

Student Success Trends Among Adults in the Bay Region

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Introduction

The California Community College Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 calls for transformational change and recognizes individuals ages 25 and older as a critical student population within the community college system.¹ Despite representing a large portion of students within the community college system, this student population has historically been largely overlooked by policy makers and institutional leaders.² Vision 2030 intends to shift that narrative by focusing on understanding ways in which community colleges can better serve these students, particularly adult learners of color and those without postsecondary education. Not only do these adult learners represent significant potential for increasing student enrollments for community colleges across the state, but they are also essential in bridging the gap between the state's workforce needs and equity goals.

These adults typically begin college later in life or are returning after not completing a degree. They are often motivated to improve economic mobility, fulfill educational goals, and many bring unique lived experiences to the classroom.³ These factors highlight the need for different types of supports compared to more traditional students who enter directly from high school. Many of these adults desire flexible course offerings, guided advising, and support services to help them navigate educational pathways.⁴ While institutions are making progress towards developing systems and supports for these students, data remains central to understanding and refining practices that support retention, completion, and success outcomes for adults in the community college system.

In an effort to understand trends and outcomes among adults, the Bay Region Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to supplement the comprehensive [Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard](#)⁵ that summarizes data on enrollment and student outcomes for the 28 community colleges in the region. These community colleges include College of Alameda, Berkeley City College, Cabrillo College, Cañada College, Chabot College, City College of San Francisco, Contra Costa College, De Anza College, Diablo Valley College, Evergreen Valley College, Foothill College, Gavilan College, Hartnell College, Laney College, Las Positas College, Los Medanos College, College of Marin, Merritt College, Mission College, Monterey Peninsula College, Napa Valley College, Ohlone College, San Jose City College, College of San Mateo, Santa Rosa Junior College, Skyline College, Solano College, and West Valley College. This dashboard can be used to compare metrics across community college institutions, districts, the Bay Region, subregions, and statewide.

¹ "Vision 2030: A Roadmap for California Community Colleges," California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, September 2023, accessed June 1, 2025, <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-for-California-Community-Colleges.pdf>.

² Lumina Foundation, National Institute for Transformation and Equity, & the Association for the Study of Higher Education (2018). "Creating Inclusive and Equitable Environments for Racially Minoritized Adult Learners: Recommendations for Research, Policy, and Practice." <https://nite-education.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Creating-Inclusive-and-Equitable-environments-for-racially-minoritized-adult-learners-FINAL.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard," Bay Region Center of Excellence, May 2025, accessed June 1, 2025, https://public.tableau.com/views/StudentEnrollmentandSuccess/StudentSuccess?:language=en-US&:sid=&:redirect=auth&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link.

Student Enrollment and Success Outcomes

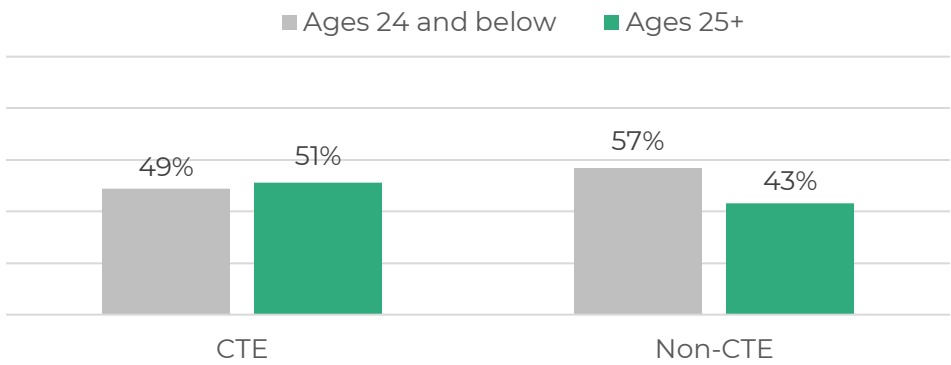
The following sections in this brief summarize data on general admit students who were enrolled in at least one term during the selected year at a Bay Region Community College. Please refer to the methodology for more information regarding definitions. According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Data Vista, there were 350,799 general admit students enrolled across all community college programs in the Bay Region in the 2023-24 academic year (Exhibit 1).^{6,7} When focusing on students in Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, 183,515 students (40%) were enrolled across Bay Region Community Colleges, compared to 276,191 students enrolled in non-CTE programs (60%). Please note that students may be counted more than once if they enrolled in CTE and non-CTE programs, and these numbers do not sum to the total number of students enrolled.

