

## Opportunity Grant Program Report

January 2011

### Background & Overview

In 2006, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$4 million to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to create the Opportunity Grant Pilot Program. The 10 pilot programs served approximately 843 low-income students enrolled in training for high wage, high-demand career pathways. The pilots showed excellent results with a 73 percent retention rate overall.

The Legislature, in 2007, removed the pilot status and expanded the program with a total of \$11.5 million per year for all 34 community and technical colleges. In 2007-08, the Opportunity Grant Program served approximately 3,000 full-time and part-time students; this was over 2,000 full-time equivalent students (FTEs). An evaluation of the program in its first year after the pilot exceeded student persistence expectations with an 81 percent Fall to Spring retention rate.

In 2009, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) increased the capacity of the Opportunity Grant Program by adding \$1 million from the Work-Based Learning Program. These monies were divided evenly between the 34 colleges.

For FY11 only, an additional \$1 million was added to the colleges with Opportunity Express funds. By-college allocations were divided on an FTES basis. The funds primarily covered the increased tuition costs over the past two years with only a slight increase in the FTES target.

The goal of the Opportunity Grant Program is to help low-income adults complete at least 45 credits, earn a credential, and increase job skills and knowledge by supporting and encouraging students to pursue and persist on pathways that can lead them to higher attainment. They contribute to the system's larger policy goal of increasing educational attainment for Washingtonians to the "tipping point" and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

Eligible students enrolled in approved training programs may receive funds to cover tuition and mandatory fees for up to 45 credits and up to \$1,000 per academic year for books and supplies. An important part of the program is support services that may include personalized counseling, one-on-one tutoring, career advising, college success classes, emergency child care, and emergency transportation.

In 2008, the State Board issued a progress report on the early implementation of the Opportunity Grant Program. Early findings showed retention rates were strongest for students who received larger aid packages that met more of their financial need by combining Opportunity Grants with Pell and in most cases, a State Need Grant. Students who only received Opportunity Grants had less of their financial need met. However, their results were moderately strong in comparison to unaided students. This report can be found at:

[http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/resh\\_rpt\\_08\\_4\\_opportunity\\_grants\\_004.pdf](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/resh_rpt_08_4_opportunity_grants_004.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> The "tipping point" concept came out of research on adult community college students and informed and motivated the creation of the Opportunity Grant Program. Basically, the research found that "attending college for at least one year and earning a credential provides a substantial boost in earnings for adults." More information on the research can be found at [http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/data/research\\_reports/resh\\_06-2\\_tipping\\_point.pdf](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/data/research_reports/resh_06-2_tipping_point.pdf).

The focus of this report is on program completion and employment outcomes for Opportunity Grant students who left the system in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Completion is defined as earning a certificate, degree or apprenticeship, or otherwise deemed “prepared for work”<sup>2</sup> upon leaving their training program. The outcomes of these leavers are analyzed also for reaching the tipping point or beyond upon exit. To assess the level of program completion success of Opportunity Grant recipients, we make comparisons to subgroups of students. Two mutually exclusive groups of students were identified from those enrolled in the same high-demand training programs. These comparisons included:

- Pell Grant recipients who did not receive an Opportunity Grant;
- Low socioeconomic status (SES) students who received neither an Opportunity Grant nor a Pell Grant.<sup>3</sup>

The following questions are answered in this report:

- What are the employment outcomes of Opportunity Grant students who complete, complete at the tipping point, or leave before completion?
- What are the college program outcomes, in terms of overall completion rates and percentage, of leavers who reach the tipping point or beyond for Opportunity Grant and for comparison students?

## Key Findings

- 2009-10 employment rates and post-training earnings were substantially higher for Opportunity Grant students who completed training and they were highest for those who reached at least the tipping point. Likewise, for Opportunity Grant students who started work in 2008-09, job retention and earnings were highest for students who completed at the tipping point or beyond. The findings suggest that completion at the tipping point offered the most protection to students in the current economy.
- Opportunity Grant students who left college in 2008-09 were 11 percent more likely to complete and 4 percent more likely to reach the tipping point than comparison students.
- For the majority of Opportunity Grant students who received Pell Grants, completion rates were 18 percent higher and the percent reaching the tipping point was 11 percent higher than non-Opportunity Grant Pell students enrolled in the same programs. The higher rates of completions and of completing at least at the tipping point were universal across all training program areas.
- Students who received only Opportunity Grants were just slightly more likely to complete than a comparison group of low socio-economic students and as a group had no greater likelihood of reaching higher levels of completion than the comparison students. While this finding was true for the majority of training areas, students who trained in transportation, manufacturing, and

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<sup>2</sup> Prepared for work is the designation for workforce students who leave college after at least one year with a certificate, degree or apprenticeship, or who completed an individualized plan or at least one year of professional technical education (45 workforce credits).

