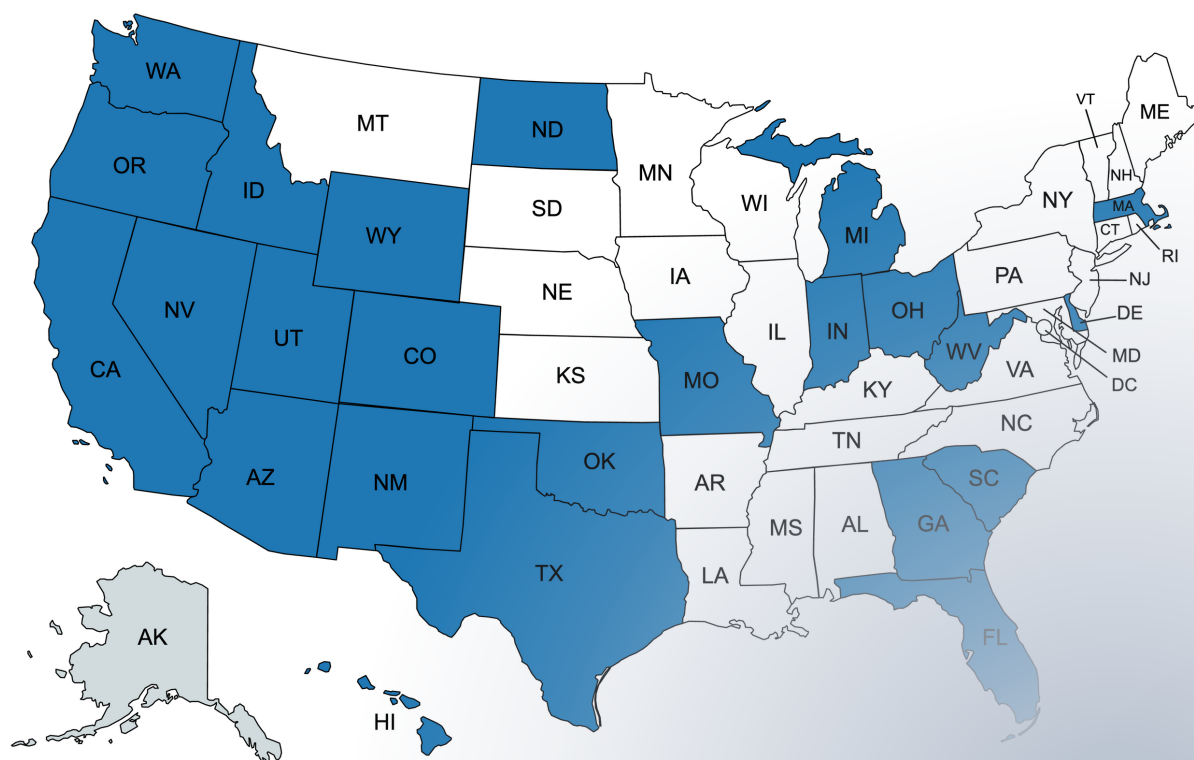


Watch Them Grow:

The Evolution of Community College Baccalaureate Degrees in the United States



2024



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Community College Baccalaureate Association
Bragg & Associates, Inc.

April 23, 2024

Introduction

With 24 states now authorizing community college baccalaureate (CCB) degrees, it is important to know how these degrees are evolving and who they are serving to understand where they may be heading in the future. Specifically, knowing where and why bachelor's degrees are evolving in the community college context may shed light on the [nation's changing higher education landscape](#) as colleges and universities reform and transform to better meet student and stakeholder needs.

Building on the [first national inventory of CCB degrees](#) completed in 2021, this research brief updates the 2021 findings with two more years of data on CCB degree adoption and implementation at the state, college, program, and student levels. These results were presented in a [webinar](#) on January 23, 2024 by the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) leadership team and Bragg & Associates researchers. We link insights gained from this research with the CCBA team's deep experience implementing CCB degrees to identify notable trends and future possibilities for scaling up more CCB degrees in the United States.

Methods and Definition of the Community College Baccalaureate (CCB)

To be considered a "CCB college" in our study, an institution need not be formally named a "community" college, but it must be recognized presently or historically as a college conferring predominantly sub-baccalaureate degrees according to the state and/or local boards responsible for governing these colleges. Also, the formal name of the college may not be "community" college, but the institution must be recognized currently or historically as a community college according to the institution's mission statement and by a regional accreditor. In addition to formal documentation, we use the [Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education](#) and associated variables in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as sources of information to determine whether a college should be designated as a CCB-conferring college.

To this point, a primary way that we classify community colleges as "CCB colleges" is using two categories from the [Basic Carnegie Classification](#), both of which require institutions to confer

fewer than 50 percent of their total associates and bachelor's degrees at the baccalaureate level. This stipulation ensures that a bachelor's degree is not the predominant form of college degree attained by graduates at CCB colleges. These two categories are:

- **Baccalaureate/Associates Dominant**, wherein institutions confer fewer than 10 percent of all degrees at the baccalaureate or higher level, meaning at least 90 percent of all degrees are conferred at the associates level.
- **Mixed Baccalaureate/Associates**, wherein institutions confer more than 10 percent but not more than 50 percent of all degrees at the baccalaureate or higher level.

We also use IPEDS to confirm that the proportion of bachelor's degree graduates does not exceed the 50 percent threshold established by the IPEDS Basic Carnegie Classification for each institution designed as either Baccalaureate/Associates Dominant and Mixed Baccalaureate/ Associates. Because the proportion could fluctuate just below or above the 50 percent mark, we do not immediately remove an institution that exceeds 50 percent but monitor this proportion over a period of three years. This approach is similar to the method the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) uses to measure the percentage of bachelor's conferrals for institutions at or near 50 percent.

In addition, our inventory focuses exclusively on publicly funded community colleges that are regionally accredited higher education institutions in the 50 states. However, some "independent" colleges, referring to private non-profit and for-profit colleges, are classified in IPEDS as Baccalaureate/Associates Dominant or Mixed Baccalaureate/Associates because they confer associates and bachelor's degrees. This group is not large, but it is present in the IPEDS data. According to the [AACC](#), a total of 37 independent colleges are identified as baccalaureate conferring community colleges.

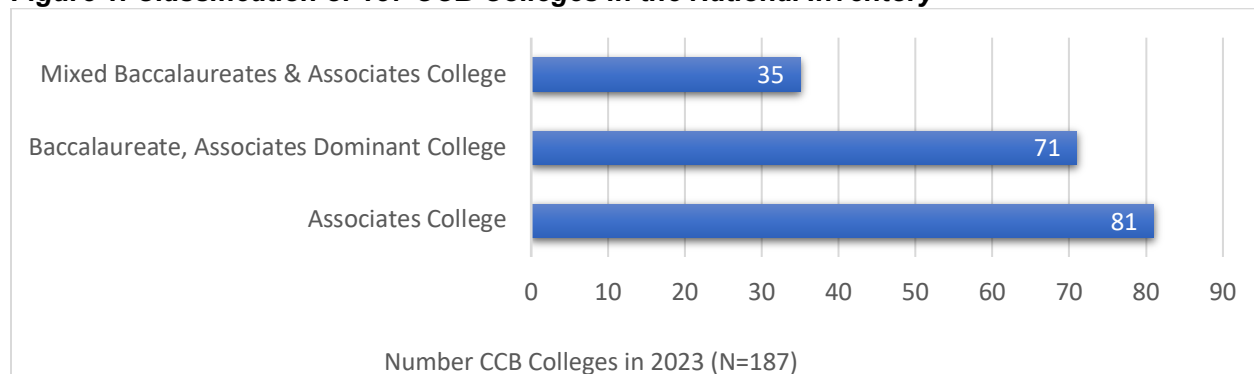
We also gathered data from states and institutions to identify community colleges approved to confer bachelor's degrees that are not yet included in IPEDS. To do this research, we gathered data through interviews with state agency and local college personnel, and we systematically inventoried institutional websites. In states without coordinating or governing boards, we gathered data directly from institutions, including reviewing local boards of trustees' decisions to approve CCB degrees. Because of this approach, we believe this inventory represents the most complete and accurate count of CCB colleges and programs in the United States, including community colleges conferring CCB degrees and colleges that are approved but not yet implementing such degrees.

