



ISSUE BRIEF | June 2024 (Revised November 2024)

South Carolina Technical College System Noncredit Data Snapshot

Mark M. D'Amico, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Michelle Van Noy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Project Background

Adults seeking further education have long shown keen interest in noncredit education. An estimated 4 million people enroll in noncredit programs annually, and surveys have found that at least half of adults interested in further postsecondary learning seek an alternative to college degree programs¹. Policymakers also recognize the potential value of noncredit and related programs. A 50-state scan identified state-led initiatives in 28 states, totaling at least \$3.8 billion, in support for attainment of short-term credentials.²

Given the growing interest and public investment in short-term alternatives to college degree programs, policymakers and practitioners generally agree on the importance of a strong evidence base to inform decision-making. Yet state collection and analysis of noncredit data remains inconsistent and difficult to use for policymaking purposes, making direct comparisons across states dauntingly hard. Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers regularly encounter varying definitions, an absence of educational or labor market outcomes data, and overall data quality issues.³ At the most basic level, very little is known about the

¹ Jacoby, T. (September 2021). *The indispensable institution: Taking the measure of community college workforce education*. Opportunity America. <https://opportunityamericaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL-survey-report.pdf>; Strada. (2020, September 16). *Public viewpoint: Interested but not enrolled: Understanding and serving aspiring adult learners*. <https://cci.stradaeducation.org/pv-release-september-16-2020/>

² Murphy, S. (2023). *A typology and policy landscape analysis of state investments in short-term credential pathways*. HCM Strategists. <https://hcmstrategists.com/resources/a-typology-and-policy-landscape-analysis-of-state-investments-in-short-term-credential-pathways>

³ D'Amico, M. M. (2017). Noncredit education: Specialized programs to meet local needs. In K. B. Wilson & R. L. Garza-Mitchell (Eds.), *Forces shaping community college missions* (No. 180, pp. 57–66). New directions for community colleges. Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20281>; Erwin, M. (2019). Noncredit enrollment and related activities (NPEC 2019). National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, with US Department of Education funding; Romano, R. M., & D'Amico, M. M. (2021, July/August). How federal data

characteristics of noncredit programs, such as their instructional time, instructional format, requirements for entry, linkages to further education, awarding agencies, cost, and credential types awarded. Better data on noncredit offerings within states will help inform ongoing measurement efforts and ensure those efforts are more grounded in the realities of noncredit delivery, financing, and learner outcomes.

With support from the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES)/National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center (EERC) and key partners at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Michigan, and University of California–Irvine are working with state leaders from across the country as part of the State Noncredit Data Project (SNDP). The SNDP examines noncredit data to achieve three key goals:

- Develop an inventory of and consistent operational definitions for state-level noncredit data elements to better understand the noncredit data infrastructure.
- Collect and examine noncredit course/program-level data to explore noncredit offerings and their associations with enrollment rates, outcomes, instructional characteristics, and financial arrangements.
- Uncover the drivers of noncredit offerings and produce relevant policy implications.

In addition to this analysis, the SNDP convenes a Learning Community of states on data for noncredit education and non-degree credentials. The Learning Community is designed to bring together state leaders to share current practices related to state noncredit data. Through our research and convening, SNDP seeks to lay the groundwork for common definitional language for future data collection and analysis efforts to improve understanding of the value and quality of noncredit programs and non-degree credentials.

Methods

This report is one in a series that explores the noncredit data infrastructure of US states and presents descriptive analyses of those data at the course/program and provider level. The findings presented in these reports were reached using a multi-phased collaborative approach with leaders in partner states. The first step was to engage with state partners about the context for noncredit and related data collection. This ongoing engagement included regular conversations, off-line questions, and the collection of relevant policy and process information on noncredit categories, determinants of noncredit success, instructional characteristics, finance, and related topics. The engagement process has been critical to understanding the state noncredit landscape and data collection.

This report is one in a series that explores the noncredit data infrastructure of US states and presents descriptive analyses of those data at the course/program and provider level. The findings presented in these reports were reached using a multi-phased collaborative approach with leaders in partner states. The first step was to engage with state partners about the context for noncredit and related data collection. This

shortchange the community college. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 53(4), 22–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2021.1930978>

ongoing engagement included regular conversations, off-line questions, and the collection of relevant policy and process information on noncredit categories, determinants of noncredit success, instructional characteristics, finance, and related topics. The engagement process has been critical to understanding the state noncredit landscape and data collection.

