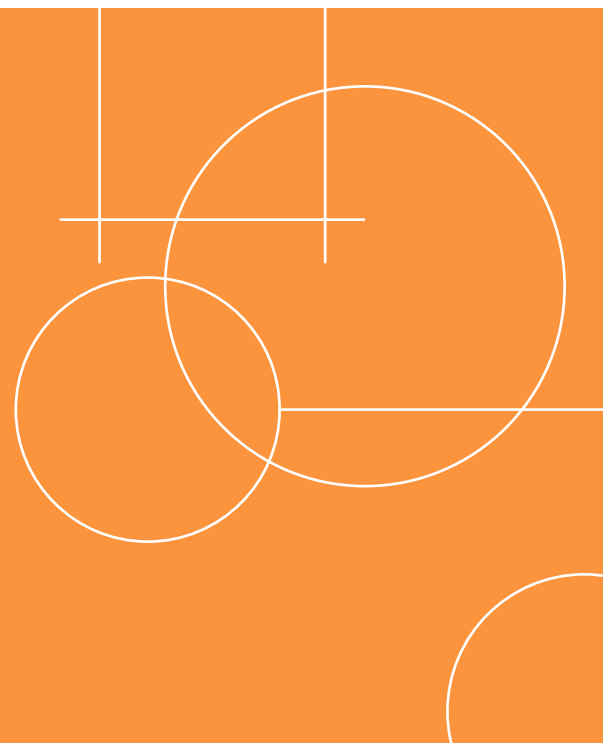




*A Typology and Policy Landscape Analysis of **State Investments in Short-term Credential Pathways***

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INTRODUCTION

The higher education landscape is evolving rapidly, and short-term credentials — also known as microcredentials, sub-baccalaureate credentials, or non-degree credentials — are increasingly taking center stage. With the job market constantly changing, there is growing demand for these valuable certificates and micro-degrees, which can enhance individuals' career prospects and help meet the evolving demands of the modern economy.


States are quickly recognizing the importance of short-term credentials and, as a consequence, are taking steps to support the advancement of these alternative credential pathways for their residents. According to our analysis of state legislation, budgets, and publicly available data, we conservatively estimate that **states have invested at least \$3.81 billion in short-term credential pathways.**¹ Some states are using this money to provide tuition relief to students to make higher education more affordable and reduce student debt. Others are investing in institutions to support program development and capacity-building, ensuring they have the necessary resources to create and maintain a diverse range of short-term credential programs that meet the needs of local economies. And some states are going so far as to incorporate short-term credentials into their funding formulas, thereby providing further recognition and financial support for these programs.

However, despite the rapid proliferation in state funding for short-term credentials, we know little about these investments. To our knowledge, **there has not been a systematic cataloging or analysis of state investments in short-term credential pathways.** As a result, the rapid expansion of sub-baccalaureate offerings has led to a lack of consistency and capacity at the state level to define, evaluate, and track the quality, equity, and impact of these programs. While much of the current policy discussion has focused on evaluating the value of short-term credentials in the abstract or debating whether federal funding should be extended to short-term credentials, little is known about the various components and outcomes of existing state funding for these educational pathways. This has resulted in a “wild, wild west” scenario in the short-term credential landscape, where many policy innovations have yet to catch up with the pace of change.

This analysis offers the first comprehensive classification system, or typology, of direct, sustained state funding for short-term credential programs.²

1 Our search for exact figures allocated to certain programs remains ongoing. As we are able to find new information, we will continue to update our findings.

2 Short-term credentials, as defined in this report, refer to educational programs with a duration of one year or less of full-time study. These shorter-term credentials include college-level certificates and industry-recognized certifications. These programs are typically not eligible for Pell Grants. Variations from this definition are noted, as applicable.



To create the typology we conducted an **in-depth examination of all 50 U.S. states** and collected an extensive dataset containing all available information from legislation, state budgets, existing research, and direct communication with state higher education leaders. Our comprehensive scan employs both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a nuanced and evidence-based understanding of state investments and policies around short-term sub-baccalaureate credentials, with a particular focus on **quality** and **equity**. The purpose of these efforts is to deepen our understanding of state investments in short-term credential programs and pathways, and to identify trends or best practices. By conducting this scan, we aim to leverage this knowledge to allow state policy, investments, and practice to be guided in a more informed and effective way.

The following research questions drove our investigation:

1. What states are appropriating funds to support the creation, expansion, or durability of short-term credential programs and pathways?
2. What are the various components of these existing investments?
3. What are states funding — student aid to defray the costs of tuition and fees or institutions to build capacity to offer more and stronger programming?
4. What funding sources are available and is there a consideration of sustainability?
5. What are the elements of strong policy design on short-term credentials and how can existing policies be improved?

Our typology catalogs state investments in short-term credential pathways along several key benchmarks, including (see Figure 1):

- Whether and how states **clearly define short-term credentials** to help establish a consistent understanding of these programs;
- Whether policies are **equity-centered in design and delivery**, ensuring that diverse populations have equal access to these valuable learning opportunities;
- **Revenue sources and sustainability** to understand how states allocate funds and maintain ongoing support; and
- Whether states commit to an **assurance of value or quality**, demonstrating a dedication to providing impactful, high-quality programs to learners.



FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: TRENDS IN STATE FUNDING OF SHORT-TERM CREDENTIALS

Our research identified **59 state-led initiatives across 28 states** (Table 1).³ The investments in these programs total **no less than \$3.81 billion**. While there is significant variation in how states define short-term credentials in state policies, in this study the term “short-term credentials” refers to educational achievements that require less than one year of full-time study, aligning with the definition commonly used in federal data systems. Any deviations from this definition are acknowledged when relevant. The scope of our focus primarily revolves around credentials granted by public and private postsecondary institutions upon the satisfactory completion of coursework and/or assessments, including both for-credit and not-for-credit programs. It is worth noting that short-term credentials can also include certificates issued by industry organizations. Although certain initiatives in our dataset offer funding for longer-term programs, to meet the minimum inclusion criteria, they must also extend funding opportunities to programs that align with our definition of a short-term credential.


Among the initiatives we examined, many of these programs (27) provide financial aid directly to students to defray program costs. A total of 15 state initiatives allocate funding to institutions with the aim of providing a means to offer student supports and/or tuition relief. A select six states within our dataset provide funding to institutions to promote capacity-building and foster the development of short-term credential programs that align with workforce needs. An additional five states integrate funding for short-term credentials into their outcomes-based funding formula. The remaining programs, best classified as “other,” fund the development of a tool, framework, or further research on short-term credentials to help inform future policies.

A strong example of an initiative that funds students directly is Louisiana’s **[MJ Foster Promise Program](#)**, a last-dollar promise program that covers tuition and fees up to a maximum of \$6,400 per academic year. To be eligible for the program, students must meet certain income or employment criteria, including having a family income of 300% of the Federal Poverty Level or below, or being un/under-employed for at least six months prior to receiving the grant. Recipients must also commit to annual 20 hours of community service, internships, or mentorships to maintain eligibility.

In early June 2023, the Louisiana State Legislature passed **[Senate Bill 204](#)** and sent it to Gov. Edwards for his signature. The new law will bring significant changes to the MJ Foster Promise Program with the aim of improving its overall performance and providing greater support to eligible students. The new law will bring about three key actions that go into effect July 1, 2023.

