



Outcomes-Based Funding

Wisconsin Technical College System

September 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is the first higher education sector in Wisconsin to distribute a portion of its state aid based on the outcomes of its 16 colleges. This model of distributing state funding began with the 2014-15 state fiscal year. Now in its thirteenth year of implementation, the outcomes-based funding model has successfully:

- demonstrated the link between college outcomes and the funding provided by the State of Wisconsin;
- encouraged continuous improvement by the colleges in areas of strategic importance; and
- struck a balance in the distribution of state funding between accountability and innovation (i.e., outcomes-based funding at 30%) and the need to maintain a continuous, predictable source of funding to address ongoing educational and workforce needs (i.e., formula funding at 70%).

WTCS colleges are producing outcomes across the priority areas established by the Legislature. Compared to the previous three-year period:

- A greater percentage of graduate credentials are in high-demand fields;
- the number of Adult Education students that transitioned into postsecondary coursework increased by 5.4%;
- dual credits earned by Wisconsin high school students increased by 8.6%;
- workforce training credits delivered to Wisconsin's employers increased by more than 6%; and
- credits earned for prior education and training increased by nearly 7%.

BACKGROUND

Beginning with the 2014-15 fiscal year, a new funding model for allocating a portion of general state aid to technical colleges was adopted.

Statutory Criteria

The funding model is based on ten statutory criteria identified under s. 38.28(2)(be)1:

- 1) job placement rates in jobs related to students' programs of study;
- 2) number of degrees and certificates awarded in high demand fields;
- 3) number of programs or courses with industry-validated curriculum;
- 4) the transition of adult basic education students to skills training;
- 5) the success rate of adults in basic education courses;
- 6) participation in dual enrollment programs;
- 7) workforce training provided to businesses and individuals;
- 8) participation in collaboration or efficiency initiatives;
- 9) training provided to special populations or demographic groups unique to the district; and
- 10) number of credits awarded to students for relevant educational experience or training, including skills and training received during military service.

The statutes under s. 38.28 further specify that:

- the funding model be used to distribute 30% of general state aid funding;
- the remainder (70%) of general state aid be distributed based on the enrollment and cost-based statutory aid formula;
- the model uses data from the three previous fiscal years; and
- each college designates seven of ten statutory criteria for use in the funding allocations.

Allocation of Outcomes-Based Funding Across Criteria

Each year, 25% of the total outcomes-based funding is divided equally among the ten statutorily defined outcomes criteria as the base allocation for each criterion. If a criterion is not selected, the base allocation is redistributed among the other criteria. The remaining 75% of outcomes-based funding is then distributed among all criteria proportionately, based on the number of colleges selecting each criterion.

2026-27 OUTCOMES FUNDING

TABLE 1: Distribution of 2026-27 Outcomes-Based Funding, by College and Criteria (in rounded \$)

	Criteria 1: Job Placement	Criteria 2: High Demand Fields	Criteria 3: Industry Validated Curriculum	Criteria 4: ABE Transition	Criteria 5: ABE Success	Criteria 6: Dual Enrollment	Criteria 7: Workforce Training	Criteria 8: Collaboration	Criteria 9: Special Populations	Criteria 10: Credit for Prior Learning	College Total
Blackhawk	247,187	134,786	210,391	156,827	192,485	-	-	214,483	232,464	-	1,388,622
Chippewa Valley	371,704	356,825	315,156	-	218,037	432,087	345,468	326,924	-	-	2,366,201
Fox Valley	400,107	473,724	468,628	-	-	388,444	624,507	-	466,665	380,013	3,202,088
Gateway	301,684	458,302	-	-	341,426	506,173	303,970	335,511	315,735	-	2,562,801
Lakeshore	187,774	157,673	241,817	-	238,733	-	99,366	201,237	223,526	-	1,350,127
Madison Area	485,793	462,175	-	658,626	480,152	-	-	459,940	507,105	623,825	3,677,617
Mid-State	288,426	-	220,807	299,966	242,500	170,101	-	224,692	223,382	-	1,669,875
Milwaukee Area	-	-	525,437	556,782	717,621	-	481,835	495,350	457,262	342,301	3,576,587
Moraine Park	264,011	223,306	260,142	-	296,818	-	301,982	244,965	345,469	-	1,936,693
Nicolet Area	149,360	54,295	128,521	156,131	236,707	-	-	174,189	185,816	-	1,085,019
Northcentral	-	-	327,740	314,118	279,017	335,770	-	274,945	241,766	157,162	1,930,517
Northeast Wisconsin	350,620	398,092	408,296	-	-	431,818	327,642	371,805	-	425,618	2,713,890
Northwood	294,659	340,628	286,590	-	235,956	129,705	-	223,766	195,122	-	1,706,426
Southwest Wisconsin	267,862	-	171,947	-	106,152	128,965	118,707	201,676	205,119	-	1,200,428
Waukesha County	260,762	347,600	293,875	-	-	289,553	341,385	290,843	-	250,126	2,074,144
Western	-	-	241,874	339,869	284,345	363,518	-	292,166	270,517	303,274	2,095,562
Total	3,869,949	3,407,406	4,101,221	2,482,318	3,869,949	3,176,134	2,944,862	4,332,493	3,869,949	2,482,318	34,536,600