<sup>3</sup> The low socioeconomic (SES) students were selected using their place of residence as a proxy for their SES level. They were presumed to be of low socioeconomic status (that is, they were in the 5<sup>th</sup> quintile) like their neighbors with respect to income, education and professional occupation. Based upon the socioeconomic status of their communities and neighbors, this group is primarily comprised of low skill, low-income workers with less than an associate degree level of education.

education did have substantially higher completions including higher levels of completions than comparison students.

- Completion rates and the tipping point results for students who left college in 2007-08 were similar to their comparison groups. These results were impacted by the limited amount of time available to follow students in the program. More time is needed before Opportunity Grant Program trends can emerge.
- Completion results are similar for all groups of students with the exception of African American students and students in I-BEST. Both of these subsets were less likely to complete than other students.

## Next Steps

Post training employment outcomes both for students starting work and staying employed in 2009-10 support the notion that completion at the tipping point or beyond provides the highest gains. About two-thirds of students are annually awarded Opportunity Grants packaged with Pell. The majority additionally received a State Need Grant. An earlier report on preliminary findings ([http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/resh\\_rpt\\_08\\_4\\_opportunity\\_grants\\_004.pdf](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/resh_rpt_08_4_opportunity_grants_004.pdf)) showed that such grant packages meet 55 percent of need for the majority of independent Opportunity Grant students and 77 percent for the smaller subset of dependent students. This compares to 44 percent and 63 percent respectively for independent and dependent students receiving similar aid packages, but who did not receive Opportunity Grants. This enhanced aid package substantially boosted overall completions and longer completions with direct employment and income benefits to students.

However, for students who receive only an Opportunity Grant (about one third of the annual grants recipients) less than one quarter of their financial needs were met. This relatively small aid package modestly boosted the completion rate and thus provided some economic benefit when compared to low income students who are unaided or who just received a State Need Grant. Students receiving only an Opportunity Grant had little or no effect on the rate of students reaching higher levels of completions and who demonstrated the highest earnings and employment outcomes.

This suggests that greater attention should be paid to Opportunity Grant students who receive less comprehensive aid packages. This attention might include using the aid only for the specific programs where there is more impact. Practices should be identified within the most successful programs and replicated within other program areas. The provision of more wrap-around services to support these students in lieu of more aid should also be considered.

African American students and I-BEST students as a whole comprised higher percentages of those receiving only an Opportunity Grant than they did of those receiving Opportunity Grant as part of a more comprehensive aid package. This leads to questions about why this is occurring and suggests that these students should be receiving greater attention for higher wrap-around support and advising.

## **Part I. What are the employment outcomes of Opportunity Grant students who have exited the system?**

We examined the most recent employment outcomes available (2009-10). These are the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter outcomes for those who left the system in 2008-09. We compare employment outcomes for three subgroups of Opportunity Grant students:

- Completers
- Non-completers
- Those reaching at least the “tipping point.”

While completers finished their program, not all programs have the “tipping point” as a condition of completion. We also compare the outcomes of Opportunity Grant leavers to those of the Pell and Low-SES leaver comparison groups.

For those who left the system in 2007-08, we review longer-term employment outcomes. Specifically, the employment outcomes at the 7<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit, which occurs in 2009-10, as well as the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter after exit in 2008-09 were reviewed.<sup>4</sup>

### **Short-term Employment Outcomes: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter After Exit**

As shown in Table 1, in 2009-10, completers had, on average, better employment outcomes than the non-completers did. Those completers who reached the tipping point had the best outcomes of all three comparison groups of students. The employment rate for completers was 58 percent; the rate for those who completed at the tipping point was 70 percent, but the rate for non-completers was only 48 percent. Average hourly wages were highest for tipping point students at \$14.21 and lowest for non-completers at \$10.48. Tipping Point students averaged quarterly earnings of over \$6,000, while completers had average earnings of just over \$5,000 and non-completers of less than \$3,000. These employment outcomes appear to indicate that completing a training program tends to improve employment outcomes and reaching the tipping point or beyond has an even greater impact on employment outcomes.

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<sup>4</sup> One of the goals of the Opportunity Grant Program is to prepare students for a career pathway that could lead to higher-level degrees: associate degrees for programs that reaching certificates and bachelor’s degrees or higher for those programs that culminated in an associate’s degree. The percentage of students who continued to be employed in the 7<sup>th</sup> quarter, therefore, must be assessed with caution because students may leave the labor force to further their education.

