AN ANALYSIS OF EXISTING SHORT-TERM POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS

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Acknowledgements

About NASFAA

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is a nonprofit membership organization representing more than 20,000 financial aid professionals at nearly 3,000 colleges, universities, and career schools across the country. NASFAA member institutions serve nine out of every 10 undergraduates in the United States. Based in Washington, D.C., NASFAA is the only national association with a primary focus on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators. For more information, visit https://www.nasfaa.org.

About Advance CTE

Advance CTE is the longest-standing national nonprofit that represents state directors and state leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult Career Technical Education (CTE) across all 50 states and U.S. territories. Advance CTE's mission is to support visionary state leadership, cultivate best practices and speak with a collective voice to advance high-quality CTE policies, programs, and pathways that ensure career success for each learner. Their vision is to transform and expand CTE so that each learner—of any background, age, and zip code—is prepared for career and college success through state leadership, advocacy, and partnerships.

About ACTE

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, school counselors, guidance and career development professionals and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness, and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities. For more information, visit www.acteonline.org.

About Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. We envision a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation's need for talent through a broad range of credentials.

Research Support

Executive Summary and Introduction

It has become increasingly difficult to succeed in the U.S. workforce with only a high school diploma. While 75% of the middle-class workforce had only a high school education in the 1970s, that percentage dropped to below 40% by 2007.[1] An estimated two-thirds of all jobs in 2020 will require some postsecondary training, up from just a quarter of all jobs in 1973.[2] Many of these jobs, however, only require short-term postsecondary training as opposed to a lengthier certificate or degree. For instance, 40% of middle-education jobs (i.e., jobs requiring some higher education but not a bachelor's degree) require less than 12 weeks of formal classroom training.[3] However, many Americans simply cannot afford the costs of the training needed to gain the skills required for these types of jobs. What's more, the COVID-19 pandemic has already resulted in the highest rates of unemployment since the Great Depression, and those without any type of postsecondary attainment have been hit by job loss at higher rates than those with postsecondary experience.[4] In response to the Great Recession (2007–09), college enrollment increased by 2.5 million students, mainly due to enrollment by nontraditional-age students.[5] A similar pattern is possible as a result of COVID-19. Based on the job loss data so far, many expect a significant need for reskilling and up-skilling.

These combined effects, along with the growing national spotlight on student indebtedness and the related question of whether college pays off, have turned attention to non-degree, postsecondary credentials. This attention has come from the current administration,[6] Congress, states that include non-degree options in their postsecondary education attainment goals, and other education and workforce stakeholders. The increased focus on multiple education pathways has opened the conversation to expanding eligibility for the federal student aid programs authorized in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). Currently, the HEA primarily targets those students in more traditional degree programs. One potential expansion under consideration by Congress is to allow aid for short-term programs of less than 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours over less than 15 weeks of instruction.

However, no single, comprehensive source of national data exists that can inform conversations around extending HEA Title IV aid to short-term programs. In this project, we attempted to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about short-term programs with a national landscape analysis. We conducted this analysis in four parts: a survey of three national membership organizations, focus groups, telephone interviews, and a collection of program-level data.

Key Findings

- The majority of institutions agree or strongly agree that their short-term programs benefit the local economy, adult learners, and other students, and that expanding short-term program is of interest to industry representatives, educators, and local leaders.

- The most common short-term credentials offered by participants in our study are in health care and transportation fields.

- The business sector is one of the most significant driving forces behind short-term program development. Employers offer input into program designs to provide students with in-demand skills.

- Institutions often face difficulty filling short-term programs with sufficient enrollments because prospective students cannot afford the costs, and colleges can be reluctant to build short-term certificate programs that are not financial aid eligible, even when they would benefit students and employers.

- Just over half of programs offered by institutional survey respondents are eligible under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

- Many short-term certificates are already embedded in longer certificate or degree programs, or are considered "stackable" credentials that build upon previous credentials and may feed into degree programs.

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[1] Carnevale, A. P., Jayasundera, T., Hanson, A. R. (2012, September). *Career and technical education: Five ways that pay along the way to the B.A.* https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CTE.FiveWays.FullReport.pdf

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. (2020, June). *Monetary policy report.* https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/2020-06-mpr-part1.htm#xbox2-federalfiscalpolicyresponsetoc-106eaf79

[5] Advance CTE. (2020, June). *COVID-19's impact on CTE: Defining the impact and the opportunity.* https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/AdvanceCTE_COVID19_Impact_June_2020.pdf

[6] Bauer-Wolf, J. (2019, November 13). DeVos pushes alternative credentials, flexibility in speech to business leaders. *Education Dive.* https://www.educationdive.com/news/devos-pushes-alternative-credentials-flexibility-in-speech-to-business-lea/567283/

- States and institutions would be interested in offering more short-term programs if the programs were eligible for Federal Pell Grants and could serve more students.

- Even if short-term programs became eligible for federal financial aid, however, most institutions stated they could not shorten many existing programs because of state, industry, and academic standards.

While our research yielded useful facts and anecdotes about short-term programs, it also highlighted the difficulty of gathering and aggregating piecemeal data into a substitute for a national data source. We caution readers against extrapolating results from this work to a broader scale due to its small and nonrepresentative sample sizes, as noted throughout the report. Rather, we hope our findings identify areas for further research and inform future data collection efforts.

Background

Some lawmakers and policy organizations are promoting broadening Pell Grant eligibility to students enrolled in short-term postsecondary programs as a possible means to address the needs of a changing workforce, increase postsecondary access, and raise wages for American workers. Current law limits Pell Grants (authorized under Title IV of the HEA) to programs of study composed of at least 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours and offered over at least 15 weeks of instruction. Federal student loans can be offered for programs of at least 300 clock hours over at least 10 weeks of instruction provided the programs meet some additional quality requirements.

Many in-demand labor market skills require less seat time than the minimums established in the Title IV eligibility rules. This forces students to either find alternatives to Title IV financial aid to fund their studies or pay out of pocket, which potentially limits access to such programs. To address this challenge, extending Title IV aid to short-term programs to fill skills gaps in today's labor market has been proposed by the White House and Congress in bipartisan, stand-alone bills as well as HEA reauthorization proposals.

Determining whether and how to extend Title IV aid to short-term programs, and establishing which programs should be eligible, can be informed by identifying how these programs are similar to and differ from current eligible programs in terms of program quality and student success. This includes the lengths of known short-term programs, whether they are offered by Title IV-eligible institutions or by nontraditional providers, what credentials they offer and in what fields, the demographics of students they serve, and the levels of success achieved by their students. While some data exist on short-term programs, no comprehensive national database exists that answers all these questions.

Defining Short-Term Programs

Outside of the context of Title IV financial aid, these programs are frequently referred to as workforce development, career and technical education (CTE), or non-degree credentials. These programs include employer-based training (either on-the-job or classroom-based); industry-based certifications (e.g., commercial driver's license; certified nursing assistant; Microsoft certification); apprenticeships in fields like construction, pipe fitting, and machining; and postsecondary certificates.[7] Short-term programs often prepare students for what may be referred to as "middle-skill" jobs. However, some short-term programs also serve as a stepping-stone toward a college degree, and others supplement or enhance a degree.

The definition of short-term program used for purposes of this paper does not completely overlap the definition of a CTE training program. While short-term programs are almost always CTE programs, not all CTE programs are necessarily short-term programs; many CTE programs do meet the minimum program length requirements to qualify for Pell Grants.

Short-term programs can be offered by accredited or non-accredited institutions of higher education, can be offered for credit or not, and can be stand-alone programs or embedded into longer programs of study. Embedding short-term programs fully into longer programs at accredited institutions of higher education can make students eligible for Title IV aid, thus providing assistance for an otherwise ineligible short-term program. Further, an institution of higher education (IHE) can provide the embedded program itself or via a nontraditional provider if that provider's portion of the student's education is less than 25% (or, in some cases, less than 50%) of the student's entire educational program.

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[7] Carnevale, A. P., Jayasundera, T., Hanson, A. R. (2012, September). *Career and technical education: Five ways that pay along the way to the B.A.* https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CTE.FiveWays.FullReport.pdf

For purposes of this project, we defined short-term programs as those that fall below the existing Pell Grant minimum program length requirement, i.e., programs of less than 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours, or offered over less than 15 weeks of instruction. We also limited our scope, where possible, to postsecondary programs offered to students not concurrently enrolled in high school. Many short-term programs are offered as part of a secondary CTE program at technical high schools or as part of dual or concurrent enrollment in college while the student simultaneously completes high school. However, since high school students are not eligible for Title IV federal student aid funds, we attempted to consider only program and outcomes data for postsecondary students and have noted where that is not the case. Finally, our research only covered programs offered by IHEs in some form, not short-term training offered by employers or apprenticeship providers without a connection to a postsecondary institution.

Existing Rules for Title IV Aid Eligibility

The HEA limits eligibility to participate in the Title IV programs to public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit IHEs that meet certain requirements. This includes being authorized to operate in the state where the IHE is located, being accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and being approved by ED to participate in the federal student aid programs. Programs within eligible IHEs must also meet certain requirements to be considered eligible to award Title IV aid to students enrolled in those programs; institutional eligibility does not automatically confer eligibility upon all programs. As mentioned earlier, undergraduate programs must provide at least 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours over at least 15 weeks of instruction to award federal student aid. Graduate programs must provide at least 300 clock hours or eight credit hours over at least 10 weeks to qualify. Finally, programs of at least 300 clock hours offered over at least 10 weeks may offer Federal Direct Student Loans only, provided the program has been in existence for at least one year, has verified completion and job placement rates of at least 70%, and is not more than 150% longer than the minimum training period for the occupation for which it prepares its students.

Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)[8] and meet certain eligibility requirements to qualify for Title IV aid. Broadly, those conditions require that a student be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen, not be in default on federal student loans, be registered with the Selective Service System if assigned the male sex at birth, not have been convicted of certain drug-related offenses, and be making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of their program of study.

Most types of Title IV aid are means-tested; eligibility is determined based on answers to income and asset questions on the FAFSA®. Students can receive assistance for up to the total cost of tuition and fees, books and supplies, transportation, personal expenses, and certain other expenses like dependent care and disability-related expenses. Annual Pell Grant awards are capped for 2020–21 at $6,345 for full-time study (prorated for less-than-full-time study), Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grants can be awarded for as much as $4,000 per year, and undergraduate Direct Loans can be awarded for as much as $12,500 per year. Aggregate caps apply to most of the Title IV aid programs.

Current Mechanisms for Funding Short-Term Programs

In the absence of Title IV student aid, a patchwork of other federal programs can help fund short-term programs. Additionally, some states, IHEs, employers, and private donors fund short-term programs. Unfortunately, the results of interviews and focus groups, discussed later in this report, show the burden of funding often falls on the student.

The Carl D. Perkins Act
The Perkins Act provides federal funding to states to increase student access to high-quality CTE programs. It does not set minimum hours of instruction or program length as a requirement for funding, so it can fund short-term programs. However, its funds support program improvement, not direct student aid, and thus are awarded to states, postsecondary institutions, and school districts rather than individuals. States also have the option to use this funding for non-credit programs, but due to limited resources, most states do not.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
The largest of several U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administrations programs, WIOA's primary focus is to help displaced job seekers to succeed in the labor market. Like the Perkins Act, WIOA does not establish a statutory program minimum length or hours of instruction as a qualifier for eligibility. However, unlike Perkins Act-funded programs, individuals can use WIOA Individual Training Account (ITA) funds at eligible training providers.

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[8] Federal Student Aid. (n.d.). Complete the FAFSA form. https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program (TAA)

TAA, another U.S. Department of Labor program, provides federal funding for workers who lost jobs due to foreign competition.[9] The primary use of TAA funds is for training and reemployment services. Like the Perkins Act and WIOA, TAA does not establish statutory program minimum length or hours of instruction as a qualifier for eligibility.

The GI Bill®

The stated purpose of the GI Bill®, offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, includes assisting veterans in readjusting to civilian life and boosting the U.S. economy,[10] and the education benefits associated with the GI Bill® achieve both. While students primarily use these benefits at IHEs,[11] they may also use them at nonaccredited and non-degree programs, including short-term programs, as well as for apprenticeships.

State Resources

States may devote their own resources to providing scholarship support or other resources for students enrolled in short-term programs.

Employers

Employers often provide on-the-job training at their own cost and typically fund the bulk of apprenticeship program costs.[12] Sometimes employers also support classroom-based, on-the-job training or offer their own job training delivered through a postsecondary institution.

IHEs and Nontraditional Education Providers

IHEs may award their own scholarships or loans to students enrolled in short-term programs that are not eligible for Title IV student assistance. A popular financing strategy often used in funding education through nontraditional providers (e.g., coding bootcamps) has been income share agreements (ISAs). ISAs create contracts between students and the ISA provider whereby students agree to pay a percentage of their future income for a set amount of time in exchange for funding to pay for their program of study.

Philanthropy

Some philanthropic organizations[13] support short-term programs through both direct scholarships to students and support to institutions that provide short-term programs.

Public High Schools

Many states offer subsidized or no-cost dual or concurrent enrollment where students earn college credits or credentials while completing high school, although the determination of who is responsible for tuition often takes place at the local level.[14] Notably, ED launched an experiment[15] under its Experimental Sites Initiative to allow high school students concurrently enrolled at an IHE from one of a selected experimental group approved to receive Pell Grants for the college courses taken while in high school. Since students outside of this experiment must have completed high school or its equivalent to be eligible for Pell Grants, we excluded the experimental sites' population from the scope of this paper.

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[9] Collins, B. (2018, August 14). *Trade adjustment assistance for workers and TAA Reauthorization Act of 2015.* Congressional Research Service. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44153.pdf

[10] Title 38 – Veterans' Benefits. Ch. 33 – Post 9/11 Educational Assistance: https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title38/part3/chapter33&edition=prelim

[11] Congressional Budget Office. (2019, May). The post-9/11 GI Bill: Beneficiaries, choices, and cost. https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-05/55179-Post911GIBill.pdf

[12] Carnevale, A. P., Jayasundera, T., Hanson, A. R. (2012, September). *Career and technical education: Five ways that pay along the way to the B.A.* https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CTE.FiveWays.FullReport.pdf

[13] For example, the Association for Career and Technical Education offers a grants and scholarship resource center: https://www.acteonline.org/professional-development/opportunities/scholarships/

[14] Education Commission of the States. (n.d.). *Dual/concurrent enrollment: Who is primarily responsible for paying tuition.* http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/MBQuest2RTanw?Rep=DE1904

[15] See Federal Register Notice (November 3, 2015) regarding its experimental sites initiative relating to dual enrollment: https://ifap.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/fregisters/FR110315.pdf

The Economic Case for Short-Term Programs

While federal, state, and private funding exists for short-term programs, the funding sources are a patchwork of options offered by a variety of providers, all with different rules, eligibility requirements, funding amounts, and durations. While students may receive financial assistance from one or more of these programs to pay for short-term training, they are still likely to experience a gap between the cost of their program and the funding they are eligible to receive. Some proponents of extending Title IV aid to short-term programs believe these gaps can be filled with Pell Grants.

About 53% of the jobs that comprise the country's labor market require education beyond high school but do not require a bachelor's degree.[16] These jobs are also where the country is experiencing some of the largest skills gaps,[17] and short-term programs can often address this need. Especially when embedded in a larger stackable credential strategy, short-term credentials can expand access to postsecondary attainment for those who would otherwise go without.[18] Individuals, especially those who are working and have familial responsibilities, can attain credentials through short-term programs that improve their job prospects or build on the academic and technical skills they already apply in the field.

Proponents of extending Title IV aid to short-term programs cite evidence of promising returns on these programs. Most national data are based on certificates earned in less than one year, which is a broader definition than the one used here. Still, those data show an earnings premium of 20% over the earnings of high school graduates.[19] While states vary in the amount and depth of data available, many also show positive outcomes for programs that fit within the short-term program definition used in this paper.[20]

Some students may receive Title IV funding even when their program does not meet the minimum program length requirements because some short-term programs consist of the introductory courses for a longer-term program. For instance, the eight credits of coursework that qualify a student to become a basic emergency medical technician (EMT) could be the same eight credits that, when taken in addition to another 30 credits, qualify a student to become a paramedic. In this example, a student would not be able to use Pell Grants for the basic EMT program but could use Pell for the longer paramedic program. In other words, a student who intends to complete the longer paramedic program could enroll in that program and receive Title IV aid but may withdraw upon completion of the basic EMT coursework having received a Pell Grant. However, a student who initially enrolled in the shorter basic EMT program would not have had the opportunity to receive Title IV aid for that coursework.

Separate from the issue of affordability and access, both students in this example may be gainfully employed upon completion of the basic EMT program, but only the student who initially enrolled in the basic EMT program would be treated as a success in program completion accountability metrics. The student who enrolled in the longer program but dropped out after completing the EMT coursework would be counted as a non-completer, despite having the same workforce outcome as the student who had enrolled in the shorter program.

Eligibility, Quality, and Accountability Considerations

It is crucial to ensure that all educational programs create meaningful opportunities for students. Those opportunities include, but are not limited to, the ability for graduates to secure employment in their chosen field, earn better wages than they would have earned without the credential, and pursue further postsecondary education that would allow them to apply their previously earned credits to a new credential.

Program quality considerations are essential for all educational programs, and short-term programs are certainly not exempt. Most legislative proposals that would expand Pell Grants to short-term programs would hold those programs to higher standards than degree or longer-term certificate programs. This is because degree programs provide an academic experience that, while certainly expected to lead to post-graduation employment, is broad and could lead graduates down a variety of career paths with the skills acquired in earning those degrees.