JOB PLACEMENT

WTCS gathers job placement data by annually surveying all credential completers six months after graduation. While not all graduates choose to answer the survey, 56% of 2025 graduates responded to the survey's standardized questions.

Among 2025 graduates, 92% of respondents were employed within six months of graduation. Technical college graduates overwhelmingly stay to work and live in Wisconsin, with 93% of respondents employed within the state.

As shown in Table 2, nearly 78% of employed graduates report being employed in jobs related to their specific programs of study within six months of completing a technical college program. These high levels of employment, particularly employment related to their specific programs of study, have been shown to be consistent over time, regardless of the state's unemployment rate or the overall state of the economy.

TABLE 2: Three-Year Total, Graduates in Related Fields

	Graduates Employed	Graduates Employed in Related Fields	Percentage Employed in Related Fields
Blackhawk	810	670	82.7%
Chippewa Valley	1,888	1,583	83.8%
Fox Valley	2,153	1,799	83.6%
Gateway	1,773	1,250	70.5%
Lakeshore	480	354	73.8%
Madison Area	3,338	2,543	76.2%
Mid-State	1,099	939	85.4%
Milwaukee Area	1,969	1,477	75.0%
Moraine Park	871	749	86.0%
Nicolet Area	238	160	67.2%
Northcentral	1,470	1,107	75.3%
Northeast Wisconsin	2,179	1,584	72.7%
Northwood	1,543	1,145	74.2%
Southwest Wisconsin	1,023	837	81.8%
Waukesha County	1,043	824	79.0%
Western	599	482	80.5%
Statewide	22,476	17,503	77.9%

Three-year total includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Fifty percent of the funds are distributed based on a college's job placement rate and 50% based on a college's proportionate share of statewide graduates that report they are working in jobs related to their programs of study.

GRADUATES IN HIGH-DEMAND FIELDS

High-demand fields are defined as the top 50 occupations in Wisconsin with heavy employer demand for qualified workers for both new jobs as well as replacements created by turnover or retirements. Occupations are identified by comparing the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) statewide, long-term occupational projections with the technical colleges' occupational training.

Examples of high-demand occupations for 2025-26 include: childcare workers, teacher assistants, farmers, nurses, medical assistants, machinists, truck drivers, and welders.

As shown in Table 3, Wisconsin's technical colleges produced 63,586 credentials in high-demand fields over the last three years. Over the same period, 89,481 credentials were earned across all fields. As a result, 71% of graduates were in fields with the most acute talent needs in the state, reflecting the longstanding practices of meaningful, ongoing engagement with local employers and information from local labor market analyses. Such efforts influence and inform every technical college program, including its capacity, curriculum, equipment and skillsets.

TABLE 3: Three-Year High-Demand Credential Totals, by College

	High-Demand Credentials
Blackhawk	1,914
Chippewa Valley	5,067
Fox Valley	6,727
Gateway	6,508
Lakeshore	2,239
Madison Area	6,563
Mid-State	2,248
Milwaukee Area	5,048
Moraine Park	3,171
Nicolet Area	771
Northcentral	3,677
Northeast Wisconsin	5,653
Northwood	4,837
Southwest Wisconsin	1,406
Waukesha County	4,936
Western	2,821
Statewide	63,586

Three-year total includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Funds are distributed based on each college's proportionate share of the total number of degrees and certificates awarded in high-demand fields statewide.

