across the five states by reviewing their priorities for noncredit, their funding, and the drivers for data collection. This section is followed by a discussion of the status of the states' data systems and an inventory of their available data elements. After describing the data available, we include comparisons of descriptive findings on key data elements across states. The report concludes with recommendations for states building their noncredit data infrastructure.

Policy Context for Noncredit Data

The state policy context for noncredit is an important driver for the availability of data and varies substantially across states. We review the essential elements of the state policy context related to noncredit data in our partner states, including their mission and priorities related to noncredit education, funding approaches for noncredit education, and their reported drivers of noncredit data collection.

Noncredit Priorities

Broader educational and workforce policies play both direct and indirect roles in influencing the noncredit educational environment in each state. Most states have an educational attainment goal, but only some of them include the completion rates of students enrolled in noncredit offerings in their calculations. Some noncredit offerings are accounted for in the attainment goals in New Jersey and South Carolina, but not in Maryland, Tennessee, or Oregon.[19] These differences in attainment goal definition—typically set by state agencies and/or governor's offices—may influence stakeholders' willingness to promote noncredit education.

Some states have CTE-focused policies that influence noncredit education. Initiatives like the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, Maryland's Career Preparation Expansion Act, and the Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Credentials List related to promoting K-12 CTE credentials and education play a role in informing important discussions concerning noncredit offerings. Initiatives like these, which set out to build upon and improve the existing CTE system in different ways, can help guide noncredit activity in the state in which they are implemented by raising questions around credential quality and credential-preparation programs. The More Jobs for Maryland Act made a direct impact on noncredit education in that state by mandating data collection and providing scholarship funds for noncredit offerings.

Policies that eliminate degree requirements for certain state positions are rising in popularity and may also indirectly influence the noncredit ecosystem. Maryland led the charge by becoming the first state to implement such a policy in early 2022, and since then, many states have followed suit, including New Jersey and Tennessee.[20] While these policies are not directly related to noncredit education, they reflect a willingness to think beyond the traditional degree, which is germane to shifting state attitudes toward noncredit.

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[19] Lumina Foundation. (2020, March). *State strategy labs: State higher education attainment goals.* https://www.luminafoundation.org/campaign/strategy-labs/; South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. (2021, February). *Ascend 60x30 public agenda implementation plan.* https://www.che.sc.gov/sites/che/files/Documents/General%20Public/2021_02_05_CHE_Public_Agenda_Implementation_Plan_Final.pdf; Carnevale, A. P., Ridley, N., & Fasules, M. L. (2018). *Certificates in Oregon: A model for workers to jump-start or reboot careers.* Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/CEW-Oregon-Report.pdf

[20] Smalley, A. (2023). *States consider elimination of degree requirements.* National Conference of State Legislatures. https://www.ncsl.org/education/states-consider-elimination-of-degree-requirements

Funding

While funding approaches vary, many states factor noncredit enrollment or contact hours into their funding formulas for two-year institutions. Community and technical college funding formulas in Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Oregon are partially based on enrollment of specific subsets of noncredit students. In Maryland, only students enrolled in workforce-oriented noncredit offerings are included in the funding formula. South Carolina's funding formula, meanwhile, bases noncredit allocations on two metrics: the type of noncredit offering in which a student is enrolled—specifically, occupational training—and the ratio of credit to noncredit in the funded occupational categories. Tennessee's noncredit funding policy depends on the type of institution: TCAT institutions are mainly supported by year-to-year changes to FTE enrollments, including noncredit enrollments, whereas Tennessee Community Colleges are funded through a performance-based model. Similarly, Oregon's funding formula for community colleges is a mix of enrollment and performance-based funding. The state's funding formula for community colleges is based on enrollments of students in priority populations (i.e., low-income individuals, adult learners, enrollees in career and technical programs, and students of underrepresented racial/ethnic backgrounds). Many noncredit offerings in Oregon also generate FTE reimbursement. New Jersey does not currently dedicate state-level allocations for noncredit offerings. Table 2 summarizes state funding for noncredit education.

Noncredit funding for two-year institutions in some states in the sample is performance based. Performance-based funding, a model in which the amount of money allocated to an institution is determined by their performance on a set of metrics (e.g., completion rates, employment, wage premiums) is an element in the funding formulas for community colleges in Oregon and Tennessee.[21] While Oregon's funding formula for community college is primarily based on enrollments of students in the priority populations mentioned previously, it is also partially based on retention and graduation rates, with bonus weight given to students from the priority populations. In Tennessee, both community colleges and universities are funded through a performance-based model, but only the community college formula has a noncredit component. Noncredit workforce contact hours are one of eleven metrics on which the community colleges are funded by the state.

Table 2: SNDP Phase II Partner States and Noncredit Funding at a Glance

State Name	State-Level Funding Methods for Noncredit Education
Maryland	Based on headcount of workforce-oriented noncredit students
South Carolina	Based on credit-hour production of each college and ratio of credit to noncredit contact hours
Tennessee	TCAT: Based on FTEs Community Colleges: Performance-based
New Jersey	No dedicated formula funding for noncredit
Oregon	10% performance based (enrollment of priority populations, retention, certificate earning, and graduation rates), 90% FTEs, for reimbursable noncredit offerings (mostly occupational/vocational or pre-college/basic skills)

[21] Whinnery, E., & Keily, T. (2024, February 20). *Paying for college: The latest trends in performance-based funding.* Education Commission of the States. https://www.ecs.org/paying-for-college-the-latest-trends-in-performance-based-funding/

Other noncredit funding streams utilized by states include grant and scholarship programs, special initiatives, and federal dollars that are often directed toward students or specific programs rather than institutions. Maryland offers grants and scholarships—such as the state's Workforce Development Sequence or Community College Promise scholarships—to students in workforce-oriented or licensure-associated noncredit offerings in addition to its formula funding. South Carolina also has scholarship and grant programs in place to support noncredit offerings: the Workforce Industry Needs Scholarship and the Workforce Scholarships and Grants. In Tennessee there are no such scholarships or grants currently in place, though legislation was recently proposed that would pilot a grant for noncredit students in workforce training programs. State legislative priorities have driven industry-specific initiatives in Tennessee that have provided funding for certain noncredit training programs, however. For example, in 2023 the state legislature provided funding for the Trucking Tennessee initiative, which expanded CDL training programs, including noncredit offerings. New Jersey has two programs that can be used to fund noncredit programs: Fund My Future, modeled on Lifelong Learning Accounts, and Pay It Forward, a zero-interest loan program supplemented by grants that provides support services and help with ancillary costs like books, uniforms, and other fees. Some states use federal funds to support their noncredit education programming. For example, at times, South Carolina and Maryland use allocations from agencies such as the US Department of Labor and US Department of Education to fund noncredit education.