Figure 1 shows 187 community colleges counted as "CCB colleges" in the national inventory.¹ Each college has been approved to confer one or more CCB degree programs at the time this iteration of the national inventory concluded on December 31, 2023. A total of 106 of these colleges fall into one of the two Carnegie Classification categories, with 19 percent of all 187 CCB colleges designated as Mixed Baccalaureates/Associates Colleges, wherein more than 10 percent of degrees are bachelor's or higher. The other 38 percent of CCB colleges are Baccalaureate/ Associates Dominant with fewer than 10 percent of degrees offering bachelor's or higher degrees. It is also noteworthy that the largest group of community colleges in our

¹ On March 26, 2024, the California Community Colleges announced approval of six new CCB degree programs, with more information [here](#). We do not include these new programs in this brief because our intent is to summarize results of the CCBA webinar held January 23, 2024. However, we do recognize these new programs are approved in California and reassure readers that these programs will be reported in future inventory results.

inventory is made up of 81 colleges that are still classified in IPEDS as Associates Colleges. However, this classification should change to reflect the Baccalaureate/Associates Dominant College designation within the next year or two.

Figure 1. Classification of 187 CCB Colleges in the National Inventory

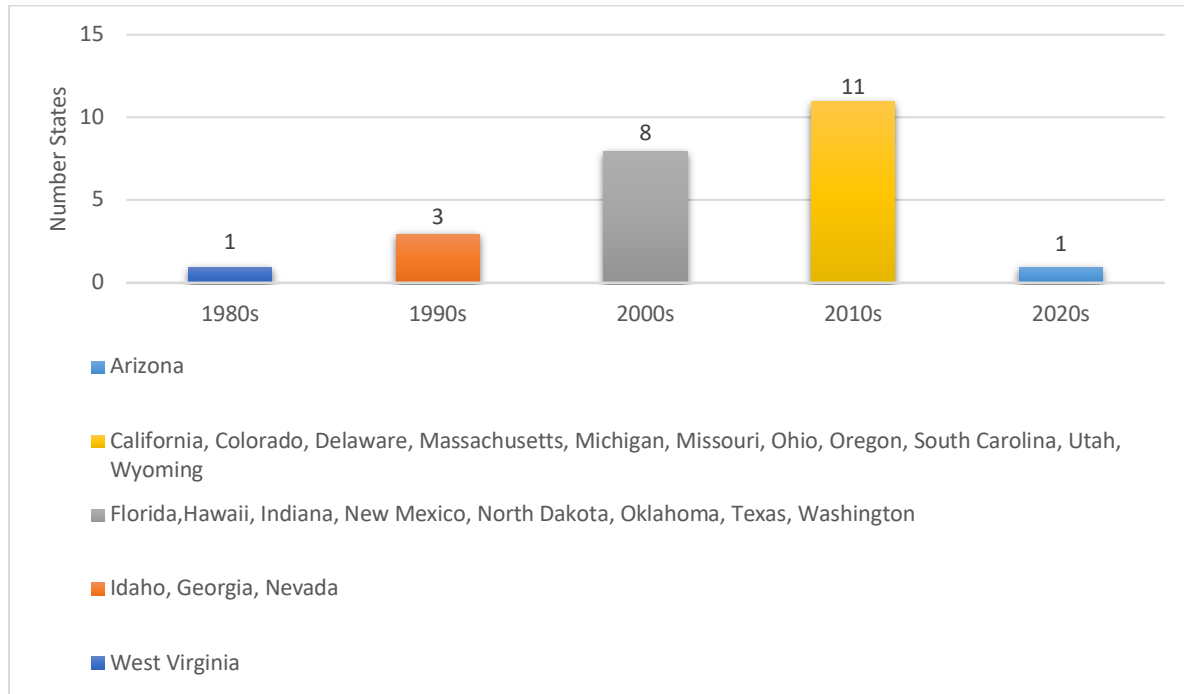


Finally, while we do not include Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) or U.S. territories in this brief, we have used IPEDS to identify 20 TCUs that confer CCB degrees or have reported public plans to do so, and we have also found all five U.S. territories with permanent, non-military populations that confer these degrees as well.

Conferral of CCB Degrees by States

The adoption of CCB degrees in the United States has been occurring for almost five decades. Starting in West Virginia in 1989, only a few states adopted CCBs until the 2000s, when eight states authorized such degrees. This group includes two states that have scaled up CCB degrees to all or nearly all community colleges. Specifically, Florida reached full-scale adoption of CCB degrees by all 28 of its colleges in 2021, and Washington has approved 33 of 34 colleges to confer CCB degrees, with nearly all already conferring and the one remaining non-conferring college seeking approval now. In the decade of the 2010s, 11 more states approved CCB degrees, including California, Colorado, and Ohio, where sizeable numbers of community colleges are offering CCB degrees, with more on the horizon. Arizona became the newest state authorizing CCB degrees in 2021, with 14 of 19 community colleges having already approved new CCB degrees. Notably, nine of Arizona's community colleges are part of the Maricopa District located in the Phoenix metro area. Figure 2 shows the number of states adopting CCB degrees by decade.

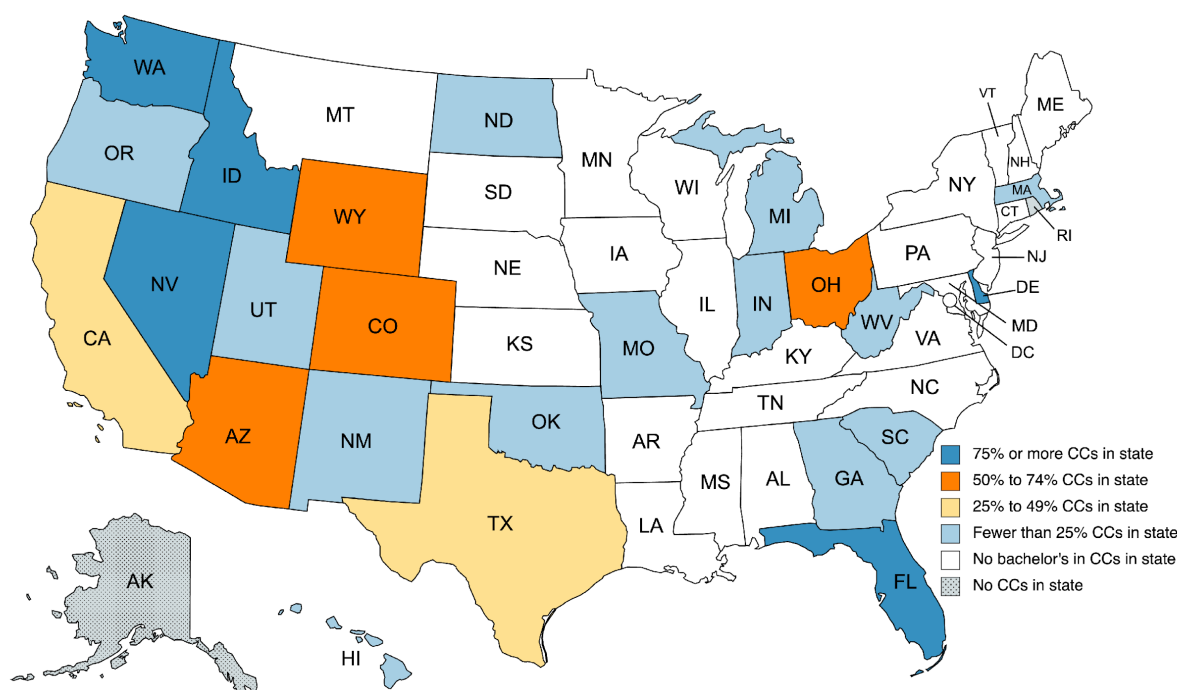
Figure 2. Number of States by Decade of First CCB Degree Legislation and Authorization



Looking at the map in Figure 3, one can't miss the preponderance of CCB colleges located west of the Mississippi River. Sixty-two percent of CCB colleges are located in the Western region of the U.S. where there is far [less density of higher education](#) and where longer commutes can impede students' decisions to attend college. Geographic access to college, measured through proximal distance from a student's home to college, correlates with students deciding whether they will ever participate in higher education. Research on what Hillman ([2019](#)) calls "education deserts" (p. 2) shows most students choose to attend college within 50 miles of their home.

