Ohio

In October 2020, Opportunity America invited the nation's community and technical colleges to respond to a survey about their credit and noncredit workforce programs and relationships with employers.

Nearly half of the colleges invited to participate answered at least one question, and 477 institutions provided more robust replies, for a 38 percent response rate.

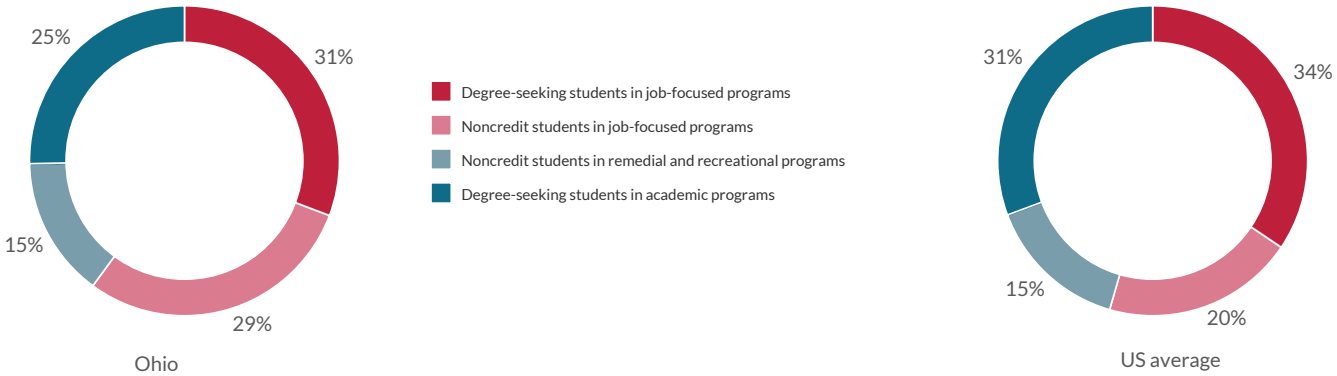
This customized report compares Ohio colleges to an aggregate of other responding colleges nationwide—data that can be used to benchmark policy planning and innovation.

Community colleges serve a diverse mix of students with varied goals

Nationwide, just over half of community college students are enrolled in programs designed to help them acquire the skills they need to get a job or a better job.

Some community college students seek traditional academic credentials, others do not

Most community colleges have a degree-granting 'credit' division and a nondegree-granting 'noncredit' division. Nationwide, job-focused education predominates on both sides of the college.



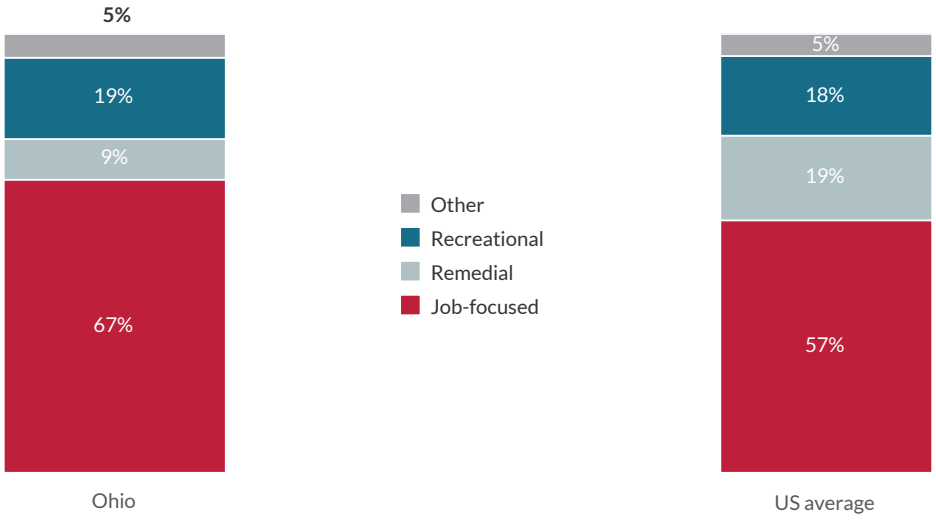
Sometimes called the 'hidden college,' noncredit education is often invisible to the public and policymakers