1. The legislation stipulates that funds will be allocated to the college financial aid office using a formula similar to the state’s approach with the **[Louisiana GO Grant](#)** and the **[Taylor Opportunity Program for Students \(TOPS\)](#)**. This arrangement ensures that the monetary resources are brought closer to the students, thereby

³ It should be noted that our research findings are limited to existing policies and funding initiatives as of the release of this report and do not include pending legislation or proposed budgets. However, we are closely monitoring legislation and budgets.



enhancing the efficiency of distribution. It is important to note that the responsibility for implementing this provision lies with the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) through rulemaking, rather than being directly addressed in the legislation itself.

2. The law also establishes the award as a first-dollar award of \$1,600 per semester, with a lifetime maximum of \$6,400.
3. Finally, the law removes specific language pertaining to rules and entrusts LOSFA with the management of these details through the rulemaking process. This approach enables the state to target specific populations, such as those eligible for Medicaid. For instance, applicants may be asked if they qualify for Medicaid, and a positive verification could grant them financial eligibility under the program. It is worth noting that a considerable number of students lack parental information required for FAFSA. Therefore, the state seeks to provide an allowance for first-time college students, allowing them to qualify for the initial term without completing FAFSA, while simultaneously helping them complete the application. The new law will also provide alternative options to the FAFSA, such as using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid. The administrative agency will be responsible for managing the verification of this information.

An exemplary initiative that funds institutions to provide student supports is Virginia's [New Economy Workforce Credential Grant \(WCG\)](#). This program uses a pay-for-performance model to fund non-credit workforce training that leads to credentials in high-demand fields. Institutions are required to submit student-level data to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for analysis, which in turn ensures transparency and accountability in an otherwise unregulated sector.

During FY 2022, the WCG program experienced a remarkable surge in enrollment, with a record number of students enrolling in and completing the program to earn their credential. This growth is particularly noteworthy given the declining enrollments in for-credit academic programs at Virginia Community Colleges in recent years.

This program is dedicated to fostering equity by serving a large number of historically underserved populations, such as students with financial need, underrepresented minority groups, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The WCG program primarily serves nontraditional students, with a median age of 32; only 29% of the program's students are 24 years or younger. Additionally, the program caters to a significant population of first-time-in-college students, as approximately two-thirds (7,658) of WCG participants in FY 2022 had not previously enrolled in a postsecondary training or credential program. Prior to enrolling in the WCG programs, the median annual wage of students is \$24,877. However, twelve months after completing the program, the median wage increases to \$30,274, representing a \$5,397 (22%) increase compared to pre-program wages.

Table 1: Comprehensive Catalog of State-Funded Initiatives⁴

STATE	PROGRAM	WHO'S FUNDED	YEAR ESTABLISHED
AL	Alabama Workforce Stabilization Grant	Student	2022
	Alabama Works! Credentialing Framework	n/a	2019
AR	Workforce Challenge Scholarship*	Student	2017
CA	Golden State Education and Training Grant	Student	2022
CO	House Bill 23-1246	Institution: Capacity-building	2023
	Career Development Incentive Program	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2016
CT	CareerConneCT	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2022
FL	Rapid Credentialing Grant	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2020
	Open Door Grant	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2022
	Senate Bill 98	Outcomes-based Funding	2021
HI	Promising Credentials in Hawai'i	Other: Research	2020
IL	Workforce Equity Initiative	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2019
IN	Workforce Ready Grant	Student	2017
IA	GAP Tuition Assistance Program	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2013
	Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant (Kibbie Grant)	Student	2012
	Vocational-technical Tuition Grant	Student	AY 1974-75
KS	Accelerating Opportunity Kansas	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2011

⁴ The information presented in this report reflects the best available data we could find through our research. It is important to note that given the lack of consistent and comprehensive data systems to track short-term credential programs at the state level, we acknowledge that we may have missed some state-funded initiatives. We invite readers to contact Stephanie Murphy at stephanie_murphy@hcmstrategists.com to report any additional initiatives that may not have been captured in this study.

STATE	PROGRAM	WHO'S FUNDED	YEAR ESTABLISHED
LA	MJ Foster Promise Program	Student	2022
	Completers Fund	Student	2022
	Reboot LA 2.0	Institution: Capacity-building	2022
	Jumpstart Louisiana	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2014
KY	Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship*	Student	2017
MD	Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship*	Student	Refreshed in 2020
	Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship	Student	2017
	Non-credit Workforce Completers System	Other: Dataset	2022
MI	Michigan New Jobs Training Program	Institution: Capacity-building	2008
	Skills Scholarship	Student	2021
	Futures for Frontliners*	Student	2021
MN	Workforce Development Scholarship*	Student	2021
MO	FastTrack Workforce Incentive Grant	Student	2019
	Upskill Credential Training Fund (House Bill 417)	Other: Employers	2023
NV	Promise Scholarship*	Student	2017
	Silver State Opportunity Scholarship	Student	2015
NC	GEER Scholarship	Student	2020
	Reinforcement and Investment to Strengthen the Economy (RAISE) Scholarship	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2023
	Short-term Workforce Development Grant Program	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2022
	NC GROW (Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce)	Student	AY 2020-21
OH	House Bill 699, Section R.C. 3333.34 (126th General Assembly)	n/a	2005-06 legislative session
	Short Term Certificate Grant Program	Student	2021
	TechCred Program	Other: Private Provider	2005
	Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP)	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2020
OK	UpskillOK.org	Other: Pathways Tool	2022

STATE	PROGRAM	WHO'S FUNDED	YEAR ESTABLISHED
RI	Rhode Island Reconnect	Institution: Capacity-building	2020
TN	OBF Funding Formula, The Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010	Outcomes-based Funding	2010
	Tennessee Promise	Student	2015
	Tennessee Reconnect*	Student	2018
	Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant	Student	2004
	"Project Calypso" — Reimagining the Community College Experience Program	Institution: Capacity-building	Fall 2023
TX	Reskilling Support Fund Grant Program	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2021
	Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) Grant Program 2022	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2021
	Returned Value Formula at TSTC Campuses	Outcomes-based Funding	2013
	Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Grant	Institution: Capacity-building	2022
	House Bill 8 (Revised State Community College Funding Model)	Outcomes-based Funding	2023
VA	FastForward Wraparound Services	Student	2016
	New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (Pay-for-performance Model)	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	2017
UT	Senate Bill 117	Outcomes-based Funding	2017
WA	Washington State Opportunity Grant	Student	2011
	Washington State Worker Retraining Program	Institution: Student Supports/Tuition	Reauthorized 1999
WV	Job Jumpstart Program	Student	2020
	Workforce Component of the Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student (HEAPS) Grant Program*	Student	2004

*The programs supported by these initiatives partially fit our working definition of short-term credentials because, although they lead to industry-recognized certificates, diplomas, or associate degrees, they are eligible for the Pell Grant. Nevertheless, we have included them in our typology because they provide funding for shorter-term certificates and industry-recognized certifications that meet Lumina Foundation's quality benchmarks. That is, they lead to meaningful employment, serve as a stepping stone to career advancement, higher pay, and future opportunities, and provide a pathway to continued education training and lifelong learning.




