



STATE-BY-STATE ANALYSIS
EARLY RESULTS
Community college workforce education survey

Preliminary data from a study conducted by Opportunity America and Lumina Foundation confirm that some of the most exciting innovation in higher education is taking place at community colleges – new thinking about how to prepare learners for the world of work.

These new policies and practices will be more important than ever as the nation emerges from the Covid crisis and millions of Americans need fast, job-focused upskilling to get back to work. Yet relatively little is known about the breadth and depth of community college workforce programs.

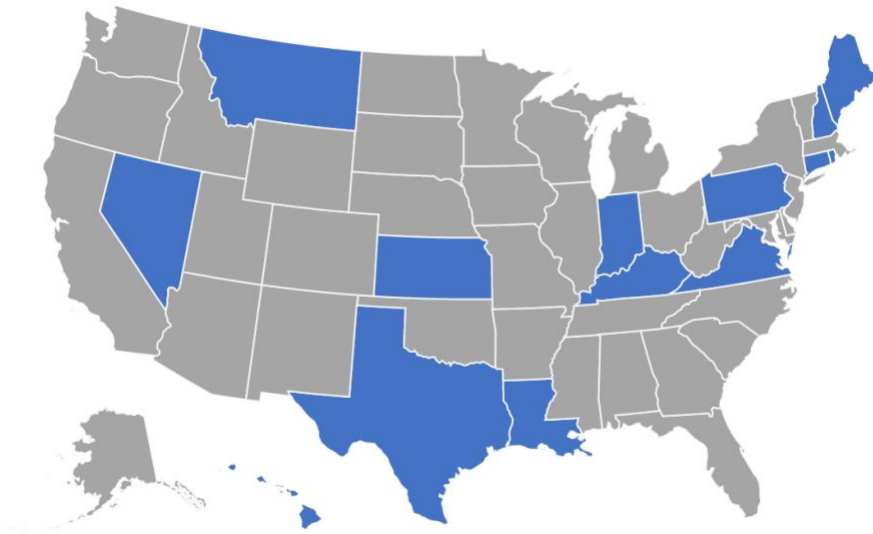
Some 1,260 publicly funded two-year colleges were invited to participate in the study. As the survey closed in early February, 36 percent of community and technical colleges had responded. A full analysis of the results will be available later this spring, but we have preliminary data from 127 colleges in 14 states – nearly one-third of our full sample.

These 127 institutions may or may not be representative, and differences in terminology from state to state can make it difficult to generalize.

But these preliminary data – answers to a few of the survey's most probing questions – offer an intriguing picture of credit and noncredit community college workforce education.

Among our most interesting findings were the broad discrepancies among states – discrepancies illustrated by the figures that follow.

