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College System of Tennessee Noncredit Data Snapshot

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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 characteristics of noncredit

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.

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.

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

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

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. In this report, we will be highlighting the state noncredit dataset of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system, which comprises two organizational units: the Tennessee Community Colleges and the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT). 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 2022–23, TBR reported 2,083 offerings across their two organizational units: the 13 Tennessee community colleges provided 1,929 of these offerings, while TCAT’s network of 24 institutions provided 154. There are notable data collection differences between the two organizational units; we discuss these differences where appropriate in this report.

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. Two of these types of offerings are present in the Tennessee dataset, occupational training and contract training, with the labels “Occupational/Vocational” and “Sponsored/Contract,” respectively.

Tennessee’s Policy Context for Noncredit

TBR, the state’s largest higher education system, has had governance over TCAT since the 1980s and over Tennessee’s community colleges since the 1970s. While TCAT’s entire network was under the mandate of the state’s Department of Education before being absorbed by TBR, the state’s community colleges had developed independently prior to coming together under the board. TBR also had governance over six public state universities until 2016, when those universities became locally governed institutions. This change, along with a shift toward workforce education within the TBR, led the board to take a more active role in

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

supporting TCAT. Prior to this shift, TCAT had reduced reporting obligations relative to those of community colleges, though TBR assisted them with IPEDS and Perkins reporting. In 2019, TBR centralized all TCAT institutions into a single instance of the Banner student information system, which houses student-level data for both noncredit and credit students.

Noncredit Policy Priorities

The state prioritizes certain kinds of noncredit education. Most notably, albeit somewhat indirectly, the state prioritizes specific industry credentials on the Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Credentials list, which is produced by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE). This list recognizes industry credentials that meet criteria set out by TDOE and categorizes them into three tiers.

TBR's noncredit focus centers on workforce education, contract training, and the like. Thus, areas such as pre-college remediation and personal interest programming are de-emphasized in TBR's noncredit ecosystem and not included in the noncredit dataset analyzed in this report. Adult education programming is primarily run through the state's Department of Labor and Workforce Development, although community colleges do offer some programming that is akin to GED preparation.

More noncredit activity is happening in Tennessee's community colleges than at TCAT in terms of offerings (1,929 vs. 154, respectively). The two types of institutions differ in what types of noncredit they prioritize. TCAT's noncredit offerings may be more closely aligned with the local workforce than those of community colleges. Community colleges tend to offer more open-enrollment noncredit offerings compared to TCAT, which tends to offer a larger percentage of Sponsored/Contract programs.

Funding

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) has oversight of and administers the funding formulas for the TBR system, the University of Tennessee system, and the six locally governed public universities in the state. Noncredit education funding differs between TCAT and community colleges, though some similarities persist between the two parts of the TBR system. For example, most noncredit programs, whether at TCAT or community colleges, are ineligible for state financial aid, including the Tennessee Promise program. The primary funding stream for TCAT is based on year-over-year changes to full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. This differs from the outcomes-based funding formula that is used for community colleges. In addition to the FTE-based funding, the state will at times provide TCAT with additional one-time or multi-year funding for specific initiatives or academic programs, both credit and noncredit. For example, in 2023, the state provided funds to TBR for the Trucking Tennessee initiative in response to a truck driver shortage in the state. This initiative expanded CDL training programs—both credit-bearing and noncredit—and funded the purchase of additional training equipment.

TCAT funding often comes from contracts signed with employers for training as well as from students paying out of pocket. One of the most high-profile examples of this type of corporate/TCAT relationship is its

forthcoming BlueOval City campus. BlueOval City, an automotive plant in development in southwest Tennessee, is the product of a partnership between Ford Motor Company and SK Innovation. These corporate partners were lured to Tennessee by significant financial incentives from the state and federal governments, including funding for the construction of a new TCAT campus onsite.⁸ Much of the action at TCAT is related to this type of industry-connected contract training, although there are some open-enrollment programs. These open noncredit programs, in fields such as phlebotomy, tend to have lower clock hours, and they are typically paid for out-of-pocket by students, though tuition is sometimes paid directly by a student's employer.

