

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: Challenges Community Colleges Face to Reach the Unemployed

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KEY FINDINGS

- High joblessness strains community college training capacity in 35 states, as business leaders look to community colleges to address training needs.
- Yet community colleges are challenged to prepare workers due to high unemployment. In July 2007, unemployment was at or below 5% in 38 states; in July 2008, it was $\geq 5\%$ in 23 states; in July of 2009, 2010, and 2011, in just 3.
- Available training funds from the federal Workforce Investment Act and other sources have been exhausted in 21 states.
- From July to October of 2011, unemployment fell in 27 states, yet available workforce training funds were exhausted in more than half (15).
- Colleges are pressured to offer noncredit “quick training,” not higher cost programs in high demand technology-based majors, especially in large states.
- Just 4 states can afford to offer free college tuition for displaced workers.

The Challenge of Unemployment

Every poll indicates the top issue for 2012 voters is jobs. The National Bureau of Economic Statistics, the non-partisan agency that assesses economic trend data, charts the downturn started in late 2007, bottoming in June 2009. At 18 months in duration, this is the longest recession since World War II.¹ Some 5.7 million Americans have been out of work for more than 26 weeks, the federal definition of long-term unemployed. According to a December 2011 National Public Radio/Kaiser Family Foundation Poll of these individuals, only 13% currently get unemployment benefits, 51% say they’ve borrowed money from friends or family to get by, close to half say they’ve had trouble paying for food and housing, and a third changed their living situation to save money, including moving in with relatives and friends.²

The deep recession means millions of Americans have personally seen only

modest improvements in economic conditions since 2009. Unemployment rates are declining, but slowly. From July to October 2011, unemployment fell in 27 states, stayed the same in 6, and rose in 17 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).³ Yet Table 1 shows federal retraining funds at community colleges are severely limited in at least 21 states. With high unemployment and deep cuts in state operating budgets, how are community colleges doing to retrain and reach unemployed workers?

About this study

This report assesses challenges related to reaching unemployed and underemployed workers that community colleges today face. Unlike elite private or state flagship universities, community colleges are place-based institutions. Their service delivery areas are assigned by regulation or statute. They are highly committed to developing local and state economies. Their funding streams are diverse—in 25 states, they receive local funding in excess of 10% of all revenues, in 25 they do not.⁴ This report

examines these issues from the unique perspective of the state offices responsible for coordination and supervision of community colleges. Since 2003, The University of Alabama’s Education Policy Center reports series, *Access and Funding in Public Higher Education* (see <http://uaedpolicy.weebly.com>)⁵ has examined these issues.

TABLE 1 Summary: July and October 2011 Unemployment Rates and Reported Stress on Available Workforce Training Dollars			
	Change in State Unemployment Rates, July to October 2011	Increased numbers of unemployed/displaced workers have exhausted available workforce training dollars via WIA and other sources for colleges in my state.	
Increase	17	21	Agreement
Stayed the Same	6	19	Neutral/Don't Know
Decrease	27	11	Disagreement

Sources: (1) 2011 Survey of Access and Finance, Education Policy Center, The University of Alabama
(2) Because Georgia has two systems, there are 51 responses to the survey as compared to 50 states.
(3) Bureau of Labor Statistics, 7/11 & 11/22/11 @ <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>

We thank the generous support of



TABLE 2
The Context for Retraining Unemployed Workers and Community Colleges

	In my state for next year, increased unemployment stresses existing community college retraining capacity.**	In my state, unemployed workers can attend community colleges tuition-free for retraining purposes.		In my state, increased unemployment has overwhelmed available workforce training dollars (via WIA and other sources) for community colleges.		
		2009*	2010**	2009*	2010**	2011
Strongly Agree	13	2	1	4	7	2
Agree	22	9	3	12	17	19
Neutral/Don't Know	7	9	8	17	16	19
Disagree	8	17	20	16	9	11
Strongly Disagree	1	11	13	1	1	

* from 2009 Survey **from 2010 Survey Source: 2011 Survey of Access & Finance, The University of Alabama.

propelled by an increase in Pell funding from \$1.25 to \$2.2 billion. *Four of five of the 225 community colleges surveyed saw increases in their full-time equivalent enrollments exceed their increases in headcount enrollments, which by definition means more students were taking more hours.*¹⁰

In the State of Iowa alone, Pell funding jumped from \$84.6 million to \$153.3 million—an additional \$74 million of new Pell funding in one year.