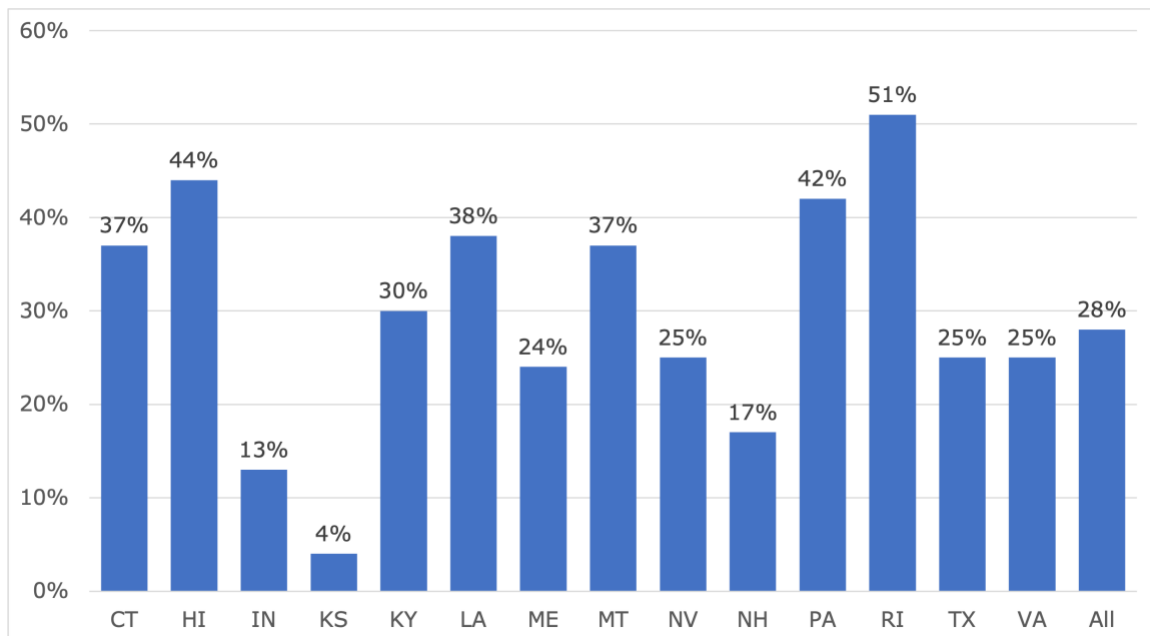
States that submitted early data



Noncredit enrollments

Data about noncredit offerings are less reliable than the information tracked and reported to IPEDS by community college credit divisions. But taken together, the 127 colleges in the preliminary sample reported that 28 percent of their FY 2019 enrollments were noncredit learners.

Figure 1. Noncredit enrollments as a percentage of total college enrollments



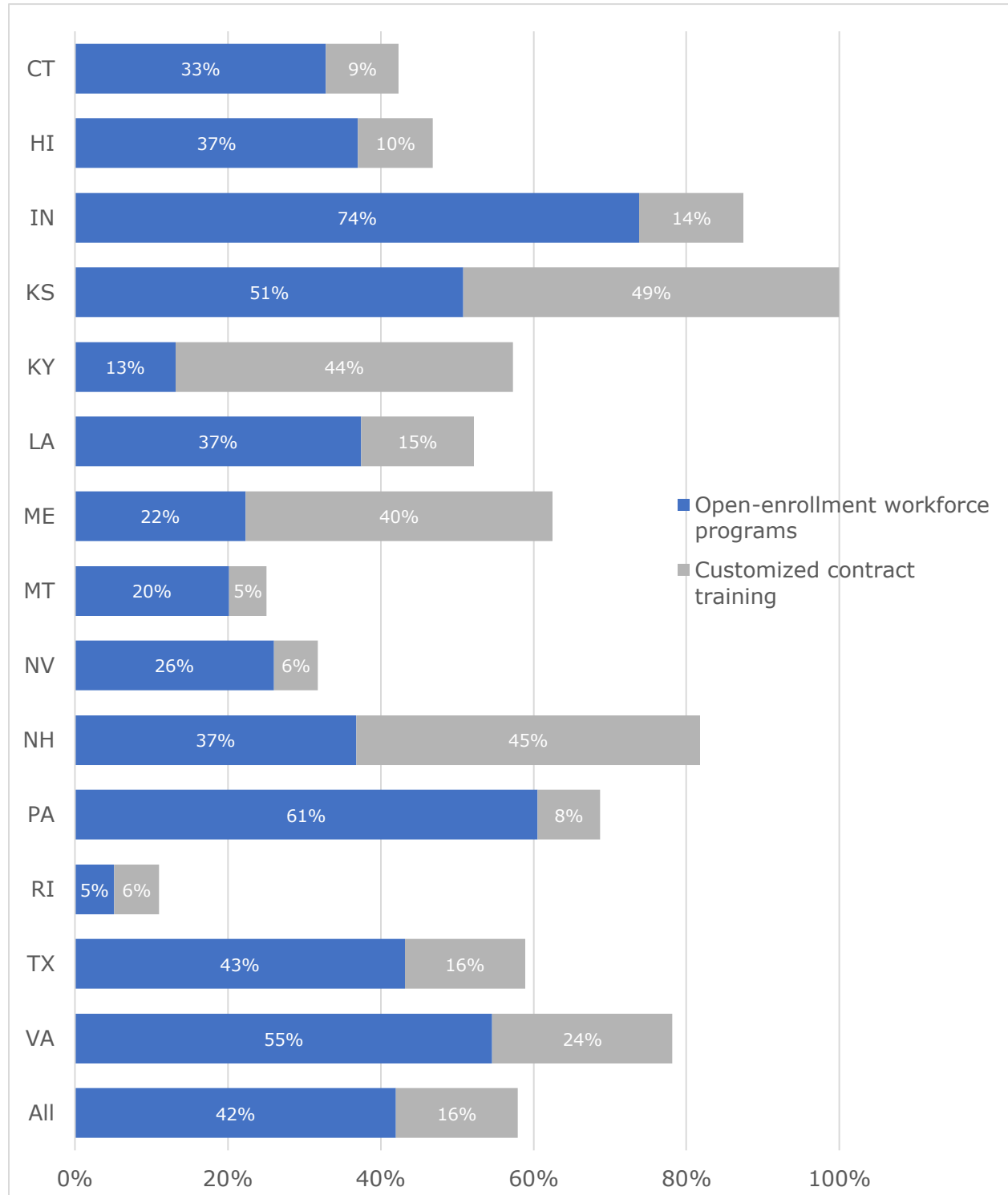
Source: Opportunity America community college survey.