INDUSTRY-VALIDATED CURRICULUM

Industry-validated curriculum is defined in two ways: active industry advised programs and Technical Skills Attainment (TSA). Industry-validated curriculum are technical college degrees and certificate programs which have enrolled students and advisory committees comprising local employers and employees in the relevant occupation. The advisory committees provide input on equipment, course materials, instructional methods and career guidance counseling to ensure relevance to current industry practiced standards.

Technical Skills Attainment assessments are formal, direct measurements that provide evidence that students have achieved intended program outcomes or skills. TSAs may include third-party exams, performance-based assessments, portfolios, capstone projects, clinical evaluations or other measures. TSAs measure student achievement in core industry-relevant program outcomes, while ensuring those outcomes derive directly from valid industry standards.

Table 4: Three-Year Total Industry-Validated Programs and TSAs

	Industry-Validated Programs	Technical Skills Attainment Assessment
Blackhawk	244	175
Chippewa Valley	353	286
Fox Valley	535	406
Gateway	364	175
Lakeshore	291	181
Madison Area	459	268
Mid-State	258	180
Milwaukee Area	677	308
Moraine Park	315	191
Nicolet Area	149	107
Northcentral	415	206
Northeast Wisconsin	510	270
Northwood	331	241
Southwest Wisconsin	201	140
Waukesha County	329	267
Western	300	164
Statewide	5,731	3,565

Three-year total includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Seventy-five percent of the funds are distributed based on each college's proportionate share of active programs (i.e., having enrolled students) and the remaining 25% is distributed based on each college's proportionate share of programs with TSA assessments.

AE TRANSITIONS

Adult Education (AE) helps adults with reading, writing, mathematics skills and career education at levels ranging from first through twelfth grade. English Language Learning (ELL) provides instruction for those whose native or dominant language is other than English. ELL helps these learners to read, write and communicate in English to achieve high school completion, entry into occupational programs and work placement.

A primary mission of Wisconsin's technical colleges is to enable full participation in the workforce, regardless of an individual's prior educational background. Over the past three years, technical colleges helped more than 13,900 students transition out of AE and into postsecondary coursework.

Table 5 shows the number of adults over a three-year period transitioning from AE to postsecondary coursework in the same year or the following year.

TABLE 5: Three-Year Total, Transitions from Adult Education to Postsecondary Education

	3-Year Total
Blackhawk	676
Chippewa Valley	395
Fox Valley	403
Gateway	420
Lakeshore	183
Madison Area	2,839
Mid-State	1,293
Milwaukee Area	2,400
Moraine Park	650
Nicolet Area	673
Northcentral	1,354
Northeast Wisconsin	339
Northwood	308
Southwest Wisconsin	148
Waukesha County	383
Western	1,465
Statewide	13,929

Three-year total includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Funds are distributed based on each college's share of the number of adult students who: (a) were enrolled in at least 12 hours of adult education, adult high school or ELL courses; and then (b) successfully completed a postsecondary course, in either the year of their AE enrollment or in the following academic year.

AE SERVICES AND SUCCESS

A core function of Wisconsin's technical colleges is to provide basic skills education and promote a fully literate society. Basic skills education enables students to fully participate in Wisconsin's workforce and helps ensure that all state residents have an opportunity to better themselves economically.

As shown in Table 6, more than 63,600 students took advantage of AE services at technical colleges over the past three years. (To facilitate access to Wisconsin's technical colleges and to promote these statewide interests, state law requires AE services must be provided tuition-free.)

