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Submitted by Madeline St. Amour on December 3, 2019 - 3:00am

More community colleges are offering bachelor's degrees, according to Community College Research Initiatives at the University of Washington in Seattle. But how they're being implemented varies across the country.

Twenty-three states now allow public two-year institutions to confer bachelor's degrees, but to varying degrees, according to [a data note on the research project examining community college bachelor's degrees](#) [1]. Some states allow all two-year institutions to confer bachelor's degrees, while others allow some but not all, limiting the ability to confer degrees to certain institutions.

Nearly 13 percent of the 941 public two-year colleges in the country offer bachelor's degrees, according to a 2019 American Association of Community Colleges report cited in the data note.

Some states also limit two-year institutions to conferring bachelor's degrees in specific fields of study, the note states. The fields typically vary based on the state's workforce needs.

Much of the legislation that authorizes these degrees at community colleges mentions its ability to address access and equity concerns. According to the note, there is some emerging research that suggests this is true. The students who enroll in these programs tend to be working, older and more racially and economically diverse than university students.

Initial outcomes in several states look good so far, showing positive impacts on enrollment, high completion rates and earnings on par with those who graduate from four-year institutions.