



Perkins CTE Funding



The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) is the principal source of dedicated federal funding for career and technical education (CTE)—helping to build the capacity of school districts and community colleges to provide CTE programs that are aligned with the needs of business and industry. Funding CTE delivers a strong return on the public’s investment. For example, Oklahoma’s economy reaps a net benefit of \$3.5 billion annually from graduates of the state’s CTE system. In Wisconsin, taxpayers receive \$12.20 in return for every dollar invested in the technical college system, while every dollar spent on secondary CTE students in Washington state leads to \$26 in lifetime earnings and employee benefits.

Moreover, students involved in CTE programs are more engaged, graduate at higher rates and typically go on to postsecondary education. The average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE is 93 percent. Additionally, CTE students were more likely to develop time management, critical-thinking and other essential skills while in high school. Those students are also likely to persist in their education—91 percent of high school graduates who earned 2-3 CTE credits enrolled in college. Perkins funding ensures that students are equipped with the academic, technical and employability skills they will need for success in postsecondary education and the workforce.

CTE programs prepare students for careers in in-demand fields and provide an affordable pathway to the middle class. Health care occupations, many of which require an associate degree or industry credential, are projected to grow 18 percent by 2026—adding more than 2 million new jobs. Half of all STEM occupations, which offer students high-skilled, high-wage career opportunities, require less than a bachelor's degree. Students can pursue valuable workforce credentials at community and technical colleges for a fraction of the cost of tuition at other institutions: just \$3,520 on average for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Despite CTE’s impressive outcomes, increased popularity and a growing need for career education and workforce training to address the skills gap, the federal investment in Perkins has simply not kept pace. If Perkins Basic State Grant funding had simply kept pace with inflation from its Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 high, not accounting for any additional increase in funding, the Perkins Basic State Grant would have around \$500 million more than it does today. **By adequately investing in Perkins Basic State Grants to meet the current demand,** we could expand access to high-quality CTE programs for students nationwide. Moreover, it will strengthen the capacity of school districts and postsecondary institutions to deliver academically rigorous CTE content, ensure support for special populations, purchase the latest technology and equipment for the classroom, strengthen employer partnerships, provide college and career counseling services, and deliver educator professional development opportunities. It is time to make building our investment in CTE a top priority!