This allowed the total number of awards to increase from 35,555 in 2008-09 to 62,205 in 2009-10 across the state’s 16 community and technical colleges.¹¹ Similar results were reported in New Hampshire and other states.

The injection of new federal funds coincided with federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act requirements mandating states to maintain operating budgets and limit tuition increases to no more than 5% to take federal stimulus funds.¹² The ARRA provisions magnified significantly the impact of the new Pell Grant funding, and kept students in college and off the unemployment rolls, an important point beyond this report’s scope. (see <http://uaedpolicy.weebly.com>).

The possible impending federal cuts in Pell Grants in the Summer of 2012, an issue to be studied in future Education Policy Center reports, occurs as operating budgets are being cut in 29 states. This will likely contract the capacity of community colleges to reach workers dislocated by recession. The question begs: How can community colleges reach out to unemployed workers when their capacity is itself threatened?

The Underfunded Workforce Training Mandate

As the nation looks to community colleges to train and retrain the workforce, it is critical to consider their capacity to do so. Our 2009 survey revealed respondents from just 4 states—Delaware, Idaho, Rhode Island, and Virginia—formally assigned responsibility to administer Workforce Investment Act-funded programs, the largest federal employment and training program, to their community colleges (39 disagreed). Table 2 shows 35 respondents to our 2010 survey agreed increased unemployment stressed existing

Community colleges are the portal of entry to higher education for millions of academically-talented minority, low income, first-generation and adult students to the baccalaureate degree. They simultaneously provide short- and long-term workforce training courses and programs that reach temporarily dislocated workers, and in some cases, the long-term unemployed. Since funding for workforce training often comes through federal flow-through programs administered by states, members of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges are well positioned to know how federal and state workforce policies and practices play out locally. They understand how these policies and funding impact the capacity and ability of community colleges to assist in improving economic competitiveness.⁶ *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs* presents selected items from the 2011 Survey of Access and Finance, conducted from July 5 to August 24, 2011.⁷ We thank our advisory panel for survey input⁸, American Public University System for support, and NCSDDC members for their participation. We also thank EPC Fellow Delphine Harris and EPC Research Associate J. Lucas Adair for assistance. Responsibility for any errors is ours and ours alone.⁹

The Policy Context

We begin by acknowledging the dramatic increases in federal Pell Grant funds that contributed to sharp enrollment increases at most community colleges in the Summer of 2010, as compared to Summer 2009. The Obama Administration planned for 800,000 new Pell recipients over 8 years. A Education Policy Center study found just under 400,000 additional Pell Grant recipients at 225 community colleges in 2008-09 compared to 2009-10,