Drivers of Noncredit Data Collection

Mandated data collection and reporting is a prominent driver of noncredit data collection. Maryland's Budget Committee mandates that all educational institutions with workforce-related programs, including noncredit, must collect and report detailed data. In Maryland, MHEC has a regulatory role over the state's community colleges and owns these data on noncredit workforce programs. Similarly, Oregon's HECC requires reporting of certain noncredit data elements as part of continuing education program auditing. In the NJOSHE dataset, noncredit data collection is built into preexisting student unit record data collection for two-year institutions. New Jersey DOL also requires student-level data to be reported quarterly to inform the data dashboard connected to the state's Eligible Training Provider's List (ETPL). In almost all of the states in this phase of the project, however, funding models drive the shape of noncredit data collection.

Data collection is driven by funding models in many partner states, and the differing models may contribute to variations in the types of data collected. The funding models in Maryland, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee all necessitate collection of some degree of noncredit data. In Maryland, Oregon, South Carolina, and in the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology, noncredit data collection is tied in some way to the number of students enrolled in noncredit programming—be it headcount, FTE, or number of contact hours. Each of these states, therefore, had information about student headcount in their datasets, though they varied on how much other information they collected at the student level. Oregon and Tennessee community colleges fund noncredit using an outcomes-based data element; Tennessee has been using this for a few years now, and Oregon is just rolling it out. The Tennessee Community College funding formula is partially based on workforce training contact hour accumulation, which may explain why the Tennessee Board of Regents has

contact hour data on all noncredit offerings in its dataset for the Community Colleges, but only some of those data for offerings at TCAT. Oregon is still in the process of implementing their new funding formula and developing their dataset, and, as yet, has limited data on some of the metrics included in the new model (e.g., student demographics).

State funding of noncredit education typically drives data collection and analysis more than any other factor, and this can be seen among the states in our sample. New Jersey provides no funding for noncredit education; their current data collection efforts originated in a prior era when the state did have funding for noncredit activity. South Carolina, on the other hand, includes noncredit workforce-oriented programs in their funding allocations, leading to a more comprehensive collection system that is expected to yield additional information within the next 1–2 years. Yet funding is only one factor influencing data collection. Maryland, Oregon, and Tennessee all fund workforce-oriented noncredit offerings in various forms, yet their state officials contend with significant gaps in collection and reporting systems. These gaps manifest in various ways, such as missing data, inconsistent data formats, lack of standardized definitions across institutions, or limited capacity to track student outcomes effectively. Table 3 summarizes the uses of data in each state.

Table 3: Uses of Noncredit Data in SNDP Phase II Partner States

State	Primary Uses of Data
Maryland	State institutional and grant funding, legislative mandate, data dashboard
New Jersey	Public reporting on website (NJOSHE) and data dashboard (NJDOL)
Oregon	State institutional funding
South Carolina	State institutional and grant funding
Tennessee	State institutional funding

State Noncredit Data Inventory

The foundation for comparing noncredit activity across states is documenting how noncredit is defined and measured. States construct their data collection systems based on their specific needs with regard to measuring noncredit activity. We examine various aspects of noncredit data systems including the status of noncredit system development, ways that noncredit offerings are classified, and the availability of data elements across the states.

Status of State Noncredit Data Systems

The states reviewed in the second phase of the study are in the process of developing their noncredit data systems and are building upon foundational efforts. Although they currently collect fewer categories of data and have fewer mechanisms for analysis and reporting compared to those in the first round of the SNDP, they are actively working toward significant expansions and improvements. Nearly all of these states have plans to refine their data systems, which will lead to more consistent and robust noncredit data in the future. Table 4 summarizes the current status of noncredit data in each state.

Table 4: Status of Noncredit Data Systems in SNDP Phase II Partner States

State	Description	Improvement plans
Maryland	State-mandated systems in place to capture noncredit data. Limited to students who complete workforce sequences. Began in 2020. Course-level data on noncredit offerings.	Collect and analyze new course-taking collection to complement completions collection
New Jersey	NJOSHE: Long-standing reporting system since 2006. Provides information on students, but not courses or programs. Reported in the NJ SURE system and customized training data.	NJOSHE: Investigate options for expanded reporting
	NJDOL: Noncredit data on providers, programs, and students collected as Eligible Training Provider List reporting requirements.	NJDOL: Improve matching input data to educational and labor market outcomes
Oregon	Data entered into two data collection mechanisms (Web Forms and Data for Analytics "D4A") that do not interact. Data fields collected at student level have limited accessibility to most agency staff.	Update noncredit course coding to indicate more course types, connect major noncredit data collection mechanisms
South Carolina	With a long-standing practice of collecting noncredit data, reinclusion of noncredit enrollments in the funding formula in 2017 and recent workforce grants have heightened interest in improving noncredit data collection at the student level with program-specific data.	Expand reported data elements, coverage of credential outcomes
Tennessee	Strong procedures for collecting noncredit data, but also promising areas for expansion. Program-level data have been collected for community colleges since 2010; student-level data have been collected for technical colleges since 2016.	Develop system to characterize offerings by length, leverage TCAT unified student information system

The five Phase II states differ significantly from one another, with sharp distinctions between their data systems. Notably, Maryland currently collects data specifically on students who complete workforce-oriented noncredit courses and sequences, but not on those who leave without completing or those who enrolled in other noncredit programs. Maryland launched the Workforce Training Registration System (WTRS), a new system designed to collect data on course completions rather than sequence completions, in Fall 2023, with the first year of data coming in December 2024. New Jersey collects data on students, but not the courses and programs in which they enroll. Oregon is navigating siloed data collection systems that, because they largely do not interact, obstruct state officials' ability to analyze and report their findings.

Classifying Noncredit Offerings

Throughout the literature on noncredit data and as evidenced through collaboration with states on the present project, varied terminology is used to identify noncredit activity. For example, South Carolina defines

noncredit programs as courses or groups of courses leading to a credential, as compared with courses that do not lead to a credential, certification, or license. By contrast, Maryland refers specifically to courses as stand-alone units or grouped into sequences that form training programs. This type of variation in terminology occurs across partner states; therefore, we commonly refer to a more generic term, "noncredit offering," to encompass a variety of terms such as course and program.

As seen in Table 5, the general way that states report their annual number of offerings is the number of times courses/programs are offered in a given year. For example, Maryland had 6,590 noncredit offerings in the year under study, compared with more than 14,000 in Oregon. The Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology data shows the lowest number of offerings at 154. However, there are only 64 TCAT offerings with contact hours data available, and our analysis later in this report will show that these offerings have the greatest intensity in terms of contact hours.

