



# The State of Career Technical Education: An Analysis of States' Perkins V Priorities

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In summer 2018, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) was signed into law. Perkins has historically afforded states significant flexibility in how they support their Career Technical Education (CTE) systems and programs, including how they direct resources, define quality and measure success. Perkins V maintains these flexibilities and the focus on program and system improvement. Perhaps most importantly, Perkins V planning provided states the opportunity to reflect, engage with a wide array of stakeholders and partners, reaffirm key priorities and commitments, and identify new opportunities to support learners and their industry partners.

**The State of Career Technical Education: An Analysis of States' Perkins V Priorities** examines how states have leveraged the development of Perkins V state plans to advance the dual priorities of expanding quality and increasing equity within their CTE systems. While there

is no one-size-fits-all approach to Perkins V planning, Advance CTE has identified common aspects of states' Perkins V plans that are indicative of a comprehensive and cohesive state plan, a number of which go beyond the law's requirements and expectations.



A shared **statewide vision** that has a clear through line to the major decisions made in the state plan, including how and where states direct their funding. Highlights include:

- ◆ Ninety percent of states are using the **Reserve Fund** option, with 27 percent of states using the full 15 percent of the Reserve Fund that is allowed under the law.
- ◆ States' most common uses of the Reserve Fund include supporting **programs of study** (53 percent of states), closing **equity gaps** (37 percent), expanding **rural CTE** (31 percent), and expanding **dual enrollment and articulation** (24 percent).



Mechanisms for ongoing and meaningful **alignment and collaboration** across the K-12, postsecondary and workforce systems at the state and local levels. Highlights include:

- ◆ Ninety percent of states are sharing **labor market information** across systems, and 53 percent are using **common definitions** for "high skill," "high wage" and "in demand."
- ◆ Seventy-eight percent of states report establishing **feedback loops** aimed at gathering regular input from secondary and postsecondary CTE practitioners, while only 43 percent of states have feedback loops to gather regular input from families, learners and community members.
- ◆ Eighteen percent of states submitted a **Combined State Plan** — a single plan that fulfills the requirements of both Perkins V and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- ◆ Sixteen percent of states are encouraging **secondary-postsecondary consortia**, with 6 percent of states requiring them for all eligible recipients.
- ◆ Just 32 percent of states are going beyond the minimum requirements outlined in the law to explicitly require or encourage some degree of collaboration across secondary and postsecondary institutions in the development of the **Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment** (CLNA).



A **commitment to equity** through the direction of resources, a focus on the needs of different populations of learners, and capacity building within CTE systems to recruit and support learners and close opportunity gaps. Highlights include:

- ◆ Closing equity gaps and addressing the individualized needs of each learner are major priorities in many states' Perkins V state plans, including a focus on **targeted technical assistance** (82 percent of states), **professional development** (80 percent) and the use of **State Leadership dollars** (69 percent). Nearly two-thirds of states are going above and beyond the requirements of the CLNA and/or the local application to prioritize closing equity gaps.
- ◆ Two-thirds of states (63 percent) are coordinating substantially with other state offices or agencies to deliver services to learners, and more than half (53 percent) are providing **dashboards or other data tools** to support equity gap analyses at the local level.
- ◆ Nearly all states (90 percent) are formally allowing Perkins V funds to support **middle grades CTE**. About half of states (49 percent) report that they are allowing funds to be used starting as early as grade 5. However, more than a third of states (37 percent) do not include any details within their plans regarding middle grades CTE efforts.



A commitment to **quality** driven by support for programs of study and the expansion of meaningful work-based learning experiences, credentials of value, and dual enrollment and articulation opportunities. Highlights include:

- ◆ More than three-quarters of states are prioritizing CTE **programs of study** above and beyond the minimum requirement in Perkins V, with about a quarter of states reporting that all Perkins and state funds are delivered through programs of study.
- ◆ Two-thirds of states include **work-based learning** in their definitions for size, scope and quality, which states use as a litmus test to determine Perkins V funding eligibility, among other uses. Nearly half of all states (49 percent) are prioritizing work-based learning as part of their CLNA or local application process, and 47 percent of states include work-based learning as a factor when approving new or existing CTE programs.
- ◆ Seventy-six percent of states include **credentials** as a component in their size, scope and quality definitions, and 41 percent of states require credentials as part of the state's program approval process. Twenty-seven percent of states reference developing or maintaining state-developed lists of approved credentials of value in their Perkins plans.
- ◆ More than 60 percent of states incorporate **dual enrollment and articulation** in their definitions of size, scope and quality. A third of states refer to developing statewide articulation agreements in their Perkins plans. And about half of states include dual enrollment or articulation as part of their CTE program approval process.