Note: Preliminary data from 127 colleges in 14 states. Kansas data represent technical colleges only.

How much noncredit education is job-focused?

In FY 2019, 58 percent of community college noncredit students were enrolled in occupational programs, either customized contract training or job-focused programs open to all qualified students.

Figure 2. Percentage of noncredit programs that are job-focused by type of instruction



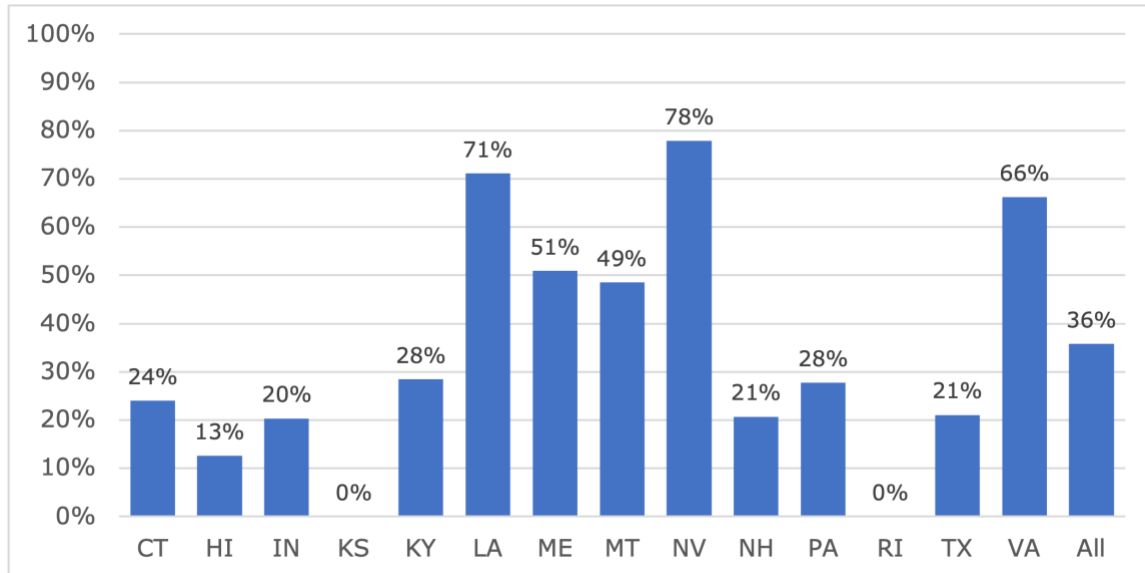
Source: Opportunity America community college survey.

