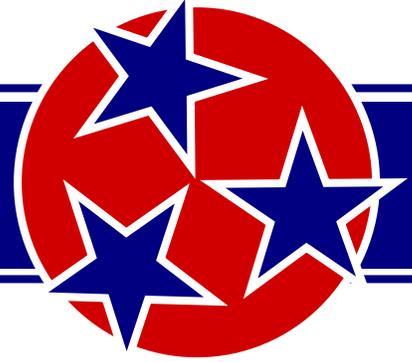


**WILDER-NAIFEH TECHNICAL SKILLS GRANT  
PROGRAM REPORT**

A Baseline Evaluation

**Prepared by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission**

## COMMISSION OVERVIEW

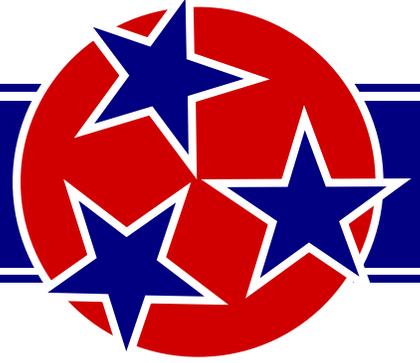


The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly (TCA 49-7-202) for the purpose of coordinating and supporting the efforts of postsecondary institutions in the State of Tennessee. One of its statutory requirements is to create a master plan for the development of public higher education in Tennessee

The mission for Tennessee's twenty-first century system of higher education is to:

- Elevate the overall educational attainment of citizens in the state through increased accessibility to mission-focused institutions, which deliver educational services on campus, as well as through a planned network of off-campus instruction; and
- Prepare citizens responsibly for success in the new century by providing high quality teaching and research in an environment that serves the needs of its consumers.

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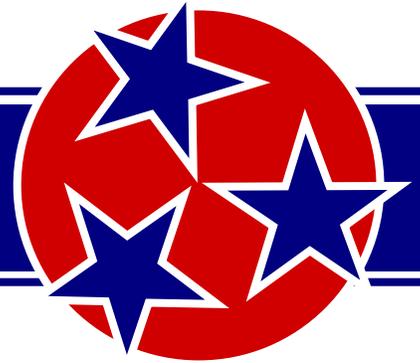
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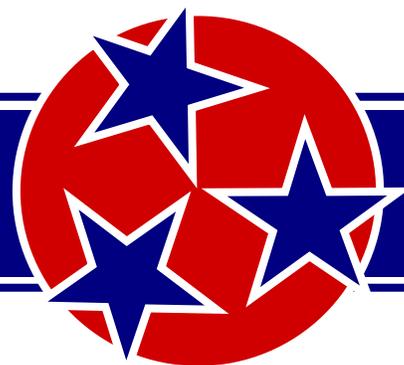
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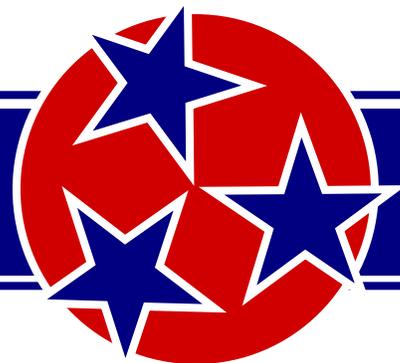
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

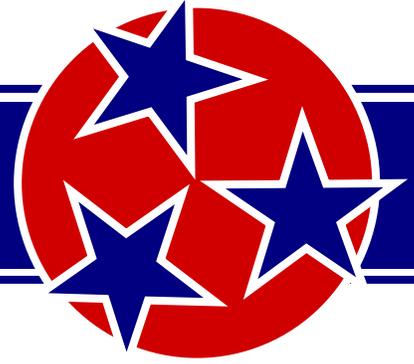


## Executive Summary

- **In the 2008-09 academic year, the Wilder-Naifeh program granted awards to 11,604 students, the largest number since the inception of the program.**
  - Total spending on the Wilder-Naifeh program during the 2008-09 academic year was \$13,314,583; the average annual award was \$1,147, increasing substantially from the level in 2004-05, which was \$750.
  - Wilder-Naifeh grant recipients accounted for 13 percent of the participants in all TELS programs; the spending amount for the program was 5 percent of the entire cost for all TELS programs.
  
- **The demographic composition of Wilder-Naifeh recipients has remained steady over time, but it is slightly different from the demographic composition of non-recipients.**
  - In academic year 2007-08, 51 percent of recipients and 41 percent of non-recipients were female.
  - In 2007-08, 23 percent of recipients and 12 percent of non-recipients were non-white students.
  - In 2007-08, 56 percent of recipients and 69 percent of the non-recipients were at age 25 or above.
  
- **The majority of Wilder-Naifeh grant recipients comes from lower-income families; the income distribution of recipients has been consistent over time.**
  - In academic year 2009-10, 45 percent of the Wilder-Naifeh recipients were from families with an adjusted gross income of less than \$12,000.
  - Students with a family income of \$36,000 or less represented 81 percent of Wilder-Naifeh recipients, compared to 25 percent for other TELS programs.
  - Unlike recipients of other lottery scholarship programs, very few students from the highest income brackets participated in the Wilder-Naifeh program.

- **In the 2007-08 academic year, the most popular majors among Wilder-Naifeh recipients were Health Professions, Mechanic and Repair Technologies, and Business.**
  - More than 60 percent of grant recipients majored in these three fields.
- **Program completion rates of Wilder-Naifeh recipients have ranged between 73 and 79 percent. Of these completers, 80-92 percent of students maintained their scholarship until the end of their programs.**
  - TTC program completion rates of non-grant recipients have been around 50 percent. Wilder-Naifeh recipients must be enrolled in a program that results in a certificate or diploma. Because non-recipients do not necessarily enroll to obtain a formal certificate or diploma, they demonstrate a lower completion rate as compared to grant recipients.
- **Between academic years 2004-05 and 2007-08, the average length of enrollment for program completers among grant recipients was 3.8 academic terms.**
  - By program, the longest average length of enrollment was in Engineering Technologies at 4.6 terms, while the shortest was in Transportation and Materials Moving at 1.2 terms.
- **Of all the students who enrolled at Tennessee Technology Centers from Fall 2004 to Summer 2008, at least 5.5 percent transferred to colleges and universities in Tennessee.**
  - The transfer rate of Wilder-Naifeh grant recipients was also 5.5 percent, showing no difference from the rate for non-recipients.
  - The Tennessee community college sector is the most popular destination for transfer students from the Tennessee Technology Centers, enrolling 84 percent of all transfer students from TTCs.
  - Only 62 Wilder-Naifeh recipients who transferred from TTCs continuously received HOPE scholarships.
  - This transfer rate does not account for students who transferred into out-of-state institutions and Tennessee's private institutions without HOPE scholarships.