A comprehensive system to attract, retain and develop **CTE instructors** and other professionals who reflect the demographic makeup of the learners they teach. Highlights include:

- ◆ Nearly three-quarters of all states are providing **targeted professional development** for specific groups of educators, administrators or other CTE professionals. Forty-five percent of states are including **quality instructors** in their definitions for size, scope and quality, and 47 percent of states are going beyond the requirements laid out in the law to **prioritize supporting CTE professionals** in their CLNA or local application.
- ◆ One area of future work is ensuring that the CTE teacher workforce is representative of the learners they serve. Only 10 percent of states have identified in their plans any **explicit recruitment activities** focused on diversifying the CTE teaching field.



A commitment to **data-driven decisionmaking** supported by data quality, public reporting and meaningful accountability indicators. Highlights include:

- ◆ More than half of states (53 percent) have selected **work-based learning** as one of their program quality indicators. Forty-three percent of states have elected to use **recognized postsecondary credential attainment** as at least one of their secondary CTE program accountability measures. A quarter of states have selected **postsecondary credit attainment** for this purpose.
- ◆ About a third of states have selected **more than one program quality indicator**, with four states selecting all three options. Twenty-nine percent of states have selected at least one other program quality indicator outside the three required options.
- ◆ At least a third of states report having a **secondary concentrator definition** that is distinct from the one put forward by Perkins V but still meets the statutory requirements of the law, including 20 percent of states that are requiring that a learner must complete at least one intermediate, advanced or capstone course to qualify as a secondary CTE concentrator.



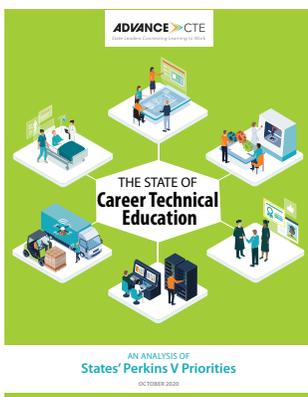
A strong system of **supports** to ensure fidelity of implementation across districts and institutions.

States have sought to make the most of the Perkins V planning process in a number of critical ways. States overwhelmingly have recognized the need to systemically and meaningfully attend to the issue of equity to better support each learner. They also are building upon Perkins' and CTE's legacy of connecting systems, promoting collaboration with and alignment of education and workforce development systems. This focus is especially evident in states' bold statewide visions for CTE. Many states also have taken up the challenge of reconfiguring their accountability frameworks to signal what they value most within their CTE systems.

In other areas, the work is just beginning. States have put a significant amount of time and effort into the development of their first-ever CLNAs. As state CTE systems mature, these processes will be revisited, presenting states with the opportunity to further refine and strengthen their efforts and deepen their impact over

time. In a few years, we will have a better sense of whether the intended power and promise of the CLNA — to purposefully interrupt the historical distribution of Perkins funds and instead intentionally focus resources on high-impact activities that close equity gaps, ensure learner access to high-quality CTE programs, and further align CTE to the needs of the labor market — have been realized.

Importantly, this analysis focuses on plans and not on subsequent implementation, which is the final “hallmark” of a strong state Perkins V plan. These plans are simply the first step of a much longer journey as states set out to implement their visions for CTE and refine their systems to improve program quality and equitably serve each learner. Even with the best-laid plans, states will likely need to make adjustments, reprioritize and otherwise adapt to stay responsive to both learners and the wider economy.



To view the full report, visit <https://careertech.org/resource/state-cte-perkins-v>.