[16] Lamback, S., Gerwin, C., & Restuccia, D. (2018, June 13). *When is a job just a job—and when can it launch a career? The real economic opportunities of middle-skill work.* JFF. https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/ResumeDataBook6.pdf

[17] National Skills Coalition. (2020, March 10). *Skills mismatch: Lack of access to skills training hurts workers and businesses.* https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/middle-skill-fact-sheets/file/US_skillsmismatch.pdf

[18] Wilson, B. (2016, October). *Stackable credential policy toolkit.* National Skills Coalition. https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/Stackable-Credential-Policy-Toolkit-1.pdf

[19] Carnevale, A. P., Jayasundera, T., Hanson, A. R. (2012, September). *Career and technical education: Five ways that pay along the way to the B.A.* https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CTE.FiveWays.FullReport.pdf

[20] The Institute for College Access and Success. (2019, July 22). *Short-term programs in the shadows: What data show about program length, cost, and payoff.* https://ticas.org/affordability-2/short-term-programs-in-the-shadows-what-data-show-about-program-length-cost-and-payoff/

Despite mounting student debt, the economic benefits of a college degree are still well established.[21] Conversely, non-degree credential programs (whether short-term or not) are generally aligned toward a very specific career field with less transferability to different paths. Because of that, some argue that these types of programs need additional safeguards to ensure that taxpayer dollars and students' time, effort, and money are well spent. The gainful employment regulations developed by ED in 2014[22] sought to address some of those concerns by imposing institutional accountability metrics for student debt and earnings for certain programs. However, ED rescinded those rules in 2019.[23]

The HEA has always specified "guardrails" to limit which institutions and programs have access to Title IV funds. Some guardrails are based strictly on the type of institution or program. For instance, prior to 1972, proprietary institutions were not eligible to participate in the federal student aid programs.[24] Another example is the minimum program length of 600 clock hours or 16 credits and 15 weeks. Other guardrails define minimum accountability metrics, such as cohort default rate, as a proxy for quality for otherwise eligible institutions. Choosing the right set of parameters for which short-term programs are eligible to participate in the Title IV programs will be essential to ensuring these funds are well spent.

Another key consideration in weighing whether to extend Title IV aid to short-term programs is how to ensure ongoing program quality and establish accountability measures institutions must meet to continue to offer federal student aid. With one in six Americans holding a share of the aggregate $1.5 trillion in outstanding student loans,[25] several highly publicized college closures,[26] and concerns about noncompletion,[27] there is general agreement that current HEA quality assurance efforts and accountability metrics are inadequate to measure whether students and taxpayers are benefiting from their investment in postsecondary education.[28]

The HEA relies on accreditors, states, and the federal government—commonly known as "the triad"—to evaluate quality and hold institutions accountable. Charged with ensuring academic quality at Title-IV eligible IHEs, accreditors look at factors such as graduation rates, licensure pass rates, curriculum, and faculty in considering whether to grant approval to an institution; states authorize institutions to operate there and provide consumer protections; and the federal government recognizes accreditors and evaluates the financial responsibility of IHEs and their administrative capability to manage the Title IV aid programs. ED oversees the compliance of IHEs with statutory and regulatory requirements for such accountability metrics as cohort default rate, satisfactory academic progress, return of Title IV funds, and, prior to its rescission from the regulations, gainful employment.

Knowing that the HEA cannot adequately assure postsecondary education quality and accountability for currently eligible programs means new standards should be considered for all programs. States have their own quality assurance requirements for non-degree credentials to count toward their state postsecondary achievement goals and/or qualify for state funding. States often fund both for-credit and noncredit credentials.[29] Some common criteria states use to determine quality include some measure of value of the credential by employers, such as whether the credential is required or preferred by industry; whether the credential aligns with an in-demand occupation; whether the credential leads to high-quality employment (which may be based on earnings, career advancement or career security); and whether the credential is stackable to a higher credential or otherwise leads to opportunities for further education or training.[30] Some less common state quality criteria include that a program must be on the state's WIOA Eligible Training Providers List or meet a minimum completion rate, employment rate, or number of clock hours.[31]

[21] Abel, J., & Deitz, R. (2019, June 5). *Despite rising costs college is still a good investment.* Liberty Street Economics, Federal Reserve Bank of New York. https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2019/06/despite-rising-costs-college-is-still-a-good-investment.html

[22] Program Integrity: Gainful Employment. 34 C.F.R. §600; 34 C.F.R. §668. (2014) https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/10/31/2014-25594/program-integrity-gainful-employment

[23] Program Integrity: Gainful Employment. 34 C.F.R. §600; 34 C.F.R. §668. (2019) https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/07/01/2019-13703/program-integrity-gainful-employment

[24] Gladieux, L. E. (1995, October). *Federal student aid policy: A history and an assessment.* Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI/FinPostSecEd/gladieux.html

[25] Miller, B., Campbell, C., Cohen, B., & Hancock, C. (2019, June 12). *Addressing the $1.5 trillion in federal student loan debt.* Center for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/reports/2019/06/12/470893/addressing-1-5-trillion-federal-student-loan-debt/

[26] Bauman, D., & O'Leary, B. (2019, April 4) College closures 2014-18. *Chronicle of Higher Education.* https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/college-closures#id=all_all_all; https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/closed-school

[27] Long, B.T., (2018, May 28). *The college completion landscape: Trends, challenges, and why it matters.* Third Way. https://www.thirdway.org/report/the-college-completion-landscape-trends-challenges-and-why-it-matters

[28] Erickson, L., & Hess, F.M. (2019, July). *Mapping out common ground on accountability in higher education.* Third Way. https://thirdway.imgix.net/pdfs/override/Mapping-Out-Common-Ground-on-Accountability-in-Higher-Education-web.pdf

[29] Duke-Benfield, A., Wilson, B., Kaleba, K., & Leventoff, J. (2019, September). *Expanding opportunities: Defining quality non-degree credentials for states.* https://m.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/9.18-NSC_QNDC-paper_web.pdf

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

In 2019, the National Skills Coalition developed a consensus definition for quality of non-degree credentials incorporating existing state frameworks and feedback from states and policy experts. Their framework focused on employment and wage gains as well as employers' skills needs because students and state leaders identified these as key indicators of quality. They proposed three required criteria: (a) evidence of substantial job opportunities associated with the credential, (b) transparency with respect to the competencies mastered by credential holders, and (c) evidence of employment and earnings outcomes post-completion. They also recommended consideration of a credential's stackability to additional education or training.[32] The National Skills Coalition suggests the possibility of using their recommended quality criteria to calculate a composite rating for programs, instead of establishing a pass/fail for each criterion, as a way to balance the relative strengths and weaknesses of any single quality metric or, alternatively, assigning different weights to different criteria.

Finally, there are also practical concerns about administering student aid under existing Title IV regulations for such short programs. Lawmakers wrote the HEA with traditional degrees in mind, and the rules for administering these funds largely reflect this. Students are eligible for Title IV funds for not only the cost of tuition, fees, books, and supplies, but also for transportation, housing, food, and personal and other expenses. This may need to be adjusted for programs of only a few weeks.

Students receiving Title IV funds must demonstrate that they are making satisfactory academic progress by meeting a minimum qualitative (i.e., grade point average) and quantitative (i.e., percentage of attempted courses completed) standard, which is evaluated by the institution either annually or at the end of each term. However, satisfactory academic progress could not be measured this way—or maybe even at all—for short-term programs. Similarly, students who withdraw from their educational programs are subject to a calculation that may require them or their school to return a portion of the Title IV funds they received. These rules may need to be considered differently for short-term programs to prevent fraud.

While none of these concerns presents insurmountable barriers, they will require deliberate consideration to prevent opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse, and to prioritize program quality.

Review of Current Literature and Data on Short-Term Programs

Data collection for short-term programs takes place at many different levels. States collect data to measure their own postsecondary attainment goals, to determine the effectiveness of state funding initiatives, and to evaluate preparation for future state workforce needs. The federal government collects data from IHEs and from states to measure the effectiveness of programs like WIOA, the Perkins Act, TAA, the Title IV student aid programs, and VA education benefits. Institutions and university systems collect data to measure the enrollments and outcomes of the programs they offer, and accrediting agencies collect data to assess program quality as part of their role in the triad. National and state certification boards, and national associations of state certification boards (e.g., the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians[33] and the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy[34]) collect and publish certification exam pass rates. Think tanks, policy organizations, and academic researchers collect and review data to answer research questions and advance policy positions.

National data sets, such as those generated by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), WIOA, the Perkins Act, VA, and TAA mandatory reporting, are either too broad or too limited to apply to short-term programs as defined for purposes of this paper. For instance, only Title IV-eligible institutions must report data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). While some non-Title IV-eligible institutions may report data to NCES, and Title IV-eligible institutions often report less-than-one-year certificate programs that are not eligible for Title IV funds, those data are at the institution level; student data such as demographics or outcomes are not available at the individual program level. WIOA, TAA, and VA data include programs that are not eligible for Title IV, and even include nonaccredited institutions, but they do not distinguish programs by number of credits, and they track recipients of funding from those programs. Perkins Act data might include students in short-term programs, but these data also do not distinguish between programs of different lengths. State data are often limited to programs offered by community colleges or public institutions only and may not disaggregate short-term programs from other certificates.

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[32] Ibid.

[33] See National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians for more information: https://www.nremt.org/rwd/public

[34] See The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy for more information: https://www.fsbpt.org/Free-Resources/NPTE-Pass-Rate-Reports/NPTE-Exam-Year-Reports

Existing National Data

Most existing national data on short-term programs focus on certificates or other non-degree credentials of less than one year, while for the purposes of this work we sought data specifically on programs of less than 15 weeks. Those shorter programs are, of course, encompassed in the broader category of programs of less than one year, but trends and outcomes could vary significantly between a 10-month program and a three-month program. Nevertheless, many of the arguments for and against permitting the use of Title IV student aid are based on the data for all programs lasting less than one year, so we found it useful to examine data and trends in those programs to determine where they compare to the available data on programs of less than 15 weeks, look for similarities and differences, and see whether the data on less-than-one-year programs might satisfy the data needs for programs of less than 15 weeks.

Nationwide, approximately 46% of certificate programs were less than one year according to 2013–14 IPEDS data.[35] In 2018, 44% of community college credentials awarded were non-degree certificates, and 24% were less than one year in length.[36] Students earned nearly 500,000 less-than-one-year credentials in 2018.[37]

In a 2012 study of students completing certificates, 51% enrolled in public 2-year colleges, while 45% enrolled in programs at private for-profit institutions and 4% at private not-for-profit institutions.[38] Nearly all (79%) non-degree institutions—those that primarily grant certificates—were in the private, for-profit sector.[39] The representation by institutional control (public, private non-profit, private for-profit) varies by discipline. For instance, 87% of cosmetology certificates and 57% of healthcare-related certificates were awarded by private, for-profit institutions.[40]

The most commonly awarded less-than-one-year certificates are as follows:[41]

• Nurse/nursing assistant/aide and patient care assistant

• Medical/clinical assistant

• Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operation

• Emergency medical technology/technician (EMT paramedic)

• Automobile/automotive mechanics technology/technician

Demographics

Nearly half (56%) of certificate-seeking students are adults.[42] Gender discrepancies exist in the types of certificate fields pursued, with men more highly represented in mechanical fields, transportation, policing, and agriculture, and women more highly represented in office management, cosmetology, and healthcare.[43] While 11% of White, Hispanic, and Asian American cohorts each report a certificate as their highest level of educational attainment, that figure is 17% among African Americans.[44]

[35] Miller, A., Erwin M, Richardson, S., Arntz, M. (2016). *Collecting and disseminating certificate awards.* https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/NPEC/data/NPEC_Paper_IPEDS_Collecting_and_Disseminating_Certificate_Awards_2016.pdf

[36] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2017-18 Completions survey.

[37] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2017-18 Completions survey.

[38] Carnevale, A., Rose, S., & Hansen, A. (2012, June). *Certificates: Gateway to gainful employment and college degrees.* https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Certificates.FullReport.061812.pdf

[39] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (Fall 2018). Fall 2018, Institutional Characteristics Header component.

[40] Carnevale, A., Rose, S., & Hansen, A. (2012, June). *Certificates: Gateway to gainful employment and college degrees.* https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Certificates.FullReport.061812.pdf

[41] Miller, A., Erwin M, Richardson, S., Arntz, M. (2016). *Collecting and disseminating certificate awards.* https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/NPEC/data/NPEC_Paper_IPEDS_Collecting_and_Disseminating_Certificate_Awards_2016.pdf

[42] Carnevale, A., Rose, S., & Hansen, A. (2012, June). *Certificates: Gateway to gainful employment and college degrees.* https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Certificates.FullReport.061812.pdf

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

One-third of certificate holders come from low- to moderate-income backgrounds[45] and one third also hold a degree in addition to their certificate.[46] Sixty-two percent of certificate holders who have also earned an associate degree received their certificate first,[47] suggesting that certificates can serve as an entry point to degree attainment.

While research indicates that less-than-one-year certificate holders earn, on average, 20% more than high school graduates with no college, this figure varies greatly by the field of study and the certificate earner's race, sex, and ethnicity.[48] It is important to note, although not surprising, that the earnings premium on short-term programs is higher when graduates are employed in their field of study.[49]

Existing State Data

States collect and maintain data on CTE programs and non-degree credentials to learn who enrolls in short-term programs, evaluate the progress of their state postsecondary attainment goals, assess the alignment of workforce needs with educational offerings in their states, and measure the success of their investments in postsecondary education. What data each state collects, however, varies widely, making it difficult to draw broad national conclusions. For instance, in our survey of states, we received 32 responses representing 27 states. Among those, only 15 reported they collect data on various student background characteristics and outcomes metrics, and the information collected varies between states. The interviews with states, discussed later in this report, shed light on some of the challenges with data collection. One of the major themes across states is that the lack of federal and, often, state funding for these programs means that administrators do not have a mechanism for data collection and reporting.

The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) recently released an analysis[50] of short-term program data for three states: Iowa, Missouri, and Texas. While they were able to separate out programs of less than 600 credit hours—which is the main challenge with much of the national data—they found significant gaps in the amount of available data.

First, states were not able to provide data on every short-term program in their state. Iowa data included only short-term programs in its community college system. Texas data encompassed only short-term programs at the state's community and technical colleges. Missouri had the widest range of institution types in its data, with all Title IV-eligible institutions included as well as all programs registered with the state's Department of Higher Education and/or its Division of Workforce Development. As such, only Missouri could report the breakdown of short-term programs by type of institution that offers them. Their data showed that 69% of Missouri's short-term programs were offered at 2-year public institutions, 22% at 4-year public institutions, 6% at private not-for-profit institutions, and 3% at for-profit institutions.

Short-term non-credit programs in Texas ranged in length from 208 to 598 contact hours; all but one of Texas' 194 for-credit programs were 563 contact hours, which translates to 15 credits. In Missouri, non-credit programs ranged from 150-588 contact hours, while for-credit programs ranged from 9-15 credits. Almost all of Iowa's 149 short-term programs were embedded in longer programs, so students in these programs met eligibility requirements to receive Pell Grants. TICAS found that only one-third of Missouri's short-term programs were offered for credit, whereas in Texas, well over half (57%) of short-term programs were offered for credit. Only Missouri reported cost data, with typical direct costs of $3,000 with variation by program and a range of direct costs falling between $2,550 and $5,020. Health professions fields had the highest shares of enrolled students in Missouri programs, while in Texas, education topped the list.

Demographic data were largely missing from the TICAS evaluation of these three states, although Iowa did report that 9% of students enrolled in their short-term programs had earned some prior postsecondary credit. Iowa also reported that 70% of students enrolled in short-term programs were employed prior to enrollment and 75% during enrollment, although both of these figures showed significant variation by field of study.

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Carnevale, A., Rose, S., & Hansen, A. (2012, June). *Certificates: Gateway to gainful employment and college degrees.* https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Certificates.FullReport.061812.pdf

[50] The Institute for College Access and Success. (2019, July 22). *Short-term programs in the shadows: What data show about program length, cost, and payoff.* https://ticas.org/affordability-2/short-term-programs-in-the-shadows-what-data-show-about-program-length-cost-and-payoff/

Completion rates and licensure pass rates were not available from these three states. However, some employment and earnings data were available. Texas reported a 79% employment rate among its short-term program completers with median earnings of $27,500. Iowa reported 90% employment and earnings of at least $27,000 per year within one year of students leaving their program. However, the median figures mask variability among fields of study. In Texas, median earnings were $9,540 for a fire science program (although this may be due to the volunteer nature of many fire departments) but $49,920 for a criminal justice program. In Iowa, healthcare field graduates typically earned only $17,200 versus $35,100 for graduates of other short-term programs.

Methodology

To gather both qualitative and quantitative information on existing short-term programs, NASFAA, Advance CTE and ACTE conducted an online survey, focus groups, phone interviews, and targeted data collection.

Online Membership Survey

In fall 2019, all three associations collaborated on two online surveys designed to collect data from their members regarding existing short-term programs.

• Advance CTE drafted one survey instrument for state CTE directors across the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories (Appendix A).

• ACTE and NASFAA drafted a second survey instrument for ACTE and NASFAA members—including educators and administrators of postsecondary CTE programs offered primarily in public area CTE centers and community and technical colleges (Appendix B).