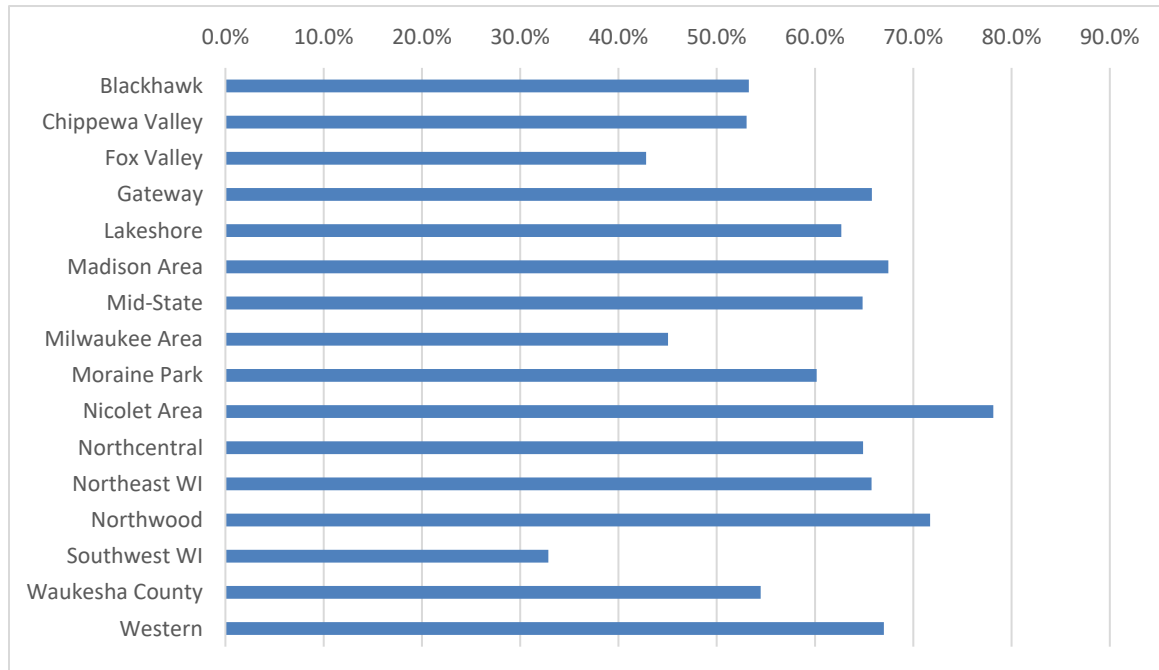
TABLE 6: Three-Year Total, Adult Education Students

	Number of Students
Blackhawk	1,724
Chippewa Valley	2,455
Fox Valley	4,509
Gateway	5,035
Lakeshore	2,371
Madison Area	8,806
Mid-State	2,327
Milwaukee Area	17,006
Moraine Park	4,172
Nicolet Area	1,248
Northcentral	3,347
Northeast Wisconsin	2,519
Northwood	1,671
Southwest Wisconsin	710
Waukesha County	2,353
Western	3,351
Statewide	63,604

Three-year total includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Student success in AE courses is defined as demonstrated educational gains on standardized national tests, which are administered and reported as a condition of the colleges receiving federal adult education grants. Figure 1 shows the average three-year AE student success rates by college. The three-year success rate includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25.

FIGURE 1: Three-Year Success Rate: AE Students Demonstrating Educational Gains



Funds are distributed based on two factors. Fifty percent of funding is distributed based on each college's proportionate share of the number of adult students who were enrolled in at least 12 hours of adult education, adult high school or ELL courses. The other 50% of funding is distributed based on each college's "success rate," which is defined as the percentage of adult education, adult high school or ELL students who have demonstrated educational gains under standardized pre- and post-testing regimens.

