

BEAUTY SCHOOL DEBT AND DROP-OUTS

How Utah Cosmetology Licensing Fails Aspiring Beauty Workers



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INTRODUCTION

On January 4, 2021, newly sworn-in Utah Gov. Spencer Cox issued his first executive order. The order requires all executive branch agencies that establish administrative rules for occupational or professional licensing to review and identify those rules and regulations “that are no longer necessary or can be amended to reduce barriers to working while still protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Utah residents.”¹

Just a couple of weeks after Governor Cox’s call to action, Sen. Curtis Bramble introduced SB 87.² The bill’s House floor sponsor, Rep. Candice Pierucci, said, “The impetus for this [bill] is looking at how often government overregulates industries and businesses.”³ The bill, which quickly became known as the “Blow Dry Bar Bill,” sought an exemption from the state’s cosmetology/barber license for any individual who “only dries, styles, arranges, dresses, curls, hot irons, shampoos, or conditions hair.”⁴ In lieu of a cosmetology/barber license, the bill ultimately required that stylists complete a “hair safety program” of no more than two hours and pass a corresponding exam with a score of at least 75%.⁵

In explaining the bill, Bramble said, “Shampooing and blow drying hair is something that everybody is familiar with. The idea that you need to have a license to do what is a common practice is a challenge.”⁶ This is in line with a Utah Supreme Court precedent holding that the state can license only occupations that “require special skill, learning and experience, and [where] the public ordinarily does not have suffi-

cient knowledge to determine the qualifications of the practitioner.”⁷ Despite some pushback from the cosmetology industry, including a protest at the Salt Lake City-County Building,⁸ the bill garnered majority support in both houses of the Legislature and was signed into law on March 16, 2021.⁹

Utah’s Blow Dry Bar Bill is only one of the latest examples of how cosmetology licensing has attracted concern in recent years for the costs it imposes on workers, consumers and the wider economy.¹⁰ But while much research has been done on the costs and benefits of occupational licensing in general,¹¹ little work has been done to systematically analyze the experiences of people pursuing cosmetology careers.

A forthcoming Institute for Justice study aims to change that with a detailed analysis of federal educational data, including a large, and largely untapped, dataset on nondegree credentials and work experience programs.¹² This policy brief draws on that national study to explore the experiences of people pursuing cosmetology careers in Utah.

Key findings include:

- The education required for cosmetology licensure in Utah is expensive and time-consuming, and students typically incur significant student loan debt to finance it.
- Cosmetology programs in Utah rarely graduate people on time, delaying aspiring cosmetologists' entry into the workforce and increasing their debt burden.
- If aspiring cosmetologists become licensed in Utah, they frequently end up in jobs where they earn low wages, likely making it difficult to repay loans.
- Our data suggest Utah's licensure requirements largely explain why cosmetology school takes as long as it does. After Utah reduced required education hours in 2013, over 90% of cosmetology schools in the state shortened their programs to match.

Unfortunately, Utah's cosmetology schooling requirements appear disconnected from the government's interest in protecting public health and safety—the justification for restricting occupational entry through licensing.¹³ Not only do many niche cosmetology services—such as those provided by blow dry bars—pose little or no threat to the public, but licensing requirements for cosmetologists outstrip those for other occupations that present greater risks. At the same time, cosmetology programs appear to spend little time on health and safety.

Based on our findings, it is clear that obtaining a license represents a tremendous burden for aspiring cosmetologists—and one where the costs appear to outweigh the benefits. Given these costs, Utah policymakers should take the opportunity presented by Governor Cox to take a hard look at whether the state's license is the proper way to regulate cosmetology.

BACKGROUND

Cosmetology is a vast and highly regulated industry in the United States. In 2020, over 2,500 people were working as cosmetologists in Utah. Put differently, for every 1,000 jobs in the state, nearly 1.7 were in cosmetology.¹⁴ Every one of those 2,500 people needs a cosmetology/barber license to do their job, and the requirements for licensure are far from trivial.

Based on information gathered for the second edition of *License to Work*, an IJ report that catalogs licensing requirements for 102 lower-income occupations across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, applicants for a Utah cosmetology license must spend at least 1,600 hours in cosmetology school (which takes approximately 373 calendar days, assuming full-time study), pay \$234 in fees and pass two exams.¹⁵ By IJ's metrics, these rank as the 9th most burdensome requirements among those for the 64 lower-income occupations from *License to Work* that Utah licenses.¹⁶ Taking into account required education or experience, fees, and exams, Utah licenses cosmetologists more onerously than 18 other states.¹⁷ In fact, Utah requires more education than 31 other states and the District of Columbia.¹⁸

Utah's licensing requirements for cosmetologists are more burdensome than those for some other occupations with far greater relevance to public health and safety. For example, compared to entry-level emergency medical technicians in Utah, cosmetologists spend more hours (and calendar days) in training and pay higher fees for their licenses, even though the

work of an EMT is undoubtedly more closely related to health and safety. And the difference in required training is not marginal: Utah requires 13 times more calendar days' worth of training for cosmetologists than for aspiring EMTs (373 days vs. 28 days).¹⁹

Utah's cosmetology licensing requirements look especially onerous when placed in an international context. Over half of the member countries of the European Union, in addition to the United Kingdom, do not require cosmetology licensure at all.²⁰ Certification is available for those in the U.K. if they seek it, but it is entirely voluntary.²¹

Another reason to question Utah's cosmetology licensing requirements is that cosmetology schooling does not appear tightly linked to health and safety. State law requires cosmetology programs to cover health and safety, but it does not specify how much time they should devote to the topic.²² And when cosmetology schools describe how much time their programs devote to health and safety, it becomes clear that they believe the topic can be adequately covered in just a few hours.

For example, as Figure 1 illustrates, one Utah school's program spends less than 5% of the required 1,600 hours on health and safety-related topics, and this is when construing health and safety broadly.²³ In other words, only about 18 days out of a yearlong program are spent on health and safety, even though health and safety is the official—and only legitimate—rationale for licensing the occupation.

Figure 1: Health and Safety Topics in the Curriculum of Utah's Taylor Andrews Academy



Source: Taylor Andrews Academy. (2021). *Student catalog*. <https://taylorandrew.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NEW-Student-Catalog-2020.docx-2.pdf>

A similar pattern appears in the curriculum for another Utah school's program, this one 2,000 hours long. As Figure 2 shows, again using a broad definition of

health and safety, the program spends as little as 39 hours, or about nine days, covering this essential topic.²⁴ This means health and safety accounts for less than 2% of the total curriculum.