Revenue Sources and Sustainability

Adequate funding is necessary to ensure that a policy can **support a sufficient number of individuals** seeking a short-term credential or sufficiently **provide for institutional capacity-building**. A sustainable funding source helps ensure the longevity and stability of a policy, as well as help with long-term planning. Many of the initiatives in our dataset (25) are funded using the state's general funds (Appendix: Figure 2). In terms of sustainability, general state appropriations provide a relatively stable funding source that can be crucial for achieving long-term goals. Yet, even so, funding decisions for general state appropriations are often subject to political influence and priorities, which can shift depending on the political climate or leadership changes. This can result in changes to funding levels or priorities that may not align with the program's objectives or may lead to an initiative's elimination altogether.

Four states — Florida, Tennessee, Texas, Utah — allocate state formula funding for short-term credentials through an outcomes-based funding model, which distributes money based on student performance. There are several advantages to having states include short-term credentials in their outcomes-based funding calculation. Institutions are encouraged to prioritize and invest in short-term credential programs, as they are directly linked to funding outcomes. This often means that institutions are incentivized to offer programs that lead to high-demand occupations, which promotes the development of a more skilled and job-ready workforce. Additionally, because shorter-term programs often serve a disproportionately high number of non-traditional and underrepresented student populations, outcomes funding incentives can increase equity by providing funding and support for the programs that often serve traditionally underserved populations. Yet, despite the many advantages associated with outcomes-based funding formulas, they are nevertheless susceptible to challenges that states ought to address. For instance, research has shown that performance-based funding can result in institutions “gaming the system” to meet funding metrics by prioritizing programs that are easier to complete or have lower costs, rather than those that lead to high-demand occupations. Additionally, institutions may be driven to show preference for more advantaged, better resourced students who are more likely to persist and graduate (McKinney and Hagedorn 2017, Dougherty and Reddy 2011, Li, Gándara, and Assalone 2018). The logic behind this behavior is simple: it boils down to a numbers game. The more students successfully progress through a program, the more funding an institution stands to get. States have responded to these research findings by implementing various measures to address the identified issues. These actions include allocating additional funds to support higher-cost and higher-demand programs, as well as increasing financial resources targeted towards underserved populations. With this in mind, as short-term credentials continue to proliferate, similar policy adjustments can be made if states are to include these in their outcomes-based funding formulas. This would include funding only specific short-term credentials that are shown to have value.

Eleven initiatives in our typology made use of federal Covid-19 emergency relief dollars to pay for one-time or pilot programs. Most of these programs were established to provide financial assistance to individuals who lost their jobs during the pandemic. The primary objective of these grants was to enable people to rapidly reskill or upskill with training in high-demand fields to facilitate their reentry into the workforce. Although these programs



served as a temporary mitigation strategy to address the immediate economic challenge states faced during the global emergency, their short-term funding meant that they failed to provide a long-term or sustainable investment in short-term credentialing.


Of the states that launched temporary grant programs for short-term credentials, [Florida's Open Door Grant Program](#) (formerly the Rapid Credentialing Grant) stands out as a successful transformation of one of these initiatives into a longer-term program. During the 2021 Florida Legislative Session, [House Bill 1507](#) was passed, which effectively made permanent the Rapid Credentialing Grant. This grant provides financial support to enable student completion of short-term, high-demand credit and non-credit career and technical education (CTE) programs at career centers and Florida College System (FCS) institutions. One year later, in the 2022 session, certain provisions of the Open Door statute were amended, and the funding source for the grant was changed from a federally-funded program to a state-funded initiative. In the years to come, it will be important for researchers and advocates to closely monitor the Open Door Grant to ensure that the program remains financially viable and adaptable to changing workforce demands.

Equity

Short-term credentials play a pivotal role in offering a valuable and viable avenue for improving labor market prospects, particularly among individuals who face constraints in terms of time, finances, and social capital that hinder their ability to pursue more conventional two- or four-year degree programs. By effectively addressing these barriers, short-term credentials are emerging as essential for enhancing labor market equity. These educational pathways allow individuals to more quickly and cost-effectively enhance their skills and competencies, empowering them to advance their career opportunities and bridge the gap between their existing qualifications and the evolving requirements of high-demand industries. From this standpoint, short-term credentials have serious potential for becoming a transformative force by facilitating upskilling and enabling individuals to effectively showcase their proficiencies to employers. As a result, they have the potential to foster a more inclusive labor market, characterized by greater equality of opportunity for all learners.

With this in mind, state policies for funding short-term credentials should be designed to intentionally promote inclusivity and equity. Programs should be accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds, and states should ensure that funding is distributed equitably among various populations. Strong state-funded short-term credential initiatives tend to target funding to underserved populations to ensure that funding is reaching those who need it the most. Key target populations include low-income/low-wage individuals, the underemployed, rural residents, displaced workers, individuals from minoritized racial and ethnic backgrounds, people with disabilities, and the re-entry population.

Among the 59 initiatives captured in our typology, 23 incorporate an “equity component” that specifically aims to address the needs of distinct target populations. A significant majority of these initiatives limit eligibility on the basis of income; they direct funds to individuals who demonstrate financial need and fall within the “low-income



or low-wage” bracket. However, it is important to highlight a couple of exemplary initiatives that go beyond the prevailing focus on financial need and direct funds toward other high-need populations. For instance, Connecticut’s CareerConneCT specifically targets populations that are significantly underrepresented in the workforce, including individuals from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, people with disabilities, the re-entry population, opportunity youth, veterans, immigrants, and women. By directing resources towards these populations, the initiative aims to address systemic barriers and promote inclusivity in the labor market, thereby fostering greater workforce diversity and equity.

Similarly, Illinois’ Workforce Equity Initiative takes a focused approach by tying the allocation of funds to student demographics. For an institution to qualify for the funds, its student population must consist of at least 60% Black individuals. This targeted strategy acknowledges the historical and ongoing disparities faced by Black communities and seeks to address systemic inequities by directing resources towards educational institutions that serve these populations.

These exemplary initiatives in Connecticut and Illinois demonstrate a deliberate effort to expand the scope of equity considerations beyond financial need by prioritizing historically marginalized and underrepresented populations. By recognizing and targeting the unique challenges faced by these groups, these programs have the potential to make significant strides in fostering more inclusive and equitable educational and employment pathways.


Quality or Value Assurance

Strong state policies that support non-degree credential pathways tend to limit funding to certain credentials deemed to be of value. By identifying the factors that contribute to the value of a credential, policymakers and educators can design postsecondary education programs that **meet the needs of the job market** and **promote economic mobility** for individuals. Value is most effectively ascribed on the basis of outcomes, such as:

1. **Employer recognition** of a credential as evidence of proficiency in a specific skill or knowledge area.
2. **Greater employability** due to employer demand for specific credentials or actual job placements.
3. **Wage premiums** and increased prospects for economic mobility — with a particular focus on increasing the economic mobility of **underserved populations**.

In our analysis of the extent to which state funding for short-term credentials imposes limitations based on the perceived value of programs, we classify these initiatives into three distinct categories.

