

ACTE 2026 Postsecondary CTE Summit

Powering Possibility: Advancing Postsecondary CTE Impact

Aligning pathways. Accelerating innovation. Strengthening workforce outcomes.

Why Attend the ACTE Postsecondary CTE Summit?

The ACTE Postsecondary CTE Summit brings together faculty, administrators, system leaders, researchers, and partners to tackle the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing postsecondary CTE today. Hosted in the DC–Arlington region, the Summit offers practical, action-oriented sessions focused on emerging technologies, aligned career pathways, leadership and policy implementation, and strengthening the CTE workforce. Attendees will gain real-world strategies, share lessons learned, and engage in meaningful dialogue that connects innovation to impact—supporting stronger outcomes for learners, institutions, and employers in a rapidly evolving workforce landscape.

Theme 1: Emerging Technologies and Innovation in Postsecondary CTE

Preparing Learners and Institutions for a Rapidly Evolving Workforce

This theme explores how emerging technologies are reshaping postsecondary CTE programs, teaching and learning, and workforce preparation. Sessions will highlight how institutions are integrating technologies such as AI, automation, advanced manufacturing, and digital tools to improve program quality, expand access, and strengthen alignment with labor market needs. Proposals may feature applied research, pilot initiatives, industry partnerships, and evidence-informed approaches that support innovation with measurable impact.

Focus Areas May Include:

- Integrating emerging technologies into CTE curriculum and instruction
- AI and automation impacts on CTE programs and workforce preparation
- Industry partnerships supporting technology adoption and scaling
- Faculty and staff professional development related to emerging technologies
- Applied research and evaluation of technology-enabled CTE models

Theme 2: Strengthening Secondary–Postsecondary CTE Pathways

Making Alignment Work for Learners

This theme focuses on strengthening alignment between secondary and postsecondary CTE to create seamless, learner-centered pathways that support access, persistence, and successful transitions into postsecondary education and the workforce. Sessions will explore cross-sector collaboration, shared accountability, and strategies that move beyond articulation agreements to meaningful program and systems alignment. Proposals may highlight applied research, partnership models, policy-informed approaches, and evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for learners across the CTE continuum.

Focus Areas May Include:

- Secondary–postsecondary partnerships and joint ownership of CTE pathways
- Dual enrollment, early college, articulation, and credit transfer models
- Program alignment across curriculum, credentials, and industry standards
- Advising, navigation, and student supports during key transition points
- Data sharing, outcome tracking, and continuous improvement across systems
- Applied research and evaluation of pathway effectiveness and learner outcomes

Theme 3: Aligning Policy, Funding, and Systems to Strengthen Postsecondary CTE**From Policy to Practice in a National Context**

This theme examines how policy, funding, and cross-system alignment shape the future of postsecondary CTE. Sessions will explore implementation of federal and state policies, funding strategies, and partnerships that support sustainable, high-quality CTE programs. Proposals may address system-level coordination, policy-informed practice, and evidence-based approaches that connect education, workforce, and economic development efforts.

Focus Areas May Include:

- Implementation of federal and state CTE and workforce policies
- Funding alignment, sustainability, and braided funding strategies
- Workforce Pell, short-term credentials, and noncredit-to-credit transitions
- Cross-system partnerships connecting education, workforce, and employers
- Policy analysis, evaluation, and evidence to inform decision-making

Theme 4: Strengthening the Postsecondary CTE Workforce — Faculty, Staff, and Institutional Capacity**Building the Talent and Teams that Power Student Success**

This theme centers on building a strong and sustainable postsecondary CTE workforce by addressing faculty recruitment, preparation, professional development, and retention, as well as the essential roles of staff in student support, employer engagement, work-based learning, and program coordination. Sessions may highlight evidence-informed strategies, institutional and system-level approaches, and research–practice partnerships that strengthen capacity, support CTE teams, and improve student outcomes in an evolving workforce landscape.

Focus Areas May Include:

- Faculty recruitment, preparation, onboarding, and retention in postsecondary CTE
- Professional development aligned to emerging technologies and workforce needs
- Building staff capacity in advising, navigation, employer engagement, and work-based learning
- Addressing burnout, workload, and workforce sustainability across CTE teams

- Developing educator and staff pipelines, including industry-to-education pathways
- Applied research, program evaluation, and data-informed capacity-building strategies