Exhibit 1. Enrollments for CTE and non-CTE students in the Bay Region, 2023-24

Total Students Enrolled	350,799
CTE Students	Non-CTE Students
183,515	276,191

When focusing on the 2023-24 academic year in the Bay Region, Exhibit 2 shows that students aged 25 and above accounted for a slightly higher proportion of students enrolled in CTE programs (51%, or 93,898 students), compared to students aged 24 and younger (49%, or 89,617 students). In contrast, non-CTE programs had a higher proportion of younger students, with 57% aged 24 and below compared to 43% of students aged 25 and above.

Exhibit 2. Percentage of students enrolled in CTE and non-CTE by age, 2023-24



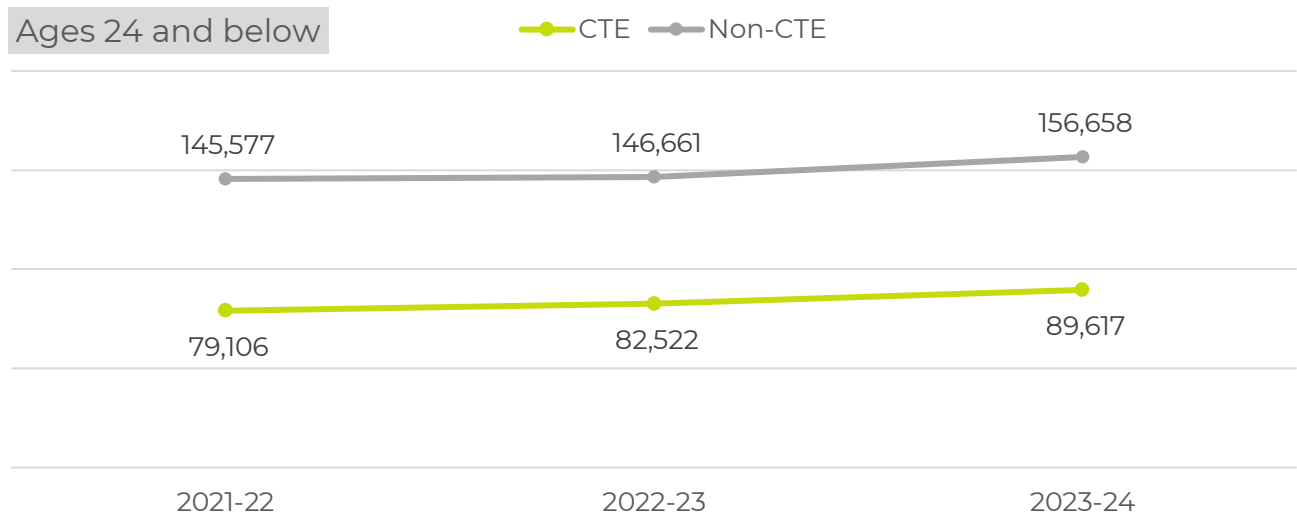
Note. Total may not add to 100% due to rounding

⁶ Please note that 350,799 represents unduplicated students across all programs. CTE and non-CTE is based on whether students were enrolled in a TOP code, and students can be included in multiple student journeys (CTE and non-CTE). "DataVista Metric Definition Dictionary," Data Vista, accessed June 31, 2025, https://storagecccccodywebprod001.blob.core.windows.net/resources/v0lcobd2mbtaiqujtb3cmI559d94?sp=r&sv=2018-11-09&se=2025-08-04T22%3A38%3A57Z&rscd=inline%3B+filename%3D%22Metric_Definition_Dictionary_Detail_with_Background_08.01.2025.pdf.

⁷ Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (June, 2025). Metric themes. Data Vista. Retrieved June 27, 2025, https://datavista.cccco.edu/data_views/metric_themes.