- **No/None:** Initiatives falling under this category do not impose any specific limitations on funding allocation based on predetermined value criteria.
- **Basic:** Initiatives classified as “Basic” employ relatively simple, straightforward language to define value. Typically, these initiatives broadly stipulate that programs should be in “high-demand areas” and/or



lead to “middle-to-high-wage” jobs with “competitive” wages. However, they lack further clarification or specific parameters regarding the precise interpretation of these terms.


- **Advanced:** Initiatives designated as “Advanced” exhibit clearer, more refined and explicit language concerning the definition of value. Many of these initiatives require the establishment of boards or committees that convene on a regular basis to assess and develop an official list of programs deemed to possess value to the individual and the state. This approach introduces a more comprehensive framework for evaluating the value of short-term credential programs.

In our typology, we identified 32 initiatives that limit funding for short-term credentials to those deemed to be of value (Appendix: Figure 4). Of these, 24 are categorized as “Basic,” indicating that they acknowledge the importance of ensuring that credential programs are high quality. However, these initiatives lack explicit clarification regarding the specific criteria or standards that define and evaluate quality. Some states make broad, sweeping statements regarding value. For instance, the language of Rhode Island Reconnect stipulates that valuable credential programs are “many different types of credentials from different programs” that “give students the chance to earn a valuable and transferable credential to use in the workforce.” The ambiguity of this language can make it difficult for prospective students to discern which credentials are regarded as valuable and are more likely to lead to in-demand employment opportunities with competitive wages. Meanwhile, other states provide a basic definition of value in terms of job placement rates or income. For example, Michigan’s New Jobs Training Program states that credential earners must earn at least 175% of the state’s minimum wage, and Illinois’ Workforce Equity Initiative indicates that individuals must earn at least 30% above minimum wage after exiting a program funded by the initiative. However, neither initiative offers concrete examples of programs that effectively contribute to this level of economic mobility.

By contrast, 11 states — Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia — fund initiatives that offer “Advanced” language around credential value. Minnesota is highly regarded for its robust quality framework, earning it the reputation of being the “gold standard” in this domain (Fain 2023). The state’s primary focus revolves around addressing key questions concerning how quickly people can find jobs post-completion and evaluating the career pathways that lead to higher-paying positions for program graduates.

To ensure transparency and accountability, Minnesota mandates a comprehensive report on participant outcomes for workforce programs that receive state funding. This reporting requirement involves linking program data with administrative wage records, enabling the assessment of employment status, wage levels, and industry affiliations. Notably, the report includes job-retention rates for students, even if they did not complete the training. Moreover, the data are meticulously disaggregated to provide insights based on important demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, geography, age, education, and housing status.

By adhering to such rigorous standards and providing detailed information on participant outcomes, Minnesota offers a robust foundation for evidence-based decision-making. This approach ensures that policymakers and



stakeholders have access to reliable data, facilitating informed discussions and the development of effective strategies to enhance the value and impact of workforce programs.


Another example of a state-funded initiative we classify as “Advanced” is the Reskilling Support Fund Grant Program in Texas. Grant recipients are required to (re-)enroll in a “high-value career program,” which consists of those that have fewer than 60 semester credit hours. This includes programs that may be converted to credit or are stackable to credit-bearing programs, Level 1 Certificates, Level 2 Certificates, or Level 3 Enhanced Skills Awards, and Advanced Technology Certificates. To qualify as eligible, workforce credential programs must meet either of the following criteria:

- Alignment with high-value occupations within a region, as determined by the most recent Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Target Occupations regional list.
- OR
- Alignment with high-value occupations offering above-average wages and demonstrating strong job placement rates within a region. This alignment is determined by the institution through a thorough examination of relevant labor market information in collaboration with regional employers and in consultation with the Regional Workforce Development Board.

When individuals have access to transparent information regarding the value of different credentials, including their relevance to specific industries and their potential to lead to high-demand, well-paying jobs, they can make more discerning choices regarding their educational pathways. This helps individuals invest their time, effort, and resources in programs that align with their career goals, maximize their potential for economic mobility, and support the state’s economic development. Additionally, concrete language around quality assurance is vital for maintaining credibility and trust in higher education — a concern that is particularly relevant given that skepticism about the value of higher education is extraordinarily high. When there are explicit standards and criteria in place to evaluate the quality of credentials, it can help ensure that postsecondary institutions and other training providers are held accountable for delivering programs that meet established benchmarks. This promotes consistency in the educational experience, enhances the reputation of institutions and programs, and provides assurance to employers that graduates possess the necessary skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce.

Data Systems to Track Short-term Credentials

A strong data system that tracks credential production and outcomes is essential for effective workforce development, but short-term and non-credit workforce programs often lack reliable data on their outcomes (Mehl 2023, Xu et al. 2023). Strong data on outcomes can help to ensure accountability, program improvement, equity, inter-agency coordination, and economic development, all of which are critical for building a skilled and



competitive workforce that supports economic growth and development. Yet, despite recent growing interest in short-term credentials, we have minimal data on state funding of these programs. This lack of data poses a significant challenge to tracking credential growth and assessing the impact of non-credit instruction. As a consequence, we are limited in our ability to formulate evidence-based policies and practices related to short-term credentials.

We have seen encouraging progress in some states. One such example is Maryland, which implemented the Non-credit Workforce Completers System to capture data on students who successfully complete non-credit workforce training programs within a given collection year. In this context, workforce training completers refer to students who have fulfilled the requirements of a course or series of courses that qualify them for specific occupations or provide a comprehensive knowledge base facilitating career advancement. The process of establishing Maryland's non-credit data collection system was met with several challenges; key factors that contributed to the successful resolution of these challenges include: (1) ensuring consistency in data fields to enable reliable comparisons and analysis, (2) fostering strong partnerships among relevant stakeholders to facilitate collaborative efforts and data sharing, (3) recognizing that non-credit instruction diverges from the standard framework of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and, therefore, the state's approach to data collection needed to be adapted accordingly, (4) establishing clear and precise definitions of data elements to eliminate ambiguity and ensure consistent interpretation, and (5) engaging representatives from select colleges to collectively undertake the necessary work on behalf of all participating institutions (Schmertz and Kellogg 2022).

Iowa also stands out for having a particularly robust data collection system capable of capturing comprehensive information related to the production of short-term credentials. The Iowa Department of Education (IDE) has been actively collecting data on non-credit students since 1999, which has resulted in an increasingly nuanced and refined approach over the past two decades. This steadfast commitment to data collection has enabled Iowa to go beyond a mere headcount and delve into more comprehensive analyses, revealing valuable insights into the outcomes and impact of short-term credential programs.

Through their data collection efforts, the IDE's data have evolved from a simple enumeration of students to an analysis of critical indicators such as the percentage of completers who secure in-state employment, their median wage pre- and post-completion, and the proportion of students who subsequently enroll in for-credit classes. This comprehensive approach allows key stakeholders to have a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and value of short-term credential programs in Iowa.

The IDE also regularly releases a "Gap Program Outcomes Report" that provides in-depth information on short-term credential program participants. This report not only offers a comprehensive overview of enrollment, transfer, and employment/wage outcomes, but also presents data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and age. This level of granularity allows policymakers, educators, and researchers to identify potential disparities or inequities in the outcomes of short-term credential programs at Iowa's institutions, thereby enabling targeted

interventions to promote greater equity and access for all student populations in the state.