Figure 3 also shows five states (shaded in dark blue) that have scaled fully or are close to full-scale adoption of CCB degrees. Delaware, Florida, and Nevada have reached all colleges, while Washington is just one college short of full-scale adoption. Over the [objection of four-year universities](#) in the state, the Idaho State Board of Education authorized three of the state's four community colleges to offer one or more CCB degrees in early 2024. Altogether, this group of five states has a total of 71 CCB colleges, with all or most of them actively conferring the degrees.

Figure 3. Scale of College Adoption of CCB Degrees by the Fifty States



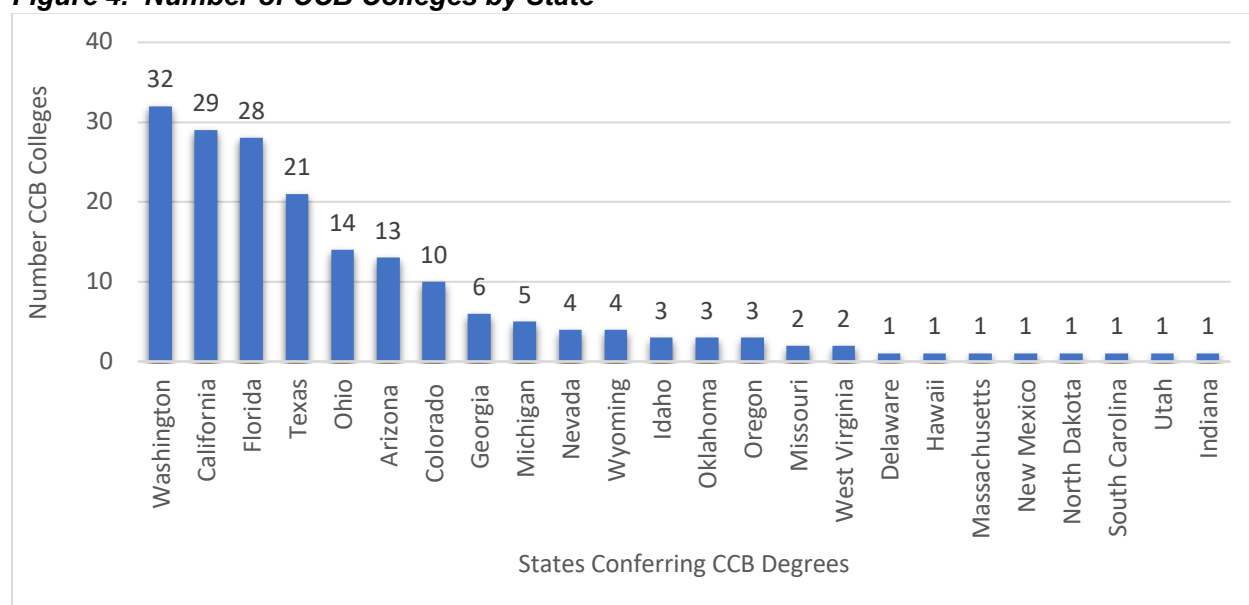
In addition, the four states shaded in orange (Arizona, Colorado, Ohio, and Wyoming) in Figure 3 have 50 to 74 percent of community colleges adopting CCB degrees, with a total of 40 colleges already conferring or approved to confer. Another 24 colleges in these four states do not yet confer CCB degrees, leaving more opportunity for scale-up since these states do not restrict conferral to specific colleges or programs of study. Shaded in gold are two states, California and Texas, with large community college systems where 25 to 49 percent of their colleges are approved to confer CCB degrees. In California, 32 of the state's 116 community colleges are approved to confer bachelor's degrees, with three more colleges granted approval to confer CCB degrees in March 2024. Texas also has potential to scale-up more CCB degrees, with 21 colleges in the state's 50 community college districts conferring but the rest of the colleges, representing the majority of colleges in the state, lacking any CCB degrees so far.

On the other end of the spectrum, half of the 24 states (shaded in light blue) have fewer than 25 percent of all community colleges conferring CCB degrees. Most of these states have laws that limit or prohibit expansion, but some states can grow. For example, South Carolina has the potential to offer bachelor of applied science (BAS) degrees in advanced manufacturing in any of the state's 17 technical colleges, but only one college has adopted a CCB degree program so far. Similarly, more CCB degrees are possible in Michigan and Missouri, but restrictions on the types of programs that can be offered slow scale-up. Finally, in states such as Indiana, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and North Dakota, only one community college is granted CCB degree conferral authority, leaving the majority of community colleges in these states without the option to award CCB degrees.

Community College Conferral of CCB Degrees

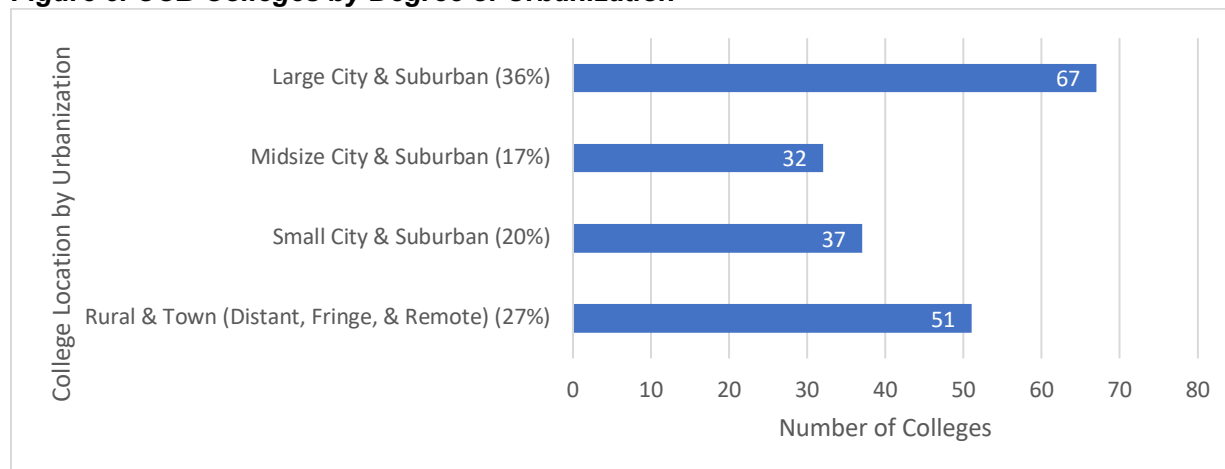
Although the states conferring CCB degrees did not change from fall 2021 to fall 2023, the number of colleges conferring these degrees grew substantially. In this two-year period, the nation saw a 32 percent increase in community colleges conferring bachelor's degrees or approved to do so, from 132 in 2021 to 187 in 2023. These colleges make up 20 percent of the total count of 932 community colleges in the United States, according to the [2023 AACC Fact Sheet](#). Figure 4 provides a count of colleges conferring CCB degrees nationwide, with Washington, California, and Florida having the most colleges and Texas slightly fewer. Altogether, the seven states of Washington, California, Florida, Texas, Ohio, Arizona, and Colorado are responsible for nearly 80 percent of all community colleges conferring CCB degrees in the United States.

Figure 4. Number of CCB Colleges by State



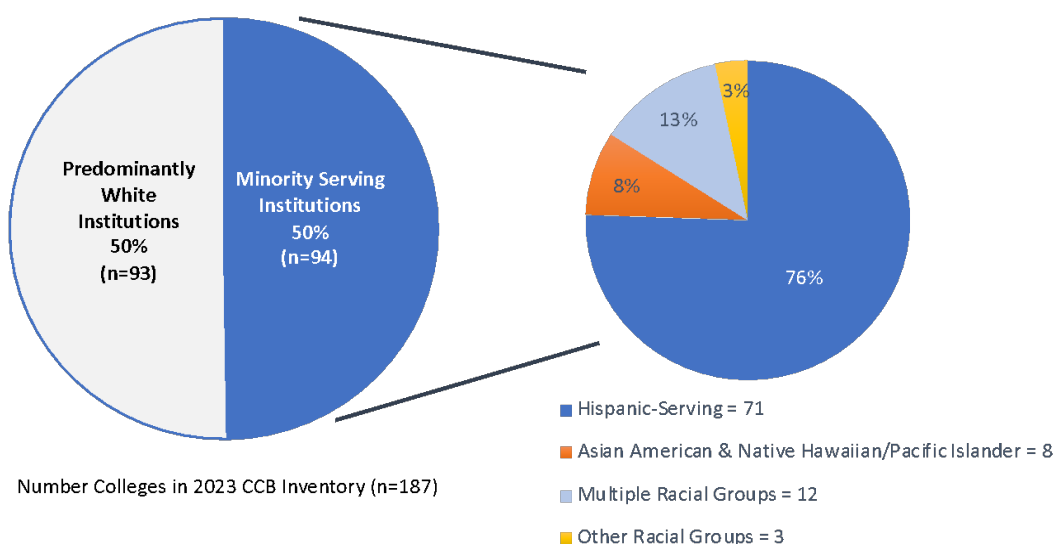
Knowing the importance of geography to college access, we examined the location of CCB colleges using IPEDS data. We looked at the degree of urbanization to document the location of CCB colleges by rural and town (fringe, distant, and remote) and suburb and city (small, midsize, and large). Figure 5 shows that the largest number of CCB colleges (36 percent) are located in large city and suburban areas, followed by 27 percent in rural and town locations. CCB colleges located in small city and suburban locations make up 20 percent of the total, with the remaining 17 percent situated in midsize city and suburban locations. These results suggest almost two-thirds of all CCB colleges are located on either end of the urbanization spectrum, either in the largest city and suburban settings or the most rural and remote locales.