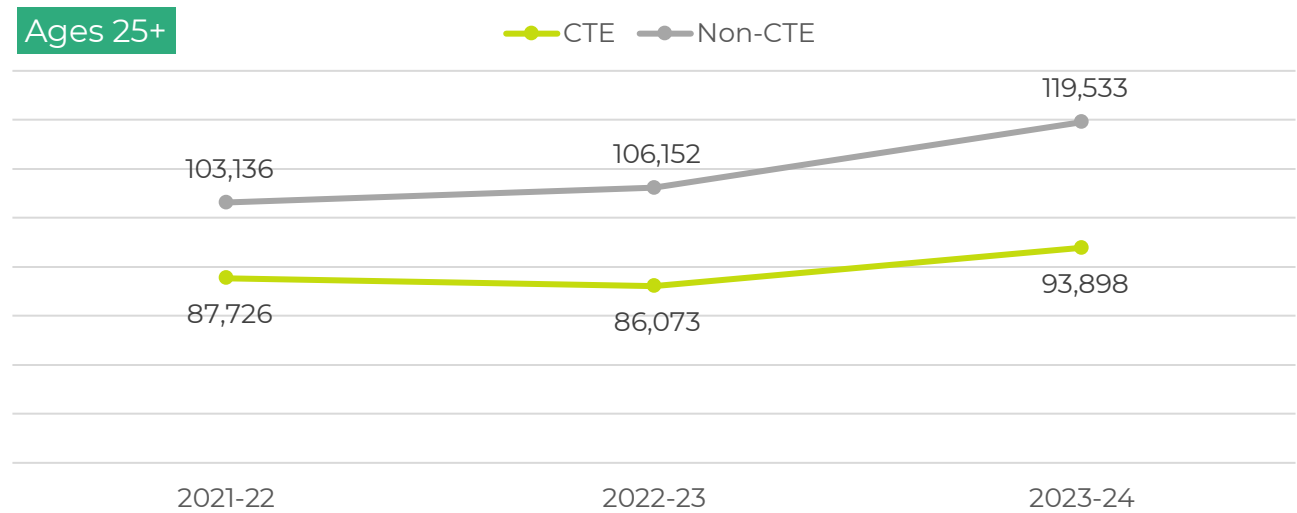
Exhibit 3 illustrates enrollment trends over the past three academic years for students aged 24 and under in both CTE and non-CTE programs in the Bay Region. Non-CTE enrollments among younger students increased steadily, rising by 1% from 2021–22 to 2022–23 and by 7% from 2022–23 to 2023–24. In comparison, CTE enrollments grew at a faster rate, increasing by 4% and 9% during the same periods, respectively.

Exhibit 3. Number of students aged 24 and below enrolled in CTE and non-CTE, 2021-22 to 2023-24



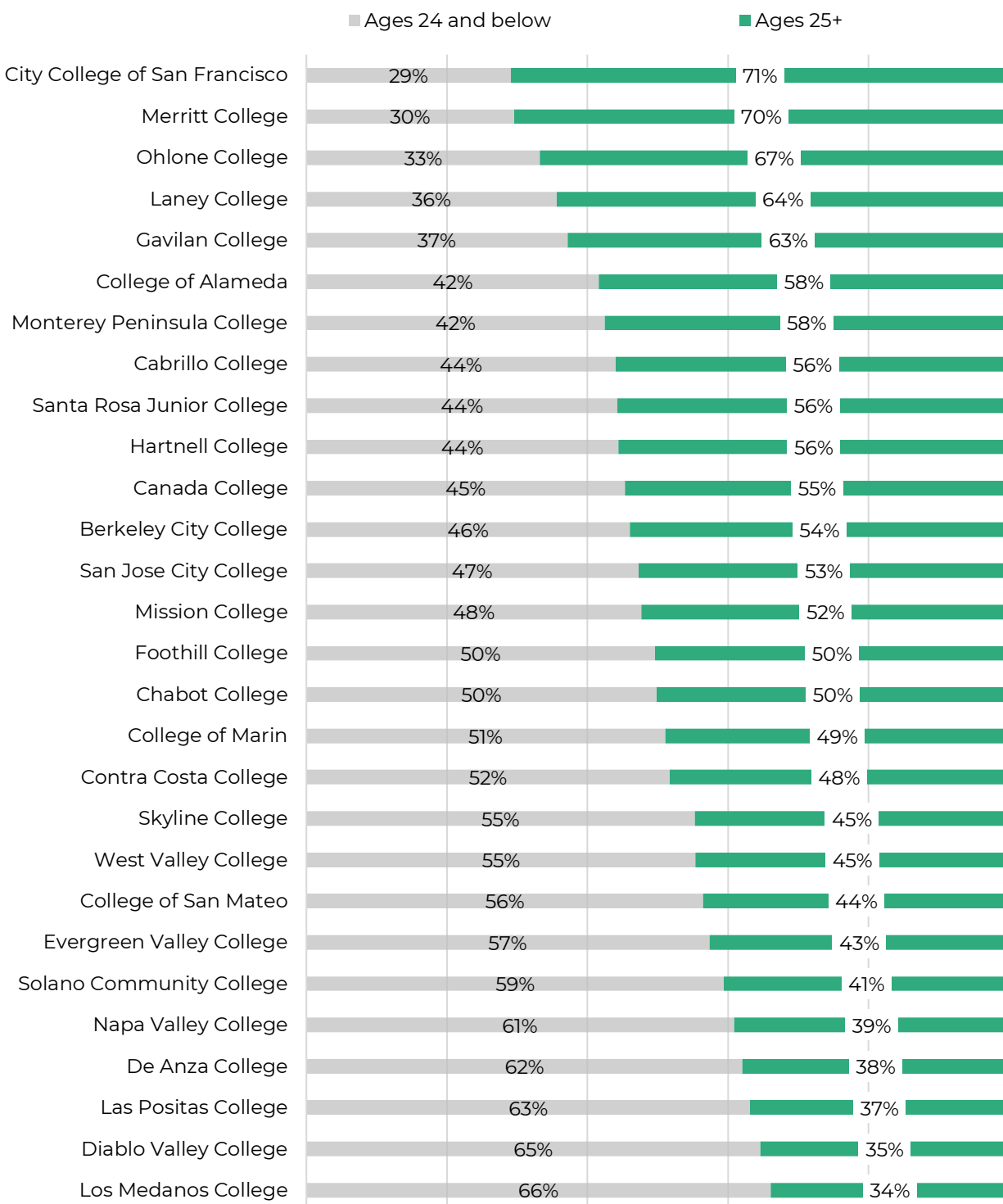
Although adult learners (aged 25 and older) represented a slightly higher percentage of CTE students (Exhibit 2), the majority of adult learners enrolled in non-CTE programs. As shown in Exhibit 4, non-CTE enrollments among adult learners steadily increased, rising by 2% from 2021–22 to 2022–23 and by 13% from 2022–23 to 2023–24. In contrast, CTE enrollment among adult learners declined by 2% between 2021–22 and 2022–23, then rebounded with a 9% increase in 2023–24.