Table 5: Definitions and Methods for Identifying Unique Offerings in SNDP Phase II Partner State Data

State		Number of Unique Offerings	Definition of Unique Offering	Note on Colleges Offering Data
Maryland		6,590	Approved courses offered at any community college	From across the state's 16 community colleges
New Jersey	NJOSHE	N/A	N/A	From across the state's 18 community colleges
	NJDOL	1,476	N/A	From all providers, including the state's community colleges, 4-year schools, and private training providers
Oregon		14,823	Single section of a noncredit course at a college in a term	From across the state's 17 community colleges
South Carolina		6,643	Each time a course/program is offered at any college	From across the state's 16 technical colleges
Tennessee	TCAT	154	Each time a course is offered at any college	From across the state's 24 Colleges of Applied Technology
	CC	1,929		From across the state's 13 community colleges

Data Availability

Throughout the process of working to understand the noncredit data infrastructure, the project team collaborated with leaders from partner states to identify data elements on noncredit offerings, categorize them, and develop operational definitions to arrive at a consistent understanding of what noncredit data are collected at the state level. The first phase of the project resulted in the creation of the Noncredit Data Taxonomy, which includes four main categories: (1) purpose and design, (2) outcomes, (3) demographics and enrollment, and (4) finance. Table 6 shows a comparison of available data elements across states and systems for the respective years reported (2021–22 or 2022–23).

The availability of data elements is reported in Table 6 based on whether they are collected at the state level for noncredit offerings. The exception is NJOSHE, which does not collect data associated with program offerings, so in that case only, information reported in Table 6 is based on the availability of student-level data. The majority of the categories and data elements in the table are rooted in the existing taxonomy. Row titles that are shaded were present in at least one state and will be considered for inclusion in a forthcoming revised version of the data taxonomy; availability is marked with a "-" if states were not asked about these newly introduced elements in the inventory during the data collection process. Finally, it is worth noting that because the data inventory only captures elements included in state-level noncredit datasets, the absence of data in Table 6 indicates only that those data are not captured at the state level. It is possible that those data are collected, and related activities are occurring, at the college level.

Data commonly collected include information about program offerings—e.g., program name and noncredit type—whereas information on demographics, outcomes, and finance continue to be elusive for many states. Information on program offerings is typically collected at the program level, although in some cases (e.g., NJOSHE) only student-level data are available without connections to specific noncredit offerings. Other information on demographics, outcomes, and finance necessitate collection at the student level and can be difficult to collect without a focused interest in building noncredit data and reporting capacity. The intent of showing current data inventories is to help partner states develop a roadmap for adding to their current state-level noncredit datasets and to provide other states—especially those states that are either just beginning or working to improve their noncredit data collection—with a realistic picture of the noncredit data infrastructure.

Table 6: State-Level Noncredit Data Inventory, SNDP Phase II

Category	Subcategory	State-Level Data Availability							
		Maryland (2022–23)	New Jersey (2021–22)			Oregon (2022–23)	South Carolina (2021–22)	Tennessee (2022–23)	
			NJOSHE Student Unit Records	NJOSHE Customized Training	NJDOL			Community Colleges	TCAT
Purpose and Design									
Field of Study	Course/program name	All	None	None	All	All	All	All	All
	CIP code	Most	None	None	All	Some	None	None	All
	SOC code	None	None	None	All	Some	Most	None	None
	Career cluster	None	None	None	None	Some	Most	All	Most
	Program description	All	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	State-specific code	All	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Noncredit Type	Occupational, sponsored, pre-college, personal interest, or aligned with IPEDS	All	All	All	All	Many	None	All	All
Program Length	Number of courses if multi-course program	Many	None	None	None	Many	NA	None	None
	Total contact hours	All	None	None	All	All	All	All	Many
	Calendar length	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
Delivery	Face-to-face	All	None	None	All	None	All	None	All
	Face-to-face location	None	None	None	All	None	None	None	None
	Online	All	None	None	All	None	All	None	All
	Blended	All	None	None	Most	None	All	None	None
	Competency-based	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
	Work-based learning required	None	None	None	Most	None	None	None	None
	Student service availability	None	None	None	All	None	None	None	None
	Faculty data	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

	Evening courses	-	-	-	All	4-	-	-	-
	Bus route	-	-	-	Most	-	-	-	-
	Train route	-	-	-	Many	-	-	-	-
	Access for disabled	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Offered in other languages	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Provider name and ID	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Provider type	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Provider description	-	-	-	In Development	-	-	-	-
	Provider address	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Provider website	-	-	-	Most	-	-	-	-
	Provider contact information	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Career assistance	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	One Stop career	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Personal assistance	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	AJB/ATB	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Childcare	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Assistance in obtaining childcare	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
Associated Credentials	Certifications, licensure, certificates, microcredentials associated with courses	All	None	None	Most	Some	None	Unknown	Some
					Outcomes				
Academic Outcomes	Students continue to credit	None	None	None	None	All	None	None	None
	Completion data	Many	None	None	All	None	None	None	Some
	Exit date (non-completers)	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
Labor Market Outcomes	Pre-enrollment employment	Many	None	None	In Development	None	None	None	None
	Post-enrollment employment	Many	None	None	In Development	None	None	None	None

	Pre-enrollment salary/wage	Many	None	None	In Development	None	None	None	None
	Post-enrollment salary/wage	Many	None	None	In Development	None	None	None	None
Non-Degree Credential Outcomes	Industry certification	Many	None	None	All	None	None	Most	None
	Occupational licensure	Many	None	None	All	None	None	None	None
	College-issued certificate	None	None	None	All	Some	None	None	Some
	Microcredentials	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
	Apprenticeship	None	None	None	All	Some	None	None	None
	General education development	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Certificate of completion	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
Demographics and Enrollment									
Enrollments	Headcount	Most	All	None	All	All	All	All	All
	Enrollment date	-	-	-	All	Most	-	-	-
	Contact hours	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	Some
	Registrations	-	All	All	-	-	-	-	-
	Full-time equivalent	All	All	All	-	-	-	-	-
	Ratio of clock hours to registrations	-	All	All	-	-	-	-	-
	Number of course sections delivered	-	None	All	-	Some	-	-	-
	Ratio of registrations to course sections	-	None	All	-	-	-	-	-
	FTEs/company	-	None	All	-	-	-	-	-
	Number of business clients served	-	None	All	-	-	-	-	-
Demographics	Race/ethnicity	Many	Many	None	All	Some	All	None	Most
	Age	Many	Some	None	All	Some	All	None	Most
	Sex/gender	Many	Most	None	All	Some	All	None	Most
	Citizenship	Many	Many	None	-	-	-	-	-
	Student zip code	Many	Most	None	-	-	-	-	-