The next step was to develop a robust inventory of each of the data elements potentially available from state agencies and organizations. Through engagement with state partners, cross-state meetings, a review of prior literature and resources^{4,5,6} and program-level data analyses with our first three research states (Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia), the project team created a noncredit data taxonomy⁷ for the organization of relevant data elements. The key elements in the taxonomy—(1) purpose and design, (2) outcomes, (3) demographics and enrollment, and (4) finance—guide the organization of available data elements in the present report (see Table 1) and the subsequent analyses on providers and programs that follow. In this next phase of the project, the project team is working with an additional group of states (including South Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, and Tennessee) to understand the nature of their noncredit data.

A critical step in the project toward creating a sustainable, robust noncredit data system is to build state-level datasets consistent with the available data on these identified and defined data elements. Because the goal is to understand what noncredit is, the unit of analysis for this project is the noncredit *offering* (an offering may be a course or a program, depending on the nomenclature used across institutions and systems). For 2021–22, the South Carolina Technical College System (SCTCS) reported 6,643 offerings, which represent all of those offered at each of its 16 colleges for the year reported. The data were provided by SCTCS at the course/program level to allow for tabulations regarding noncredit offerings, associated data, and enrollments within noncredit categories.

Findings in this report are reported by noncredit type. Though previous research has focused considerable attention on noncredit in relation to workforce education, the typology employed here covers the complete landscape of noncredit offerings, which includes occupational training, sponsored occupational (contract) training, personal interest, and pre-college offerings. Although all noncredit types were discernible in South Carolina’s 2021–22 noncredit data, data on sponsored (contract) training are not currently being captured. The state will resume collection of these data in 2025. In addition, noncredit offerings delivered as an economic development incentive to businesses relocating to or expanding within South Carolina through the System’s readySC division are not tracked consistently in the state-level noncredit data system. The same is

⁴ D’Amico, M. M., Morgan, G. B., Robertson, S., & Houchins, C. (2014). An exploration of noncredit community college enrollment. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 62(3), 152–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2014.953438>; D’Amico, 2017.

⁵ IPEDS. (2021–22). Glossary. <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>

⁶ Jacoby, T. (2021). The indispensable institution: Taking the measure of community college workforce education. Opportunity America. <https://opportunityamericaonline.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/10/FINAL-survey-report.pdf>

⁷ D’Amico, M., Van Noy, M., Srivastava, A., Bahr, P., & Xu, D. (2023). Collecting and understanding noncredit community college data: A taxonomy and how-to guide for states. Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center. https://sites.rutgers.edu/state-noncredit-data/wp-content/uploads/sites/794/2023/11/State-Noncredit-Taxonomy_EERC_11.17.23.pdf

true for technical instruction related to US Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships through the Apprenticeship Carolina office.

South Carolina's Policy Context for Noncredit

The motivating force behind noncredit offerings is a drive to meet the specific needs of states and local communities through the use of a flexible format. It follows, then, that there is great variability among offerings across states and even across institutions within a state. The following sections outline some of the important policy drivers of noncredit offerings in South Carolina.

Noncredit Policy Priorities

Technical and community college noncredit education in South Carolina reflects priorities at both the state and local levels. SCTCS's purpose in offering noncredit courses is to provide short-term, noncredit training courses designed to meet the workforce needs of the communities in which each college is situated. These courses are generally offered on a flexible, nontraditional schedule to meet the needs of participants as well as area business and industry. Because workforce needs vary substantially across all areas of the state, and because SCTCS colleges possess autonomy, the types and characteristics of courses offered at each college vary substantially as well.

Generally, SCTCS noncredit offerings include training focused on updating/upgrading workforce skills or providing continuing education credits; occupational skills training that leads to a certification or licensure; customized workforce skill update/upgrade training for business and industry; and courses for personal enrichment that align with specific community demand. In the following section, each of the System's official types of noncredit education as described in SCTCS policy will be discussed in terms of inclusion in the funding allocation formula.

Funding

Funding for SCTCS's noncredit offerings originates from two types of sources: formula funding and a series of grant/scholarship programs for which students may be eligible. First, it is important to note that the SCTCS funding formula is a system formula for allocating SCTCS's finite resources appropriated by the South Carolina General Assembly each year, rather than a formula used to determine state appropriations. As part of SCTCS funding procedure,⁸ noncredit offerings are placed in two primary categories, occupational education and non-occupational programs, and further divided into eight subcategories.

