Data Matters:

Certificate Popularity Is on the Rise

REBECCA L. WEBER
January 12, 2016

Learn more about the fastest-growing postsecondary credential in the United States.

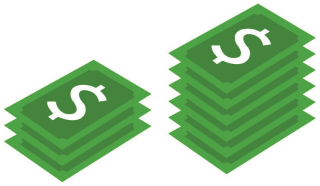
Certificates have surged in popularity in the past 20 years — in fact, they're the fastest-growing postsecondary credential in the United States, according to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

In some instances, data show certificates may even be a better investment than a college degree. **Check out our infographic for more stats.**

CERTIFICATE CRAZE

NUMBER OF CERTIFICATES AWARDED

Certificates of postsecondary awards has **increased 16%** from 1980 to 2012.



On average, workers with certificates earn **20% more** money than those with only high school diplomas.

MOST POPULAR CERTIFICATE FIELDS

HEALTH CARE **15%**

BUSINESS AND OFFICE MANAGEMENT **11%**

COSMETOLOGY **7%**

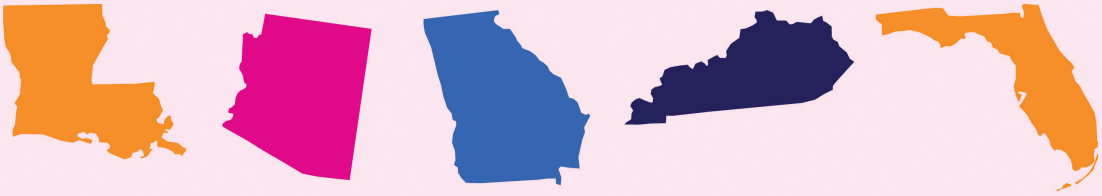
HOW MANY CERTIFICATE HOLDERS ATTENDED COLLEGE?

- Some college – 26%
- Associate degree – 19%
- Bachelor's degree or higher – 15%

Blue-collar and tech careers hold the highest value for men.

Business and office-management careers hold the highest value for women.

STATES THAT PRODUCE THE MOST CERTIFICATES



LOUISIANA	ARIZONA	GEORGIA	KENTUCKY	FLORIDA
67%	50%	50%	50%	45%

** Awards per 10,000 population*

AACC 21st Century Center — Resources for Reclaiming the American Dream

Sources: "Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees," by Anthony P. Carnelvale, Stephen J. Rose and Andrew R. Hanson; and unpublished data from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System; U.S. Census

Reprinted from Community College Daily, published by the American Association of Community Colleges.