

Improving Career Education Pathways into California's Workforce

August 26, 2021

Shannon McConville, Sarah Bohn, Bonnie Brooks,
Mina Dadgar

Supported with funding from the ECMC Foundation, the
James Irvine Foundation, and the Sutton Family Fund



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

The pandemic has increased focus on workforce training

- The pandemic may reshape jobs and increase the need for training
 - Long-term economic shifts were already reshaping the future of work
- Public funding for job training has bipartisan support
- Recent federal and state investments have increased funding levels

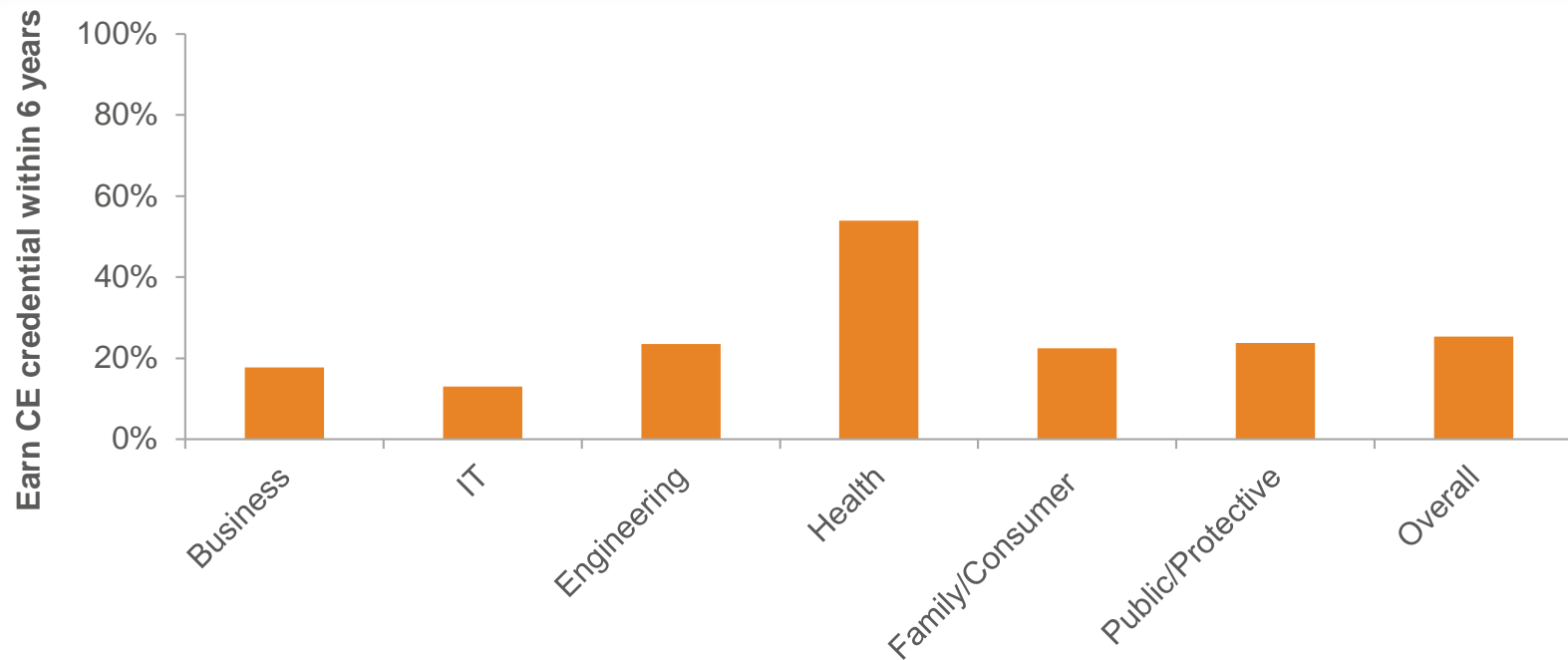
Community colleges are poised to play a key role

- Largest public provider of workforce education
 - diverse group of students in terms of race/ethnicity, age, work experience
 - training opportunities from manufacturing to health care to business
 - varying levels of credentials
- Wages increase about 20%
 - program choice and credential type matter a lot!