The significance of Iowa’s robust data collection system cannot be understated. It facilitates evidence-based decision-making, promotes transparency, and supports ongoing evaluation and improvement of short-term credential programs. By continually monitoring and disseminating data, Iowa’s approach contributes to a more informed understanding of the outcomes and impacts of non-credit programs, allowing for informed policy development, program refinement, and equitable opportunities for students. As data becomes more readily available nationwide, the opportunities to analyze the value of short-term credential pathways — both in the short- and long-term — will grow in parallel.

APPENDIX

Figure 1: Summary of HCM’s short-term credential typology

CATEGORY	BENCHMARKS
Basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State • Program Name • Year Established
Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Covid Relief Funds • Lottery Revenue • General State Budget • Unemployment Insurance Taxes • Formula Funding • Total Allocation • % Change in Funding Since Implementation • Allocation Recipient <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students Directly (Financial Aid) • Institutions: Student Supports/Tuition Assistance • Institutions: Capacity-building • Outcomes-based Funding Formula • Employers/Private Providers • Allocation per Recipient • Funding Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time Funding • Pilot Phase • Short-term (End Date Specified) • Long-term (No End Date Specified)

CATEGORY	BENCHMARKS
Revenue (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability of Funding Source Duration or End Date
Clear Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Language Delimits Credential Duration Policy Language Specifies Whether Funds are Available for Credit/ Non-credit Programs Policy Language Delineates Stackability/Portability
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation is equity-centered in design and delivery Eligibility Limitations Eligibility Requirements (Details)
Quality/Value Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to an Assurance of Value or High Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No/None Basic Advanced Details on Language to Define Value Limited to Specific Sector(s) Details on Sector Specifications
Adjacent State Policies/Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term Credentials in State Attainment Goal State Extends Financial Aid to Short-term Credentials State has Data System to Track Short-term Credential Production and/or Outcomes Data System Details

Figure 2: Summary of revenue details

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
AL	Alabama Workforce Stabilization Grant	Federal Covid Funds	\$17.82M	Unknown	One-time Funding	Until funds disbursed to 7,080 participants
	Alabama Works! Credentialing Framework	Other	Unknown	n/a	Short-term (Specified End Date)	Ended September 2022
AR	Workforce Challenge Scholarship	Lottery Revenue	Unknown	Maximum \$800 per program	Long-term (No End Date)	—

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
CA	Golden State Education and Training Grant	Federal Covid Funds	\$500M \$472M from Covid Funds	\$2.5K	One-time Funding	2022-2023
CO	House Bill 23-1246	General State Budget	\$45M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Career Development Incentive Program	General State Budget	\$22M (total since 2016-17)	Up to \$1K per completed credential	Long-term (No End Date)	—
CT	CareerConneCT	Federal Covid Funds	\$70M	Varies	One-time Funding	—
FL	Rapid Credentialing Grant	Federal Covid Funds	\$35M	Unknown	One-time Funding	Until Allocated Funds Exhausted
	Open Door Grant	Formula Funding	\$15M for School Districts; \$20M for College System	Unknown	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Senate Bill 98	Formula Funding	\$6.5M for School Districts; \$14M for State Colleges	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
HI	Promising Credentials in Hawai'i	Other	Unknown	n/a	One-time Funding	2020
IL	Workforce Equity Initiative	General State Budget	\$18.7M	Varies	Short-term (Specified End Date)	Nov. 1, 2020- Oct. 31, 2021

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
IN	Workforce Ready Grant	General State Budget	Unknown	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
IA	GAP Tuition Assistance Program	Formula Funding	\$2M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Skilled workforce Shortage Tuition Grant (Kibbie Grant)	Formula Funding	\$5M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Vocational-technical Tuition Grant	General State Budget	Unknown	Average: \$550- \$900; Max: \$1.2K	Long-term (No End Date)	—
KS	Accelerating Opportunity Kansas	Other	Unknown	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
LA	MJ Foster Promise Program	State-Funded. Previously: Federal Covid Funds	\$10.5M	\$3.2K per Year, or up to \$6.4K for High-cost Programs.	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Completers Fund	Federal Covid Funds	\$13.3M	Varies	Short-term (Specified End Date)	Until all funding is exhausted, or June 30, 2023, whichever is later
	Reboot LA 2.0	General State Budget	\$10M	Varies	Short-term (Specified End Date)	This is the second round of one-time funding
	Jumpstart Louisiana	General State Budget	\$2.8M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
KY	Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship	General State Budget	\$15.9M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
MD	Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship	General State Budget	\$134.1M	\$200-\$5K	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship	Other	At Least \$1M Annually	Max \$2K Annually	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Non-credit Workforce Completers System	General State Budget	Unknown	n/a	Long-term (No End Date)	—
MI	Michigan New Jobs Training Program	General State Budget	Part of a suite of policies for which \$135M has been allocated	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Skills Scholarship	General State Budget	\$1.5M	\$1-1.5K	One-time Funding	One-time Grant
	Futures for Frontliners	General State Budget	\$30M (\$24M + \$6M top up in 2022)	Varies	Pilot Phase	The program is in its first year. Gov. Whitmer is interested in continuing and expanding the program.
MN	Workforce Development Scholarship	General State Budget	\$265K	\$2.5K per Year	Long-term (No End Date)	—

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
MO	FastTrack Workforce Incentive Grant	General State Budget	\$10M Annually	Max \$500	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Upskill Credential Training Fund (House Bill 417)	General State Budget	\$6M	Up to \$30K per fiscal year	Long-term (No End Date)	—
NV	Promise Scholarship	General State Budget	\$7.33M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Silver State Opportunity Scholarship	General State Budget	\$24.67M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
NC	GEER Scholarship	Federal Covid Funds	\$15M	Up to \$750 or Cost of Program, Whichever is More	One-time Funding	Through September 30, 2022
	Reinforcement and Investment to Strengthen the Economy (RAISE) Scholarship	Other	\$35M		Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Short-term Workforce Development Grant Program	General State Budget	\$3M	Max \$750	Short-term (Specified End Date)	January 1, 2022- June 30, 2022
	NC GROW (Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce)	Unemployment Insurance Taxes	\$45M \$30M for Programs in Fields With High Employer Demand + \$15M for Non-credit Training Programs	Max \$1K per student	Long-term (No End Date)	—

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
OH	House Bill 699, Section R.C. 3333.34 (126th General Assembly)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Short Term Certificate Grant Program	Federal Covid Funds	\$7.5M	One-time Grant of up to \$2K	Short-term (Specified End Date)	January 2022- December 2023
	TechCred Program	General State Budget	Unknown	Varies. Businesses are eligible for up to \$30,000 per round and up to \$180,000 per year.	Long-term (No End Date)	There is no specified end date, and Gov. Dewin has indicated that he will retain it for as long as he is in office.
	Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP)	Other	\$5M	Varies. Training providers get up to \$250,000K.	Short-term (Specified End Date)	Unclear if the program will receive additional funding.
OK	UpskillOK.org	Other	\$1M	n/a	Long-term (No End Date)	—
RI	Rhode Island Reconnect	Grant from Lumina Foundation	\$400K	n/a	One-time Funding	December 2021

