WORKFORCE PREPARATION AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES
EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES: UNITED STATES

Employment status and labor force participation rate for U.S. community college students six years after first enrolling, by demographic and enrollment characteristics

OVERALL

Demographic and enrollment characteristics

HIGHEST DEGREE ATTAINED AFTER SIX YEARS

Demographic and enrollment characteristics

WORK INTENSITY, FIRST YEAR ENROLLED
What Is Measured?
Employment status and labor force participation rate six years after first enrolling

Who Is Counted?
First-time college students who first enrolled in U.S. community colleges in the 2003-04 academic year who were not enrolled in any postsecondary institution after January 2009 as of spring 2009
What It Tells Us
Some 92 percent of U.S. community college students were in the labor force within six years of entering community college, 78 percent were employed and approximately 62 percent were employed full time. Students who attained an associate degree were more likely to be in the labor force and employed than students who did not earn a credential (95 percent vs. 90 percent; 84 percent vs. 76 percent); they were also more likely to be employed full time (70 percent vs. 60 percent). Likewise, students who earned a certificate were more likely to be in the labor force than students who did not earn a credential (96 percent vs. 90 percent), and they were more likely to be employed full time (71 percent vs. 60 percent).

Why It’s Important
Labor force participation is consistently associated with higher levels of education, even among those who do not complete a degree or certificate. For example, in 2009, among individuals age 25 or older, 71 percent of those with an associate degree or some college education were employed, compared with 62 percent of those whose highest level of education is a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This is equivalent to a 15 percent higher labor force participation rate among the group with some college education. While a number of states report employment outcomes for students who have enrolled in a community college or completed a community college degree or certificate, the way in which these outcomes are reported and the populations on which outcome measures are based vary widely, making it difficult to compare these measures across states.

ABOUT THE DATA
Labor force participation: defined as respondents who were employed or who were not employed but were looking for work.
Employment and labor force participation: calculated only for students who are not enrolled anywhere after January 2009.
Race/ethnicity: Other includes Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and individuals who indicated Other or Two or more races. Race categories exclude Hispanic/Latino origin unless specified.
Social sciences and humanities: includes cultural and gender studies; visual and performing arts; English language and literature; family and consumer sciences; philosophy, theology, and religious studies; psychology; social sciences and history; and liberal arts, general studies, and humanities.
STEM: includes agricultural and natural resource studies; biological and biomedical sciences; computer and information sciences and support; engineering; mathematics and statistics; physical sciences; science technologies and technicians; and engineering technologies and related fields.
Income percentile rank: calculated separately for dependent and independent students and then combined. Each ranking thus compares the respondent only to other respondents of the same dependency status. Uses parents’ income if respondent is dependent and uses respondent’s own income if respondent is independent.

DATA SOURCE