TABLE 3

State Unemployment Rates, July 2007 - July 2011

	July	July	July	July	July	Change	
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	5 years	1 year
Alabama	3.4	4.9	10.2	9.2	10	6.6	0.8
Alaska	6.1	6.5	8	7.9	7.7	1.6	-0.2
Arizona	3.6	6	10	9.9	9.4	5.8	-0.5
Arkansas	5.3	5.2	7.5	7.8	8.2	2.9	0.4
California	5.4	7.3	11.7	12.4	12	6.6	-0.4
Colorado	3.7	4.8	8.6	8.8	8.5	4.8	-0.3
Connecticut	4.5	5.7	8.5	9.1	9.1	4.6	0
Delaware	3.5	5	8.2	8.3	8.1	4.6	-0.2
Dist of Columbia	5.4	6.6	9.8	9.8	10.8	5.4	1
Florida	4	6.3	10.5	11.5	10.7	6.7	-0.8
Georgia	4.7	6.4	10	10.1	10.1	5.4	0
Hawaii	2.6	4.1	7	6.6	6.1	3.9	-0.5
Idaho	2.8	4.9	7.9	9.4	9.4	6.6	0
Illinois	5.2	6.6	10.4	10.1	9.5	4.3	-0.6
Indiana	4.6	5.8	10.8	10.1	8.5	3.9	-1.6
Iowa	3.8	4.5	5.8	6.2	6	2.2	-0.2
Kansas	4.2	4.6	7.6	7	6.5	2.3	-0.5
Kentucky	5.5	6.6	11.1	10.2	9.5	4	-0.7
Louisiana	3.7	4.4	6.9	7.6	7.6	4.3	0
Maine	4.8	5.3	8.4	7.8	7.7	2.9	-0.1
Maryland	3.6	4.5	7.3	7.4	7.1	3.5	-0.3
Massachusetts	4.4	5.3	8.5	8.4	7.6	3.2	-0.8
Michigan	7.2	8.3	14	12.4	10.9	3.7	-1.5
Minnesota	4.7	5.4	8.4	7.2	7.2	2.5	0
Mississippi	6.1	7	9.7	10.2	10.4	4.3	0.2
Missouri	5.2	6.1	9.6	9.5	8.7	3.5	-0.8
Montana	3.3	4.6	6.4	7.3	7.7	4.4	0.4
Nebraska	3.1	3.2	5	4.6	4.2	1.1	-0.4
Nevada	4.6	6.7	13	14.9	12.9	8.3	-2
New Hampshire	3.5	3.9	6.5	5.9	5.2	1.7	-0.7
New Jersey	4.3	5.4	9.4	9.4	9.5	5.2	0.1
New Mexico	3.4	4.5	7.2	8.5	6.7	3.3	-1.8
New York	4.6	5.3	8.7	8.5	8	3.4	-0.5
North Carolina	4.8	6.3	11.1	10.3	10.1	5.3	-0.2
North Dakota	3.2	3.2	4.3	3.9	3.3	0.1	-0.6
Ohio	5.7	6.7	10.5	10	9	3.3	-1
Oklahoma	4.2	3.7	7	7	5.6	1.4	-1.4
Oregon	5.2	6.3	11.5	10.7	9.5	4.3	-1.2
Pennsylvania	4.3	5.3	8.3	8.6	7.8	3.5	-0.8
Rhode Island	5.3	7.9	11	11.6	10.8	5.5	-0.8
South Carolina	5.5	6.7	11.7	11	10.9	5.4	-0.1
South Dakota	3	3.2	5	4.7	4.7	1.7	0
Tennessee	4.7	6.7	10.8	9.5	9.8	3.2	0.3
Texas	4.4	4.9	7.8	8.1	8.4	4	0.3
Utah	2.7	3.6	7.3	7.6	7.5	4.8	-0.1
Vermont	3.9	4.4	7.1	6.1	5.7	1.8	-0.4
Virginia	3	4	7	6.8	6.1	3.1	-0.7
Washington	4.6	5.5	9.6	9.5	9.3	4.7	-0.2
West Virginia	4.2	4.1	8.3	9	8.1	3.9	-0.9
Wisconsin	4.9	4.7	9.2	8.2	7.8	2.9	-0.4
Wyoming	2.8	3.2	7	6.9	5.7	2.9	-1.2

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://data.bls.gov/map/MapToolServlet>

community college worker retraining capacity. In 2009, unemployed workers could attend community colleges tuition-free in 11 states; this declined to 4 in 2010 (this item was not included in 2011).

