



CREDIT

when it's due

Arkansas



STATE PROFILE

State Funder: The Kresge Foundation

About Credit When It's Due

The Credit When It's Due (CWID) initiative is funded by six foundations and is supporting 15 states to develop reverse transfer programs and policies. Reverse transfer enables students to receive an associate's degree when students meet associate's degree requirements after transfer to a 4-year college or university.

State Implementation Context

Arkansas' reverse transfer effort involves all 22 public community colleges and 11 public universities. Most Arkansas universities are authorized to confer the associate's degree, so reverse transfer implementation in Arkansas includes conferral of associate's degrees by community colleges and universities.

Key Implementation Strategies

Interagency Leadership and Steering Committee.

Reverse transfer implementation in Arkansas is led by a collaboration of agencies, including the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC), and the Arkansas Research Center (ARC). This interagency collaboration provides leadership for many aspects of reverse transfer activities. In addition, a steering committee comprised of college and university student affairs officers, academic affairs officers, financial aid

officers, and registrars was established early in the grant period to advise on the development and implementation of reverse transfer processes. The state formally launched reverse transfer in June 2013 to build awareness of reverse transfer and to communicate the value of an associate's degree more broadly. More than 200 college and university representatives from across Arkansas attended a press conference and kickoff luncheon. Press coverage included at least 20 local, state, and national media outlets.

Pilot Strategy and Leveraging Existing Data Capacity.

The ARC hosts Arkansas' longitudinal database that includes all higher education data for public institutions, including transcript-level information. This robust database is key to the state's reverse transfer efforts and was leveraged as part of a pilot strategy to identify students who are candidates for reverse transfer. Focusing on a pilot cohort of students, ARC staff used the database and course equivalency information to identify students who completed all or most of the 16 to 17 courses that constitute the core associate's degree requirements. The centralized data at ARC provides for an efficient mechanism to unofficially audit degrees at the state level to determine student eligibility for reverse transfer.

Statewide Expansion and Launch. The pilot strategy allowed Arkansas to test ARC's ability to accurately identify eligible students and allowed institutions to test reverse transfer processes before expanding to a larger group of students. Recognizing that all students, not just transfer students, may benefit from CWID, Arkansas is expanding CWID efforts in Spring 2014 to any student enrolled at a public institution between 1994 and 2013 who completed at least 15 courses toward the associate's degree (approximately 5,900 students). The state will launch the expansion by targeting these 5,900 students and encourage them to finish their associate's degree.

Reverse Transfer Process

Based on a review of implementation across CWID states, OCCRL developed a framework for the reverse transfer process that consists of five broad processes, and Arkansas' pilot process is applied to this framework below. Arkansas' reverse transfer pilot process includes both

Implementation Timeline

Spring 2013: The reverse transfer steering committees were convened to advise on program and policy development and implementation.

June 2013: A statewide press conference and luncheon launched the states' reverse transfer initiative.

January 2014 – March 2014: Universities and colleges began contacting students, community colleges began auditing degrees, and the first associate's degrees were conferred.

Fall 2013: Arkansas contracted with a local firm to develop communication materials about reverse transfer and the value of an associate's degree.

April 2014: The state plans to expand and launch CWID to reach a broader range of students and launch a marketing and communications campaign.



Associate's degrees
conferred as of March 2014: **17**





state-level coordination and institutional-level decisions.

1. **Reverse Transfer Student Identification:** The ARC staff query the ARC database and apply eligibility criteria to identify which students meet all or nearly all of the requirements for the associate's degree. In collaboration with ADHE and AATYC, the information on the potentially eligible students is sent to the institutions to execute the remainder of the process.
2. **Consent Process:** After receiving the list of eligible students from ARC, the colleges and universities contact the students to receive consent using an opt-in process. The ADHE and AATYC developed sample communication for institutions to seek student consent, but the specific consent process is determined at the institutional level.
3. **Transcript Exchange:** There is no statewide standard on how to exchange transcripts, but most Arkansas institutions use the Standardization of Postsecondary Education Data Exchange (SPEEDE) server to exchange electronic transcript-level data.
4. **Degree Audit:** The ARC performed an unofficial degree audit when it identified students, but it is the responsibility of the community college or university to verify the degree audit. If students consent to participate, the university sends the transcript data to the community college and the community college conducts the degree audit. Because most Arkansas public universities have the authority to confer the associate's degree, some students may qualify for an associate's degree at the university in which case the university corresponds directly with the student and audits the students' degree.

5. **Degree Conferral:** Students who are within one or two courses of degree completion are contacted by the institution, and those students who meet all degree requirements are conferred a degree.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

Successes: A key success for Arkansas is the high level of cooperation and buy-in from partner colleges and universities across the state, and there has been little to no resistance from public institutions. The June 2013 press conference and kickoff luncheon attracted statewide and national media attention and put a spotlight on the value of associate' degrees and reverse transfer. A second success was the ability to leverage the ARC whose existing data capacity allowed the state to centrally audit degrees based on course equivalencies across institutions. The pilot process provided the state with the confidence to expand CWID to a larger group of students with the potential to benefit from an associate's degree.

Challenges: The biggest implementation challenge was locating the 240 students in the first round of implementation. Arkansas' initial plan was to implement an opt-out consent process whereby colleges and universities assume consent from students unless students opted-out. However, due to concerns about FERPA, Arkansas decided to require active consent from students using an opt-in model. A second challenge was locating students' contact information to seek consent. The addresses and phone numbers of many students were outdated, resulting in a very low response rate. Based on this experience, Arkansas has contracted with a private firm to identify accurate directory information for the next round of reverse transfer students.

Institutions Participating in Credit When It's Due

Arkansas Northeastern College	National Park Community College	University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville
Arkansas State University - Beebe	North Arkansas College	University of Arkansas Community College at Hope
Arkansas State University - Jonesboro	Northwest Arkansas Community College	University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Arkansas State University - Mountain Home	Ozarka College	University of Arkansas at Monticello
Arkansas State University - Newport	Phillips Community College /UA	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Arkansas Tech University	Pulaski Technical College	University of Arkansas for Medical Science
Black River Technical College	Rich Mountain Community College	University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
College of the Ouachitas	South Arkansas Community College	University of Arkansas, Fort Smith
Cossatot Community College of the UA	Southeast Arkansas College	University of Central Arkansas
East Arkansas Community College	Southern Arkansas University - Magnolia	
Henderson State University	Southern Arkansas University - Tech	
Mid-South Community College	University of Arkansas Community College - Morrilton	

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