## Overview: Distance Education and Workforce Development Reports

NC-SARA contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to create a new Distance Education and Workforce Development Report for each SARA member state. The goal for these reports is to better help states identify how distance education can be used to meet workforce needs, as well as to identify gaps in state offerings.

These reports incorporate NC-SARA data on exclusively distance education enrollment and out-of-state learning placement activity, data from IPEDS on distance education programs offered, state educational attainment measures, and workforce development data provided by Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass). For questions about this report please contact NC-SARA at data@nc-sara.org.

Please note that states may report figures other than those included in this report due to differing methodologies; please refer to the higher education system or state higher education agency for more information.

### Definition of Terms:

**Distance Education:** Education that uses one or more types of technology to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously.

**Distance Education Program:** A program for which all the required coursework for program completion can be completed entirely via distance education courses.

**Exclusively Distance Education Enrollment (EDEE):** Students who are solely taking coursework via distance education.

**Out-of-State Learning Placement (OOSLP):** Supervised field experiences such as, but not limited to, clinical rotations, internships, or student teaching, offered by SARA-participating institutions in locations outside their home state.

### About NC-SARA

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a nonprofit organization that helps expand students' access to educational opportunities and ensure more efficient, consistent, and effective regulation of distance learning programs.

Today, more than 2,400 institutions participate SARA across 49 member states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands all voluntarily participate in SARA.

### About NCHEMS

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to improve strategic decision making in postsecondary education for states and institutions in the United States and abroad. Its work has touched on topics across a wide spectrum of public policy: strategic planning to finance and resource allocation to the development of new educational delivery models. Throughout its more than 50 years, NCHEMS has been a resource for turning data into usable knowledge for leaders and policymakers at all levels.

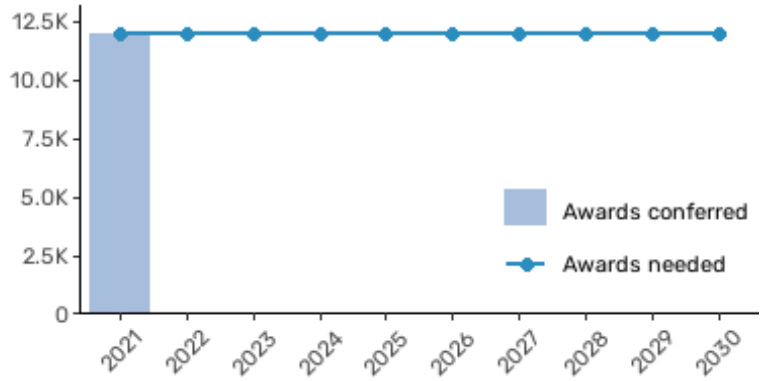# Distance Education and Workforce Development

## Educational Attainment and the Workforce

The Lumina Foundation has set a goal for 60 percent of the U.S. population aged 25 to 64 to possess at least a postsecondary degree or certificate of value or industry recognized certification by 2025. DC is on track to reach 82% attainment by 2030, which will exceed that goal.

The industries projected to be the District of Columbia's overall largest in 2030 are Government, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Other Services (except Public Administration), and the ones projected to grow by the largest percentage are Accommodation and Food Services, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Management of Companies and Enterprises.

This document summarizes how distance education may contribute to meeting DC's workforce needs.

### Award Production Needed
#### Progress towards 82% Attainment

Sources: IPEDS, U.S. Census Bureau, Lumina Foundation, Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce

## College Enrollment and Distance Education

How much exclusively distance education enrollment is taking place at District of Columbia colleges and universities?