With impending Pell Grant cuts, tuition rising at double the inflation rate and state-funded student aid stagnating, students and families are being squeezed...as reductions in state operating budgets challenge the public higher education access colleges committed to serving them.

Unemployment Remains Persistently High

Table 3 shows unemployment rates remain persistently high in many states. From July 2007 to July 2009, unemployment doubled in 26 states, and tripled in one (Alabama). In July 2007, 38 states reported unemployment rates of 5% or below, the so-called “natural rate of unemployment;” just 3 did so by July of 2009 (when 11 reported rates more than double the 5% rate).

Tables 3 and 4 document the slow recovery from the bottom point of the recession moving forward. In July 2009, 40 states reported unemployment above 7%; in July 2011, 39 states did so. In July 2009, 22 states reported unemployment rates above 9%; by July 2011, 20 states did so. In a challenging environment of persistently high continuing unemployment, which produces flat or declining state tax revenues for their operating budgets, community colleges will be challenged to deliver worker retraining to all who seek these vital services.

	Number of States					
	(July of Each Year)					July-Oct 2011
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
under 3%	4					
>3 to 4%	15	8		1	1	1
>4% to 5%	19	15	3	2	2	2
>5% to 6%	10	11	1	1	5	4
>6% to 7%	2	14	7	7	4	8
>7% to 8%	1	2	9	8	11	8
>8% to 9%		1	9	9	8	12
>9% to 10%			8	10	10	5
>10%			14	13	10	11

Note: BLS counts the District of Columbia, making 51 states total.

Recent Changes in Unemployment Rates

The right columns of Table 5 show BLS data from July to October of 2011. In 17 states, the unemployment rate increased, in 8 it stayed the same (these are italicized), and in 27 it declined (these are bolded and italicized). The top 5 states with the largest declines were Minnesota (0.8%), Alabama (0.7%), Idaho and Louisiana (0.6%), and Utah (0.5%). Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maine, New Jersey, and South Carolina reported declines of 0.4%. The top 5 with increasing unemployment rates were Illinois (0.6%), Indiana (0.5%), Hawai'i, and Nevada (0.4%), and North Carolina and Ohio (at 0.3%). The trend of improving unemployment rates in recent months is unmistakable. Yet much more progress must be made if rates are to return to 2008 and 2007 levels.

Has high unemployment overwhelmed available retraining dollars from the federal Workforce Investment Act and other sources for community colleges? Table 2, above, shows that among those venturing an opinion, in 2009 16 agreed and 17 disagreed; in 2010, 24 agreed and 10 in disagreed; and in 2011, 21 agreed and 11 disagreed. This trend is unmistakable. Yet as place-based institutions accountable to their local communities and regions, the colleges must persevere to make a patchwork quilt of federal and state employment and training, welfare to work, and adult literacy programs fit (Katsinas & Lacey, 1989).¹³

Business leaders expect community colleges to retrain workers, yet by a 2:1 margin, respondents venturing an opinion report training funds from WIA and other sources are exhausted. *Even among the 27 states reporting lower unemployment rates from July to October 2011, workforce training funds were exhausted in more than half (14).* Our September 2011 report, *Squeeze Play*, found students and families squeezed as tuition will rise by twice the inflation rate, and most predict flat-funding or cuts in state-student aid programs, as well as community colleges budget cuts. With exhausted WIA funds and state budget cuts, the ability of community colleges to serve workers in need of retraining is necessarily constricted.