Exhibit 4. Number of students aged 25+ enrolled in CTE and non-CTE, 2021-22 to 2023-24



When focusing on CTE programs and the percentage of students enrolled across community colleges by age group, Exhibit 5 illustrates that the colleges with a higher proportion of adult learners in CTE compared to younger students include City College of San Francisco (71% of CTE students), Merritt College (70%), and Ohlone College (67%)

Exhibit 5. Percentage of CTE students enrolled in college by age, 2023-24



Data Vista also provides outcomes by industry sectors.^{8,9} Exhibit 6 highlights the sectors in which CTE students ages 25 and older were concentrated. The largest proportion of adult learners enrolled in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) - Digital Media programs (20%, or over 20,000 students), followed by Business and Entrepreneurship (17%), and Public Safety (16%). These students were least likely to enroll in Advanced Transportation and Logistics and Life Sciences - Biotechnology.

Exhibit 6. Percentage of students aged 25+ by CCCC sectors, 2023-24

CCCCO Sectors	% Students Aged 25+ Enrolled in Sector
Information and Communication Technologies - Digital Media	20%
Business and Entrepreneurship	17%
Public Safety	16%
Health	13%
Education and Human Development	11%
Energy, Construction and Utilities	7%
Unassigned	6%
Retail, Hospitality and Tourism	4%
Advanced Manufacturing	3%
Agriculture, Water and Environmental Technologies	3%
Advanced Transportation and Logistics	1%
Life Sciences - Biotechnology	<1%

Note. Total may not add to 100% due to rounding

⁸ "CTE TOP Codes to Sectors," Data Vista, October 14, 2024, accessed June 1, 2025, <https://datavista.cccco.edu/resources/8>.

⁹ "Metric Definition Dictionary (MDD): Comprehensive Snapshot," Data Vista, April 24, 2025, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://datavista.cccco.edu/metrics>.

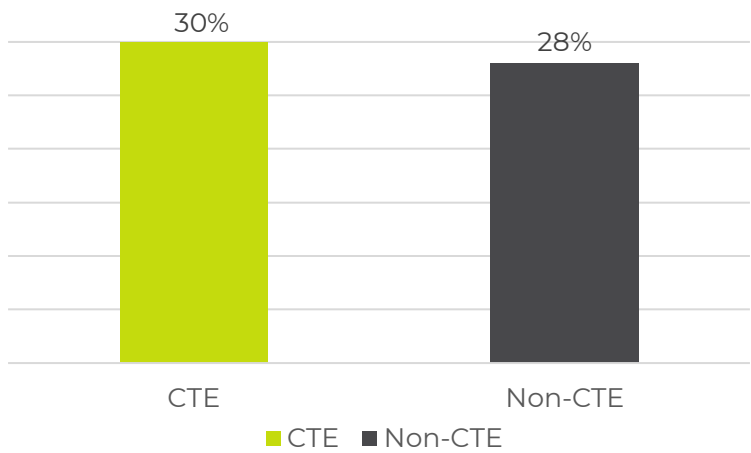
In addition to identifying the industries in which adult learners are concentrated, this brief also highlights the percentage of students aged 25+ in CTE programs by Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) codes. For program year 2023–24, Exhibit 7 shows that the CTE programs in which students aged 25+ make up the highest proportion of students compared to 24 and younger students included Custodial Services (TOP 300500; 94% of students were aged 25+), Police Academy (TOP 210550), and Parenting and Family Education (TOP 130560).