In contrast, community colleges are funded through an outcomes-based formula comprised of eleven metrics. Though most state funding for these institutions goes towards credit bearing programs, one of the eleven metrics—Workforce Training Contact Hours—is directly relevant to this report's examination of noncredit education in Tennessee. Recently, THEC provided clarification about what type of noncredit training is eligible for this workforce training metric. To be eligible for state funding reimbursement, community college workforce courses must meet the following four criteria: provides students with occupational, technical, or soft skills for the workplace; carries no institutional credit; increases an individual's opportunities in the labor market; and improves workforce-related knowledge and skills.⁹

Colleges can set a weight for the workforce training metric so that it is between 5% to 10% of their overall formula consideration. While this weight range seems minimal, this metric can have a significant impact on a community college's overall funding, particularly in times of declining for-credit enrollment. In a recent example, almost half of one college's \$1.5 million increase in funding from the prior year was due to an increase in noncredit workforce training enrollments.

Drivers of Noncredit Data Collection

One of the most notable drivers of noncredit data collection in Tennessee was TBR's consolidation of noncredit enrollments in the TCAT student information system (SIS) in 2019. The TBR system office has de facto oversight of TCAT's noncredit data because they share IT services; thus, TCAT must notify TBR if they want to make any technical changes or build additional courses or programs in the SIS. TBR is evaluating options for establishing a unified noncredit SIS for the community colleges as well, but currently, the community college SIS is decentralized. Due in part to the aforementioned technical oversight, the mechanisms in place to encourage noncredit data collection at community colleges are not quite as strong as those in place at TCAT.

Within the broader state context, there is a growing interest in incorporating noncredit education and training into other statewide initiatives. While the state's influential financial aid programs, including

⁸ Madland, D., & Ross, K. (2024). Construction of Tennessee EV Battery Facility Highlights Promises and Challenges of Biden Administration Policies. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/construction-of-tennessee-ev-battery-facility-highlights-promises-and-challenges-of-biden-administration-policies/>

⁹ Tennessee Higher Education Commission. (2022). Workforce Training (Contact Hours) Reporting Requirements Academic Year 2021-2022.

Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect, have historically focused on for-credit students, legislation was recently introduced that proposed piloting a statewide grant for noncredit students seeking workforce training. Furthermore, there is growing interest among state agencies in incorporating noncredit data into research and data tools that highlight employment rates and wages for higher education program graduates. Finally, the state is prioritizing the alignment of postsecondary programs – designed for both credit and noncredit students - to create multiple on and off ramps for higher education during their careers. While postsecondary alignment efforts such as the Tennessee Transfer Pathway currently focus on the associate to bachelor’s pathway, institutions and state officials are working to include TCAT and CTE offerings, which, in the future may lead to the incorporation of noncredit opportunities into these pathways.

Classifying Noncredit Offerings

The State Noncredit Data Project (SNDP) classifies any noncredit course or program as an “offering” to capture the full variety of noncredit educational units. Similarly, TBR marks no distinction between noncredit courses and programs at TCAT. Every noncredit offering is called a “program,” even if it only consists of a single course. This is due in part to the fact that data are often limited to headcount and are not focused on course outcomes. For TCAT, all noncredit offerings are competency-based, so there is no meaningful differentiation between a course and a program. On the other hand, at the community colleges, a noncredit program can be comprised of multiple noncredit courses. TBR has considered characterizing noncredit offerings by length, but this effort is still nascent. In terms of the differentiation between credit and noncredit within the TBR data ecosystem, the general guideline is that credit offerings are IPEDS reportable, whereas noncredit offerings are not.

Data Inventory

When embarking on the first round of our project with partner states Iowa, Louisiana, and Virginia, the project team worked with state representatives to explore the data elements within their state data systems.¹⁰ When concluding that round, we developed a Noncredit Data Taxonomy and How-To-Guide¹¹ to serve as a primer for states just beginning data collection or refining their approach. We have since refined and updated that work. Table 1 shows the complete inventory of potential noncredit data elements as it has been re-organized from our original taxonomy. The table displays which of these data points are included in the data collected by Tennessee community colleges and TCAT and how complete those data are: if data are 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 system’s noncredit offerings.

¹⁰ 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>

¹¹ D’Amico, et al. (2023).