**Table 1**

**Employment rates, hourly wages and quarterly earnings in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter after leaving the CTC system:  
2008-09 Leavers Employed in 2009-10**

	All Opportunity Leavers	Completers	Tipping Point or Beyond	Non-Completers
# of Leavers in 2008-09	2,240	1,245	654	895
% Employed in 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2009-10	58%	65%	70%	48%
Median Hourly Wage	\$11.72	\$12.47	\$14.21	\$10.48
Median Quarterly Earnings	\$5,018	\$5,340	\$6,383	\$2,861

### **Employment Outcomes by Career Cluster: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter After Exit**

SBCTC, in partnership with business, labor, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board identifies Opportunity Grant-Eligible Programs of study (RCW 28B.50.273). These programs of study are categorized into demand training areas based on the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes. These training areas are referred to as career clusters.

There are numerous programs of study in each cluster. The number of students enrolled in each cluster varies. In 2008-09, the largest number of Opportunity Grant leavers (494) left programs in the business, management, and administration cluster; the second largest (404) left programs in the nursing cluster. Leavers of the business, management, and administration cluster were enrolled in over 30 different programs, including accounting technology and bookkeeping, business administration and management, health unit coordinator/ward clerk, medical administrative assistant/secretary, office management and supervision. Leavers of the nursing cluster were enrolled in one of two programs—registered nursing and practical nursing.

In this section, we examine employment outcomes by career cluster for all Opportunity Grant leavers, completers, and those who reached the tipping point or beyond. As shown in Table 2a, Opportunity Grant students who left the nursing and health technology clusters had the highest 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter employment rates, 72 percent and 71 percent, respectively. The human services and information technology clusters had the lowest employment rates, 42 percent.

With a couple of exceptions, Tipping Point leavers tended to have higher employment rates by cluster than completers. For completers, the highest employment rates were:

- Nursing, 79%
- Health Services, 72%
- Health Technology, 72%
- Education and Training, 70%

For Tipping Point leavers the highest employment rate was also in nursing (87%), followed by:

- Health Technology, 77%
- Education and Training, 76%
- Health Services, 75%
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, 75%

**Table 2a**

**Employment rates in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter after leaving the CTC system by Career Cluster:  
2008-09 Leavers Employed in 2009-10**

--- All Opportunity Leavers ---      ----- Completers -----      ---- Tipping Point or Beyond ----

	# of Leavers	% Employed 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr.	# of Leavers	% Employed 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr.	# of Leavers	% Employed 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr.
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	9	**	7	**	2	**
Archit. & Const.	56	52%	25	**	16	**
Bus., Management & Admin.	494	54%	277	57%	131	54%
Education & Training	232	54%	90	70%	37	76%
Health Services	355	63%	240	72%	97	75%
Health Tech.	87	71%	65	72%	43	77%
Human Services	48	42%	26	35%	11	**
Information Tech.	69	42%	29	38%	12	**
Law, Public Safety & Security	68	60%	35	60%	15	**
Manufacturing	181	49%	119	55%	56	50%
Marketing, Sales & Services	23	**	4	**	2	**
Nursing	404	72%	264	79%	171	87%
Science, Tech., Engineering & Math	25	**	15	**	10	**
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	189	57%	149	62%	51	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,240</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>70%</b>

\*\*The number of leavers is too small to calculate a reliable employment rate.

Nursing and health technology clusters also had the highest average 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter hourly wages, \$16.18 and \$15.63, respectively, and quarterly earnings of \$6,768 and \$7,340, respectively (see Table 2b). Completers and Tipping Point leavers from the nursing and health technology clusters, in general, had considerably higher wages and earnings than leavers from other career clusters. Tipping Point leavers tended to have higher wages and earnings regardless of career cluster.

**Table 2b**

**Median hourly wages and quarterly earnings in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter after leaving the CTC system by Career Cluster:  
2008-09 Leavers Employed in 2009-10  
(Wages and earnings in 2009-10 dollars)**