Figure 5. CCB Colleges by Degree of Urbanization



Our research also identified institutions according to their enrollment of racially minoritized populations, and we found a strong representation of Minority-serving Institutions (MSIs). Specifically, we found half of all 187 CCB colleges are designated as MSIs in IPEDS, with the remaining half being predominantly white institutions (PWIs) (see Figure 6). Slightly over three-quarters of MSIs are classified as Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), indicating the student population of these institutions is 25 percent or higher full-time equivalent (FTE) Hispanic students. Another 12 percent of MSIs enroll students associated with multiple groups (e.g., Black and Hispanic), and another 8 percent are recognized as Asian American and Pacific Islander-serving Institutions (AAPISIs).

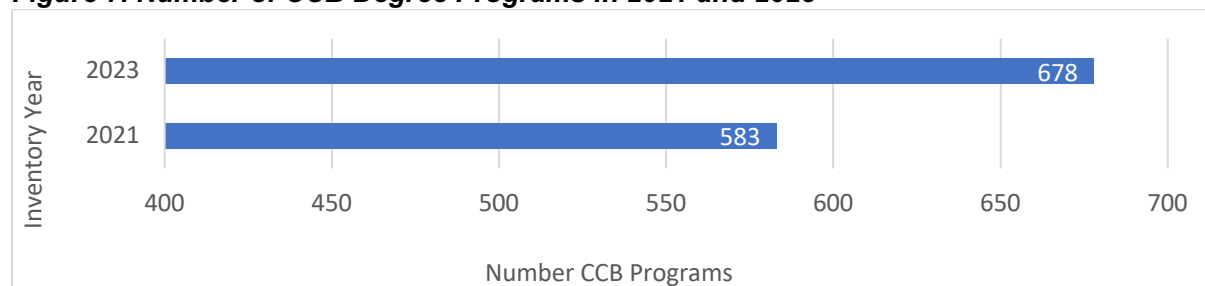
Figure 6. CCB Degree Colleges by Institutional Classification



CCB Degree Programs

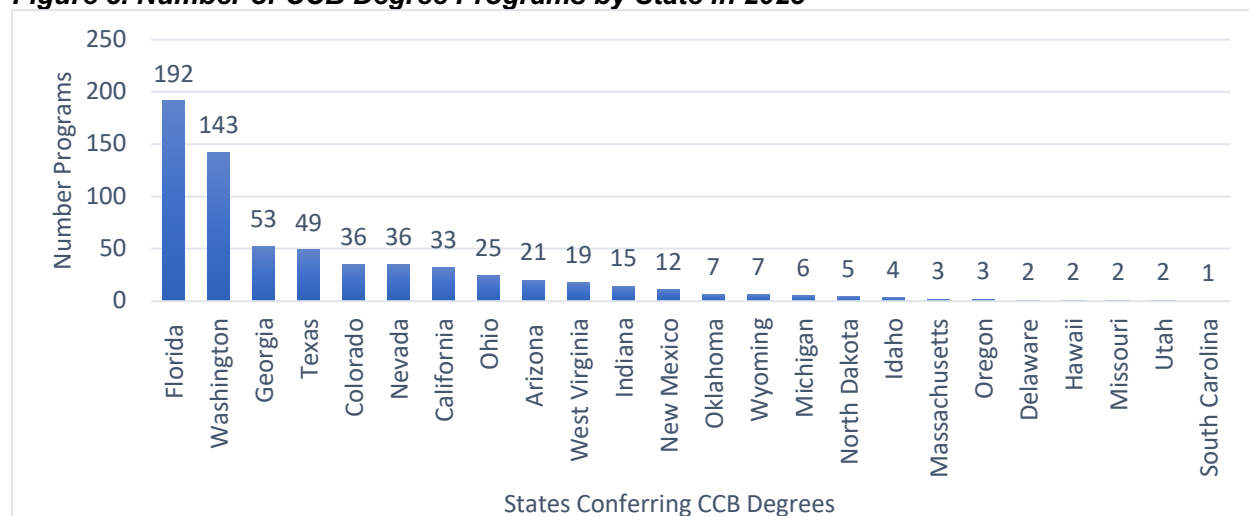
Like the increase in community colleges conferring bachelor's degrees from 2021 to 2023, we saw growth in programs culminating in CCB degrees. Specifically, the total number of CCB degree programs grew from 583 to 678 over this two-year period, increasing by 17 percent (or 95 programs) (see Figure 7). About two-thirds of these programs had received approval but had not yet implemented a CCB degree by the end of 2023, with plans to launch in 2024-25.

Figure 7. Number of CCB Degree Programs in 2021 and 2023



Also looking at CCB degree program adoption over the last two years, we found a tendency for states with a longer history of CCB granting authority to confer more CCB degree programs than newer CCB-adopting states. For example, two early adopter states, Florida and Washington, offer 192 and 143 programs, respectively (see Figure 8). The CCB colleges in Florida average 6.9 programs, and the community and technical colleges in Washington average 4.5 programs. Nationally, the average number of CCB degree programs per college is 3.6, with a median of two programs. Our data also reveal 57 percent of all CCB colleges offer one or two CCB degree programs only.

Figure 8. Number of CCB Degree Programs by State in 2023



These results suggest while CCB colleges in a few states average relatively large numbers of CCB degree programs, other states, like Idaho, Massachusetts, Missouri, Oregon, and South Carolina, offer only a few since state authorization is more recent. Also, as noted earlier, some states have legislative restrictions on the number of institutions or types of programs that can be offered, constraining the number of programs that can be implemented. Arizona is a noteworthy exception. In this state, 13 of 19 of the state's community colleges have approved 21 bachelor's degree programs within three years of the passage of a CCB-authorizing bill in 2021, with some community colleges acting to adopt multiple CCB degrees during this relatively short period.