The associations then distributed the surveys via email in November 2019, with a follow-up email sent the next week. The survey instrument for ACTE and NASFAA membership resulted in 232 institutional responses,[51] and the survey instrument for Advance CTE membership resulted in 32 state director responses.
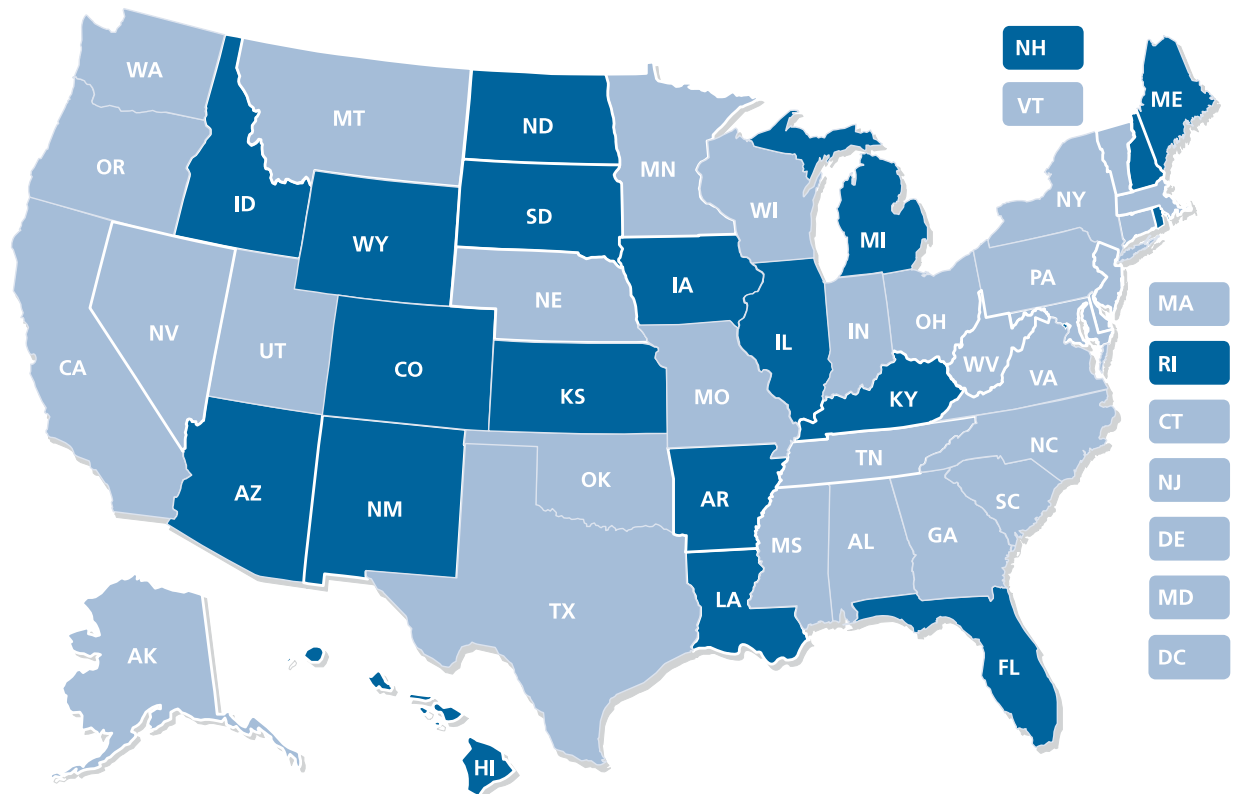
[51] A response is calculated as a survey participant having answered at least one question.

We then provided the data from both survey instruments to representatives from an external consulting company, ASA Research LLC, who analyzed the results and wrote this paper's findings. Of the 232 institutional responses, 70 offer short-term programs (defined as less than 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours, or less than 15 weeks of instruction). The 70 institutional respondents that indicated they offered short-term programs were then asked a series of questions related to data on their programs. Of those, only 40 provided institutional-level data. While 28 of the 40 institutions track short-term program-level data, only a handful of respondents provided these data, such as demographics and outcomes, by individual program; therefore, program-level data were not robust enough to make any comparisons or conclusions.

In all, the findings in this report summarize the institutional-level data provided by 40 institutions. Of the 32 state responses representing 27 states, only 24 were complete responses, representing 21 states as shown on page 13.

In-Person Focus Groups

In November 2019, NASFAA and ACTE collaborated on protocols for collecting information from ACTE's membership on existing short-term programs via in-person focus groups (Appendix C). ACTE conducted two in-person focus groups at ACTE's annual meeting in December 2019. NASFAA distributed an invitation to participate to meeting attendees with potential interest in the topic (i.e., those that worked at postsecondary institutions). Attendees were a subset of ACTE's membership, i.e., educators and administrators of postsecondary CTE programs offered primarily in public area CTE centers and community and technical colleges. Each focus group was approximately 90 minutes long and had 14 - 15 attendees. ASA Research LLC then analyzed the recordings and notes from these focus groups for this paper.

Individual Phone Interviews

In December 2019, Advance CTE and NASFAA collaborated on phone interview protocols designed to collect information from Advance CTE's membership regarding existing short-term programs. Advance CTE then conducted one-on-one phone interviews with nine state CTE directors in December 2019 and January 2020 using the set of questions included in Appendix D of this report. The interviewed states included those that had and had not completed the survey, those with robust short-term programs, and those new to developing short-term programs to allow for a range of perspectives. Advance CTE analyzed the conversations from these phone interviews for this paper.

Data Collection

To supplement the data on individual short-term programs received through the earlier membership survey, all three associations decided to conduct a smaller, targeted data collection. In January 2019, all associations and our outside consulting company, ASA Research LLC, collaborated on variables to collect from members of Advance CTE and ACTE regarding existing short-term programs. Based on the differences in their two membership bases, the associations drafted one set of variables for the membership of Advance CTE (Appendix E) and another for the membership of ACTE (Appendix F).

In January and February 2020, we emailed these data collection documents to targeted members, which included those who had either participated in the phone interviews, focus groups, or an online membership survey, or were actively engaged with the leadership of their association. The data collection resulted in a total of six responses from two states and four institutions. Across the two states, one state provided data by program for 16 institutions, and another state provided aggregate data from every institution in the state for 16 short-term programs.

All but one data set contained Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes for their programs. When cleaning and sorting the data, NASFAA combined all program-level data and matched CIP codes to either the sixth digit or fourth digit. NASFAA then used the National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS CIP Code user site[52] to manually match the program-level data for the one data set without CIP codes assigned to their programs.

The results include program-level data for 95 program areas which we grouped into 13 different CIP codes, as detailed in the "Findings from Data Collection" section. We reported averages for various characteristics of programs such as credits, average costs, and more by CIP code. However, the number of programs reported varied in some cases. For example, for CIP code 15.0613, data were reported for four programs overall, but data on funding sources students used to pay was only reported for two programs. While these numbers give us some insight into the outcomes of these programs, NASFAA cautions readers to keep in mind that these findings may not be nationally representative due to the small sample size at the program level and because this is a convenience sample of institutions and states. Appendix G lists a full definition for each CIP code.

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[52] National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). *What is the CIP?* U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode

Findings From the Online Membership Surveys

This section highlights the major findings from two online surveys conducted with the membership of NASFAA, Advance CTE, and ACTE during fall 2019. More information on recruitment appears in the Methodology section, and survey protocols appear in Appendix A and B.

Due to the relatively low response rate, the data findings do not represent the national universe of institutions but rather provide a snapshot of member perspectives. Since no national data set of short-term programs currently exists, these data shed light into this subset of programs and supplement existing research about broader certificate programs.

We administered two separate surveys: one to institutions and the other to state representatives. We summarize findings from both surveys in this section by topic. The majority of institutional respondents providing short-term programs (defined as less than 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours and less than 15 weeks of instruction) are community colleges (37 of the 40), which is due in part to the makeup of ACTE's membership. Institutions reported enrolling an average of 1,449 full-time and 3,230 part-time students in short-term programs per year. The average completion rate as reported by respondents across certificate programs was 78% for full-time students and 68% for part-time students for the limited subset of respondents that could provide this data.

Program Offerings

The 40 institutions providing survey data offer an average of 20 short-term programs each, ranging from 1 to 181. Half (20) of the institutions offer 10 or fewer short-term programs, 17 offer 11 to 40 programs, and three offer 70 or more. Of these, an average of seven programs at each institution—55% of their short-term programs—are on state WIOA Eligible Training Provider (ETP) lists. Seven institutions indicated no programs being WIOA-eligible; at 13 institutions, all short-term programs are on WIOA ETP lists.

Nearly all (25 of 27) state respondents indicated their state offers short-term programs. The two states not offering short-term programs cited state policy barriers and lack of federal financial aid as reasons. Respondents representing both of these states agreed or strongly agreed that the local economy and adult learners would benefit from short-term programs; however, while local employers have shown interest, educators and state leaders are not as interested in creating short-term programs.

State respondents reported that an average of 18 public, two-year institutions offer short-term programs in their state. The number of institutions offering short-term programs ranges from 1 to 56 in each state.

Student Characteristics

Institutions reporting data serve an average of 6,879 full-time equivalent (FTE) students each year. The reported demographic characteristics for students enrolled in the 40 institutions' short-term programs appear in Figures 1, 2, and 3. State respondents also described the types of learners they serve in short-term programs, as shown in Table 1.
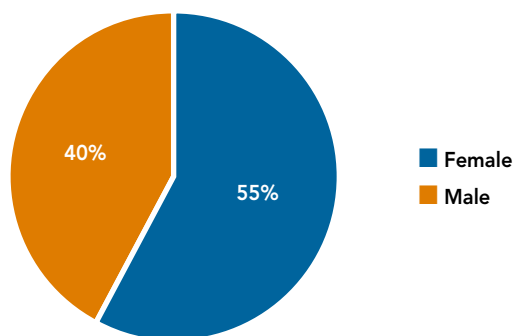
Figure 1. Percentage of students enrolled in respondents' short-term programs, by gender.

Note. The categories do not total 100% due to data reporting errors.

N = 30.
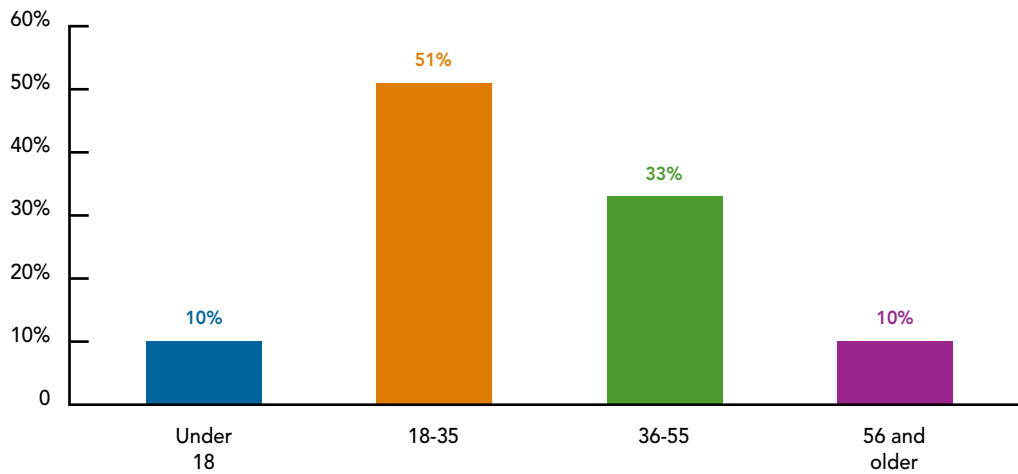
Figure 2. Percentages of students enrolled in respondents' short-term programs, by age.

Note: The categories do not total 100% due to data reporting errors.
N = 24.
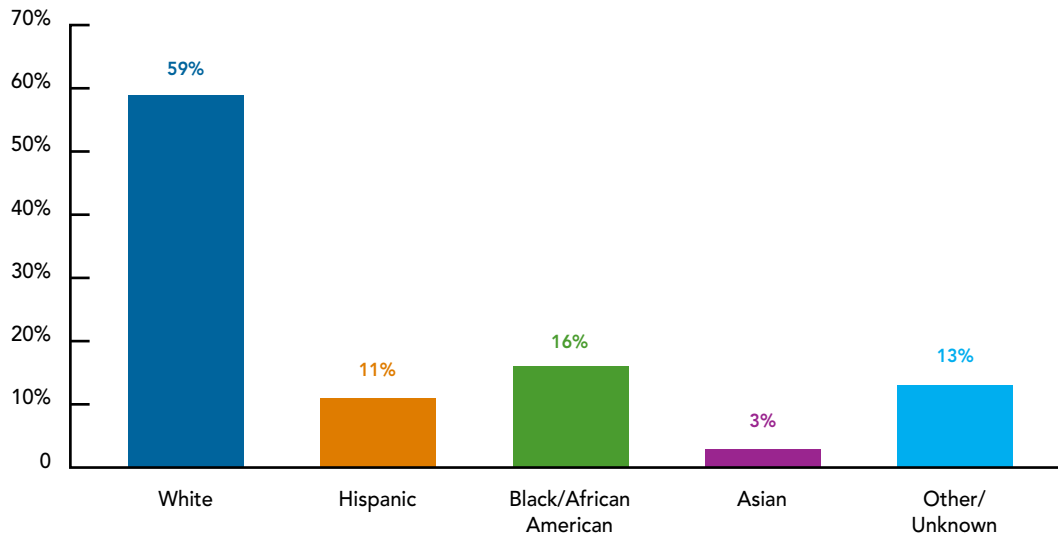
Figure 3. Percentages of students enrolled in respondents' short-term programs, by race/ethnicity.

Note: The categories do not total 100% due to data reporting errors.
N = 24.

Table 1: Types of Learners Served by Short-Term Programs in Each State

Types of learners served	Number of respondents serving these learners[a]
Adult learners	15
Students seeking skills for career advancement	15
Students seeking skills for a new career	16
Traditional-aged students	5
Part-time students	13
Full-time students	5

Note: The survey instructed respondents to select all that apply.
[a]N = 17.

Program Characteristics

The majority of institutions report awarding industry certifications or occupational licensures upon completion of short-term programs (24 and 20 out of 39, respectively). Sixteen institutions award sub-baccalaureate certificates, half for credit and half for non-credit programs (Figure 4). Ten institutions award micro-credentials (i.e., digital means of demonstrating competency or mastery of key skills).[53]

Figure 4. Type of credential earned upon completion of short-term programs.

Note: The survey instructed respondents to select all responses that apply.
N = 39.

As shown in Table 2, the majority of institutions reported offering stackable, short-term programs, either part of a career pathway or transferrable to a longer-term program (28 and 24 institutions, respectively). Institutions reported offering an average of 15 short-term programs as part of career pathways and 13 programs that articulate to longer-term credentials.

Table 2: Number of Institutions Offering Stackable Programs and Average Number of Stackable Programs per Institution, by Type of Program

	Number of institutions	Average number of programs per institution
Stackable - career pathway	28	15
Stackable - longer-term program	24	13

N = 38.

The majority (23 of 39) offer some short-term programs for credit, while 16 do not (Table 3).

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[53] National Education Association, Center for Advocacy, & Center for Great Public Schools. (2018, June). Micro-credential guidance. http://www.gpsnetwork.org/assets/docs/Micro-credential-guidance-pdf-june18.pdf

Table 3: Number of Surveyed Institutions Offering Different Types of Short-Term Programs

Short-term program offerings	Number of institutions
Credit	13
Not-for-credit	16
Mix of both	10

N = 39.

Institutions offer short-term programs in an average of two formats each. The most common format is in-classroom study, followed by online formats (Table 4).

Table 4: Short-Term Program Formats, by Institution

Program format	Number of institutions[a]
Traditional/classroom	38
Online	20
Competency based	10
Dual/concurrent high school	11

Note: The surveys instructed respondents to select all formats that apply.
[a]*N* = 39.

Short-Term Program Perceptions

The surveys asked both institutional and state respondents to rate statements about the interest in and benefits of short-term programs. As shown in Figure 5, the majority of institutions and states agree or strongly agree with all statements: that their short-term programs benefit the local economy (30 of 32), local adult learners (32 of 33), and full- and part-time students in their state (25 of 30 and 27 of 30, respectively).
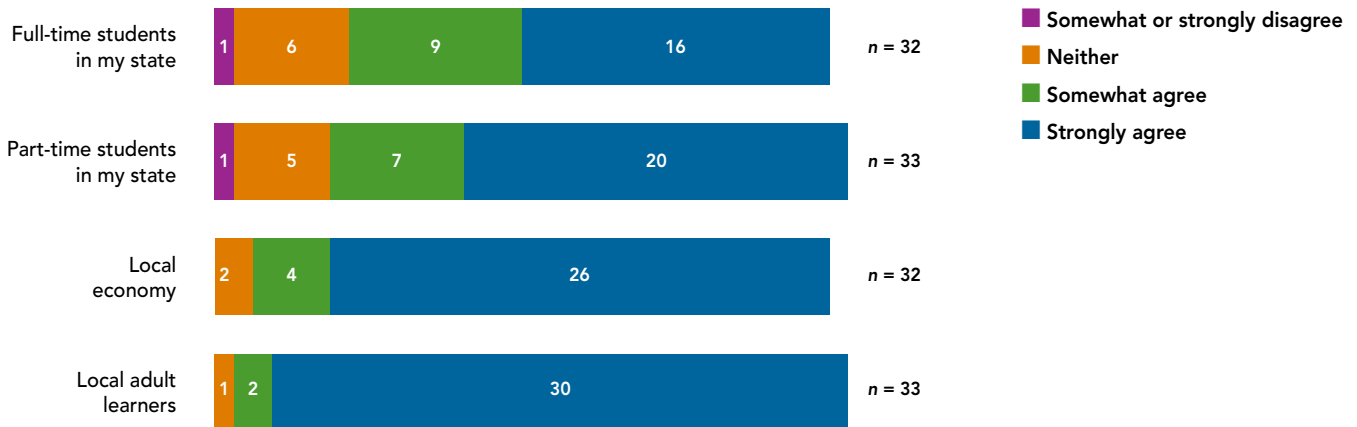

Figure 5. Institution respondents' perceptions of the benefits of short-term programs to four stakeholder groups.