	State of residence	Many	Most	None	-	Most	-	-	-
	County of residence	Many	Most	None	-	-	-	-	-
	Institution code	Many	All	All	-	-	-	-	-
	Target audience	-	All	None	-	-	-	-	-
	Disability status	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	WIOA participant	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	ESL	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Formerly incarcerated	Some	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Exhausted TANF	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Foster care youth	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Housing status	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
Identifiers	Social Security Number	Many	Many	None	All	Some	Some	None	Most
	Institutional identification number	Many	All	None	None	None	All	None	All
	Name	Many	None	None	All	All	All	None	All
	Birth date	Many	Some	None	All	Some	All	None	Most
	Driver's license/state ID	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	State identification number	-	None	None	-	-	-	-	-
					Finance				
Tuition	Course/program tuition	None	None	None	All	None	None	None	None
	Financial aid	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Books and supplies	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Fees	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Other costs	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
	Total costs	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
State and Federal Funding	State funding	All	None	None	None	All	All	Most	None
	WIOA-eligible training provider	None	None	None	All	All	None	None	None
	Economic development incentive	None	None	None	None	None	None	All	All
	Other federal grants	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
	Other state grants	None	None	None	None	None	All	All	All

Approval agency for ETPL	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
Date submitted for ETPL	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
ETPL approval	-	-	-	All	-	-	-	-
ETPL expiration date	-	-	-	Most	-	-	-	-

Data Availability Legend Indicates the degree to which data are available on each data element at the offering (course/program) level.	
All	Data are available on all noncredit offerings.
Most	Data are available on 2/3 or more offerings.
Many	Data are available on more than 1/3 but fewer than 2/3 of offerings.
Some	Data are available on 1/3 or fewer offerings.
None	Data are available on no offerings.
-	Data availability cannot be determined because the data element was added to the table post-survey based on its availability in at least one state.
Note. The availability of data by course and program does not guarantee that data are available on all students within programs for which data are available. Missing data values are particularly common in demographic categories for noncredit enrollments. Additionally, NJ data were based on student-level enrollments, since course/program data were not available.	

Cross-State Comparison

To better understand the role that noncredit education plays and who it serves, we examined basic characteristics of noncredit offerings and the students who enroll in them. We focused on points of intersection where comparisons could be made across states based on the four primary components of the noncredit data taxonomy: purpose and design, outcomes, demographics and enrollment, and finance. NJOSHE data are not presented alongside other states in this section because the unit of analysis is at the student level; thus the data do not lend themselves to comparisons at the program level.

Purpose and Design

Across the states included in our analysis and reflected in Figure 1, noncredit offerings are generally categorized by the broad type of training they provide students and the intended purpose of that training. There are four main types of noncredit offerings: (1) *occupational training* geared toward individuals seeking to gain or improve job skills leading to initial or better employment, (2) *sponsored occupational (contract) training*, similar to the former category but instead arranged by special contract with organizations typically looking to develop a particular set of skills within their workforce, (3) *pre-college* courses/programs for general and developmental studies (e.g., ABE, ESL, GED preparation) typically offered at no cost other than certain fees, and (4) *personal interest* courses/programs that are demand-driven and self-paid, reflecting the needs, interests, and priorities of local communities. Data on the purpose and design of noncredit offerings in terms of their instructional characteristics are presented in Table 7.

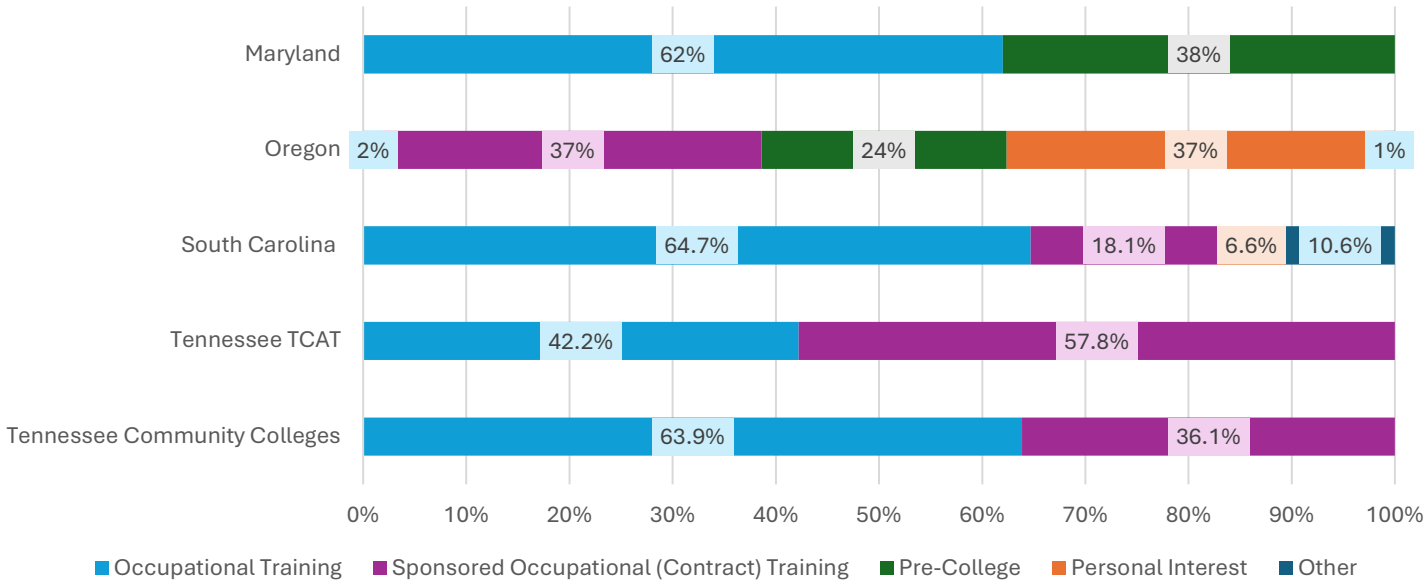
Occupational training was the most common type of noncredit offering across the five states. When combining open enrollment (i.e., non-employer sponsored) and sponsored/contract offerings, occupational training comprised from 64%–100% of states' noncredit offerings (see Figure 1). This primary finding documents the strong focus on workforce training within state systems and reflects states' priorities.