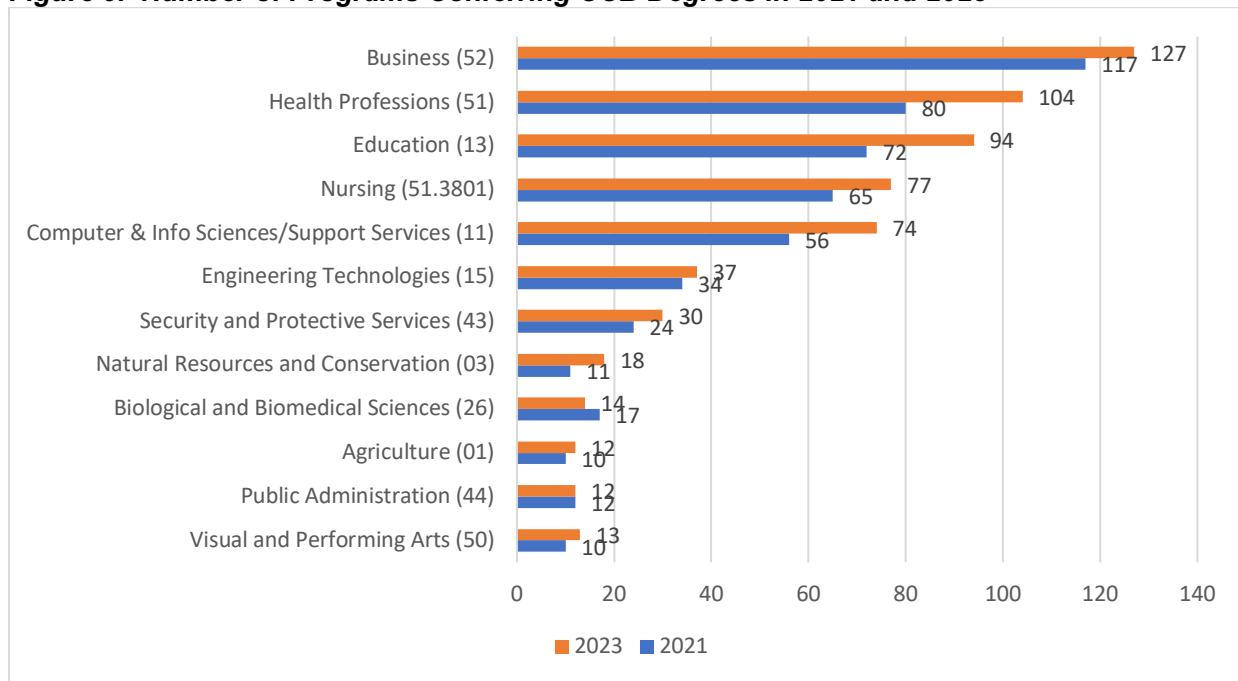
Looking at the number of CCB programs conferred by state, we also identified the programs associated with CCB degrees by 2-digit CIP codes located in IPEDS, which we refer to as "major program categories." Figure 9 shows the number of programs by the top twelve 2-digit CIP codes, including business, health professions and nursing, education, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs. Comparing the inventory results for 2021 to 2023, we see growth over time in programs associated with most of these 2-digit CIPs. For example, we found a 31 percent increase in education programs, from 72 in 2021 to 94 in 2023. These results are consistent with results using 6-digit CIP codes (not shown) that reveal nursing and other health-related programs, business, education, and STEM are the most prevalent CCB programs. Nursing is the major program area with the largest number of CCB degree programs nationally.

It is no coincidence that CCB programs focus on industry sectors that are growing across the country and globally. Demonstrating workforce need for employees with baccalaureate level qualifications is a requirement in most [states for the approval of new CCB programs](#). This tight coupling of CCB degrees to workforce needs helps explain why such degrees tend to be offered in regionally dominant and growing industry sectors. Demonstrating workforce needs that require baccalaureate-trained college graduates is also important to ensure new CCB degrees yield good jobs with career mobility for graduates.

Since the pandemic, [employment has exploded](#) in numerous sectors, including growth in jobs in business, especially retail; in occupations associated with healthcare broadly and nursing specifically; in teaching, especially private education; and in government and social assistance positions. Jobs are reasonably plentiful in other sectors as well, including manufacturing and transportation, although employment is not growing at the pace of these other sectors.

Also important to mention in this context is the decline in tech jobs caused largely by [layoffs](#) at big tech companies. However, tech jobs still exist in sizeable numbers throughout the country because these employees operate and maintain computers and online infrastructure in many industry sectors, not just tech companies.

Figure 9. Number of Programs Conferring CCB Degrees in 2021 and 2023



Our study also reveals the type of bachelor's degrees associated with CCBs tilts toward the bachelor of applied science (BAS), with another substantial number of CCB degrees in the form of bachelor of science (BS) (Figure 10). For the most part, the degree type (e.g., BAS or BS) associated with CCB degrees in a state conforms to state legislation. Thus, states requiring applied bachelor's degrees confer the BAS or a similar applied degree type, such as the Bachelor of Technology (BAT). Where states do not legislate the type of degree for CCB programs, the BS degree, as well as Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), are more prevalent.

Figure 10. Number of CCB Degree Programs by Type of Degree Awarded in 2021 and 2023

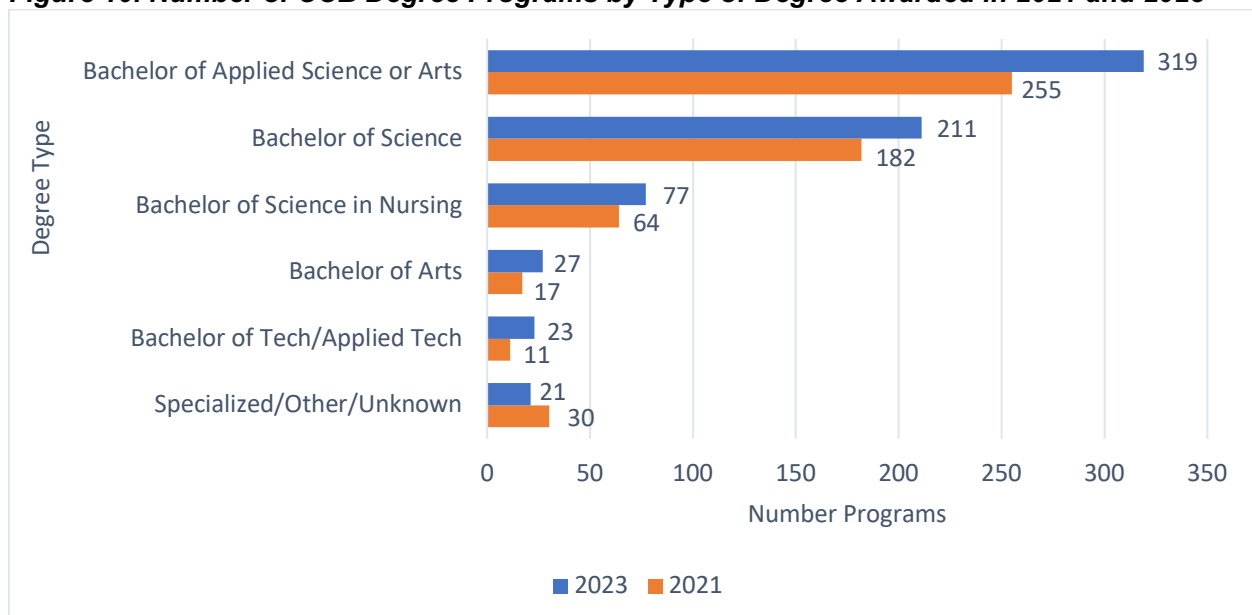
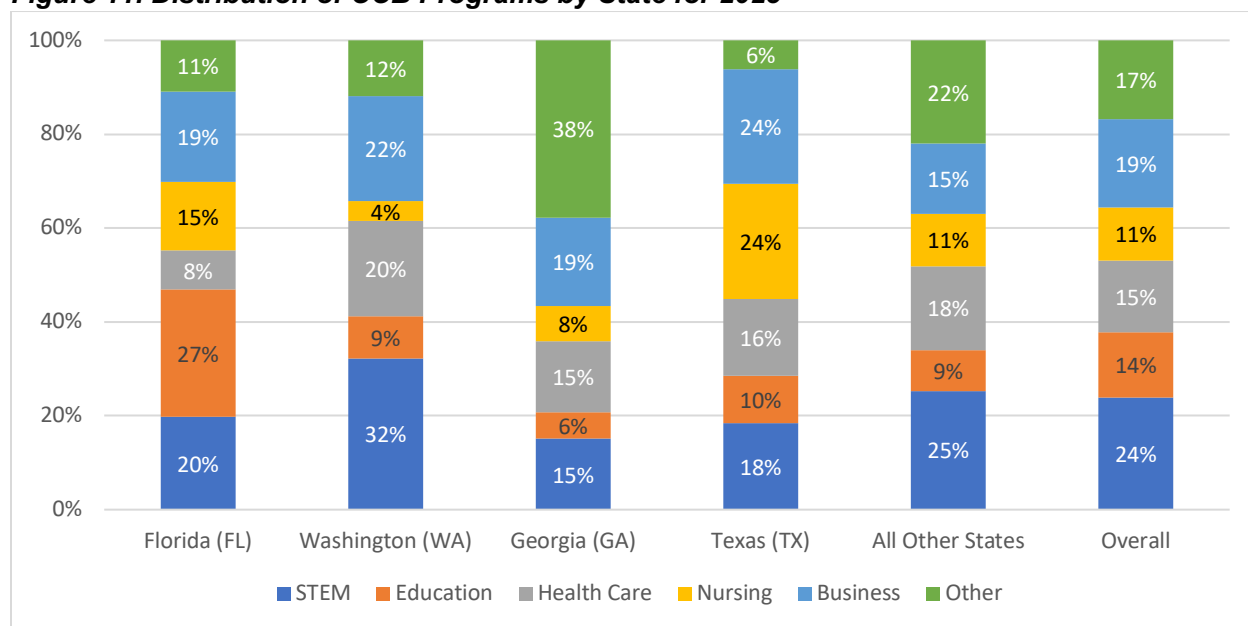


Figure 11 shows the distribution of six major program categories for the four states with the most CCB degree programs in 2023. These distributions are compared to all other states and the overall state results, revealing that the percentage of major programs varies substantially by state. For example, the largest percentage of CCB degree programs in Florida is in education, whereas the largest percentage of programs in Washington is in STEM. Many of Georgia's CCB colleges offer a comprehensive curriculum, including CCB degree programs in liberal arts and sciences that show up in the "other" major program category. In Texas, the largest percentage of programs is evenly split between business and nursing. The distribution of programs for all other states and for the states overall is fairly similar, with STEM, business, and other major programs topping the list. These results may reflect differences in state and regional economies, the colleges' capacity to deliver new baccalaureate degrees in specific workforce areas, and other factors unknown to us.

