

Impact of the Health Professions Pathways Consortium

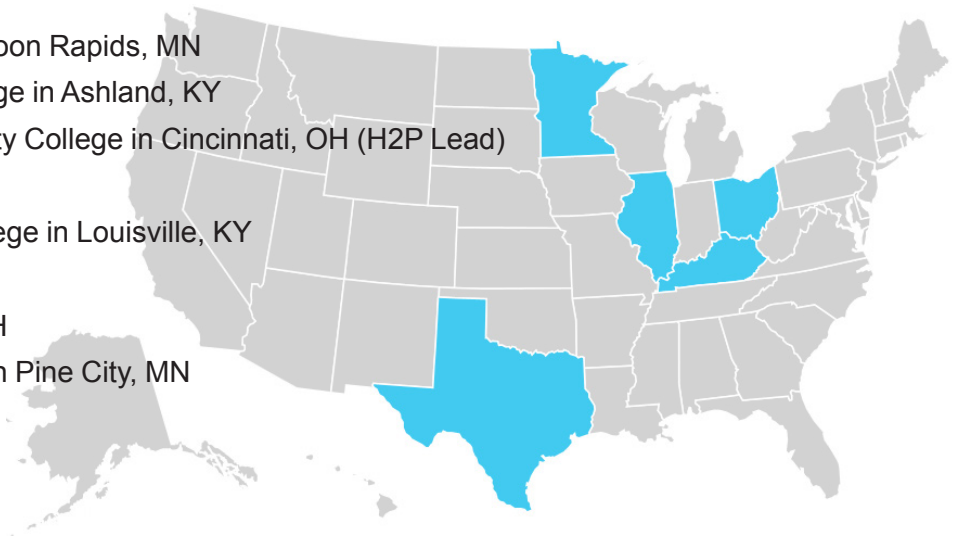


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Health Professions Pathway (H2P) Consortium

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant was launched in 2011 by the United States Department of Labor (DOL), in partnership with the United States Department of Education. The Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign conducted the third-party evaluation of the Health Professions Pathways (H2P) Consortium that was funded with a Round One TAACCCT grant of over \$19M. The evaluation had three major components: 1) implementation evaluation, 2) impact evaluation, and 3) performance reporting on behalf of the H2P Consortium to the DOL. This executive summary highlights major results of the H2P Consortium, taking into account programs of study and strategy implementation by the following nine co-grantee colleges:

- Anoka-Ramsey Community College in Coon Rapids, MN
- Ashland Community and Technical College in Ashland, KY
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in Cincinnati, OH (H2P Lead)
- El Centro College in Dallas, TX
- Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville, KY
- Malcolm X College in Chicago, IL
- Owens Community College in Toledo, OH
- Pine Technical and Community College in Pine City, MN
- Texarkana College in Texarkana, TX



H2P Strategies

Eight strategies represent the H2P Consortium's efforts to enact transformative change in healthcare education. Six of these strategies focus on student competency-building and healthcare employment success:

- Recognize skills and knowledge gained by students through enhanced credit for prior learning (CPL) processes designed to accelerate time to completion;
- Provide contextualized and integrated developmental education that improves students' foundational skills and the likelihood that they will earn a credential;
- Offer healthcare occupations core curriculum that expands access to diverse student populations, raises student awareness of career options, and prepares students for the rigor of healthcare studies;
- Implement incumbent healthcare programs that advance lower-skilled healthcare workers into professional positions;
- Provide intrusive retention and student success services to foster student success in their career pathway; and
- Build industry-recognized stackable credentials and incumbent healthcare programs that align education

pathways to the labor market and accelerate time to completion.

The other two strategies demonstrate a larger commitment to transformative change in healthcare education and training in and beyond the H2P Consortium. These strategies include enhanced data and accountability systems, including sustaining and scaling these reforms, and galvanizing a national movement to reform healthcare education. The Consortium works in partnership with major healthcare employers and workforce partners to effect transformative change on a national scale. Through strategic development of networked partnerships, the Consortium is leveraging the national TAACCCT stage to build interest in curriculum reform, most notably scaling the healthcare occupations core curriculum. Please see OCCRL (2015) *Third-party Evaluation of Implementation of the Health Professions Pathways Consortium* report for indepth description of the implementation of strategies by H2P.