# Introduction



## Introduction

### **STATUTORY CHARGE**

This report on the Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant, a component of the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship family of programs, is prepared pursuant to T.C.A. §49-4-903(b), which directs the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to:

“...provide assistance to the general assembly and to the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) by researching and analyzing data concerning the scholarship and grant programs created under this part, including, but not limited to, student success and scholarship renewal.”

The report is divided into five major sections:

- *Program Overview* describes the program’s objectives, eligibility requirements, and size and scope;
- *Recipient Demographics and Academic Majors* describes the demographic composition of grant recipients and their programs of study;
- *Program Completion* describes the rates at which cohorts of students receiving Wilder-Naifeh grants completed their programs. It also presents the rate at which these completers retained awards through program completion and their average terms to completion, by major;
- *Student Transfer* longitudinally tracks all students who attended Technology Centers from the Fall 2004 term until the end of academic year 2007-08 and demonstrates how many students, both grant recipients and non-recipients, transferred to colleges and universities in Tennessee; and
- *Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research* discusses policy implications of the findings in the report and shares the future research agenda of THEC on the Wilder-Naifeh program.

### **Introduction**

The Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant, introduced in Winter 2004, grants awards of up to \$2,000 to students who attend one of the 27 Tennessee Technology Centers. Since the inception of this program, approximately 50,000 students<sup>1</sup> have received

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<sup>1</sup> The sum of annual unduplicated recipients from AY 2004-05 to AY 2007-08

grants, and the state of Tennessee has spent roughly \$47.5 million on the program over the last four years<sup>2</sup>. The annual recipient headcount has grown continuously, from 8,815 in 2004-05 to 11,604 in 2008-09. It is expected that grant expenditure will continue to expand as more students flow into Technology Centers along with the increased demand for more skilled workers.

This study is the first comprehensive report on the Wilder-Naifeh program since the program came into being. The report introduces basic data pertaining to the program such as enrollment, completion, and transfer. First, it presents enrollment data in terms of demographics and academic major. The enrollment profiles of award recipients and non-recipients are compared and differences are observed. Secondly, the report details the performance of grant recipients. Specifically, completion rates are calculated for each cohort, and transfer rates as well as time-to-completion data are also included in this report.

### **Data Sources and Limitations**

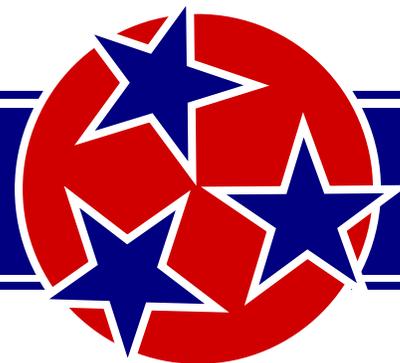
This report utilized two data sources in its compilation. The first data source is THEC's Student Information System (SIS); the other is an end-of-year report released annually by the Tennessee Student Assistance Cooperation (TSAC). As required by state law, THEC has collected individual data on all students in Tennessee's 2-year and 4-year institutions who participated in the TELS program every fall and spring semester to study the use of public funds for higher education. THEC separately collects individual data on students in Tennessee Technology Centers, receiving all three terms' data (i.e. fall, spring, and summer) at one time after the end of each academic year. The most recent TTC data available as of this writing was Academic Year 2007-08.

Additionally, TSAC maintains an administrative database that contains individual-level data used to produce the annual report. The database contains a variety of information pertaining to scholarship applications and transactions. Because it is a live, transactional database, a census date does not exist in TSAC's database, and thus TSAC's data are always current. Because TSAC's database is limited to information available from Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and scholarship transactions, it cannot provide information regarding student major, degree completion, college GPA, or any other data indicating the student's academic progress in college. It is for this reason that the majority of analyses presented in this report draw on THEC data. As a rule of thumb, therefore, this report relies on TSAC data only when financial information is involved. For other purposes, THEC data were utilized.

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<sup>2</sup> Academic Year 2004-05 through 2007-08

## Program Overview



### Program Overview

#### **What is the Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant?**

The Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant exists within the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarships (TELS) program. As Tennessee's social and economic needs grow into the twenty-first century, the amount of education acquired by its workers is increasingly important to further economic sustainability. By allocating funds specifically for technical skills, Tennessee has adapted financial aid availability to meet the diverse needs of its workforce. The Wilder-Naifeh program is unique in using resources obtained through a lottery program specifically designed to close the gap in access to technical diploma and certificate programs.

Eligible students must be enrolled in a diploma or certificate course of study at a Tennessee Technology Center and maintain satisfactory academic progress in order to remain eligible. Under this program, students can receive up to \$2,000 annually to pay for their tuition and fees. Unlike other state scholarship programs, no academic criteria such as a minimum ACT score or high school GPA are necessary to be eligible for this program. Students who meet the following criteria<sup>3</sup> may participate in the program:

- Enrollment in a certificate or diploma program at a Tennessee Technology Center;
- Cannot be a prior recipient of the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship or the Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant; and
- Residence in Tennessee during the twelve months prior to the beginning of the school term.

Unlike comparable programs in other states, the Wilder-Naifeh grant does not require a minimum number of enrolled hours per semester for scholarship renewal, allowing for greater flexibility of student lifestyle. In 2007-08, the average annual Wilder-Naifeh award amount was \$1,147, comparable to awards funded in Georgia (\$1,584) and Florida (\$989).