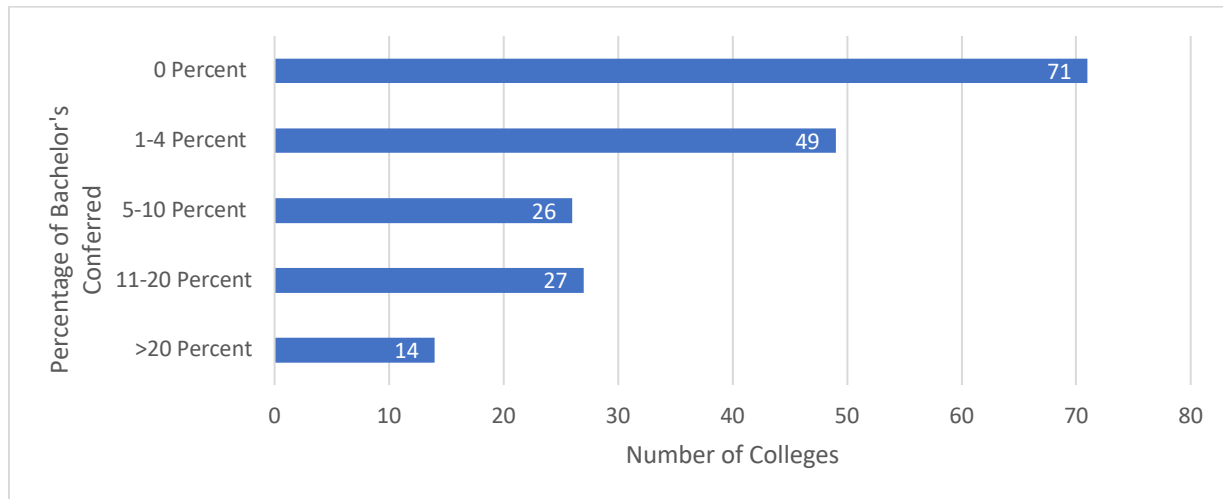
Figure 11. Distribution of CCB Programs by State for 2023



CCB Degree Graduates

Of all CCB colleges, 118 (63 percent) awarded bachelor's degrees in the 2021-2022 academic year, the most recent year for which IPEDS data are available on college graduates. Figure 12 shows a distribution of percentages of all degrees at the baccalaureate level for all CCB colleges, ranging from no bachelor's degrees to greater than 20 percent (but fewer than 50 percent) bachelor's degrees out of all degrees conferred in 2020-21. These data suggest the vast majority of CCB colleges confer 10 percent or fewer degrees at the bachelor's level, confirming the continuing dominance of associates degrees at CCB colleges.

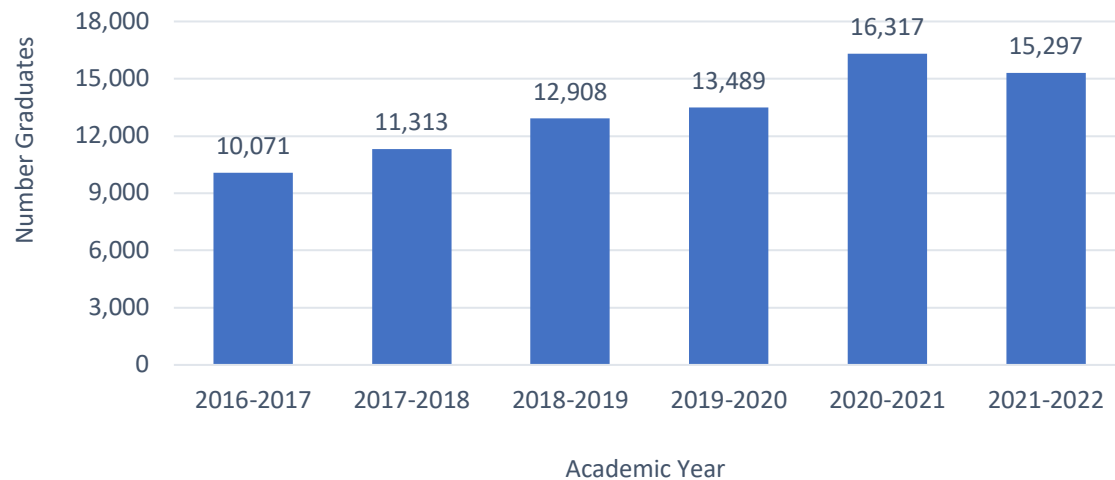
Figure 12. Number of CCB Colleges by Percentage of All Degrees Conferred as Baccalaureates



Additional analysis of these data reveals colleges not reporting CCB graduates in the 2021-2022 academic year are concentrated in Arizona, California, Ohio, and Texas. Together, these four states make up 70 percent of the CCB colleges that did not report CCB graduates for the 2021-2022 academic year. These states either adopted new legislation to authorize more community colleges and/or they granted approval for more programs of study in recent years. The remainder of the CCB colleges without graduates are concentrated in states adopting CCB degrees in the last five years.

Looking at the CCB colleges with graduates, we found the number of graduates receiving a CCB degree rose steadily over the five-year period, from 10,071 in 2016-17 to 16,317 in 2020-21, after which the number of graduates fell by 1,020 graduates to 15,297 in 2021-2022 (see Figure 13). Though the exact reasons are unknown, the decline may have been prompted by declining enrollments due to COVID-19. A 2024 National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) [report](#) on higher education enrollment shows falling numbers from the pandemic to fall 2023, when an upward tick was noted for the first time since 2020. In this NSC 2024 report, we find a 2.1 percentage increase in associates-level enrollment. If this increase in enrollment translates into higher associates enrollment and graduation numbers, we should see CCB graduate numbers recover and climb as more CCB degree programs come online in the future.