H2P Participation in Programs of Study

Overall, the nine co-grantee colleges that comprised the H2P Consortium served more than 6,500 participants, nearly 5,000 of whom enrolled in one or more of the 41 TAACCCT-funded programs of study. The remaining students participated in one or more of eight strategies specified above. Impacted programs of study include eight very short-term certificate programs, fourteen short-term certificate programs, eight long-term certificate programs, and eleven associate degree programs. The reformed and improved programs of study with the highest enrollment were: a) Certified Nursing Assistant, b) Practical Nursing, c) Registered Nursing, d) Medical Assisting, e) Pharmacy Technician, and f) Emergency Medical Technician. Three key facts about the H2P participants:

- 31% highest level of previous education was a high school diploma or equivalent,
- 29% were not employed when they enrolled in H2P, and
- 24% had some college but no credential.

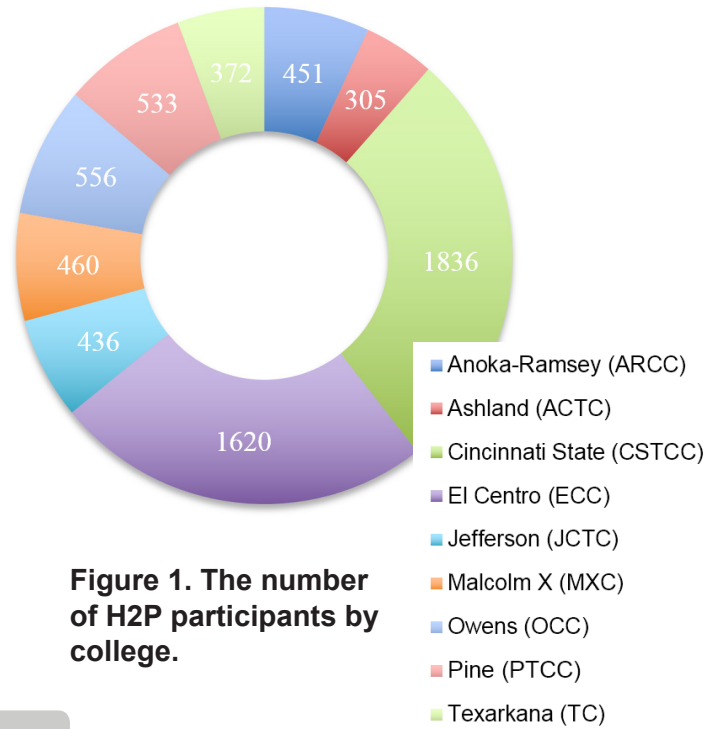


Figure 1. The number of H2P participants by college.

68% of H2P Participants Earned at Least One Credential or Were Still Enrolled as of Fall 2014

Educational Outcomes

In terms of the educational outcomes of H2P students, our analyses revealed that the majority of H2P participants received educational benefits from participating in a grant-funded program of study, and there is compelling evidence that the reforms that H2P colleges implemented made a positive impact on the attainment rates of healthcare students. Of the 4,888 students who enrolled in a program of study that was created or modified through TAACCCT funds, roughly two-thirds had either earned a postsecondary credential or were still enrolled in their H2P co-grantee college by the Fall 2014 semester, and this figure was higher than 90% at one college. More than 1,000 long-term certificates and associate's degrees were awarded to students, in addition to more than 1,000 short-term and very short-term certificates. Nearly one out of every