3.7 million

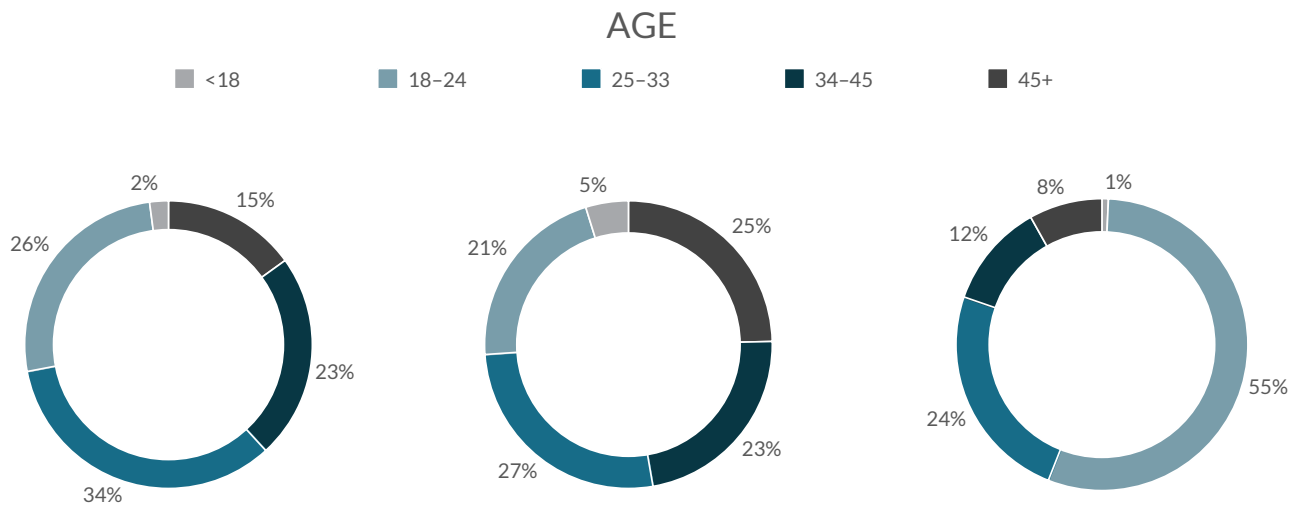
Estimated number of students enrolled in noncredit programs nationwide—learners who are not included in federal education data

The noncredit division helps students meet a variety of needs*

Some programs help learners improve basic reading and math skills or prepare for college; others cater to their personal interests. But noncredit education's signature strength is workforce education.



Midcareer adults seeking new skills for new jobs often look to noncredit college programs*



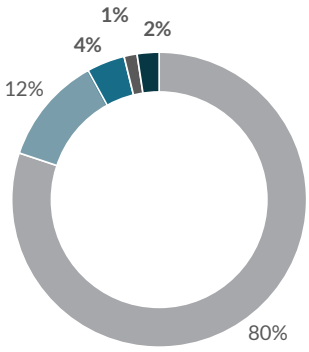
Ohio noncredit workforce programs

US noncredit workforce programs

US credit-eligible community college programs

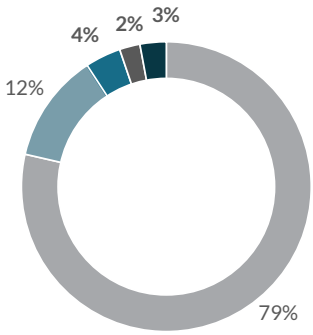
Noncredit workforce education can be a driver of equity and economic mobility*

RACE



Ohio noncredit workforce students

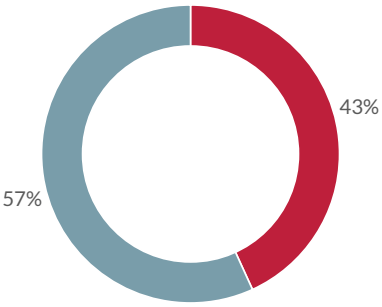
White
Black
Hispanic
Asian
Other



Ohio population

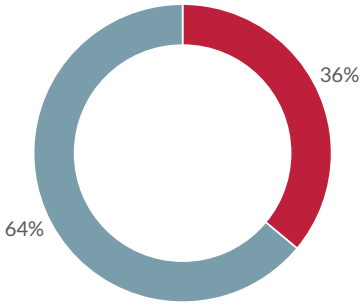
Collaboration with employers helps colleges stay abreast of a changing labor market

Employers may offer advice about industry trends. Others help design programs and craft curriculum. A sign of a strong industry partnership: the employer provides opportunities for work-based learning—internship, apprenticeship or other hands-on experience.