Figure 13. Number of CCB Graduates from 2016-17 to 2021-2022

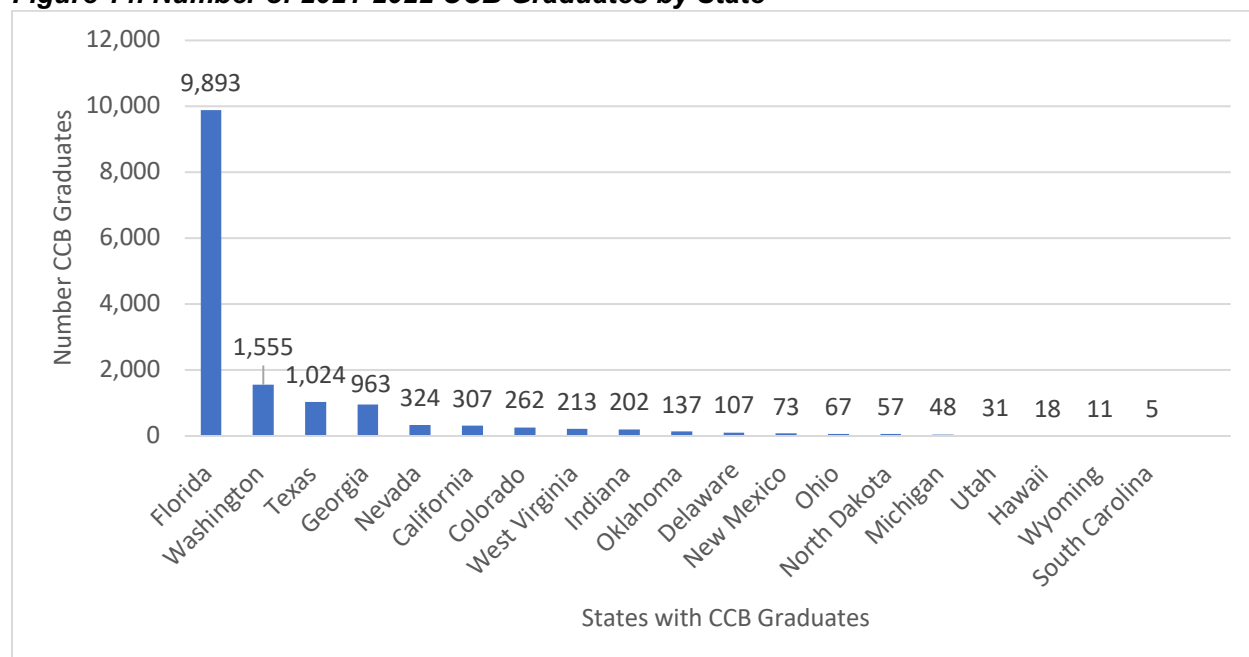


Looking at CCB graduates by state, almost two-thirds of all of these graduates in 2021-22 were in Florida (9,893 total), with another 3,542 graduates from three additional states having the largest number of CCB degree programs: Washington, Texas, and Georgia (see Figure 14). Altogether, CCB graduates in these four states comprise over 88 percent of all CCB graduates in the country in 2021-2022 and 90 percent across the six years included in our analysis. This finding makes sense, as these states have been conferring CCB degrees for a longer period of time than many other states, and they have authorized a more expansive approach to baccalaureate conferral by community colleges.

For example, of eight states with fewer than 100 CCB graduates in 2021-2022, four restrict CCB degree-conferral to one college (Hawaii, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah), and another two (Michigan and South Carolina) limit CCB degree programs to specific fields of study (e.g., energy, manufacturing, maritime occupational preparation). Only two of these eight states (Ohio and Wyoming) grant more expansive CCB conferral authority to community colleges, but they are more recent CCB adopters, both authorizing such degrees within the last six years.

Standing up a new CCB degree program takes a number of years due to program approval, development, and implementation, which typically requires enrolling students for at least two years. Thus, it is not surprising to see zero or only a few graduates in states with less time to bring CCB degree programs to fruition.

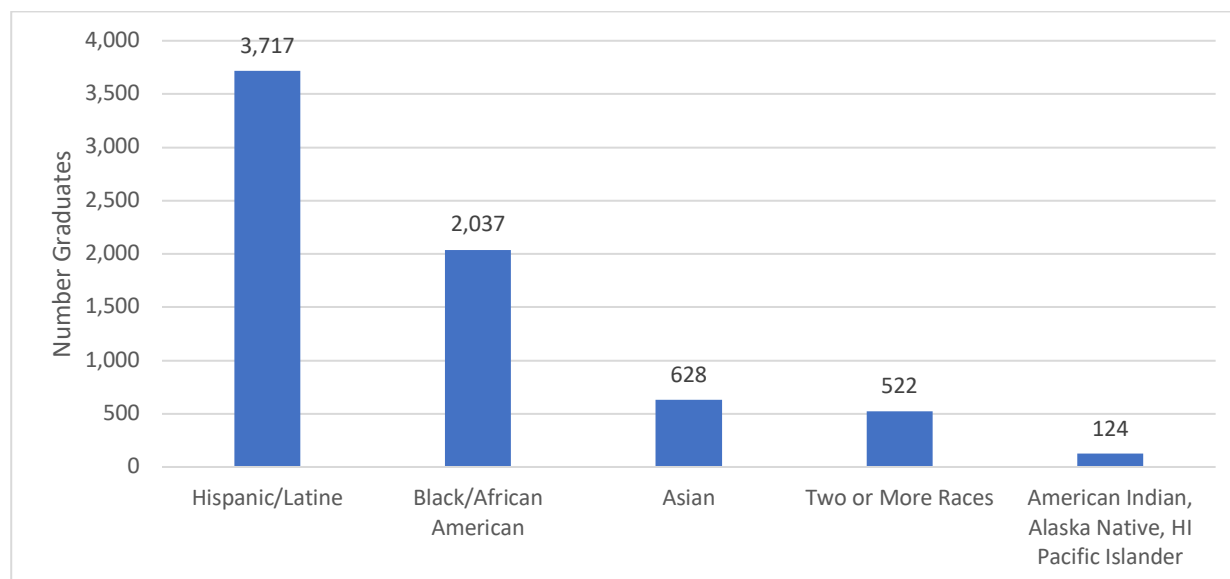
Figure 14. Number of 2021-2022 CCB Graduates by State



Looking at the demographic characteristics of CCB graduates, we find the majority of 2021-2022 CCB graduates are women (64 percent). In fact, the proportion of women compared to men has held steady at about two-thirds women graduates and one-third men graduates over the six-year period from 2016-17 to 2021-22. The percentage of women is slightly higher than the percentage of women enrolled in community colleges nationally, as reported by [AACC](#) using the 2021 fall enrollment survey conducted by IPEDS. Though the reason for the higher representation of women among CCB graduates is unknown, this pattern is consistent with higher levels of degree attainment among women than men in higher education overall, according to a recent report by the Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce (CEW), found [here](#).

The racial composition of CCB graduates in 2021-2022 closely resembles the institutional classification reported earlier in this brief, with about half of CCB graduates representing racially minoritized groups, based on IPEDS. Looking at racially minoritized students only, totaling 7,028 students, we find the largest group is Hispanic/Latine at 52 percent (see Figure 15). The second largest group is Black/African American at 29 percent, followed by Asian graduates at 9 percent, two or more races at 7 percent, and American Indian, Alaska Native, and Hawaiian Pacific Islander at 2 percent. In addition, 4 percent of CCB graduates are international students, and another 4 percent of CCB graduates do not provide a racial identity to IPEDS.

Figure 15. Number of Racially Minoritized CCB Graduates by Racial Group



We also cross-walked our data on CCB graduates by major program category based on 2-digit CIP codes, gender, and race. Figure 16 compares the distribution of 2021-2022 CCB graduates by program category for women and men. Here we find a similar percentage of men and women graduating in business but large differences in STEM graduates by gender, where men outnumber women. By comparison, women outnumber men in nursing, healthcare, and education. A relatively small percentage of either women or men graduate with a major in the “other” program category, though men are slightly more prevalent than women. These findings suggest CCB graduates tend to complete programs that are historically associated with gendered occupations, except perhaps business. Similar findings were presented in a [New America report](#) on CCB programs in Florida and Washington, the two states with the most graduates in this inventory for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Our crosswalk of CCB graduates by racially minoritized group and major program category reveals some similarities and differences between groups. Specifically, whereas business is the largest single major program category for all groups except Asian graduates, we see a higher percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latine graduates in business than other groups. We also see slightly over 20 percent of white, Black/African American, and American Indian/Native American/Hawaiian Pacific Islander graduates in nursing. Over 11 percent of American Indian/Native American/Hawaiian Pacific Islander graduates also complete other healthcare programs, accounting for about 32 percent of these graduates in nursing or healthcare combined. A similar percentage accrues for Asian graduates when we add healthcare and nursing graduates together.

Finally, the percentage of graduates in STEM varies by racial group, with Asian and the group of students reporting two or more races having the highest percentage of graduates, 31.2 percent and 26.4 percent, respectively (see Figure 17). The percentage of Hispanic/Latine and American Indian/Native American/Hawaiian Pacific Islander groups have a slightly higher proportion of graduates in STEM than the white and Black/African American groups. Overall,

while these results on graduates by major program are not as varied as gender, there is still considerable variation by racial group.