### District of Columbia Enrollment by Fall Term
#### Exclusively Distance Education Enrollment vs. Total Enrollment
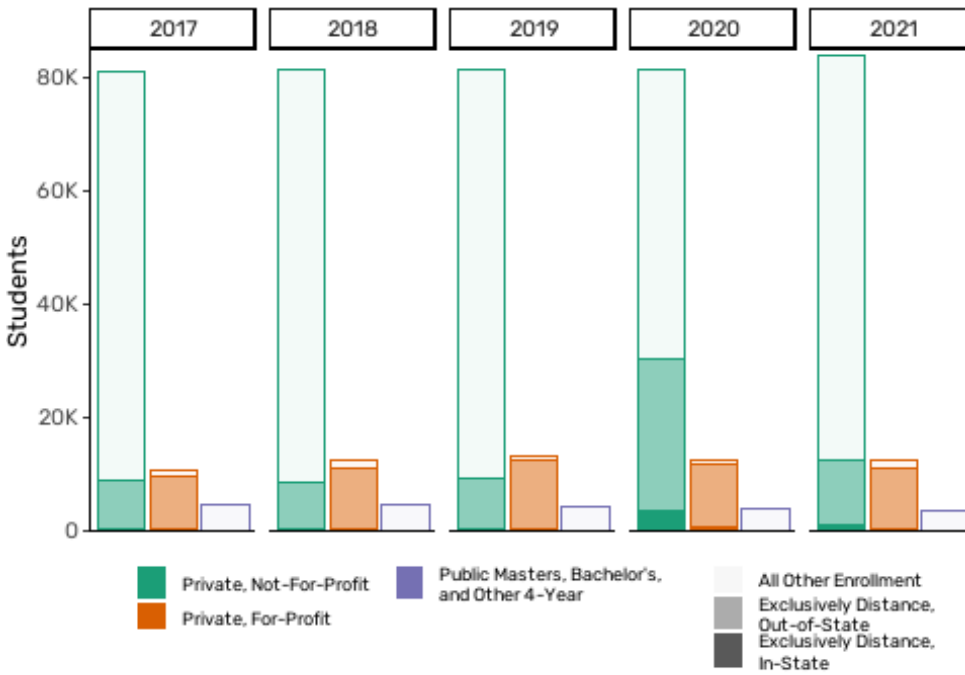
Source: IPEDS

In contrast to nationwide trends, overall college and university enrollment in the District of Columbia has increased; there were 3,492 more students in Fall 2021 compared to Fall 2017. The number of students attending exclusively via distance education also grew, from 18,359 (19% of enrollment) in Fall 2017 to 21,603 (22% of enrollment) in Fall 2019. The pandemic accelerated this trend, and Fall 2021 exclusively distance education enrollment was 23,719 (24% of enrollment). Of those attending exclusively via distance education in Fall 2021, 6% were in-state students from DC. This represents an increase from 2019, when the percentage was 4%.

In Fall 2021, the sector with the highest percentage of exclusively distance education students was Private, For-Profit, while Public Masters, Bachelor's, and Other 4-Year was lowest.
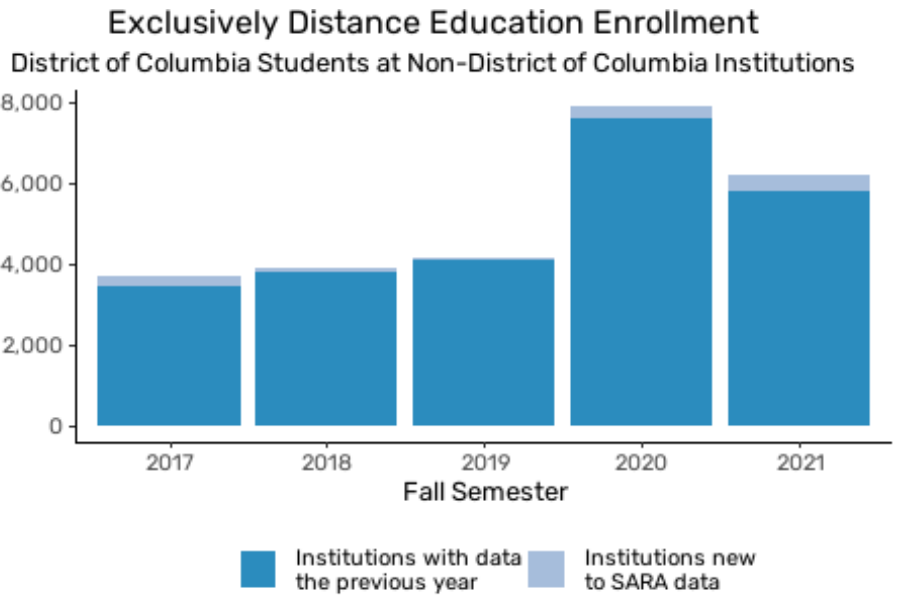
When reading the chart above, note that the darker bands represent exclusively distance education enrollments.

# How many District of Columbia students are studying via distance education at out-of-state institutions?

The number of students from the District of Columbia who study at out-of-state institutions exclusively via distance education has also increased over time.

According to NC-SARA data, in Fall 2017, 3,700 DC students were attending out-of-state institutions exclusively via distance education. In 2021, that number was 6,194, which was an increase of 67% over four years.

The NC-SARA data represents enrollments at over 2,300 institutions, or 67% of all postsecondary institutions that offer distance education. In the chart to the right, the light blue areas represent enrollments at institutions new to SARA participation – so any change is because of their inclusion, not an increase in students.
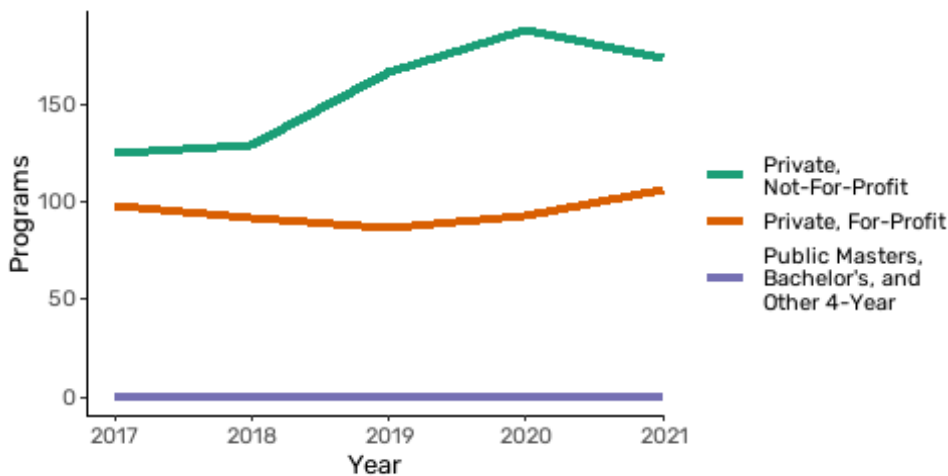
## Exclusively Distance Education Enrollment
### District of Columbia Students at Non-District of Columbia Institutions



Legend:
- Institutions with data the previous year (dark blue)
- Institutions new to SARA data (light blue)

Source: NC-SARA

# What are the distance education offerings from District of Columbia institutions?

## Distance Education Programs at District of Columbia Institutions
### Over Time For All Program Levels, by Sector



Legend:
- Private, Not-For-Profit (green)
- Private, For-Profit (orange)
- Public Masters, Bachelor's, and Other 4-Year (purple)

Source: IPEDS

Just as the number of distance education students has grown, the number of distance education programs has also grown, allowing students a wider variety of distance education options. . A distance education program is defined as a program for which all the required coursework for program completion can be completed entirely via distance education courses.

In 2017, District of Columbia colleges and universities offered 223 distance education programs. By 2021, that number had grown to 280, an increase of 26%. In 2021, the sector with the largest number of distance education programs was Private, Not-For-Profit, which offered 12% of its programs (173 programs) via distance education. Across all sectors, 52% of District of Columbia institutions offered at least one program that could be completed entirely via distance education.

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In 2021, District of Columbia institutions offered distance education programs in 18 disciplines. These accounted for 17% of all programs offered by institutions in the state. The largest number of distance education programs were available at the Master's degree level; there were 106 such programs across 10 DC institutions. The programs most commonly offered via distance education were in Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services.

### District of Columbia Programs Available via Distance Education, 2021
By Program Level
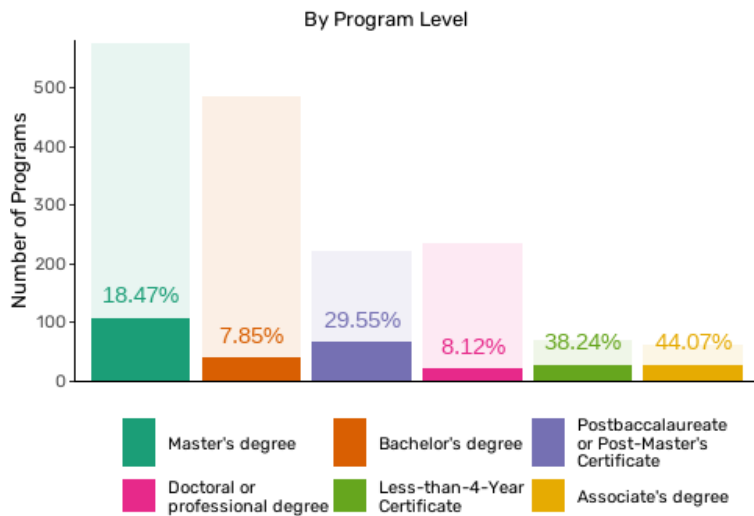