2,021 (41%) of H2P Participants Earned at Least One Credential by Fall of 2014

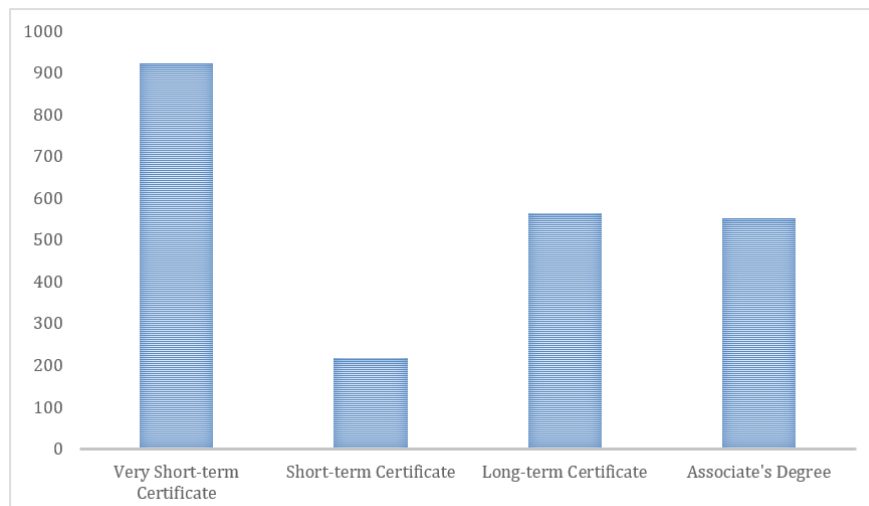


Figure 2. The number of credentials H2P participants earned, by credential length.

ten students who earned a credential earned more than one, supporting the assumption that the stackable credential strategy improved credential attainment rates for H2P participants. Additionally, our analyses provide support that H2P increased the likelihood that students enrolled in healthcare programs of study would complete their credentials, particularly in regards to the LVN/LPN programs across colleges. H2P participants in LVN/LPN programs were roughly 18% more likely to earn that credential compared to a retrospective cohort of students in the same programs when using the most rigorous methods available to control for potential differences in background characteristics between the groups.

High Impact Strategies

Out of the six student-focused strategies emphasized by the Consortium, four stand out as particularly important in terms of the number of students who participated and the degree of student engagement. These strategies are enhanced retention services, stackable credentials, healthcare occupation core curriculum, and credit for prior learning

Enhanced Retention Services

Bolstered by the student success/retention coaches hired with grant funds, all co-grantee colleges increased efforts to provide students with intrusive advising and targeted retention services to increase their chances of success.

H2P used a 4-pronged approach to enhanced retention services: a) build relationships with community-based organizations and workforce partners, b) provide students career planning services, c) provide proactive advising, and d) provide technology-assisted employment services.

Among three of the colleges that collected particularly detailed data on retention services, 2,221 students received 14,473 individual services, for a total of 9,504 hours of services, or roughly 4.5 hours of services per student who received retention services.

Stackable Credentials

The H2P Consortium selected industry-recognized stackable credentials with the goal of accelerating time to completion and streamlining pathways to the labor market for students (H2P Consortium, 2011).

Eleven sets of stackable credentials, involving 13 new industry-recognized credentials, were developed or enhanced through the H2P grant.

Fifteen percent of all credential earners (356 graduates) earned multiple credentials, and an additional 523 students were continuing their studies after having earned at least one credential.

Credit for Prior Learning

The Consortium selected this strategy as a means to recognize the knowledge and skills gained by displaced and incumbent workers through previous work and life experience (H2P Consortium, 2011).

Across the Consortium, 415 students earned at least some credit for prior learning, for a total of 3,055 credits, averaging about 7 credits of credits granted or waived, per student who received any credit for prior learning.

Healthcare Occupation Core Curriculum

A competency-based healthcare occupations core curriculum was implemented to some extent at all nine colleges.

In total, 2,202 students enrolled in one of the 40 healthcare occupation core curriculum courses implemented across the Consortium, for a total of 3,682 student-course enrollments with an overall pass rate of 97.5%.

Given that only El Centro College had a pre-existing healthcare occupations core curriculum, the breadth and depth of implementation of this strategy by the Consortium is noteworthy.