A majority of institutional respondents also agree that stakeholders in their state have shown an interest in expanding short-term programs (Figure 6). Institutional respondents were most likely to agree that they are hearing interest from educators and local leaders, in particular. While few institutional respondents disagree with statements relating to the interest of their local legislature and governor in expanding these programs, roughly one third are neutral about these statements. This could be because respondents are not in direct contact with these officials or are unfamiliar with their interests.
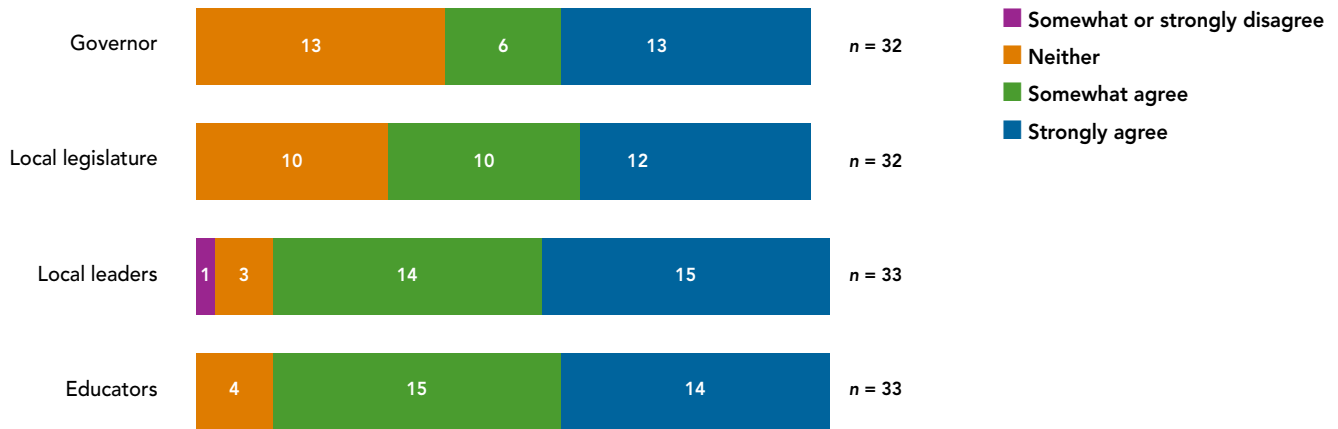
Figure 6. Institutional respondents' perceptions of stakeholders' level of interest in expansion of short-term programs.

Similar to institutional respondents, the majority of state respondents agree that short-term programs benefit specific stakeholders. Both state and institutional stakeholders are in strong agreement that the state's economy benefits from short-term programs (Figure 7).
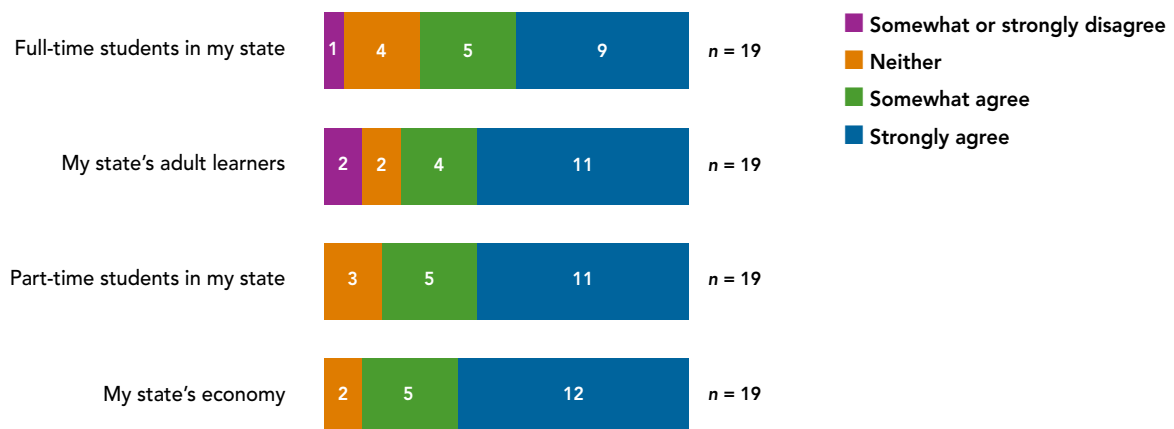
Figure 7. State respondents' perceptions of short-term benefits to stakeholders.

Among state respondents, the majority agree that stakeholders have interest in expansion of short-term programs (Figure 8). While eight respondents strongly agree that state leaders, educators, and their governor have expressed interest, only four strongly agree that the state legislator has expressed such interest.
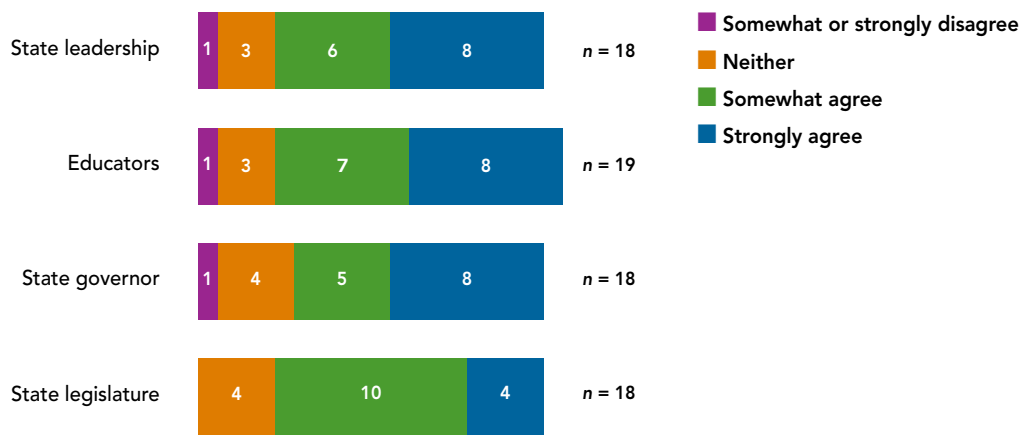
Figure 8. Stakeholders' level of interest in expansion of long-term programs.

Short-Term Program State Policies

Ninety percent of state respondents (18 out of 20) indicated having statewide postsecondary attainment goals. Of those, 15 states include short-term programs as part of their attainment goals. One respondent indicated that, while not currently a part of state attainment goals, short-term programs will eventually be included "as we work to better define credentials of value, and then align these programs to them." Another state would consider adding short-term programs to the postsecondary attainment strategy if federal aid were available for these programs. Only one respondent indicated that their state requires that credits earned in short-term programs be stackable to higher credentials.

Figures 9 to 12 summarize responses to additional questions asked about state policies relating to short-term programs. The majority of state respondents (13 of 21) viewed short-term programs as a priority or high priority for the state to develop.
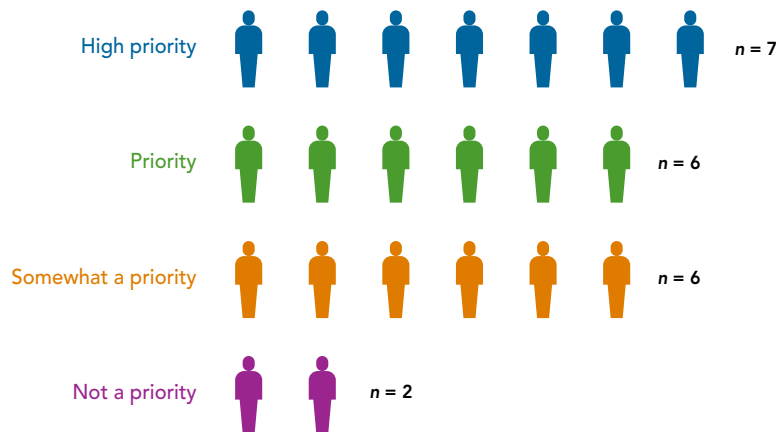
Figure 9. State leaders' perceptions of the priority of developing new and sustaining current short-term programs.

N = 21.

State respondents reported using several criteria to approve short-term programs, but alignment to in-demand occupational sector was by far the most frequently applied criteria, which 16 of 20 respondents used (Figure 10).
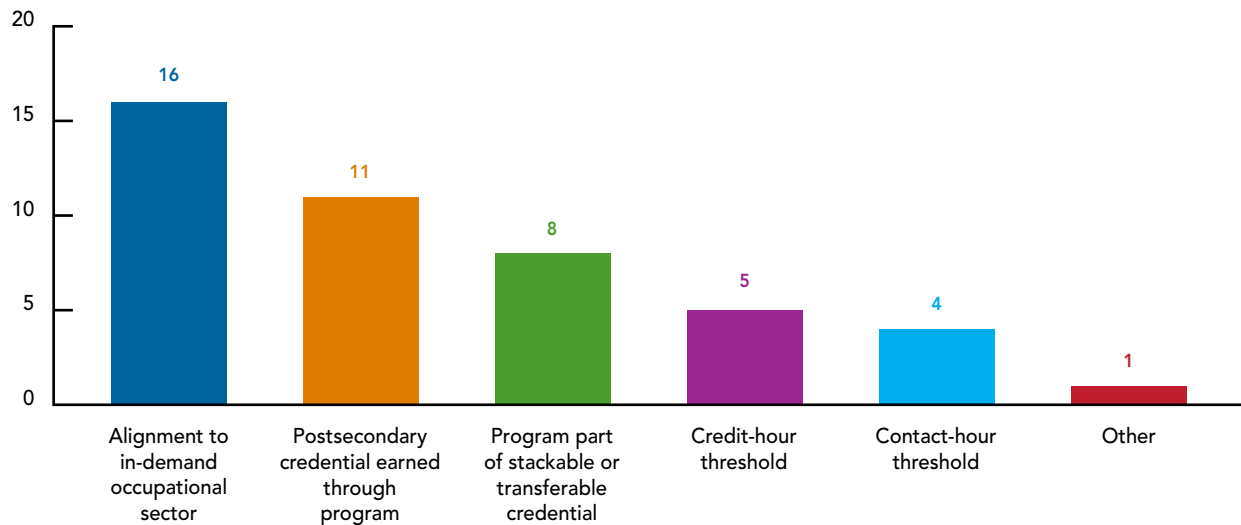
Figure 10. Criteria used to approve short-term programs.

N = 20.

The surveys asked institutional respondents whether their institutions would shorten existing Title IV programs if the HEA made those programs eligible for federal aid. Of the 40 institutions, 12 replied yes, while 20 indicated they would not shorten programs, and eight did not respond.

Of the 20 who replied they would not shorten their programs, 18 provided their reasons, typically citing existing state, industry, or academic standards (Figure 11). Those who cited state standards or requirements noted that state boards or accreditation standards typically define the hours in their program length. Among academic requirements are programs serving as preparation for associate degrees.

Respondents also offered these additional comments:

• "Aid eligibility is not the primary driver of the program design and approval process."

• "If shortened too much, the integrity of the education could become questionable."

• Due to "state requirements for minimum numbers of credit hours … may consider creating 'new' certificates that would meet the requirements for a short-term program."

• "The program length is necessary for the content."

Among respondents whose institutions would **not** shorten programs:

5 of 18
referenced **industry** standards or requirements

5 of 18
referenced **academic** standards or requirements

9 of 18
referenced **state** standards or requirements
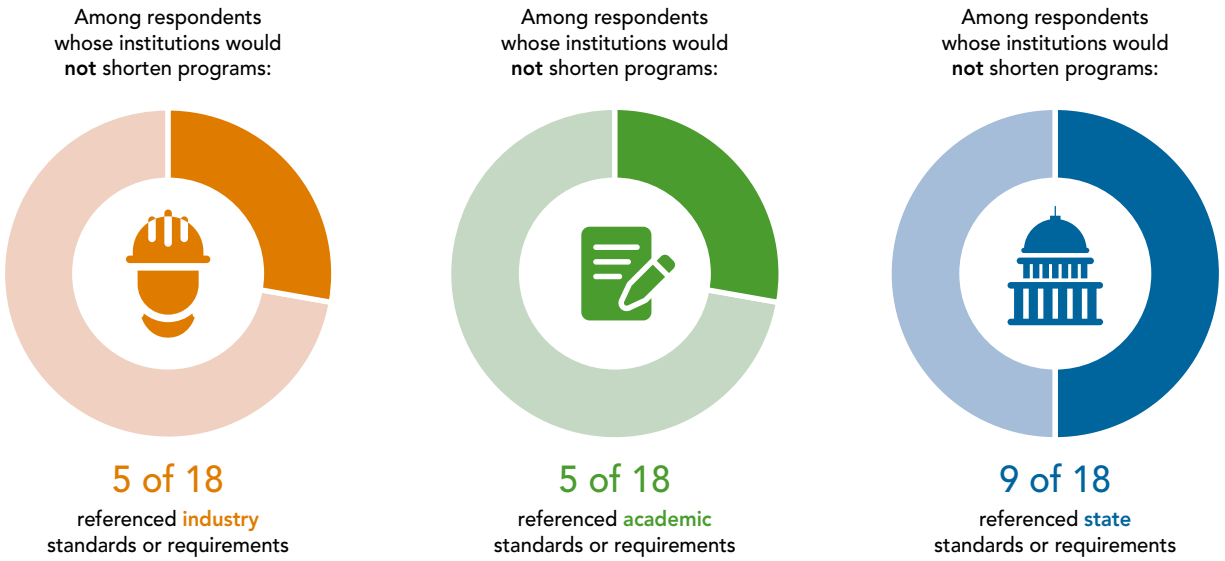
Figure 11. Reasons cited by institutions for why their states would not shorten programs.

Note that four respondents cited "other requirements." Respondents could indicate multiple reasons for not shortening programs.
N = 18.

Nineteen out of 21 respondents agreed that their state would offer more short-term programs if learners were eligible for the Pell Grant, specifically. However, the majority also agreed that if other Title IV student aid, employer financial aid, or state financial aid were available, their state would offer more short-term programs (Figure 12).

	Value
Pell Grants	19
Any type of Title IV federal aid	16
Employer financial aid	12
State financial aid	11
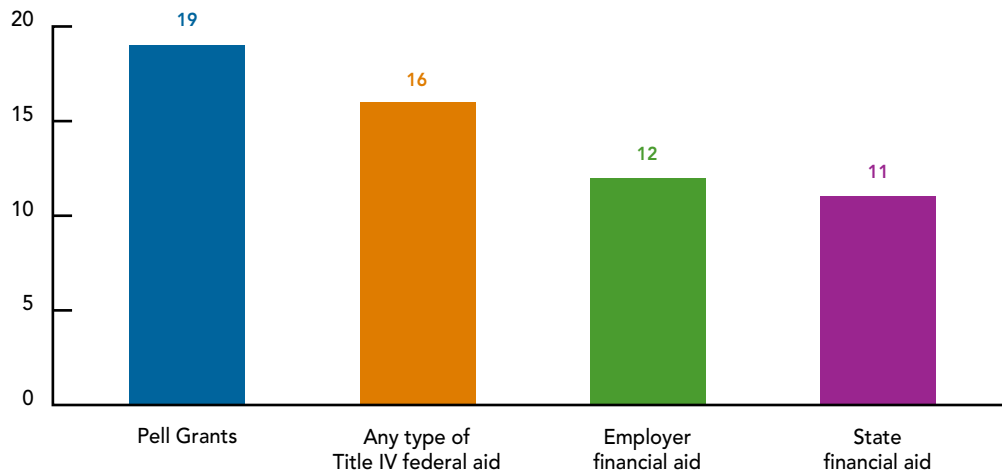
Figure 12. Institutions' perceptions of which financial assistance would encourage their state to offer more short-term programs.

N = 21.

Online Survey Summary

Survey findings reveal insights into short-term program structures and characteristics. Institutions that responded to the survey, most of which were community colleges, offer an average of 20 short-term programs each. Nearly all institutions offer short-term programs using in-classroom instruction, while half offer programs online, and 10 offer competency-based programs. Just over half of programs (55%) offered by institutional survey respondents are WIOA-eligible. Other funding sources include institutional foundations, limited state/institutional scholarships, and veterans waivers.

Over half of institutional survey respondents offer short-term programs for credit, while 41% do not. The majority of states report awarding industry certifications or occupational licensures for short-term program completion. The majority of institutional respondents (24 of 39) report offering stackable short-term programs that are transferable to longer-term degrees.

Findings From In-Person Focus Groups

This section highlights the major findings from two focus groups conducted among ACTE's membership of career and technical education professionals during the association's annual meeting in December 2019. More information on recruitment for these focus groups appears in the Methodology section, and focus group protocols appear in Appendix C.

Program Definition and Descriptions

For the most part, participants agreed with the short-term program definition provided by the facilitators at the beginning of the focus group meetings (i.e., 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours and less than 15 weeks of instruction), with some institutions noting they offer 16-week programs.

When asked to describe short-term programs at their institution (i.e., types of credentials, students, outcomes, data, credit), focus group participants mentioned several occupational short-term certificates across various industries, such as manufacturing, electrical, truck driving, automotive repair, teacher preparation, computer, EMT, nursing, and culinary arts.

While not all participants knew or specified the number of certificate programs at their institution, one noted having five short-term programs, while another reported more than 30, indicating a wide range between institutions. Some noted having fewer stand-alone, short-term certificates than short-term programs embedded in larger degrees (see "Embedded/Stackable Credentials," below).

Program Details

Short-term program development, enrollment issues, outcome challenges, different student populations, and program data collection emerged as common themes in the focus groups.

Short-Term Program Development

Short-term programs are largely designed to meet industry needs and train individuals with specific skill sets to be ready for the workforce quickly. One institution changed an automotive program from 1800 hours of automotive service technology to 600 hours of "light maintenance and auto repair" because "our students and our community want to get to the workforce faster, so the ability to have more short-term training [by] removing barriers to get adults into those training programs is going to be very important for us."

Certificate programs must often meet state approval requirements. For example, one participant mentioned needing to show industry demand to obtain state approval for each program. However, another participant noted that state board approval is only required in their state for certificates over 30 credits.

Enrollment Issues

Colleges reported mixed experiences filling various short-term programs. A community college representative noted that some short-term certificates for in-demand skills, such as computer repair, have had lower enrollments than in the past, and the institution is deciding whether to continue these offerings. Another college offers short-term programs, such as commercial driving, based on need, but many prospective students cannot afford to enroll.