The Wilder-Naifeh program grants awards to students of all ages, while HOPE scholarships require students to enroll in Tennessee colleges or universities within one

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<sup>3</sup> College Pays. [http://www.tn.gov/CollegePays/mon\\_college/wilder\\_naifeh.htm](http://www.tn.gov/CollegePays/mon_college/wilder_naifeh.htm)

year of graduation from high school<sup>4</sup>. As long as students meet the above-mentioned conditions, they can receive a grant from the Wilder-Naifeh program. Due to this flexibility in scholarship eligibility, the Wilder-Naifeh program has a higher portion of adult recipients as compared to other TELS programs.

**Table 1** shows annual recipient headcounts and spending for Wilder-Naifeh grants and total TELS programs. In the academic year 2008-09, 11,604 students received the Wilder-Naifeh scholarship, accounting for 13 percent of participants in TELS programs. Spending for the Wilder-Naifeh program in the same academic year was \$13.3 million, approximately 5 percent of the entire TELS expenditure.

**Table 1:  
Annual Grant Recipient Headcounts and Total Costs:  
Wilder Naifeh Program vs. All TELS Programs  
Academic Year 2004-05 to 2008-09**

AY	Wilder-Naifeh Grant			TELS Total			Wilder-Naifeh % of Total	
	Recipients	Dollars	Average	Recipients	Dollars	Average	Recipients	Dollars
2004-05	8,815	\$6,613,273	\$750	40,195	\$93,416,022	\$2,324	22%	7%
2005-06	10,023	\$7,860,163	\$784	56,058	\$136,844,971	\$2,441	18%	6%
2006-07	9,725	\$8,079,913	\$831	67,053	\$191,725,142	\$2,859	15%	4%
2007-08	10,429	\$11,810,022	\$1,132	76,292	\$225,697,738	\$2,958	14%	5%
2008-09	11,604	\$13,314,583	\$1,147	88,397	\$259,913,392	\$2,940	13%	5%

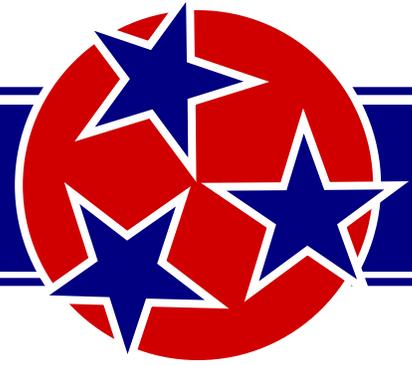
Note: Current dollars

Source: Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) year-end report

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<sup>4</sup> The Non-traditional Student Grant is the other exception to the requirement to enroll within one year of high school graduation.

# Recipient Demographics and Programs of Study

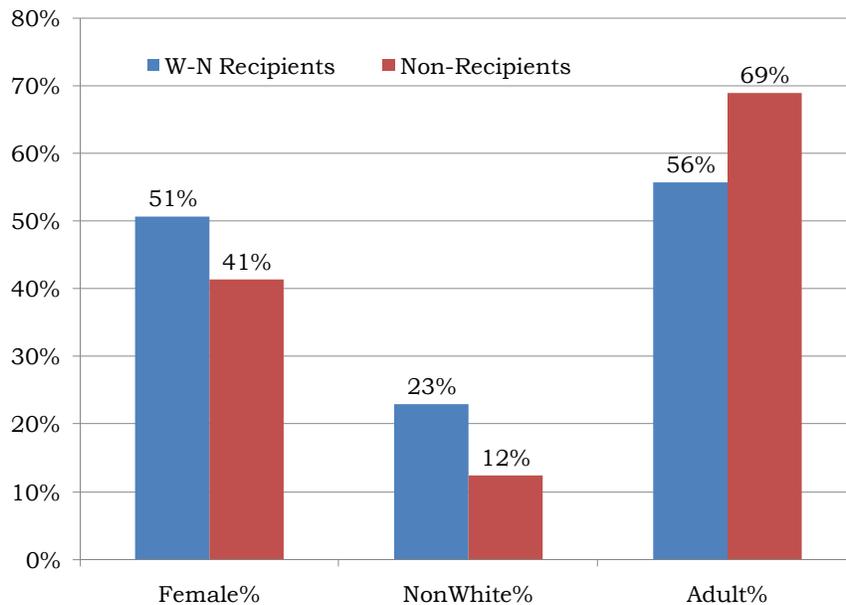


## Recipient Demographics and Programs of Study

### Gender, Ethnicity, and Age

**Chart 1** shows a snapshot of demographic composition (i.e. gender, ethnicity, and age) for Wilder-Naifeh recipients and non-recipients in Tennessee Technology Centers during the academic year 2007-08. According to the chart, 51 percent of the recipients were female and 23 percent were non-white students. Adult students, defined in this study as students at age 25 and above, accounted for 56 percent of all recipients, indicating that, counter other TELS programs, adult students form a majority group in the Wilder-Naifeh program unlike other TELS program. As compared to the demographic profile of non-recipients, female and non-white students make up a higher percentage of grant recipients but a lower percentage of adult students.

**Chart 1:**  
**Demographic Composition of Students in Tennessee Technology Centers:**  
**Wilder-Naifeh Recipients vs. Non-Recipients**  
**Academic Year 2007-08**



Source: Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Student Information System (SIS)

**Table 2** shows a longitudinal trend of the demographic profile for grant recipients and non-recipients from the 2004-05 academic year to 2007-08. While the percentage of grant recipients who are females age 25 and over has remained steady over time, the percentage of grant recipients who are non-white increased from 17 percent in the 2004-05 academic year to 23 percent in the 2007-08 academic year. In the meantime, a higher share of non-recipients were adult students, marking substantial growth from 50 percent in 2004-05 to 69 percent in 2007-08.