Given the goal of the current project to arrive at a more uniform understanding of noncredit across state datasets, we begin by aligning these eight categories with the four noncredit categories established in the noncredit data typology: occupational training, sponsored occupational training, personal interest, and pre-

⁸ SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education Procedure. (2019). Programs Description and Classification Reporting Requirements [Procedure No. 7-1-201.1]. <https://www.sctechsystem.edu/faculty-and-staff/policies-and-procedures/procedures/7-1-201.1.pdf>

college.⁹ A fifth category, “other,” is included to incorporate SCTCS classifications that do not align with the established options. Table 1 maps SCTCS’ eight noncredit subcategories into the established noncredit typology¹⁰ employed in this project:

Table 1: Alignment of Noncredit Data Types with SCTCS Noncredit Categories

Community College Noncredit Types	SCTCS Noncredit Categories
Occupational training	Occupational training Apprenticeship training Tennessee
Sponsored occupational training	Occupational training provided for an employer or other sponsor
Personal interest	Personal enrichment
Pre-college	NA
Other	Non-instructional occupational services [skills assessment]
	Testing and/or test preparation
	Occupational enrichment [information not training]
	Faculty and staff training
	Sponsored indirect occupational training [enrollment tracking for Enterprise Zone training that may or may not be delivered by the college]

Only two types of noncredit offerings are included in the funding formula presented in SCTCS finance procedure 7-1-201.1: occupational training and apprenticeship training. Because the funding formula in South Carolina allocates resources appropriated to SCTCS and is therefore not bound to full-time equivalency (FTE) calculations, it does not directly convert contact hours to credit hours. Instead, the formula considers the credit-hour production of each college, as well as the proportion of credit to noncredit contact hours, when calculating the funding allocated for noncredit activity in the relevant categories.

The SCTCS funding model has changed over the last decade. Prior to fiscal year 2012, noncredit was converted to FTEs, only to be removed from the formula entirely for fiscal years 2012–16. Noncredit education meeting the criteria explained above was reincorporated into the funding formula in fiscal year 2017.

The second type of funding for SCTCS noncredit programming comes through workforce-relevant student aid programs. Some sources of student aid funding are relatively stable, such as the South Carolina Workforce Industry Needs Scholarship and the Workforce Scholarships and Grants programs, which are funded by either the state General Fund or the SC Education Lottery. Other sources, however, are shorter-term and focused on current government priorities. Special initiative funding includes federal funding from the US Department of Labor for Apprenticeship Carolina, a national model for partnerships among business, technical colleges, and

⁹ D’Amico et al., 2014.

the US Department of Labor. Finally, federal funding passthroughs from the Governor's Office and the US Department of Education are also included in this second category of noncredit SCTCS funding.

Drivers of Noncredit Data Collection

South Carolina has multiple drivers of noncredit data collection, first and foremost the state's desire to ensure financial accountability and appropriate funding allocations for noncredit through the SCTCS funding formula and the student aid programs discussed above. Second is the growing need to ensure that the SCTCS can respond to key stakeholder data requests. Given noncredit education's importance in the SCTCS mission, the ability to quantify workforce development efforts is critical to communicating success toward that mission. Finally, stakeholders seek state-level noncredit data in order to examine trends across colleges. Standardized data can be used to identify challenges and issues so that SCTCS colleges more effectively meet their individual missions.

Noncredit data collection at SCTCS is currently undergoing significant revision and expansion. This expansion is at least partially driven by new streams of funding in place to support students, including the grant and scholarship opportunities discussed in the previous section. In order to justify the continued acquisition of these funds, it is critical to both demonstrate how they are being utilized and to connect them to relevant outcomes such as completion rates and impact in the labor market. Part of these expanded efforts includes a movement to appropriately classify and capture noncredit course and program areas by verified Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes. This initiative to classify offerings will mark a significant step forward for SCTCS by greatly expanding their ability to explain the impact of noncredit education on the workforce and within industry.

Another key area of expansion addresses the measurement of outcomes. Historically, SCTCS has employed enrollment data to provide general qualitative descriptions of outcomes. For instance, being able to show the number of enrollments in a particular career field shows service to particular industry sectors. With its new data collection efforts, SCTCS intends to enhance outcome measures to include noncredit course completions, college-issued certificates, and apprenticeships with hopes of expanding into labor market outcomes over time.

Since the reintroduction of noncredit programming to formula funding in 2017, efforts to establish a robust and accurate data collection system at SCTCS have been met with challenges. Despite its strong central governance system, the semi-autonomous nature of the system's institutions has not lent itself to the creation of a single uniform data system across the colleges. SCTCS intends to move in a direction where noncredit program offerings are more standardized at the system level through the generation of a "catalog" keyed to accurately captured CIP codes, but it is currently unlikely that all colleges will migrate to a single data platform. For instance, several institutions use Banner, while others use Colleague, and yet others have implemented Lumens. Additionally, some colleges integrate noncredit and credit data into one system, while others have separate data systems for each student enrollment category. As SCTCS works through revisions of their noncredit data collection, they are prioritizing the quality of data produced rather than the format; thus, the SCTCS system office currently works with institutions utilizing multiple platforms.

The information provided in this section demonstrates how South Carolina is undergoing their noncredit data journey, and how this journey is driven by policy and other key priorities for the state. At the time of this report, South Carolina’s noncredit data collection process is in transition. The sections below represent data collected for 2021–22, one of the last years of the existing data collection, essentially serving as a baseline. The 2023–24 reporting will include expanded data as outlined above.

Classifying Noncredit Offerings

South Carolina reported 6,643 offerings across its 16 technical colleges in 2021–22. While some of these offerings were similar, by counting each course uniquely we can identify variations in content, delivery, and contact hours. The data used for this report represent enrollments in courses named and categorized based on college-level determinations.

While not yet codified in policy, SCTCS is working toward establishing greater uniformity across institutional classification systems by defining a *noncredit program* as a course or group of courses leading to an industry-recognized credential or designed to prepare a student for the workforce. Alternatively, a *noncredit course* is an offering that is part of a program or a stand-alone class or group of classes that does not lead to a credential, certification, or license. Using these definitions, in the data collection following Summer 2023, information on all noncredit programs and the courses within them will be reported with a relevant CIP code, while noncredit courses will be reported with a CIP code of 300000, indicating that they do not meet the requirement to be a program and are not part of a program. For the analysis below, however, all noncredit courses (i.e., offerings) are included within the analysis.

Across partner states in the current project, there is some variation in how data are reported, based on the ways in which data are collected and delineated within each state. For example, some data reported represent a consolidation of enrollments across multiple sections of the same course, whereas South Carolina’s data represent individual student enrollments for each time any course is offered by any college.

Data Inventory

Table 2 documents which data elements on noncredit offerings in South Carolina are being captured and to what degree. When embarking on the project with our first-round partner states—Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia—the project team worked with state representatives to explore the data elements within state data systems.¹¹ After concluding our first-round work and engaging additional states such as South Carolina, we developed the noncredit data taxonomy¹² to serve as a primer for states just beginning data collection or refining their approach. The noncredit data elements included in Table 2 are based on that noncredit data taxonomy. The analysis examines whether information on each data point is available on *all*, *most* (more than 2/3), *many* (more than 1/3 but fewer than 2/3), *some* (fewer than 1/3), or *none* of the state’s noncredit

¹¹ D’Amico, M., Van Noy, M., Srivastava, A., Bahr, P., & Xu, D. (2023). *The state community college noncredit data infrastructure: Lessons from Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia*. Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center. <https://sites.rutgers.edu/state-noncredit-data/wp-content/uploads/sites/794/2023/08/The-State-Community-College-EERC-8.2023.pdf>

¹² D’Amico et al., 2023, Collecting and understanding noncredit.

offerings. Where appropriate, we indicate times when enrollment data were available for all offerings but not necessarily for all students. Details regarding which demographics were not reported and where there were missing data by noncredit type are included in the tables and figures. Because we consider South Carolina to be a state with an established noncredit data system but also one that is undergoing considerable revisions to their noncredit data collection processes, we have added a column to Table 2 to capture which types of data missing from this analysis will be available beginning with the reporting of the 2023–24 data.

Essentially, data collected prior to Summer 2023 include student demographics, contact hours, course enrollments, and basic information about the offerings.

Table 2: State-Level Noncredit Data Inventory for 2021–22 and Future Data Collection Expectations, South Carolina

Category	Subcategory	State-Level Data Availability	
		(2021–22) [Included in this Report]	(2023–24) [Future Data Collection]
Purpose and Design			
Field of Study	Course/program name	All	All
	CIP code	None	All
	SOC code	Most	None
	Career cluster	Most	All
Noncredit Type	Occupational, sponsored, pre-college, personal interest, or aligned with IPEDS	None	Some
Program Length	Number of courses if multi-course program	NA	None
	Total contact hours	All	All
Delivery	Face-to-face	All	All
	Face-to-face location	None	None
	Online	All	All
	Blended	All	All
	Competency-based	None	None
	Work-based learning required	None	None
	Student service availability	None	None
Associated Credentials	Faculty data	None	None
	Certifications, licensure, certificates, microcredentials associated with courses	None	None
Outcomes			
Academic Outcomes	Students continue to credit	None	None
	Completion data	None	All
Labor Market Outcomes	Pre-enrollment employment	None	None
	Post-enrollment employment	None	None
	Pre-enrollment salary/wage	None	None
	Post-enrollment salary/wage	None	None

Non-Degree Credential Outcomes	Industry certification	None	None
	Occupational licensure	None	None
	College-issued certificate	None	All
	Microcredentials	None	None
	Apprenticeship	None	All
Demographics and Enrollment			
Enrollments	Headcount	All	All
	Contact hours	All	All
Demographics	Race/ethnicity	All courses/Not all students	All courses/Not all students
	Age	All courses/Not all students	All courses/Not all students
	Sex/gender	All courses/Not all students	All courses/Not all students
Identifiers	Social security number	Some	Most
	Institutional identification number	All	All
	Name	All	All
	Birth date	All courses/Not all students	All courses/Not all students
Finance			
Tuition	Course/program tuition	None	None
State and Federal Funding	State funding	All	All
	WIOA-eligible training provider	None	None
	Economic development incentive	None	Some
	Other federal grants	None	None
	Other state grants	All	All

Description of State Data

In addition to gaining a better understanding of South Carolina’s state-level noncredit data infrastructure, the findings below from the 2021–22 academic year provide a snapshot of data availability and noncredit offerings in the state. All noncredit courses were captured separately in the 2021–22 state-level data, so enrollments do not represent any multi-course programs.

Findings are organized by the following key areas: (1) purpose and design of the noncredit offerings, (2) noncredit course demographics and enrollment, and (3) financing of noncredit courses. While outcomes would typically be included in a state report on this project, no completion, credential, or labor market outcomes were tracked by South Carolina at the time of this analysis. These data will to be added to collection efforts in the future, so we expect to be able to include findings on outcomes in the future.

Purpose and Design

Key findings on noncredit offerings and delivery in South Carolina include the following:

- Occupational training courses (both individual enrollment and sponsored) represented more than four out of five noncredit offerings in South Carolina (Table 3) in 2021–22. However, enrollments in workforce-relevant noncredit education likely exceeded 90 percent because Enterprise Zone enrollments, testing, and career-focused information sessions were best categorized as “other” under the noncredit data typology.
- Occupational courses required the greatest number of contact hours on average (Table 4). In 2021–22, 649 (15.1%) of the state’s 4,298 individual enrollment occupational training courses met the minimum 150-hour threshold being considered for proposed Workforce Pell Grants.¹³
- The vast majority of noncredit offerings were delivered face-to-face in South Carolina across all categories. Occupational training had the highest proportion of online offerings—17.2 percent—while less than 1 percent of contract training was offered online (Table 4).

Table 3: Number of Noncredit Offerings by Noncredit Type, South Carolina, 2021–22

Noncredit Types	Offerings	
	n*	%
Occupational Training	4,298	64.7
Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training	1,201	18.1
Personal Interest	439	6.6
Pre-College**	0	0.0
Other	705	10.6
Total	6,643	100.0

*The unit of analysis is the noncredit offering. Each time a course/program is offered at each college, it is counted as a unique offering.

** Because technical colleges are not responsible for adult education in South Carolina, SCTCS had no enrollments in the pre-college category.

Table 4: Instructional Characteristics by Noncredit Type, South Carolina, 2021-22

Noncredit Types	Median Contact Hours	Mean Contact Hours	Delivery	
			% Face-to-Face	% Online
Occupational Training (n = 4,298)	24	66	82.8	17.2
Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training (n = 1,201)	7	17	99.2	0.8
Personal Interest (n = 439)	12	17	97.7	2.3
Pre-College (n = 0)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other (n = 705)	3	31	88.8	11.2

¹³ Other requirements would need to be met for Workforce Pell eligibility under the proposed guidelines.

Enrollment and Demographics

- In 2021–22, South Carolina had 60,614 duplicated headcount enrollments (Table 5).
- Student enrollments largely reflected the patterns of noncredit offerings. For example, occupational training (open enrollment and sponsored combined), which accounted for 83 percent of courses, enrolled 75 percent of students (Tables 3 and 5).
- Women and men represented nearly equal enrollments in noncredit education overall (50.7% women vs. 49.3 percent men when removing those unknown or other). Women had greater representation than men in the open enrollment occupational training category, but men significantly outnumbered women in sponsored (contract) training. Nearly half of the demographic data on sex is missing in the sponsored category, however, which may be due to employers not providing demographic data on employees participating in the training (Figures 1 & 2).
- Across most of the race subgroups, the majority of enrollments were in open enrollment occupational training. Black/African American and white students were represented nearly equally in open enrollment occupational training; however, white students outnumbered Black/African American students in sponsored occupational (contract) training by nearly 2.5 to 1. While these enrollment patterns in the sponsored training category raise questions of access, it is important to note that 61 percent of the demographic data on race are missing (Figures 3 & 4).

Table 5: Headcount Enrollment by Noncredit Type, South Carolina, 2021 - 22

Noncredit Types	2021–22 Headcount Enrollment	
	n	%
Occupational Training	32,584	53.8
Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training	12,679	20.9
Personal Interest	4,238	7.0
Pre-College	0	0.0
Other	11,113	18.3
Total	60,614	100.0

Figure 1: Percent Enrollment in Noncredit Types by Sex, South Carolina, 2021-22

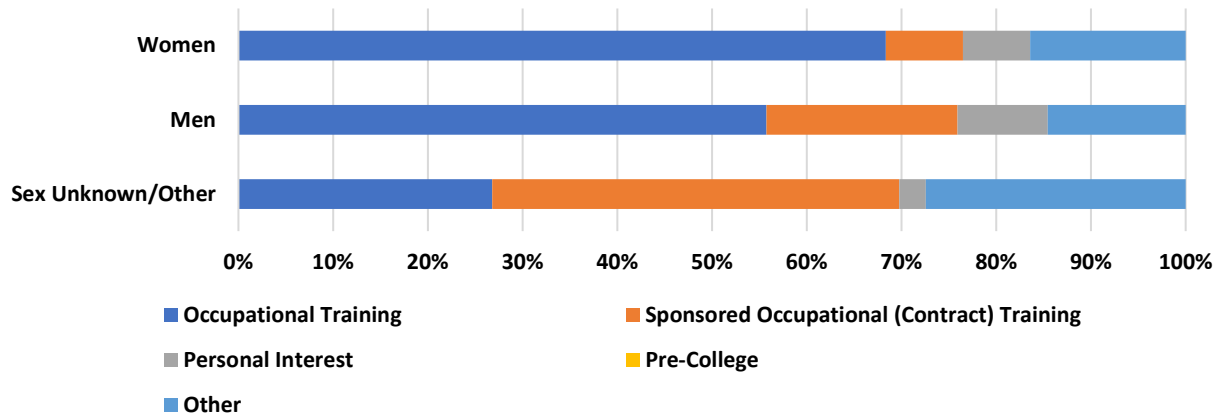


Figure 2: Percent Enrollment by Sex within Noncredit Types, South Carolina, 2021-22