	Increased numbers of unemployed/displaced workers have exhausted available workforce training dollars via WIA and other sources for colleges in my state.	2011 Unemployment Rates				Change
		July	October		Rank	
			%	Rank		
Alabama	Neutral/DN	10.0	9.3	37	Decrease	
Alaska	Neutral/DN	7.7	7.4	19	Decrease	
Arizona	Neutral/DN	9.4	9.0	32T	Decrease	
<i>Arkansas</i>	Agree	8.2	8.2	26T	<i>Same</i>	
California	Neutral/DN	12.0	11.7	49	Decrease	
Colorado	Neutral/DN	8.5	8.1	24T	Decrease	
Connecticut	Agree	9.1	8.7	30	Decrease	
Delaware	Neutral/DN	8.1	7.9	22T	Decrease	
Florida	Agree	10.7	10.3	43	Decrease	
<i>Georgia-TCS</i>	Disagree	10.1	10.2	42	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>Georgia-UGS</i>	Neutral/DN					
<i>Hawai'i</i>	Disagree	6.1	6.5	11	<i>Increase</i>	
Idaho	Agree	9.4	8.8	31	Decrease	
<i>Illinois</i>	Strongly Agree	9.5	10.1	41	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>Indiana</i>	Agree	8.5	9.0	32T	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>Iowa</i>	Neutral/DN	6.0	6.0	7	<i>Same</i>	
<i>Kansas</i>	Disagree	6.5	6.7	13	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>Kentucky</i>	Disagree	9.5	9.6	39T	<i>Increase</i>	
Louisiana	Agree	7.6	7.0	14T	Decrease	
Maine	Strongly Agree	7.7	7.3	17T	Decrease	
<i>Maryland</i>	Agree	7.2	7.2	16	<i>Same</i>	
Massachusetts	Agree	7.6	7.3	17T	Decrease	
Michigan	Agree	10.9	10.6	47	Decrease	
Minnesota	Disagree	7.2	6.4	9T	Decrease	
<i>Mississippi</i>	Neutral/DN	10.4	10.6	47	<i>Increase</i>	
Missouri	Neutral/DN	8.7	8.5	29	Decrease	
Montana	Neutral/DN	7.7	7.6	20	Decrease	
<i>Nebraska</i>	Disagree	4.1	4.2	2	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>Nevada</i>	Disagree	12.9	13.4	50	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>New Hampshire</i>	Neutral/DN	5.2	5.3	4	<i>Increase</i>	
New Jersey	Disagree	9.5	9.1	36	Decrease	
New Mexico	Agree	6.7	6.6	12	Decrease	
New York	Neutral/DN	8.0	7.9	22T	Decrease	
<i>North Carolina</i>	Agree	10.1	10.4	44T	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>North Dakota</i>	Disagree	3.3	3.5	1	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>Ohio</i>	Neutral/DN	9.0	9.0	32T	<i>Same</i>	
<i>Oklahoma</i>	Neutral/DN	5.5	6.1	8	<i>Increase</i>	
<i>Oregon</i>	Agree	9.5	9.5	38	<i>Same</i>	
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	Disagree	7.8	8.1	24T	<i>Increase</i>	
Rhode Island	Agree	10.8	10.4	44T	Decrease	
South Carolina	Neutral/DN	10.9	10.5	46	Decrease	
South Dakota	Neutral/DN	4.7	4.5	3	Decrease	
Tennessee	Disagree	9.8	9.6	39T	Decrease	
<i>Texas</i>	Neutral/DN	8.4	8.4	28	<i>Same</i>	
Utah	Agree	7.5	7.0	14T	Decrease	
Vermont	Agree	5.7	5.6	6	Decrease	
<i>Virginia</i>	Neutral/DN	6.1	6.4	9 (Tie)	<i>Increase</i>	
Washington	Agree	9.3	9.0	32T	Decrease	
<i>West Virginia</i>	Agree	8.1	8.2	26T	<i>Increase</i>	
Wisconsin	Agree	7.8	7.7	21	Decrease	
Wyoming	Agree	5.8	5.7	6	Decrease	
Strongly Agree	2	Increase			17	
Agree	19	Stay the Same			6	
Neutral/Don't Know	19	Decrease			27	
Disagree	11					
Strongly Disagree						

Sources: (1) 2011 Survey of Access & Finance Issues, Education Policy Center, The University of Alabama; (2) BLS, <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>

