

State Work-Based Learning Toolkit Innovation Tracker



About This Tracker

During spring 2021, Advance CTE launched its [*Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education initiative*](#), which was developed with the input of more than 42 national organizations and 200 national, state and local leaders in the Career Technical Education (CTE) field. Aligning this vision with JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s *New Skills ready network (NSrn)* priorities gave Advance CTE the additional charge to ensure that learners across the country have equitable access to programs offering real-world work experience. As part of the NSrn initiative, Advance CTE has been tracking various aspects of CTE implementation including the accessibility of work-based learning (WBL) toolkits in each state. This analysis takes into account resources from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and three U.S. territories.

Of the 54 states and territories analyzed, 41 currently have publicly accessible WBL toolkits. Though each state has its own interpretation of WBL, the statutory definition per the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) is “sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field.” Many states have developed WBL toolkits as a means for disseminating information about the

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key components for effective WBL program implementation. Creating a WBL toolkit then becomes a matter of best practice, allowing industry partners to align their WBL opportunities with state CTE expectations.

Effective toolkits foster understanding between industry partners and states and create a useful resource for centralizing WBL goals, language and means of implementation. These toolkits create a framework to guide WBL programs by highlighting learning outcomes, legal expectations for learners, and best practices for program monitoring and administration. They may include learner training forms, employer resources or even evaluation and assessment forms. A well-crafted WBL toolkit allows school districts and industry partners to work together to create a pipeline of career pathways for future learners. The State Work-Based Learning Toolkit Innovation Tracker captures these toolkits in an effort to provide state and local leaders with real-life examples to adapt and implement in their own states and communities.

Analysis of States' WBL Toolkits

The state toolkits evaluated as part of this analysis share commonalities that should be considered standard elements in toolkit design. At minimum, each toolkit gives a state-specific definition of WBL and clearly describes the roles of learners and employers participating in the program. Many of these toolkits also detail clear guidelines for how each stakeholder is expected to engage in their roles within the program. Additionally, they provide guidance on learner progression and expected outcomes, allowing employers, learners and schools to benchmark and track learner progress and success.

Thirty-seven states have some form of public data reporting procedure to track learner enrollment and matriculation through their WBL programs. These data reporting systems range from employer self-reporting

to state-appointed record keepers or agencies. Public reporting of data shows a commitment to accountability and creates a place for meaningful dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders, even though data collection and public reporting around WBL remain nascent in many states. Transparency in reporting allows WBL to continue to provide the best service for learners, administrators and industry partners. Notably, while a few toolkits do address learners with disabilities or language barriers, few toolkits directly address equity, inequitable barriers to WBL, or how to ensure that each learner feels welcome in and is supported through meaningful WBL experiences. States should consider delving into this area going forward to ensure truly equitable access and outcomes for learners.

State Toolkit Highlights

WBL toolkits are tailored to the needs of each state. Therefore, no two toolkits look exactly the same, and they may have been further adapted within individual school districts. The following are a few examples of state toolkits that take innovative approaches and

include a variety of useful resources. These states all have specific aspects of their toolkits that serve as model presentations of information or data collection or as templates that can be adopted into toolkits by other states or districts as needed.

ARKANSAS



Definition of WBL — WBL is defined as a structured learning experience at the worksite for a specific timeframe that leads to a career path (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). WBL programs contain three key components: the alignment of classroom and workplace learning; the application of academic, technical and employability skills in a work setting; and support from classroom and worksite mentors.

Innovative Practice — Arkansas has created an easy to navigate [website](#) attached to its toolkit that allows industry partners and learners to find information and report data on their WBL programs. Employers and learners can access easy-to-read slideshow presentations as well as the SeamlessWBL website to log hours, sign documents, and print out analyses in real time. Simplifying and centralizing the data collection process ensures that employers and learners can self-report and provide more accurate and easily trackable information on their involvement in WBL programs. Accurate and timely data collection is essential in determining opportunity gaps that may affect the accessibility of CTE programs for learners.

GEORGIA



Definition of WBL— WBL is a continuum of awareness, exploration, preparation and training activities, including developing employability and technical skills that support success in careers and postsecondary education. Structured learning and authentic work experiences are implemented through an education and industry partnership. Students have the opportunity to connect what they learn in school with worksite applications, enabling a smooth transition into the workforce and/or education beyond high school. WBL activities culminate in an assessment and recognition of acquired knowledge and skills.