**Table 2:  
Demographic Composition of Students in Tennessee Technology Centers:  
Wilder-Naifeh Recipients vs. Non-Recipients  
Academic Years 2004-05 to 2007-08**

	W-N Recipients			W-N Non-recipients		
	Female%	Non-white%	Adult%	Female%	Non-white%	Adult%
2004-05	51%	17%	54%	38%	17%	50%
2005-06	52%	18%	56%	38%	16%	49%
2006-07	55%	19%	56%	37%	15%	46%
2007-08	51%	23%	56%	41%	12%	69%

Source: THEC SIS

### Family Income

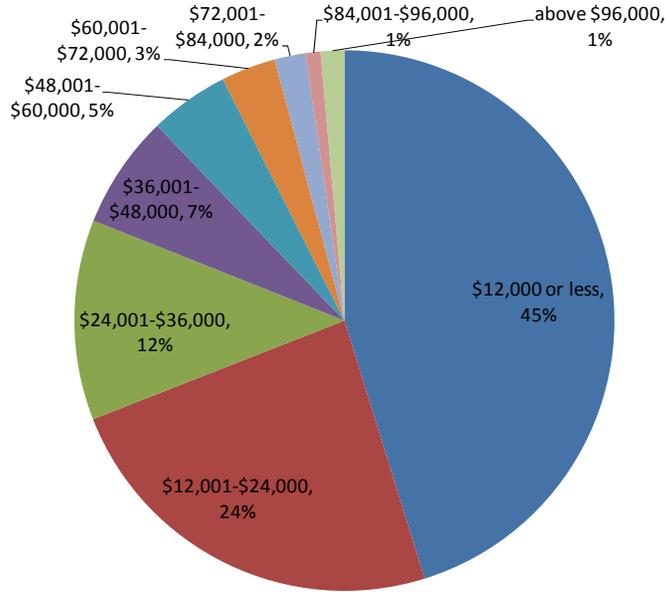
Wilder-Naifeh recipients tend to come from lower-income families. As **Chart 2** displays below, 45 percent of the recipients in 2009-10 were from families with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of \$12,000 or less. The proportion of students from lower income families is substantially higher as compared to the income profiles of all TELS participants. The share of students with a family income of \$12,000 or less for the TELS program in the 2007-08 academic year was only 9 percent. For students with a family income of \$36,000 or less, the difference is even starker. Eighty-one percent of Wilder-Naifeh recipients were from families with an AGI of \$36,000 or less, whereas the share was only 25 percent for other TELS programs.

Another noticeable feature is that the share of upper-income students is very small among Wilder-Naifeh recipients. Only 1 percent of the Wilder-Naifeh recipients were from families with an income of \$96,000 or above—much less than the rate of other lottery scholarship recipients, which was 34 percent in academic year 2008-09<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Report 2009, Table7b

**Chart 2:  
Wilder-Naifeh Grant Receipt by Family Income\*:  
Academic Year 2009-10\*\***



\*Adjusted Gross Income  
 \*\*As of November, 2009  
 Source: TSAC FAFSA Data

The family income distribution of Wilder-Naifeh recipients has remained stable over time. **Table 3** displays a five-year trend of income distribution for grant recipients. Other than the slight decline observed in the lowest income bracket, which decreased from 49 percent in the academic year 2005-06 to 45 percent in the academic year 2008-09, each income group has kept almost the same share of students over time.

**Table 3:  
Wilder-Naifeh Grant Receipt by Family Income\*:  
Academic Years 2005-06 to 2009-10\*\***

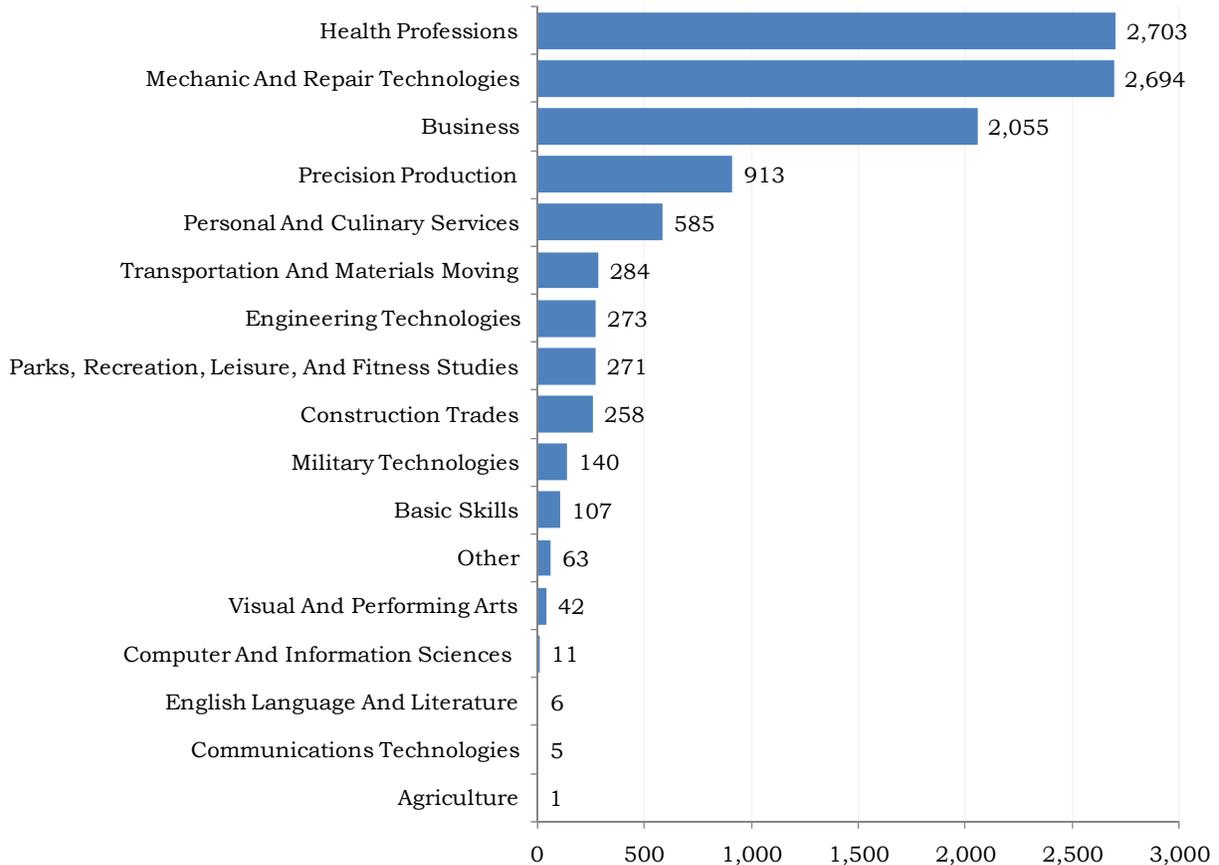
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10*
\$12,000 or less	49%	46%	44%	44%	45%
\$12,001-\$24,000	24%	24%	25%	24%	24%
\$24,001-\$36,000	12%	12%	13%	12%	12%
\$36,001-\$48,000	7%	7%	8%	7%	7%
\$48,001-\$60,000	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
\$60,001-\$72,000	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
\$72,001-\$84,000	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
\$84,001-\$96,000	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
above \$96,000	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%

