



CWID DATA NOTE

Reverse Credit Transfer: Increasing State Associate's Degree Attainment by Jason L. Taylor and Edén Cortes-Lopez

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Introduction

This Data Note is the eighth in a series of publications that shares research associated with the Credit When It's Due (CWID) initiative. CWID is a multistate initiative that supports the development and implementation of reverse credit transfer programs and policies that confer associate's degrees to transfer students when they complete their degree requirements while en route to the baccalaureate degree. Reverse credit transfer policies facilitate the conferral of associate's degrees to transfer students who have earned the credits needed for the associate's degree, even after they transferred to a 4-year college or university.

This Data Note provides the most recent update on the total number of associate's degrees conferred by the end of the 3-year CWID grant period. It updates Taylor and Bragg's (2015a) Data Note and shows how reverse credit transfer has increased the annual number of associate's degrees conferred in CWID states. The following two research questions are answered in this Data Note: (1) How many students earned associate's degrees via reverse credit transfer during AY2013-14, AY2014-15, and AY2015-16? And (2) How did reverse credit transfer policies increase state associate's degree attainment?

Methods

In order to answer the first question, data on the number of students awarded an associate's degree via reverse credit transfer were collected via the CWID Impact Study. CWID states reported the aggregate number of associate's degrees conferred at or near the end of each academic year, and these numbers are reported in this Data Note. To answer the second research question, state data on associate's degree completions were obtained from IPEDS over a 3-year period, between AY2010-11 and AY2012-13. We calculated the average number of associate's degrees conferred annually during this 3-year time period, which allowed us to account for variation in the number of degrees conferred by year. Three ratios were then calculated for each state where the numerator was the number of associate's degrees conferred via reverse credit transfer in AY2013-14, AY2014-15, and AY2015-16, and the denominator was the 3-year average of the number of associate's degrees conferred annually. The ratios represent the percentage increase in states' annual associate's degree attainment as a result of reverse credit transfer.

Limitations

There are two important limitations to this Data Note. First, not all CWID participating states provided data on the number of

associate's degrees awarded annually via reverse credit transfer. For example, Maryland did not report data for the 2015-16 academic year. Second, even during the final year of CWID implementation, all CWID states were not yet implementing at scale. Some states had not yet engaged all public institutions within the state, and many states had not engaged private institutions and students transferring from out-of-state institutions. As Taylor and Bragg (2015b) argued, many states have not yet optimized their implementation efforts, suggesting that there is potential to further increase associate's degree attainment via reverse credit transfer.

Results

Table 1 displays the results to both research questions. As of June 2016, the total number of associate's degrees conferred via reverse credit transfer in the 15 CWID states was 15,860 (see column 6), but the total varied substantially across states. States with the largest total number of associate's degrees conferred via reverse credit transfer were Texas, Ohio, and Hawaii, followed by Minnesota, North Carolina, and Michigan. The differences in degrees conferred across states are influenced by many factors including, but not limited to, when implementation began, program eligibility requirements, opt-in vs. opt-out policies, and other implementation factors described by Taylor and Bragg (2015b).

The last three columns in Table 1 display the percentage increase in associate's degree attainment based on reverse credit transfer implementation during the CWID grant. The percentage increase in associate's degree attainment ranged from zero in states that did not confer degrees to 23% in Hawaii. The three-year trend data (columns 7-9) suggest that some states experienced an increase over the grant period (e.g., CO, MO, NC, OH) whereas other states experienced a decrease during the grant period (HI, MI, MN, OR). In the last year of the CWID grant, we found that in states such as Arkansas, Colorado, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas, the degrees conferred via reverse credit transfer increased annual associate's degree attainment by 1.0% to 3.0%. Tennessee and Hawaii experienced the largest increase in associate's degrees attainment due to reverse credit transfer at 6.3% and 15.2%, respectively.

This analysis suggests that reverse credit transfer has the potential to increase state associate's degree attainment. Given that some CWID states were not yet at full-scale implementation, there is potential to further expand and improve reverse credit transfer policies and increase state degree attainment.

Table 1. Increase in State Associate's Degree Attainment Due to Reverse Credit Transfer

State	Average Number of Associate's Degrees Conferred Annually (3-year average)	RCT Degrees Awarded in AY 2013-14	RCT Degrees Awarded in AY 2014-15	RCT Degrees Awarded in AY 2015-16	Total RCT Degrees Awarded in AY 2013-14 to AY 2015-16	Increase in Associate's Degree Attainment Due to RCT in AY 2013-14	Increase in Associate's Degree Attainment Due to RCT in AY 2014-15	Increase in Associate's Degree Attainment Due to RCT in AY 2015-16
AR	9,108	17	217	167	401	0.2%	2.4%	1.8%
CO	16,167	0	68	190	258	0.0%	0.4%	1.2%
FL	96,887	202	73	41	316	0.2%	0.1%	<0.1%
GA	16,792	*	*	109	109	NA	NA	0.6%
HI	4,122	954+	628+	626	2,208	23.1%	15.2%	15.2%
MD	14,822	452	368	**	820	3.0%	2.5%	NA
MI	32,788	375	604	227	1,206	1.1%	1.8%	0.7%
MN	21,342	355	1,007	459	1,821	1.7%	4.7%	2.2%
MO	18,875	13	176	356	545	0.1%	0.9%	1.9%
NC	27,135	0	665	816	1,481	0.0%	2.4%	3.0%
NY	67,915	0	0	93	93	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
OH	34,035	594	408	1,291	2,293	1.7%	1.2%	3.8%
OR	12,617	200	100	25	325	1.6%	0.8%	0.2%
TN	13,084	*	*	830	830	NA	NA	6.3%
TX	64,859	550	1791	813	3,154	0.8%	2.8%	1.3%
Total RCT Degrees Awarded		3,712	6,105	6,043	15,860			

* Data not available because states did not participate in the first two years of CWID

** Data missing due to states not reporting degrees awarded in AY2015-16

+ Numbers are updated from numbers reported in Taylor & Bragg (2015a)

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About the Authors: Jason L. Taylor is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Utah and is Co-PI for the Credit When It's Due initiative research. Edén Cortez is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Utah.

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References

Taylor, J. L. & Bragg, D. D. (2015a). *CWID DATA NOTE: Increasing state associate's degree attainment: The potential of reverse transfer*. Champaign, IL: Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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