Innovative Practice — Georgia has a robust [section](#) on public policy, legal issues and public relations to help districts navigate the technicalities of running WBL programming. The section highlights potential legal pitfalls and describes legal terms related to CTE and WBL programs. Easing the navigation of legal and policy issues creates a more welcoming environment for employers to develop WBL programs by removing some of the anxiety that may come with building a program that specifically serves minors. Providing a centralized location for managing legal aspects of WBL allows states to show their commitment to industry partnerships. Despite the daunting nature of navigating the legal side of running a WBL program, Georgia has opened the door for more employers to take part, creating even more opportunities for learners in the state looking to engage in this type of programming.

MINNESOTA



Definition of WBL — Membership for students participating in a state-approved, WBL program is based on the number of credits the students earn, not necessarily the number of hours the students work. At a high school or seat-based alternative program, each credit a student earns replaces a class period at the school site. For example, if a student earns two credits for the work component excluding the related seminar, the student can be claimed for the equivalent of two seat-based credits/classes. At a state-approved alternative program with a state-approved independent study program, the work-based credits should be claimed like any other independent study credits using the independent study formula.

Innovative Practice — Minnesota features a special [website](#) for accommodating learners receiving special education services. This toolkit extension features links to resources for designing WBL programs for learners with disabilities and reiterates that some Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) may require learners to be included in these programs. The state toolkit specifies that all learners with disabilities should have access to WBL opportunities before describing the responsibilities of program administrators and learners.

NEW YORK



Definition of WBL — WBL is authentic learning experiences that allow students to explore their career goals, abilities and interests while applying their academic and technical knowledge and skills in a real-world context. These experiences are planned and supervised by instructional staff in collaboration with business, industry or community partners.

Innovative Practice — **New York** provides a variety of sample documents, including sample methods of administration for learners. The state [toolkit](#) also differentiates between unregistered and registered WBL opportunities as well as remote WBL experiences. This function of the toolkit gives employers a framework to build WBL experiences for learners without having to create one from scratch. Additionally, the differentiated models allow flexibility and customization of WBL programs that address various learner and employer needs. This system represents another “ease of access” approach for employers who may be daunted by the process of creating and running a program. This toolkit’s features create WBL opportunities that benefit learners by building a stronger infrastructure for those opportunities.

TENNESSEE



Definition of WBL — WBL is a proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-demand, high-skill careers in Tennessee. Students build on classroom-based instruction to develop employability skills that prepare them for success in postsecondary education and future careers.

Innovative Practice — **Tennessee** has a specialized [toolkit](#) dedicated to supporting learners who receive special education services. The toolkit highlights best practices for accommodating learner disabilities to provide equitable access to various career pathways. Aligning WBL programs with the demands of a learner’s 504 (accommodation for physical disability) plan or IEP creates meaningful work experiences for learners. Offering specific, actionable instructions and models to ensure that learners with disabilities have access to WBL programming allows them to gain the necessary skills for career readiness.

VERMONT



Definition of WBL — WBL is an educational program or experience involving student interactions with industry or community professionals in real, virtual, online or simulated work environments that exposes learners to postsecondary options, provides opportunities for skill development and proficiency attainment, and allows students to reinforce and deepen their school-based learning.

Innovative Practice — **Vermont’s** toolkit has a robust list of WBL standards and indicators. The [toolkit](#) makes the standards and indicators accessible for industry partners and program administrators to navigate. Having a toolkit that employers and district-based administrators can pull from makes program implementation easier and more accurate. The goal is to ensure that learners get the best WBL experience possible, and by making learner outcomes clear, all stakeholders can benefit from improving the school-to-work pipeline.

Why Use the Tracker

The [State Work-Based Learning Toolkit Innovation Tracker](#) is a living document, the toolkit tracker is monitored and updated quarterly, offering an accurate view of what states are using to house their work-based learning resources.

By elevating the work of each state, the toolkit gives state and local leaders access to a variety of tools that can be adapted as necessary to the needs of individual states. These needs could range from updated resources, forms and practices to additions to toolkits. Additionally, these toolkits can serve as part of state Perkins V performance measurement requirements.

The toolkit tracker can be filtered by the following options:

- WBL Toolkit Availability;
- Secondary WBL Definition;
- Training Forms;
- Roles & Responsibilities;
- Evaluation/Assessment Forms;
- Employer Resources;
- Student Learning Plan;
- Innovative Practices; and
- Data Collection.

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