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What credentials do noncredit workforce students earn?

More than one-third – 36 percent – of noncredit students enrolled in workforce education programs earn industry certifications.

Figure 3. Percentage of noncredit workforce students who earn industry certifications



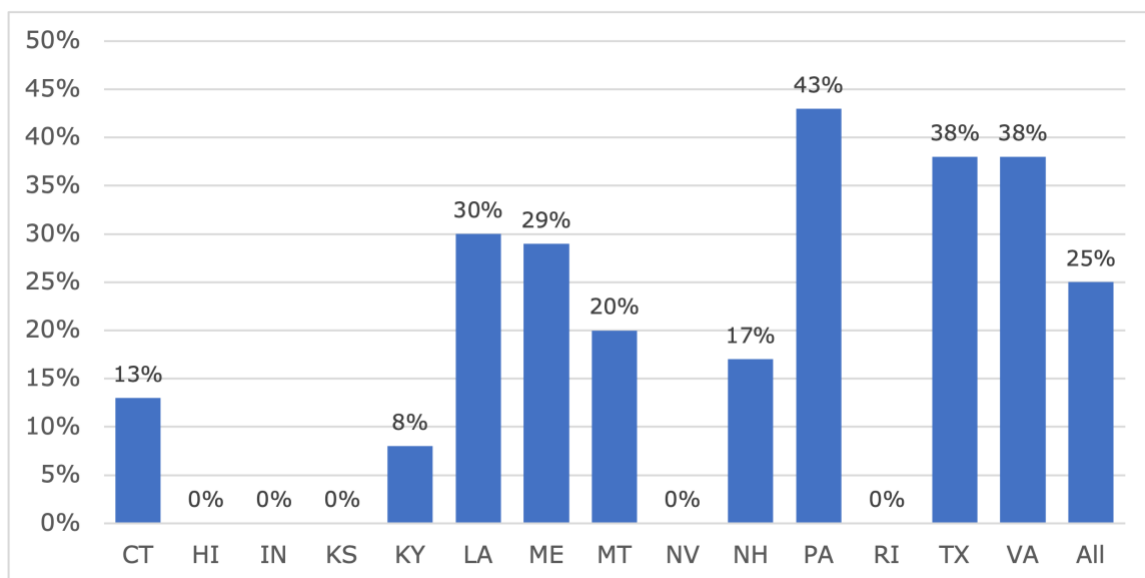
Source: Opportunity America community college survey.

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How do colleges ensure the quality of noncredit workforce programs?

Community colleges report using a number of tools to ensure the quality of job-focused noncredit programs. Some 96 percent of the sample say they design programs based on labor market information or employer input. Just 25 percent track post-completion employment outcomes.

Figure 4. Percentage of institutions that track post-completion employment outcomes