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
TN	OBF Funding Formula, The Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010	Formula Funding	\$1.25B (2022-23)	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Tennessee Promise	Lottery Revenue	\$104M (2020-21)	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Tennessee Reconnect	Lottery Revenue	\$29M (2020-21)	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant	Lottery Revenue	\$15M (2020-21)	\$2K per Academic Year	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	“Project Calypso” — Reimagining the Community College Experience Program	Other - The Access & Diversity Grant	Unknown	Varies. \$400K-\$800K per college	Pilot Phase	Funding Period Concludes May 2025

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
TX	Reskilling Support Fund Grant Program	Federal Covid Funds	\$47M	\$500-\$2.5K	Short-term (Specified End Date)	Round 1: 2021 Round 2: 2022 Round 3: 2023
	Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) Grant Program 2022	Federal Covid Funds	\$15M	Varies	Short-term (Specified End Date)	Two Years: 2021-2023
	Returned Value Formula at TSTC Campuses	Formula Funding	Returned-value Calculation: \$390M Instruction and Administration: \$140M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Grant	Federal Covid Funds	\$94.6M	Planning Grants Up to \$50K	One-time Funding	All applications were due May 31, 2022
	House Bill 8 (Revised State Community College Funding Model)	Formula Funding	\$650M	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—

STATE	PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCE	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	RECIPIENT AWARD AMOUNT	STATUS	DURATION OR END DATE
VA	FastForward Wraparound Services	General State Budget	\$7.5M	Max \$3K	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (Pay-for-performance Model)	Other	\$50M	Max award to institution for completion of training and a credential: \$3K	Long-term (No End Date)	—
UT	Senate Bill 117	Formula Funding	\$30M (FY2022)	Varies	Long-term (No End Date)	—
WA	Washington State Opportunity Grant	General State Budget	Up to \$50M Annually	Baccalaureate Scholarship: Max \$22.5K. Career and Technical Scholarship: Max \$1.5 per Quarter.	Long-term (No End Date)	—
	Washington State Worker Retraining Program	General State Budget	\$39.8M (FY2023)	\$3,816 per Full-time Equivalent Student	Long-term (No End Date)	—
WV	Job Jumpstart Program	Federal Covid Funds	\$20M	One-time Payment of \$1.5K	One-time Funding	August 12, 2022
	Workforce Component of the Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student (HEAPS) Grant Program	General State Budget	Roughly \$5.5M through 2020-21	Up to \$2K	Long-term (No End Date)	—

Figure 3: Summary of equity-focus

STATE	PROGRAM	EQUITY - FOCUSED?	EQUITY DETAILS
AL	Alabama Workforce Stabilization Grant	Yes	Targets displaced workers, new workers with barriers to enter the workforce, and underemployed/ low-wage workers. Prioritizes individuals in rural communities or Opportunity Zones.
	Alabama Works! Credentialing Framework	No	
AR	Workforce Challenge Scholarship	No	
CA	Golden State Education and Training Grant	Yes	Income-based: Recipients must meet the income and asset criteria to be eligible for the grant. The first phase of implementation will award money to student parents who can demonstrate financial need. Undocumented students are eligible and encouraged to apply.
CO	House Bill 23-1246	No	
	Career Development Incentive Program	No	
CT	CareerConneCT	Yes	The programs are "targeted toward populations most underrepresented in the workforce, including BIPOC, people with disabilities, the re-entry population, opportunity youth, and veterans, immigrants, and women."

STATE	PROGRAM	EQUITY - FOCUSED?	EQUITY DETAILS
FL	Rapid Credentialing Grant	No	
	Open Door Grant Program	No	
	Senate Bill 98	Yes	The Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help has a no-wrong-door-entry strategy to improve equity and access to the myriad state and federally funded workforce-related programs. The bill is focused on increasing the economic mobility of underserved populations; a dedicated Credential Committee establishes the policy direction for funding, which prioritizes outcomes and leverages resources to support “vulnerable populations.”
HI	Promising Credentials in Hawai’i	No	
IL	Workforce Equity Initiative	Yes	To qualify for the funds, the college’s student population must be at least 60% Black. Also, individuals must earn at least 30% above minimum wage after exiting a program funded by the initiative. An array of student supports are also provided.
IN	Workforce Ready Grant	No	
IA	GAP Tuition Assistance Program	Yes	Income-based: The program is limited to individuals earning incomes at or below 250% of the federal poverty level.
	Skilled workforce Shortage Tuition Grant (Kibbie Grant)	Yes	Income-based: Limited to low-income students.
	Vocational-Technical Tuition Grant	Yes	Income-based: Applicants must demonstrate financial need.
KS	Accelerating Opportunity Kansas	No	

STATE	PROGRAM	EQUITY - FOCUSED?	EQUITY DETAILS
LA	MJ Foster Promise Program	Yes	Income-based.
	Completers Fund	No	
	Reboot Your Career	Yes	Designed to help workers unemployed due to Covid-19.
	Jumpstart Louisiana	No	
KY	Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship Program	No	
MD	Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship	Yes	Income-based: Available to low- and middle-income students. The program requirements were revised in 2020, with 2 key changes of interest to students and families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promise recipients are no longer required to work full-time and pay Maryland income taxes after completing their program. This obligation will be waived for students who had previously committed to it. (The policy previously required recipients to commit to working full-time and pay state income taxes for a specified period.) 2. Eligibility is no longer limited to students who graduated from high school, homeschool, or completed their GED fewer than 2 years before applying.
	Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship	No	
	Noncredit Workforce Completers System	No	
MI	Michigan New Jobs Training Program	No	
	Skills Scholarship	No	
	Futures for Frontliners	No	
MN	Workforce Development Scholarship	No	

STATE	PROGRAM	EQUITY - FOCUSED?	EQUITY DETAILS
MO	FastTrack Workforce Incentive Grant	Yes	Income-based: Recipients must have a federal adjusted gross income as documented on one's Missouri 1040 tax form (or federal 1040 form if an active duty military member) of either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$80,000 or less if tax filing status is married filing jointly, or \$40,000 or less for any other tax filing status.
	Upskill Credential Training Fund (House Bill 417)	No	
NV	Promise Scholarship	No	
	Silver State Opportunity Scholarship	No	
NC	GEER Scholarship	No	
	Reinforcement and Investment to Strengthen the Economy (RAISE) Scholarship	No	
	Short-term Workforce Development Grant	No	
	NC GROW (Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce)	No	
OH	House Bill 699, Section R.C. 3333.34 (126th General Assembly)	No	
	Short Term Certificate Grant Program	Yes	Income-based: Must demonstrate financial need.

STATE	PROGRAM	EQUITY - FOCUSED?	EQUITY DETAILS
OH	TechCred Program	Yes	Income-based: Employer applications are reviewed competitively, based on the following criteria: 1. Level of economic distress in employer’s region and regional balance of awards; 2. Amount of employer contribution toward the cost of credential.
	Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP)	Yes	Income-based: Enrollment is open to Ohio residents who are low-income, partially unemployed, or totally unemployed.
OK	UpskillOK.org	No	
RI	Rhode Island Reconnect	No	
TN	OBF Funding Formula, The Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010	Yes	Premiums for at-risk populations are applied. The focus populations in the 2015-2020 model are adult students, low-income students, and academically underprepared students.
	Tennessee Promise	No	
	Tennessee Reconnect	Yes	Targets adult learners.
	Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant	No	Available to all state residents enrolled at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology.
	“Project Calypso” – Reimagining the Community College Experience Program	Yes	In their applications, colleges will be asked to identify a student population focus for their project, such as first-time freshmen or returning adults. Colleges must also identify existing access, success, and/or equity gaps for their focus population and propose how they would address and improve them as part of the project.

