

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. Increase Federal Investments in CTE

The Perkins Basic State Grant program is the principal source of dedicated federal funding for CTE, which helps build the capacity of secondary and postsecondary institutions to serve millions of students nationwide. In FY 2024, Perkins was funded at just \$1.44 billion, which remains hundreds of millions below the inflation-adjusted level from 20 years ago.

We urge Congress to provide a meaningful increase in the Perkins Basic State Grant program for FY 2025. Increasing Perkins funding will help provide critical programs and supports to students in every congressional district, such as career counseling, dual enrollment, work-based learning, industry-recognized credentials, and more.

2. Strengthen Connections Between Education and Workforce Development Systems

Our workforce and education systems should be built to operate symbiotically, not in silos. As Congress works toward the reauthorizations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the National Apprenticeship Act, we ask that the laws better connect education and workforce programs and increase access to high-quality training for both youth and adults. This can be accomplished through legislation that:

- Includes CTE stakeholders in WIOA governing bodies.
- Provides dedicated funding for WIOA infrastructure costs.
- Increases the availability of services and supports for in-school youth.
- Improves data system capacity and transparency.
- Balances requirements placed on eligible training providers to ensure robust participation.
- Ensures workforce systems are equity-driven and responsive to labor market needs.
- Formalizes definitions and expectations for all apprenticeship activities, including pre- and youth-apprenticeship programs.
- Promotes the role of CTE programs in serving as related technical instruction providers for apprenticeships.
- Increases access to youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.

3. Support the Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of CTE Educators

Institutions around the country are reporting shortages of qualified CTE educators across many subjects and across secondary and postsecondary education. CTE teachers have lower salaries than almost all other K-12 teachers, yet many could make substantially more money working directly in industry. To alleviate shortages and improve the CTE teacher pipeline, Congress should pass legislation that:

- Improves recruitment and retention by making teaching a more financially attractive career to industry professionals.
- Increase access to high-quality CTE teacher preparation and professional development.
- Makes common-sense laws to incentivize interstate teacher licensure reciprocity.
- Enhances data collection on the CTE educator pipeline.
- Addresses postsecondary CTE faculty shortages.

4. Strengthen CTE's Role in Postsecondary Education

The Higher Education Act has not been reauthorized since 2008 and does not currently reflect the needs of learners or the demands of the workforce. Higher education policies need to be updated to better support students seeking industry-recognized credentials, provide better data on postsecondary learner outcomes and align with the needs of the workforce. To achieve this, Congress should pass legislation that:

- Allows the Pell Grant to be used for high-quality, short-term, workforce-focused certification programs.
- Improves and streamlines data collection and reporting on program quality and learner outcomes.
- Removes the arbitrary exclusion or penalization of public non-degree granting institutions and clock-hour programs in federal definitions, rules and programs.
- Ensures that nontraditional students are properly supported by federal programs.
- Incentivizes innovative student-centric programs and services, such as competency-based education, dual enrollment programs and stackable credentials.

About ACTE

The Association for Career and Technical Education® (ACTE®) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, school counselors, guidance and career development professionals and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.

ACTE Public Policy Staff Contacts

- Alisha Hyslop, Chief Policy, Research and Content Officer, ahyslop@acteonline.org, 727-642-0491
- Jimmy Koch, Government Relations Manager, jkoch@acteonline.org, 443-834-3421
- Hannah Richards, Media and Advocacy Coordinator, hrichards@acteonline.org, 312-718-9134

Updated: April 2024