

# Ability to Benefit: More questions than answers?

• • •

Whitney Thompson, Director for CTE

Illinois Community College Board

April 17, 2019

# WHAT IS ABILITY TO BENEFIT?

## Benefit for Whom? (Who is Eligible)

- Individuals lacking high school diploma or equivalency;
- Who have passed an exam or completed 6 credits (or 225 credit hours) toward a credential; and
- Are enrolled in an eligible career pathway

## What Benefit do They Receive?

- Federal student aid (like Pell Grants) to pay for coursework
- Allows individuals to enroll in postsecondary and gain employment without a requirement to first obtain a HSD/E

# CAREER PATHWAY

“Career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high quality education, training, and other services that –

1. Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the state or regional economy involved;
2. Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeship;
3. Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
4. Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupation cluster;
5. Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
6. Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
7. Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

# INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IET)

“...a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.” 34 CFR §463.35

# IET

**Adult Education and Literacy:** programs, activities, and services that include: (a) adult education, (b) literacy, (c) workplace adult education and literacy activities, (d) family literacy activities, (e) English language acquisition activities, (f) integrated English literacy and civics education, (g) workforce preparation activities, or (h) integrated education and training

**Workforce Preparation:** activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in: (a) utilizing resources; (b) using information; (c) working with others; (d) understanding systems; (e) skills necessary for success transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment; and (f) other employability skills

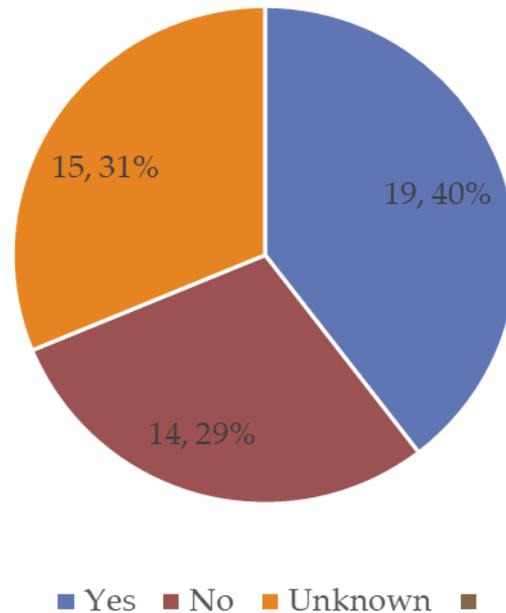
**Workforce Training:** may include occupational skill training; on-the-job training; incumbent worker training; programs that combine workplace training with related instruction; skill upgrading and retraining; entrepreneurial training; transitional jobs; job readiness training in combination with other activities; adult education and literacy activities; and customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training

# ICCS ATB SURVEY RESULTS

- In February, the ICCB administered a survey to the community colleges to understand if and how Ability to Benefit provisions were being implemented and what challenges each college was facing.
- 33 respondents out of 48 (Response Rate: 69%)
- Results were prepared and reported at the U.S. Department of Education Convening on Ability to Benefit.
  - USDOE
  - State and local leaders
  - Nonprofit and advocacy organizations

# COMMON CHALLENGES

Q1: Is the college utilizing the Ability to Benefit (ATB) provisions?