Source: IPEDS

### Five most common distance education programs in the District of Columbia, 2021

| Program Level | Discipline | Distance Education Programs |
|---|---|---|
| Master's degree | Health Professions and Related Programs | 29 |
| Postbaccalaureate or Post-Master's Certificate | Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services | 27 |
| Master's degree | Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services | 24 |
| Postbaccalaureate or Post-Master's Certificate | Health Professions and Related Programs | 22 |
| Less-than-4-Year Certificate | Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services | 16 |

Source: IPEDS

## Out-of-State Learning Placements

These learning placements include supervised field experiences such as, but not limited to, clinical rotations, internships, or student teaching.

In 2021, 4,046 total incoming students (those attending institutions in other states) participated in learning placements in the District of Columbia, and 4,509 outgoing students attending District of Columbia institutions participated in learning placements in other states. The higher number of outgoing students may indicate that there are limited job opportunities for new college graduates in DC. It could also be a sign that many out-of-state students are attending District of Columbia institutions (either via distance education or in person) but doing their learning placements back at home.

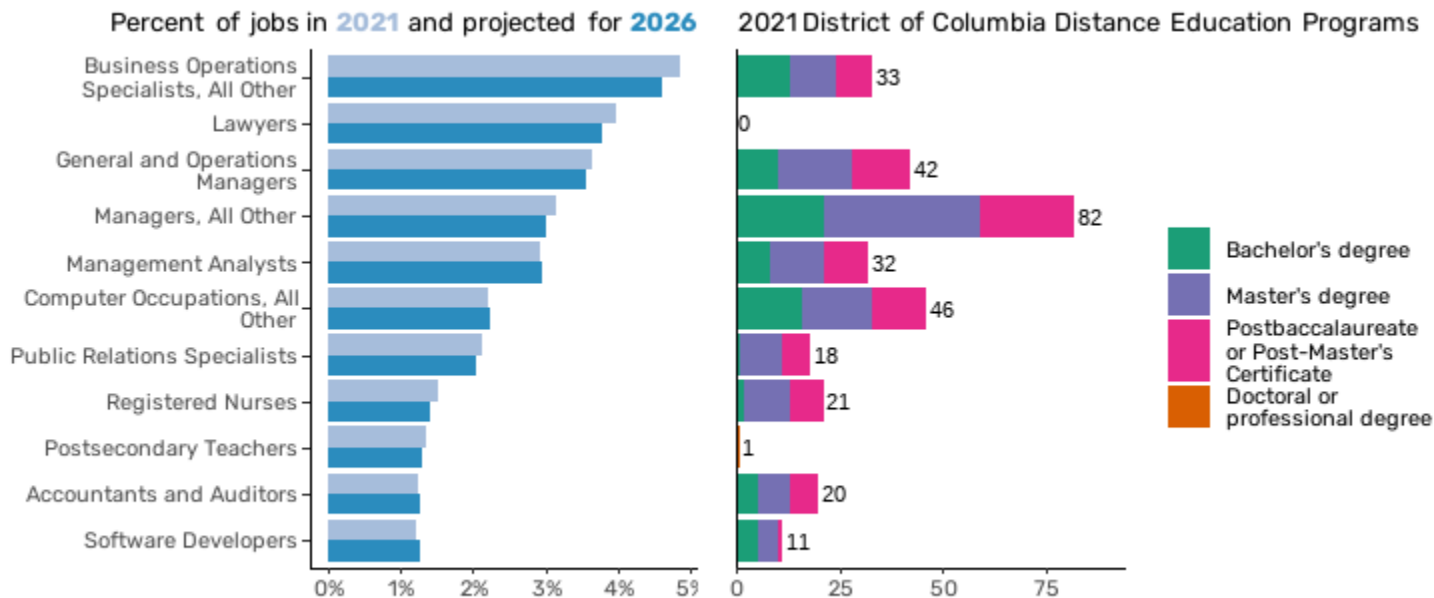### District of Columbia Outgoing, Incoming, and Net Learning Placements, 2021
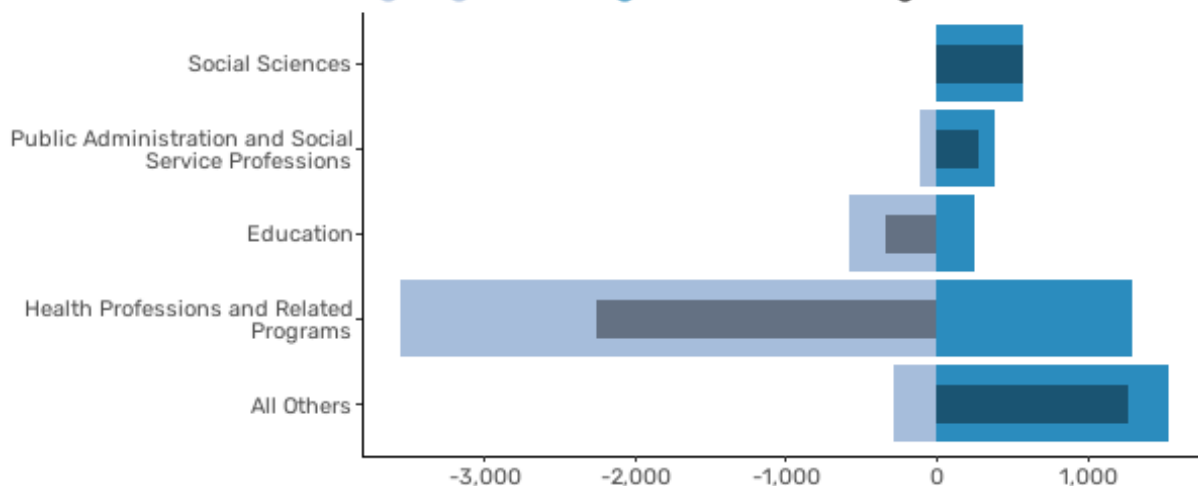


