

According to the National Skills Coalition, almost half of all jobs in Maryland require knowledge and skills beyond high school but not a four-year degree. A key solution to fill this gap between demand and supply is to strengthen and develop workforce training programs within the state’s existing post-secondary education systems^[1].

Maryland’s community colleges play an integral role in the management and development of non-degree workforce training programs across the state. All sixteen community colleges offer a vast array of workforce education programs from health care to information technology. In 2022, Maryland community colleges collectively produced 19,700 workforce training awards. This represents 52% of post-secondary credentials the community colleges awarded that year.

A Snapshot of a Completer

In academic year 2021-2022, **15,857 students** completed an approved workforce training program in a Maryland community college. Two out of three of these completers were minorities and over half were women. **The median age of these students was 37.** A little more than half of them completed a workforce credential in **less than 60 hours.** Of these completers, close to 23% completed some workforce credential in health care, approximately 17% in business/management/marketing, and 8% in homeland security/public safety.



19,700 awards (completions)



15,857 students (completers)



Median age of 37



Less than 60 hours to finish

Top 3 credentials earned by completers in AY21-22



- 23% Health Care
- 17% Business, Management, Marketing
- 8% Homeland Security/Public Safety

Key Terms:

Completers: Students enrolled in Maryland community colleges who have successfully completed a course or series of courses in an approved workforce certificate program leading to apprenticeships, employment, licensure, or job skill enhancement. Should a student complete more than one course type or sequence type, they are counted only once as a completer.

Completion: The number of courses or sequence of courses in an approved workforce certificate program leading to apprenticeships, employment, licensure, or job skill enhancement the student completed in a given academic year. As such, if a student completes more than one course or sequence, their completion will be counted multiple times.

Non-Traditional Students: Students who are characterized as non-traditional are often older students (over the age of 24), have family responsibilities, and work full-time.

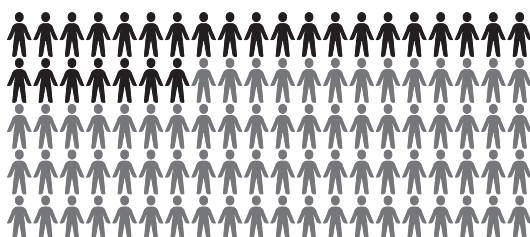
Some College, No Credential: Students who left post-secondary education without receiving a credit-bearing credential and who are no longer enrolled.

From College Degree to Workforce Training

Of these completers, 27% have some previous college credit experience:

Some earned a credit award or degree prior - Almost 9% of completers with prior college experience have previously earned an award ranging from doctoral degrees to lower division certificates. **Of these students who had earned a credit award, they went on to earn a workforce credential after completing their degree.**

Others enrolled in credit courses but did not finish a degree - About 18% of workforce completers with previous college credit experience enrolled in at least one credit bearing course in the past decade. Notably, 77% of these “some college, no credential” students were enrolled part-time in their credit-bearing program, putting them at a higher risk of dropping out^[2]. In fact, lack of time is one of the reasons cited by college drop outs for leaving post-secondary education. **Among the draws workforce training may have on college dropouts is the short time frame for completing a credential.** Of these “some college” workforce completers **almost 23% earned some licensure or industry certification as part of their program completion, putting them on a clear path to post completion employment**^[3].



27% of Completers Have Previous “Credit” Experiences

15,857 total completers

Of the completers:

27% with previous college credit

Of those with college credit:

18% with some college no degree
9% have previous awards

Opportunities and Successes for Maryland

In 2023, the National Skills Coalition released a comprehensive report that included six recommendations^[4] on how policymakers can cultivate a strong and thriving workforce. They are:

1. Building a strong infrastructure work plan
2. Fostering industry partnerships
3. Expanding access to skills training programs
4. Incentivizing and supporting training, hiring and career advancement opportunities
5. Providing economic support and breaking down barriers, and
6. Collecting comprehensive data^[5].

Maryland is seen as a leader on many of these fronts. MHEC wants to highlight two that are central to the agency mission and vision.

Collecting comprehensive data - Maryland is one of the few states in the nation collecting comprehensive data on those in the workforce education pipeline. Partnerships between Labor, MHEC, MLDS, MSDE and others allows Maryland to better understand workforce education students, their programs of study, their participation in apprenticeships, and other critical pieces of information that shed further light on the population of students who pursue this path. These data will help policymakers shape strategies to support the education and successes of these Marylanders.

In 2020, the Maryland Higher Education Commission piloted the first ever completion collection on students in workforce training. The Workforce Training Completion System (WTCS) provides a comprehensive snapshot on who is a “completer”, someone who completes an approved workforce training program from one of Maryland’s community colleges. More recently, wage data on these completers have also been analyzed. A dashboard visualizing this data collection can be found here^[6].

Continued investment in skills training programs - Maryland continues to invest in funding workforce training programs, including those at community colleges. In 2023, the Maryland Community College Association of Continuing Education and Training (MCCACET) reported 458 workforce training programs, 44% more compared to the previous year . Community colleges also provide 77% of the instruction related to the state’s Registered Apprenticeship system, training workers in high-skilled trades like electrical, steamfitter, and plumbing.

Conclusion

Workforce training programs play a critical role in addressing the skills gap in Maryland's labor market by providing flexible, accessible education options that meet current employment demands. It also meets the need of non-traditional students, such as those with "some college, no credential." Maryland's recent initiatives, including its new data collections and its continued investment in community college workforce education, further strengthen workforce training in the state.

Note: Data from the 2021-2022 WTCS were merged with a Degree Information System (DIS, 2013-2022) and then to an Enrollment Information System (EIS, 2013-2022). Successful matches were identified in one of two ways: completers with previous college credit-credentials or completers with “some college, no credential”. Descriptive analyses were performed.

Endnotes:

[1] National Skills Coalition, “Building the Future Workforce: A State Playbook to Shape a New Age in Federal Infrastructure Investments.” https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/NSC_infrastructurePlaybook_webFINAL.pdf

[2] Work by the Education Data Initiative on “some college, no credential” students suggest that part-time enrollment increases a student’s chance of dropping out by more than 50% and decreases their likelihood of re-enrolling to earn a credit award

[3] Licensure or industry certification is required for a number of fields (e.g., healthcare, education, electrician, truck driving) and presence of this kind of certification can ease in finding employment (see https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/EERC/rutgerseerc_ndcquality_framework_full_paper_final.pdf for more)

[4] Ibid footnote `.

[5] National Skills Coalition “Building The Future Workforce” <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/building-the-future-workforce/>

[6] MHEC’s Workforce Training Completion Dashboard: <https://app.powerbigov.us/view?>

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