TABLE 6
Related Issues: Serving Unemployed Workers and Capacity Strains at Community Colleges

	Concerns over high numbers of unemployed workers are pushing community colleges to offer or expand "quick" job training programs in non-credit areas in my state		Funding is needed to expand high cost programs in areas such as health sciences, engineering technology, and information technology in my state	In my state, funding is insufficient to hire full-time faculty to staff programs in high-wage careers/fields including nursing, engineering technology, etc.*	In the recession, my state's community colleges have seen more enrollment growth in transfer programs than in higher cost career-focused for-credit programs.	Community colleges in my state are planning to use/or do use internet (real time) job postings to link unemployed workers with employers.
	2010*	2011				
Strongly Agree	3	5	21	12	6	1
Agree	14	23	21	19	18	3
Neutral/Don't Know	17	13	5	6	16	8
Disagree	12	10	4	10	10	26
Strongly Disagree	3			3	1	13
Source: 2011 Survey of Access and Finance Issues, Education Policy Center, The University of Alabama. *2010 Survey						

The Current Short-Term Focus

To prepare workers for good jobs, funds are needed to expand high demand programs tied to high wage jobs in allied health, engineering technology, and information technology. Yet Table 6 shows community colleges are under increasing pressure to offer "quick" job training in non-credit areas. In 2010, 17 responded in agreement compared to 15 in disagreement; in 2011 nearly three in four respondents were in agreement.

When President Obama announced his American Graduation Initiative at Macomb Community College in July 2009, he recognized a former Chrysler employee. This United Auto Workers member had just completed a nursing program to transition himself into a job with a future.¹⁴ Can community colleges build the workforce of the future if they are focused on short-term training, and are unable to expand academic programs in high-cost, high-demand areas like allied health, nursing, engineering technology, and information technology? Table 6 shows a strong majority of respondents—42—agree funding for these very programs is needed in their states. *By better than 10 to 1, respondents know such investments are tied to the high-wage, high-demand jobs of the future.*

Our 2010 survey further asked if funding was insufficient to hire full-time faculty to staff programs in high-wage careers and fields, such as nursing and engineering technology. Of the 44 expressing opinions, 31 agreed and 13 disagreed, a margin greater than 3 to 1. We therefore conclude that progress will be difficult if states continue to cut community college operating budgets.

Respondents were also asked if enrollment growth at their state's community colleges has been greater in transfer programs, which tend to be lower cost, than in higher cost career-focused for-credit programs. Sixteen did not venture an opinion or did not know; among the 35 that did venture an opinion, by better than a 2 to 1 margin, respondents agreed (24 in agreement, compared to 11 in disagreement). We also note that only 4 indicate that their state's community colleges use or were planning to use the internet to link in real time displaced workers to job postings, compared to 39 disagreeing.

Can community colleges build the workforce of the future if they are focused on short term training, and are unable to expand longer-term academic programs in higher cost, high demand areas like allied health, nursing, engineering technology, and information technology?

Table 7, below, shows most respondents believe business leaders in their states see community colleges as primary providers of workforce training, particularly as compared to for-profit institutions, yet just 4 say their community colleges are a formally preferred provider of Workforce Investment Act programs in their states. When asked if increasing attainment of industry credentials is a priority, 3 agreed and 40 disagreed. This

TABLE 7
Perceptions of Community Colleges and Their Role in Workforce Training

	Business leaders see community colleges as primary workforce training providers.	Community colleges are a formal preferred provider of WIA programs in my state.	Increasing attainment of Industry Recognized Credentials is a priority in my state.	For-Profit colleges are perceived by policymakers in my state as a better “bang for the buck” than public community and technical colleges.
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	10			
<i>Agree</i>	24	4	3	
<i>Neutral/Don't Know</i>	5	11	8	9
<i>Disagree</i>	8	28	31	31
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	4	8	9	11

Source: 2011 Survey of Access & Finance, Education Policy Center, The University of Alabama.