Exhibit 7. Number of students aged 25+ enrolled in CTE program by TOP code, 2023-24

TOP6	Program Title	Students Aged 25+ Enrolled in CTE Program
300500	Custodial Services	94%
210550	Police Academy	93%
130560	Parenting and Family Education	92%
011510	Parks and Outdoor Recreation	91%
095250	Mill and Cabinet Work	90%
214000	Legal and Community Interpretation	89%
051430	Court Reporting	89%
130580	Child Development Administration and Management	88%
210440	Alcohol and Controlled Substances	88%
095670	Industrial and Occupational Safety and Health	86%
493100	Vocational ESL	84%
130540	Preschool Age Children	83%
130590	Infants and Toddlers	81%
050210	Tax Studies	80%
010910	Landscape Design and Maintenance	80%
130520	Children with Special Needs	79%
130100	Family and Consumer Sciences, General	79%
126100	Community Health Care Worker	78%
095230	Plumbing, Pipefitting and Steamfitting	78%
095220	Electrical	77%

A key aspect of understanding community college success metrics regarding adult learners in the Bay Region is comparing these outcomes between CTE and non-CTE students. The [Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard](#)¹⁰ summarizes this type of data and allows for regional and statewide comparisons. When comparing CTE versus non-CTE, Exhibit 8 presents the percentage of adult learners in the Bay Region who had one or more “skills gain,” measured by advancing a course level status in English, writing, English as a Second Language (ESL), reading and mathematics courses, or by improving one or more educational functioning levels in the selected year.¹¹ Numerous outcomes are focused on successful completion, but this metric enables community colleges to measure the progression among students who may take limited courses to maintain or expand skills for career advancement or ongoing employment.¹² As shown in Exhibit 8, 30% of CTE adult learners in the Bay Region gained skills, slightly outperforming non-CTE students in the region (28%).

Exhibit 8. Percentage of students aged 25+ in CTE and non-CTE that gained skills, 2023-24



¹⁰ “Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard,” Bay Region Center of Excellence, May 2025, accessed June 1, 2025, https://public.tableau.com/views/StudentEnrollmentandSuccess/StudentSuccess?:language=en-US&sid=&redirect=auth&display_count=n&origin=viz_share_link.

¹¹ “Metric Definition Dictionary (MDD): Comprehensive Snapshot,” Data Vista, April 24, 2025, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://datavista.cccco.edu/metrics>.

¹² “What Gets to Count? Constructing a Skills-BUILDER Success Metric,” RP Group, March 2015, accessed June 1, 2025, https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Archive/What-Gets-to-Count_-Constructing-a-Skills-BUILDER-Success-Metric.pdf.

In terms of students who transferred to a four-year institution, Exhibit 9 shows that CTE and non-CTE students in the Bay Region transferred at similar rates (3% and 4%, respectively).

Exhibit 9. Percentage of students aged 25+ in CTE and non-CTE that transferred to a four-year institution, 2022-23

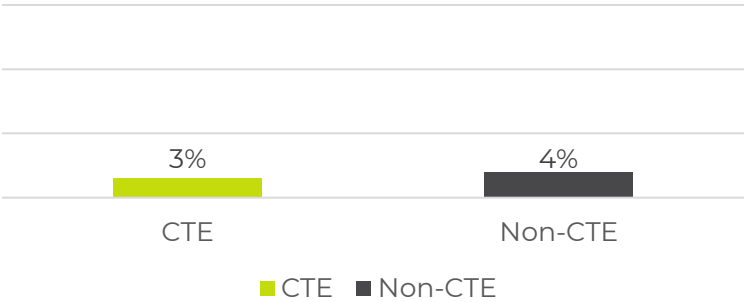


Exhibit 10 summarizes students aged 25+ that transferred to a four-year institution by sector. These results show that the sectors with the highest percentage of students that transferred were Health (5%), Business and Entrepreneurship (4%), and ICT-Digital Media (4%).

