

May 21, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole, Chair Collins, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Vice Chair Murray,

On behalf of Advance CTE, the nation's longest-standing not-for-profit representing State Directors and leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult Career Technical Education (CTE) across all 50 states and U.S. territories, and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for career success, we are writing in regards to the fiscal year 2027 (FY27) budget and appropriations process. ***Specifically, we urge the committee to increase the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act's (Perkins V) State Grant program by at least \$50 million as part of the FY27 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS-ED) appropriations bill***, as authorized and funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE).

Today, more than 12 million CTE learners across secondary and postsecondary systems rely on this funding to access opportunities that prepare them for the modern workforce.¹ Demand for CTE programs continues to grow among both students and employers but, unfortunately, the existing supply of CTE programming has not kept pace with these growing needs. For example, nearly 20,000 applicants sought admission to Massachusetts CTE programs in recent years, yet more than 42% were turned away due to limited capacity.² Similar reports abound in communities like Oklahoma City where 400 CTE students remain on waiting lists at a single area technical center, while in states like Vermont demand for CTE pathways continues to grow dramatically.³ Funding has not kept pace with these increasing demands or

¹ <https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/explorer/enrollment/perkins-v>

² <https://www.wgbh.org/news/education-news/2025-05-20/itll-soon-be-a-lottery-to-get-into-vocational-and-technical-schools-in-massachusetts>

³ https://www.realclearinvestigations.com/articles/2024/08/22/vo-tech_education_is_taking_off_and_its_not_your_dads_shop_class_anymore_1052992.html and

with rising program costs driven by significant inflationary pressures in recent years. As a result, many institutions at both the secondary and postsecondary levels face challenges in scaling programs, modernizing equipment, and ensuring access for all learners.

A \$50 million increase for the Perkins Basic State Grant would represent a meaningful and much-needed downpayment toward expanding access to high-quality CTE programs aligned with high-growth, high-wage, and in-demand industries; supporting the development and expansion of work-based learning opportunities, including apprenticeships; strengthening secondary and postsecondary program alignment to ensure seamless transitions for learners; and modernizing equipment and instructional materials to reflect current industry standards.

When adjusted for inflation, today's federal investment in CTE is nearly half of what it was in 1980.⁴ Further, the share of federal K-12 education funding specifically for CTE has dropped sharply from 11% to just 3% during this same period—representing a 73% drop in federal support over time.⁴ The Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that restoring the federal program's 2010 purchasing power would require at least \$1.7 billion annually—over \$300 million more than current levels.⁵

Expanding access to CTE is also a fiscally sound investment. The average high school graduation rate for CTE concentrators is 96%,⁶ compared to the national average of 87%.⁷ Students in CTE programs are significantly less likely to drop out of school—a fact that yields an estimated \$168 billion in economic savings annually.⁸ Among secondary CTE concentrators, nearly 70% pursue postsecondary education, advanced training, or military service after high school. Of postsecondary CTE learners, 81% remain enrolled or enter unsubsidized employment.⁹ These outcomes consistently surpass those of their non-CTE peers.¹⁰ Increasing funding for Perkins would help to expand these positive outcomes to more learners across the country.

<https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2025-03-31/declining-enrollment-not-vermonts-tech-centers-waitlists-mile-long>.

⁴ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R47166.pdf>

⁵ <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/enhancing-career-and-technical-education-state-insights-for-perkins-reauthorization/>

⁶ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget25/justifications/o-ctae.pdf>

⁷ <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/coi/high-school-graduation-rates>

⁸ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ943149.pdf> and

<https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/profile/national/performance/2022/population/summary/met/secondary/summary>

and <https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/profile/national/performance/2022/population/summary/met/postsecondary/summary>

⁹ <https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/profile/national/performance/2022/population/summary/met/secondary/summary>

and <https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/profile/national/performance/2022/population/summary/met/postsecondary/summary>

¹⁰

<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=51#:~:text=Of%20the%202.7%20million%20high,in%20college%20in%20October%202021> and

While an overall funding increase is critical, troublingly, the Administration’s FY27 budget request includes language that would prohibit the use of funds for postsecondary CTE programs, directly undermining state authority, flexibility, and reversing decades of progress in creating seamless pathways between secondary and postsecondary education. This change would represent an effective cut of over \$400 million in support for CTE programs at community colleges, technical colleges, and area technical centers. Without Perkins funding at the postsecondary level, institutions will face serious constraints in delivering high-quality CTE, ultimately reducing student access and success and harming the longer-term viability of the American economy. This is especially important given 72% of careers in the next decade are forecasted to require some form of postsecondary education or training beyond high school.¹¹ We strongly encourage the Committee to reject this aspect of President Trump’s FY27 proposal.

Finally, we respectfully urge the Committee to reject any appropriations language that would codify the interagency agreement (IAA) proposing to transfer administration of Perkins V to the Department of Labor. We recognize the administration's interest in better coordinating education and workforce systems—a goal we have long shared. However, permanent structural realignment of this magnitude warrants deliberate Congressional consideration through a formal reauthorization process, not annual appropriations legislation.

Questions about how Perkins V administration should be structured over the long term are precisely the kind of consequential policy decisions that belong in a Perkins VI reauthorization effort, where Congress can fully examine statutory intent, weigh tradeoffs, and shape program design with appropriate deliberation. Perkins V was designed explicitly as an educational initiative: it integrates rigorous academic and technical instruction, supports career exploration and student services, and aligns with state academic standards and graduation requirements. With three-quarters of states administering the program through K–12 agencies, educational infrastructure remains foundational to CTE's effectiveness. The implementation disruptions that have accompanied the current IAA further underscore why this decision deserves careful consideration through the appropriate legislative process.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Jimmy Koch, Manager of Government Relations at ACTE (jkoch@acteonline.org), or Steve Voytek, Federal Policy Advisor at Advance CTE (svoytek@careertech.org).

Sincerely,

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trendgenerator/app/answer/7/32#:~:text=In%20fall%202022%2C%20the%20full,is%20based%20on%204%2C923%20institutions>

¹¹ <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/projections2031/>



Kate Kremer

Kate Kremer
Executive Director
Advance CTE

LeAnn Curry

LeAnn Curry
Executive Director
ACTE

CC: The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
The Honorable Robert Aderholt
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin