



The National Landscape of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

Effective Policies for Success and Equity

Credit for Prior Learning Basics

CPL is the term for well-established, researched, and validated methods for assessing non-collegiate learning for college credit.



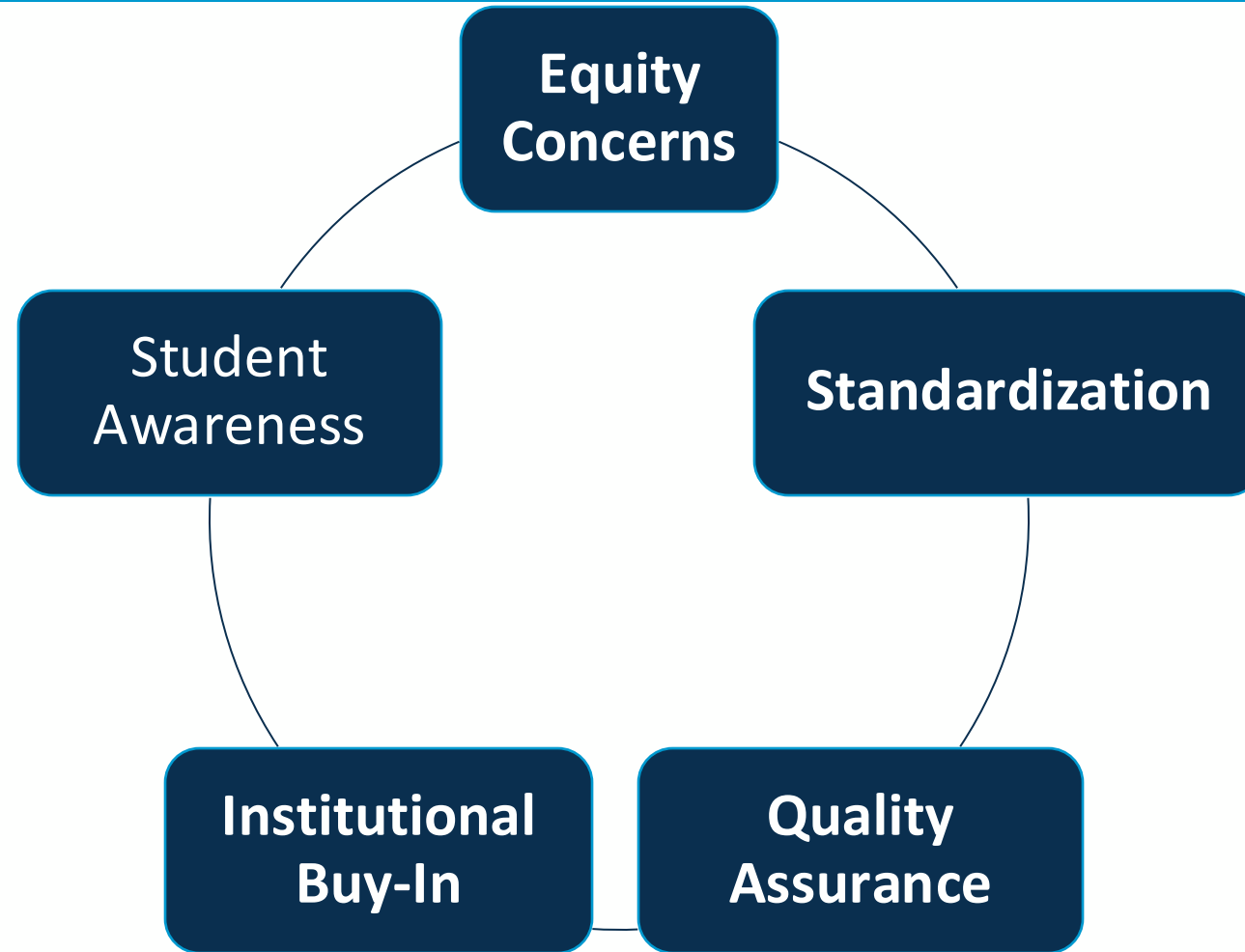
Sample CPL Evaluation Methods:

- Standardized exams (e.g., CLEP exams, DSST exams)
- Challenge exams
- Portfolio assessment
- ACE credit recommendations for military training
- American Council on Education (ACE)/National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) credit recommendations for corporate or other training
- Institutional review of training (certification, licenses, apprenticeships, corporate training, etc.)

The Importance of Credit for Prior Learning

- Evidence that CPL associated with greater retention and credential completion (CAEL and WICHE: *The PLA Boost, 2020*)
- Evidence that CPL leads to more institutional credit-earning; and potential for adult student recruitment
- Students feel validated as learners
- Students save time and money
- Tool for adult learner recruitment & re-engagement, acceleration of completion for “some college, no credential”

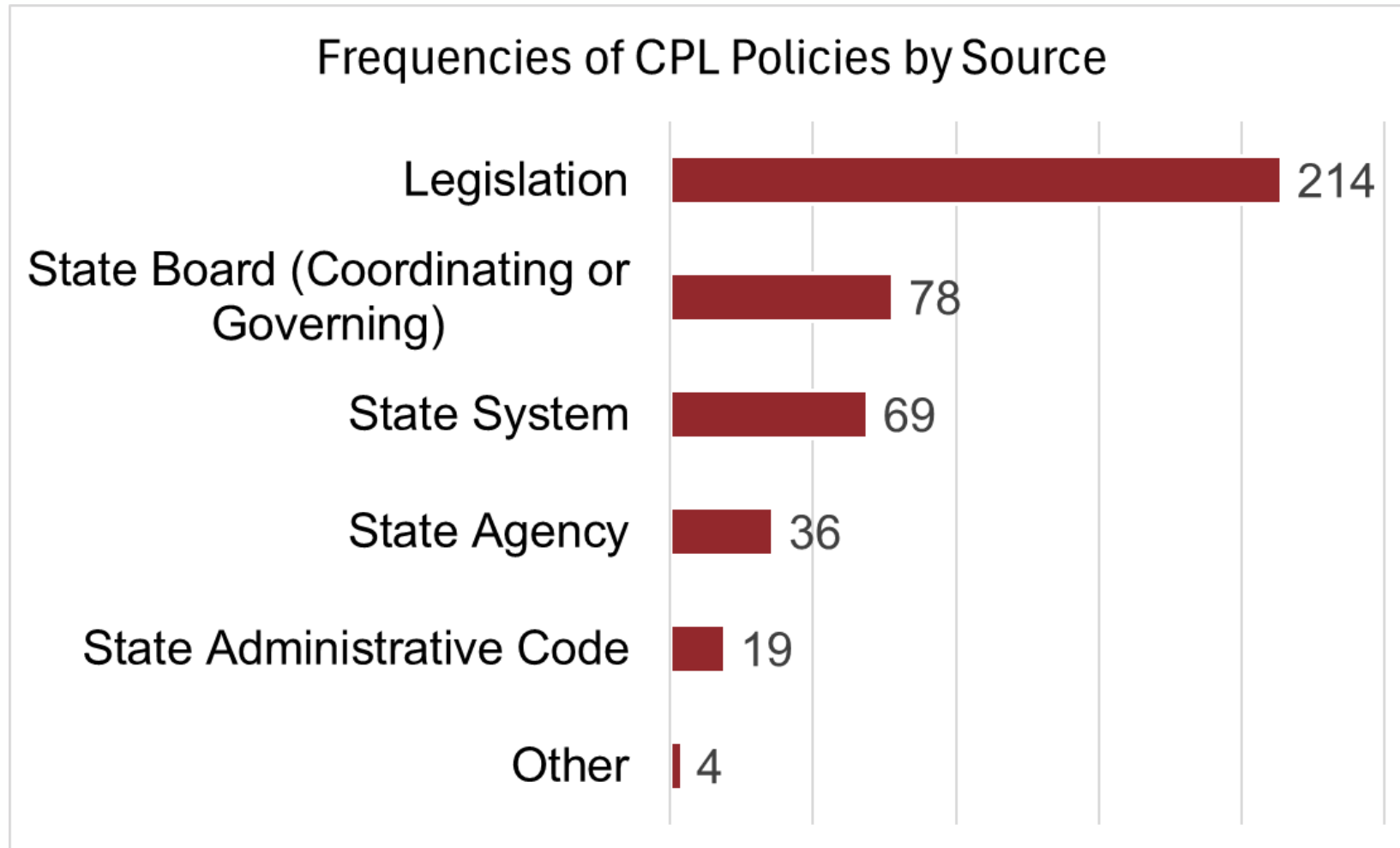
Challenges in CPL Policy Design



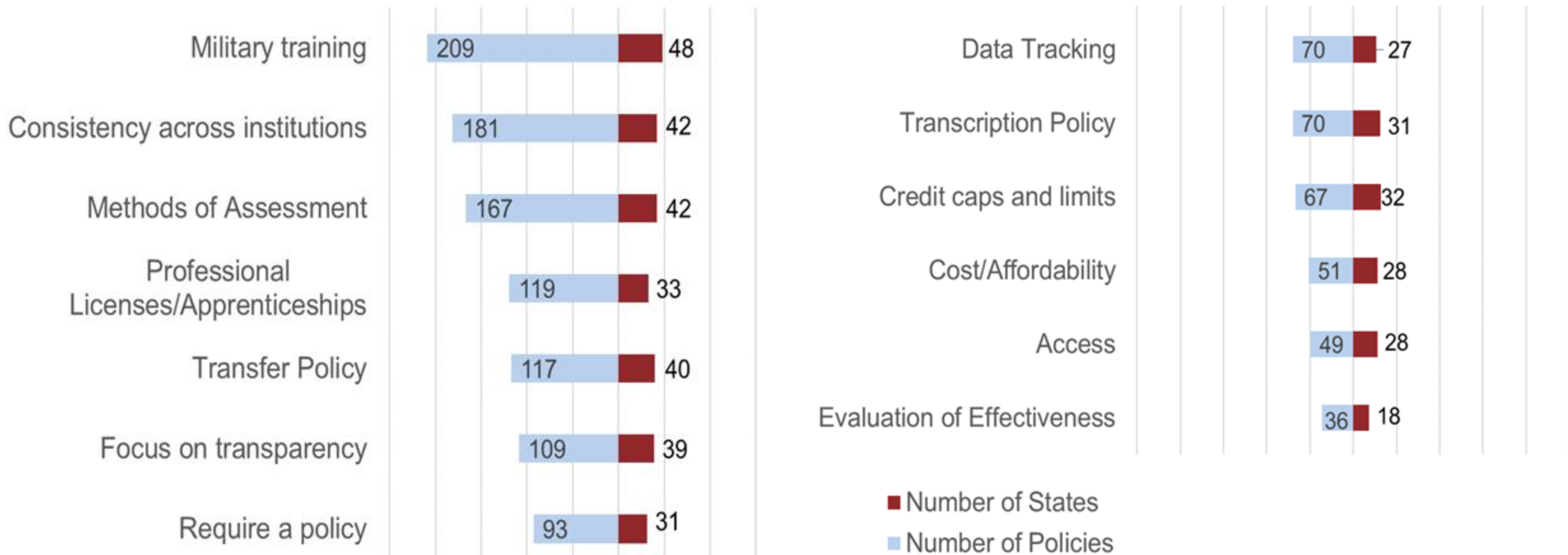
ACE & CAEL'S CPL Inventory

- Draws from previous efforts: ECS (2017), HMC & CAEL (2015), Center for Law and Social Policy (2020) (2020)
- Completed 50-state scan
- CPL database + 2 policy briefs
- Value to states and systems: CPL policies + actionable tools for CPL policy development

Preliminary Scan Result: 400+ State Policies Related to CPL



CPL Policy Themes – Frequency and By State



Example: Military Training

Louisiana (Revised Statute §3165.2). College credit for military service; spouses of veterans (2015)

- *Directs the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council to use nationally recognized standards for evaluating military training for college credit*

Illinois (110 ILCS 32/) Educational Credit for Military Experience Act (2017)

& Minnesota (197.775) – Higher Education Fairness (2006)

- *Both require all public higher ed institutions to adopt a policy, and establish procedures, for awarding credit for military training and experience.*

Example: Cost/Affordability

Indiana (IC 21-12-17). Prior Learning Assessments (2017)

- *Recipient of a state grant, scholarship or remission of fees may use the funds to pay for costs associated with CPL; they can also count the anticipated credit hours for that academic term toward the full-time and part-time attendance requirements.*

New York (2024) Section 667-C. Part-time tuition assistance program awards (2024)

- *Provides tuition assistance for part-time students enrolled in a non-degree workforce credential program directly leading to employment in a "significant industry"; stipulates that the student will receive credit for the non-degree credential by SUNY or CUNY institutions.*

Example: Transfer

Utah State System (53B-16-107). Credit for military service and training Transferability (2023)

- *Policy outlines documentation of credit for military training; students transferring within the system will have transcript with CPL credit that will be evaluated by the receiving institution.*

Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education. Policy for Articulation and Transfer Between Public Institutions. (2023)

- *Credits accepted at a state institution of higher education through any form of prior learning assessment will be accepted by the receiving institution and to the extent appropriate shall be applied toward meeting degree requirements.*

Example: Transcription

Alabama Community College System (706.01). Credit Awarded Through Non-Traditional Means (2019)

- *Course credit earned from prior learning shall be noted on the student's transcript as having been awarded through PLA.*

Maine State System (UMS), Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Standards (2018)

- *Transcript is to show CPL credit method and course number for credit awarded; listed as pass/fail and not included in GPA.*

Example: Data Tracking

Delaware State Agency (2023)

- *Delaware institutions should collaborate in common measures for CPL programs, such as numbers of students earning CPL, number of credits awarded, credits awarded by CPL source, etc.*

Kentucky Legislation (164.2951).(2010, revised 2020)

- *Develop uniform data collection and reporting methods to facilitate and ensure statewide and institutional compliance with course transfer and credit requirements.*

Example: Evaluation of Effectiveness

New York/SUNY. State University of New York Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation Policy. (2023).

- *System Administration will request information from campuses concerning the award of credit by evaluation to assess the effectiveness of this policy.*

Delaware State Agency (2023)

- *The institution has provisions for periodic re-evaluation of transfer of credit, prior learning, and articulation policies and procedures, in order to allow for participating institutions to conduct periodic research about the efficacy of its CPL policy and related equitable student outcomes*