Health-related programs seem to do better at enrolling students. At one college, a nursing certificate in an early college program is so popular among students and in so much demand, the institution "can't keep enough teachers employed to get all of the students through." One community college's most popular certificate program, EMT, attracts a "couple hundred students per year" and is one of the larger programs at the institution.

Outcome Challenges

Not only enrolling, but also completing a program once enrolled, presents challenges for many students due to costs. One community college hired a coordinator under the Perkins Act to help increase program completion by meeting one-on-one with students to learn more about their needs. Several participants noted that placing certificate completers into jobs is not difficult due to employer partnerships. However, in some cases employers hire students with less than one semester of training, which negatively affects completion rates. For example, one college's EMT program prepares its graduates for state exams and is embedded in a longer paramedic program. Some students just want to stay for one term, or 15 credits, to prepare for an EMT job and therefore are counted as non-completers.

Student Populations

Several colleges indicated their short-term programs serve primarily dual-enrollment high school students rather than adult students—even though the skills are in demand—because of lack of funding. Adult students are more likely to enroll in Pell-eligible programs of over 600 hours. They struggle to pay not only tuition, but also fees, transportation, and tools, which can add up to several thousand dollars. One participant remarked that adults interested in nursing who cannot afford programs at the college are instead "going into one-day, backroom programs." In some cases, employers help pay these costs.

Within the adult population, institutional respondents mentioned a number of groups they could serve more effectively if more resources were available for short-term programs:

- **International learners.** Some of the colleges noted international adult learners as an ideal population for short-term certificates, since international degrees often do not transfer to the United States, leaving these students in need of retooling for the job market.

- **Homeless/housing insecure individuals.** Colleges would like to see short-term programs funded to help make career-focused more accessible to homeless individuals who cannot otherwise afford to enroll.

- **Women/single parents.** Colleges would like to serve more women, particularly those interested in entering male-dominated career fields. Women often cannot complete programs due to being the primary caretaker for their families and having other home responsibilities. One college noted it is "trying to find a support system to help them with daycare."

- **Low-income individuals.** Participants cited the benefits of short-term programs, particularly for low-income individuals. "Short-term training programs are the ones that we can target more to that population that gets their foot in the door, that gets them some confidence ... and then from my experience at our school is that gets them into the job market."

- **Mid-level employees.** One participant noted a need for colleges to focus on recruiting mid-level, not just entry-level, employees. "Having different credentialing options for people as they are continuing their education throughout their careers ... law enforcement, for example, there are certain benchmarks, standards that you have to meet in order to advance to become a sergeant, a chief of police. We could offer those and make it so that you have this on-ramp."

In addition to these populations, people coming out of incarceration and displaced workers from fields currently experiencing layoffs, such as the oil and hospitality industries, could benefit from short-term programs.

Program Data Collection

The majority of participants collect some type of short-term program data, although not all participants specified the level or details of data they collect. Those who did specify noted the following metrics and challenges:

- **Education and workforce outcomes.** Several colleges track completion and placement data, as well as other outcomes such as licensure, typically through their institutional research (IR) department. Colleges must track outcomes because, as one respondent explained, "If we're not meeting those standards, we have to obviously close the program for accreditation." Within each department, program administrators may contact individual students to find out if they are working in the industry or enrolled in a degree program.

- **Certification attainment.** Other institutions noted challenges in tracking some metrics, such as the results of certification exams, due to privacy issues. One respondent noted, "We only get the results of those certification exams students are willing to tell us about because we are not paying for those exams; therefore, we don't own that information. And usually, students that report back whether they pass or fail are those who pass."

- **Financial indicators.** Some colleges take deeper dives into available data. One representative looked at the willingness to take on debt by student characteristics, such as parent education level and race/ethnicity, and found students may not take on the longer (16+ week) programs because of debt aversion.

- **Longer-term indicators.** Using IR data, another representative found that students often get industry jobs directly following certificate completion, but they eventually re-enroll "because employers are paying for them to get their associate degree."

The Impact of Federal Student Aid on Short-Term Program Offerings

The majority of focus group participants expressed enthusiasm about the possibility of offering federal financial aid to students in short-term certificate programs. One participant said the idea of getting some short-term programs to qualify for financial aid would be "huge," as the college "could offer that much more."

Another agreed this funding would make a big difference, particularly for 300-hour programs such as Plumbing 1, which the school has been unable to fill despite high demand due to costs to students. Truck driving is another program that students don't pursue due to lack of funds. The participant explained, "Truck driving, this is a one-term, very short-term program, which we have been dying to get financial aid for" because many prospective students "can't afford the program but it is a wonderful pathway to careers."

In addition, a participant noted that college presidents are "reluctant to build ... certificate options that aren't financial-aid eligible." Students "get frustrated because they are going through longer-term programs than they probably want to, and then when they get that entry-level job, they are now required to pay more money back than they probably should." One participant noted that their institution had broken out certificate programs into basic, intermediate, and advanced levels, and being able to fund them individually would be ideal "for those students who can't necessarily afford the entire program."

A few institutional participants, however, are not interested in federal financial aid. One would rather rely on the institutional foundation and "...eliminate federal financial aid because of the restrictions that places on us. Because, we're competency based, and so, it is very frustrating where students want to get through the content really quickly but yet seat time is what matters if they are on financial aid." Another college noted all of its adult programs are taxpayer funded and "financially self-sufficient."

Even for longer-term programs, federal financial aid eligibility can be difficult to establish. One EMT program, while not technically a short-term program at 20 credit hours, is facing "some challenges with trying to get students financial aid eligibility."

When asked if their institution would shorten any programs if federal financial aid were available for short-term programs, some participants reported they would review the offerings and attempt to shorten programs where possible, but only when shorter programs would still meet industry needs. One respondent said they "wouldn't be interested in shortening them because our programs are based on our local industry needs and they helped us set the curriculum and the hours that are tied to those industry credentials. What we'd look at is modularizing some of those longer-term programs."

Some colleges have developed programs around Pell eligibility, however. One participant noted having "inflated [programs] to some degree" to be financial aid eligible. Another community college built its nail technician certificate program at 16 credit hours so that it could qualify for financial aid.

Focus group participants indicated that students, too, have found ways around the Title IV minimum program length rules for short-term programs by enrolling in longer programs and dropping out once they have completed the courses they wanted to take. This negatively impacts the institution's completion outcomes.

One participant cited a welding program as an example of a program they would shorten. At its current length of 1,050 hours, students—and particularly working adults with families—find the program difficult to complete. The participant explained that shorter, "stackable credentials [for example] Welding 1 and Welding 2, would allow us opportunity to get more people into the workforce … and then developing more of the short-term programs. Right now, I am very hesitant to start because of the stress it puts us under trying to find money to pay for them."

Other than making programs shorter, participants would restructure by increasing the number of offerings and offering the programs at various times throughout the day and year. Financial aid would also allow industry partners "to fund students they can't now because they are funding all these others."

Other Types of Financial Aid

In addition to employer funding, colleges fund short-term programs through institutional foundations, limited state and institutional scholarship funds, local workforce boards, WIOA funds for displaced workers, and tuition waivers for veterans. Some states have special scholarships for short-term certificates, such as The Ohio Means Jobs scholarship and a grant for the fire fighting program in another state.

While most institutional grants do not cover the full program cost (as one participant described it, institutional grants are "not as expansive or comprehensive as federal financial aid"), they are often used strategically or on a case-by-case basis. One institution noted using funds to help students complete if "they may be one or two classes short," rather than "send students out ... without the package deal." Another college's foundation covers two test fees for every student, which has been helpful.

Aligning Short-Term Programs to the Local Economy

Institutions' programs typically must go through a program approval process, advisory committee, and/or workforce board to be offered. Advisory committees typically have representatives of different employers and industries who also often provide adjunct instructors. One institution mentioned having a workforce alignment team. Institutions take into consideration industry and skill demand, job wages, and instructor availability to ensure their new programs fill a need. One institution noted that programs sometimes begin as customized training programs for new employees.

Employer Collaboration

Colleges often cannot offer short-term certificate programs, even those that provide training for in-demand skills, because of gaps in funding. Many turn to employer partners to help offer these programs. For example, one community college facing difficulty filling a commercial driving program because students cannot afford it is looking to employers for supplemental funding.

Employer support can come not only in the form of funding but also equipment, tools, and connections to other funding sources. For example, one participant's college worked with its employer partners in construction to secure funding through trade boards. In addition, focus group participants explained that employers often guarantee interviews for students who complete a program they developed in partnership with the college.

Focus group members suggested that colleges often develop these employer programs as non-credit, because doing so is "easier, faster, and they don't have that fear that ... financial aid is going to be a sticking point." Employers typically need these programs developed quickly, which the colleges say is "not a sustainable model." They would much prefer to fund the programs through federal aid. One respondent explained, "employer-to-college agreements [are] short term, fix the immediate need, but ... moving the needle on the financial aid eligibility is really more about a systemic change."

Several colleges noted that, while they recognize the benefits of employer partnerships, losing students to employers also raises concerns:

• One college has agreements with employers "to not take our students," but to hire them on a part-time basis only.

• A community college requires that employer partners—particularly those in manual labor fields—let students work part time so they are not exhausted for classes at night after a day of work. The participant explained, "If you encourage this person to quit school and come to work for you 40, 50, 60 hours a week, I'm not going to let you back in the door ... if you want to continue the pipeline for potential new entry-level employees, then work with us. You know, even put them to work part time until they finish."

• Others agreed that the "top students in the program, a lot of times, they get recruited" and "never come back."

• In one case, an aerospace employer sends their new hires from the certificate program back to the college to further their postsecondary education in engineering. Although the employer pays for this additional education, the representative noted that the employer does not give employees time off to take the additional coursework, and therefore students do not always follow through. This often results in the employer recruiting engineers from out of state.

Developing relationships with employers can be time consuming, and one college recently added an industry and outreach coordinator to take on this responsibility.

Connecting Short-Term Programs to Longer-Term Certificates or Degrees

Many of the participants' short-term certificates are embedded in degree programs or considered to be "stackable" credentials that feed into associate degree programs or above. The following examples illustrate how these connections between short- and long-term programs work for participants in our focus group:

- One college embeds its EMT program into a longer-term paramedic program. Students who only complete one term (15 credits) to become an EMT are counted as non-completers.

- At another institution, a biotechnician assistant credentialing exam articulates into two-year biotechnician programs. The institution also offers courses of varying lengths, some as short as two credit hours, which can be combined to meet the industry's changing needs.

- One institution offers teacher certification at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, typically appealing to career changers from other industries. Most students, however, matriculate to a full-degree program rather than just complete the short-term certificate (the certificate feeds into associate, bachelor's, and master's degree programs).

According to one institutional respondent, in addition to stackable credentials, colleges can ensure that students continue beyond certificates through "purposeful advising so students know how to get where they want to go." Another representative concurred about the use of purposeful advising to help guide students to immediate employment and apprenticeship opportunities, but also felt it could make students aware of longer-term pathways: "We show them the pathway before they leave, they understand that these [programs] are waiting for them, we actually register them, we show them the process so it is not overwhelming for them."

Offering stackable credentials presents some challenges, however. One participant noted that it can be difficult to find equivalent courses to apply toward an associate degree and get "accreditors to value a non-credit short-term program as equivalent to university work taught by PhD faculty."

Focus Groups Summary

Overall, the institutional respondents in the two focus groups at the ACTE meeting reported enthusiasm for short-term programs but noted funding challenges associated with offering programs that are not eligible for Title IV aid. These challenges particularly involved adult students and costs beyond tuition and fees, such as transportation and tools. While some participants expressed interest in the possibility of offering Title IV aid for short-term programs, others also noted that their institutions have found ways to do so already, either by embedding shorter programs into longer ones or by intentionally creating programs that meet the minimum requirements for Title IV eligibility, even though these programs could be shorter.

These conversations suggest that extending Title IV aid for short-term programs could increase access to such programs, potentially resolve high dropout rates from longer programs by allowing students to enroll in the shorter programs they desired in the first place, and even result in some artificially long short-term programs being shortened, reducing the cost of such programs.

Findings From Phone Interviews

This section highlights the major findings from phone interviews conducted with Advance CTE membership in winter 2019. Advance CTE interviewed nine state CTE directors to learn more about the national landscape of short-term programs. More information on participant recruitment appears in the Methodology section, and survey protocols appear in Appendix D.

Each of the state directors interviewed shared that their state is exploring high-quality, short-term programs and stressed the need for a clear understanding of the benefits and potential risks of short-term programs. However, they also discussed variation in what these programs might look like across states and how each state is supporting program development and implementation.

Several common themes that emerged during the interviews—such as data collection and the role of industry in short-term programs—brought promising practices and challenges to the forefront. State leaders often mentioned seeing an increased interest in short-term programs and suggested they expect this trend to continue.

Inconsistent Definitions of "Short-Term Program"

Responses given during the phone interviews with CTE directors made it evident that states typically do not have a formalized definition of what a short-term program entails. Although program providers may share a general understanding, often neither the state nor the postsecondary system has a specific policy defining these programs.

Even among those states with a formal definition, that definition is inconsistent across states. A sampling of definitions used by different states includes the following:

• A non-degree certificate program not eligible for financial aid

• A program of less than 16 credit hours that results in an industry-recognized credential

• A program of less than 15 weeks of instruction and 600 clock hours

• Anything under a degree level

• Informally understood as less than 900 clock hours and 30 credit hours

Rather than formalized definitions, institutions often operate on an informal, system-wide understanding.

State interviewees often explained that short-term programs are part of lifelong learning and not the final destination in college or career. Some felt a formalized definition would help communicate this goal and create consistency in defining what a high-quality program includes.

Scarce Data Inhibit Program Development

For the most part, data collection is inconsistent across states. While a few states have robust enrollment and outcomes data systems, most do not. A common message that came up in interviews is that state leaders would like to collect more data that is better validated, but they do not have a good mechanism to do so. Enrollment data are more commonly collected than outcomes data; however, collection methods for enrollment vary widely—sometimes even within a state system.

For example, in one state, short-term program enrollment information may be collected via students physically signing into an attendance list in the classroom or through an integrated platform the school uses to keep track of noncredit courses. Since the state does not fund the majority of programs, it also cannot track the data for most of the programs. So, although nearly every public college in the state offers a noncredit, short-term program, information on these programs is missing. State and local leaders alike acknowledge this deficiency, according to the interviewee.

Another state's community and technical college system collects disaggregated student enrollment data for non-credit programs that are part of a degree path. Non-credit programs that are not part of a degree path do not have the same reporting requirements, however. While administrators attempt to utilize a similar collection method for all programs, the challenge is that these methods are not requirement driven. This state's system is unique in that it collects outcomes data, including completion, certification, and wages if that information is available.

One state's community and technical college system developed its own student data system that attempts to collect full outcome data. The need to report back to the state and meet accreditation requirements drove the development of this system. The state's system of higher education operates separately from its community and technical college system, enabling it to collect and report enrollment data. In addition, the state higher education system annually publishes a CTE report that includes outcomes data as available.

However, a variety of roadblocks have made the collection of enrollment and outcomes data challenging or impossible for many states. The interviews demonstrated a common desire for high-quality data for short-term programs, which would allow administrators to improve delivery, meet the needs of students and the community, and clearly communicate the impact of short-term programs. There are various barriers to doing so, though. In some instances, the short-term program is not only defined differently than a traditional program, but also viewed in a different light. This can mean the data mechanisms used for a traditional postsecondary program do not include short-term enrollments in the count.

The Critical Role of Industry

The business sector represents one of the most significant driving forces behind short-term program development in all states. Industry representatives commonly approach state and local leaders to seek opportunities to either upskill current employees or create a pipeline for new ones. These partners then work with faculty and administrators to ensure that short-term programs provide employees with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Such partnerships also create a path to employment upon program completion.

State Funding Can Support or Obstruct Program Implementation

It is clear that no consistent avenue across the country allows for allocation of state funding to short-term programs. While some states provide some sort of funding, others offer none. In most cases, at least a partial financial burden therefore falls on the participating learner. For example, in some states, funding for these programs largely comes from businesses investing in a particular program or student, and students must pay the remaining costs out of pocket. As mentioned by institutions during the focus groups, phone interviews with state leaders indicated that, in some cases, a formalized state definition of a short-term program affects whether states are able to provide funding.

One interviewee described a number of statewide regulations regarding student aid and wraparound supports, which means the state has mechanisms in place to allocate funding to some, but not all, short-term programs. The state invests in dislocated workers through an entirely state-funded program provided via the state's General Fund. These state funds can assist students enrolled in a short-term program provided that program is part of the host college's retraining plan. The college must apply to the state board to approve the attached credential for the program list. The institution can use funding through this program for financial aid to students and for program development.

Another state created a statewide initiative in response to the skills shortage problem. In each of the state's 23 community colleges, it offers short-term programs that align with in-demand occupations and result in a credential. The state legislature has funded operation of this initiative since 2017 and uses a pay-for-performance funding model. At the start, the student pays for one third of the program cost using any source of funding (e.g., employer reimbursement, financial aid, or personal funds). If the student completes the program, the state then pays the hosting college one-third of the program cost; students who do not complete the program are responsible to pay that additional third. If the student attains the workforce credential after program completion, the college then receives the last third of the institutional program cost from the state initiative.

In another state, in order for the state higher education board to approve a short-term program, the program must meet the statewide definition of 16 credit hours, include an industry-recognized credential, and be part of a stackable credential path, when possible. If a program does not meet those criteria, it cannot receive state funding.

In yet another example, the state's funding formula includes certificates that are equated to academic credit but excludes short-term programs that do not earn academic credit. This means that, in general, only tuition and additional fees fund non-credit, short-term programs. Some funding available at the system level can reduce the student's financial burden, and at times an industry partner supplements some fees or even pays the entire cost for upskilling an employee.

Interviewees agreed unanimously, across statements, that federal funding for short-term programs would increase access.