Regarding the data availability by type, two states, South Carolina and Tennessee, are able to identify sponsored occupational offerings within their data, but across the three sectors in those two states (Tennessee's Colleges of Applied Technology and Community Colleges data are considered separately in the data inventory), there is a strong mix of open enrollment and sponsored activity, with sponsored occupational education comprising the majority of offerings within the TCAT dataset. Maryland and Oregon were the only states to provide pre-college noncredit offerings, which comprised about a third of noncredit offerings in each state. These differences in types of noncredit offerings across states may be in part due to the funding mechanisms available, as well as the policy focus on particular types of education for the states' community and technical college missions. For example, open enrollment occupational training accounting for 64% of noncredit offerings in Tennessee Community Colleges may be influenced by the state's focus on workforce training and its funding of noncredit through workforce contact hour accumulation.

Additionally, Figure 1 shows that Oregon and South Carolina were the only two states to offer noncredit courses for personal interest, with Oregon personal interest offerings surpassing one-third of all noncredit activity. Similarly influenced by financing, this may be a function of the enrollment-based funding availability for students in Oregon, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, seeking skills without necessarily being tied to an employer or set of competencies. The relatively large number of unique noncredit offerings (14,823) across Oregon's 17 community colleges may also factor into the high proportion of personal interest offerings, as these may have a high degree of variation in their content.

Maryland collects noncredit data using three categories of workforce development: job preparatory, licensure or certification, and job skill enhancement. For comparability, we combined these three types of workforce development into one category for occupational training. Maryland also collects two other types of noncredit data, basic skills and general education, which we combined into one category for pre-college. NJOSHE collects data under two common categories—occupational training and personal interest—but does so at the individual student level and does not necessarily have offering-level information for these categories.

Figure 1: Proportion of Noncredit Offerings by Type



Contact hours for noncredit offerings varied significantly between states as well as within states across noncredit types. For states with program-level data, the mean as well as median contact hours varied between states within the same noncredit categories as well as within states across noncredit categories. In most states the median contact hours ranged from 7 to 55 hours. The exception was the TCAT, where the median hours exceeded 1,500 for occupational training and more than 1,700 for sponsored offerings, indicating that TCAT has a unique way of organizing and delivering noncredit education through intensive courses and programs.

Most noncredit program offerings were conducted face-to-face. Where data were available, the overwhelming majority of noncredit offerings in South Carolina and Tennessee, and most noncredit offerings in Maryland, were conducted face-to-face. However, occupational training in Maryland had the highest proportion of online offerings out of any state in this phase of the project, with approximately 23% of courses offered exclusively online. Additionally, about 20% of the noncredit occupational offerings in Maryland utilized a dual delivery model, providing students with both online and in-person learning options.

Table 7: Instructional Characteristics by Noncredit Type across SNDP Phase II Partner States

		Contact Hours		Delivery	
Noncredit Type	N	Median	Mean	% Face-to-Face	% Online
Occupational Training					
Maryland[1]	4,089	NA	36	50%	23%
New Jersey[2] (OSHE)	24,781	15	65	NA	NA
Oregon	344	20	36	NA	NA
South Carolina	4,298	24	66	83%	17%
Tennessee					
TCAT	33	1,512	1,498	100%	0%
Community Colleges	1,232	20	45	NA	NA
Pre-College					
Maryland[1]	2,501	NA	30	56%	13%
Oregon	3,504	55	58	NA	NA
Personal Interest					
New Jersey[2] (OSHE)	13,573	16	88	NA	NA
Oregon	5,423	10	14	NA	NA
South Carolina	439	12	17	98%	2%
Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training /Customized Training					
New Jersey[2] (OSHE)	194,449	NA	12.2	NA	NA
South Carolina	1,201	7	17	99.2%	0.8%
Oregon	5,487	7	26	NA	NA
Tennessee					
TCAT	31	1,728	1,706	100.0%	0.0%
Community Colleges	697	24	149.6	NA	NA

Notes.

[1]For Maryland, we collapsed original data categories (job preparatory, licensure or certification, and job skill enhancement) for comparability.

[2]Data for New Jersey show the mean per student rather than per offering, and the median based on clock hours for each course.

Industry certifications were associated with less than half of all noncredit offerings in states where such data were available. Sponsored occupational training offerings at Tennessee Community Colleges had the highest proportion of associated industry certifications (43%), while about a quarter of open enrollment occupational training offerings in Maryland and at Tennessee Community Colleges were associated with industry certifications. TCAT were the only noncredit providers to award college-issued certificates, which were associated with almost 40% of sponsored occupational training offerings and almost 20% of occupational training offerings. Table 8 summarizes associated non-degree credential information.

Table 8: Associated Credentials by Noncredit Type across SNDP Phase II Partner States

Noncredit Types	N	% with Industry Certification	N	% with College-Issued Certificate
Occupational Training				
Maryland[1]	4,089	26%	NA	NA
Tennessee				
TCAT	NA	NA	65	18.5%
Community Colleges	1232	25.5%	NA	NA
Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training/Customized Training				
Tennessee				
TCAT	NA	NA	89	38.2%
Community Colleges	697	42.9%	NA	NA
Pre-College				
Maryland[1]	2,501	<1%	NA	NA

Note. [1]For Maryland, we collapsed original data categories (job preparatory, licensure or certification, and job skill enhancement) for comparability.

Outcomes

Completions, employment, and salaries/wages are the main outcomes of interest for all types of education, including noncredit education. Completion data can be compiled by tracking the attainment of credentials such as college-issued certificates, certifications, and licensures, which are intended to lead to positive employment outcomes. However, states vary in how they define completions as well as how they collect or link those data to employment outcomes. Employment measures and other labor market data tend to be gathered via matches with state wage records and other sources external to colleges, as few institutions have the capacity to collect these data on their own. Consequently, most states in our sample are still developing their data systems to better incorporate educational and labor market outcomes.

Data on outcomes are currently limited across states, though there are some exceptions. Only two partner states capture data on any outcomes at the state level. Maryland's "completions" dataset includes information about whether or not each completion requires a license or industry certification.22 In effect, since completion of some workforce sequences necessitates the earning of a license or industry certification, program completion rates constitute a form of outcomes data. Maryland also has a "completers" dataset, which includes pre- and post-program wage information for many completers.23 NJDOL collects data on noncredit completions as well as exit dates if students did not complete an offering, but we were unable to collect these data at the time of our report. NJDOL's data on labor market outcomes are in development, as is the case in most states.

