

# 2025 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 approximately \$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 to the Perkins Basic State Grant as future appropriations bills are considered.](#) Increasing Perkins funding will help provide critical programs and supports to students in every congressional district, ensuring students can complete CTE programs; participate in work-based learning; earn industry-recognized credentials; and pursue high-skill, high-wage and in-demand careers.

## 2. Maintain Strong Support for Public Education

CTE programs are an integral part of the public education system across the United States, both at the secondary and postsecondary levels. To ensure all learners have access to high-quality CTE programs as part of their broader education pathway, the federal government must continue to play a key role in supporting public education. In particular, Congress should:

- Ensure the Department of Education is maintained as outlined in current law and is organized and staffed in a robust way to ensure it can continue to administer the congressionally appropriated programs that serve millions of public school students.
- Provide meaningful oversight to ensure that all congressionally appropriated programs are carried out with fidelity and in a maximally efficient and effective manner.
- Oppose all legislation and executive actions that divert funds away from public schools and into non-public efforts that do not afford students the same access to programs and services.
- Prioritize the importance of the federal role in education data and research and reverse the cancellation of projects and contracts at the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), including the congressionally mandated National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins (NECTEP) and other key data collection activities.

## 3. Expand Pell Grant Access for Short-term Training Programs

Pell Grants are not currently available to students looking to enroll in postsecondary programs that are under 600 clock hours and shorter than 15 weeks. The bipartisan JOBS Act, S. 383, would expand Pell Grant access for programs between 150 and 600 clock hours over a period of at least 8 weeks. Congress should advance this bill to ensure that there are fewer barriers to entry for students looking to enter into high-quality, shorter-term CTE programs that provide in-demand credentials for high-wage, high-skill careers.

## 4. Strengthen CTE's Role in Postsecondary Education

Our workforce and education systems should be built to complement each other. As discussions on the reauthorizations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the National Apprenticeship Act (NAA) move forward, we ask that policymakers think strategically about the unique roles each piece of the education and workforce system play while also strengthening alignment between these systems to ensure increased access to high-quality training for both youth and adults. This can be accomplished through legislation that:

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

## 5. Strengthen Alignment Between Education and Workforce Development Systems

Secondary and postsecondary institutions around the country are reporting shortages of qualified CTE teachers across many subjects. These instructors help students develop the technical, academic and employability skills they need for success. However, CTE teachers have lower salaries than many other K-12 teachers and 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.
- Increases access to high-quality CTE teacher preparation and professional development.
- Incentivizes interstate teacher licensure reciprocity.
- Enhances data collection on the CTE educator pipeline.
- Addresses postsecondary CTE faculty shortages.

### 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](mailto:ahyslop@acteonline.org), 727-642-0491
- Jimmy Koch, Government Relations Manager, [jkoch@acteonline.org](mailto:jkoch@acteonline.org), 443-834-3421
- Hannah Richards, Media and Advocacy Coordinator, [hrichards@acteonline.org](mailto:hrichards@acteonline.org), 312-718-9134

*Updated: March 2025*