Phone Interview Summary

State phone interview participants generally agreed that short-term programs will continue to gain traction from state leaders and be sought by students and industry. Interviewees see adults in particular gravitating toward these programs, and as the idea of a traditional postsecondary student shifts, the traditional postsecondary experience must also be flexible.

Implementation of a high-quality, short-term program requires cohesive efforts among federal, state, local and industry representatives. Common across the state interviews, interviewees expressed the sentiment that opening federal financial aid to short-term programs would allow more students to enroll in these programs, supported by mechanisms designed to ensure the programs benefit participants and operate consistently.

Findings From Program-Level Data Collection

This section highlights a program-level collection of data conducted with ACTE's career and technical education professional members and the state CTE directors of Advance CTE's membership during winter 2020 to supplement the data collected in the initial survey. NASFAA analyzed the collected program-level data. More information on participant recruitment appears in the Methodology section, and data collection protocols appear in Appendix E and F. As mentioned in the Methodology section, the data collection comprised 629 individual programs. Once cleaned and combined, the results include program-level data for 13 different CIP codes for 95 programs.[54] Appendix G includes a full definition for each CIP code.

While the data from this collection give some insight into the composition and outcomes of these programs, NASFAA cautions readers to keep in mind that these findings may not be nationally representative due to the small sample size at the institution level and because this is a convenience sample of institutions and states. Also, readers should note that these represent self-reported data; different institutions may have used different measurement approaches in reporting data in some categories.

Comparison of Selected Program Characteristics Across CIP Codes

As seen in Table 5, programs in the sample ranged from 1 to 16 credit hours and from 75 to 220 clock hours. Institutions measured most, but not all, programs in both clock and credit hours.

Table 5: Average Program Length, by CIP Code

| CIP code and program title | Program length | | | |
| | Credits | | Clock hours | |
	n	Average	n	Average
11.0901: Computer systems networking and telecommunications	5	1	8	88
12.04: Cosmetology and related personal grooming services	1	9	1	200
15.0613: Manufacturing technology/technician	1	16	1	120
43.0203: Fire science/fire fighting	-	-	2	122
47.0303: Industrial mechanics and maintenance technology	1	15	4	144
47.06: Vehicle maintenance and repair technologies	2	11	-	-
48.05: Precision metal working	5	3	1	150
49.0205: Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operation	3	4	-	-
51.0911: Radiologic technology/science - radiographer	2	10	3	76
51.10: Clinical/medical laboratory science and allied professions	2	4	1	75
51.26: Health aides/attendants/orderlies	4	1	-	-
51.39: Practical nursing, vocational nursing and nursing assistants	4	1	1	80
52.04: Business operations support and assistant services	1	14	1	220

[54] Since some data were shared at the aggregated state level, the total number of institutions in this data set cannot be determined.

In all but four programs, the majority of students enrolled were aged 25 and over (Table 6). The exceptions were vehicle maintenance and repair technologies, where the majority were aged 18-24, and radiologic technology/science, clinical/medical laboratory science, and practical nursing, where the majority were either aged 18-24 or unknown.

Table 6: Average Age of Enrolled Students, by CIP Code

| CIP code and program title | n | Age of enrolled students in years | | | |
		Unknown	Under 18	18-24	25 and over
11.0901: Computer systems networking and telecommunications	9	18%	0%	33%	55%
12.04: Cosmetology and related personal grooming services	2	-	5%	18%	77%
15.0613: Manufacturing technology/technician	1	-	0%	27%	73%
43.0203: Fire science/fire fighting	2	-	0%	47%	53%
47.0303: Industrial mechanics and maintenance technology	3	-	0%	48%	52%
47.06: Vehicle maintenance and repair technologies	3	0%	0%	76%	24%
48.05: Precision metal working	5	38%	0%	9%	60%
49.0205: Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operation	3	13%	1%	19%	75%
51.0911: Radiologic technology/science - radiographer	3	40%	5%	52%	29%
51.10: Clinical/medical laboratory science and allied professions	3	25%	4%	41%	47%
51.26: Health aides/attendants/orderlies	4	31%	0%	18%	51%
51.39: Practical nursing, vocational nursing and nursing assistants	5	34%	7%	41%	31%
52.04: Business operations support and assistant services	2	-	0%	0%	100%

As shown in Table 7, reported program completion rates ranged from 61% to 100%, and job placement rates ranged from 32% to 100%. Caution should be used in interpreting these rates, however, as the number of students in each institution's reported outcome metrics is unknown and may be less than 10.[55]

[55] Institutions were instructed to provide a description of completion rate calculations and use the WIOA definition for job placement.

Table 7: Average Student Completion and Placement Rates, by CIP Code

CIP code and program title	Completion rate		Job placement rate	
	n	Average	*n*	Average
11.0901: Computer systems networking and telecommunications	9	94%	2	75%
12.04: Cosmetology and related personal grooming services	3	85%	3	67%
15.0613: Manufacturing technology/technician	3	61%	1	94%
43.0203: Fire science/fire fighting	3	88%	2	100%
47.0303: Industrial mechanics and maintenance technology	5	94%	2	100%
47.06: Vehicle maintenance and repair technologies	5	66%	-	-
48.05: Precision metal working	9	84%	2	75%
49.0205: Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operation	5	83%	2	87%
51.0911: Radiologic technology/science - radiographer	6	83%	3	88%
51.10: Clinical/medical laboratory science and allied professions	7	90%	3	72%
51.26: Health aides/attendants/orderlies	7	80%	2	32%
51.39: Practical nursing, vocational nursing and nursing assistants	10	86%	3	73%
52.04: Business operations support and assistant services	3	100%	2	100%

Table 8 compares the number of students enrolled with the number who graduated. The programs in this sample enrolled between nine and 5,827 students in 2018-19 and graduated between nine and 393 students in the same year.

Table 8: Total Number of Students Enrolled and Graduated, by CIP Code

CIP code and program title	Student enrollment		Number of graduates	
	n	Total	*n*	Total
11.0901: Computer systems networking and telecommunications	9	9	-	-
12.04: Cosmetology and related personal grooming services	3	45	-	-
15.0613: Manufacturing technology/technician	4	199	1	10
43.0203: Fire science/fire fighting	3	63	1	9
47.0303: Industrial mechanics and maintenance technology	7	59	2	22
47.06: Vehicle maintenance and repair technologies	4	47	2	30
48.05: Precision metal working	5	67	3	49
49.0205: Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operation	4	536	1	254
51.0911: Radiologic technology/science - radiographer	7	454	2	113
51.10: Clinical/medical laboratory science and allied professions	5	219	3	71
51.26: Health aides/attendants/orderlies	3	1,374	-	-
51.39: Practical nursing, vocational nursing and nursing assistants	7	5,827	3	393
52.04: Business operations support and assistant services	3	32	1	13

Data Collection Summary

Only two of the 95 short-term programs whose data we were able to collect offered the minimum credit or clock hours to meet the criteria for any of the proposed legislation extending Pell Grants to short-term programs. The remainder of the programs would not receive Title IV funding even under the proposal with the lowest number of minimum clock/credit hours, i.e., 150 hours offered over at least eight weeks.

Of the 8,931 students represented in our collected data, 65% were enrolled in the practical nursing, vocational nursing, and nursing assistant field; when expanded to include all health science fields, that percentage increased to 88%. This aligns with national data for certificates of less than one year, where healthcare is also the largest certificate field.[56]

The top three fields represented in terms of total student enrollments were (a) nursing assistant, (b) health aide, and (c) truck driving. These are nearly the same as the top three less-than-one-year certificates awarded nationally (with health aides substituting for medical assistants), which could indicate that using national data currently available on less-than-one-year certificates may be a good proxy for data on short-term programs.

Programs of less than 600 clock hours or 16 credits and 15 weeks had, not surprisingly, significantly lower tuition and fees costs than the national average costs for all programs at two-year institutions. Focus group members noted conversations about short-term programs often overlook the cost of tools. From the data we collected, the cosmetology/personal grooming, manufacturing technology, vehicle maintenance and repair, and business operations support and assistant services fields had the highest costs of books and supplies (where the cost of tools would be accounted for).

While most of these costs align with trades requiring specialized tools, the high cost of books and supplies for business operations support and administrative services seemed somewhat surprising. This cost could represent books rather than tools, given the field of study; however, another possible explanation for the high cost could be the purchase of hardware or software. Focus group participants noted that not all funding sources for short-term programs cover costs beyond tuition; these data confirm that the non-tuition costs for certain programs can be significant.

Average completion rates for short-term programs ranged from 61%. Average job placement ranged from 35% to 100%,[57] but it is difficult to draw conclusions from job placement averages alone. For example, low job placement rates might occur in a program designed as a stepping-stone to further education. In that case, low rates would be acceptable provided the rates were high when combined with the rates for students pursuing additional postsecondary education. However, another possible explanation might be that students pursue postsecondary education after completing a short-term program because they were unable to find employment after finishing the program.

These factors make it critical to track students' intention upon enrollment—for example, to increase job opportunities/wages, enroll in further postsecondary education, or personal enrichment—along with student outcomes to provide context for success and help determine programs' financial aid eligibility. This is true not just for short-term programs but for all postsecondary programs.

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[56] Carnevale, A. P., Jayasundera, T., Hanson, A. R. (2012, September). *Career and technical education: Five ways that pay along the way to the B.A.* https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CTE.FiveWays.FullReport.pdf

[57] Caution should be used in interpreting these outcomes, as they are self-reported by institutions, may have inconsistent cohorts or definitions, and in some cases represent less than 10 students.

Overall Findings

Need for Short-Term Program Data

Our study found no comprehensive statewide or national databases for short-term programs, defined as less than 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours and offered over less than 15 weeks of instruction. National data exists for the broader group of less than one-year programs, but those data include Pell-eligible programs and typically do not provide information about student-level outcomes.

While institutions, particularly in the focus groups, shared that they collect and use various data, collecting and reporting these data uniformly to a central, publicly available database at the state or federal level could help improve program delivery, better meet the needs of students and communities, clearly communicate the impact of short-term programs, ensure accountability, and inform decisions about related policies such as Pell Grant eligibility.

In addition to the lack of a central database and varying definitions and data availability across state entities, some short-term program outcomes, such as certification exams conducted by an independent entity outside the institution, are difficult to track. While some state data exist, there is a lack of consistent definitions across states. For instance, some states define short-term programs as non-degree/less than a degree or non-financial aid-eligible and others by program length (either credit hours, weeks, clock hours, or less than one year).

What We Know About Short-Term Programs

Through our surveys, interviews, and data collection, we identified the following information about short-term program offerings, development, funding, student enrollment and outcomes, and state policies.

Program Offerings

Of 27 states reporting, nearly all (25) offer short-term programs. The remaining two states cited state policy and lack of federal financial aid as barriers to offering short-term programs. However, their state and local economies and adult learners would benefit from such programs.

Of 232 initial institutional survey respondents, 70 offer short-term programs. The 40 institutions that responded to survey questions providing data about their programs offer an average of 20 short-term programs each. It is important to note that 37 of the survey respondents included in the analysis[58] that offer short-term programs are community colleges. This differs from national data on the large number of for-profit institutions offering short term programs due to the membership of ACTE. Nearly all surveyed institutions with short-term programs offer these programs in the classroom, while half offer programs online, and 10 offer competency-based programs.

Nationally, the most commonly awarded less-than-one-year certificates are nursing, medical fields, truck driving/operations, EMT, and auto mechanics/technology.[59] In this sample (representing approximately 232 unique institutions[60] and 27 states), short-term programs range from 1 to 16 credits, with only two of these programs meeting the minimum length required by Pell Grant expansion proposals. Tuition and fees reported by institutions and states range from $106 to $3,294, and books and supplies range from $34 to $785.

The majority of states reported awarding industry certifications or occupational licenses for short-term program completion. Over half of institutional survey respondents offer short-term programs for credit, while 41% do not. Only 16 of 40 institutional respondents award certificates for short-term program completion; of those, only half (8) are for credit. While not all programs were offered on the "for-credit" side of the institutions, the majority of respondents reported offering stackable short-term programs that are transferable to longer-term degrees. However, focus group participants shared that the credits from these programs do not always transfer to other institutions; accreditors do not always value short-term programs.

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[58] Survey respondents included in the analysis provided institutional-level data (see Methodology).

[59] Miller, A., Erwin M, Richardson, S., Arntz, M. (2016). *Collecting and disseminating certificate awards.* https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/NPEC/data/NPEC_ Paper_IPEDS_Collecting_and_Disseminating_Certificate_Awards_2016.pdf

[60] This number represented the number of distinct, identifiable institutions based on respondent's identification of the institution. Some institutions (approximately five) had multiple respondents. We left all responses in the sample.

Program Development
Short-term programs are designed to meet industry needs, and many institutions collaborate with employers to develop these programs. Programs must also meet state requirements, including documented industry demand. Many programs developed with employers are non-credit, and some are developed quickly, leaving some institutions feeling this model is not sustainable because these certificates may not be transferable to other employers.

Program Funding
Just over half of programs (55%) offered by institutional survey respondents are WIOA eligible. Other funding sources include institutional foundations, limited state/institutional scholarships, and veteran waivers. Our data collection analysis revealed that nearly all programs rely on private funding and self-pay, the majority also receive state funds, and few receive institutional funds. Programs are not typically covered in full, and students must pay the remaining costs. Some states have developed special scholarship programs for short-term certificates.

Student Enrollment and Outcomes
Nationally, over half of students who earn certificates are adults over the age of 22 (56%).[61] State representatives reported that short-term programs most commonly enroll part-time adult learners seeking new skills to advance in their current careers or change to new careers.

Institutions often face insufficient enrollment in short-term programs because prospective students cannot afford the costs. In some cases, institutions serve more dual-enrollment high school students for this reason. The enrollment shortage can vary by field, with healthcare programs more likely to meet enrollment targets. Some institutions report that their adult students often enroll in programs of over 600 hours rather than in short-term programs because they do not have the resources to enroll without federal financial aid, which is currently only available to these longer programs.

Institutions would like to recruit more adult students to their short-term programs, especially those students in need of retooling for the workforce: displaced workers, international students, and single parents. Unfortunately, the programs' prohibitive costs and ineligibility for federal financial aid make it difficult for these students to enroll. Costs also make completing programs a challenge. Not only tuition and fees, but also books, supplies, and transportation can create financial barriers to program completion.

Nonetheless, analysis of the institutional survey data reveals the average completion rate for short-term programs is 78% for full-time students and 68% for part-time students. This is relatively high compared with national completion rates for community colleges. However, it should be noted that these figures represent 20 institutions' self-reported data as an average across all short-term programs at the institution. Focus group participants noted that, as institutions collaborate closely with employers on many short-term programs, students are sometimes recruited to work for the partner employers before they complete the program, which can negatively affect completion rates.

State Policies
Ninety percent (18 of 20) of state survey respondents report short-term programs as part of their statewide postsecondary attainment goals. The most common state criteria to approve short-term programs are alignment to in-demand occupations and credit-hour thresholds.

The majority of focus group participants feel that state and local leaders are interested in expanding short-term programs, but they noted these leaders do not always have concrete plans, policies, or programs to do so. Interviewees shared that state representatives need a better understanding of the benefits and potential risks of short-term programs.

Pell Effects
All but two state respondents would offer more short-term programs if they were made Pell-eligible, but most institutions stated that even if these programs became eligible for Pell, they could not reduce the length of many existing programs due to state, industry, and academic standards. State boards or accreditation standards typically establish the number of required hours, and respondents expressed concern about maintaining the integrity of existing programs.

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[61] Carnevale, A., Rose, S., & Hansen, A. (2012, June). *Certificates: Gateway to gainful employment and college degrees.* https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Certificates.FullReport.061812.pdf

Instead, extending Pell Grant eligibility could help already existing short-term programs reach more students, and new programs could be created or longer programs could be "chunked" into shorter segments with stackable credentials. The majority of focus group participants said Pell Grant availability would allow them to offer additional short-term programs (either new offerings or existing programs at additional dates and times), and some would break out existing offerings into smaller programs or skill sets.

In some cases, students currently enroll in longer programs than required for their desired employment so they can receive federal financial aid. Making Pell Grants available for shorter-term programs could potentially alleviate this issue. Federal student aid does not interest some focus group participants, however, because of the associated restrictions, or because their alternative structures, such as competency-based learning, do not align with the seat-time guidelines used for federal aid eligibility.

Conclusion

Institutional and legislative leaders have shown increasing interest in the accessibility of short-term programs to students in need of workforce training. In light of the coronavirus outbreak, with its economic effects and anticipated job layoffs, the spotlight will be on short-term programs once again to help displaced workers retool for new careers. Institutions and states surveyed for this report agreed that short-term programs benefit the local economy and learners, particularly adults. However, the question remains: How will students afford the tuition, fees, and associated expenses of a short-term program without federal financial assistance? Unemployed individuals in particular would benefit from the expansion of Pell Grants to short-term programs.

The findings from this report point to a wide variety of short-term programs in terms of content, length, cost and funding, provider, credit, credential, enrollments, and outcomes. These programs vary further by institution type and state policies. Short-term programs may require disparate accountability standards by program and institution type, following the precedent set through gainful employment, a regulatory requirement that only applied to for-profit institutions and non-degree programs. Given the wide range of short-term program offerings, purposes, and level of quality, a thoughtful consideration of these nuances will lead to stronger Pell Grant expansion proposals.

Appendix A: Advance CTE Membership Online Survey Instrument

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Advance CTE, and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) are currently collaborating to produce a national analysis of short-term programs. Legislators on both sides of the aisle in Congress have expressed interest in extending federal Title IV student financial assistance to short-term programs. However, significant data gaps about these types of programs often make it difficult to evaluate legislative proposals. Through this survey, we hope to learn more about the existing landscape of short-term programs to better inform discussions about extending Title IV aid to them. This project is generously funded by Lumina Foundation.

