



Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act



The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) is essential to ensuring that all students have access to high-quality CTE programs. Since 2006, the last time the Perkins Act was reauthorized, key advancements have been made toward this goal. The attention on CTE is growing, and student performance results have been positive. It is critical that the next Act build on current law by reinforcing its successes and making careful changes to enhance progress. As Congress considers the reauthorization of this Act, the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) makes the following recommendations:

1. **Increase Equitable Access to High-quality CTE Programs**

The federal investment should focus on the design and delivery of quality CTE programs of study that ensure a spectrum of career exploration through career preparation opportunities for all students, regardless of their geographic location, race, gender, disability status, socioeconomic background or any other population characteristic. Adequate resources must be provided toward this goal, and key structural protections should be maintained to ensure appropriate use of federal funds.

2. **Prioritize and Strengthen Connections Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education**

The Act should be built around a more specific “CTE Program of Study” definition, linking secondary and postsecondary education and leading to meaningful credentials; and states should focus on systems alignment.

3. **Emphasize Engagement with Employers in the Design and Implementation of Programs**

More robust stakeholder involvement language is needed related to local planning and program delivery, and current or future local labor market demands should be considered to ensure programs are responsive to economic priorities. At the same time, final fiscal and programmatic decisions must remain in the hands of educators, who are best positioned to meet diverse, long-term student needs.

4. **Streamline the Law to Increase Clarity and Consistency and End Duplication Between and Within Sections**

The state and local plan and uses of funds sections should be significantly narrowed to focus on outcomes, while giving states and local communities flexibility in how best to meet their own unique needs.

5. **Require Greater Coordination Between Planning, Spending and Accountability**

A new local needs assessment structure should be incorporated into the law, modeled off other education legislation; and associated planning and uses of funds language should be directly connected to identified needs. Requirements should be integrated to ensure decisions and investments are guided by data.

6. **Ensure Relevant and Consistent Data**

The Perkins accountability system should be overhauled to ensure fewer and more meaningful measures that are more consistent across states and across federal programs and more useful for program improvement. The system should rely on data that is already available or can be easily incorporated into state longitudinal data systems (including secondary, postsecondary and workforce information) to minimize the data burden on educational institutions.

7. **Align the Law, to the Extent Appropriate, with Other Federal Education and Workforce Development Legislation**

Thoughtful attention must be paid to both programmatic requirements and accountability indicators in other federal laws, including the Every Student Succeeds Act, Higher Education Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. In making alignment decisions, populations served, institutional structure, reporting burden and the appropriate use of information should all be considered.