\*Adjusted Gross Income  
 \*\*As of November, 2009  
 Source: TSAC FAFSA Data

## Major Fields of Grant Recipients

**Chart 3** shows the types of programs in which grant recipients majored in the 2007-08 academic year. All student majors were categorized by two-digit CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) codes for the purpose of this presentation. Because some students majored in more than one program, the figures do not add up to the total headcount shown in Table 1. The chart illustrates student preferences in major. Health Professions topped all fields with 2,703 students. This ranking was closely followed by Mechanic and Repair Technologies, with a total of 2,694 students. Business was the third most popular major, with 2,055 students. Precision Production and Personal & Culinary Services ranked fourth and fifth, respectively, but many fewer students enrolled in these programs than the top three majors.

**Chart 3:  
Major Fields of Wilder-Naifeh Recipients  
Academic Year 2007-08**



Source: THEC SIS

**Tables 4** and **5** display a longitudinal trend of majors declared by grant recipients and non-recipients, respectively. There are no notable changes in the majors chosen by either student group. However, the non-recipient population shows a different pattern in major selection from that of grant recipients. While Health Professions majors have

attracted the largest percentage of grant recipients, it is the Construction Trades program that has enrolled the largest share of non-grant recipients. The second most popular field chosen by non-recipients is Mechanic and Repair Technologies, followed by Health Professions, Basic Skills and Business.

**Table 4:  
Major Fields of Wilder-Naifeh Recipients  
Academic Years 2004-05 to 2007-08**

Program Name	Headcount				Percent			
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Agriculture	8	5	6	1	0%	0%	0%	0%
Communications Technologies	24	11	11	5	0%	0%	0%	0%
Computer And Information Sciences			13	11	0%	0%	0%	0%
Personal And Culinary Services	377	583	669	585	5%	5%	6%	6%
Engineering Technologies	240	310	264	273	3%	3%	2%	3%
Other	34	47	62	63	0%	0%	1%	1%
English Language And Literature		5	4	6	0%	0%	0%	0%
Military Technologies		2	9	140	0%	0%	0%	1%
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, And Fitness Studies	9	58	167	271	0%	1%	2%	3%
Basic Skills	59	102	33	107	1%	1%	0%	1%
Construction Trades	200	353	282	258	3%	3%	3%	2%
Mechanic And Repair Technologies	2,064	2,731	2,707	2,694	28%	26%	25%	26%
Precision Production	641	1,006	878	913	9%	9%	8%	9%
Transportation And Materials Moving	78	195	228	284	1%	2%	2%	3%
Visual And Performing Arts	20	33	34	42	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Professions	1,965	3,024	3,265	2,703	26%	28%	30%	26%
Business	1,725	2,148	2,332	2,055	23%	20%	21%	20%
Total	7,444	10,613	10,964	10,411	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: THEC SIS

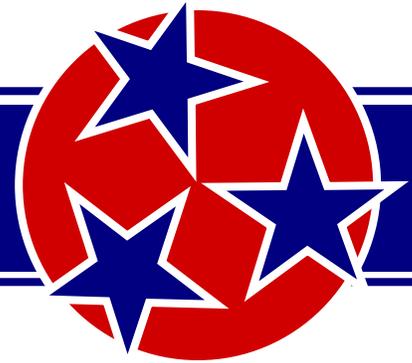
**Table 5:  
Major Fields of Non-Wilder-Naifeh Recipients at Tennessee Technology Centers,  
Academic Years 2004-05 to 2007-08**

Program Name	Headcount				Percent			
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Agriculture	39	40	17	45	0%	0%	0%	0%
Communications Technologies	23	4	11		0%	0%	0%	0%
Computer And Information Sciences			5	6	0%	0%	0%	0%
Personal And Culinary Services	416	339	211	274	2%	2%	1%	2%
Engineering Technologies	272	250	149	278	1%	1%	1%	2%
Other	62	79	40	50	0%	0%	0%	0%
English Language And Literature	302	598	407	372	2%	3%	2%	2%
Military Technologies	1674	1565	1590	636	8%	9%	10%	4%
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies		8	22		0%	0%	0%	0%
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, And Fitness Studies	763	575	624	666	4%	3%	4%	4%
Basic Skills	1510	1889	2014	2352	8%	10%	12%	13%
Interpersonal And Social Skills	52	32	4	26	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction Trades	4743	4812	4672	4918	24%	26%	29%	28%
Mechanic And Repair Technologies	3783	3027	2572	3369	19%	17%	16%	19%
Precision Production	1168	1059	985	1155	6%	6%	6%	7%
Transportation And Materials Moving	311	380	334	99	2%	2%	2%	1%
Visual And Performing Arts	23	15	10	4	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Professions	2807	1784	1309	1905	14%	10%	8%	11%
Business	2012	1749	1382	1511	10%	10%	8%	9%
Total	19,898	18,161	16,330	17,621	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: THEC SIS



## Program Completion



### Program Completion

#### Completion Rate

**Tables 6 and 7** display program completion rates by cohort for grant recipients and non-recipients, respectively. All students were grouped into a cohort based on their first term of enrollment. The Fall 2004 cohort was excluded from this table. Because THEC's data collection on TTC students began in Fall 2004 and information as to whether a student is a first-time student is not available in the database, it is not possible to identify the first-time freshmen of the Fall 2004 term. Furthermore, the Wilder-Naifeh scholarship has only been available since the Winter 2004 term. Although Fall 2004 entrants were eligible for awards in their second term, they did not receive Wilder-Naifeh aid in their first term. These reasons led to the decision to exclude the Fall 2004 cohort from the analysis.

