

2026

Community College Baccalaureates: A Resource Guide for State Leaders

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This document presents curated research and reports on community college baccalaureate (CCB) programs, including national overviews, frequently asked questions, literature reviews on student outcomes, topic-specific resources on affordability, data, workforce alignment, and program approval, state examples, and quality frameworks. It is intended to support state higher education leaders and institutions in planning and implementing CCB degrees that are affordable, equitable, data-driven, and sustainable.

CCBs at a National Level

These resources give state leaders a clear picture of CCB programs, including where they exist, how they're growing, and common questions and misconceptions.

- ***Still Growing: The Continuing Evolution of Community College Baccalaureate Degrees in the United States (Meza & Vo, 2026)***
 - <https://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Meza-Vo-2026-Still-Growing-The-Continuing-Evolution-of-Community-College-Baccalaureate-Degrees-in-the-United-State.pdf>
 - This provides an overview of the current state of CCBs. It reports the states and colleges offering CCBs, the number and types of programs, and information on CCB graduates.
- ***Twenty Frequently Asked Questions About Community College Baccalaureate Degrees (Bragg & Harmon, 2024)***
 - <https://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/24.1.18-v.2-FAQ-Designed-w-Cover-Page-Logos-1.pdf>
 - This document helps clarify misconceptions and common questions related to CCBs.
- ***When Community Colleges Offer a Bachelor's Degree (Meza & Love, 2023)***
 - <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/when-community-colleges-offer-a-bachelors-degree/>
 - This literature review synthesizes research that addresses student access and outcomes in CCB programs. Key themes include graduates' racial and ethnic diversity and employment rates and wages for CCB graduates.

- ***Community College Baccalaureate Programs: A State Policy Framework* (Love & Palmer, 2020)**
 - <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED610697.pdf>
 - This report explains the growing development of CCB programs and provides guidance for state policymakers on how to design, approve, and regulate them as part of higher education systems.

- ***An Update on the Impacts of the Community College Baccalaureate* (Wright-Kim, 2022)**
 - <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20497>
 - This article outlines the (mis)perceptions surrounding the CCB landscape and explores the impact of CCBs on enrollment in public four-year institutions, with implications for practice and policy.

- ***A Multi-State Analysis of Latinos in Community College Bachelor's Degree Programs*. (Rios-Aguilar, C., Vo, D., Meza, E., & Bragg, D. D., 2025, October)**
 - <https://latino.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/A-Multi-State-Analysis-of-Latinos-in-Community-College-Bachelors-Degree-Programs.pdf>
 - This policy brief provides the most updated and comprehensive analysis to date of Latino enrollment, completion, and post-graduation wage outcomes in CCB programs, with a focus on four states — California, Florida, Texas, and Washington — that have large Latino populations and robust CCB infrastructures.

Resources on Specific Topics

These resources give state leaders information on specific topics related to CCB programs, including quick data, cost comparisons, workforce demand tools, and approval processes.

- ***Data Points series (authors vary)***

- <https://www.accbd.org/category/ccb-data/>
- These are a series of two-pagers that provide digestible data and research for frequent questions on CCBs. This is a good bank of resources to read and to send to people who might have a specific question or interest related to CCBs.
- Topics include:
 - Graduate employment and earnings
 - Top jobs for CCB graduates; cost
 - Economic outcomes
 - Enrollment and completion
 - Bipartisan support for CCBs
 - Student access
 - Adult learners

- ***Affordable Bachelor's Degrees are Available at Community Colleges - Depending on Where You Live (Meza, 2025)***

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/403347532_Affordable_Bachelor's_Degrees_are_Available_at_Community_Colleges-Depending_on_Where_You_Live_2025
- This report analyzes the affordability of CCB programs across states, comparing their tuition, total cost of attendance, and net price to public four-year universities. It finds that CCB programs offer significantly lower costs and greater financial aid coverage, making them a more accessible pathway to a bachelor's degree for adult, working, and lower-income students.

- ***Supply and Demand Toolkit (Harmon, 2024)***

- <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:47f54a3a-9402-427b-82a4-863709e1ea27>
- This tool supports the analysis of supply and demand for occupations or sets of occupations and the programs of study that will supply graduates for them. It is focused on supporting supply and demand analysis for CCB degree program development, although the methods described can be adapted for use in any program development context where it is important to describe the occupational supply and demand.