	----- Hourly Wage -----			----- Quarterly Earnings -----		
	Opportunity Grant Leavers	Completers	Tipping Point or Beyond	Opportunity Grant Leavers	Completers	Tipping Point or Beyond
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	**	**	**	**	**	**
Archit. & Const.	\$11.08	**	**	\$5,233	**	**
Bus., Mgmt. & Admin.	\$10.82	\$11.03	\$11.55	\$4,314	\$4,396	\$4,719
Education & Training	\$10.14	\$10.05	\$10.05	\$3,817	\$4,204	\$3,557
Health Services	\$10.58	\$11.08	\$11.87	\$4,308	\$4,594	\$5,018
Health Tech.	\$15.63	\$18.30	\$18.30	\$7,340	\$8,675	\$9,490
Human Services	\$9.92	**	**	\$1,884	**	**
Info. Tech.	\$13.15	\$13.70	**	\$3,755	\$6,070	**
Law, Public Safety & Security	\$9.81	\$9.86	**	\$4,609	\$5,111	**
Manufacturing	\$10.85	\$12.08	\$12.72	\$4,111	\$4,343	\$4,501
Marketing, Sales & Services	**	**	**	**	**	**
Nursing	\$16.18	\$20.36	\$22.63	\$6,768	\$8,774	\$10,630
Science, Tech., Engineering & Math	**	**	**	**	**	**
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	\$12.58	\$12.60	\$11.79	\$5,635	\$5,950	\$5,509
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11.72</b>	<b>\$12.47</b>	<b>\$14.21</b>	<b>\$5,018</b>	<b>\$5,340</b>	<b>\$6,383</b>

\*\*The number of leavers is too small to calculate reliable average wage and earnings amounts.

### Longer-Term Outcomes: 7<sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit

To determine longer-term employment impacts, we look at employment rates, hourly wages, and quarterly earnings of leavers who were employed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> quarters after exiting. Leavers from 2007-08, the most current employment outcomes, were used. 2008-09 is their 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter after exit and 2009-10 is their 7<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit.

Tipping Point leavers had the highest 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter employment rate, 84 percent, followed by completers, 77 percent, and non-completers, 53 percent. Eighty-five percent of Tipping Point leavers, 78 percent of completers, and 71 percent of non-completers employed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter were also employed a year later in 2009-10 (the 7<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit).

Third quarter and 7<sup>th</sup> quarter average hourly wages and quarterly earnings were highest for Tipping Point leavers and lowest for non-completers. On average, despite economic conditions, all groups of leavers were able to increase hourly wages and quarterly earnings. The increase in the median hourly wage for completers was particularly high at 11 percent. Tipping Point had high wages to start (the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter) but still increased 7 percent one year later.

However, what is especially encouraging is that the growth in median quarterly earnings for each of the groups was at least 10 percent. Completers had the highest increase at 18 percent; non-completers had an increase of 14 percent and Tipping Point leavers had a 10 percent increase. While the increase was lowest for Tipping Point leavers, their median quarterly earnings were still the highest, \$7,704, compared to \$6,838 for completers, and \$4,236 for non-completers.

Increases in quarterly earnings are due to increases in hourly wages or amount of hours worked. In some cases, while the hourly wage is high, low earnings can be attributed to employees who are only working part-time. While increases in hourly wages are certainly desired, an increase in the number of hours worked is also an objective. Based on the data here, it appears that for non-completers an increase in hours was more likely the reason for the increase in quarterly earnings rather than just an increase in hourly wages.

**Table 3**

**Employment rates, hourly wages and quarterly earnings in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Quarters After Exiting: 2007-08 Leavers**  
(Wage and earnings in 2009-10 dollars)

	All Opportunity Leavers	Completer	Tipping Point or Beyond	Non-Completer
# of Leavers in 2007-08	987	467	200	520
% Employed in 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. – 2008-09	64%	77%	84%	53%
% of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. Employees Employed in 7 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. 09-10	75%	78%	85%	71%
Hourly Wages				
3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr.	\$11.79	\$12.55	\$15.08	\$10.48
7 <sup>th</sup> Qtr.	\$12.86	\$13.99	\$16.18	\$10.56
Wage Growth	\$1.07	\$1.44	\$1.10	\$0.08
% Growth	9%	11%	7%	1%
Quarterly Earnings				
3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr.	\$4,650	\$5,391	\$7,031	\$3,721
7 <sup>th</sup> Qtr.	\$5,211	\$6,383	\$7,704	\$4,236
Earnings Growth	\$561	\$992	\$673	\$515
% Growth	12%	18%	10%	14%

## **Part II. What are the academic outcomes, in terms of completion and Tipping Point rates, of Opportunity students?**

As described in the previous section, students who complete their training programs or were otherwise deemed “prepared for work”<sup>5</sup> upon leaving the community and technical college (CTC) system tend to have better employment outcomes than students who do not. Moreover, those who reach the tipping point or beyond tend to have better employment outcomes. This section examines the completion and tipping point rates of students who left the CTC system in 2008-09. The tipping point rate is the percentage of leavers who reached the tipping point or beyond at the time of exit. We look at these rates by career cluster and student demographics.