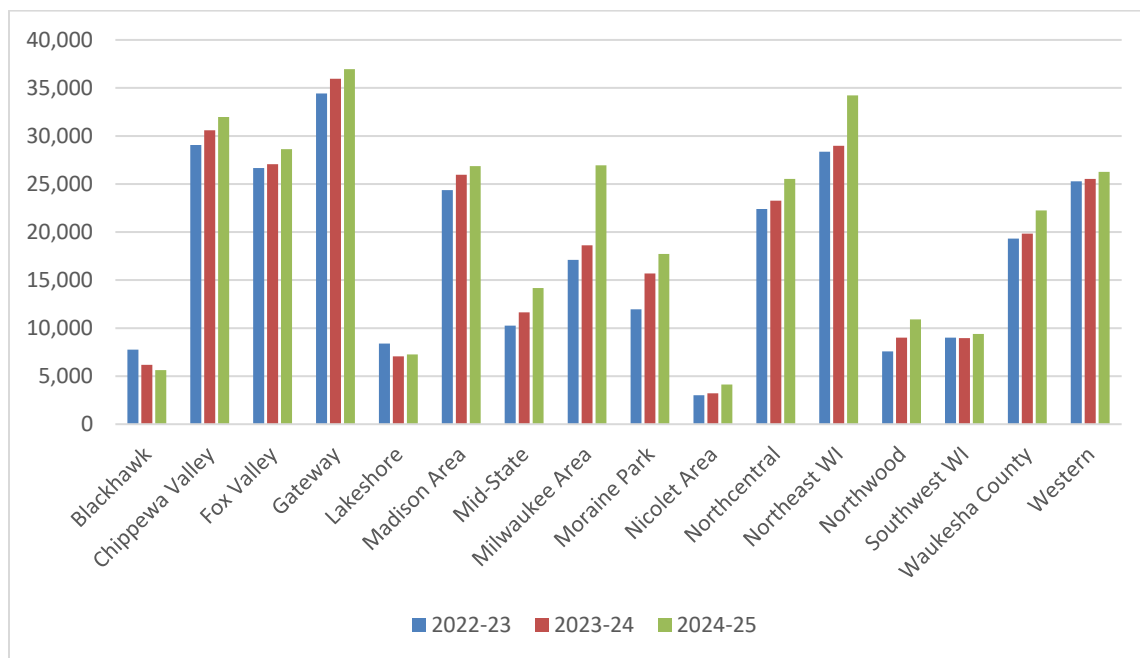
DUAL ENROLLMENT

Wisconsin's technical colleges have provided college credit to high school students for more than 20 years, under a variety of programs designed to maximize access and minimize costs to students and their school districts.

Dual credit is earned for a selection of high school courses that allow students to simultaneously earn both high school and college credit. Each college works to establish and continually grow participation in these programs, even in those districts that are sparsely populated, cover a large geographical area or have other challenges to participation.

More than 911,300 dual enrollment credits were issued over the last three years. Figure 2 shows the distribution of credits awarded across the colleges.

FIGURE 2: Credits Awarded Under Dual Enrollment



An accessible table containing the data presented in this figure is available in Appendix A, Table A-2.

Total statewide dual enrollment credits earned by high school students at Wisconsin's technical colleges increased by more than 15% between 2022-23 and 2024-25. More than 67,700 Wisconsin high school students got a head start on college while earning dual credits in 2024-25.

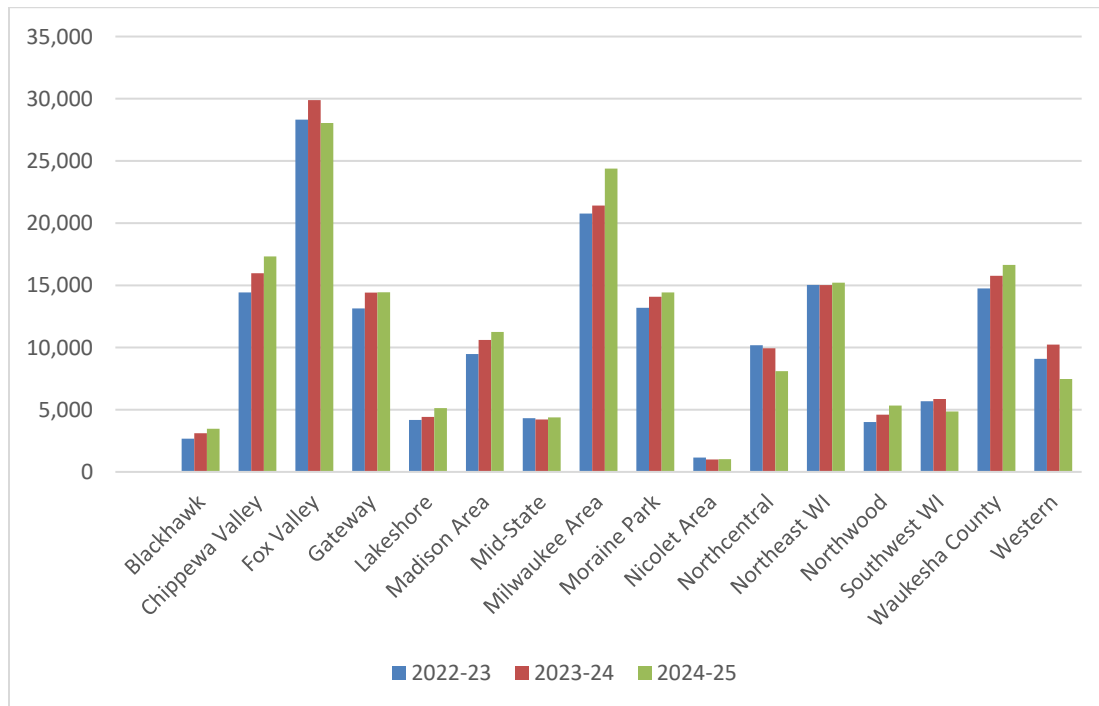
Funds are distributed based on each college's proportionate share of statewide credits earned in all types of dual enrollment offerings, which include transcribed credit, advanced standing (reported once the student enrolls at a technical college, post-high school), and Youth Apprenticeship, Start College Now (a replacement for Youth Options) and 38.14 contract offerings.