- ***What it Takes to Get Community College Bachelor's Degree Programs Approved (Bragg, 2025)***

- <https://evans.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Bragg-2025.-What-It-Takes-to-Get-Community-College-Bachelors-Degree-Programs-Approved.pdf>
- This brief describes how CCB degree programs are approved in 15 states, providing a fuller understanding of CCB program approval than has existed to date.

State-Specific Resources

These resources are helpful for state leaders looking for examples of how other states have researched, made the case for, or approved CCBs.

CALIFORNIA

- ***California's Community College Baccalaureate Programs: Benefits and Opportunities* (Hoang, Vo, & Rios-Aguilar, 2022)**
 - <https://education.ucdavis.edu/community-college-baccalaureate-degrees>
 - This report provides a comprehensive portrait of participation and outcomes in community college baccalaureate (CCB) degree programs across California.

ILLINOIS

- ***Making the Case for Community College Baccalaureates* (Bragg & Harmon, 2022)**
 - <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/making-the-case-for-community-college-baccalaureates/>
 - This is a good example of how Illinois started making the case for CCBs.
- ***Myth Busters from Illinois***
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O86OnFml-XXfFed5NxRgXkUYf7sMGwfb/view?usp=drive_link
 - This document addresses myths about CCBs, created in Illinois to help in their case to pass CCB legislation.
- ***College Baccalaureate Degrees in Illinois***
 - <https://www.communitycolleges.org/community-college-baccalaureate-degrees-in-illinois>
 - This is a website intended to support the passage of CCB bills in Illinois.

IOWA

- ***Community Colleges for Iowa Bachelor's Degrees Interim Study Report***
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SVWsQ5bX_DrXsst_nElwmYvuFZs88CMf/view?usp=drive_link
 - This report responds to a legislative request in Iowa by examining the feasibility of offering bachelor's degrees at community colleges, including program structure, costs, and potential policy changes.

TEXAS

- ***Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Texas: A First Look at Enrollment and Outcomes (Love, Meza, & Nzau, 2024)***
 - <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/briefs/community-college-bachelors-degrees-in-texas/>
 - Representing the first look at data on Texas students participating in CCB degree programs, this brief explores the demographic characteristics of these students and the labor market outcomes of graduates.

WASHINGTON

- ***Washington's Community College Baccalaureate Degrees: Growth and Outcomes, 2024 Update. (Meza & Bragg, 2025).***
 - <https://evans.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Final-SBCTC-Report-2025.pdf>
 - This report evaluates the educational outcomes and career impacts for students in community college bachelor's programs in Washington over the six years period of 2018-2024.
- ***Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges: Bachelor's Degree Program Approval Process***
 - <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/bachelors-degrees/bachelors-program-approval-application>
 - This is a website from Washington that supports CCB program approval. It provides a clear overview of the approval process and examples of completed applications, which might be helpful for states looking to create or refine approval processes.

Quality in CCB Programs

These sources provide frameworks and guidance for ensuring quality and readiness of CCB programs.

- ***Elements of Quality for CCBs (Pawlicki, Kersenbrock, & Garcia-Beaulieu, 2023)***
 - <https://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/CCBA-Thought-Paper-publication.pdf>
 - This provides nine elements of quality to consider when creating or improving CCB programs.
- ***CCBA Quality Framework***
 - <https://www.accbd.org/ccba-quality-framework/>
 - This webpage presents the CCBA Quality Framework, which addresses a growing need for clear, evidence-based measures that ensure community colleges offer bachelor's degrees that are high quality, relevant, and connected to workforce and community needs.
- ***Considerations for Scaling up Quality Community College Baccalaureate Degrees (Bragg & Pawlicki, 2025)***
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CDIXQO3IV3Vbkrfexq69sBvVe1ByHMn0/view?usp=sharing>
 - This provides key aspects to consider as we think about CCB quality, based on research in Washington and Oregon.
- ***Two-Year Institutions Seeking to Offer the Baccalaureate Degree: Considerations for Readiness (Higher Learning Commission, 2020)***
 - https://download.hlcommission.org/Two-YearOfferingBachelorsGuidelines_OPB.pdf
 - These guidelines provide information to (1) assist two-year institutions when initially seeking to offer, and then subsequently offering, bachelor's degree programs; and (2) assist peer reviewers when evaluating an application from a two-year institution that is seeking to offer, or when evaluating an institution that is then subsequently offering, bachelor's degree programs.