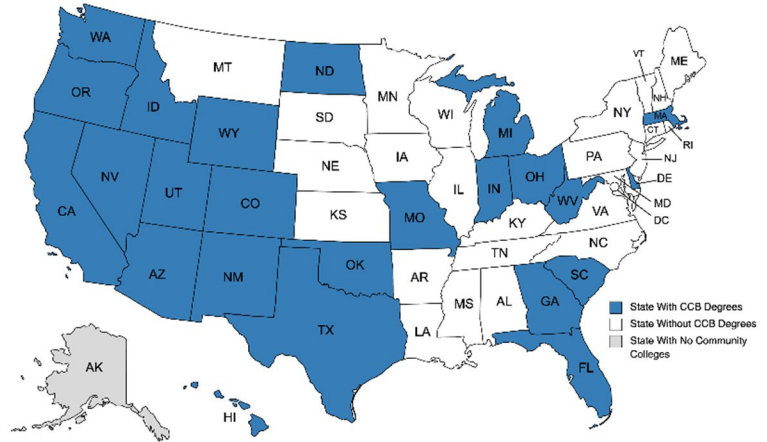


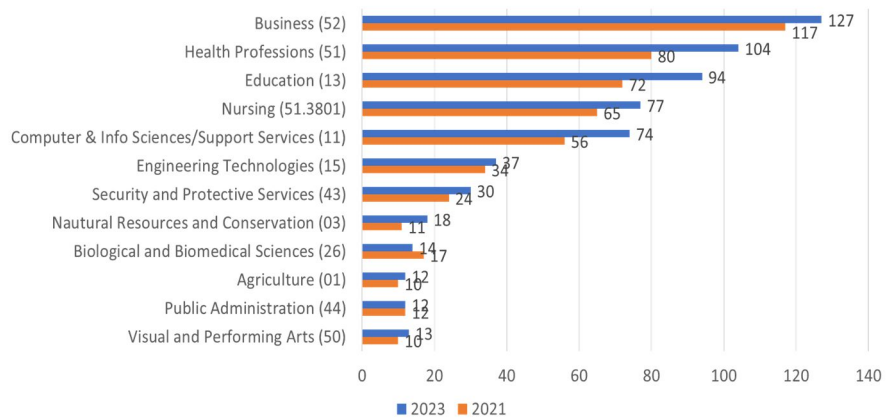
CCB FACT SHEET

Many states have embraced the community college baccalaureate (CCB) as part of their response to the challenge of increasing baccalaureate attainment.

Twenty four of the 49 states with community colleges have authorized bachelor's degrees conferred by these colleges. Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming have passed state laws or implemented administrative rules allowing all public community and/or technical colleges formerly conferring associates degrees as their highest college credential to award baccalaureate degrees, known as community college baccalaureates (CCB). State legislation passed since 2017 has resulted in conferral of CCB degrees in Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, and Wyoming. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) estimates 159 public community colleges, and 37 independent two-year colleges confer bachelor's degrees nationwide, comprising nearly 20 percent of all community and technical colleges in the country. Collectively, they account for about 25,000 bachelor's conferrals reported to the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in 2020-21.



As the number of community colleges conferring bachelor's degrees increases, the types of degrees and programs (or fields) of study are growing as well. An updated [national inventory of CCB degree programs](#) by Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) and Bragg & Associates, Inc. found 678 CCB programs, with states with the longest history with CCB degrees having the largest numbers. Business has the most CCB programs, with healthcare programs in second place. Substantial growth has occurred in these programs as well as nursing. CCB degree programs are also increasing in early childhood education (ECE) and in other teacher preparation programs that are experiencing teacher shortages. CCB degree programs are also expanding in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), including in information technology, cybersecurity, biomanufacturing, engineering technologies, and related fields.



Applied degrees (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Science) and Bachelor of Science are the predominant types of CCB degrees found in our inventory, but the Bachelor of Nursing is also used in many states.

These Fact Sheets are adapted from: Bragg, D. D., & Harmon, T. (2023). [Twenty Frequently Asked Questions about Community College Baccalaureate \(CCB\) Degrees in Illinois](#). Springfield, IL: Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA). Please see this document for a more complete discussion of CCB policy issues.

Community college baccalaureate (CCB) programs can help close access and equity gaps in baccalaureate attainment.

