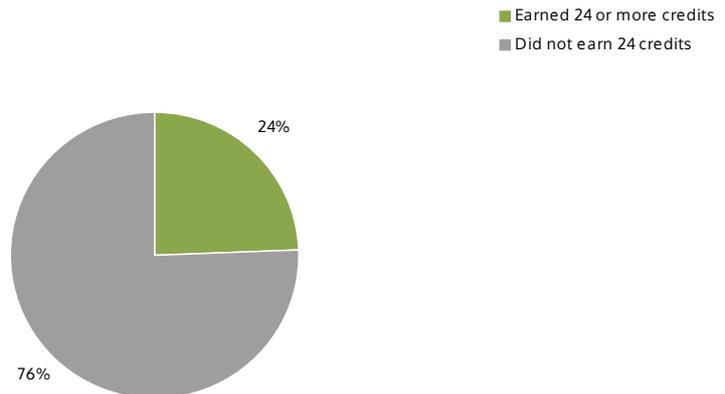


MOMENTUM

CREDITS EARNED WITHIN ONE YEAR: VIRGINIA

Percentage of first-time Virginia Community College students enrolled in fall 2004 who earned 24 or more credits in their first year



What Is Measured?

Percentage of students earning 24 or more credits within one year

Who Is Counted?

First-time Virginia Community College students enrolled in programs in fall 2004

What It Tells Us

Among first-time Virginia Community College students enrolled in fall 2004, slightly less than one-quarter earned a total of 24 or more credits within one year (24 percent).

Why It's Important

Researchers generally agree that students need to earn a certain number of credits during their first year to gain momentum toward completion and transfer. Although the probability of completing a certificate or degree increases almost linearly with the number of first-year credits completed (Offenstein et al., 2010, figure 11), the indicators in this measure specify a particular threshold number of credits in the first year. Community college students who earn at least 20 credits in their first year are more likely to complete a certificate or associate degree (Offenstein et al., 2010, figure 12) and to earn a bachelor's degree than those who do not (Adelman, 2005, table 42). Policies that encourage full-time and summer enrollment in the first year can facilitate early credit accumulation.

ABOUT THE DATA

Estimates include students who began their coursework in summer 2004 and students who were formerly dual enrolled. Students who were missing grades were excluded. Students enrolled in more than one community college were assigned to one college and not counted more than once.

DATA SOURCE

Virginia's Community Colleges. (2009, August). *On the road to success—some intermediate milestones*, Issue #9. Richmond, VA: Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.