In examining completion and tipping point rates by career cluster, we compare Opportunity Grant leavers to comparison leavers. First, Pell comparison and Low-SES leavers are combined and compared to all Opportunity Grant leavers. Second, subgroups of Opportunity Grant leavers—Opportunity-Plus-Pell and Opportunity-No-Pell are compared, separately, to Pell Comparison leavers and Low-SES leavers, respectively.

### **Completion and Tipping Point Rates by Career Cluster**

There were 2,240 Opportunity Grant leavers in 2008-09.<sup>6</sup> Of these leavers, 60 percent had completed their programs and 29 percent reached at least the tipping point. As shown in Table 4, of the 6,324 comparison leavers, 49 percent completed their programs, and 25 percent reached the tipping point or beyond. During 2008-09, Opportunity Grant leavers were more likely than comparison leavers to complete their programs and to have reached the tipping point or beyond.

Completion results for 2007-08 were also analyzed. These overall results for early program leavers are actually somewhat lower than for the comparison students. This suggests that while the Opportunity Grant Program is improving substantially over time, it is still somewhat early to have a definite pattern emerge between comparison groups of students (see Table 2 in the Appendix for details).

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<sup>5</sup> Prepared for work is the designation for workforce students who have not been enrolled in college for at least one year, and who completed a certificate, degree or apprenticeship, or completed an individualized plan or at least one year of professional technical education (45 workforce credits).

<sup>6</sup> This number of leavers excludes those with an “unknown” or missing CIP code in the MIS.

**Table 4**

**Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2008-09 Leavers**

----- Opportunity Grant Leavers -----                      ----- Comparison Leavers -----

	# of Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rate	# of Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rate
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	9	**	**	18	**	**
Archit. & Const.	56	45%	29%	97	33%	15%
Bus., Mgmt. & Admin.	494	56%	27%	1,484	51%	29%
Education & Training	232	39%	16%	403	37%	12%
Health Services	355	68%	27%	749	53%	21%
Health Tech.	87	75%	49%	339	61%	38%
Human Services	48	54%	23%	202	47%	18%
Info. Tech.	69	42%	17%	202	47%	21%
Law, Public Safety & Security	68	51%	22%	266	35%	12%
Manufacturing	181	66%	31%	353	42%	18%
Marketing, Sales & Services	23	**	**	142	44%	6%
Nursing	404	65%	42%	1,653	55%	36%
Science, Tech., Engineering & Math	25	**	**	106	45%	28%
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	189	79%	27%	310	46%	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,240</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>6,324</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>25%</b>

**Note:** Excludes those with “unknown” CIP codes.

\*\*The number of leavers in this cluster is too small to calculate reliable completion and tipping point rates.

Table 5 presents completion and tipping point rates for a subgroup of 2008-09 Opportunity Grant leavers, those who also received a Pell Grant, and Pell-Grant-Comparison leavers. There were 1,338 Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers and 4,760 Pell Comparison leavers. Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers had a much higher completion rate, 67 percent, than those who received a Pell but no Opportunity Grant, 49 percent. Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers had a higher rate of reaching the tipping point, 38 percent, compared to Pell comparison leavers, 27 percent.

With a few exceptions, across clusters, the Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers had higher completion rates than the Pell Comparison leavers. This was also evident for tipping point rates.

The completion rates for 2007-08 Opportunity-Pell and Pell-Grant-Comparison leavers were the same 55 percent. Their tipping point rates were similar, 29 percent for Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers and 30 percent for Pell-Grant-Comparison leavers. 2007-08 represents the first year of Opportunity Grant leavers. Therefore, it may be difficult to draw conclusions from these early results.

**Table 5**

**Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2008-09 Leavers**

----- Opportunity-Plus-Pell -----

----- Pell Comparison -----

	# of Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rate	# of Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rate
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	8	**	**	11	**	**
Archit. & Const.	33	45%	24%	70	41%	21%
Bus., Mgmt. & Admin.	307	63%	35%	1,153	55%	35%
Education & Training	121	47%	21%	233	42%	16%
Health Services	187	72%	43%	515	50%	24%
Health Tech.	53	81%	62%	270	57%	34%
Human Services	31	46%	21%	165	48%	21%
Info. Tech.	28	65%	32%	154	49%	21%
Law, Public Safety & Security	37	72%	35%	172	33%	13%
Manufacturing	123	11%	11%	215	47%	20%
Marketing, Sales & Services	9	**	**	89	49%	10%
Nursing	270	64%	45%	1,440	47%	28%
Science, Tech., Engineering & Math	11	**	**	77	48%	36%
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	120	41%	0%	196	49%	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,338</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>4,760</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>27%</b>

**Note:** Excludes those with CIP code “Unknown.”

\*\*The number of leavers in this cluster is too small to calculate reliable completion and tipping point rates.