STATE	PROGRAM	EQUITY - FOCUSED?	EQUITY DETAILS
TX	Reskilling Support Fund Grant Program	Yes	Income-based: Must have financial need as determined by the completed FAFSA and meet federal Title IV aid eligibility criteria (even if choosing a non-credit workforce credential program).
	Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) Grant Program 2022	No	
	Returned Value Formula at TSTC Campuses	No	
	Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Grant	No	
	House Bill 8 (Revised State Community College Funding Model)	Yes	Additional weights will go to colleges that educate large numbers of students who may need additional support services, including students from lower-income backgrounds, those who are less academically prepared, and adults who are looking to reskill or upskill.
VA	FastForward Wraparound Services	No	The only eligibility requirement for the Virginia FastForward program is for students to be living in the Commonwealth of Virginia. However, FastForward serves people that traditional higher education programs do not serve (65% males as opposed to 45% in traditional higher education programs: two-thirds have dependents compared to one-fourth. The average participant age is 36 years old compared to 21 years old). 20% of all FastForward students received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. FastForward is serving the neediest, low-income families. These graduates earned an estimated \$81 M last year, representing a \$15M increase prior to training.

STATE	PROGRAM	EQUITY - FOCUSED?	EQUITY DETAILS
VA	New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (Pay-for-performance Model)	No	While the grant does not have an equity component built into it, Virginia is transparent about the program's equity and outcomes. The average age of grant recipients is 35. Black students were well represented, comprising 25% of total enrollments, but Latinos were severely underrepresented, with just 4% of enrollments. Black students were eight percentage points less likely to complete the workforce grant program last year compared to white students, while Latino students were seven percentage points less likely.
UT	Senate Bill 117	No	
WA	Washington State Opportunity Grant	Yes	Income-based: Applicants must demonstrate financial need by having total family income (adjusted gross income plus all untaxed income) that does not exceed 125% of the state family median income based on family size.
	Washington State Worker Retraining Program	No	
WV	Job Jumpstart Program	Yes	Income-based: Applicants must demonstrate one of the following to qualify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have filed for and were deemed eligible for unemployment benefits in West Virginia on or after January 1, 2022 • Received SNAP benefits as of January 1, 2022 • Received TANF benefits as of January 1, 2022 • Are currently un- or underemployed
	Workforce Component of the Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student (HEAPS) Grant Program	No	

Figure 4: Summary of language on quality/value assurance

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
AL	Alabama Workforce Stabilization Grant	No	
	Alabama Works! Credentialing Framework	n/a	
AR	Workforce Challenge Scholarship	Basic	Provides funding for “High-demand areas.”
CA	Golden State Education and Training Grant	No	
CO	House Bill 23-1246	No	
	Career Development Incentive Program	Advanced	Industry-recognized credentials, internships, industry pre-apprenticeships/apprenticeship programs should align with occupations identified in the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report or other high-demand industries, including computer science Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Annually, the State Workforce Development Council, in partnership with the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Labor and Employment, and the Office of Economic Development, determine the regional and state-level demand for different occupations and the corresponding programs associated with those occupations.
CT	CareerConneCT	No	
FL	Rapid Credentialing Grant	Basic	Directed toward “In-demand areas of the regional workforce board.” Graduates must be able to secure “middle- to high-wage” jobs.
	Open Door Grant	Basic	Provides funding for “High-demand programs.”

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
FL	Senate Bill 98	Advanced	<p>Requires one-third of performance funding to be based on rewarding student job placement and the remaining two-thirds be based on student earnings, with a focus on increasing the economic mobility of underserved populations.</p> <p>The law requires the CareerSource state board to appoint a Credentials Review Committee to identify degree and non-degree credentials of value, develop a Master Credentials List for performance funding, and establish policy direction for funding which prioritizes outcomes and leverages resources to support vulnerable populations.</p>
HI	Promising Credentials in Hawai'i	No	
IL	Workforce Equity Initiative	Basic	Income-based: Individuals must earn at least 30% above minimum wage after exiting a program funded by the initiative.
IN	Workforce Ready Grant	Basic	Programs must align with one of five priority sectors. Eligible programs must also be "in-demand."
IA	GAP Tuition Assistance	Basic	Programs must align with a for-credit certificate, diploma, or degree and must be in an in-demand sector.
	Skilled workforce Shortage Tuition Grant (Kibbie Grant)	Advanced	Must be a "high-demand career and technical education program" at a Title-IV-eligible institution. Must also be on the approved program list.
	Vocational-technical Tuition Grant	No	
KS	Accelerating Opportunity Kansas	Basic	Short-term certificate programs must be aligned with labor market needs, leading to industry-recognized credentials and immediate jobs with family-sustaining wages.

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
LA	MJ Foster Promise Program	No	Susan Schowen, Vice President for Policy and Industry Partnerships, Louisiana Community and Technical College System has stated, "The only metric that matters is the W-2."
	Completers Fund	Basic	Eligible programs are those in high-demand fields (healthcare, and other Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields and teacher education) at Louisiana's public two- and four-year institutions.
	Reboot Your Career	Advanced	Eligible program list.
	Jumpstart Louisiana	Advanced	Eligible program list.
KY	Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship	No	
MD	Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship	Basic	There are few requirements associated with outcomes, demand, or value. Students must enroll in a sequence of credit or non-credit courses that leads to licensure of certification, make satisfactory academic progress toward a vocational certificate/certificate/associate degree, or participate in a registered apprenticeship program.
	Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship (Sequence Scholarship)	Basic	Must support job preparation, a registered apprenticeship, license or certification, or job skill enhancement, and not lead to an associate degree or baccalaureate degree.
	Noncredit Workforce Completers System	No	
MI	Michigan New Jobs Training Program	Basic	The newly-trained employees must earn at least 175% of the state's minimum wage.
	Skills Scholarship	No	
	Futures for Frontliners	No	

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
MN	Workforce Development Scholarship	Advanced	<p>Minnesota is highly regarded for its exceptional transparency in providing information on non-degree programs. It has been dubbed the “gold standard” with one of the strongest quality frameworks in the nation. The main concerns revolve around how quickly people can find jobs and whether these programs lead to better-paying career opportunities in the future.</p> <p>To address these concerns, Minnesota requires workforce programs that receive state funding to report on participant outcomes. This means that program data is linked to records of wages earned in administrative databases, which helps determine employment status, wages earned, and the industries graduates are working in. Interestingly, even students who did not complete their training are included in the analysis to assess job retention rates. Moreover, the data are further broken down by factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, geography, age, education, and housing status.</p>

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
MO	FastTrack Workforce Incentive Grant	Advanced	<p>Missouri has recently undertaken a project called Missouri Industry Recognized Credentials (MIRCs), the goal of which is to identify credentials that are highly sought after by employers within specific industries or sectors. These credentials are recognized, desired, or preferred by employers for various purposes, such as recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, and advancement of employees.</p> <p>MIRCs, which are funded by the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), are required to be listed on the provider’s website as well as on the OWD ETPS Page. They can also be stacked with USDOL Recognized Credentials, providing additional value and recognition. Training providers, employers, and workforce boards have the opportunity to apply for the inclusion of a MIRC on the list by completing an application. The applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis, unless otherwise approved by the Director.</p> <p>To keep stakeholders informed, a list of newly approved MIRCs will be published on a quarterly basis and included in the Annual Report of the Office of Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning (OAWBL). It is important to note that MIRCs must align with the 11 targeted in-demand industries established by the program.</p>
	Upskill Credential Training Fund (House Bill 417)	Advanced	<p>Applications undergo a rigorous evaluation of prospective value to the state’s economy based on specific criteria including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The projected average wage increase that employees are expected to experience upon acquiring an upskill credential, relative to the cost associated with obtaining the credential. 2. The economic distress in the region where the qualifying employer operates.