Exhibit 10. Percentage of CTE students aged 25+ that transferred to a four-year institution by sector, 2022-23

CCCCO Sectors	% Students Aged 25+ that Transferred
Health	5%
Business and Entrepreneurship	4%
Information and Communication Technologies - Digital Media	4%
Unassigned	3%
Education and Human Development	3%
Retail, Hospitality and Tourism	2%
Public Safety	2%
Energy, Construction and Utilities	1%
Agriculture, Water and Environmental Technologies	1%
Advanced Manufacturing	1%
Life Sciences - Biotechnology	N/A
Advanced Transportation and Logistics	N/A

Note. "N/A" indicates data was not reported because the numbers were too small.

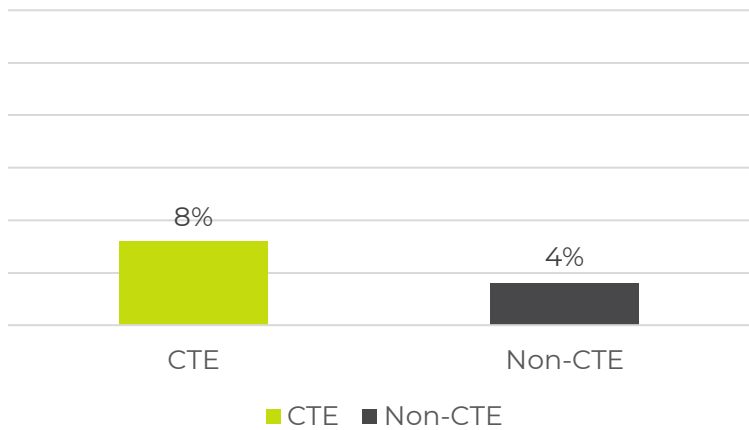
Exhibit 11 focuses on the percentage of students aged 25+ that transferred to a four-year institution by CTE TOP code. These results demonstrate that the CTE programs with the highest percentage of students that transferred were Registered Nursing (123010), Journalism (TOP 060200), and Child Development Administration and Management (130580).

Exhibit 11. Percentage of students aged 25+ that transferred to a four-year institution by CTE TOP code, 2022-23

TOP6	Program Title	% Students Aged 25+ that Transferred
123010	Registered Nursing	15%
060200	Journalism	13%
130580	Child Development Administration and Management	9%
123000	Nursing	8%
140200	Paralegal	7%
070700	Computer Software Development	7%
050900	Marketing and Distribution	7%
070710	Computer Programming	7%
061220	Film Production	7%
130600	Nutrition, Foods, and Culinary Arts	6%
493200	General Work Experience	6%
061400	Digital Media	6%
050500	Business Administration	6%
120100	Health Occupations, General	5%
125000	Emergency Medical Services	5%
050100	Business and Commerce, General	5%
050200	Accounting	5%
070210	Software Applications	5%
070810	Computer Networking	4%
070100	Information Technology, General	4%

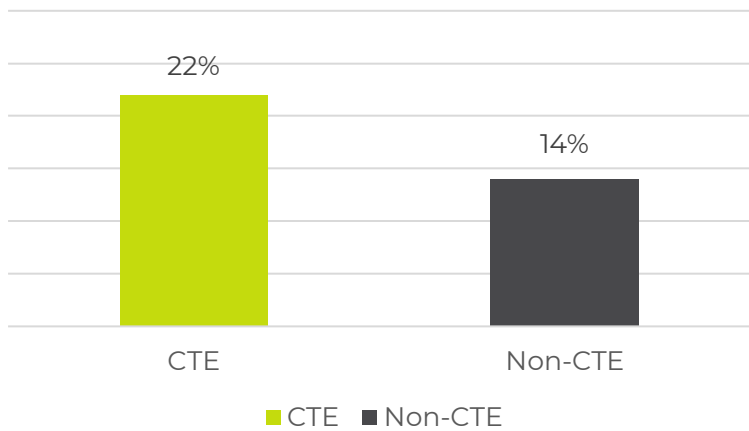
In terms of earning an award, or the percentage of students who earned one or more of the following: Chancellor’s Office approved certificate, associate degree, or non-credit award, 8% of CTE adult learners achieved this outcome, which is twice the rate of non-CTE students in the Bay Region (4%; Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12. Percentage of students aged 25+ in CTE and non-CTE that earned an award, 2023-24



In terms of employment,¹³ Exhibit 13 shows that 22% of CTE adult learners in the Bay Region reported becoming employed within two quarters after exiting the community college system, while 14% of non-CTE adult students became employed.