Table 6 presents completion and tipping point rates for a second subgroup of Opportunity Grant leavers—those who did not receive a Pell Grant and Low-SES leavers. There were 902 Opportunity-No-Pell leavers and 1,564 Low-SES leavers. Opportunity-No-Pell leavers were somewhat more likely to complete than Low-SES leavers (50 percent compared to 47 percent), however a little less likely to reach the tipping point.

These results were true for most training clusters. However, Opportunity Grant students’ completion and tipping point rates were higher than for comparison students in education, manufacturing, and transportation. Completion results were higher than comparison students in business and health services.

2007-08 results were substantially weaker than comparison students for the first group of Opportunity Grant students to exit. These results in fact had the greatest influence on the overall differences between all Opportunity Grant students and comparison students that year.

**Table 6****Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2008-09 Leavers**

----- Opportunity-without-Pell -----

----- Low-SES -----

	----- Opportunity-without-Pell -----		----- Low-SES -----			
	# of Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rate	# of Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rate
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	1	**	**	7	**	**
Archit. & Const.	23	**	**	27	22%	7%
Bus., Mgmt. & Admin.	187	45%	13%	331	38%	14%
Education & Training	111	30%	10%	170	28%	5%
Health Services	168	63%	10%	234	58%	15%
Health Tech	34	65%	29%	69	71%	48%
Human Services	17	**	**	37	43%	11%
Info. Tech.	41	39%	15%	48	46%	21%
Law, Public Safety & Security	31	35%	10%	94	41%	10%
Manufacturing	58	53%	22%	138	30%	9%
Marketing, Sales & Services	14	**	**	53	42%	4%
Nursing	134	55%	30%	213	78%	60%
Science, Tech., Engineering & Math	14	**	**	29	41%	21%
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	69	68%	16%	114	39%	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>1,564</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>19%</b>

**Note:** Excludes those with CIP code "Unknown."

\*\*The number of leavers in this cluster is too small to calculate reliable completion and tipping point rates.

### Completion and Tipping Point Rates by Student Demographics

In general, Opportunity Grant leavers in 2008-09 were racially/ethnically diverse (55% White), more likely to have children or other dependents (60% parents); older (76% are 25 years or older); and female (69%). Fifteen percent of leavers were also WorkFirst Program participants, 16 percent were I-BEST students, and 19 percent participated in the Worker Retraining Program. Table 1 in the appendix presents details for the characteristics of Opportunity Grant leavers and leavers from the comparison groups.

Completion and tipping point rates by student demographics are presented in Table 7 for all Opportunity Grant leavers, Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers, and Opportunity-No-Pell leavers. Of the Opportunity Grant leavers in 2008-09, the completion rates of Asian/Pacific Islander (65%), Native American (63%), and White (62%) leavers were higher than those of Latino (59%), African American (53%), or Other/Multiracial (45%) leavers. Single parents (63%) and couples (62%) with children or other dependents were more likely to complete than those without children or other dependents (58%). Older students (62%) were slightly more likely to complete than younger students (60%). Female leavers

(61%) had a higher completion rate than male leavers (58%). Completion rates for those in WorkFirst and Worker Retraining programs were 68 percent and 66 percent, respectively. The completion rate for those in I-BEST programs was 53 percent.

With some exceptions, the tipping point rate patterns were similar to those of the completion rate patterns. Asian/Pacific Islander and White leavers had higher tipping point rates than Native American, Latino and African American completers; older leavers had a higher rate than younger leavers; female leavers had a higher rate than male leavers; and Worker Retraining and WorkFirst leavers had higher rates than I-BEST leavers. Dependency status, however, did not appear to have a differential impact on tipping point rates. It should be noted that I-BEST students generally start at lower educational levels than the other populations of students described. By definition, all I-BEST students are federally eligible for adult basic education services including English as a second language. When I-BEST students were compared to their peers, in an independent study by Columbia University's Community College Research Center, they perform at higher rates, including completion, than other adult basic education students.<sup>7</sup>

## **Opportunity-Plus Pell and Opportunity-No-Pell Comparisons**

The Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers in 2008-09 were characteristically different from Opportunity-No-Pell leavers. Compared to Opportunity-No-Pell leavers, Opportunity-Plus Pell leavers had a higher percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders and White students; a lower percentage of African American students; a higher percentage of couples with dependents; a lower percentage of students with no dependents; a higher percentage of males; a lower percentage of I-BEST and Worker Retraining participants (see Table 1 in Appendix for details).

Across demographic subgroups, Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers tended to have much higher completion and tipping point rates than Opportunity-No-Pell leavers. For example, Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers of African American background had a completion rate of 58 percent and a tipping point rate of 38 percent. Opportunity-No-Pell leavers of African American background had a completion rate of 46 percent and a tipping point rate of only 17 percent.