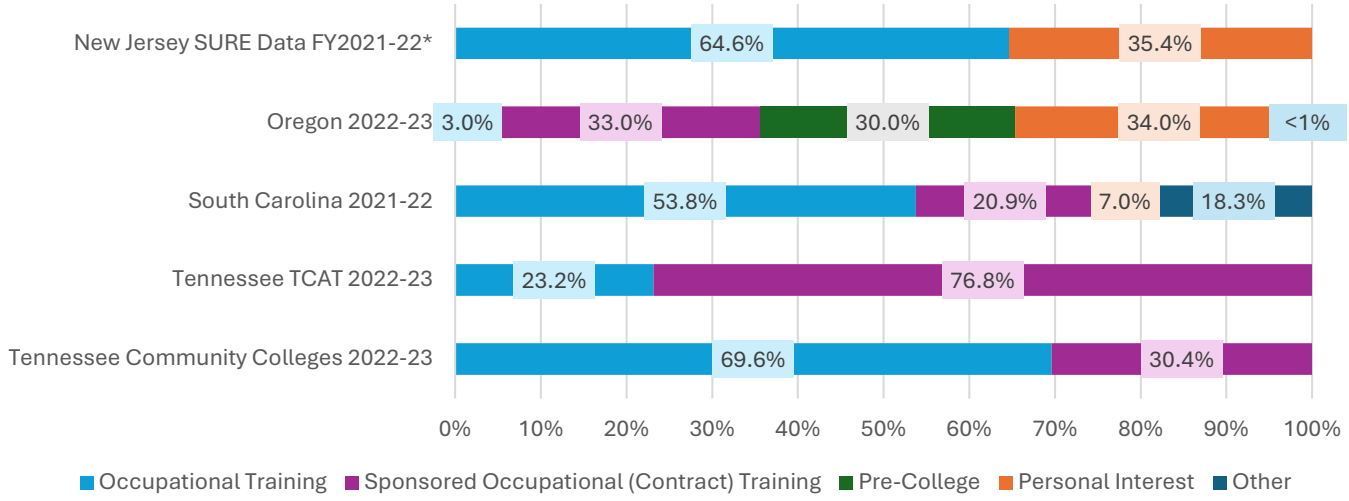
Noncredit data partnerships are a potential area for growth for many states. Some states, especially those with well-established noncredit data systems, use partnerships with other organizations and entities to capture additional data elements outside of those in their main noncredit dataset. These partnerships are often particularly important in the process of matching noncredit data to outcomes data. In Maryland, MHEC partnered with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center to match noncredit completers to labor market outcomes. In New Jersey, while NJOSHE maintains much of the student-level noncredit data, NJDOL collects data for WIOA and the Eligible Training Provider List. These two datasets, however, have not yet been placed in conversation with each other. Broader state efforts to bring together data across agencies is led by the Heldrich Center at Rutgers through the New Jersey Statewide Data System. In Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee, efforts to establish such partnerships in noncredit data are still in the very early stages of development.

[22] The Maryland "completions" dataset is the collection of each instance of a workforce sequence being completed in a given AY.
[23] The Maryland "completers" dataset is the collection of each individual student who completed one or more workforce sequences in a given AY.

Demographics and Enrollment

Occupational training was the most prevalent type of noncredit by headcount enrollment. Figure 2 indicates that occupational training comprised a majority of noncredit headcount enrollment in New Jersey and South Carolina and across the Tennessee Community Colleges. Individual and employer-sponsored occupational training together made up all noncredit enrollment in both Tennessee systems, Community Colleges and TCAT. Nonetheless, there was variation in enrollment within states—particularly in Oregon, where almost one-third (30%) of enrollments were in pre-college offerings, and in South Carolina, where one-fifth of enrollments were in noncredit programs that did not fall into any of our existing categories. When considering prior findings on states with established data systems in our previous work, occupational training still rises to the top as the primary focus of noncredit data collection efforts among states[24]; however, additional attention to other noncredit types may reflect that state education and training systems are incorporating a wider range of student, community, and employer interests.

Figure 2: Proportion of Headcount Enrollment by Type of Noncredit Offering

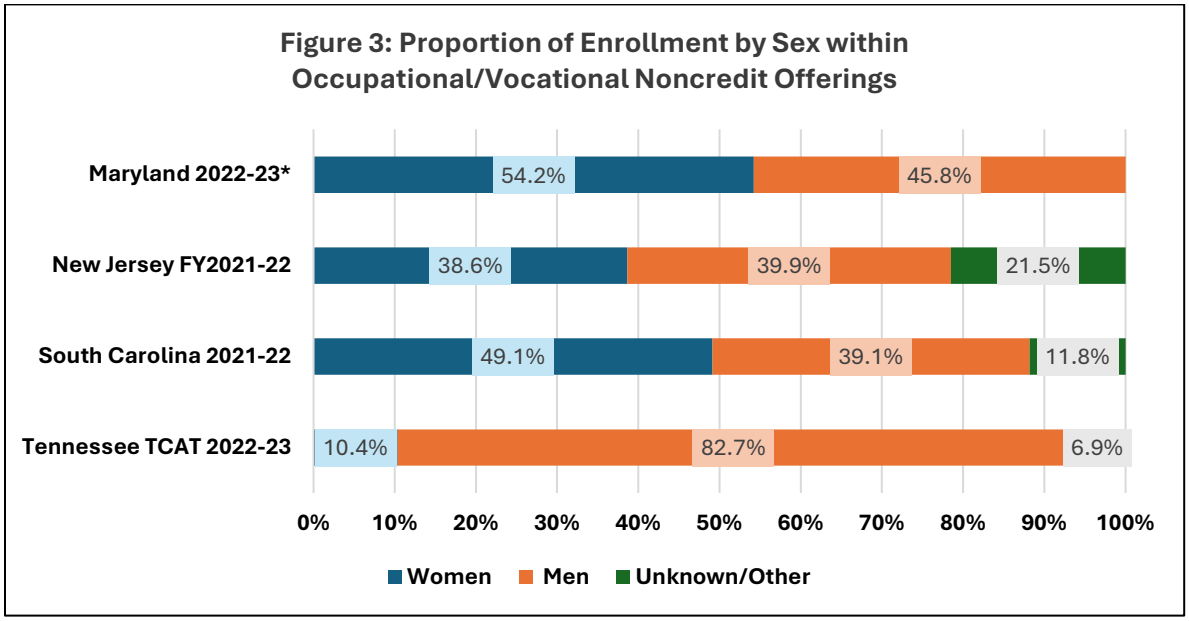


* Headcount enrollments for sponsored occupational (contract)/customized training data are not available.