10 to 1 margin may indicate the under-funding of the state operating budgets, which necessarily constrains community colleges’ capacity to prepare workers for good jobs that industries need. This may speak to community college involvement in workforce training as an “underfunded mandate.” Creating a formal preference for community colleges in WIA and other federal workforce training programs deserves serious consideration by federal policymakers as Congress reauthorizes this vital program.

State Responses to Workforce Development

Below we offer examples of statewide responses by community colleges to reach displaced workers and keep currently employed workers competitive. Space limitations do not allow us to list the many additional examples.

Even with unemployment above 10%, the *South Carolina Technical College System* boasts an average 82% job placement rate among graduates. One SCTCS initiative, *Apprenticeship Carolina*, has worked with businesses to more than quadruple the number of registered apprentices in the state to 3,200. In addition, their long-standing program readySC™ helps create new jobs, with more than 80% of new companies ranking the program as a significant factor in their decision to relocate to South Carolina. Yet even with these successes, capacity issues to enhance workforce quality remain, as SCTCS President Dr. Darrel Staat notes: “Additional resources are needed to sustain tuition at a manageable level while providing the high quality technical programs necessary to educate a world-class workforce for South Carolina.”

The New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development was formed in 2004 to coordinate the state's 19 community colleges and 64 campuses with employers and students. The Consortium serves two distinct populations: Currently employed workers who need skill updating to maintain competitiveness, and new workforce entrants, particularly in higher cost/high technology areas. In 2006-2007, the Consortium reached 287 employers and 4,538 currently employed workers; by 2009-2010, 556 employers and 12,020 workers were trained. The Consortium today provides basic workforce skills in mathematics, written and oral communications skills, basic computer skills, specialized certifications (e.g., health care), and firm/industry specific training (bio-technology, hazardous waste disposal, etc).

In Iowa, there is no one entity that keeps track of workforce training.

Table 8

July to October 2011 Unemployment Rates, and Stress on Retraining Capacity at Community Colleges in Large States

	Increased numbers of unemployed/displaced workers have exhausted available workforce training dollars via WIA and other sources for colleges in my state.	Concerns over high numbers of unemployed workers are pushing community colleges to offer or expand "quick" job training programs in non-credit areas in my state.	Funding is needed to expand high cost programs in areas such as health sciences, engineering technology, and information technology in my state	Community colleges in my state presently have the capacity to meet current and projected numbers of older students returning to college.	2011 State Unemployment Rates			Change July-Oct.
					July	October		
						%	Rank	
California	Neutral/DN	Neutral/DN	Agree	Disagree	12.0	11.7	49	Decrease
Florida	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral/Don't know	10.7	10.3	43	Decrease
Georgia-TCS	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	10.1	10.2	42	Increase
Georgia-UGS	Neutral/DN	Neutral/DN	Agree	Neutral/Don't know	10.1	10.2	42	Increase
Illinois	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	9.5	10.1	41	Increase
New York	Neutral/DN	Neutral/DN	Strongly Agree	Disagree	8.0	7.9	22T	Decrease
North Carolina	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	10.1	10.4	44T	Increase
Ohio	Neutral/DN	Neutral/DN	Neutral/DN	Neutral/Don't know	9.0	9.0	32T	Same
Pennsylvania	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	7.8	8.1	24T	Increase
Texas	Neutral/DN	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Agree	8.4	8.4	28	Same
Strongly Agree	1	2	4		Increase			4*
Agree	2	3	4	5	Stay the Same			2
Neutral/Don't Know	5	4	1	3	Decrease			3
Disagree	2	1	1	2				
Strongly Disagree								

* Georgia has two state agencies/offices responsible for aspects of two-year colleges, and is thus counted once here.