Four Potential Benefits to a Healthcare Occupations Core Curriculum



Students are Aware of the Array of Health Care Occupations and Make Better Program of Study Selections

Students are Better Prepared for Rigor of Health Programs and More Likely to be Retained and Complete Their Program of Study

Students Enter Their Program with Foundational Knowledge Leading to Improved Mastery of Discipline Specific Skills

Underserved Students Gain Access to Health Careers through Integrated Developmental Education and the Opportunity to Build Foundational Health Care Skills

A Healthcare Occupations Core Curriculum is: A set of interdisciplinary courses, clinical training, and other educational exposures designed to provide allied health students at each level with the common knowledge, skills, and values necessary to perform effectively in the evolving health care workplace. (McPherson, 2004, p. 30)

Employment Outcomes

This report also demonstrates that the labor market outcomes of H2P participants improved greatly when comparing their employment and earnings prior to H2P to their labor outcomes at the end of the grant period. Across the Consortium, students gained \$1,400-\$1,700 in average quarterly earnings (depending on the precise method of calculation). When assessing earnings growth between the quarter immediately preceding when each student enrolled in H2P and final earnings, students gained \$1,900-\$2,500 in quarterly earnings. Earning a credential of any length was shown to have a beneficial impact on the likelihood that students were employed post-H2P, and the earnings gains for students who completed long-term certificate and associate's degree programs were particularly pronounced. Students who completed long-term certificates earned roughly \$2,500 more quarterly compared to their pre-H2P average and \$3,600 more compared to their earnings in the quarter immediately prior to enrollment in H2P. For students who completed associate's degrees, these gains were \$4,000 and \$6,000. These results underscore the high labor market value of the majority of credentials awarded to H2P participants.

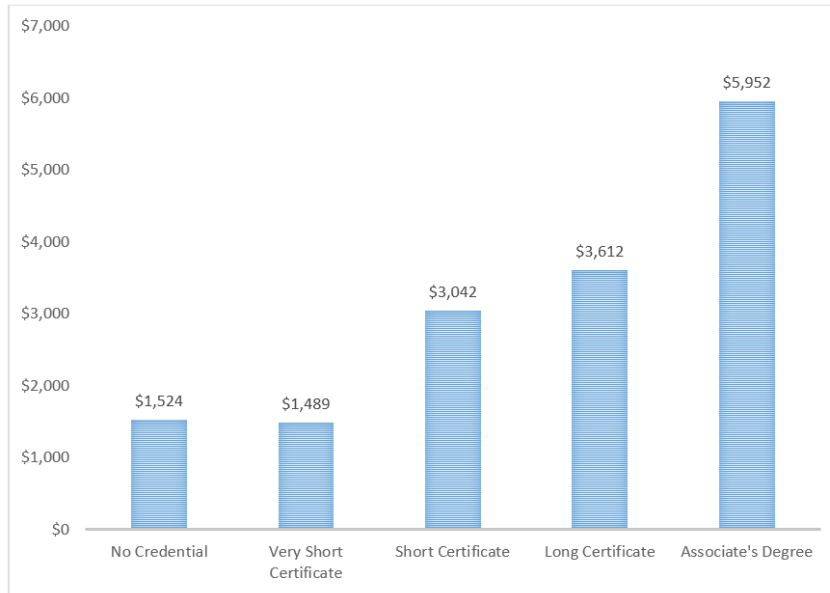


Figure 3. The mean quarterly gain in earnings of H2P participants, by credential length.

Our results also support the positive impact that H2P made on the labor market outcomes of healthcare students, although our conclusions are tempered by the fact that the economy was improving over the course of the grant and substantially changed between the time periods of enrollment for the retrospective and H2P groups. Nevertheless, H2P students experienced median earnings gains roughly 60% higher than retrospective students, and they were significantly more likely to be employed at the end of the cohort time period. They also had significantly higher quarterly earnings, even when controlling for a broad range of student characteristics and the specific credentials students earned. Using rigorous quasi-experimental techniques, H2P students had an estimated 8% greater likelihood of employment and 22% higher wages than retrospective students, both significant differences.

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McPherson, M. L. (2004). Allied Health Core Curriculum: Its time has come. *Community College Journal*, 75(1), p. 30-35.

Full Evaluation Reports

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