



# COLLEGE COUNT\$

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

## THE ARKANSAS CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE: PHASE ONE RESEARCH RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHICS







In order to qualify, participants must be a custodial parent eligible for public assistance through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and be at 250% or below the federal poverty level.




#### THE AVERAGE CPI PARTICIPANT IS:

- ✓ 31 years of age
- ✓ Female (89% of participants)
- ✓ A single parent
- ✓ 65% of CPI students are White
- ✓ 30% are African American and 5% are Hispanic, Asian, or Native American

#### SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS

-  Need help with transportation
-  Need help with childcare
-  Lack basic skills, requiring remediation to be successful in college
-  Vast majority are first generation college students who lack role models to show them how to successfully negotiate higher education

#### SUPPORT FROM CPI

-  Personalized case management, tutoring and mentoring
-  Financial support as needed including assistance with tuition and books, and when appropriate childcare vouchers or gas cards.
-  Individual counseling


### The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI)


The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is managed by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education at 25 community and technical colleges across the state. It has provided case management, education, and training to more than 30,000 Arkansans since 2006. CPI helps low-income parents complete degrees and certificates leading to high-demand higher-wage jobs. Funds for the program come from federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) appropriations through the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services.


### College Count\$: Evidence of Impact


College Count\$ is an external evaluation which is measuring the student success, social impacts, and economic benefits to low-income families resulting from this investment of federal TANF dollars into the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative. The study compares income, education, and employment outcomes of CPI participants with non-participants – to determine whether the program is successfully lifting Arkansas families out of poverty and providing a return on investment to the state.

**KEY:**

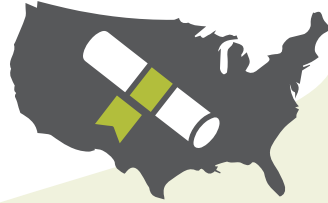
 Arkansas Community College student participating in CPI

 Arkansas Community College student not participating in CPI

 Nationwide Community College student not participating in CPI

 TANF recipients not enrolled in Arkansas Community College

## EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES



National studies report degree completion is directly correlated with **improved employment, higher lifetime earnings and social benefits.**

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) has **significantly increased educational outcomes and achievement** for low-income participants when compared to their peers:



Of 27,517 low-income participants enrolled in the CPI between 2006 and 2013, more than **52%** graduated with a degree or certificate. This is **double the completion rate** of Arkansas community college students who did not participate in CPI.



Only **24%** of all non-CPI two-year college students enrolled between 2006 and 2013 completed a degree or certificate.

The CPI graduation rate is even more **impressive** compared to completion rates nationwide.



**62%** of CPI students enrolled in 2008 completed a degree or certificate by 2013.



Only **39%** of students who enrolled at a public two-year college nationwide in 2008 completed a degree or certificate by 2014.

Successful rates of program graduation and completion have **continued to improve over time.**



**Six times** as many CPI participants earned Associate Degrees by 2013, compared to non-CPI college students who enrolled in an Arkansas community college in 2011.



**Three times** more CPI participants earned Certificates of Proficiency or Technical Certificates when compared with their community college peers.

**Sponsored by:**



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## ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

CPI graduates **earned significantly more** than their low-income TANF peers.



CPI graduates who enrolled in 2009 earned **\$2,600 more** in their first year than their matched TANF counterparts from the same region and field of employment, despite having earned similar incomes prior to entry into the program.



The wage bump increased to **\$3,100 per year more** for all CPI participants who enrolled in 2011, compared to income levels of matched TANF recipients.

In the Allied Health and Education employment sector which employs 60% of all CPI graduates and includes high demand nursing fields, CPI graduates who enrolled in 2011 earned an average of **\$3,176 more per year** than their matched TANF counterparts according to state employment records.

In early years of the CPI program, first year CPI students earned an average of \$6,400 less than their community college peers who entered the workforce the same year.



By 2011 CPI students narrowed the average annual wage gap to **\$1,584**, eliminating it entirely in some career fields.



CPI graduates tend to be single parents who are far more likely than their community college peers to initially work part-time rather than full-time. Low-income CPI participants often start work at a lower rung on the career ladder, but over time they catch up to their peers as they progress along the career pathway and earn additional credentials.