Source of unemployment data: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 7/11/11 and 11/22/11, at <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/launstrk.htm>

Source: 2011 Survey of Access and Finance Issues, Education Policy Center, The University of Alabama

Challenges Faced by Large States

Table 8 shows that 3 of the nation’s largest states said funds to reach unemployed workers from WIA and other sources had been exhausted (Florida, Illinois, and North Carolina). With continuing high unemployment, 5 report their community colleges were pushed to offer quick training (Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas). A strong majority agree funding is needed to expand higher cost/high demand programs in nursing, allied health, engineering technology and information technology. And 5 agree their states currently possess capacity to meet current and projected numbers of older adults returning to college—but 2 that did not were California and New York. California enrolls better than 1 in 4 of all U.S. community college students, and the State University of New York and City University of New York are among the nation’s largest.

Conclusion

As policymakers and business leaders look to community colleges to train the next generation of workers and re-tool those seeking to re-enter the workforce, it is important to both recognize and understand the many constraints felt within the sector. Our findings reveal that state community college leaders believe high unemployment has strained the available workforce training capacity at community colleges in many states, as budget woes limit the development and maintenance of programs to prepare individuals for high-skill, high-wage jobs. If community colleges are to assist workers to achieve economic competitiveness and help the nation to economic recovery, the capacity strains described in this report cannot remain unaddressed. Even as community colleges have long been known for persisting despite budget cuts and enrollment increases, we are left wondering whether the sector has neared its limits.

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6. The National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges is an affiliated council of the American Association of Community Colleges. This report was written independently; neither the NCSDDC nor the AACCC formally endorsed it.
7. Responses were received from all 51 NCSDDC members or their designees. Community college state associations responded for Arizona, Maryland, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania; and the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia both responded; the State University of New York and not the City University of New York responded.
8. The Advisory Panel for the 2011 Survey of Finance and Access in Public Higher Education include Marilyn J. Amey, Michigan State University; Anthony P. Carnevale, Georgetown University; Brent D. Cejda, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Marc Cutright, University of North Texas; Pamela Eddy, College of William & Mary; Linda Serra Hagedorn, Iowa State University; Arthur M. Hauptman, Cary A. Israel, President, Collin College District (TX); Daniel J. Hurley, American Association of State Colleges and Universities; R. Frank Mensel, Education Policy Center, The University of Alabama; Michael T. Miller, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville; James C. Palmer, Illinois State University; Hilary Pennington and Sidney Hacker, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; James O. Rose, Wyoming Community College Commission; Terrance A. Tollefson, East Tennessee State University; Holly Zanville, Lumina Foundation for Education; Eboni Zamani-Gallaher, Eastern Michigan University.
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THE EDUCATION POLICY CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

The College of Education's Education Policy Center seeks to inform and improve education policy-making and practice, and our understanding of the roles education plays in a free and equitable society, through a coordinated program of research, topical and historical analyses of education-related issues, and services for education practitioners and policy-makers in Alabama and the nation. On-going Center projects include:

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The Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps (2007-2011) is one of 10 \$1 million national demonstration programs funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. In partnership with the UA Office of Academic Affairs, the Alabama Community College System, and 13 partner colleges, over 24,000 students attending community colleges in high poverty areas received transfer counseling services.

The University of Alabama Superintendent's Academy is a partnership with Alabama State Department of Education to create a more diverse, competent, and prepared applicant pool ready to assume district-/system-wide leadership positions.

The Carnegie Basic Classification of Associate's Colleges was published in 2006 and updated in 2011. The federal government cannot tell how many community colleges exist, because data are collected by units of accreditation and not districts. The Carnegie Basic codes are embedded in all US Department of Education data bases. EPC Director Steve Katsinas, Senior Fellow Vincent Lacey, and David Hardy of the College of Education are Consulting Scholars to the Carnegie Foundation with this project.

Wayne J. Urban's book, ***More Than Science or Sputnik, the National Defense Education Act*** (2010), provides a comprehensive re-examination of the NDEA. Urban is now working on a biography of former Harvard University President James Bryant Conant.

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