

**Written Testimony of Association for Career and Technical Education and Advance
CTE Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies U.S. Department of Education: Office of Career, Technical and Adult
Education**

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, which is authorized and funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE).

The overall federal investment in CTE remains inadequate to meet the growing national demand for high-quality, employer-aligned CTE programs. 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 Sustained and increased federal investment in the Perkins V State Grant program will ensure that state and local CTE systems can respond to workforce demands while helping the United States maintain its competitive economic edge.

Troublingly, the FY27 budget request includes language that would prohibit the use of funds for postsecondary CTE programs, directly undermining state flexibility and reversing decades of progress in creating seamless pathways between secondary and postsecondary education. This change would effectively cut 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. 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.²

When adjusted for inflation, today's federal investment in CTE is nearly half of what it was in 1980.³ 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—

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

² <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/projections2031/>

³ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R47166.pdf>

⁴ <https://americancompass.org/the-workforce-training-grant/>
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/enhancing-career-and-technical-education-state-insights-for-perkins-reauthorization/>

over \$300 million more than current levels—just to restore the program’s 2010 purchasing power.⁵

Closing this widening investment gap in CTE is essential to building the skilled workforce needed to meet national economic priorities. As the Administration and Congress focus on revitalizing manufacturing, restoring the nation’s industrial capacity, and reshoring supply chains, parallel investments in education and career preparation are crucial. These goals directly rely on the availability of skilled talent in many economic sectors critical to our shared economy, including, but not limited to, manufacturing, healthcare, energy, and applied technologies. These are needs that are only growing as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technological innovations reshape many aspects of work and daily life.

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

Moreover, a recent Institute of Education Sciences meta-analysis found that CTE participation leads to statistically significant gains in academic achievement, high school completion, employability, and college readiness.¹¹ These results reinforce what CTE educators have long known: CTE succeeds because it blends rigorous academic instruction with hands-on technical training, preparing students for multiple pathways to postsecondary and career success.

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>

<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>

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<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

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

¹¹ <https://ctereseachnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/CTE-Systematic-Review-508.pdf>

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Subcommittee to increase funding for the Perkins V Basic State Grant program in FY 2027. Doing so would represent an essential initial investment in restoring the federal commitment to CTE, allowing programs to expand in response to growing demand and equipping learners with the skills needed to succeed in this rapidly evolving economy.

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).