Ohio

Share of employer partners that offer work-based learning
Share that do not offer work-based learning



US average

A growing number of community college programs prepare students to earn competency-based credentials issued by employer groups

Unlike traditional academic credentials, which signal that students have attended and completed a course of study, industry certifications signal what learners know and what job-related tasks they can perform—occupation-specific knowledge and skills measured by tests developed by industry groups.

SHARE OF NONCREDIT WORKFORCE STUDENTS WHO EARN INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS

45%

Ohio

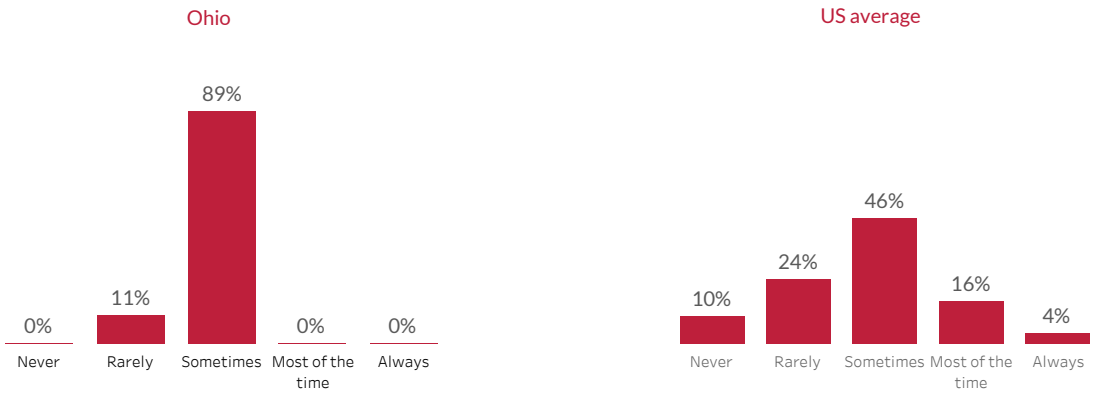
25%

US average

Some noncredit students later return to college to earn degrees

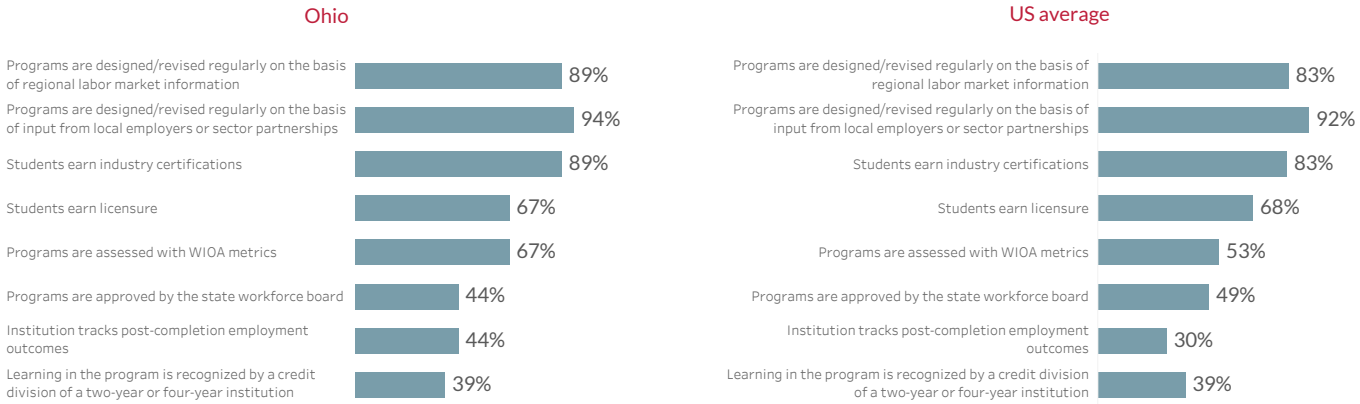
Many colleges seek to build bridges between credit and noncredit education. But nationwide, just 20 percent of colleges say that job-focused noncredit students who later enroll in credit programs can leverage most or all of their noncredit learning for college credit 'most' or 'all' of the time.