WORKFORCE TRAINING

Wisconsin’s technical colleges are an integral component of employer success across the state: as the premier providers of customized business solutions; apprenticeship-related classroom instruction; on-site training; and professional development, including supply chain management, Lean Six Sigma, health care and human services, occupational safety, continuous improvement, project management, leadership development and other specialized training.

WTCS-delivered customized training helps businesses increase their efficiency, productivity and worker safety. For employees, it allows them to improve their employability and earning potential. Technical colleges provide workforce training for businesses of all sizes and across a wide variety of industries. Figure 3 shows the distribution of more than 532,400 workforce training credits delivered by technical colleges over the last three years. The number of workforce training credits increased 6.2% compared to the previous three-year period.

FIGURE 3: Workforce Training Credits



An accessible table containing the data presented in this figure is available in Appendix A, Table A-3.

Workforce training funds are distributed based on each college’s proportionate share of credits generated in each of the following areas:

- contracts to provide customized instruction to public and private employers;
- employer-paid tuition and training;
- apprenticeship education; and
- professional development seminars.

COLLABORATION

Wisconsin's technical colleges participate in a variety of local and regional collaborations and partnerships aimed at increasing efficiencies, maximizing student success and opportunities, and making the most of instructional resources. The six statewide partnerships in which all 16 technical colleges participate were chosen as standard measures for the purposes of the collaboration criteria.

Districts Mutual Insurance (DMI), for example, was formed by the colleges for the purposes of insuring property, automobiles, liability, workers' compensation and other risks. Since its establishment in 2004, DMI has saved taxpayers \$22 million in insurance premiums, through the collective buying power of all 16 institutions and lowered administrative overhead. Similarly, the WTCS Purchasing Consortium takes advantage of the colleges' combined purchasing power to save on supplies and services common across all 16 colleges.

Funds are distributed 50% based on each college's proportionate share of full-time equivalent students and 50% as an amount equally divided among the colleges. To be eligible under these criteria, a college must maintain membership in the following collaborative partnerships:

- Districts Mutual Insurance;
- District Boards Association;
- Purchasing Consortium;
- State Branding Council (formerly Marketing Consortium);
- Wisconsin Student Government; and
- Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS).

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The special populations criteria recognizes special student populations or demographic groups that may be considered unique to certain technical college districts, such as older dislocated workers and returning veterans. These groups may require specialized support services to reach their academic and career goals.

TABLE 7: Three-Year Total, Special Populations Served by Wisconsin Technical Colleges

	All Students	Pell Recipients (low income)	Students of Color	Veterans	Justice- Involved	Dislocated Workers	Students with Disabilities
Blackhawk	21,746	3,892	5,337	323	231	80	647
Chippewa Valley	52,281	5,936	7,511	1,055	727	4	1,755
Fox Valley	149,269	5,957	28,328	2,151	1,677	1,105	1,122
Gateway	58,517	7,191	24,972	1,190	218	95	2,810
Lakeshore	26,624	2,682	5,825	1,150	506	21	475
Madison Area	82,456	9,917	29,069	2,875	1,795	223	4,858
Mid-State	33,693	3,353	4,002	1,827	379	44	724
Milwaukee Area	93,833	22,141	57,944	1,643	705	88	2,583
Moraine Park	44,734	2,829	8,930	879	4,505	37	2,148
Nicolet Area	11,754	1,182	1,594	259	87	36	404
Northcentral	57,446	4,314	7,697	559	1,161	104	1,650
Northeast Wisconsin	77,620	7,215	16,975	2,317	360	121	2,030
Northwood	42,634	3,173	4,367	1,357	531	17	990
Southwest Wisconsin	20,468	1,909	2,635	610	438	41	465
Waukesha County	53,946	3,183	12,266	497	378	50	1,407
Western	42,199	4,677	8,182	850	1,220	39	1,770
Statewide	869,220	89,551	225,634	19,542	14,918	2,105	25,838

Three-year total includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Half of available funds for these criteria are distributed based on each college's proportionate share of the six special populations: students of color, Pell Grant recipients, military veterans, incarcerated individuals, dislocated workers and persons with disabilities. The remainder is distributed based on each college's percentage of special population students, relative to their total student population.