There were also differences in the patterns across demographics between Opportunity-Plus-Pell and Opportunity-No-Pell leavers. For example, older Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers had a higher completion rate than younger Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers, 69 percent compared to 65 percent. They also had a higher tipping point rate, 39 percent compared to 33 percent. On the other hand, older Opportunity-No-Pell leavers had a similar completion rate to younger Opportunity-No-Pell leavers, 51 percent compared to 52 percent, and a similar tipping point rate, 17 percent compared to 16 percent.

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<sup>7</sup> Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST): New Evidence of Effectiveness (CCRC Working Paper No. 20); (Matthew Zeidenberg, Sung-Woo Cho & Davis Jenkins)

**Table 7**

**Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2008-09 Leavers**

	----Opportunity All----		---Opportunity Plus-Pell---		---Opportunity No-Pell----	
	Completion Rate	%of Leavers at Tipping Point or Beyond	Completion Rate	%of Leavers at Tipping Point or Beyond	Completion Rate	%of Leavers at Tipping Point or Beyond
All Students	60%	29%	67%	38%	50%	17%
African American	53%	25%	58%	38%	46%	17%
Asian/Pacific Islander (including Hawaiian)	65%	37%	72%	51%	60%	25%
Latino	59%	26%	69%	39%	48%	18%
Native American (American Indian or Alaskan Native)	63%	26%	67%	39%	**	**
Other, Multiracial	45%	**	**	**	**	**
White	62%	31%	68%	38%	51%	17%
Single Parent with Children or Other Dependents	63%	29%	71%	38%	49%	11%
Couple with Children or Other Dependents	62%	30%	67%	40%	50%	14%
Without Children or Other Dependents	58%	30%	63%	37%	51%	20%
Under 25	60%	26%	65%	33%	52%	16%
25 or Older	62%	30%	69%	39%	51%	17%
Male	58%	25%	65%	29%	50%	19%
Female	61%	31%	67%	41%	51%	16%
WorkFirst	68%	29%	72%	39%	50%	10%
I-BEST	53%	14%	55%	23%	59%	8%
Worker Retraining	66%	35%	75%	44%	55%	25%

\*\*The number of leavers in this cluster is too small to calculate reliable completion and tipping point rates.

## Appendix

### Demographics of 2008-09 Leavers

In 2008-09, there were 2,240 Opportunity Grant Program leavers from the community and technical college system. The leavers were racially and ethnically diverse, typically older, female and more likely to have children or other dependents than not.

Compared to Opportunity-No-Pell leavers, Opportunity-Plus Pell leavers had a higher percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders and white students and a lower percentage of African American students; a higher percentage of couples with dependents and a lower percentage of students with no dependents; a higher percentage of males; a lower percentage of I-BEST and Worker Retraining participants.

Compared to Pell Comparison leavers, Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers had a higher percentage of African American and Asian/Pacific Islanders students; a lower percentage of Latino and White students; a higher percentage of single parents with dependents; a slightly lower percentage of students without dependents; a higher percentage of older students; a higher percentage of males; a higher percentage of WorkFirst, I-BEST, and Worker Retraining participants.

Compared to Low-SES leavers, Opportunity-No-Pell leavers had a higher percentage of African American, Asian/Pacific Islander students; a lower percentage of Latino, White, and Native American students; a higher percentage of single parents and couples with dependents; a higher percentage of older students; a higher percentage of females; a higher percentage of WorkFirst, I-BEST, and Worker Retraining participants.

**Table 1****Student Demographics: 2008-09 Leavers**

	<b>Opportunity All</b>	<b>Opportunity Plus-Pell</b>	<b>Opportunity No-Pell</b>	<b>Pell Comparison</b>	<b>Low SES</b>
Left College in 2008-09	2,240	1,338	902	4,760	1,564
African American	17%	14%	20%	10%	12%
Asian/Pacific Islander (including Hawaiian)	9%	15%	12%	7%	7%
Latino	16%	3%	3%	11%	12%
Native American (American Indian or Alaskan Native)	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%
Other, Multiracial	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%
White	55%	60%	45%	70%	64%
Race/Ethnicity Known	1,898	1,154	744	4,569	1,484
Single Parent with Children or Other Dependents	26%	26%	27%	23%	25%
Couple with Children or Other Dependents	34%	37%	29%	38%	22%
Without Children or Other Dependents	40%	37%	44%	39%	53%
Family Status Known	1,439	886	553	3,597	1,100
Average Age	32.9 yrs.	32.2 yrs.	34 yrs.	29.6 yrs.	32.6 yrs.
Under 25 years	24%	24%	24%	37%	32%
25 or Older	76%	76%	76%	63%	68%
Male	31%	29%	33%	26%	36%
Female	69%	71%	67%	74%	64%
WorkFirst	15%	15%	14%	13%	10%
I-BEST	16%	10%	23%	2%	6%
Worker Retraining	19%	17%	21%	12%	4%

## Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2007-08 Leavers

2007-08 was the first non-pilot year of the Opportunity Grant Program. It was the first year many community and technical colleges and their training programs served Opportunity Grant recipients.