Exhibit 13. Percentage of students aged 25+ in CTE and non-CTE that became employed, 2022-23



¹³ “Metric Definition Dictionary (MDD): Comprehensive Snapshot,” Data Vista, April 24, 2025, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://datavista.cccco.edu/metrics>.

Exhibit 14 summarizes students aged 25+ that became employed in the Bay Region by sector. These results show that the sectors with the highest percentage of students that became employed were in Health (39%), Advanced Transportation and Logistics (31%), and Energy, Construction and Utilities (27%).

Exhibit 14. Percentage of students aged 25+ that became employed by sector, 2022-23

CCCCO Sectors	% Students Aged 25+ Became Employed
Health	39%
Advanced Transportation and Logistics	31%
Energy, Construction and Utilities	27%
Advanced Manufacturing	25%
Business and Entrepreneurship	22%
Information and Communication Technologies - Digital Media	21%
Unassigned	20%
Education and Human Development	19%
Agriculture, Water and Environmental Technologies	18%
Public Safety	17%
Retail, Hospitality and Tourism	14%
Life Sciences - Biotechnology	N/A

Note. "N/A" indicates data was not reported because the numbers were too small.

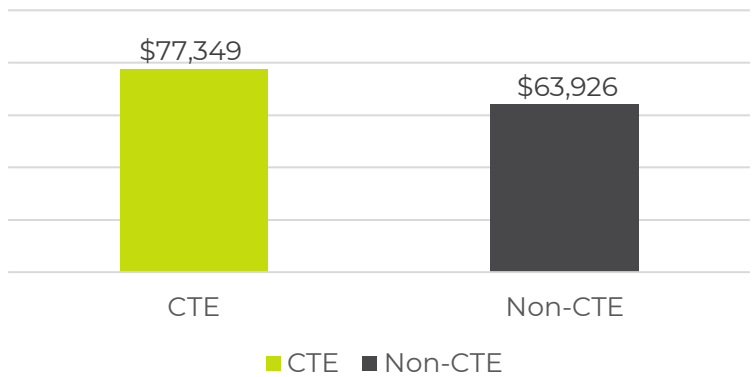
Exhibit 15 focuses on the percentage of students aged 25+ that became employed by CTE TOP code in Bay Region Community Colleges. These results demonstrate that the programs with the highest percentage of students that became employed were Dental Hygienist (TOP 124020), Respiratory Care/Therapy (TOP 121000), and Radiologic Technology (TOP 122500).

Exhibit 15. Percentage of students aged 25+ that became employed by TOP code, 2022-23

TOP6	Program Title	% Students Aged 25+ Became Employed
124020	Dental Hygienist	88%
121000	Respiratory Care/Therapy	78%
122500	Radiologic Technology	67%
213300	Fire Technology	62%
123010	Registered Nursing	58%
123000	Nursing	58%
100500	Commercial Music	48%
125000	Emergency Medical Services	46%
095650	Welding Technology	45%
020100	Architecture and Architectural Technology	44%
140200	Paralegal	44%
061400	Digital Media	43%
493200	General Work Experience	41%
070210	Software Applications	41%
061460	Computer Graphics and Digital Imagery	38%
120800	Medical Assisting	38%
101200	Applied Photography	37%
050500	Business Administration	36%
120100	Health Occupations, General	35%
010900	Horticulture	34%

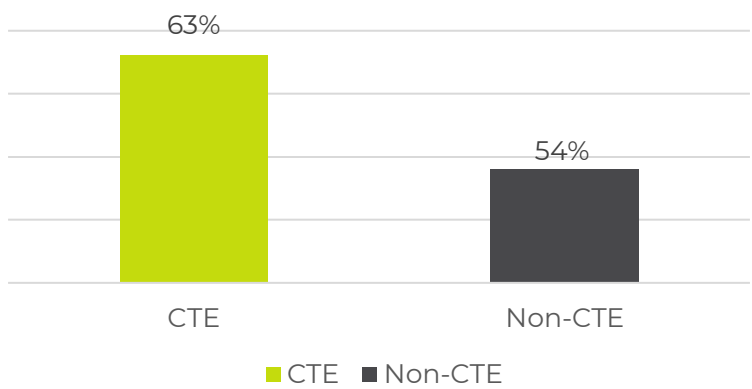
Of adult learners who became employed in the Bay Region, Exhibit 16 displays the median annual earnings reported by CTE and non-CTE students who exited the community college system.¹⁴ Results showed that CTE adult learners earned considerably higher median earnings, more than \$13,000 annually, than non-CTE students in the Bay Region. These figures are also higher than the living wage in the Bay Region, which is \$27 per hour for a single adult using the average median wages across the 12 counties in the Bay Region.¹⁵ The living wage is the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support themselves and/or their family, working full-time, or 2,080 hours per year.