CREDITS AWARDED FOR RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OR TRAINING

Wisconsin's technical colleges provide students with the opportunity to shorten their time to a credential by demonstrating their knowledge and skills they have gained outside the classroom.

Wisconsin's technical colleges award credits for relevant educational experience or training not obtained through an institution of higher education, including skills training received through military training. Technical colleges awarded 36,251 credits during the most recent three-year period and the distribution of these credits by college is shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8: Three-Year Total, Credits Awarded for Relevant Educational Experience or Training

	Number of Students
Blackhawk	671
Chippewa Valley	2,047
Fox Valley	4,333
Gateway	1,056
Lakeshore	526
Madison Area	7,113
Mid-State	1,169
Milwaukee Area	3,903
Moraine Park	1,202
Nicolet Area	280
Northcentral	1,792
Northeast Wisconsin	4,853
Northwood	340
Southwest Wisconsin	656
Waukesha County	2,852
Western	3,458
Statewide	36,251

Three-year total includes fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24
and 2024-25

Funds are distributed based on each college's credits awarded to students who successfully demonstrated relevant educational experience or training skills not obtained through an institution of higher education, but acquired through military and work experience, as well as other learning acquired outside traditional academic institutions.

APPENDIX A: Data Tables Supporting Figures

This appendix contains accessible data tables corresponding to graphs presented throughout this report. These tables provide the source data used to create each visualization.

TABLE A-2. Data for Figure 2: Credits Awarded Under Dual Enrollment (Rounded)

	2022-23 Credits	2023-24 Credits	2024-25 Credits	Three-Year Total Credits
Blackhawk	7,765	6,180	5,636	19,581
Chippewa Valley	29,059	30,591	31,974	91,624
Fox Valley	26,672	27,062	28,635	82,370
Gateway	34,424	35,950	36,960	107,334
Lakeshore	8,390	7,066	7,266	22,722
Madison Area	24,374	25,961	26,857	77,192
Mid-State	10,253	11,635	14,182	36,070
Milwaukee Area	17,107	18,624	26,947	62,678
Moraine Park	11,954	15,688	17,729	45,371
Nicolet Area	3,012	3,211	4,129	10,352
Northcentral	22,403	23,270	25,527	71,200
Northeast Wisconsin	28,362	28,977	34,228	91,567
Northwood	7,579	9,011	10,914	27,504
Southwest Wisconsin	9,003	8,957	9,387	27,347
Waukesha County	19,314	19,839	22,248	61,400
Western	25,283	25,537	26,264	77,084
Statewide	284,954	297,559	328,883	911,396

TABLE A-3. Data for Figure 3: Workforce Training Credits (Rounded)

	2022-23 Credits	2023-24 Credits	2024-25 Credits	Three-Year Total Credits
Blackhawk	2,673	3,112	3,473	9,257
Chippewa Valley	14,424	15,978	17,320	47,722
Fox Valley	28,325	29,890	28,053	86,268
Gateway	13,141	14,413	14,436	41,990
Lakeshore	4,176	4,415	5,135	13,726
Madison Area	9,480	10,605	11,250	31,335
Mid-State	4,314	4,211	4,377	12,902
Milwaukee Area	20,765	21,408	24,387	66,560
Moraine Park	13,197	14,086	14,431	41,715
Nicolet Area	1,155	1,004	1,026	3,185
Northcentral	10,187	9,939	8,100	28,226
Northeast Wisconsin	15,029	15,020	15,211	45,260
Northwood	4,009	4,595	5,331	13,934
Southwest Wisconsin	5,676	5,868	4,854	16,398
Waukesha County	14,746	15,771	16,641	47,158
Western	9,087	10,237	7,464	26,788
Statewide	170,384	180,552	181,489	532,424