

## **CHAMP's Scorecard: A Quantitative Analysis of the Colorado Helps Advanced Manufacturing Program**

**Overview:** The Colorado Helps Advanced Manufacturing Program (CHAMP) was a four-year, U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Act-funded project under which nine colleges, including seven community colleges, a technical school and a four-year university, worked with employers to develop a pipeline of qualified advanced manufacturing workers.

The Rutgers University Education and Employment Research Center (EERC) participated in CHAMP as a third-party evaluator, assessing how the program worked and how successful it was in meeting its goals. From spring 2014 through fall 2016 ("the study period"), EERC collected and analyzed a range of data on who CHAMP students were, how they fared in the program, and how participation affected their employment and earnings.

**Enrollment:** EERC identified 4,354 students who were enrolled in at least one CHAMP course during the study period. The largest percentage of these students (19%) enrolled in spring 2014 when the program started, suggesting that initial marketing efforts were successful. The number of new enrollees declined over time, however, possibly because many CHAMP staff members were transitioning to other roles as funding ended.

**Student Profile:** Characteristics of CHAMP students across all colleges included the following:

- About 85% were male, 15% female;
- 69% were white, 22% Hispanic, 4% black, fewer than 3% Asian and 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native;
- Age ranged from 16 to 74, with an average of about 28; 48% were "non-traditional" age (i.e. older than 25), higher than the Colorado Community College System average of 41%;
- 2% reported having a disability;
- 9% reported having a military background; half of these attended Pikes Peak Community College, which is located near several military bases;
- 40% received financial aid in the form of Pell grants.

**Retention Rate:** During the study period, about 47% of CHAMP students who had not earned a credential or degree remained in the program. Of those students who did earn a credential or degree during the study period, 40% remained enrolled in CHAMP in order to pursue additional credentials. For both types of students, enrollment declined over time. This was especially the case in respect to spring to fall retention rates.

**Graduation Rate:** Thirty percent of CHAMP students graduated with at least one credential or degree during the study period. Of these, 19% earned a short-term certificate (less than one year in the program), 9%

earned an associate's degree and 1% earned a long-term certificate (one to two years in the program). Students who entered CHAMP with a stated goal of earning a short-term or long-term certificate had the highest graduation rates (42% and 41% respectively). Students who entered the program with a stated goal of earning an associate's degree had a 37% graduation rate. Students who had did not declare a goal at the time of enrollment had the lowest graduation rate (20%).

Full-time students were far more likely to graduate than part-time students (40% v. 22%). Students who received financial aid were somewhat more likely to graduate than students who did not (about 35% v. about 26%). Students with a military background were also somewhat more likely to graduate than those without one (37% v. 29%). Graduation rates did not vary much by race or ethnicity, with the exception of American Indian/Native Alaskan students, who were the most likely to graduate at 37%, and black students who were the least likely at 25%.

Actual CHAMP graduation rates may be higher than estimated because it is likely that many students were still working toward completing the program at the time the study period ended.

**Employment Rate:** Forty-four percent of CHAMP students were employed at the time of enrollment. Of those who were not, 30% got a job in the first quarter after they earned their first CHAMP credential. Those who earned a long-term certificate had the highest rate of employment (40%); the rate was 30% for those who earned a short-term certificate and 26% for those who earned an associate's degree. The likelihood of finding a job was higher for traditional-age CHAMP graduates (25 or younger) than non-traditional-age students (about 34% v. about 24%), and far higher for white and Hispanic graduates (about 31% and about 34%, respectively) than for black or Indian American/Native Alaskan students (5% and 7%, respectively). Graduates with a military background were less likely to find a job than those without one (23% v. 31%).

**Wage increase:** Sixty-seven percent of incumbent workers in CHAMP received a quarterly wage increase of more than \$500 at some point after they enrolled. Men were more likely to see an increase than women (68% v. 59%). American Indian/Native Alaskans saw an increase at a somewhat higher rate (74%) than the average for all incumbent workers; the rates at which whites and Hispanics saw an increase were roughly in line with the average (68% and 64%, respectively); blacks and Asians saw an increase at lower-than-average rates (53% and 47%, respectively).

Full-time students were slightly less likely to see an increase than part-time students (64% v. 69%). Students who received financial aid were somewhat less likely to see an increase than their counterparts (63% v. about 69%). Students with a military background were less likely to see an increase than their counterparts (59% v. 68%). This negative association between full time status and wage increase may be because time constraint and conflict when working and studying at the same time. Financial aid may have helped students remain in school and graduate by alleviating the financial burden of the students. However, it may also curb students' desire for wage gain. Incumbent students with military background may be constrained by their military service requirements for wage gain.

Demographics and outcomes varied considerably from college to college. To find out what the data has to say about individual CHAMP colleges and learn more about EERC's evaluation of the program, visit <http://smmr.rutgers.edu/content/colorado-helps-advanced-manufacturing-program-champ-evaluation>.