Figure 16. Distribution of CCB Graduate Men and Women by Major Program Category

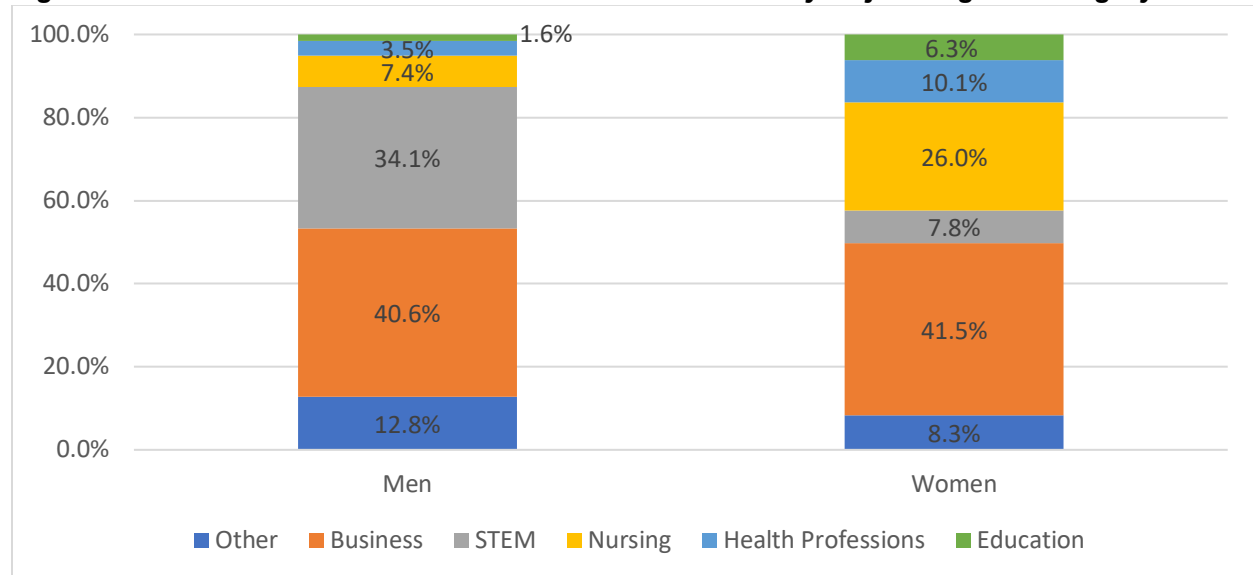
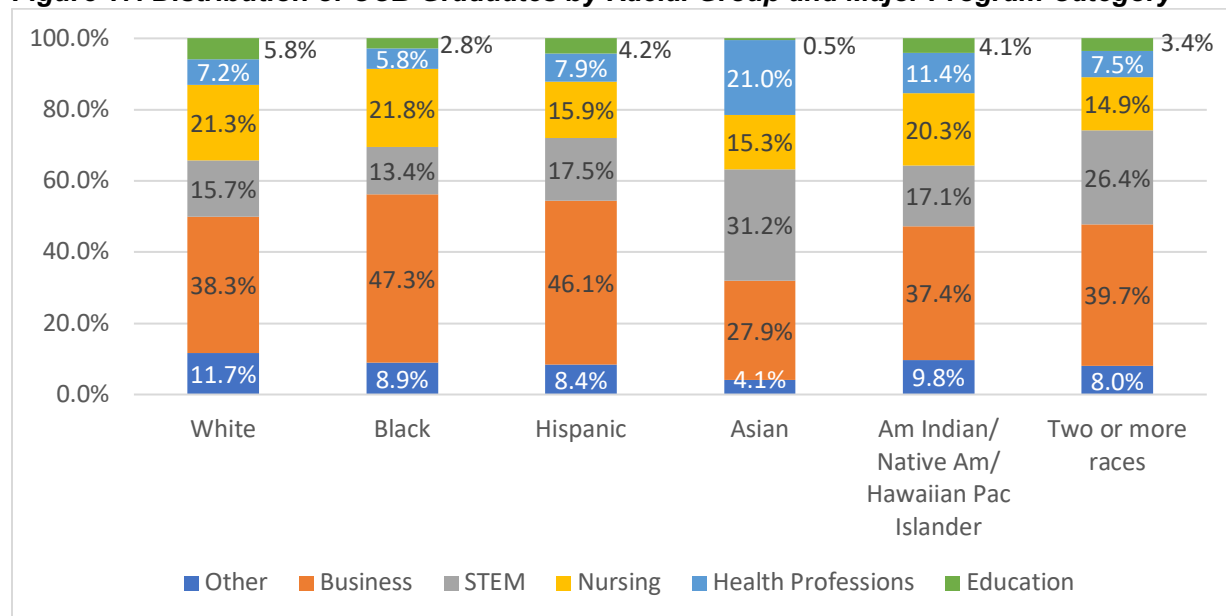


Figure 17. Distribution of CCB Graduates by Racial Group and Major Program Category



Non-Conferring States

Besides gathering information from CCB-conferring states, we sought information from the 26 states that reported not conferring CCB degrees in the 2021 national inventory. To collect data from these states, we administered a questionnaire through Survey Monkey, and we used email to follow up with non-respondents. In addition, we solicited information from three Great Lakes states that are part of another grant that we are conducting to better understand baccalaureate attainment policies and initiatives in seven Great Lakes states, funded by the Joyce Foundation.

This data collection activity generated responses from 14 states, all confirming that they do not authorize CCB degrees. Additional searches of legislation and literature suggests none of the remaining 12 states confer CCB degrees either, but we do not have firsthand confirmation of that from our research process. Of the 14 non-conferring states responding to our inquiry, we learned Illinois and New Jersey introduced bills in their 2023-2024 legislative sessions. Illinois' [bill](#) authorizes CCB degrees at any community college in the state, upon approval by local trustees, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). The proposed [law](#) in New Jersey allows for CCB degrees in up to three fields approved by local trustees, the New Jersey Presidents' Council, and the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education. Establishing workforce demand is required for approval of such degrees in both states, along with processes to ensure curriculum, cost, and other factors are consistent with state and regional accreditor priorities for baccalaureate degrees. Whether these laws will pass is unknown, but it is important to monitor through this legislative season and beyond, as state laws authorizing CCB degrees can take multiple tries before passage.

Another important development to mention in the Great Lakes region of the country is the launch of a CCB degree program at Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) in Minnesota. This state passed a bill that would allow FDLTCC to offer an [elementary education program](#) several years ago, and the college began enrolling students in this curriculum during the 2023-2024 academic year. The FDLTCC is a member of both the Minnesota State College System and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), so while other public community colleges in Minnesota cannot confer CCB degrees, FDLTCC can now do so.

Most of the rest of the non-conferring states indicate they are not considering CCB policies, without providing further explanation. However, four respondents offered commentary on why their states are not seeking to confer CCB degrees at the present time. Respondents from two states emphasized maintaining good working relationships with in-state universities and worrying that CCBs may disrupt plans to improve transfer. A respondent from another state mentioned that community colleges are awarding fewer associates degrees in the wake of the pandemic, reducing interest in CCB degrees until community college enrollments recover. Other concerns expressed by respondents included the potential for CCB degrees to compete with other policy and structural changes considered for two- and four-year colleges, including their state's desire to increase short-term and non-degree credentials. Finally, respondents from another state mentioned excitement about the [nexus](#) degree, based on a similar model adopted by Georgia. In this approach, students pursue a specialized degree in high-demand sectors over a three-year period, with extensive employer engagement and work-based learning. With seemingly similar features to CCB degrees, there is lessened interest in expanding bachelor's degrees conferred by community colleges in this state.

Lessons for Scaling Up More CCB Degrees

The 2023 national inventory of CCB degree programs has provided a greater depth of understanding of where CCB degree programs are located, by state and college, and who graduates with such degrees. We find substantial growth continues in states that have been conferring CCB degrees for a relatively long time, such as Florida, Washington, Georgia, and Texas. However, newer CCB-conferring states, such as California, Arizona, and Ohio, are increasing the pace of program adoption, and graduates are on track to increase as well. Growth in these states is linked to policy decisions to open the door to baccalaureate degrees for larger numbers of historically underserved students who can contribute to inclusive economic and social development in their communities.

Overall, colleges offering CCB degrees are graduating racially minoritized CCB students at the same rate or higher than among community college graduates generally. Given the stated goal of CCB degree programs to address [systemic inequities](#) in baccalaureate access and attainment, this finding is noteworthy. Additional data are needed to examine access and attainment on other demographic characteristics, such as age and financial need, and such studies will be done in the future. For its part, CCBA will continue to conduct this inventory on a biannual basis to provide an accurate and timely estimate of CCB degrees for the nation.

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