These tables demonstrate that grant recipients have higher completion rates than non-recipients. While the completion rates of recipients ranged from 73-79 percent, the rate for non-recipients ranged from 50-59 percent. However, this result cannot necessarily lead to the immediate conclusion that the Wilder-Naifeh grant contributed to the increase in completion rates. Unlike grant recipients, who usually intend to obtain certificates or some type of award, non-recipients often take just one or two courses for their own professional development and do not necessarily seek to complete a program. Because non-recipients embrace a wider range of enrollment purposes, a simple comparison of completion rates between the two groups may be misleading. One way to interpret this table is, therefore, that most grant recipients completed their programs successfully. Compared to other scholarship programs such as the HOPE scholarship, the Wilder-Naifeh programs produced program completers with much higher success rates.

Table 6 also displays a percentage of students who completed programs with their grants still intact. For the Winter 2004 cohort, 80 percent of the completers maintained their scholarship until the end of their program. For the Summer 2006 cohort, the rate increased to 92 percent. It appears that the scholarship retention rate has improved over time.

**Table 6:  
Program Completion Rate by Cohort, Wilder-Naifeh Recipients,  
Winter 2004 to Summer 2006 First-time Students**

Cohort	Initial Headcount	Completed Program by end of 2007-08 (Unduplicated)	Certificate	Diploma	Supplemental Certificate or Sufficient Credential	Completion Rate	Completed Program with Scholarship	% Completers who kept scholarship until the end
Winter 2004	2,186	1,652	528	1,122	159	76%	1,314	80%
Spring 2005	1,145	874	268	600	117	76%	713	82%
Summer 2005	1,421	1,031	281	739	133	73%	886	86%
Fall 2005	1,713	1,314	376	934	133	77%	1,094	83%
Winter 2005	1,806	1,421	404	933	210	79%	1,252	88%
Spring 2006	1,683	1,312	365	901	177	78%	1,198	91%
Summer 2006	1,870	1,387	272	1,007	248	74%	1,282	92%

Notes:

1. Students enrolled at Tennessee Technology Centers
2. Awards include: 1) Certificate, 2) Diploma, 3) Supplemental Certificate, and 4) Supplemental Credential
3. Completion rate is as of the end of AY 2007-08

Source: THEC SIS

**Table 7:  
Program Completion Rate by Cohort, Non-Wilder-Naifeh Recipients at Tennessee  
Technology Centers, Winter 2004 to Summer 2006 First-time Students**

Cohort	Initial Headcount	Completed Program by end of AY 2007-08 (Unduplicated)	Certificate	Diploma	Supplemental Certificate or Sufficient Credential	Completion Rate
Winter 2004	4,784	2,389	336	225	1,883	50%
Spring 2005	3,078	1,560	155	174	1,265	51%
Summer 2005	2,392	1,373	165	126	1,096	57%
Fall 2005	2,501	1,470	239	158	1,092	59%
Winter 2005	2,985	1,648	242	150	1,292	55%
Spring 2006	3,117	1,665	188	146	1,360	53%
Summer 2006	2,285	1,286	102	137	1,076	56%

Notes:

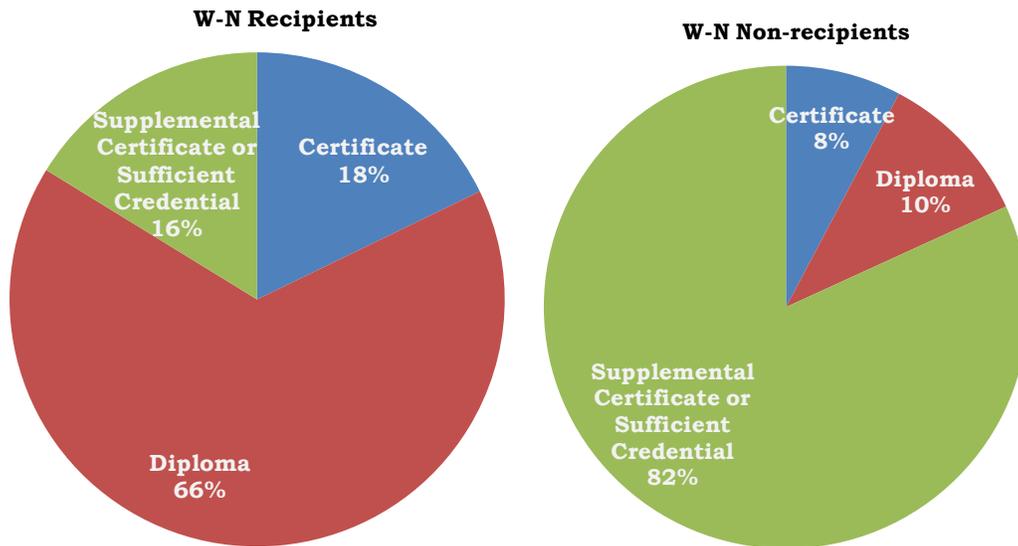
1. Students enrolled at Tennessee Technology Centers
2. Awards include: 1) Certificate, 2) Diploma, 3) Supplemental Certificate, and 4) Supplemental Credential
3. Completion rate is as of the end of AY 2007-08

Source: THEC SIS

**Chart 4** displays the breakdown of programs completed by the Summer 2006 cohort, according to the type of credentials earned, for Wilder-Naifeh recipients and non-recipients, respectively. While approximately two-thirds of the grant recipients received diplomas, non-recipients mostly obtained Supplemental Certificates or Sufficient Credentials from programs usually consisting of short-term coursework or training. Under the current rules of the Wilder-Naifeh program, scholarship-eligible students must enroll in a program that confers a certificate or a diploma. It is for this reason that the majority of non-recipients obtained Supplemental Certificates or Sufficient Credentials. In the meantime, a small portion of grant recipients also received either Supplemental Certificates or Sufficient Credentials. A plausible explanation for this result is that these students probably enrolled in a diploma/certificate track program

initially, but ended up obtaining supplemental awards and left school before earning certificates or diplomas.