SHARE OF COLLEGES WHERE NONCREDIT WORKFORCE STUDENTS CAN LEVERAGE MOST OR ALL PRIOR LEARNING FOR COLLEGE CREDIT



Colleges and states use a variety of tools to ensure the quality and labor market relevance of job-focused noncredit programs

Most noncredit programs don't need faculty or accreditor approval, allowing them to adapt quickly and agilely to changing labor market demand. These are some of the tools they use instead to assess program quality.

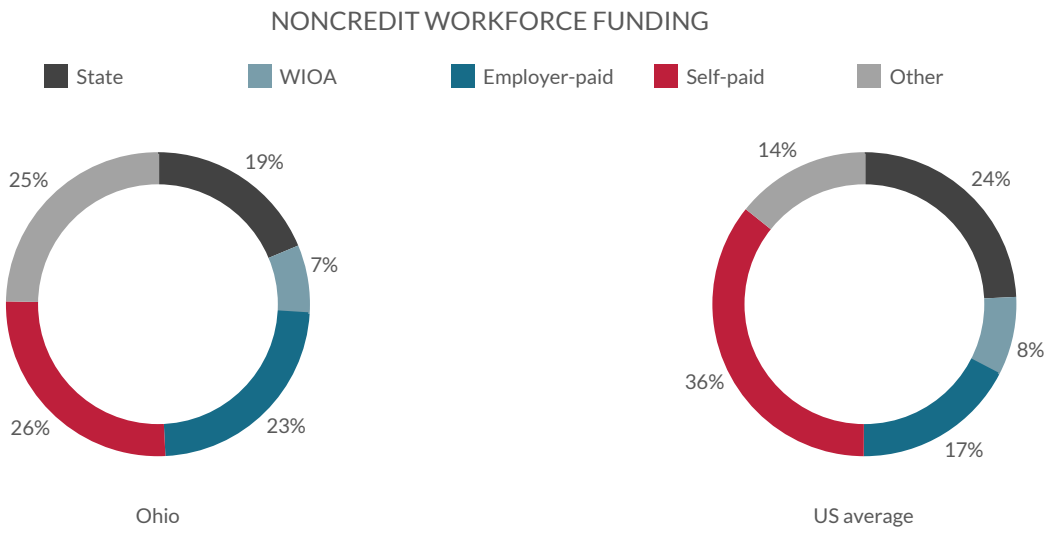


Many colleges know relatively little about noncredit workforce students

Better data would help educators and policymakers make the most of noncredit education.

Who pays for noncredit workforce education?*

Pell Grants don't generally cover the cost of noncredit workforce programs, so students must find other ways to pay. Some states offer financial aid; some learners draw on means-tested federal benefits. But students paying out of pocket and employers carry the lion's share of the burden.



More about this study

A total of 75 Ohio community and technical colleges were invited to participate in this study in October 2020, and 22 responded by mid-March 2021, for a 29 percent response rate.

The data provided in this brief reflect the responses provided by participating colleges only and may not be representative of all community and technical colleges in the state or nationwide.

All questions in the study asked about fiscal year 2019. Participating colleges could pass over questions they were unable to answer; missing responses were excluded from calculated percentages.

As postsecondary workforce education evolves, so does the language used to describe it, and different educators in different states often use different terminology. The language used in this study represents an effort to find common ground but may not conform exactly with the terminology used in every state.

**Very small percentages may not appear due to software constraints.*

To learn more about the Opportunity America community college survey, please visit https://opportunityamericaonline.org/ccsurvey