Table 1: State-Level Noncredit Data Inventory for Tennessee Community Colleges (CCs) and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT)

		CCs	TCAT
Purpose and Design			
Field of Study	Course/Program Name	All	All
	CIP Code	None	All
	SOC Code	None	None
	Career Cluster	All	Most
Noncredit Type	Occupational, Sponsored, Pre-College, Personal Interest, or aligned with IPEDS	All	All
Program Length	Number of Courses if Multi-Course Program	None	None
	Total Contact Hours	All	Many
Delivery	Face-to-Face	None	All
	Face-to-Face Location	None	None
	Online	None	All
	Blended	None	None
	Competency-Based	None	None
	Work-Based Learning Required	None	None
	Student Service Availability	None	None
	Faculty Data	None	None
Associated Credentials	Certifications, Licensure, Certificates, Micro Credentials Associated with Courses	None	Some
Outcomes			
Academic Outcomes	Students Continue to Credit	None	None
	Completion Data Availability	None	Some
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	Most	None
	Occupational Licensure	None	None
	College-Issued Certificate	None	Some
	Micro Credentials	None	None
	Apprenticeship	None	None
Demographics and Enrollment			
Enrollments	Headcount	All	All
	Contact Hours	All	Some
Demographics	Race/Ethnicity	None	Most
	Age	None	Most
	Sex/Gender	None	Most
Identifiers	Social Security Number	None	Most
	Institutional Identification Number	None	All
	Names	None	All

Birth Dates		None	Most
Finance			
Tuition	Course/Program Tuition	None	None
	State Reimbursement	Most	None
	WIOA-Eligible Training Provider	None	None
State and Federal Funding	Economic Development Incentive	All	All
	Other Federal Grants	None	None
	Other State Grants	All	All

Description of State Data

Purpose and Design

Key findings on the purpose and design of noncredit offerings in Tennessee include the following:

- There were significant differences in the ratio of Occupational/Vocational programs to Sponsored/Contract programs between the two organizational units. At community colleges, 63.9% of noncredit offerings were Occupational/Vocational, while at TCAT, only 42.2% of offerings were in that category (Table 2). Although Sponsored/Contract offerings are a type of occupational training, there are differences in the purpose and funding arrangements of these two types of offerings.
- Noncredit headcount was much higher at community colleges than at TCAT. Community college enrollments comprised 74.6% of total headcount enrollments across both TBR systems (Table 2).
- There are data available on the contact hours for all community college noncredit programs and many TCAT noncredit programs. TCAT provided TBR with contact hours data for half of its Occupational/Vocational offerings and about a third of its Sponsored/Contract offerings. TBR is missing contact hours data on 58% of noncredit offerings at TCAT because the academic program inventory only has access to data on noncredit program length when an offering also has a credit-bearing version at the same institution.
- Based on the available data, community college noncredit programs tended to have lower contact hours than those offered by TCAT. On average, community college Occupational/Vocational and Sponsored/Contract offerings required just 20 and 24 contact hours, respectively. Meanwhile, TCAT Occupational/Vocational offerings required 1,498 contact hours on average, and their Sponsored/Contract offerings required 1,706 contact hours on average.
- There are no data available on delivery format for noncredit offerings at community colleges. There are data available on delivery format for all noncredit offerings at TCAT. Within TCAT, all Occupational/Vocational offerings, and 93.3% of Sponsored/Contract offerings, were face-to-face (Table 3).
- All of the online Sponsored/Contract offerings at TCAT were in the Health Sciences career cluster: Anatomy & Physiology, Dosage Calculations for Nurses, and Nursing Pre-Requisites.

- Among TCAT offerings for which contact hours data are available, all courses in both noncredit types exceeded the proposed Workforce Pell 150-hour threshold. At community colleges, 6.8% of Occupational/Vocational offerings and 20.2% of Sponsored/Contract offerings met or exceeded the proposed threshold (Table 3).
- Certain career clusters dominated noncredit types, but they were not consistent across institutional types.
 - At community colleges, the most popular career cluster for Occupational/Vocational offerings was Business Management & Administration (31.7%). The most popular career cluster for their Sponsored/Contract training, however, was Manufacturing, which accounted for half (49.9%) of all offerings (Table 4).
 - At TCAT, Manufacturing was the most popular career cluster among Occupational/Vocational offerings (33.8%), whereas Health Science dominated Sponsored/Contract offerings (43.8%) (Table 4).

Table 2: Noncredit Offerings and Headcount Enrollment at Tennessee Community Colleges by Noncredit Type

Noncredit Type	Offerings		Headcount Enrollment	
	n*	%	n	%
Occupational/Vocational	1,232	63.9	19,876	69.6
Sponsored/Contract	697	36.1	8,678	30.4
Total	1,929	100.0	28,554	100.0
Noncredit Offerings and Headcount Enrollment at TCAT by Noncredit Type				
Occupational/Vocational	65	42.2	2,255	23.2
Sponsored/Contract	89	57.8	7,485	76.8
Total	154	100.0	9,740	100.0

*The unit of analysis is the number of noncredit offerings (courses) at each college (i.e., each time a course is offered at any college).

*n = Number of programs with contact hours data available

Table 3: Instructional Characteristics of Tennessee Community College Offerings by Noncredit Type

Noncredit Type	Median Contact	Mean Contact	Delivery	
	Hours	Hours	% Face-to-Face	% Online
Occupational/Vocational (n=1,232)	20	45	Unknown	Unknown
Sponsored/Contract (n=697)	24	149.56	Unknown	Unknown
Instructional Characteristics of TCAT Offerings with Contact Hours Data by Noncredit Type				
Occupational/Vocational (n=33)*	1,512	1,498	100.0	0.0
Sponsored/Contract (n=31)*	1,728	1,706	100.0	0.0

Table 4: Noncredit Offerings at Tennessee Community Colleges by Career Cluster and Noncredit Type

Career Cluster	Occupational/Vocational		Sponsored/Contract	
	n	%	n	%
Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources	2	0.2	1	0.1
Architecture & Construction	31	2.5	83	11.9
Arts, AV, Communications	46	3.7	0	0.0
Business Management & Administration	390	31.7	34	4.9
Education & Training	128	10.4	44	6.3
Finance	34	2.8	0	0.0
Government and Public Administration	9	0.7	9	1.3
Health Science	266	21.6	24	3.4
Hospitality & Tourism	11	0.9	5	0.7
Human Services	17	1.4	6	0.9
Information Technology	68	5.5	56	8.0
Law, Public Safety, Corrections	62	5.0	36	5.2
Manufacturing	86	7.0	348	49.9
Marketing	38	3.1	3	0.4
STEM	36	2.9	43	6.2
Transportation & Logistics	8	0.6	5	0.7
Not Available	0	0.0	0	0.0
	1,232	100.0	697	100.0

Table 5: Noncredit Offerings at TCAT by Career Cluster and Noncredit Type

Career Cluster	Occupational/Vocational		Sponsored/Contract	
	n	%	n	%
Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources	1	1.5	2	2.2
Architecture & Construction	12	18.5	13	14.6
Business Management & Administration	2	3.1	5	5.6
Finance	1	1.5	0	0.0
Health Science	3	4.6	39	43.8
Hospitality & Tourism	0	0.0	1	1.1
Information Technology	4	6.2	8	9.0
Manufacturing	22	33.8	7	7.9
STEM	9	13.8	1	1.1
Transportation & Logistics	10	15.4	13	14.6
Not Available	1	1.5	0	0.0
	65	100.0	89	100.0

Enrollment and Demographics

Key findings on noncredit enrollment and demographics in Tennessee include the following:

- At community colleges, student enrollment tended to reflect the patterns of noncredit offerings, with Occupational/Vocational offerings comprising 643.9% of community college noncredit offerings and 69.6% of noncredit enrollments. This pattern was not maintained at TCAT; Occupational/Vocational programs made up 42.2% of all TCAT offerings but accounted for only 23.2% of headcount enrollments (See Table 2).
- Community colleges generally do not report the demographic data of noncredit students to TBR, while TCAT report demographic data to TBR for 91% of their noncredit offerings. However, one offering on which these data are missing, the Line Workers noncredit program, comprised over 56% of the TCAT system's Occupational/Vocational headcount.
- At TCAT, the majority of both women (86.2%) and men (83.0%) were enrolled in Sponsored/Contract training. However, 62.5% of TCAT students for whom gender data are missing were enrolled in Occupational/Vocational offerings, which made up a much larger percentage (69.6% vs. 30.4%) of TCAT headcount (Figure 1; Table 2).
- When removing those for whom gender is unknown, men comprised a much larger portion of both Occupational/Vocational (91.1%) and Sponsored/Contract (88.9%) enrollment than women (Figure 2) did at TCAT.
- Race data are missing for most (83%) of TCAT's Occupational/Vocational students (Figure 4). Among TCAT enrollments with available data on race, the majority of White, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian students were enrolled in Occupational/Vocational offerings, as were both Alaskan Native students in the dataset. The majority of TCAT's multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Black students, however, were enrolled in Sponsored/Contract offerings (Figure 3).
- There were noticeable disparities with regard to missingness in the reported demographic data across the two noncredit types at TCAT. Gender was unknown for a much larger portion of the Sponsored/Contract students relative to their Occupational/Vocational counterparts (38.3% vs. 6.9%). Meanwhile, race/ethnicity was unknown for a much larger percentage of Occupational/Vocational students (83%) than Sponsored/Contract students (17.6%) (Figure 4).

Figure 1: Percent Enrollment in Noncredit Types by Sex, TCAT

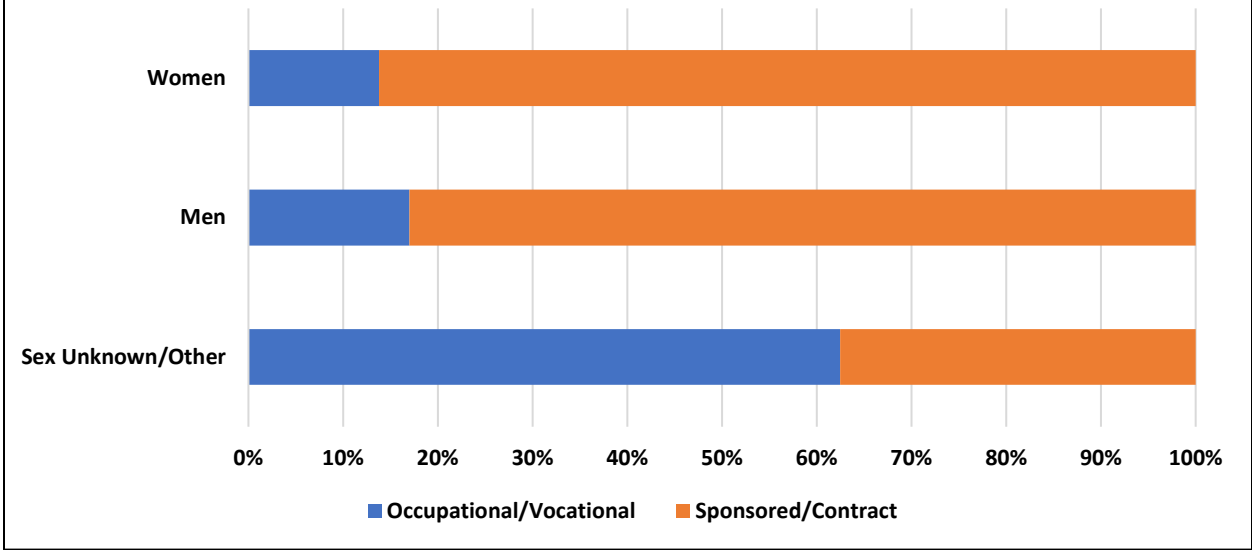


Figure 2: Percent Enrollment by Sex within Noncredit Types, TCAT

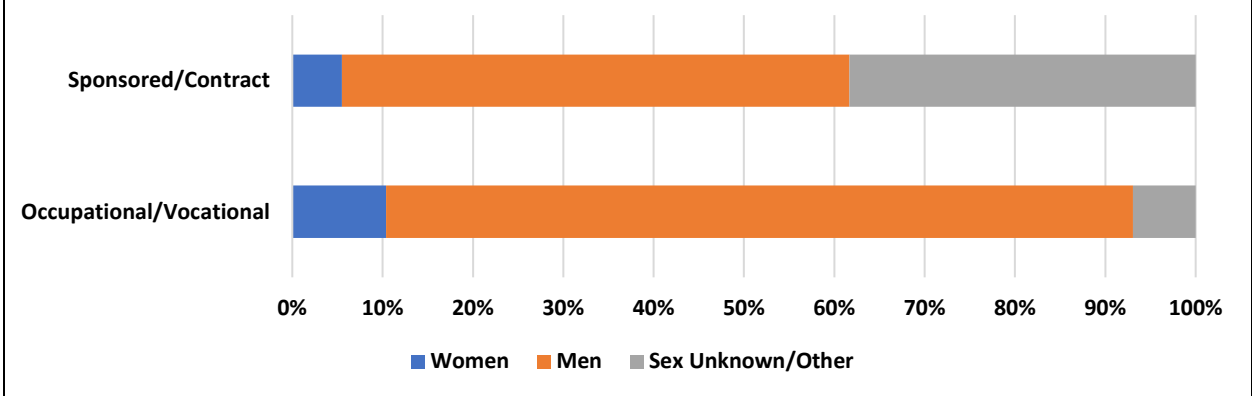


Figure 3: Percent Enrollment in Noncredit Types by Race, TCAT

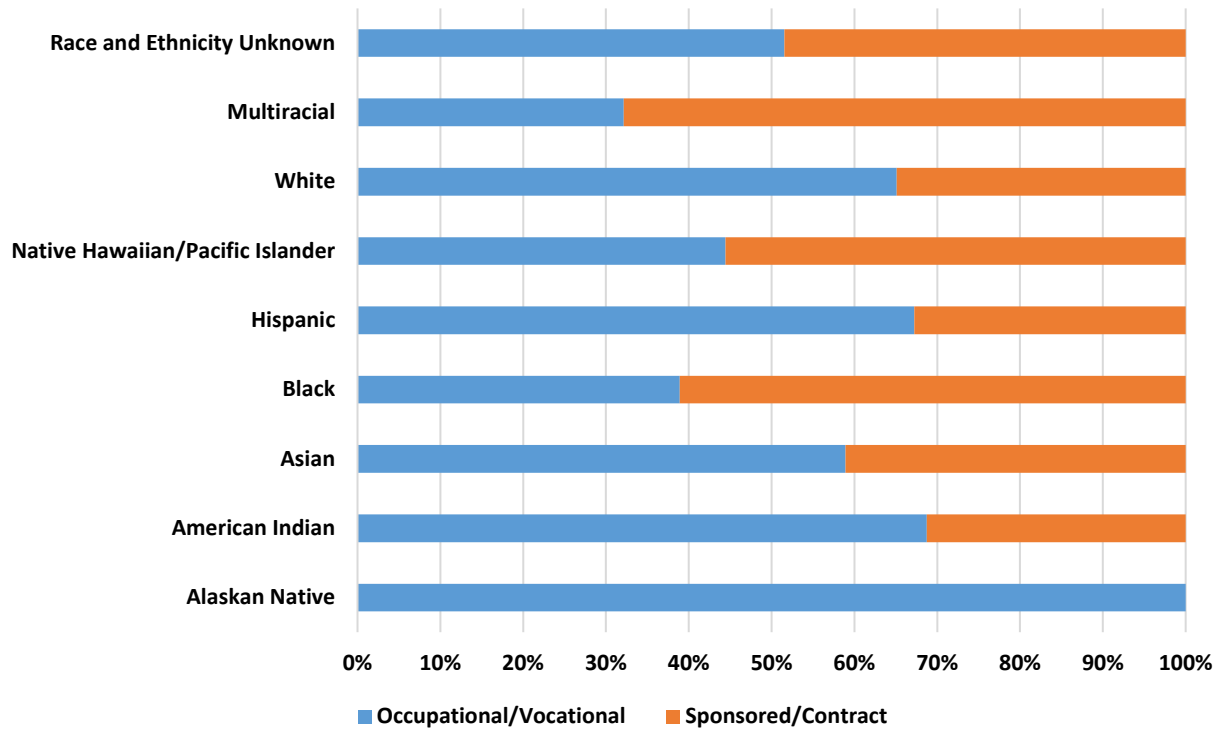
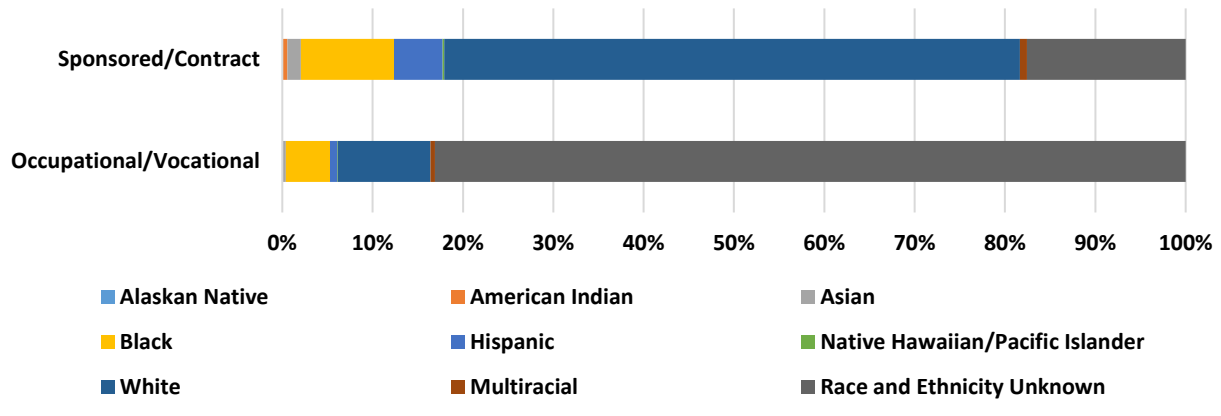


Figure 4: Percent Enrollment by Race within Noncredit Types, TCAT



Finance

Key findings on the financing of noncredit in Tennessee include the following (Table 6):

- None of the noncredit offerings at TCAT—neither Occupational/Vocational nor Sponsored/Contract—were factored into the state funding formula.
- At community colleges, the vast majority of Occupational/Vocational offerings (96%), and almost all of the Sponsored/Contract offerings (99.7%), were eligible for state funding reimbursement.

Table 6: State Funding of Noncredit Offerings at Tennessee Community Colleges and TCAT by Noncredit Type

Noncredit Type	% Factored into State Funding Formula	
	CCs	TCAT
Occupational/Vocational	96.2	0.0
Sponsored/Contract	99.7	0.0

Conclusions

As the SNDP team learns more about noncredit offerings and data infrastructure with state partners, Tennessee provides unique lessons and conclusions:

- The Tennessee Board of Regents can navigate the varying data infrastructure needs and challenges of two different institution types: community colleges and technical colleges. While these two different institution types have concentrations of missingness around different data elements, the dataset includes useful information from both types of institutions, including but not limited to: program name, noncredit type, headcount, career cluster, and funding sources.
- There are some areas for growth for the noncredit data infrastructure in Tennessee. Community colleges and TCAT would benefit from collecting information on academic and labor market outcomes, as well as more information about program delivery and non-degree credential outcomes. Community colleges could begin sharing demographic data on their noncredit students with TBR, and TCAT could work on ensuring the completeness of its noncredit demographic data. TCAT could also collect more robust data on program length for its noncredit offerings.
- Analysis of the state’s noncredit offerings shows that community colleges have a stronger focus on Occupational/Vocational training, while TCAT focuses more on Sponsored/Contract training. This difference reflects the diverse missions of the two institution types and is likely to persist in light of recent policy and economic developments, such as the Sponsored/Contract training focus of the forthcoming BlueOval City TCAT campus.

- Like institutions in the Louisiana Community & Technical College System, TCAT uses Banner to collect noncredit data in a centralized system. TBR manages this central database, thus providing a thin layer of oversight to TCAT's noncredit programming offerings. Tennessee community colleges, meanwhile, each have their own approach to noncredit data collection.

The SNDP team is working toward a comprehensive cross-state analysis with five states in the second phase of the project, including Tennessee, while continuing to cultivate a deeper understanding of the developing noncredit data taxonomy. The purpose of the SNDP is to use findings from states such as Tennessee to assist in the development of noncredit data infrastructure in states across the country.

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