**Chart 4:  
Distribution of Earned Credentials, Summer 2006 First-time Students,  
Wilder-Naifeh Grant Recipients vs. Non-recipients**



Note: Credentials earned by Summer 2008  
Source: THEC SIS

Average Terms to Completion by Major

**Chart 5** shows the average terms of enrollment by major<sup>6</sup> for completers with and without the Wilder-Naifeh grant since Winter 2004. The average number of terms was calculated by dividing the sum of total semesters enrolled by the total headcount of completers who finished their programs by the end of Summer 2008. Completers were defined as those who obtained any postsecondary-level credentials including the following: diploma, certificate, supplemental certificate, or supplemental credential. The major fields with less than 10 completers are excluded from the chart because minor variations in the number of students in these majors could result in dramatic changes in their average.

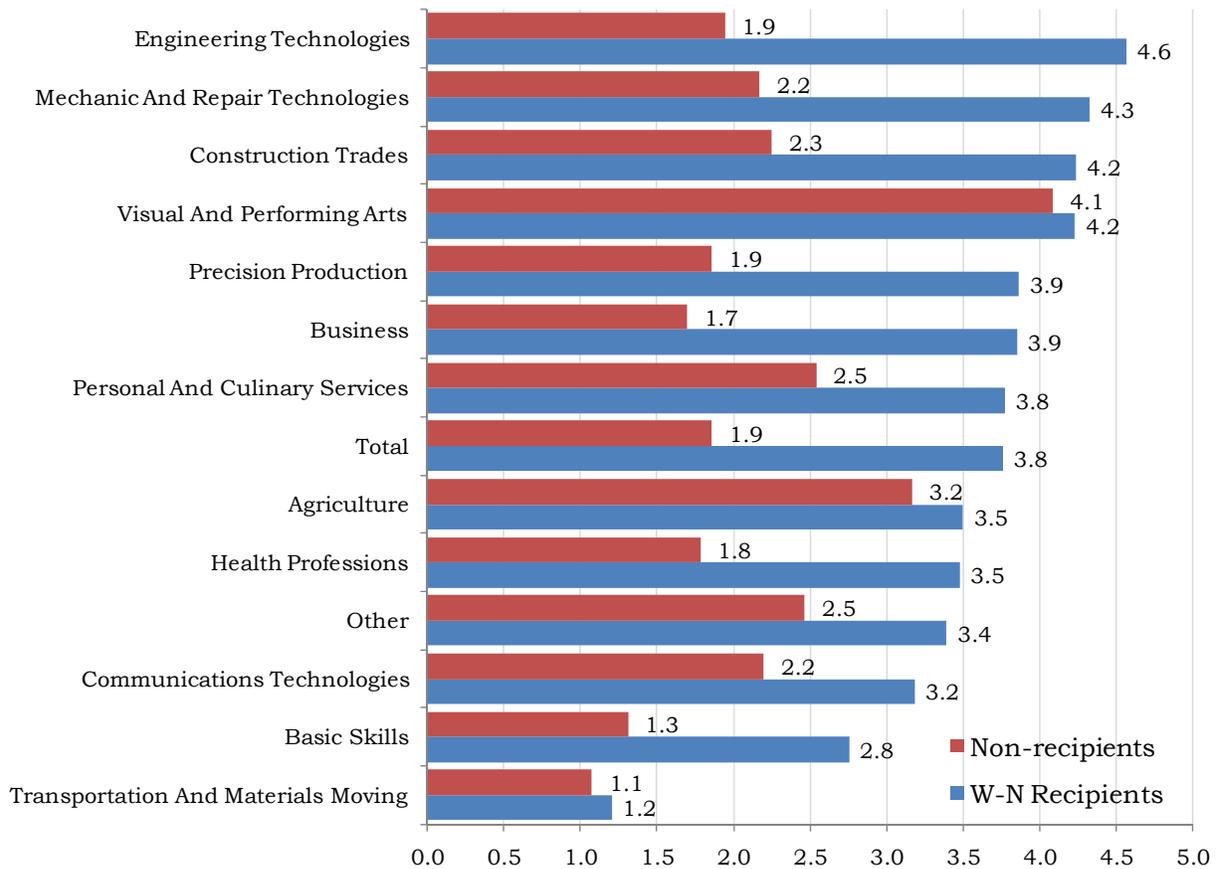
The grand average across all major fields was 3.8 terms for grant recipients and 1.9 for non-recipients. For grant recipients, Engineering Technologies had the highest average at 4.6 terms, whereas Transportation and Materials Moving held the lowest average at 1.2. This indicates that students usually complete their program within one to two years of initial enrollment. However, the average term length substantially differs according to each major.

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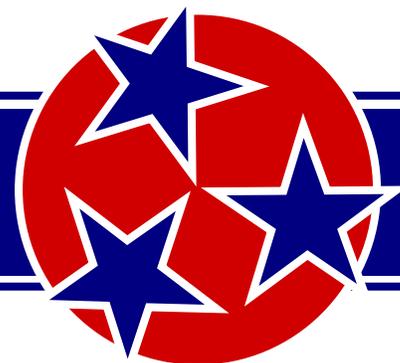
<sup>6</sup> i.e. 2-digit Federal Classification of Institutional Programs (CIP) code

Non-recipients tend to complete their programs earlier than grant holders. This is because many of them enroll in a short-term program that does not confer a diploma or certificate, as Chart 4 shows above. The non-recipient average is 1.9 terms to completion, which is just half the time it took for grant recipients to complete their programs, on average. The highest average was marked by Visual and Performance Art at 4.1 terms. As was the case for award recipients, Transportation and Materials Moving took the shortest time, at 1.1 terms.

**Chart 5:  
Average Terms to Completion by Program\*,  
All Completers from 2004-05 to 2007-08,  
Wilder-Naifeh Recipients vs. Non-Recipients**



Note: \*2-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Codes  
Source: THEC SIS



## Student Transfer

### Transfer Rate to Colleges and Universities from Tennessee Technology Centers

Tables 8 and 9 compare the rates at which grant recipients and non-recipients at Tennessee Technology Centers from Fall 2004 to Summer 2008 transferred to colleges and universities in Tennessee. A total of 28,184 students received a scholarship at least once during this time period. Of those, 1,562 students, or 5.5 percent of the total, transferred to colleges or universities in the state (**Table 8**). Non-grant recipients also demonstrated the same transfer rate (**Table 9**). Of the 50,109 students who attended TTCs without a scholarship, 2,733 students (5.5 percent) enrolled in other postsecondary sectors after their appearance at a TTC. For both student groups, the most popular destination was a community college.