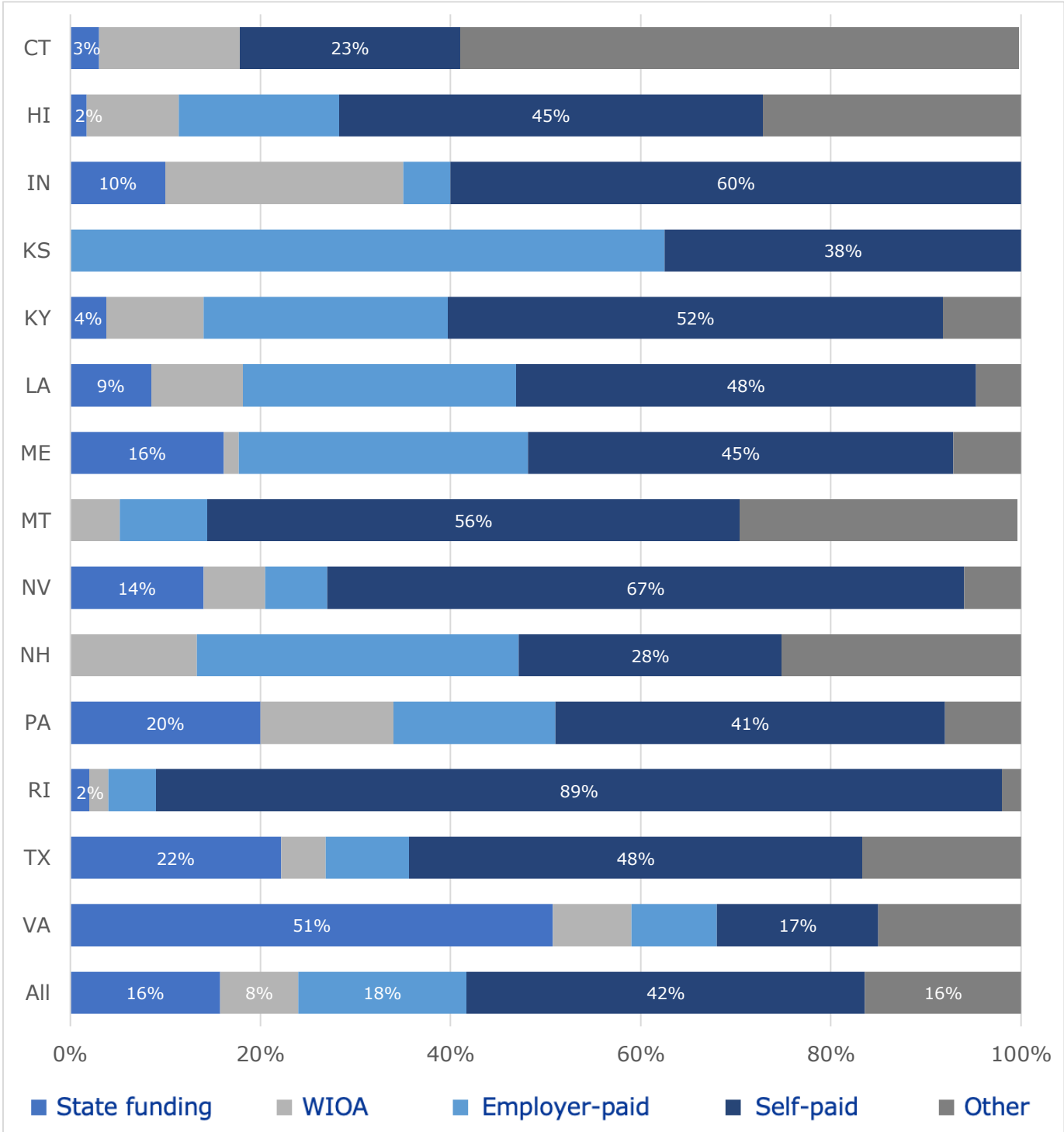
Source: Opportunity America community college survey.

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Who pays for noncredit workforce education?

State formula funding and grants cover the cost of just 16 percent of noncredit workforce programs. The principal source of funding – 42 percent – is students paying out of pocket. Employers pick up 18 percent of the cost.

Figure 5. Percentage of funding for noncredit workforce education by source



Source: Opportunity America community college survey.

Note: Preliminary data from 127 colleges in 14 states. Kansas data represent technical colleges only.

**For more information about the study, please visit
<https://opportunityamericaonline.org/ccstudy/>.**

Opportunity America is a Washington DC-based nonprofit promoting economic mobility – work, skills, careers, ownership and entrepreneurship for poor and working Americans. The organization’s principal activities are research, policy development, dissemination of policy ideas and working to build consensus around policy proposals.