In most states, women made up a large portion of enrollments in noncredit occupational offerings. Women comprised a significant portion of noncredit enrollments in three of the four states datasets that included demographic data information. The proportion of women in the occupational/vocational noncredit student datasets for Maryland and South Carolina was larger than the proportion of men. Women also comprised a significant proportion of the NJOSHE dataset, though enrollment of women and men within occupational/vocational offerings was nearly equal. Unlike the other three state datasets where this information was available, men represented a considerable majority of occupational noncredit enrollments in

[24] D'Amico et al., 2023, The state community college noncredit data infrastructure.

the TCAT (see Figure 3). While it is difficult to understand the complete range of implications of gender distribution without a full analysis of enrollments by industry sector, these findings suggest several areas worthy of consideration. States may be spreading more awareness about noncredit training and education, aligned with the increasing investment they are making in noncredit and the numerous funding mechanisms available. Given the variance in enrollment by gender across states, there may also be regional, industrial, or occupational aspects to these trends.



* Maryland data are for only those students who completed offerings.

Data on race/ethnicity are not available for all states in our sample. Table 6 shows the states and specific datasets in which race/ethnicity data are available (TCAT, South Carolina, NJOSHE SURE, and Maryland completers). The low data availability is primarily due to the lack of or mixed data collection by community colleges and/or employers for different kinds of noncredit offerings, as well as training providers' lack of ability to collect individual student-level information and aggregate it to the program level. The lack of demographic data available or not provided in a state that still collected at least some information is indicated by the "Not Available" category in the last column of Table 6, with levels of missing race/ethnicity data ranging from 21% to 83%. Additionally, data are not always fully accessible or formatted for use by the public or by researchers, although they may be collected by a state agency. For example, this is the case regarding NJDOL and is why the agency's demographic data are not shown here.

Among each state in which race data are available, White enrollees comprised a majority of student enrollment. White students combined with students whose race was unknown or not provided comprised a majority of enrollment out of all race categories within each state, making these two categories the most common in our sample (see Table 9). South Carolina had the highest proportion of any non-White category of any state, with Black/African American students comprising a third of enrollment. Maryland had the second-highest proportion of Black/African American students, comprising almost 20% of enrollment, while

New Jersey had the highest proportion of Hispanic/Latinx students, comprising 12% of enrollments. Given historic racial trends of majority-White enrollment in occupational training, these recent data may imply that states with higher proportions of students of color have been implementing more effective diversity efforts or creating more accessible funding mechanisms that have enabled them to reach wider ranges of underrepresented populations in occupational training. However, they may also simply reflect state demographics and populations. With more complete data on race/ethnicity, additional analysis regarding equitable access would be possible.

Table 9: Percent Enrollment by Race within Occupational Training Offerings across SNDP Phase II Partner States

	Race								
State	*American Indian or American Indian/ Alaska Native*	*Asian*	*Black/ African American*	*Hispanic/ Latinx*	*Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*	*White*	*Two or More Races*	*Non-Resident (If specified in the data)*	*Not Available*
Maryland 2022–23[1]	0.2%	4.2%	19.4%	9.6%	0.1%	38.9%	1.4%	5.5%	20.7%
New Jersey (OSHE) FY2021–22	0.2%	1.5%	7.9%	12.1%	0.1%	17.1%	0.5%	0.7%	59.9%
South Carolina 2021–22	0.3%	1.2%	33.1%	3.7%	0.1%	32.6%	1.4%	0.0%	27.5%
Tennessee (TCAT) 2022–23	0.1%	0.3%	4.9%	0.8%	0.1%	10.3%	0.5%	0.0%	83.1%

Note.[1]Maryland data are for only those students who completed offerings. For Maryland, we collapsed original data categories (job preparatory, licensure or certification, and job skill enhancement) for comparability.

Finance

Most states collect some data on which of their noncredit offerings are eligible for funding, particularly for their workforce-oriented offerings. Many of the Phase II states collect data on which of their noncredit offerings are factored into their state funding formula or are eligible for special initiative funding (see Table 10). Tennessee only collects data on noncredit offerings categorized as occupational training or sponsored occupational/contract training at the state level. These offerings are only factored into the state funding formula for Tennessee Community Colleges, not the formula for TCAT. Oregon collects data on whether offerings are included in the state funding formula across various types of noncredit, including occupational, personal interest, and pre-college. Oregon and South Carolina both collect data on personal interest courses, but only Oregon factors these offerings into the state funding formula. Only the Oregon dataset includes

data on pre-college noncredit courses, and all of those offerings are factored into the state's funding formula. Each state has its own policies for which noncredit offerings are eligible for funding, yet it is clear that workforce-oriented (i.e., occupational or contract training) offerings are the most likely to be fundable through their respective funding formulas. Across the states that collect data on reimbursement for noncredit offerings, almost all occupational training offerings and contract training offerings are included in the state funding formula. There is no dedicated state-level funding for noncredit education at New Jersey community colleges or Tennessee's TCAT.

Table 10: Noncredit Funding Mechanisms across SNDP Phase II States

State/Funding Types	State Funding Formula with Enrollment-Based Element(s)	State Funding Formula with Performance-Based Element(s)	Special Initiative Funding for Occupational Training in Workforce Priority Areas	Need-Based Funding for Occupational Training
Maryland	X			X
New Jersey (NJOSHE)				
Oregon	X	X		
South Carolina	X		X	
Tennessee (CCs)		X		
Tennessee (TCAT)	X		X	

Conclusions and Recommendations

The State Noncredit Data Project works with states to document the drivers for noncredit data collection, explore noncredit data systems to inventory data elements, and describe noncredit offerings. The first phase of the project, which focused on states with *well-established* noncredit data systems (Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia), offered an opportunity to assemble a noncredit data taxonomy and chronicle operational definitions of key data elements. In the second phase, we engaged with leaders in Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee who were responsible for the oversight of *developing* state noncredit datasets—states where those datasets either are newly emerging or are in the midst of system improvements. Our analyses of noncredit data in partnership with states across the spectrum of development have brought to light new insights.

Formula funding for noncredit education is present in some Phase II states but is not the norm. We see a growing trend for special initiative funding, however, as states make investments in short-term workforce education that leads to credentials. Regardless of its source, public funding continues to be a powerful driver of whether states collect noncredit data and what data elements they collect.

Overarching conclusions from the five Phase II states include:

- *Data collection variability.* Due to their earlier stage of development, the data systems are more heterogeneous across Phase II states compared with the Phase I states. Maryland maintains data on students who complete workforce sequences and is expanding their data collection to include all enrollees. In New Jersey, NJOSHE currently provides information on students, including the general type of program offering, and NJDOL includes information on students, programs, and providers. Oregon enters data into two distinct systems. South Carolina consistently collects a limited set of data elements. Tennessee has two institutional systems with varying definitions of program offerings. All of these states have a basis for noncredit data collection and seek to expand their data collection and analysis capacities, and currently divergent systems will likely begin converging over time.
- *Public funding.* State funding of noncredit education typically drives data collection and analysis more than any other factor. All states but New Jersey include noncredit education in funding formulas, although each state makes different choices of formulas and metrics. Performance-based metrics are included in the Tennessee and Oregon community college models. The states also differ in their use of grants, scholarships, and initiative funding to support students in noncredit education.
- *Occupational training.* The most common type of noncredit offering among the four states that count offerings (all but New Jersey) is occupational training through a combination of sponsored contract training and those accessible through open enrollment. This form of noncredit ranged from 64% to 100% of all noncredit offerings in the Phase II states.