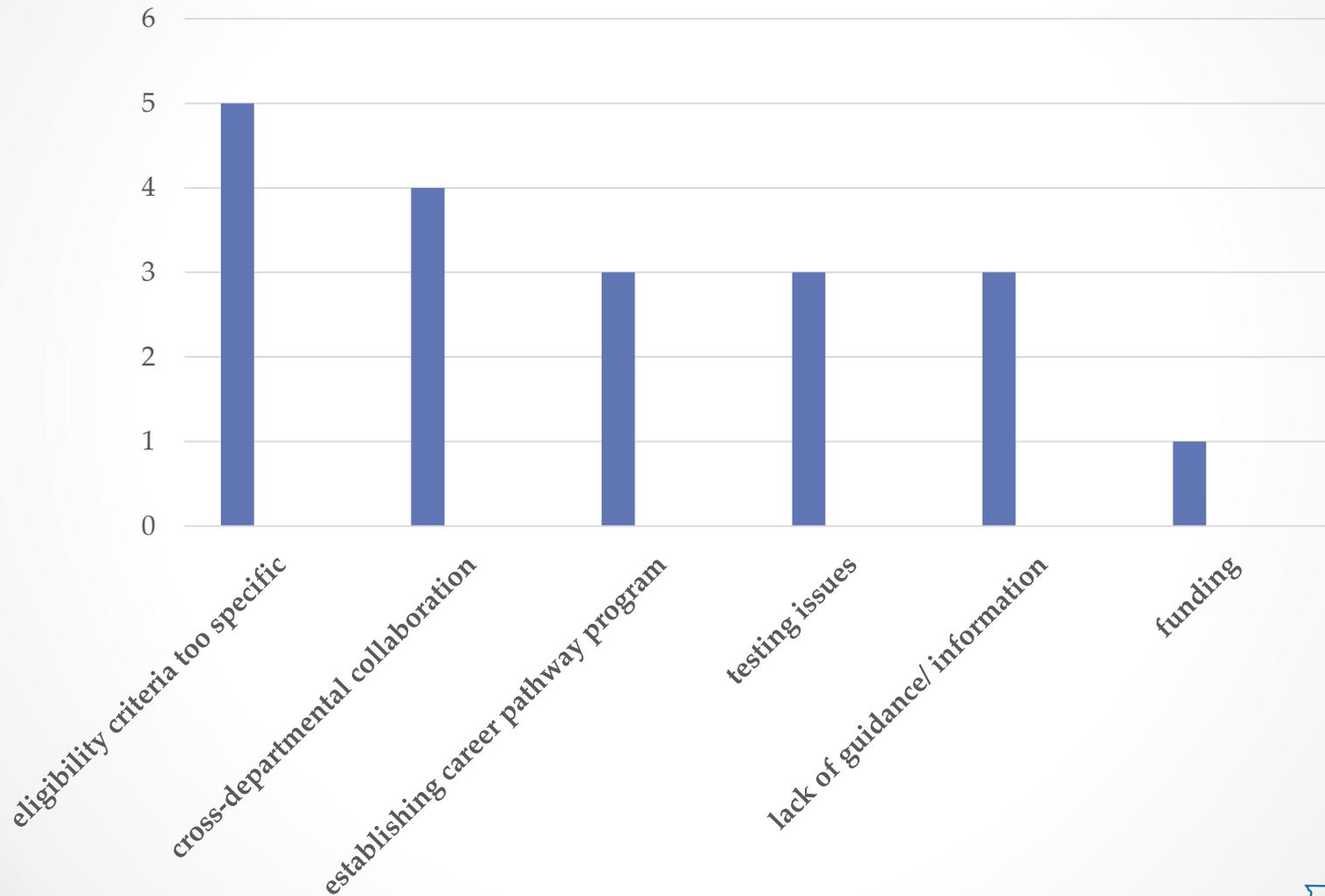


Q2: Specifically, is the college utilizing Ability to Benefit for adult students enrolled in Adult Education -Integrated Education and Training programs?

Yes: 12 (36%)

No: 21 (64%)

# Q3: CHALLENGES



# Q4: WHAT DO OTHER COLLEGES NEED TO CONSIDER AS THEY SCALE IMPLEMENTATION OF ATB?

1. Communication plans for other departments
2. Knowledgeable frontline staff
3. Developing a process for monitoring and tracking students (i.e. program changes, eligibility, etc.)
4. Information guides for students, families, etc. (marketing)
5. Proper training and fully documenting processes

# MOVING FORWARD

- U.S. Department of Education wants to address the challenges that states and institutions are facing in implementing ATB.
- National and Financial Aid/Admissions groups are interested in sharing out resources to financial aid administrators
- Illinois will be exploring how to address some of the challenges reported by the system.

# ATB RESOURCES

USDOE

Dear Colleague Letter

State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

CLASP