

Cheat Sheet: Opportunities for Employer Involvement in CTE

Schools and colleges across the nation have found innovative ways to connect with industry to strengthen their Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and programs of study. However, with a growing skills gap and rapidly changing workplace, more must be done to ensure educational institutions have the capacity to prepare each student to succeed in today's economy. It is critical that business and industry leaders play an active role by providing their expertise, time, and resources in true partnership with state and local education leaders to deliver on the value and promise of CTE. There are many ways that employers can partner with states and local schools and postsecondary institutions, ranging greatly in the capacity and commitment required. With the 2018 passage of the new federal law governing CTE (the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)), there are more opportunities than ever for industry leaders to get involved in CTE.

What is CTE?

Career Technical Education (CTE) provides middle school, high school, postsecondary and adult learners with the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for successful careers. Learners enrolled in CTE programs progress along a pathway of increasingly specific academic and technical courses. They often have the opportunity to participate in internships, engage with employers and apply what they are learning through hands-on projects.

Interested in getting involved in any of the activities below? If your business or organization has a statewide presence or is interested in coordinating involvement in any of the opportunities below at the state level, contact your state's State CTE Director ([listed online](#)). If your business or organization is interested in getting involved in a program, school, district, or institution in a particular local area, contact your local school district's CTE coordinator or the office of workforce development at an area technical center or community or technical college. If you are looking for more information about CTE funding and performance data, you can find [state profiles online](#).

Getting Involved with the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V):

This law reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), which is a federal education program that invests in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs in all 50 states and the territories. Over eight million secondary learners and nearly four million postsecondary learners are enrolled in CTE programs that benefit from Perkins nationwide

- Participating in Perkins planning at the state level: States designate an eligible agency to administer Perkins, and this agency is required to submit a state plan to the U.S. Department of Education in order to receive Perkins funds. The first full plans are due April 2020, but there are

regular opportunities for revisions in the future. The Perkins eligible agency must engage with a number of entities within the state on state plan development and any future revisions. Representatives of business and industry and employers play an important role as stakeholders during this process, providing labor market data, feedback on draft plans and input along the way.

- Participating in Perkins planning at the local level: Each eligible recipient of Perkins funds (e.g., local school districts, community colleges, area technical centers, etc.) must submit a local application to the eligible agency for Perkins funding. The local recipient is required to consult with a number of groups as they conduct a needs assessment related to their CTE programs and develop the local application, and afterward in a continuing consultation role. Representatives of business and industry and employers can be key partners and provide information on the labor market, input about what is needed in the local area and feedback throughout the process.
- Forming a consortia to apply for a national competitive grant program: Perkins V authorized an innovation and modernization program that will be administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The first grant application was due in June 2019 and future grants are expected to be awarded every three years. Employers have the opportunity to form a consortia with at least two education agencies and at least one stakeholder group (such as parents and students) to apply for grants that identify, support and rigorously evaluate evidence-based and innovative strategies and activities to improve and modernize CTE and align workforce skills with labor market needs.

Getting Involved with CTE at the State and Local levels

Guest speaking: Industry experts can facilitate student learning by guest lecturing. This enables students in CTE and core academic classes alike to make connections between their coursework and real-life careers. Industry professionals can also work with educators to integrate technical and academic learning in a way that is relevant and motivating for students.

Participating in a career day event: Career days allow schools, districts, and institutions to invite employers to share information about their industry and connect with interested students or the community at large.

Competition judging: Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) host events at the local, state, and national levels for students to compete with their peers. These events give students an opportunity



to demonstrate competencies in their chosen career field. Industry professionals can volunteer to judge these competitions, providing much-needed expertise and ensuring that students are being judged using workforce-relevant standards. Similarly, CTE programs may bring industry and community partners in to review and assess students' capstone presentations and portfolios.

Providing job shadowing opportunities or student field trips: Employers can host students for a day at their place of business, either individually or in small groups, so that students can see real-world examples of careers in action, as well as be exposed to the workplace.

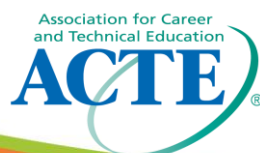
Offering intensive work-based learning opportunities: Industry experts can engage students by offering more intensive work-based learning opportunities, such as internships and apprenticeships, which bring students into the workplace to connect with industry experts and develop career competencies through hands-on experiences.

Mentoring and advising students: Industry experts can support student learning by providing mentorship and career advice to students. Many schools and institutions host mentoring programs to connect students with industry leaders. Mentoring involves a limited time commitment from industry professionals, but also allows students to benefit from expert career guidance.

Hosting teacher externships: Employers can help instructors and faculty keep pace with the rapidly changing workplace by hosting them for externships during breaks, such as over the summer. Educators benefit by seeing the latest updates in industry first-hand and refining their skills, and industry partners benefit by ensuring that these educators' students will be exposed to their field and what it looks like today.

Donate equipment: Employers may be in a prime position to donate equipment or supplies that meet industry standards, ensuring that students in secondary and postsecondary institutions have access to the appropriate instruments for the respective career fields they hope to enter.

Serving in an advisory capacity: Industry partners at the state and local levels can play an active role in identifying, developing, and regularly reviewing CTE programs of study. This may include serving on a formal advisory board or committee, or providing more informal feedback. Employers can provide guidance on industry standards, certifications or program facilities and equipment, and review program curriculum for secondary and postsecondary institutions. They may also advise on which occupations are in demand and which CTE programs in local districts and postsecondary institutions should be added, eliminated or revised.



Business Leaders United
for Workforce Partnerships

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
ADVANCE CTE
State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work



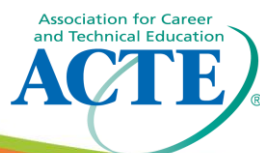
Full-time or part-time teaching: Retired or transitioning professionals may consider teaching roles at postsecondary institutions or make use of state alternative certification policies to enter secondary classrooms full time. However, many professionals may be able to teach only on a part-time basis. Several states have passed [policies to enable industry professionals to teach](#) at the secondary level for a limited number of hours per week or to co-teach with a teacher of record. At the postsecondary level, adjunct faculty opportunities can allow for part-time teaching.

Expanded Opportunities

This cheat sheet is meant as a starting point for businesses and employer involvement with CTE, but isn't exhaustive. There are many opportunities for partnerships that extend beyond the scope of this document.

Need More Information on How to Get Involved?

If your business or organization is interested in working with a particular program, school, district, community college or institution, contact your local school district's CTE coordinator or the office of workforce development at an area technical center or community or technical college. These individuals will be best-positioned to make the necessary connections to support your involvement.



Business Leaders United
for Workforce Partnerships

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
ADVANCE CTE
State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work