Access to higher education is critical to the social mobility of Illinoisians, as well as to the viability of regional economies in the state. This commitment is clearly reflected in the state’s higher education strategic plan, titled [A Thriving Illinois](#), where community colleges are described as “the economic engines of their local communities.” The state’s plan also calls for improving bachelor’s attainment to create more equitable opportunities for all Illinoisians to garner living-wage earnings and economic security. Without improvements for racially minoritized and other underserved populations, the state is likely to see continued or even greater [inequitable achievement gaps](#).

A Thriving Illinois calls for evaluation of the impact of CCB degrees on the state’s “higher education ecosystem,” implying community colleges and universities. Consistent with this goal, a recent [report](#) from New America published in Inside Higher Education discussed the impact of CCB degrees on closing equity gaps in baccalaureate attainment, which should be a key focus of the study of CCB degrees in Illinois.

Research conducted on CCB students in Florida and Washington shows students’ average age is older than typical undergraduate students, averaging 31 to 32 years old. These students are also more racially and ethnically diverse than students in similar fields of study, and many CCB students come from families with limited financial resources to pay for college. As a result, many CCB students work full-time to support themselves and their dependents while pursuing a baccalaureate degree.

A modest number of studies have been conducted and reported promising results on CCB student graduation rates. For example, Washington state reports a 68 percent CCB graduation rate, similar to the 70 percent graduation rate for community college students who transfer to a bachelor’s program at a university. Recent research in Washington state also shows positive wage gains for CCB graduates in fields like business and nursing, and high initial employment rates for CCB graduates compared to university bachelor’s graduates.

Our own research (inset) shows that of the 29 Illinois degree-granting institutions where racially minoritized students constituted over 40 percent of total graduates in 2022, 14 were community colleges. And if we look at the subset of these 29 institutions with over 1,000 graduates (14 institutions), community colleges accounted for eight.

Type of Illinois Higher Education Institution	Institutions with more than 40 percent minority graduates	Institutions with more than 40 percent minority graduates and over 1,000 graduates per year
Community Colleges	14	8
Public Universities	3	2
Private Non-profit College or Universities	6	2
Private For-profit College or Universities	6	2
Totals	29	14

In fact, [five of the top ten](#) CCB colleges in the United States are minority-serving institutions, and fully half of CCB graduates are students of color, based on Bragg & Associates’ initial research using IPEDS graduation data. Authorizing community colleges to confer the CCB has the potential to substantially expand access to baccalaureate completion for racially minoritized students.

CCB FACT SHEET

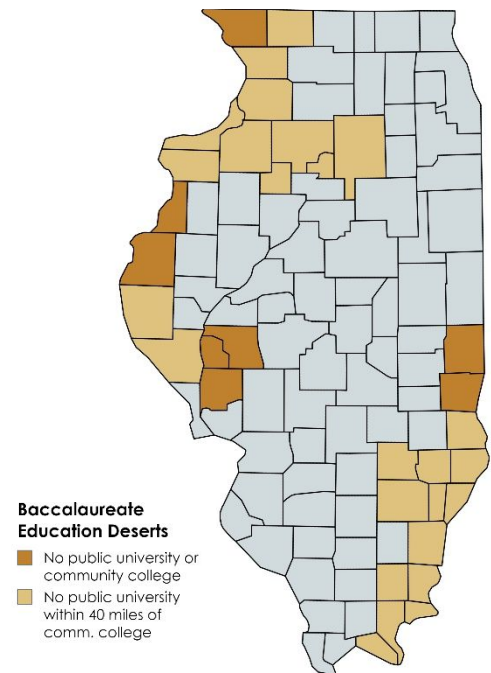
Working, lower-income and place-based students face substantial barriers to baccalaureate enrollment and completion which can be addressed by adoption of the community college baccalaureate (CCB).

Distance. Based on research on education deserts conducted by [Nicholas Hillman](#), our team studied Illinois' 25 [commuting zones](#) (CZs) and distances between community colleges and public universities in the state (map). Four of these zones have no community college or public university, and another six CZs have a community college but no public university within 40 miles. This means 10 (40 percent) of Illinois' CZs are without a public university in commuting distance, although three of these CZs do have a public university within 50 miles of a community college. For students living in these parts of the state, their local community college may be the only practical option for baccalaureate education. This reality is underscored by the fact that [47 percent of CCB colleges](#) in the U.S. are located in rural, town, or small city/suburban locations.