We seek to understand effective pathways into the workforce

- Our study examines student progress through career education programs
- Our interviews with stakeholders shed light on the college-workforce connection

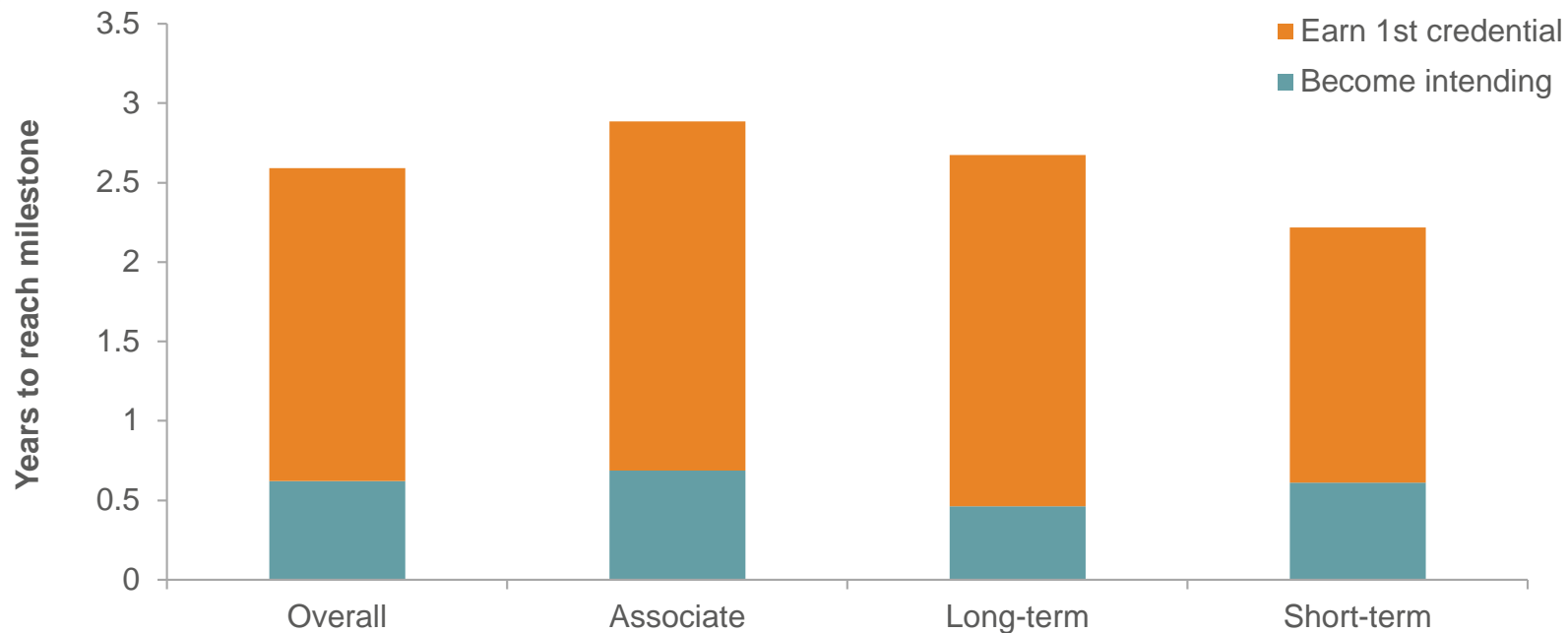
Few career education students complete a credential