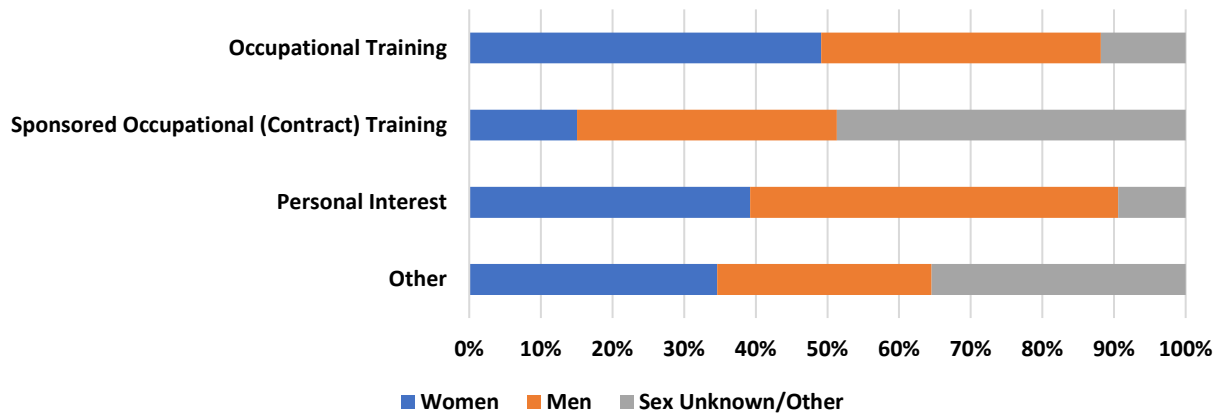


Figure 3: Percent Enrollment in Noncredit Types by Race, South Carolina, 2021-22

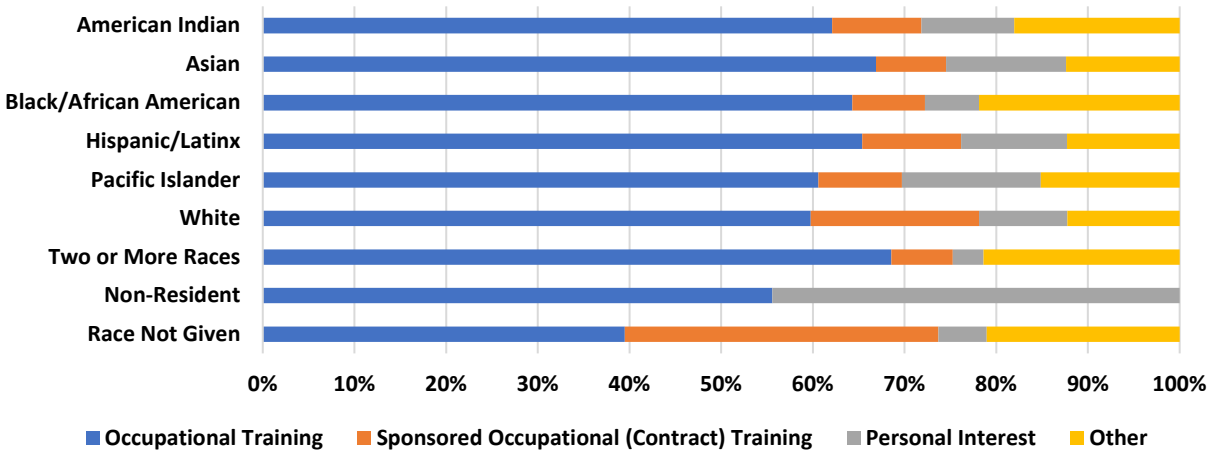
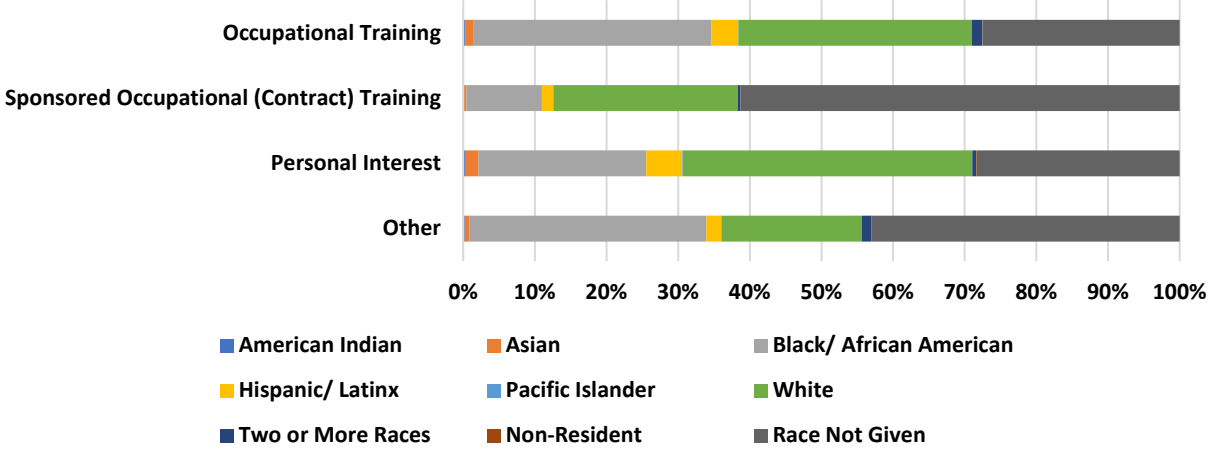


Figure 4: Percent Enrollment by Race within Noncredit Types, South Carolina, 2021-22



Finance

Key findings on the funding of noncredit in South Carolina include the following:

- For 2021–22, noncredit funding was included in the SCTCS funding allocation formula. Occupational training and sponsored occupational training were the only noncredit types considered in the formula (Table 6).
- In recent years, noncredit scholarship dollars have been made available for noncredit students. These scholarship funds have driven additional data collection beginning with the 2023–24 academic year.