Figure 2: Health and Safety Topics in the Curriculum of Utah's New Horizons Beauty College



Source: New Horizons Beauty Academy. (2020). *Catalog*. <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/f8bc61ceed524a8ab5baec-45c52e4330/files/uploaded/Catalog%20November%202020.pdf>

Utah has started to recognize that its cosmetology licensing requirements are unnecessarily high—at least when it comes to some niche cosmetology services. For example, in 2012, spurred by an IJ lawsuit, a

federal judge freed African-style hair braiders from cosmetology licensure in Utah, ruling that it was unconstitutional to require braiders to become licensed cosmetologists when they do not cut or color hair and cosmetolo-

gy school typically spends little, if any, time on hair braiding.²⁵ In 2013, the Legislature passed a bill updating the state's cosmetology law to reflect the ruling.²⁶

In another example, the state does not regulate microblading through licensure or other personal qualifications.²⁷ Microblading is a semipermanent procedure akin to tattooing that involves making small, hairlike cuts in the skin and filling them with pigment to create the effect of fuller eyebrows, reducing the need to fill in one's brows on a daily basis. Instead of state licensing, county health departments regulate the cleanliness of brow studios and the proper disposal of microblading equipment.²⁸

And, as described in the introduction, the state recently exempted people who only wash, dry or style hair from cosmetology licensure.²⁹

In addition to exempting these niche services from licensure, Utah has also modestly reduced cosmetology licensing requirements. In 2013, it cut required cosmetology schooling hours from 2,000 to 1,600.³⁰ Though this was a welcome improvement, licensing burdens remain high with little time spent on health and safety. But while previous research has estimated the average hours needed to obtain a license, very few

studies have quantified how much time and money it actually costs to complete the required education or whether that investment pays off in the form of earnings.³¹

A forthcoming IJ study extends our work on occupational licensing's costs to focus on the experiences of people pursuing cosmetology careers. A primary data source for that study, and this Utah-specific policy brief, is the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. IPEDS provides data on cosmetology schools and their students by gathering information from Title IV schools—that is, schools that accept federal loans and Pell Grants. This policy brief uses IPEDS data for the 2011–2012 to 2016–2017 school years to take a closer look at the data for Utah.

Specifically, this policy brief uses IPEDS data about costs (i.e., tuition, school fees, books and supplies) and hours, which are provided at the program level, and data about financial aid and graduation rates, which are provided at the school level. The number of Utah programs by year in this sample ranged from 20 to 23, while the number of Utah schools by year ranged from seven to 12. Analyzing these data provides a clearer picture of the experiences of Utahns forced to obtain a cosmetology license.



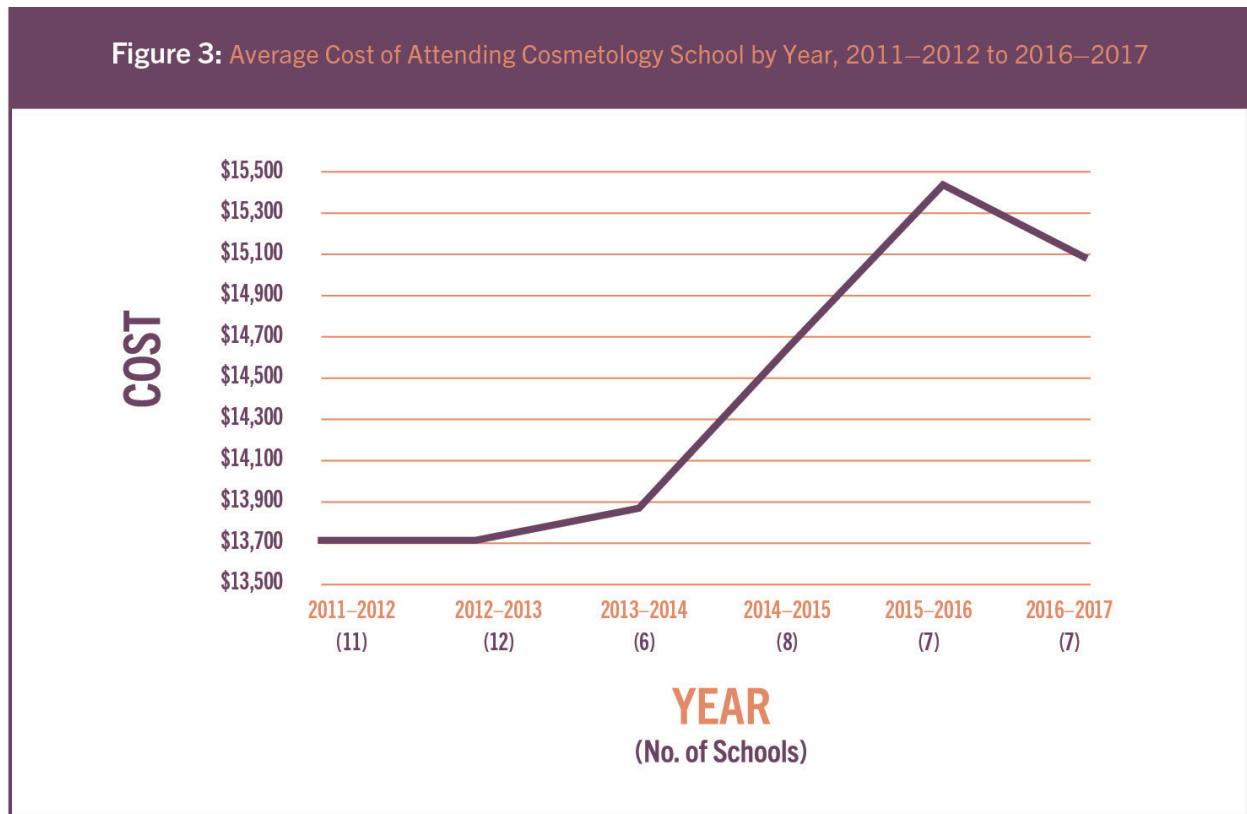
KEY FINDING 1:

The education required for cosmetology licensure in Utah is expensive and time-consuming, and students typically incur significant student loan debt to finance it.

Utah cosmetology programs are expensive in terms of both time and money. For licensure, the state requires cosmetologists to complete at least 1,600 hours of education, and most of the state’s cosmetology programs recorded by IPEDS (n=20–23) are designed to last around 12 months.³² For this education, students can expect to pay thousands of dollars. The average cost of attending cosmetology school in Utah was more than \$14,400 over the study period.³³

However, this average masks a dramatic increase in costs over time. Costs were around \$13,700 for the 2011–2012 school year but had risen to over \$15,000 by the 2016–2017 school year, for an increase of more than 10% (see Figure 3). This outpaces inflation over the same period (6.7%).³⁴ This is particularly notable given that most Utah schools reduced curriculum hours by 400 hours during the study period.³⁵

Figure 3: Average Cost of Attending Cosmetology School by Year, 2011–2012 to 2016–2017



Source: IPEDS.

Compared to a four-year degree, cosmetology school may appear to be a bargain, but most cosmetology students come from lower-income backgrounds and must fund their education with the help of financial aid. The income profile of students is illustrated by Pell Grant data. Pell Grants are a form of need-based federal aid intended to help lower-income students access postsecondary education and vocational programs. These grants do not normally have to be repaid and are awarded based on a set of factors that include financial need and the cost of the

program.³⁶ On average across Utah cosmetology schools (n=7-12), over 50% of students received a Pell Grant during the study period. The average Pell Grant award per recipient was over \$4,000.

Aspiring cosmetologists may also turn to student loans to help fund this expense. On average, almost 40% of students at Utah cosmetology schools took out student loans. Among those with student loans, the average amount borrowed was over \$5,400.



In any given year, about a quarter of cosmetology schools saw less than a quarter of their students graduate on time.



KEY FINDING 2:

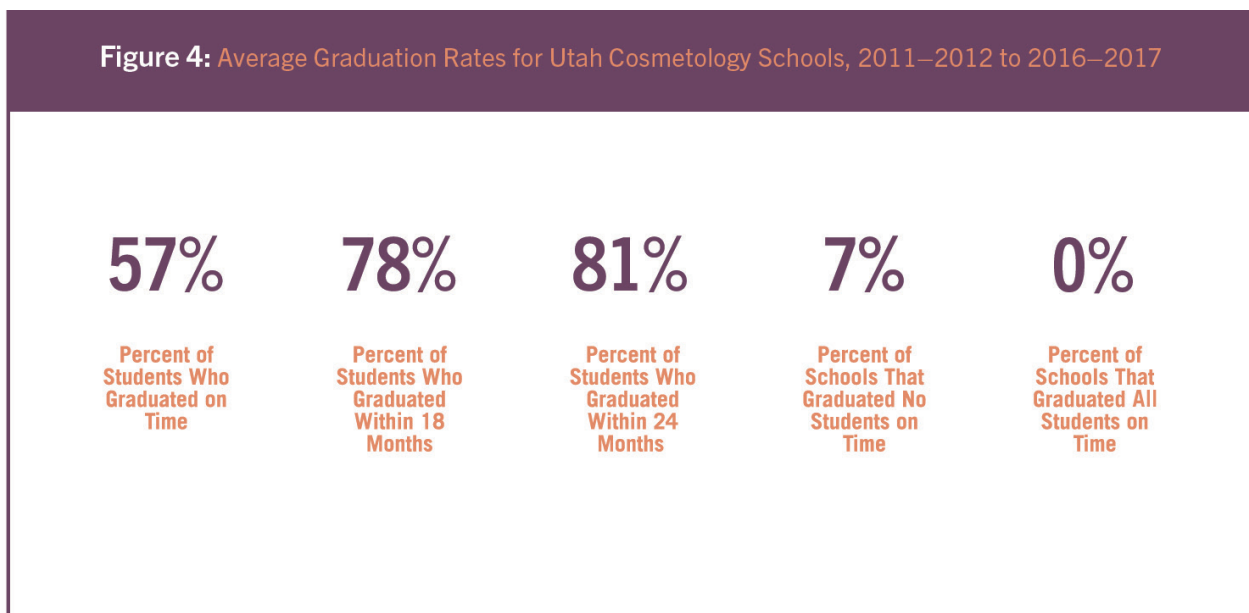
Cosmetology programs in Utah rarely graduate students on time, delaying aspiring cosmetologists' entry into the workforce and increasing their debt burden.

The actual cost of completing cosmetology school may be much higher than the total program costs reported for any given year. This is because Utah cosmetology schools (n=7–12) often fail to graduate students on time, or within “normal time”—that is, the 12 months programs are designed to take on average. Figure 4 displays the average percentage of students who graduated on time per school, within 18 months (150% of normal time) or within 24 months (200% of normal time) over the study period.

As Figure 4 shows, the average cosmetolo-

gy school graduated about half its students on time and roughly four in five within 150% or 200% of normal time. Put differently, the average school failed to graduate a fifth of its students in twice the time programs were supposed to take. And these averages mask the degree of variation among individual schools. In any given year, about a quarter of schools saw less than a quarter of their students graduate on time. Over the entire study period, 7% of schools graduated no students on time and no school graduated all of its students on time.³⁷

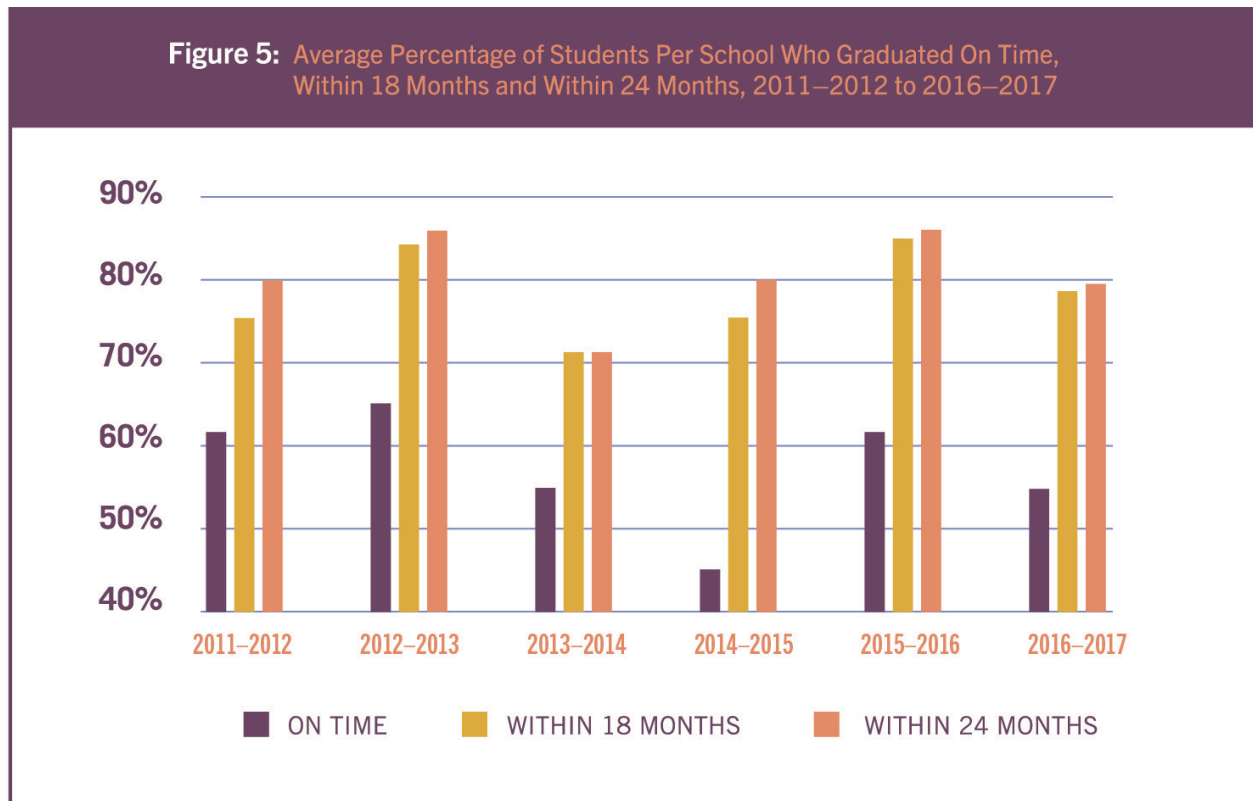
Figure 4: Average Graduation Rates for Utah Cosmetology Schools, 2011–2012 to 2016–2017



Source: IPEDS.

As can be seen in Figure 5, average graduation rates were not driven by any particular year. Between the 2011–2012 and 2016–2017 school years, the average percentage of students per school per year who graduated on time ranged

from a low of 45.3% to a high of 64.9%. Over the same time period, the average percentage of students per school per year who graduated within 24 months ranged from 71.2% to 85.9%.



Source: IPEDS.

Such overages cost students both time and money. In addition to being held back from entering the workforce, students who do not graduate on time may be forced to pay additional sums. Some cosmetology schools require students to complete their programs within a certain amount of time and charge them extra tuition or fees if they fail to do so, which may increase students' debt burden. For example, the

Taylor Andrews Academy in Provo charges students \$12.50 an hour for every hour they remain enrolled after their original expected graduation date.³⁸ Similarly, students of American Beauty Academy, with campuses in Payson and West Valley City, pay \$9.50 for each additional hour they need to complete the program's requirements.³⁹

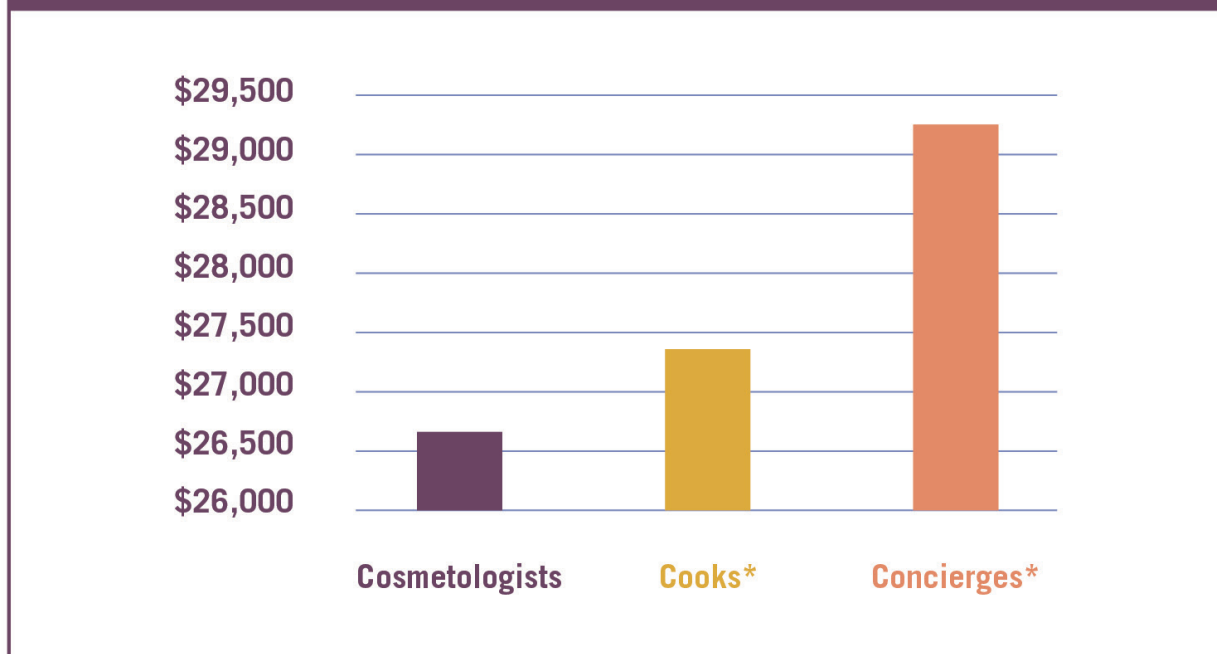
KEY FINDING 3:

If aspiring cosmetologists graduate and become licensed in Utah, they frequently end up in jobs where they earn low wages, likely making it difficult to repay loans.

Aspiring cosmetologists presumably assume these burdens because they believe going to cosmetology school will prepare them for well-paying work. Unfortunately, the reality is often less rosy. In Utah, cosmetologist salaries are largely comparable to those for occupations that do not have the same types of licensing burdens or that are not licensed at all. For example, according to 2020 Bureau of Labor Statistics data for Utah, cosmetologists make less than restaurant cooks or concierges (\$26,570 compared to \$27,380

and \$29,370, respectively; see Figure 6).⁴⁰ These occupations do not see large pluralities of people taking out student loans (and thus going into debt) before they are allowed enter them, nor do these occupations have similar licensing requirements. And yet people working in them make more money than cosmetologists. Such low wages likely make it difficult for many cosmetologists to make ends meet—and repay their student loans.

Figure 6: Median Salaries of Cosmetologists, Restaurant Cooks and Concierges, 2020



* No burdensome state licensure or education requirements.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The data indicate very few cosmetologists command celebrity-stylist wages. Yet, given the expense of attending cosmetology school, it seems likely many aspirants enter the field expecting more. Cosmetology schools are keen to encourage these great expectations. Their websites frequently assert that a career in cosmetology comes with far higher earning potential than is revealed by analyzing the actual numbers.

For example, the website for Cameo Col-

lege of Essential Beauty in Murray notes on its website that the national average salary for a cosmetologist is \$38,843, based on a 2007 survey from the National Accrediting Commission of Career Arts and Sciences.⁴¹ This was at a time when BLS reported that the national median salary for a cosmetologist was just \$24,550.⁴² And, indeed, a closer look at the NACCAS data reveals the salary estimate is based on guesswork coupled with unsupported assumptions.⁴³



KEY FINDING 4:

Our data suggest Utah's licensure requirements largely explain why cosmetology school takes as long as it does.

Our data suggest state licensure requirements largely explain why cosmetology school takes as long (and costs as much) as it does: Nearly all cosmetology program lengths (n=20–23) exactly match the hours required for licensure. During the 2016–2017 school year, 19 of 21 Utah cosmetology programs set their hours at 1,600, the number required for licensure. Lending further credence to the theory that state mandates drive cosmetology program hours, IJ's national study found similar results nationwide.

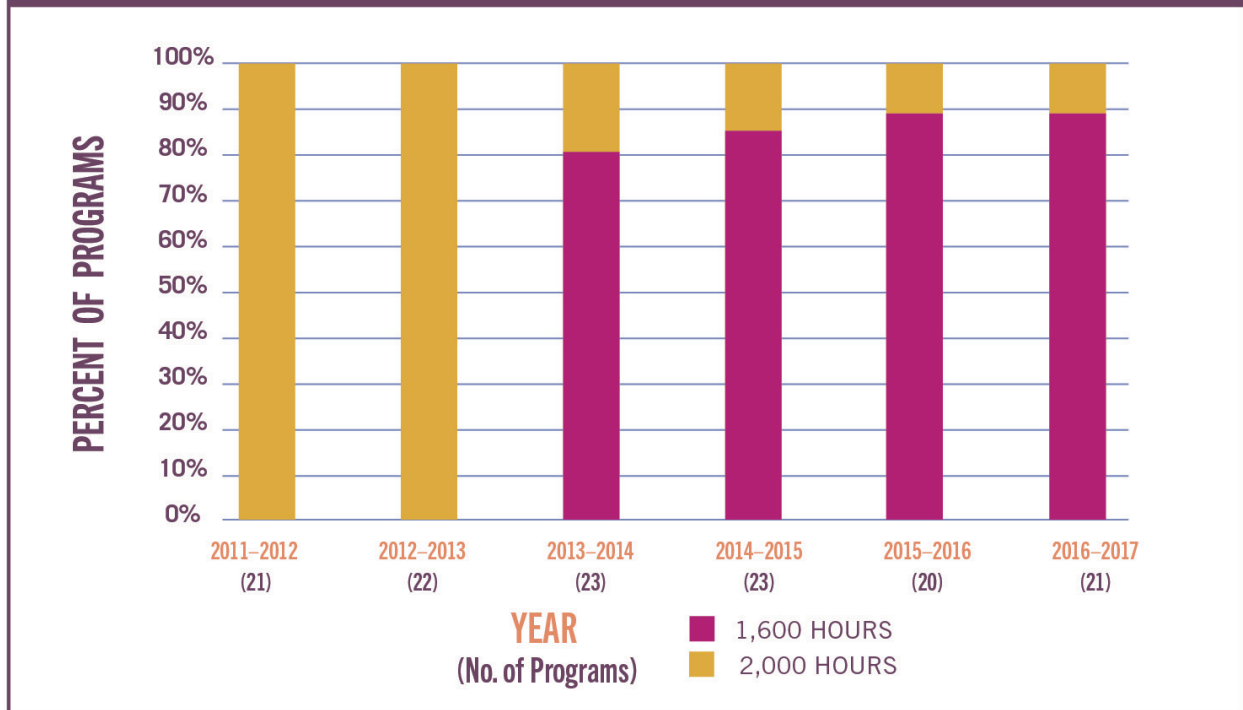
Moreover, after Utah lowered required education hours from 2,000 to 1,600 in March 2013,⁴⁴ over 80% of schools decreased their hours to match for the 2013–2014 school year. By the following school year, approximately 87% of schools had done the same. And by the year after that, all but two had. (See Figure 7.) IJ's national study found similar patterns for the three other states that decreased required educa-

tion hours during the study period.⁴⁵ This suggests schools will rapidly reduce their curriculum hours in response to reduced licensure requirements. From students' perspective, this makes sense. Aspiring cosmetologists need to meet state licensure requirements to work legally. Training beyond that is a waste of time and money—unless employers seek job candidates with more advanced credentials.

Indeed, the data suggest students may penalize schools that keep hours high despite reductions in state mandates: Schools that failed to reduce program hours to match licensing requirements saw enrollment declines. For example, Evans Hairstyling College in Cedar City did not reduce program hours during the study period. Over the 2013–2014 to 2016–2017 school years, the data show the school's enrollment dropped by almost 25%.



Figure 7: Utah Cosmetology Program Hours by Year, 2011–2012 to 2016–2017



Source: IPEDS.

In short, the near-universal match between state mandates and cosmetology program hours, including reductions in program hours following reductions in licensing hours, suggests employers are not demanding additional training. Furthermore, given how rapidly programs were able to reduce curriculum hours, there may be

nothing inherent to cosmetology that requires a certain number of hours. Cosmetology did not suddenly become less dangerous or less sophisticated, yet programs were able to shed hundreds of hours in requirements almost overnight. Instead, it appears that government mandates drive cosmetology school program hours.

DISCUSSION

These findings suggest the current licensing and training system is not serving aspiring cosmetologists. To legally enter the field, they generally must pay for lengthy and expensive schooling that often fails to graduate students on time, delaying their entry into the workforce and increasing their costs. If they graduate and secure a job, pay will typically be low, which means they may have a difficult time making ends meet and repaying the loans that financed their education. Especially given that most cosmetology students come from lower-income backgrounds, these findings are concerning.

The current system may also fail to serve consumers of beauty services. Generally, consumers do not care about a service provider's licensing status. A recent study found that, among those who recently paid for home improvement services, what was most important in selecting a service were reviews, prices and recommendations.⁴⁶ Less than 1% of people identified licensure as an important factor in their decision making. Moreover, it is not clear Utah's cosmetology licensing requirements are tightly linked to protecting public health and safety. Not only does the state require more training for cosmetologists than it does for EMTs, but only small portions of required training explicitly address health and safety. To the extent curricular mandates extend beyond legitimate health and safety goals, additional training may serve only to limit entry into the field, suppressing competition and innovation.

In addition, the current system is likely a bad deal for taxpayers—the funders of Pell Grants and guarantors of government loans used to finance pricey cosmetology schools. Indeed, prior research has found evidence that Title IV—that is, federal aid-eligible—for-profit cosmetology schools raise tuition above the actual cost of providing education to capture federal aid dollars.

Using data from Florida, the study found Title IV for-profit cosmetology schools charge almost 70% more for tuition than their non-Title IV counterparts. The study also determined school quality, as measured by pass rates on state licensing exams, was not a driver of price differences.⁴⁷

This suggests many cosmetology schools are charging more money without providing higher quality training because taxpayer-financed federal student aid allows students to pay higher prices. Another study lends further support to this proposition: It found that more generous student aid encourages entry into for-profit institutions⁴⁸—such as those that account for all of the Utah cosmetology schools in our sample (n=7–12). Put differently, taxpayer support may encourage students to choose more expensive schools and take on more debt while also encouraging schools to raise tuition. Taxpayers foot the bill, students are left with more debt and schools reap the rewards—without providing a better education.

Who is served by the current system of state-mandated cosmetology schooling? Considerable scholarship suggests licensing policy is dominated by occupational insiders, who may use regulation to limit competition and keep prices high.⁴⁹ In the case of cosmetology, state licensing requirements give cosmetology schools a captive audience of students—and likely subject that audience to longer, costlier schooling than they would experience absent licensing laws.

In short, the high costs of cosmetology school appear disconnected from the rewards cosmetologists can expect to reap, to say nothing of any risks the occupation might pose to the public. Instead, the entire system may be a failed model of professional development that primarily works to transfer wealth from students and taxpayers to cosmetology schools.

Cosmetology licensing imposes heavy burdens on aspirants, and these burdens do not pay off in the form of well-paying jobs. Moreover, these licensing burdens bear little relation to public health and safety.



CONCLUSION

Among the widely agreed-upon principles of sound licensing policy are that less restrictive alternatives should be preferred and that, if an occupation is licensed, requirements should be narrowly tailored to address public health and safety concerns without unnecessarily interfering with open occupational entry.⁵⁰

With that in mind, Utah policymakers should closely examine the state's cosmetology/barber licensing law to determine whether it is truly protecting public health and safety—or whether it is instead simply keeping would-be workers out of work. Among the questions policymakers should ask:

- Are there obviously safe niche practices that could be exempted from licensure altogether?
- How much of state-mandated curricula addresses the government's interest in public health and safety—and is the rest necessary?
- To the extent cosmetology practices are already regulated to protect public health with safety and sanitation mandates—typically enforced through inspections—how much does licensure add to these regulations?⁵¹

Some of these questions are already on Utah policymakers' minds. In recent years, Utah policymakers have shown concern about the effects of unnecessary and unnecessarily high licensing burdens on workers. In addition to freeing providers of niche cosmetology services like hair braiding and blow dry bars from licensure and modestly reducing cosmetology licensing hours, they have reined in licensing burdens across many occupations. Perhaps most notably, they dramatically scaled back licensing requirements for the construction trades, including reducing the experience requirement for general contractors from four years to two years and eliminating altogether the two-year experience requirement

for specialty contractors.⁵² And last year, they adopted universal license recognition, allowing new residents to convert licenses from other states into Utah licenses.⁵³

But policymakers can and should think bigger. Governor Cox's executive order provides an opportunity to do just that. As this policy brief illustrates, cosmetology licensing imposes heavy burdens on aspirants, and these burdens do not pay off in the form of well-paying jobs. Moreover, these licensing burdens bear little relation to public health and safety. These findings suggest policymakers should take a hard look at whether the state's license is the proper way to regulate cosmetology.

To protect the public from what risks cosmetology may pose, policymakers should consider requiring only brief training in health and safety basics, similar to that required for people working in blow dry bars. As it stands, cosmetology schools cover health and safety topics during just a fraction of the 1,600 hours required for licensure. The state could otherwise regulate cosmetology via facility or salon licenses subject to county or municipal inspections, similar to how restaurants are regulated.⁵⁴ Indeed, salons in at least some Utah jurisdictions are already subject to sanitation regulations enforced through inspections.⁵⁵ And microblading is already regulated solely in this way.⁵⁶ And, of course, cosmetologists could still choose to attend cosmetology school, if they wished to learn skills and signal to employers and customers that they have obtained formal training.

While several states have considered similar moves,⁵⁷ none has so far adopted this program. This means Utah could be the first. This pioneering reform program would advance the state's interest in protecting public health and safety without barring entry to cosmetology and related occupations. This would also leave consumers, not the government, in charge of deciding whether a person is good at cutting hair or doing nails—as they should be.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Utah Exec. Order No. 2021-01 (Jan. 4, 2021), <https://rules.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/Utah-Executive-Order-No.-2021-01.pdf>
- 2 S.B. 87, 64th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2021). Former state Rep. Marc Roberts introduced a similar bill late in the 2020 legislative session. H.B. 410, 63d Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2020).
- 3 Imlay, A. (2021, Jan. 29). Should shampooing, blow-drying and styling hair require a cosmetology license? *Deseret News*. <https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/1/29/22252723/legislature-asks-do-you-need-hairstyling-license-for-blow-dry-bars-salons-speak-against-bill>
- 4 S.B. 87, 64th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2021).
- 5 S.B. 87, 64th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2021).
- 6 Woodruff, D. (2021, Jan. 25). Utah's 'blow dry bar bill' sparks heated debate over cosmetology licensing. *KUTV*. <https://kutv.com/news/utah-legislature-2021/utahs-blow-dry-bar-bill-sparks-heated-debate-over-cosmetology-licensing>
- 7 *Leetham v. McGinn*, 524 P.2d 323, 325 (Utah 1974). *Leetham*, coincidentally, concerned a licensed cosmetologist who was sanctioned for cutting a man's hair without a barbering license.
- 8 Imlay, 2021; Woodruff, 2021; Franchi, J. (2021, Jan. 31). Utah cosmetologists protest against bill to loosen license requirements. *Fox 13 Salt Lake City*. <https://www.fox13now.com/news/politics/utah-cosmetologists-protest-against-bill-to-loosen-license-requirements>
- 9 S.B. 87, 64th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2021); Utah Governor Spencer J. Cox. (2021, Mar. 16). Gov. Cox signs 172 bills [Press release]. <https://governor.utah.gov/2021/03/16/gov-cox-signs-172-bills/>
- 10 Pethokoukis, J. (2014, Apr. 21). The terrible economic burden of occupational licensing [Blog post]. <https://www.aei.org/publication/the-terrible-economic-burden-of-occupational-licensing/>; Carpenter, D. M. (2018, Aug. 13). You'll need a license for that job. *Summer 2018 Insider*. Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/insider/summer-2018-insider/youll-need-license-job>; Kearney, M. S., Hershbein, B., & Boddy, D. (2015, Jan. 28). Nearly 30 percent of workers in the U.S. need a license to perform their job: It is time to examine occupational licensing practices [Blog post]. http://www.hamiltonproject.org/blog/nearly_30_percent_of_workers_in_the_u.s._need_a_license_to_perform_their_job; Trump, D. J. (2019, June 13). *Remarks by President Trump in working lunch with governors on workforce freedom and mobility*. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-working-lunch-governors-workforce-freedom-mobility/>; Department of the Treasury Office of Economic Policy, Council of Economic Advisers, & Department of Labor. (2015). *Occupational licensing: A framework for policymakers*. Washington, DC: White House. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/licensing_report_final_nonembargo.pdf; Wilson, J. J. (2011, Apr. 25). African hairbraider files federal suit to untangle Utah's cosmetology regime [Press release]. Arlington, VA: Institute for Justice. <https://ij.org/press-release/utah-hairbraiding-release-4-26-2011/>; H.B. 238, 60th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2013).
- 11 See, e.g., Kleiner, M. M., & Vorotnikov, E. S. (2018). *At what cost? State and national estimates of the economic costs of occupational licensing*. Arlington, VA: Institute for Justice. <https://ij.org/report/at-what-cost/>; Kleiner, M. M., & Vorotnikov, E. (2017). Analyzing occupational licensing among the states. *Journal of Regulatory Economics*, 52, 132–158; Kleiner, M. M., & Krueger, A. B. (2013). Analyzing the extent and influence of occupational licensing on the labor market. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 31(S1, pt. 2), S173–S202; Kleiner, M. M., & Krueger, A. B. (2010). The prevalence and effects of occupational licensing. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 48(4), 676–687.
- 12 Menjou, M., Bednarczuk, M., & Hunter, A. (Forthcoming 2021). *Beauty school debt and dropouts: How state cosmetology licensing fails aspiring beauty workers*. Arlington, VA: Institute for Justice.
- 13 *Leetham v. McGinn*, 524 P.2d 323, 325 (Utah 1974) (holding that “The right to engage in a profession or occupation is a property right, which is entitled to protection by the law and the courts. There are some professions and occupations, which require special skill, learning and experience, and the public ordinarily does not have sufficient knowledge to determine the qualifications of the practitioner. To protect the public health, safety, and welfare, the legislature under the police power may establish reasonable standards with which one must comply as a prerequisite to engage in certain occupations. However, under the police power, the means selected must bear a real and substantial relation to the objective sought to be attained.”). See also, e.g., Ross, J. (2017). *The inverted pyramid: 10 less restrictive alternatives to occupational licensing*. Arlington, VA: Institute for Justice. <https://ij.org/report/the-inverted-pyramid/>; Hemphill, T. A., & Carpenter, D. M. (2016). Occupations: A hierarchy of regulatory options. *Regulation*, 39(3), 20–24. https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/regulation/2016/9/regulation-v39n3-5_0.pdf; Little Hoover Commission. (2016). *Jobs for Californians: Strategies to ease occupational licensing barriers* (Report #234). Sacramento, CA. <http://www.lhc.ca.gov/sites/lhc.ca.gov/files/Reports/234/Report234.pdf>; Kleiner, M. M. (2015). *Reforming occupational licensing policies* (Discussion Paper 2015-01). Washington, DC: The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/THP_KleinerDiscPaper_final.pdf; Carpenter, D. M., & McGrath, L. (2014). *The balance between public protection and the right to earn a living* [Resource brief]. Lexington, KY: Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation. <https://ij.org/report/the-balance-between-public-protection-and-the-right-to-earn-a-living/>
- 14 Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2020, May). *Occupational employment and wage statistics*. <https://data.bls.gov/oes/>. This figure does not include people working in related subspecialties, such as “manicurists or pedicurists” or “skincare specialists.”
- 15 Carpenter, D. M., Knepper, L., Sweetland, K., & McDonald, J. (2017). *License to work: A national study of burdens from occupational licensing* (2nd ed.) Arlington, VA: Institute for Justice. <http://ij.org/report/license-work-2/>
- 16 This ranking is based on new calculations from IJ. In the second edition of *License to Work*, Utah's licensing requirements for cosmetology ranked as the 43rd most burdensome in the state. Carpenter et al., 2017. However, in the years since, Utah has slashed its licensing requirements for various contractor occupations. H.B. 187, 63d Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2019). As a result, cosmetology now ranks far worse than it did in 2017. See Carpenter et al., 2017, <https://ij.org/report/license-work-2/updates/>

- 17 Carpenter et al., 2017, <https://ij.org/report/license-work-2/ltw-occupation-profiles/ltw2-cosmetologist/>
- 18 Carpenter et al., 2017, <https://ij.org/report/license-work-2/ltw-occupation-profiles/ltw2-cosmetologist/>
- 19 Carpenter et al., 2017. This is not to argue that the problem is too lax requirements for EMTs; rather, the problem is too stringent requirements for cosmetologists.
- 20 See the EU Single Market regulated professions database: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm?action=profession&id_profession=12019&tab=countries&qid=2&mode=asc&pagenum=1&maxrows=15#top; Hair Council. (n.d.). *About us*. <https://www.haircouncil.org.uk/pages/about.html>; Conway, L. (2019). *Regulation of hairdressers* (Briefing Paper No. 8592). House of Commons Library, UK Parliament. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8592/>
- 21 Hair Council, n.d.; Conway, 2019.
- 22 Utah Code § 58-11a-302(4); Utah Admin. Code r. 156-11a-705. Utah does not have specific hour requirements for any of the 28 topics it mandates be included in cosmetology/barber curricula. Those topics include business and salon management, basic hairstyling, haircuts, razor cutting, and mustache and beard design.
- 23 Taylor Andrews Academy. (2021). *Student catalog*. <https://taylorandrew.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NEW-Student-Catalog-2020.docx-2.pdf>. In line with the methodology used for Carpenter et al. (2017), we converted education clock hours to days by first dividing hour requirements by six, which is about how much time a person might spend per day in full-time education. If the total number of clock hours was equal to or more than 30, we converted this to weeks by dividing by five, to represent a five-day work week. We then converted weeks back to days by multiplying by seven.
- 24 New Horizons Beauty Academy. (2020). *Catalog*. <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/f8bc61ceed524a8ab5baec45c52e4330/files/uploaded/Catalog%20November%202020.pdf>. See the previous note for an explanation of how we converted education clock hours to days.
- 25 Wilson, 2011; *Clayton v. Steinagel*, 885 F. Supp. 2d 1212 (D. Utah 2012); Wilson, J. J. (2012, Aug. 9). Federal judge strikes down Utah's hairbraiding licensing scheme [Press release]. Arlington, VA: Institute for Justice. <https://ij.org/press-release/utah-hairbraiding-release-8-9-2012/>
- 26 H.B. 238, 60th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2013). In 2021, the Legislature expanded the state's licensing exemption for hair braiders to cover hair stylists who work with wefts of hair, provided they do not use glue or tape to apply them. H.B. 126, 64th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2021).
- 27 Kewish, A. (2016, Dec. 12). Raising eyebrows: New 'microblading' trend not regulated by state. *KSL.com*. <https://www.ksl.com/article/42554829/raising-eyebrows-new-microblading-trend-not-regulated-by-state>; Gephardt, M., & Poe, M. (2019, May 14). Razor rules: No license require to perform microblading in Utah. *KUTV*. <https://kutv.com/news/local/razor-rules-no-license-required-to-perform-microblading-in-utah>
- 28 Kewish, 2016.
- 29 S.B. 87, 64th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2021).
- 30 H.B. 238, 60th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2013).
- 31 One exception is a study that estimated the impact of for-profit college attendance on employment rates and earnings. Cellini, S. R., & Turner, N. (2019). Gainfully employed? Assessing the employment and earnings of for-profit college students using administrative data. *Journal of Human Resources*, 54(2), 342–370. That study found that for-profit cosmetology programs generated higher returns relative to their public-sector counterparts. The authors speculate this may be because “several for-profit schools are directly linked to high-end salons and enjoy name-brand recognition.” Cellini and Turner, 2019, p. 359. They also note that *total* returns for for-profit cosmetology schools were negative. This may be because so many students drop out, leading to a negative earnings effect that negates the wage premium enjoyed by students who graduate. See Lam, B. (2016, June 1). Most for-profit students wind up worse off than if they had never enrolled in the first place. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/06/for-profit-earnings/485141/>. Another exception is Simpson, K. M., Hendrickson, C., Dwayne Norris, C. D., Vander Molen, R. J., Vestal, D., Kavanagh, K., Lilly, S., Rege, G. & Smith, D. (2016). *Examination of cosmetology licensing issues*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. That report, commissioned by the Professional Beauty Association, a beauty industry trade group, attempts to identify correlations between curriculum hours mandated by state law and various educational, employment and public safety outcomes. However, it contains several notable limitations. All analyses are correlational, and none control for variables that could influence the relationship between curriculum hours and outcomes. Several analyses examine only 11 states “of particular interest” without further explanation. And many analyses use a sample of schools from an accrediting organization, the National Accrediting Commission of Career Arts and Sciences, that includes non-cosmetology programs, such as barbering, esthetics, manicuring, massage therapy and cosmetology instruction—all of which have vastly different state-mandated curriculum hours.
- 32 In lieu of cosmetology school, aspiring cosmetologists can enter into an apprenticeship. Such an arrangement requires more hours than cosmetology school (2,500 hours vs. 1,600 hours). Utah Code § 58-11a-306(2), Utah Admin Code r. 156-11a-801.
- 33 This includes tuition, school fees, books and supplies but not room and board.
- 34 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). *CPI inflation calculator*. https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm
- 35 H.B. 238, 60th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2013).
- 36 Federal Student Aid. (n.d.). *Federal Pell Grants are usually awarded only to undergraduate students*. <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants/pell/>
- 37 The number of schools in any given year ranged from seven to 12, for a total of 43 observations. These figures are calculated on that basis.

- 38 Taylor Andrews Academy, 2021.
- 39 American Beauty Academy. (2019). *Course catalog and student handbook*. <https://americanbeautyutah.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-course-catalog.pdf>
- 40 Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2020.
- 41 Cameo College of Essential Beauty. (n.d.). *Program details: Earnings*. <https://cameocollege.com/programs/cosmetology/>
- 42 Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2007, May 17). Occupational employment and wages, 2006 [News release]. Washington, DC. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ocwage_05172007.pdf
- 43 The NACCAS data come from a survey of salon owners who were asked to estimate the wages of people working in their salons. Not only did the survey assume, without evidence, that the salon owners were capable of reliably estimating worker wages, but it also assumed, again without evidence, that all estimates under \$20,000 reflected part-time work and, without justification, omitted them from the average. Lee, J. B. (2007). *Job demand in the cosmetology industry, 2007: A national survey conducted for the National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences*. Bethesda, MD: JLB Associates. <http://elibrary.naccas.org/InfoRouter/docs/Public/Website%20Documents/2007%20Job%20Demand%20Survey/2007%20Job%20Demand%20Survey%2012-19-07.pdf>
- 44 H.B. 238, 60th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2013).
- 45 West Virginia reduced licensing hours from 2,000 to 1,800 in 2013; Wisconsin from 1,800 to 1,550 in 2013; and Nevada from 1,800 to 1,600 in 2015. H.B. 2777, 82d Leg., Gen. Sess. (W. Va. 2015); W. Va. Code R. §§ 3-1-1 to 3-1-12 (2013); S.B. 395, 101st Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wis. 2013); A.B. 246, 78th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Nev. 2015); 218 Nev. Reg. Admin Regs. R064-15A (Dec. 21, 2015).
- 46 Farronato, C., Fradkin, A., Larsen, B., & Brynjolfsson, E. (2020). *Consumer protection in an online world: An analysis of occupational licensing* (NBER Working Paper 26601). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- 47 Cellini, S. R., & Goldin, C. (2014). Does federal student aid raise tuition? New evidence on for-profit colleges. *American Economic Journal*, 6(4), 174–206.
- 48 Cellini, S. R. (2010). Financial aid and for-profit colleges: Does aid encourage entry? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 29(3), 526–552.
- 49 See, e.g., Mellor, W., & Carpenter, D. M. (2016). *Bottlenecks: Gaming the government for power and private profit*. New York, NY: Encounter Books; Kleiner and Vorotnikov, 2018.
- 50 See, e.g., Department of the Treasury Office of Economic Policy et al., 2015; National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, & The Council of State Governments. (2020). *Occupational licensing final report: Assessing state policies and practices: Project overview and lessons learned from the Occupational Licensing Learning Consortium*. Washington, DC: National Conference of State Legislatures. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/occupational-licensing-final-report-assessing-state-policies-and-practices637425196.aspx>; Schmitt, K. (2018). *Questions a legislator should ask* (3rd ed). Nicholasville, KY: Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation; Ross, 2017; Hemphill and Carpenter, 2016; Little Hoover Commission, 2016; Kleiner, 2015; Carpenter and McGrath, 2014.
- 51 See, generally, Schmitt, 2018. This book provides a framework for examining licensing policy.
- 52 H.B. 187, 63d Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2019).
- 53 S.B. 23, 63d Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2020).
- 54 See Institute for Justice. (2020). *Model Salon Inspection Act* [Model legislation]. Arlington, VA. <https://ij.org/activism/legislation/model-legislation/model-salon-inspection-act/>
- 55 See, e.g., Salt Lake County. (n.d.). *Health Department: Regulated businesses: Cosmetology*. <https://slco.org/health/business-regulation/regulated-businesses/>
- 56 Kewish, 2016.
- 57 HB 1364, 2021 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Ind. 2021); SF 691, 92d Leg., Reg. Sess. (Minn. 2021); HB 1945, 111th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Tenn. 2020); H.B. 1705, 86th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2019).

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