CPL Policy Themes/Categories

Require a policy

Focus on
transparency

Consistency
across institutions

Military training

Credit caps and
limits

Cost/Affordability

Transfer Policy

Transcription
Policy

Methods of
Assessment

Access

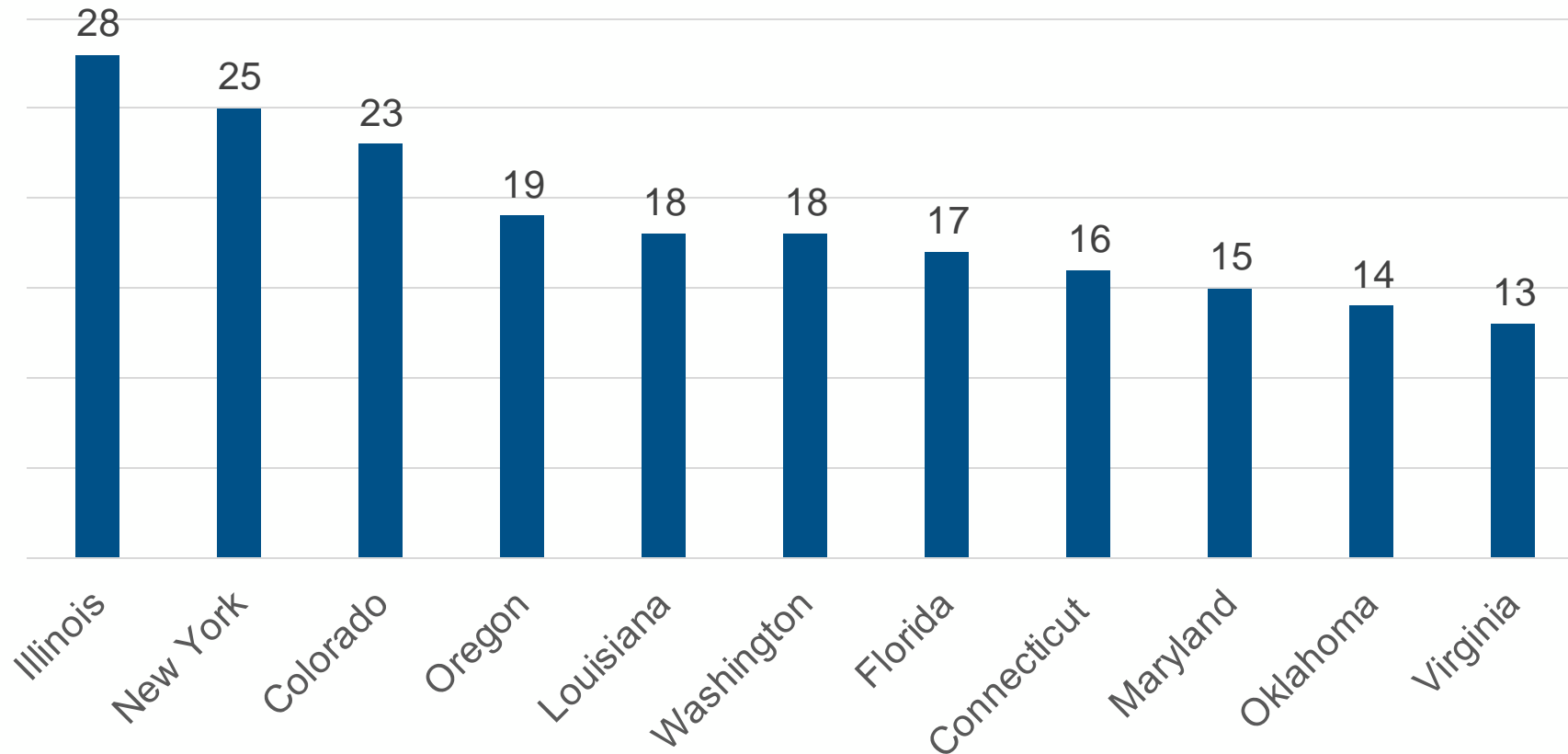
Data Tracking

Evaluation of
Effectiveness

Professional
licenses or
apprenticeship

CPL State Policy – Frequency Leaders

States With Highest Number of CPL Policies



States with Comprehensive CPL Approaches

California State University System

System-wide approach, ensuring consistency across multiple campuses.

State University of New York

Transferability among state institutions

Specific elements campus policies must include

Institutional and student support

Oregon

\$10 million one-time investment in 2022 through state general funds

Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee working on data policy

Minnesota

Public data dashboard on each institution's specific CPL offerings

Kansas

Collects, analyzes, and publishes detailed CPL data yearly

Delaware: A Case Study in Collaboration

- Established voluntary, state-wide CPL policy framework in 2023.
- Process:
 - Department of Education convened diverse group of stakeholders
 - CAEL facilitated the task force, including:
 - Level setting survey to all institutions
 - Regular task force meetings to gather feedback and create buy-in
 - Creation and facilitation of four subgroups:
 - Transcription, Transferability, and Data
 - Program and Service Design
 - Standards for Assessing CPL and Quality Assurance
 - Community, Workforce and Employer Partners
 - Collective drafting/editing

Delaware: A Case Study in Collaboration – Key Lessons

- Welcome and encourage all voices
 - Public and private institutions; 2 and 4 year
 - Representatives from administration, registrar, admissions, faculty, etc.
- Representatives become advocates to their own institutions
- Influence of flagship university
- Use other state policies to inform your own

- Next: just finished work on CPL data collection policy framework with data collection beginning in September 2024

Next Steps

- By October 2024:
 - Public searchable database
 - Policy brief
 - National webinar
- October/November 2024:
 - Presentation at CAEL conference
- Potential for Follow-On Research:
 - CPL policies & postsecondary completion.
 - Effectiveness of a CPL policy approach (state system-wide policy vs. state legislative policy) on CPL policy implementation and usage.
 - Lessons learned for states and systems in initial stages of CPL policy development.

Want to be notified when data and brief are released?

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<https://www.cael.org/resouces/pathways-blog>



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