Exhibit 16. Median earnings for students aged 25+ in CTE and non-CTE, 2022-23



When focusing on the percentage of students in the Bay Region that attained a living wage after exiting, Exhibit 17 shows that 63% of CTE compared to 54% of non-CTE students attained a living wage upon employment.¹⁶

Exhibit 17. Percentage of students aged 25+ in CTE and non-CTE that attained a living wage, 2022-23



¹⁴ "Metric Definition Dictionary (MDD): Comprehensive Snapshot," Data Vista, April 24, 2025, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://datavista.cccco.edu/metrics>.

¹⁵ "Self-Sufficiency Standard," Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington, 2023, accessed May 9, 2025, <https://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California/>.

¹⁶ "Metric Definition Dictionary (MDD): Comprehensive Snapshot," Data Vista, April 24, 2025, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://datavista.cccco.edu/metrics>.

This brief, alongside the [Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard](#),¹⁷ provides valuable insights regarding adult learners enrolled in community colleges across the Bay Region. By disaggregating data and examining key trends among these students, the Bay Region COE aims to support community colleges and educators in identifying areas of success, uncover gaps, and inform strategies to enhance outcomes for adult learners.

¹⁷ "Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard," Bay Region Center of Excellence, May 2025, accessed June 1, 2025, https://public.tableau.com/views/StudentEnrollmentandSuccess/StudentSuccess?:language=en-US&:sid=&:redirect=auth&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link.

Methodology

This brief summarizes data from the [Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard](#),¹⁸ which provides key data on enrollment and success outcomes for the 28 community colleges in the Bay Region, including College of Alameda, Berkeley City College, Cabrillo College, Cañada College, Chabot College, City College of San Francisco, Contra Costa College, De Anza College, Diablo Valley College, Evergreen Valley College, Foothill College, Gavilan College, Hartnell College, Laney College, Las Positas College, Los Medanos College, College of Marin, Merritt College, Mission College, Monterey Peninsula College, Napa Valley College, Ohlone College, San Jose City College, College of San Mateo, Santa Rosa Junior College, Skyline College, Solano College, and West Valley College. All data featured in this dashboard was obtained from the Chancellor's Office Data Vista and was last updated in March 2025. This data was downloaded from the dashboard in June 2025 and the data may have been updated since the publication of this report. Please note that some of this data does not account for masked values, which is suppressed data to protect student privacy, and used when subgroups are too small to report individually. Additionally, some data may not total summed values due to unduplicated and duplicated counts, and the data dictionary has more information about specific definitions. Definitions for the metrics in Data Vista for this report are featured below.

Data Definitions¹⁹

- *Attained a Living Wage*: Percentage of students who became employed within two quarters after exiting the community college system and attained the living wage for a single adult in the district county.
- *Enrollment*: Percentage of students who enrolled in any term of the academic year and who are college-enrolled and considered non-special admit students. Special admit students are those who are enrolled in both K-12 and community college simultaneously, or dual enrolled students. Note that these students may be classified as non-special admit if they are enrolled as a non-special admit student for at least one term during the selected academic year.
- *Become Employed*: Percentage of students who became employed within two quarters after exiting the community college system.
- *Earned an Award*: Students who earned a CCCC-approved certificate or degree. This represents the number of students who earned one or more of the following: Chancellor's Office approved certificate, associate degree, or non-credit awards.
- *Skills Gain*: Percentage of students who advanced by at least one or more course level status for English, writing, English as a Second Language (ESL), reading and mathematics courses (CB21 or SA07), or by improving one or more educational functioning levels in the selected year.
- *Transferred to a Four-Year*: Students who earned 12+ units and enrolled in a four-year institution after exiting.

¹⁸ "Student Enrollment and Success Dashboard," Bay Region Center of Excellence, May 2025, accessed June 1, 2025, https://public.tableau.com/views/StudentEnrollmentandSuccess/StudentSuccess?:language=en-US&sid=&redirect=auth&display_count=n&origin=viz_share_link.

¹⁹ "Metric Definition Dictionary (MDD): Comprehensive Snapshot," Data Vista, April 24, 2025, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://datavista.cccco.edu/metrics>.

Contact

For more information about this report, please contact:

- **Marcela Reyes, Director**
marcela@baccc.net or (831) 219-8875
- **Liza Chavac, Assistant Director**
liza@baccc.net or (831) 291-5895
- **Yumi Huang, Research Analyst**
yumi@baccc.net or (831) 275-0043

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