- *Data elements consistently collected.* Key elements about the purpose and design of noncredit offerings were consistently collected across all states but New Jersey. These included course program names and contact hours.
- *Data elements not consistently collected.* Demographic data, particularly on students' race/ethnicity, were often missing or not reported by institutions to the state, and instructional characteristics and associated credentials were collected inconsistently in some states.
- *Outcomes data.* Maryland has some data on noncredit completions, but for the most part the Phase II states are not yet collecting data from community colleges on labor market or academic outcomes at the state level. NJDOL has collected data on completions and is developing data on labor market outcomes.

The following are recommendations for states, systems, and institutions as they continue building their noncredit data infrastructures:

Recommendation 1: Strive for more complete data on students and programs through consistent definitions and greater engagement with institutions.

In the State Noncredit Data Project, we often refer to the *noncredit data journey* for two key reasons. First, with noncredit data sometimes collected by institutions primarily for administrative purposes and inconsistently reported up to the state/system level, and with no established national reporting standards, noncredit datasets and systems are not as mature as those regularly used to collect data on for-credit activity. Second, it is important to recognize that data inventories do not typically go from nonexistent to robust in one annual data collection cycle. As states and colleges think about next steps, we encourage use of the noncredit data taxonomy as an organizational template to select specific data elements that meet states' needs for mandated reporting, provide opportunities to demonstrate impact, and contribute to assessment of quality. Third, states should strive to reduce missing data by promoting consistent institutional practices for data collection. Across partner states, we found inconsistent data collection across different noncredit offerings and types. Developing more carefully refined definitions and expectations at the state level will result in more complete data being reported up from colleges. States can seek to better understand data collection and reporting practices at the institutional level. For example, SNDP conducted a survey of colleges on their noncredit data in partnership with NJOSHE to better understand these state data. See our related report.[25]

[25] Srivastava, A., Van Noy, M., Hilliard, T. (2024, October) New Jersey Community Colleges Data Snapshot. Education and Employment Research Center, Rutgers University

Recommendation 2: Utilize data to understand and promote alignment with mission and funding opportunities.

State policymakers increasingly see the urgency in developing noncredit data systems to inform policy decisions around funding, accountability, and transparency. A critical first step toward reaching these goals is to ensure that states have clear definitions in policy that categorize all noncredit offerings. For state sectors that include noncredit education in funding formulas, like some of the states in our second phase, this approach will aid states and colleges in predetermining which offerings are eligible for potential funding on the front end. This can be done through state-level CIP code alignment, like the process on which South Carolina is now embarking. States can work with institutions to align their programs' CIP codes with employers' SOC codes to better understand how workforce programs are meeting employer demand. States should also work with institutions to develop clear categorizations of all noncredit offerings. We present the four types of noncredit (occupational, sponsored occupational, pre-college, and personal interest) as a guide, but state leaders should decide how to define and categorize their noncredit offerings based on their policy objectives. Developing consistency will also help colleges verify that public funding allocations are accurate and fair across institutions. Greater uniformity in reporting can also help to ensure that characteristics of noncredit offerings and their quality, including their association with credentials and contact hours, can be documented. With the growing potential for IPEDS data reporting, Workforce Pell for offerings at 150+ contact hours, and recent pushes for noncredit-to-credit articulation, well-defined and consistent data can position states for new policy developments on the horizon.

Recommendation 3: Build the noncredit data infrastructure across data systems at the state level to reflect the broader ecosystem of credentials and providers.

Noncredit occupational education in community colleges is foundational to the earning of non-degree credentials, so the data need to work together. However, the current phase of the project found only two states (Tennessee and Maryland) able to connect industry-based certifications to their noncredit offerings at this time. The emerging CredLens initiative seeks to create a national repository of these data to offer a solution to this challenge.[26] Efforts to document noncredit value and workforce relevance would benefit from the ability to link noncredit data to other data systems available at the state level. We encourage state systems to engage in partnerships to connect their noncredit data with broader state ecosystems. One strategy is to partner with state labor/workforce departments. The value of such a strategy is demonstrated by this report's inclusion of New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL), whose student-level data are robust and are collected from all approved training providers in the state. Additionally, virtually all states are developing state longitudinal data systems that may include K-12 education, workforce, and credit-based

[26] CredLens. (2024). *Our mission.* https://www.credlens.org/

postsecondary data. Connecting noncredit data to these broader efforts will provide opportunities to gain a better grasp of students' educational and life journeys. Lastly, to better understand the connections to be made within states, additional work needs to be done toward mapping the complex web of data reporting related to state governance structures. While some of these data connections may be happening within states, there is no clear roadmap for navigating governance to create more interconnected data.

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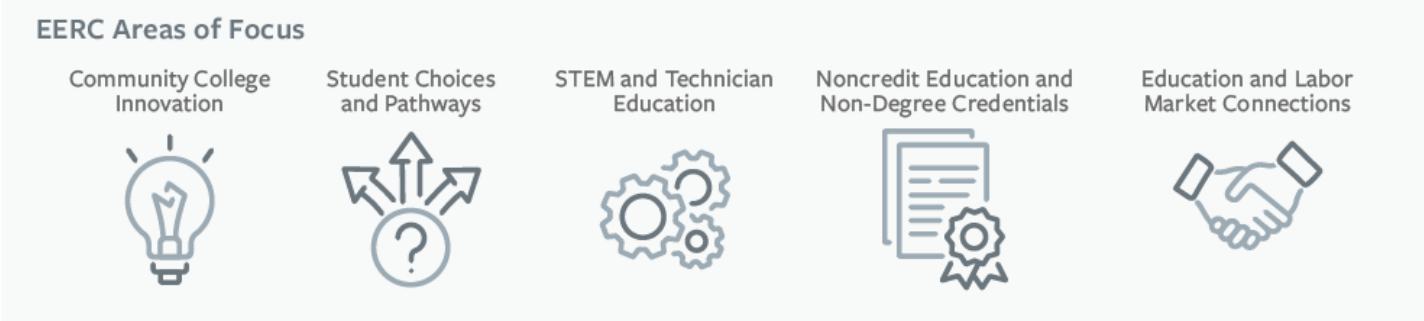

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