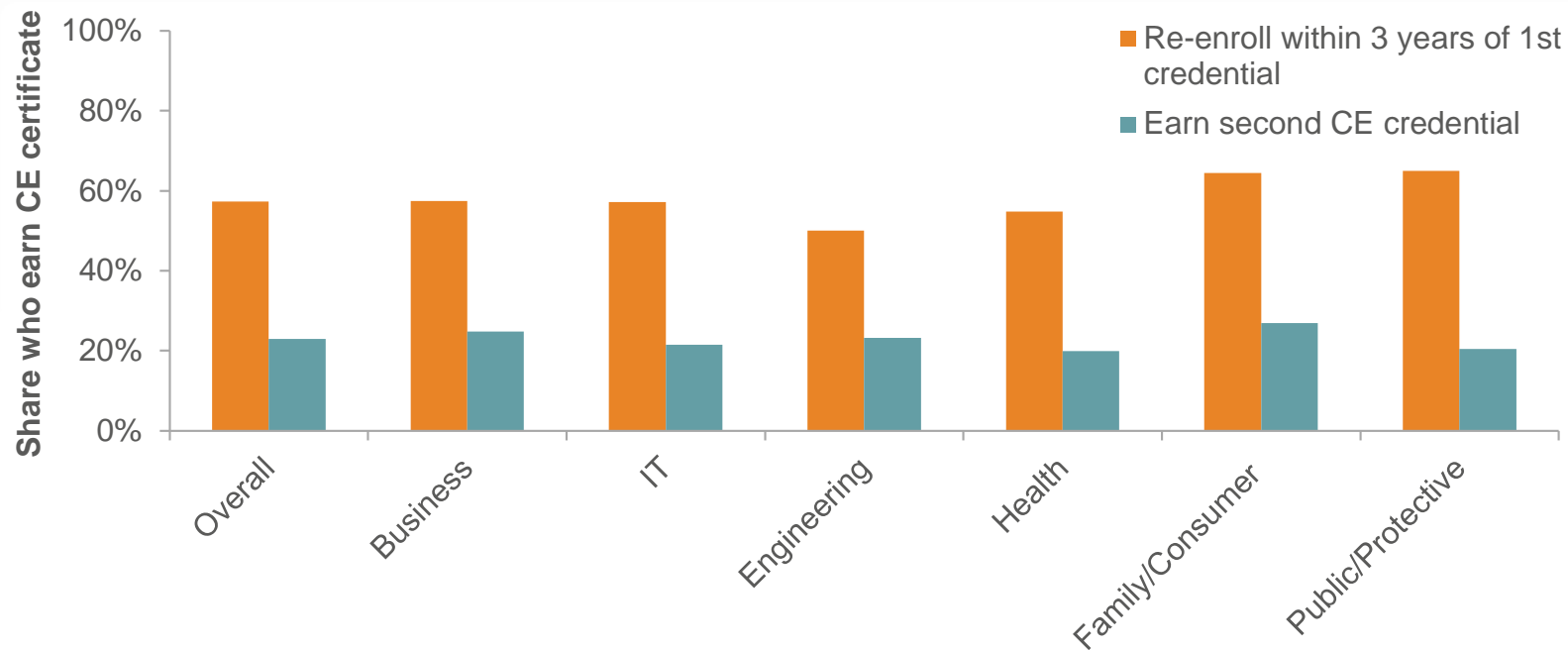
Success varies across groups, but full-time attendance is the strongest predictor

- Less likely to complete a credential:
 - Black and Latino students
 - Youngest (under 24) students
 - Male students
- Attending at least one term full-time is the strongest correlate of completion, controlling for demographics and program choice

Even a short-term credential is a time investment for students



Many students return to community colleges, but few stack credentials



Practitioners cite diverse challenges among career education students

- Students may benefit from specific supports
 - Flexible schedules to support working adults (though flexibility alone is not enough)
 - Financial supports to cover basic needs, child care
 - Technology like computers, broadband access
- Early support may keep students from falling behind and may improve equity gaps
 - Within first year, Black and Latino students have lower odds of completion compared to other racial/ethnic student groups

Stronger college-employer engagement could benefit students

- Work-based learning opportunities
 - internships, apprenticeships
- Curriculum that matches employer needs
- Increased potential for stackable pathways

However, collaboration between colleges and employers can be difficult

- Requires commitment, time, and resources
- Coordination within and across colleges is challenging
- Multiple workforce funding streams contribute to fragmented engagement efforts

Conclusions

- Connect student goals with student outcomes and supports
- Strengthen opportunities for students to attend full-time
- Consider statewide coordination role, esp. for curriculum

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Shannon McConville (mcconville@ppic.org; 415-291-4481)

Thank you for your interest in this work.