Table 6: Financing Noncredit Offerings by Noncredit Type, South Carolina, 2021-22

Noncredit Type	% Receiving State Reimbursement through Funding Formula
Occupational Training (n = 4,298)	100.0
Sponsored Occupational (Contract) Training (n = 1,201)	100.0
Personal Interest (n = 439)	0.0
Pre-College (n = 0)	NA
Other (n = 705)	0.0

Conclusion

There are several conclusions and lessons learned specific to the findings on the South Carolina Technical College System’s noncredit data infrastructure:

- An analysis of course-level data show how aligned noncredit offerings are with SCTCS’s workforce development mission. Given SCTCS’s central role in the state’s economic development agenda, its focus on noncredit occupational training should come as no surprise.
- SCTCS is highly engaged in their noncredit data journey. They represent a system that is established in terms of noncredit data collection, yet is still emerging in their efforts to expand and improve the data they collect. The current report reflects data collection as of 2021–22, and while these data may be somewhat limited in terms of the number and types of data elements collected, it is evident that their collection efforts were consistent. Their data are relatively complete on fields of study, contact hours per course, and delivery format, and they have enough data to determine whether courses can and should be included in their funding formula. Some gaps exist in demographics (sex, race/ethnicity); however, the level of missingness on race/ethnicity is lower than that of other states in the current project.
- The current data reveal opportunities for the system to expand, especially in terms of noncredit outcomes such as completion, noncredit-to-credit transitions, and connections with licensure and other industry-recognized credentials. More deliberate alignment between data categories and the noncredit typology and/or IPEDS Institutional Characteristics Header categories could ease categorizations for noncredit funding and future institutional efforts to report noncredit data, should IPEDS adopt enrollment reporting in the future.
- Next steps in South Carolina’s journey will be driven by new streams of noncredit scholarship funding that necessitate more robust data collection. Table 2 shows new data elements to be added beginning 2023–24, especially in the areas of CIP codes, the adoption of IPEDS noncredit types, and student-level completion data. These additional data will contribute significantly to the understanding of noncredit courses in the state, assure consistency across colleges, and allow for the analysis of noncredit outcomes.

- Finally, SCTCS's current efforts to achieve greater standardization of courses regarding names, contact hours, and CIP codes could pay dividends as they seek to define noncredit course quality, demonstrate consistency toward connections with credentials, and evaluate contact hours, especially if Workforce Pell Grants were to pass and create a path toward federal need-based aid for shorter-term training.

Following a second round of state-specific explorations on this project, including this one on South Carolina, the project team intends to move toward a cross-state analysis with eight states and continue our work on the evolving noncredit data taxonomy. Our purpose is to bring together the lessons learned from states like South Carolina to help other systems and institutions as they seek to expand their noncredit data collection efforts and gain a better understanding of the impact of their noncredit offerings.

About the Authors

Mark M. D’Amico is a professor of higher education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Michelle Van Noy is the director of the Education and Employment Research Center at the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations.

Acknowledgements

We appreciate the insight, resources, and data provided throughout the project by our collaborators with the South Carolina Technical College System Office. While many were involved, we would like to convey special thanks to Kassie Kriz, Moses Brown, and Matthew Morton. The authors would like to thank The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for their financial support. At EERC, Tracy Cangiano skillfully provided research support through various phases of the project, and Angel Butts of The Word Angel, LLC provided excellent editorial assistance. The authors are solely responsible for any errors.

This report was prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Education and Employment Research Center

Rutgers' Education and Employment Research Center (EERC) is housed within the School of Management and Labor Relations. EERC conducts research and evaluation on programs and policies at the intersection of education and employment. Our work strives to improve policy and practice so that institutions may provide educational programs and pathways that ensure individuals obtain the education needed for success in the workplace, and employers have a skilled workforce to meet their human resource needs. For more information on our mission and current research, visit smlr.rutgers.edu/eerc.

EERC Areas of Focus

Community College
Innovation



Student Choices
and Pathways



STEM and Technician
Education



Noncredit Education and
Non-Degree Credentials



Education and Labor
Market Connections



Rutgers' School of Management and Labor Relations

Rutgers' School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) is the leading source of expertise on the world of work, building effective and sustainable organizations, and the changing employment relationship. The school is comprised of two departments—one focused on all aspects of strategic human resource management and the other dedicated to the social science specialties related to labor studies and employment relations. In addition, SMLR provides many continuing education and certificate programs taught by world-class researchers and expert practitioners. SMLR was originally established by an act of the New Jersey legislature in 1947 as the Institute of Management and Labor Relations. Like its counterparts created in other large industrial states at the same time, the Institute was chartered to promote new forms of labor-management cooperation following the industrial unrest that occurred at the end of World War II. It officially became a school at the flagship campus of the State University of New Jersey in New Brunswick/Piscataway in 1994. For more information, visit smlr.rutgers.edu.