To help us accomplish this work we are asking you to complete a survey on your existing short-term programs. We estimate this survey should take approximately 60 minutes to gather the data required to respond and 10 minutes to complete the online survey instrument. The results of this survey will only be used in the aggregate and individual institutions will not be named.

Should you have any questions about this survey, please contact NASFAA's Research Department.

Instructions:

- For the purposes of this survey, short-term programs are defined as programs that are less than 600 clock hours, and less than 15 weeks of instruction or the credit-hour equivalency of less than 16 credit hours.

- To aid you in completing this survey we encourage you to download a PDF of the survey instrument online and write your answers on it before beginning.

- Due to the skip logic embedded in this survey you will be unable to navigate back once you have advanced forward to a new page.

- After you submit your survey you will be given the option to download a PDF of your responses, which you may keep for your records.

- If you need your survey reset for any reason so you may start over, please contact NASFAA's Research Department. You will receive a response within 24 hours.

- If there is someone in your office, your institution, or your field who did not receive the survey and wishes to participate, please contact NASFAA's Research Department and we can provide them with a link to do so.

Please provide your name: _____

Please provide your state agency name: _____

Please provide your state (using only the two-letter state abbreviation): _____

Do any institutions in your state offer short-term programs? For the purposes of this survey, short-term programs are defined as programs that are less than 600 clock hours, and less than 15 weeks of instruction.

❏ Yes   ❏ No (additional questions follow)

If the answer to the previous question is No, display the following question(s):

In your opinion, what is the reason that institutions in your state do not offer short-term programs? (Check all that apply)

❏ My state does not have the resources to support short-term programs.

❏ There are policy barriers in my state that prevent supporting short-term programs.

❏ Institutions of higher education in my state do not have the resources to support short-term programs.

❏ There is not a demand for short-term programs from students.

❏ There is not a demand for short-term programs from employers.

❏ Federal financial aid does not support short-term programs.

❏ Other

You indicated your institution does not currently offer short-term programs. In your opinion, would your institution begin offering short-term programs if financial aid were available for students to pay for those programs?

❏ Yes, if Pell Grants were available.

❏ Yes, if any type of Title IV federal student financial aid were available.

❏ Yes, if state financial aid were available.

❏ Yes, if employer financial aid were available.

❏ No, my institution would not offer short-term programs even if financial aid were available for them.

End of additional questions.

For each of the following statements, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree.

Statement	Response
My state's economy would benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
My state's adult learners would benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Employers have expressed that short-term programs would respond to skills gaps.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Educators have shared an interest in creating short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
State leadership have shared an interest in creating short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Access to short-term programs is important to achieving more equitable access and success in postsecondary education for underserved populations and communities.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree

How many institutions in your state offer short-term programs by sector type? Please enter only whole numbers.

_____ Private, not-for-profit   _____ Private, for-profit   _____ Public

What is the highest degree awarded for institutions in your state that offer short-term programs? (Check one).

❏ Certificate   ❏ Associate degree

❏ Bachelor's degree   ❏ Master's degree

❏ Doctoral degree

How many students in your state are enrolled in short-term programs? Please enter only whole numbers. _____

Do any of the short-term programs in your state collect the following information on the composition of students enrolled or outcomes measures. (Please check all that apply.)

❏ Average student income level at enrollment

❏ Average gender composition

❏ Average student age

❏ Average previous degree attainment

❏ Average enrollment status

❏ Average enrollment by race/ethnicity

❏ Average completion rate

❏ Average number of students that pass state licensure/ certification exams

❏ Post-program placement rate

❏ Average earnings of students after program completion

Does your state impose requirements that credits earned in short-term programs be stackable to higher credentials?

❏ Yes　　　　　　　　❏ No

Does your state have a statewide postsecondary attainment goal?

❏ Yes　　　　　　　　❏ No

If the answer to the previous question is Yes, display the following question(s):

　Are short-term programs part of the attainment goal?

❏ Yes　　　　　　　　❏ No

　　If the answer to the previous question is No, display the following question(s):

　　Why are short-term programs not part of the attainment goal? _____

　　Would your state consider adding short-term programs to the postsecondary attainment strategy if Title IV Federal Student Aid were available for these programs?

❏ Yes　　　　　　　　❏ No

End of additional questions.

In your opinion, how much of a priority is developing new and sustaining current short-term programs to your state?

❏ High priority　　　　　　　　　　　　　　❏ Priority

❏ Somewhat a priority　　　　　　　　　　　❏ Not a priority

What criteria are used by your state to approve short-term programs? (Check all that apply)

❏ Alignment to in-demand occupational sector

❏ Credit hour threshold

❏ Contact hour threshold

❏ Postsecondary credential obtained through the program

❏ Program is part of a stackable credential or transferable to a higher credential level

❏ Other

Is there a group of learners who most often enroll in short-term programs in your state? (Check all that apply)

❏ Adult learners returning to postsecondary education

❏ Learners who are seeking "upskilling" opportunities in order to advance in their current career

❏ Learners who are seeking "upskilling" opportunities to pursue a new career

❏ Traditional college age learner

❏ Learners enrolled part-time

❏ Learners enrolled full-time

❏ Other

In your opinion, would institutions in your state offer more short-term programs if financial aid were available for learners to pay for those programs? (check all that apply)

❏ Yes, if Pell Grants were available.

❏ Yes, if any type of Title IV federal student financial aid were available.

❏ Yes, if state financial aid were available.

❏ Yes, if employer financial aid were available.

❏ No, my state would not offer short-term programs even if financial aid were available for them.

❏ Other

For each of the following statements, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree.

My state's economy benefits from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
My state's adult learners benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
Industry representatives have expressed that short-term programs respond to skills gaps.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
Educators have shared an interest in creating more short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
State leadership has shared an interest in creating more short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
My state's legislature has expressed an interest in supporting the expansion of short-term programs in our state.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
My state's governor has expressed an interest in supporting the expansion of short-term programs in our state.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
Overall, part-time students in my state benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree
Overall, full-time students in my state benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree ... Strongly disagree

Appendix B: NASFAA and ACTE Online Survey Instrument for ACTE Members

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Advance CTE, and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) are currently collaborating to produce a national analysis of short-term programs. Legislators on both sides of the aisle in Congress have expressed interest in extending federal Title IV student financial assistance to short-term programs. However, significant data gaps about these types of programs often make it difficult to evaluate legislative proposals. Through this survey, we hope to learn more about the existing landscape of short-term programs to better inform discussions about extending Title IV aid to them. This project is generously funded by Lumina Foundation.

To help us accomplish this work we are asking you to complete a survey on your existing short-term programs. We estimate this survey should take approximately 60 minutes to gather the data required to respond and 10 minutes to complete the online survey instrument. The results of this survey will only be used in the aggregate and individual institutions will not be named.

Should you have any questions about this survey, please contact NASFAA's Research Department.

Instructions:

- For the purposes of this survey, short-term programs are defined as programs that are less than 600 clock hours, and less than 15 weeks of instruction or the credit-hour equivalency of less than 16 credit hours.

- To aid you in completing this survey we encourage you to download a PDF of the survey instrument online and write your answers on it before beginning.

- Due to the skip logic embedded in this survey you will be unable to navigate back once you have advanced forward to a new page.

- After you submit your survey you will be given the option to download a PDF of your responses, which you may keep for your records.

- If you need your survey reset for any reason so you may start over, please contact NASFAA's Research Department. You will receive a response within 24 hours.

- If there is someone in your office, your institution, or your field who did not receive the survey and wishes to participate, please contact NASFAA's Research Department and we can provide them with a link to do so.

Please provide the following information for the person completing this survey:

Institution Name _____

City _____

State _____

Email address _____

In what sector of higher education is your institution?

❏ Private, not for profit   ❏ Private, for-profit

❏ Public

What is the highest degree or credential offered at your institution?

❏ Less than a certificate   ❏ Certificate

❏ Associate degree   ❏ Bachelor's degree

❏ Master's degree   ❏ Doctoral degree

❏ Professional degree (JD, MBA, etc.)

Does your institution offer short-term programs? For the purposes of this survey, short-term programs are defined as programs that are less than 600 clock hours, and less than 15 weeks of instruction.

❏ Yes   ❏ No

If the answer to the previous question is No, display the following question(s):

You indicated your institution does not currently offer short-term programs. In your opinion, would your institution begin offering short-term programs if financial aid were available for students to pay for those programs?

❏ Yes, if Pell Grants were available.

❏ Yes, if any type of Title IV federal student financial aid were available.

❏ Yes, if state financial aid were available.

❏ Yes, if employer financial aid were available.

❏ No, my institution would not offer short-term programs even if financial aid were available for them.

If the answer to the previous question is No, my institution would not offer short-term programs even if financial aid were available for them., display the following question(s):

Please use the space below to describe why your institution would not begin offering short-term programs even if financial aid were available for them. _____

End of additional questions.

In your opinion, does your institution currently offer any Title IV federal student financial aid-eligible certificate or degree programs that they would consider shortening if financial aid were available for short-term programs?

❏ Yes, if Pell Grants were available for short-term programs.

❏ Yes, if any type of Title IV federal student financial aid were available for short-term programs.

❏ No, my institution would not shorten any existing Title IV federal student financial aid-eligible certificate or degree programs if federal financial aid were available for short-term programs.

Display This Question: If In your opinion, does your institution currently offer any Title IV federal student financial aid... = No, my institution would not shorten any existing Title IV federal student financial aid-eligible certificate or degree programs if federal financial aid were available for short-term programs.

Please use the space below to describe why your institution would not shorten any existing Title IV federal student aid-eligible certificate or degree programs even if financial aid were available for them. _____

Display This Question: If In your opinion, does your institution currently offer any Title IV federal student financial aid... = Yes, if Pell Grants were available for short-term programs. Or In your opinion, does your institution currently offer any Title IV federal student financial aid... = Yes, if any type of Title IV federal student financial aid were available for short-term programs.

Please tell us which, if any, of your current certificate or degree programs you would most likely shorten if Title IV federal student aid were available for short-term programs? _____

For each of the following statements, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree.

Statement	
My local economy benefits from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
My local adult learners benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Industry representatives have expressed that short-term programs respond to skills gaps.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Educators have shared an interest in creating more short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Local leadership has shared an interest in creating more short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
My local legislature has expressed an interest in supporting the expansion of short-term programs in our state.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
My state's governor has expressed an interest in supporting the expansion of short-term programs in our state.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Overall, part-time students in my state benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree
Overall, full-time students in my state benefit from short-term programs.	▼ Strongly agree … Strongly disagree

How many short-term programs does your institution offer? Please enter only whole numbers. _____

What was the average number of full-time and part-time students enrolled in your short-term programs in the most recent academic year for which you have data and what was their average completion rate (percentage)?

Instructions:

• Do not leave any field blank.

• If you do not have access to this data, please write "NA" in the field.

• If you do not collect this data, please check the box indicating so for each program your institution offers.

• If the answer is zero (0), put a zero rather than leaving the field blank.

• Decimals (.) may be used.

• Commas (,) may not be used.

	Open-ended Answer	Do not collect this data
Average number of full-time students enrolled per academic year		
Average number of part-time students enrolled per academic year		
Average full-time completion rate per academic year (Percentage)		
Average part-time completion rate per academic year		

Please provide the following demographics on your student composition for students enrolled in any of your existing short-term programs from the most recent academic year.

Instructions:

- Please provide the percentage not the count.

- Please do not leave any field blank.

- If you do not have access to this data, please write "NA" in the field.

- If you do not collect this data, please check the box indicating so for each program your institution offers. If the answer is zero (0), put a zero rather than leaving the field blank.

- Enter only whole numbers, do not use dollar signs ($), commas (,), etc.

	Percentage	Do not collect this data
Average gender composition	• Male	
	• Female	
Average student age	• Under 18	
	• 18- 35	
	• 36 - 55	
	• 56 & older	
Average enrollment by race/ethnicity	• White	
	• Hispanic	
	• Black/African American	
	• Asian	
	• Other	
Average part-time completion rate per academic year		

How many short-term programs from your institution are on your state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Eligible Training Program (ETP) list? Please enter only whole numbers. _____

Indicate below what credential is earned upon completion of your institution's existing short-term programs? (Check all that apply.)

❏ Sub-baccalaureate credit certificate

❏ Sub-baccalaureate non-credit certificate

❏ Baccalaureate and above credit certificate

❏ Baccalaureate and above non-credit certificate

❏ Industry certification

❏ Occupational licensure

❏ Badges

❏ Micro-credentials

❏ No credential is earned

Indicate below if credits earned as part of your existing short-term programs are stackable, part of a career pathway, or transferable to a higher credential level and, if so, how many?

For reference: As defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

(7) CAREER PATHWAY.—The term ''career pathway'' means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

(A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;

(B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the ''National Apprenticeship Act''; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (referred to individually in this Act as an ''apprenticeship'', except in section 171);

(C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;

(D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

(E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

(F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and

(G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

		Number of programs
Part of career pathway	• Yes	
	• No	
Stackable/articulate to any longer-term program	• Yes	
	• No	

Indicate below if your existing short-term programs are offered for credit or not-for-credit.

❏ Credit   ❏ Not-for-credit   ❏ A mix of both

Indicate below the program format for your existing programs. (Select all that apply)

❏ Traditional/classroom   ❏ Online

❏ Competency-based   ❏ Dual/concurrent enrollment with high school

In the space below please provide a list of the current short-term programs your institution offers. We ask that you use the exact title as offered, one per line. If you are unable to provide individual program names please enter your institution name on the first line.

Program 1 _____

Program 2 _____

Program 3 _____

Program 4 _____

Program 5 _____

Does your institution track any of its short-term program data at the individual program level?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Program-Level Data on Short-Term Programs: The following section asks for information on your individual short-term programs. Please answer questions in this section to the best of your ability.

Instructions:

• Please do not leave any field blank.

• If you do not have access to this data, or do not collect this data, please check the box indicating so for each program your institution offers. (This is important for us to know as well!) If the answer is zero (0), put a zero rather than leaving the field blank.

If the answer to the previous question is Yes, display the following question(s):

Carry Forward Entered Choices - Entered Text from "In the space below please provide a list of the current short-term programs your institution offers. We ask that you use the exact title as offered, one per line. If you are unable to provide individual program names please enter your institution name on the first line."

What is the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code for each short-term program your institution offers?

	CIP Code	Do not have access to this data	Do not collect this data
Program 1 Name Text			
Program 2 Name Text			
Program 3 Name Text			
Program 4 Name Text			
Program 5 Name Text			

<repeats to allow for all previously entered program names>

Please provide the following demographics on your student composition for each existing short-term program from the most recent academic year.

	Average student income level at the start of enrollment	Do not have access to this data	Do not collect this data
Program 1 Name Text	▼ Less than $6,000 ... $60,000 & over		
Program 2 Name Text	▼ Less than $6,000 ... $60,000 & over		
Program 3 Name Text	▼ Less than $6,000 ... $60,000 & over		
Program 4 Name Text	▼ Less than $6,000 ... $60,000 & over		
Program 5 Name Text	▼ Less than $6,000 ... $60,000 & over		

<repeats to allow for all previously entered program names>

Please provide the following demographics on your student composition for each existing short-term program from the most

recent academic year.

	Average previous degree attainment	Do not have access to this data	Do not collect this data
Program 1 Name Text	• No college • Some college • Associate degree • Bachelor's degree • Master's degree • Doctorate degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) • First professional degree (J.D., etc.)		
Program 2 Name Text	• No college • Some college • Associate degree • Bachelor's degree • Master's degree • Doctorate degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) • First professional degree (J.D., etc.)		
Program 3 Name Text	• No college • Some college • Associate degree • Bachelor's degree • Master's degree • Doctorate degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) • First professional degree (J.D., etc.)		
Program 4 Name Text	• No college • Some college • Associate degree • Bachelor's degree • Master's degree • Doctorate degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) • First professional degree (J.D., etc.)		
Program 5 Name Text	• No college • Some college • Associate degree • Bachelor's degree • Master's degree • Doctorate degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) • First professional degree (J.D., etc.)		

Please provide details on your existing short-term programs' structure

		Weeks of instruction in total	Do not have access to this data	Do not collect this data
Program 1 Name Text	• Clock hours • Credit hours			
Program 2 Name Text	• Clock hours • Credit hours			
Program 3 Name Text	• Clock hours • Credit hours			
Program 4 Name Text	• Clock hours • Credit hours			
Program 5 Name Text	• Clock hours • Credit hours			

<repeats to allow for all previously entered program names>

Indicate below what need(s) your existing short-term programs are designed to fill in your region. (Select all that apply.)

	Aligned with in-demand occupational sectors	Aligned with high-growth occupational sector	Aligned with high-wage occupational sectors	Do not have access to this data	Do not collect this data
Program 1 Name Text					
Program 2 Name Text					
Program 3 Name Text					
Program 4 Name Text					
Program 5 Name Text					

Please use the space below to outline the average student costs for your existing short-term programs.

	Direct costs	Combined costs of books, supplies, equipment, and mate-rials (direct or indirect)	Do not have access to this data	Do not collect this data
Program 1 Name Text				
Program 2 Name Text				
Program 3 Name Text				
Program 4 Name Text				
Program 5 Name Text				

<repeats to allow for all previously entered program names>

Please use the space below to outline any outcomes measures of your existing short-term programs.