These transfer rates do not reflect students who transferred to out-of-state institutions. Also, students who transferred to private institutions in Tennessee cannot be tracked unless they continuously received a TELS award. Given these data limitations, the real transfer rates could be higher than 5.5 percent, though they are not expected to be far removed from the percentages reported above.

Concerning the number of transfer students who received HOPE scholarships at institutions to which they transferred, HOPE scholarships were awarded to only 62 students. In order for Wilder-Naifeh recipients to be eligible for HOPE after transferring, students must have satisfied the HOPE scholarship entry requirements, which set a graduating high school GPA at 3.0 or an ACT composite score of 21 at the time of enrollment at a TTC. This rule makes it challenging for most TTC completers to receive a scholarship from any TELS programs after transferring into colleges and universities.

**Table 8:**  
**Transfer Rate of Students from Tennessee Technology Centers to Tennessee Colleges and Universities, Wilder-Naifeh Grant Recipients, from Fall 2004 to Summer 2008**

	Total	TBR 4-year	TBR 2-year	UT	TICUA
Received W-N between AY2004-AY2008	28,184				
Of the entire W-N recipients, Transferred to 2-yr or 4-yr Institutions by Fall 2009	1,562	167	1,313	81	1
Of the entire W-N recipients, Received HOPE Scholarship	62	11	46	4	1
Students who Transferred as a % of Total W-N Recipients by Fall 2009	5.5%	0.6%	4.7%	0.3%	0.0%
Students who Received HOPE as a % of Total W-N Recipients	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%

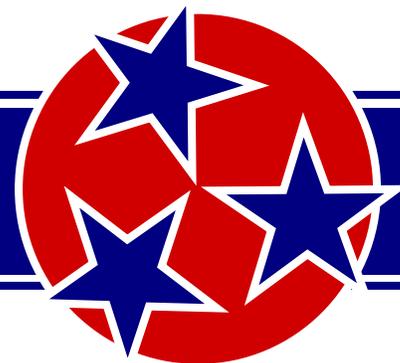
Source: THEC SIS

**Table 9:**  
**Transfer Rate of Students from Tennessee Technology Centers to Tennessee  
 Colleges and Universities, Non-Wilder-Naifeh Recipients, from Fall 2004 to  
 Summer 2008**

	Total	TBR 4-year	TBR 2-year	UT	TICUA
Did not Received W-N between AY2004-AY2008	50,109				
Of the entire non recipients, Transferred to 2-yr or 4-yr Institutions by Fall 2009	2,733	432	2,116	157	28
Students who Transferred as a % of Total W-N Recipients	5.5%	0.9%	4.2%	0.3%	0.1%

Source: THEC SIS

## Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research



### Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research

As occupational areas that traditionally did not require a high level of training demand more skilled workers, the Tennessee Technology Centers have increased their importance in expanding access to postsecondary education and thereby sustaining economic growth in the state. Student enrollment in these schools has continuously risen, attesting that students are also cognizant of such a demand from the local economy. The Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant, introduced in 2004, helps ensure that Tennesseans have the opportunity to learn at Technology Centers. The program has provided grants to students attending Technology Centers, helping them reduce the costs necessary to attend these schools. The number of grant recipients in the program has steadily increased from its beginning, a trend that is expected to continue.

However, financial resources for the program will not be unlimitedly available to sustain program expansion. In fact, a recent projection of net lottery proceeds suggests that state may soon find it difficult to pay for all the scholarships, largely because of the recent decline in lottery sales revenue influenced by the current economic recession. In order to maintain commitment to the causes promised by state law, it is necessary to evaluate the program periodically and thereby ensure that public funding is spent effectively for the intended purposes.

In this context, future research on the Wilder-Naifeh program should address the following policy questions:

- 1. To what extent does the Wilder-Naifeh program contribute to the expansion of access to higher education in Tennessee?**

Tennessee needs to educate its residents more quickly than other states to address a historically low level of educational attainment. Tennessee Technology Centers are expected to serve as some of the most important postsecondary education providers in this economic context by training students in a relatively short time period so that they can quickly attain necessary skills. The Wilder-Naifeh program intends to help those students financially, thereby reducing the opportunity cost incurred to attend programs offered in Technology Centers. In other words, the grant program aims to expand access to postsecondary education, especially to those who would not otherwise attend for financial reasons. This proposed research would assess the impact of this program in the area of access, evaluating the extent to which the grant has achieved its premised goal in promoting access.

**2. To what extent does the Wilder-Naifeh grant help students complete their programs?**

One of the assumed impacts of the Wilder-Naifeh program is that the grant helps students succeed in completing their training programs. By receiving grants, students would be able to spend more time on their school work; thus they would be more likely to complete their program more quickly than non-recipients. An examination of this hypothesis would provide valuable information to the public and policymakers, particularly for future discussions on scholarship improvement.

**3. To what extent are students aware of the Wilder-Naifeh grant program? What can the state do to raise the awareness of this program, especially among adult students?**

Although Tennessee residents enrolled in Technology Centers are eligible for the Wilder-Naifeh grant as long as they seek either a certificate or diploma, this report found that a large number of eligible students did not receive scholarships for unknown reasons. The identification of such reasons would be instrumental for better program implementations and would assist policymakers in enhancing the effectiveness of the program.

In pursuing these research agendas, THEC needs to expand the scope of data collection from Tennessee Technology Centers. The THEC SIS has collected much individual data necessary for policy analyses, but it still misses some important data necessary to better inform the public of the Wilder-Naifeh program. For instance, the collection of data concerning why students enroll would add great value to policy research. Such data would allow analysts to identify students who seek to complete a program, and thereby permit them to compare the academic performance of award recipients versus non-recipients. With the data currently available, such an assessment is not possible. Therefore, knowing whether students are seeking a diploma, certificate, or no award would substantially improve the capacity to assess the Wilder-Naifeh program.

Another proposal is to add a data field in the THEC SIS showing whether a student is eligible for a scholarship. This study recognized that probably more than a handful of students did not receive scholarships despite being eligible, but the current database does not have the capability to ascertain this. The addition of this data element would be conducive to identifying issues built into scholarship implementation, thereby providing the public with better insight into how to ensure that all qualified students are aware of the opportunities they have to receive grants.