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
NV	Promise Scholarship	No	
	Silver State Opportunity Scholarship	No	
NC	GEER Scholarship	Basic	Must lead to a state or industry-recognized credential in a high-demand career field.
	Reinforcement and Investment to Strengthen the Economy (RAISE) Scholarship	Advanced	Must be an industry-valued credential leading to a short-term, non-degree credential identified by the NC Workforce Credentials Council as either an “essential” or “career” credential: “These are credentials which tend to lead to employment in high-demand, high-growth fields that pay a family-sustaining wage.”
	Short-term Workforce Development Grant Program	Basic	Must lead to an industry-recognized credential in fields with employer demand and competitive wages.
	NC GROW (Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce)	Advanced	The State Board of Community Colleges will determine which programs are eligible for NC GROW in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Commerce. High-demand fields include Architecture and Construction, Information Technology, Health Sciences, Electrical Line Worker, and Manufacturing.
OH	House Bill 699, Section R.C. 3333.34 (126th General Assembly)	Advanced	Requires the development of a system of “pre-college stackable certificates” and “college-level certificates.” A pre-college stackable certificate is a uniform system of certificates earned before an adult is enrolled in an institution of higher education that can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a clear and accessible path for adults seeking to advance their education; 2. Transfer to college credit; 3. Articulate in a way that ensures the most effective interconnection of competencies offered in specialized training programs; 4. Respond to the expectations of both the workplace and higher education;

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
OH	House Bill 699 (cont.)		5. Be available from an array of providers, including adult career centers, institutions of higher education, and employers.
	Short Term Certificate Grant Program	Basic	Funded credential "Leads to an industry credential in a high demand occupation." Each institution will determine what is "in-demand" for the local area.
	TechCred Program	Basic	For credentials to be eligible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They must be industry-recognized; • They must be technology-focused; • They must be short-term. Credentials must be certificates or certifications able to be completed in less than 12 months or in programs that are fewer than 900 clock hours or 30 credit hours.
	Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP)	Basic	Credentials available through IMAP are short-term, industry-recognized, and technology-focused. Available credentials are listed for prospective students online.
OK	UpskillOK.org	No	
RI	Rhode Island Reconnect	Basic	Credentials deemed to be of value are ones that "give students the chance to earn a valuable and transferable credential to use in the workforce. Students can earn many different types of credentials from different programs, which usually are job- or trade-specific, take less time to complete and are cheaper than a traditional degree program, and include a variety of career fields. The most common types are licenses and certificates."
TN	OBF Funding Formula, The Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010	No	Part of the calculation depends on job placements; yet, this calculation is entirely separate from the short-term credential measurement. All short-term credentials have the same value in the OBF formula, and all are disconnected from the job placement count. It is a quite simple calculation of value: The number of graduates that are capable of being placed in the workforce from the spring, summer, and fall terms within a calendar year who obtain employment in a related field through June 30 of the following year.

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
TN	Tennessee Promise	No	
	Tennessee Reconnect	No	
	Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant	No	
	“Project Calypso” – Reimagining the Community College Experience Program	No	
TX	Reskilling Support Fund Grant Program	Advanced	Students must (re-)enroll in a “high-value career program.” Eligible workforce credential programs must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aligned with high-value occupations in the region as determined by the most recent Texas Workforce Commission Target Occupations regional list; or • Be aligned with high-value occupations offering above-average wages and strong job placement for the region as determined by the institution following examination of pertinent labor market information in partnership with regional employers and in consultation with the Regional Workforce Development Board.
	Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) Grant Program 2022	Basic	Credentials must lead to certifications or workforce credentials that create pathways to employment. The projects proposed must be for education and training programs shorter than six months in duration, industry-aligned, in high-value/high-need fields, and developed with the participation of key workforce actors such as workforce boards, economic development corporations, trade associations, industry representatives, and employers.

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
TX	Returned Value Formula at TSTC Campuses	Basic	<p>Income-based: The difference between individuals' income after five years and the minimum wage is considered the "value added" by their education. The economic benefit of the wage earners' tax bracket and buying power to the state are calculated and used by the THECB to determine the level of funding for TSTC.</p> <p>$[Student\ Job\ Earnings^*] \times [Funding\ Rate] = State\ Funding$</p> <p>*Student Job Earnings = Aggregate of actual student salaries for five years that exceed minimum wage.</p>
	Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Grant	Basic	Credentials must incorporate skills and knowledge required by high-demand careers.
	House Bill 8 (Revised State Community College Funding Model)	Basic	<p>Outcomes funding will be tied to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of students earning a "credential of value," including degrees, certificates, and other credentials from credit and non-credit programs that equip students for continued learning and greater earnings and 2. The number of students who complete a credential tied to a "high-demand field."
VA	FastForward Wraparound Services	Basic	Must lead to credentials for "the most in-demand jobs across the Commonwealth."

STATE	PROGRAM	ASSURANCE OF VALUE OR QUALITY	DETAILS ON VALUE/QUALITY LANGUAGE
VA	New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (Pay-for-performance Model)	Advanced	<p>The grant funds only “workforce training that leads to a credential in a high demand field.”</p> <p>The Virginia Board for Workforce Development (VBWD) is required to annually identify a list of high-demand fields and post the list on their website (https://elevatevirginia.org). The governing boards of each participating postsecondary institution are then responsible for aligning the occupational fields identified on the list with regional business demand and labor market information to select the noncredit workforce training and credentials that will be funded by the program at their respective institutions in support of the VBWD’s recommended high-demand occupational fields. To identify the high-demand fields in Virginia, the VBWD uses a process that identifies growth occupations aligned to the commonwealth’s economic development strategies.</p>
UT	Senate Bill 117	Basic	Calculation of value includes placement in related employment, military service or continuing education and institutional efficiency.
WA	Washington State Opportunity Grant	Basic	Programs must be “linked to high-wage and in-demand jobs.”
	Washington State Worker Retraining Program	Basic	Programs must be “linked to high-wage and in-demand jobs.”
WV	Job Jumpstart Program	Basic	While there is no explicit language around value, funds are limited to a list of approved short-term training programs.
	Workforce Component of the Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student (HEAPS) Grant Program	Advanced	Eligible programs for funding must complement West Virginia Development Office initiatives for targeted industries or employers, promote job creation or retention, or assist in developing skills for new economy jobs or high-performance workplaces. The West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education, with input from the West Virginia Development Office, annually sets programmatic funding priorities.



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