In 2007-08 comparison group leavers were more likely to be completers and more likely to reach the tipping point or beyond than Opportunity Grant leavers (see Table 2). Opportunity-Plus-Pell leavers were as likely as Pell-Grant-Comparison leavers to complete or reach the tipping point or beyond (see Table 3). Low-SES leavers were more likely than Opportunity-No-Pell leavers to complete or reach the tipping point or beyond (see Table 4).

**Table 2**

### Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2007-08 Leavers

	----- Opportunity All -----			----- Comparison All -----		
	# Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rates	# Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rates
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	5	**	**	9	**	**
Archit. & Const.	29	55%	28%	90	56%	28%
Bus., Mgmt. & Admin.	206	34%	17%	1,187	50%	19%
Education & Training	98	30%	16%	405	42%	13%
Health Services	188	59%	15%	582	56%	19%
Health Tech.	36	53%	33%	277	56%	41%
Human Services	7	**	**	102	58%	21%
Info. Tech.	37	24%	0%	149	36%	7%
Law, Public Safety & Security	37	24%	8%	172	45%	23%
Manufacturing	96	56%	21%	354	53%	24%
Marketing, Sales & Services	16	**	**	72	74%	15%
Nursing	142	60%	33%	1,413	63%	45%
Science, Tech., Engineering, Math	16	**	**	51	47%	23%
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	73	67%	32%	249	56%	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>5,119</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>25%</b>

**Note:** Excludes those with CIP code "Unknown."

\*\*The number of leavers in this cluster is too small to calculate reliable completion and tipping point rates.

**Table 3**

**Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2007-08 Leavers**

----- Opportunity-Plus-Pell -----

----- Pell Comparison -----

	# Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rates	# Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rates
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	3	**	**	4	**	**
Archit. & Const.	21	**	**	64	55%	31%
Bus., Mgmt. & Admin.	100	38%	24%	824	58%	30%
Education & Training	40	38%	18%	224	46%	19%
Health Services	65	63%	31%	390	49%	23%
Health Tech.	14	**	**	220	52%	38%
Human Services	3	**	**	84	75%	23%
Info. Tech.	13	8%	13%	86	58%	29%
Law, Public Safety & Security	8	**	**	107	53%	16%
Manufacturing	48	67%	17%	183	50%	32%
Marketing, Sales & Services	6	**	**	54	58%	31%
Nursing	70	69%	50%	1,162	65%	34%
Science, Tech., Engineering, Math	4	**	**	38	56%	29%
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	37	68%	18%	162	63%	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>3,606</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>30%</b>

**Note:** Excludes those with CIP code "Unknown"

\*\*The number of leavers in this cluster is too small to calculate reliable completion and tipping point rates.

**Table 4**

**Completion and Tipping Point Rates: 2007-08 Leavers**

----- Opportunity-No-Pell -----

----- Low-SES -----

	----- Opportunity-No-Pell -----			----- Low-SES -----		
	# Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rates	# Leavers	Completion Rate	Tipping Point Rates
Agri., Food & Nat. Resources	2	**	**	5	**	**
Archit. & Const.	8	**	**	26	62%	31%
Bus., Mgmt. & Admin.	106	30%	10%	363	40%	15%
Education & Training	58	24%	16%	181	39%	12%
Health Services	123	56%	7%	192	61%	20%
Health Tech.	22	**	**	57	61%	46%
Human Services	4	**	**	18	**	**
Info. Tech.	24	**	**	63	61%	6%
Law, Public Safety & Security	29	33%	7%	65	33%	22%
Manufacturing	48	21%	10%	171	43%	19%
Marketing, Sales & Services	10	**	**	18	**	**
Nursing	72	20%	22%	251	83%	53%
Science, Tech., Engineering & Math	12	**	**	13	**	**
Transp., Distr. & Logistics	36	33%	31%	87	31%	23%
Total	555	41%	13%	1,513	51%	24%

**Note:** Excludes those with CIP code "Unknown."

\*\*The number of leavers in this cluster is too small to calculate reliable completion and tipping point rates.