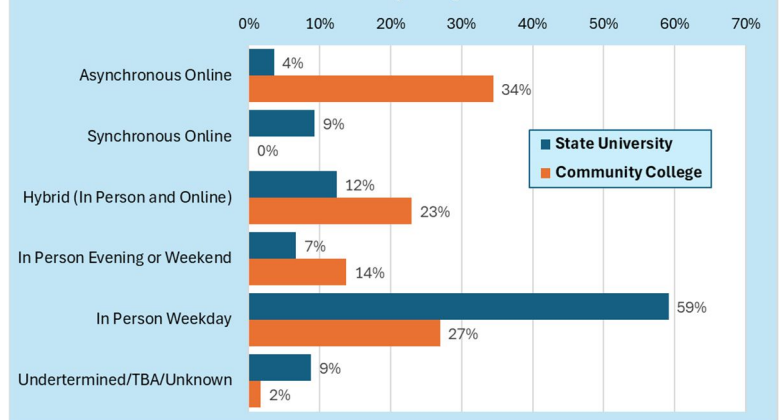
Cost. The annual tuition and fees of Illinois public universities (\$14,662) are more than three times higher than the average tuition and fees for Illinois community colleges (\$4,064), and the average tuition and fees of Illinois private universities (\$42,897) are far higher than either community colleges or public universities. Higher tuition and fees have a [dampening effect](#) on student access and participation, and they deepen inequality. CCB students in other states who have been interviewed about their experiences cite cost as one of the key reasons they elected to continue their education at their local community college. The CCB can create an affordable option for baccalaureate education for lower-income students.

Times and modes of instruction. Two-thirds of community college students work, and one-third work full time, according to the [AACC](#). Attending baccalaureate courses that are offered during the day on weekdays is difficult for these students. Community colleges usually have class schedule options for nights or use asynchronous online modes of instruction. Our research on class schedules (chart) has found that this is often not the case for baccalaureate courses in our public universities, which are more oriented toward residential, non-working students. Allowing community colleges to confer the baccalaureate creates options for working students that would not otherwise exist.

Baccalaureate Education Deserts in Illinois
Commuting Zones



Modes and Times of Instruction: Class Sections for Three Degree Programs, Spring 2024, Three State Universities and Three Partner Community Colleges



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The community college baccalaureate (CCB) can be one of the tools available to increase baccalaureate attainment in Illinois.

There is no evidence that implementing the community college baccalaureate harms enrollment in, or transfer to, public universities or private non-profit institutions. While the research examining this issue is modest to date, some studies have examined this question and found little to no negative impact on public universities. In Florida, an early-adopter state, University of Florida researchers found no negative effect on public or private not-for-profit university enrollment or bachelor's degree graduates because of community colleges conferring bachelor's degrees in specific regions of the state. However, they did find a negative effect on private for-profit, four-year college enrollment and bachelor's degree graduates from these schools. This research concluded Hispanic, white, and to a lesser extent Black students pursued CCB enrollment and completion rather than enrollment and completion at private for-profit, four-year colleges.

Community college baccalaureate programs do not compete with existing associate degree transfer options but complement them. The preponderance of CCB degree programs enroll associate of applied science (AAS) degree students whose programs fall outside state transfer and articulation agreements, like the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). These programs also enroll students who choose not to transfer to universities for numerous reasons, particularly geography and cost factors. While some community colleges have negotiated specialized transfer agreements for AAS program graduates, for many AAS students, a pathway to a bachelor's degree does not exist without community college conferral of bachelor's degrees. Credit loss and increased time to degree are serious concerns for students who attempt to transfer with AAS degrees, heightening the possibility of non-completion of bachelor's degrees at the university level.

Community college baccalaureate students are not drawn from traditional baccalaureate student populations and are unlikely to attend any baccalaureate institution other than a community college. According to the [AACC](#), two of three community college students are working, and nearly a third are working full-time. These students have limited ability to attend daytime, in-person classes, which is still the predominant mode of instructional delivery at public universities and private non-profit colleges and universities.

Adopting CCB degrees as one part of Illinois' suite of solutions to the problem of baccalaureate attainment is consistent with the state's long-standing commitment to improving career pathways for all students, including adult learners. The commitment to build clearly sequenced and attainable career pathways leading to high-value credentials is a high priority for the state. Nationwide, many CCB degree programs align with career pathways that offer associates degrees and other sub-baccalaureate credentials, including associates degrees and short-term credentials.