Source: NC-SARA

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## Top District of Columbia Occupations in That Require Some Postsecondary Education



Percent of jobs in **2021** and projected for **2026** | 2021 District of Columbia Distance Education Programs

Sources: Lightcast, IPEDS

A number of the largest occupations that require postsecondary education are expected to grow or remain fairly constant as shares of total employment over time, increasing the need for college-educated workers in the District of Columbia. Of these eleven occupations, DC colleges and universities offer distance education programs at the typical entry level of education, or one level higher, in ten of them.

The state's ten largest occupations requiring a postsecondary credential comprised 28% of the District of Columbia's total jobs in 2021. Among these occupations, the largest is Business Operations Specialists, All Other, and the one expected to grow by the largest percentage from 2021 to 2026 is Software Developers.

## What skills are in demand?

Among jobs with higher education requirements, the skills in highest demand in the District of Columbia are the "common" skills of Communications, Management, and Leadership. Common skills are prevalent across many different industries and include personal attributes, behaviors, competencies, and learned skills. Among more job-specific specialized skills, those most in-demand in DC, based on job posting language in 2022 that also mentioned a college degree, are Finance, Computer Science, and Marketing.

| Top 10 In-Demand Specialized Skills in the District of Columbia |
| --- |
| Finance |
| Computer Science |
| Marketing |
| Accounting |
| Data Analysis |
| Auditing |
| Project Management |
| Agile Methodology |
| Workflow Management |
| SQL (Programming Language) |

Source: Lightcast

**Data Details:**
• Enrollment data include institutions that do not participate in Title IV financial aid.
• The five most common distance education programs may include more than five programs if there are ties.
• In the data on outgoing distance education students, please note that a small amount of the increase in students is due to an increase in the number of institutions participating in SARA and therefore reporting data.
• Outgoing distance education data exclude students studying at institutions in California, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and American Samoa.
• The out-of-state learning placements graph includes the top three programs, based on 2-digit CIP code, ranked by the number of incoming placements, the top three programs ranked by the number of outgoing placements, and the top three programs with the largest incoming vs. outgoing differences. In many cases, there is overlap in these lists. Data exclude incoming placements from institutions in California and the U.S. Territories listed above.
• The occupation graph includes the top 10 occupations that typically require a postsecondary credential or degree, based on 2021 data and 2026 projections. The top 10 for both time intervals are included, though there is significant overlap. Occupations are based on 6-digit SOC code and ranked by the number of jobs. All types of workers are counted, including those who are self-employed and those not covered by Unemployment Insurance. The distance education programs connected to these occupations are based on Lightcast's CIP-SOC crosswalk. Only programs at each occupation's typical entry level of education plus one level higher are included.