	Post-program placement rate	Average earnings of students after program completion	Completion rate	Percent of stu-dents that pass state licensure/ certification exams	Employment rate	Percent that continue to further education or training
	Choices: • Open-Ended Box • Do not have access to this data • Do not collect this data	Choices: • Open-Ended Box • Do not have access to this data • Do not collect this data	Choices: • Open-Ended Box • Do not have access to this data • Do not collect this data	Choices: • Open-Ended Box • Do not have access to this data • Do not collect this data	Choices: • Open-Ended Box • Do not have access to this data • Do not collect this data	Choices: • First full year after • Five years after • Ten years after • Do not have access to this data • Do not collect this data
Program 1 Name Text						
Program 2 Name Text						
Program 3 Name Text						
Program 4 Name Text						
Program 5 Name Text						

Appendix C: ACTE Focus Group Protocols

Intro:

Thank you all for taking the time to participate in today's focus group. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Advance CTE, and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) are currently collaborating to produce a national analysis of short-term programs. For context: Legislators on both sides of the aisle in Congress have expressed interest in extending federal Title IV student financial assistance to short-term programs. However, significant data gaps about these types of programs often make it difficult to evaluate legislative proposals. Last month we conducted an online survey and are now conducting these focus groups with the hope of learning more about the existing landscape of short-term programs to better inform discussions about extending Title IV aid to them. This project is generously funded by Lumina Foundation.

Please note: We will ask for your first name so we can track your responses in our analysis, but no personally identifying individual information about you or the school will be used in the report.

There are no right or wrong answers; we are looking for your direct and honest feedback.

Do we have your permission to record today's discussion? The recording will only be used internally for our notes as we complete the report; all information will be kept strictly confidential.

Discussion questions: For the purposes of this conversation, short-term programs are defined as programs that are less than 600 clock hours or 16 credit hours, and less than 15 weeks of instruction.

1. Does the definition we are using (which matches federal policy) align with how you think about short-term programs at your institution? Are there other nuances to categorizing programs as "short-term" we should be thinking about?

2. Tell us about the short-term programs your institution offers?

   a. What types of credentials are awarded?

   b. Approximately how many students do you think enroll in these programs per academic year?

   c. What types of students are most likely to enroll in these programs? What are student outcomes (completion, placement, etc.) like in these programs?

   d. Does your institution collect specific program-level data on these short-term programs to verify student outcomes?

   e. Are programs generally offered for credit or on the non-credit side of your institution?

3. Would your institution begin offering more short-term programs if federal financial aid were available for students to pay for those programs?

   a. In your opinion, does your institution currently offer any Title IV federal student financial aid-eligible certificate or degree programs that they would consider shortening if federal financial aid were available for short-term programs?

4. How do you ensure that your short-term programs are aligned to the local economy and ensure students are prepared to enter high-skill, high-wage and in-demand career pathways?

5. How do you connect short-term programs to longer-term certificates or degrees to ensure students can continue their education?

6. Does your state or institution currently have other types of financial aid available to students in short-term programs, since federal aid is not available?

7. Are policymakers in your state or local area encouraging more short-term programs?

Closing:

Thank you all for taking the time to meet with us today and share institutions thoughts and practices on short-term programs. We will share your suggestions with Advance CTE and ACTE as we continue our work on this project, but will not share any individually identifying information. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns individually if you do not feel comfortable as a group, and we would be glad to point you in the right direction. You can reach us at (write contact information on white board).

Appendix D: Advance CTE Phone Interview Protocols

[IF NOT INTERVIEWING STATE DIRECTOR] Before we get started, can you tell me about your role [INSERT AGENCY]?

- I want to start by getting some background on your state's postsecondary structure:
    o What is the postsecondary governance structure in your state?
    o What is covered by your state's postsecondary system (i.e., universities, community colleges, etc.)?

- Can you tell me about the short-term program landscape in your state?
    o How do you define a short-term programs?
    o How common are these programs in your state?
    o What type of institution typically delivers these programs (i.e., community college, area technical center, university, public institution, private institution, etc.)?
    o Does your state have any statewide policies on short-term programs?
        ◆ If yes, what are the policies? How long have the policies been in place?
    o Is there state funding allocated to short-term programs?

[IF STATE DOESN'T HAVE STATEWIDE ATTAINMENT GOAL] Are there any statewide education or workforce initiatives that have motivated the development of short-term programs?

- As you've continued to implement short-term programs, what are the biggest motivators coming from the federal, state and institutional levels? (i.e., state level prioritizing, institutional prioritizing, industry pressure, etc.)
    o What do you find to be the main inhibitors at the federal, state and institutional levels to creating more short-term programs?

- Is there a particular learner that these programs are geared toward (i.e., adult learners)?
    o Are those also the learners who typically enroll?
    o How is enrollment data collected? Do you have access to enrollment data?
    o If these answer to the above question is no or unsure- please explain. Why don't you have access to it/who does? What prohibits data from being collected?

- Do you collect program completion/placement data?
    o If yes, what do you collect (i.e., transfer, work placement)? How is this collected?
    o If these answer to the above question is no or unsure- please explain.
    o Are there certain Career Clusters that most of the programs fall under?
        ◆ If yes, what are they?

[If states answered no on the survey questions asking if there's a requirement for short-term program credits be stackable to higher credentials]. Is having a requirement for short-term program credits to be stackable to higher credentials something that you think would be beneficial to learner outcomes? Why/why not?

- What difference would federal financial aid for short-term programs make to your state's ability to develop (or expand) programs? Your state's prioritization of short-term programs? Enrollment numbers in short-term programs?
    o Does expansion usually mean increasing the number of seats in a program or creating new programs?
- In your opinion, would expanding Pell grant eligibility to short-term programs benefit your state? If yes, why? If not, why not?
- Is there any other information that you'd like me to know?

Appendix E: Advance CTE Data Collection Instructions

Examining Short-Term Programs: Program Level Data Collection Instructions

January 2020

Background: The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Advance CTE, and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) are currently collaborating to produce a national analysis of short-term programs. Legislators on both sides of the aisle in Congress have expressed interest in extending federal Title IV student financial assistance to short-term programs. However, significant data gaps about these types of programs often make it difficult to evaluate legislative proposals. Through this data collection, we hope to learn more about the existing landscape of short-term programs to better inform discussions about extending Title IV aid to them. This project is generously funded by Lumina Foundation. To help us accomplish this work we are asking states and institutions to provide us with data on their short-term programs at the individual program level. The analysis of this data will only be used in the aggregate, and individual institutions and states will not be named.

Short-term Program Definition: For the purposes of this data collection we are defining short-term programs as programs that are less than 600 clock hours (or 16 credit hours), offered over less than 15 weeks. Where possible, please include programs that could be offered as stand-alone short-term programs meeting the criteria detailed above, but which have been embedded into longer programs or otherwise made longer to allow for Title IV aid eligibility (for instance, a 10-week basic welding skills program that is embedded into a longer welding program that teaches students skills required for more advanced jobs).

Data Collection: Participants will provide the data points detailed below individually for each short-term program, and not aggregated for the entire institution.

Cohort Requirements: We are requesting data for the 12-month reporting period of July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019 for all students enrolled in each program.

Data Elements:

- **Advance CTE (states):** Data for all short-term programs offered, disaggregated by institution and individual program (at each institution).

    o If you are able to provide data disaggregated by individual institution, please provide the following variables, from IPEDS. If you cannot disaggregate by individual institution please skip to the "For each program" section below:

    1. Institution ICLevel

    2. Institution HLOFFER

    3. Institution Control

    o For each program:

    1. Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

    2. Length:

        a. Using IPEDS variable "Total length of program in weeks, as completed by a student attending full-time (IC20##_PY)" from the Institutional Characteristics section.

        b. Total clock or credit hours of program (based on how program is measured)

    3. Program cost: In-state program tuition and required fees

4. List all funding sources that your students are using to pay for each program:

    a. WIOA

    b. State funds

    c. Institutional funds

    d. Private funding

    e. Federal Title IV student aid

    f. Student self-pay

5. Age breakdown

    a. Percent under 18

    b. Percent 18-24

    c. Percent 25 and over

6. Number of individual students enrolled in each program during the 12-month reporting period of July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019. (Note—count each student only once in each program.)

7. Completion rate for all students, along with how a description of how your state calculates completion rate.

Deadline: Participants are asked to submit their data files (as excel or csv files) *no later than Friday, January 31, 2020.*

Questions:

• NASFAA's Assistant Director of Research and Grants Charlotte Etier at etierc@nasfaa.org

• Advance CTE's Policy Associate Meredith Hills mhills@careertech.org

Appendix F: ACTE Data Collection Instructions

Examining Short-Term Programs: Program Level Data Collection Instructions

January - February 2020

Background: The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Advance CTE, and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) are currently collaborating to produce a national analysis of short-term programs. Legislators on both sides of the aisle in Congress have expressed interest in extending federal Title IV student financial assistance to short-term programs. However, significant data gaps about these types of programs often make it difficult to evaluate legislative proposals. Through this data collection, we hope to learn more about the existing landscape of short-term programs to better inform discussions about extending Title IV aid to them. This project is generously funded by Lumina Foundation. To help us accomplish this work we are asking states and institutions to provide us with data on their short-term programs at the individual program level. The analysis of this data will only be used in the aggregate, and individual institutions and states will not be named.

Short-term Program Definition: For the purposes of this data collection we are defining short-term programs as programs that are less than 600 clock hours (or 16 credit hours), offered over less than 15 weeks. These programs do not have to be classified specifically as CTE programs or eligible for Perkins Act funding--we are looking for any programs that meet the time/ hour definition.

Data Collection: Participants will provide the data points detailed below individually for each short-term program, and not aggregated for the entire institution. *If your institution does not have one of the variables listed below you may leave it blank.*

Cohort Requirements: We are requesting data for the 12-month reporting period of July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019 for all students enrolled in each program.

Data Elements: Data for all short-term programs offered, disaggregated by individual program.

- For the institution, from IPEDS:
    - o Institution ICLevel
    - o Institution HLOFFER
    - o Institution Control
- For each program:
    - o Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code
    - o Length:
        - Using IPEDS variable "Total length of program in weeks, as completed by a student attending full-time (IC20##_ PY)" from the Institutional Characteristics section.
        - Total clock or credit hours of program (based on how program is measured)
    - o Program cost: In-state program tuition and required fees, separately for:
        - Tuition and fees
        - Books, supplies, tools/equipment

o List all funding sources that your students are using to pay for each program.

  • Variable specific instructions: Please list one funding source per column, then indicate if it is known that students use that source to pay for each program. If all funding sources are used you may insert a column titled "All Sources Used" indicating so. Funding sources are as follows:

    · WIOA

    · State funds

    · Institutional funds

    · Private funding

    · Student self-pay

o Age breakdown: This variable may be provided one of two ways.

  • Method #1:

    · Percent under 18 (leave blank if you do not collect data for students under 18)

    · Percent 18-24

    · Percent 25 and over

  • Method #2:

    · Percentage currently enrolled in high school

    · Percentage that are post-high school

o Number of individual students enrolled in each program during the 12-month reporting period of July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019. (Note—count each student only once in each program.)

o Completion rate for all students, along with how a description of how your institution calculates completion rate.

o Placement rate for all students, using the WIOA definition of placement rate.

  • Please refer to the WIOA placement in employment language for determining this variable.

Deadline: Participants are asked to submit their data files (as excel or csv files) *no later than Friday, February 7, 2020.*

Questions:

• NASFAA's Assistant Director of Research and Grants Charlotte Etier at etierc@nasfaa.org

• ACTE's Director of Public Policy Alisha Hyslop hyslop@acteonline.org

Appendix G: Data Collection CIP Code Definitions

CIP Code Category Definitions:

CIP Code: 11.0901

- Title: Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications.

- Definition: A program that focuses on the design, implementation, and management of linked systems of computers, peripherals, and associated software to maximize efficiency and productivity, and that prepares individuals to function as network specialists and managers at various levels. Includes instruction in operating systems and applications; systems design and analysis; networking theory and solutions; types of networks; network management and control; network and flow optimization; security; configuring; and troubleshooting.

CIP Code: 12.04

- Title: Cosmetology and Related Personal Grooming Services.

- Definition: Instructional content for this group of programs is defined in codes 12.0401 - 12.0499.

CIP Code: 15.0613

- Title: Manufacturing Technology/Technician.

- Definition: A program that prepares individuals to apply basic engineering principles and technical skills to the identification and resolution of production problems in the manufacture of products. Includes instruction in machine operations, production line operations, engineering analysis, systems analysis, instrumentation, physical controls, automation, computer-aided manufacturing (CAM), manufacturing planning, quality control, and informational infrastructure.

CIP Code: 43.0203

- Title: Fire Science/Fire fighting.

- Definition: A program focusing on the theory and practice of fires and fire fighting. Includes instruction in fire chemistry and physics, combustible materials, computer science, building construction, fire codes and related laws, fire hydraulics, fire command, fire prevention/inspection, fire protection systems, fire suppression systems, fire/arson investigation, occupational safety, equipment operation, emergency medicine and communications.

CIP Code: 47.0303

- Title: Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology.

- Definition: A program that prepares individuals to apply technical knowledge and skills to repair and maintain industrial machinery and equipment such as cranes, pumps, engines and motors, pneumatic tools, conveyor systems, production machinery, marine deck machinery, and steam propulsion, refinery, and pipeline-distribution systems.

CIP Code: 47.06

- Title: Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Technologies.

- Definition: Instructional content for this group of programs is defined in codes 47.0600 - 47.0699.

CIP Code: 48.05

- Title: Precision Metal Working.

- Definition: Instructional content for this group of programs is defined in codes 48.0501 - 48.0599.

CIP Code: 49.0205

- Title: Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operation.

- Definition: A program that prepares individuals to apply technical knowledge and skills to drive trucks and buses, delivery vehicles, for-hire vehicles and other commercial vehicles, or to instruct commercial vehicle operators. Includes instruction in operating gas, diesel, or electrically powered vehicles; loading and unloading cargo or passengers; reporting delays or accidents on the road; verifying load against shipping papers; arranging transportation for personnel; and keeping records of receipts and fares.

CIP Code: 51.0911

- Title: Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer.

- Definition: A program that prepares individuals, under the supervision of physicians, to provide medical imaging services to patients and attending health care professionals. Includes instruction in applied anatomy and physiology, patient positioning, radiographic technique, radiation biology, safety and emergency procedures, equipment operation and maintenance, quality assurance, patient education, and medical imaging/radiologic services management.

CIP Code: 51.10

- Title: Clinical/Medical Laboratory Science and Allied Professions.

- Definition: Instructional content for this group of programs is defined in codes 51.1001 - 51.1099.

CIP Code: 51.26

- Title: Health Aides/Attendants/Orderlies.

- Definition: Instructional content for this group of programs is defined in codes 51.2601 - 51.2699.

CIP Code: 51.39

- Title: Practical Nursing, Vocational Nursing and Nursing Assistants.

- Definition: Instructional content for this group of programs is defined in codes 51.3901 - 51.3999.

CIP Code: 52.04

- Title: Business Operations Support and Assistant Services.

- Definition: Instructional content for this group of programs is defined in codes 52.0401 - 52.0499.

Appendix H: Short-Term Program Funding Sources

The Carl D. Perkins Act was most recently reauthorized in 2018 as the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. The Perkins Act is a federal program and should not be confused with the Federal Perkins Loan included in the Higher Education Act until authorization for the program expired in 2017. The Perkins Act provides approximately $1.1 billion[62] funding to states to increase student access to career and technical education. At least 85% of the funding received by states must go to local education agencies and institutions that offer CTE programs.[63]

Nearly two-thirds of Perkins Act funding goes to secondary schools, where eight million students are enrolled in CTE programs, and just over one third goes to postsecondary education[64, 65],where four million students are enrolled in CTE programs.[66] As noted earlier, classification as CTE does not necessarily imply that a program is a short-term program. However, Perkins Act funding does not set minimum hours of instruction or program length as a requirement for eligibility, so short-term programs can be funded by the Perkins Act.

While a valuable source for creating CTE programs, Perkins Act funding does not necessarily make short-term programs more affordable for individuals seeking career and technical training. Perkins Act funds flow through states directly to CTE providers instead of to students, and Perkins Act funding is required to supplement, not supplant[67] an institution's CTE spending, meaning that it does not free up institutional resources to spend on financial aid that would directly help students afford these programs.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which supplanted the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is the largest of several U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administrations programs. WIOA's primary focus is to help displaced job seekers succeed in the labor market. One way it achieves this is by providing training services. Training is offered primarily[68] by providing eligible individuals with funding in the form of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to use toward education and training to better prepare them for the workforce.[69] ITA funds may be used at accredited IHEs, at entities that provide apprenticeship programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act, or at other public or private training providers.[70]

While not explicitly limited to CTE, WIOA-funded education and training tend to be heavily concentrated on these types of programs.[71] Unlike Perkins Act-funded programs, WIOA ITA funds cannot be used for secondary education.[72]

Like the Perkins Act, WIOA does not establish statutory program minimum length or hours of instruction as a qualifier for eligibility. It does set other limits, though. For instance, with limited exceptions, ITA funds can only be used for training programs offered by an Eligible Training Provider (ETP). ETP lists are maintained by state and local workforce agencies, which have certified the ETPs as eligible based on state and local performance standards. For individuals to qualify for WIOA training services like ITAs, they must meet a list of eligibility requirements, including that they are:

- unlikely or unable to obtain sustainable employment with career services alone and are in need of training services for which they have the underlying skills to participate;

- unable to obtain other sources of funding like Federal Pell Grants, or require funding above and beyond other sources of funding; and

- enrolling in training that is directly linked to local employment opportunities or opportunities elsewhere if they are willing to relocate.[73]

[62] https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-perkins-cte-serve-immigrants/

[63] https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-perkins-cte-serve-immigrants/

[64] https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-perkins-cte-serve-immigrants/

[65] https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/uploads/Perkins_RTC_2014-15.pdf

[66] https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-perkins-cte-serve-immigrants/

[67] https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/AdvanceCTE_ACTE_P.L.115-224Summary_Updated082218.pdf

[68] https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_19-16_acc.pdf

[69] https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44252.pdf

[70] https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44252.pdf

[71] https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_19-16_acc.pdf

[72] https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44252.pdf

[73] https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_19-16_acc.pdf

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) provides professional development for financial aid administrators; advocates for public policies that increase student access and success; serves as a forum on student financial aid issues; and is committed to diversity throughout all activities.