

PUSHING THE LIMITS



A ROADMAP for Advancing CTE Without Limits

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INTRODUCTION

Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education (CTE Without Limits) puts forth a bold vision for a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem that will close equity gaps in educational outcomes and workforce readiness and leverage CTE as a catalyst for ensuring that each learner can reach success in the career of their choice.

The five inter-connected and equally critical principles call for a more cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem, with CTE at its nexus, that draws on the capacity of all systems (e.g., K-12, postsecondary, workforce development); leverages these systems' greatest assets; and encourages new models of collaboration, learner-centric design and delivery, funding and accountability that create the right incentives and supports.

However, only through shared commitment and shared ownership among leaders and practitioners at all levels will the possibility and aspiration of *CTE Without Limits* be realized. State CTE leaders have a critical role to play in developing this shared commitment and ownership and in charting a course in each state to make the vision a reality. *Pushing the Limits* is designed to provide a roadmap for state leaders to follow over the next months and years to make the vision actionable.

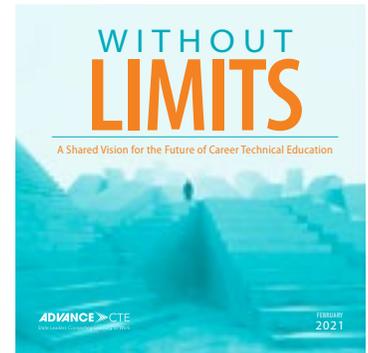
Pushing the Limits: A Roadmap for Advancing CTE Without Limits:

- ✓ Unpacks each of the five principles and related actions of *CTE Without Limits*;
- ✓ Provides self-assessment questions to help state leaders reflect on the current alignment of policies and practice, capacity for change, and potential impact of moving the needle for each action;
- ✓ Provides sample implementation steps, policies and resources to inspire action; and
- ✓ Offers an action planning tool to develop SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-Bound) goals to drive systemic change.

HOW TO USE PUSHING THE LIMITS

Pushing the Limits is designed to guide you and your team through an assessment of current policies and practices to identify what your state can build on and where new attention, policies or investments are needed to address the principles and actions outlined in *CTE Without Limits*. The tool is divided into six sections. Five sections are organized around the principles of *CTE Without Limits*, all broken down by the specific actions associated with each principle. The final section supports the development of an action plan. The tool is a fillable PDF to allow you to directly capture your responses to open-ended questions and self-ratings along the way, which can be done collaboratively or individually by members of your team. Ideally, you should include representatives from secondary, postsecondary and workforce development systems and other key stakeholders in this work.

If you want to start with a specific principle, you can jump right to that section or use the principle-specific, stand-alone versions of the tool found [here](#). It is recommended to read through each section in its entirety before conducting the assessment to ensure that you have a full understanding of what is covered in each principle and its related actions — and what data, input or other information you may need.



 **Principle 1:** Each learner engages in a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem

 **Principle 2:** Each learner feels welcome in, is supported by and has the means to succeed in the career preparation ecosystem

 **Principle 3:** Each learner skillfully navigates their own career journey

 **Principle 4:** Each learner's skills are counted, valued and portable

 **Principle 5:** Each learner can access CTE without borders

Each Learner Engages in a Cohesive, Flexible and Responsive Career Preparation Ecosystem



Learners need a career preparation ecosystem that recognizes and supports non-linear career progressions and is designed to allow all learners, not just those who opt into CTE programs, to get the skills they need, when they need them, without redundancy or limitations. The career preparation ecosystem must be nimble and offer flexible experiences, including high-quality and equitable CTE programs that are reflective of and responsive to learner and industry needs.

Building a career preparation ecosystem that serves every learner will require statewide, cross-agency commitment; deeper public-private partnerships; and supportive funding and accountability models that reinforce the ecosystem by valuing collaboration, equity and innovation. CTE sits at the nexus of K-12, postsecondary, adult education, workforce development and industry, making it uniquely positioned to serve as a catalyst for a learner-centered career preparation system.

This principle includes the following actions:

1. Establish shared, statewide goals for a cohesive career preparation ecosystem.
2. Ensure that all CTE programs of study are flexible and responsive.
3. Expand data and accountability models that value collaboration, equity and innovation.
4. Design equitable funding models that direct funding to where it is needed most.

The following sections walk through each of the four actions in this principle and provide a roadmap for state leaders to make the principle actionable.



ACTION 1: Establish shared, statewide goals for a cohesive career preparation ecosystem.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Adopt shared goals that recognize the need for more coherence across education and workforce systems;
- ✓ Increase coherence across education and workforce systems through:
 - Shared goals and coordinated programs and strategies embedded within federal plans,
 - Adoption of shared metrics,
 - Aligned data systems and public reporting, and
 - Braided funding models;
- ✓ Encourage the removal of silos between academic and career-focused instruction and credit and non-credit programs;
- ✓ Ensure that each part of the education and workforce systems understands its specific roles; and
- ✓ Develop clear protocols and processes for engagement across systems.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Based on input from key stakeholders, including local education and workforce leaders, practitioners, learners and families, what are the greatest barriers or inefficiencies within or across state education and workforce systems?



Current Policy and Practice

Is there a shared, statewide vision for education and workforce in your state? If yes, what is it?

What shared goals or objectives are embedded within your state’s federal plans, including the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and other plans?

How does CTE fit into statewide goals, such as attainment goals or economic development goals?

What statewide structures are in place for collaboration and coordination across K-12, postsecondary and workforce development to support a career preparation ecosystem?

Does the state have any shared, statewide metrics for education and workforce? If so, how are these metrics shared with key stakeholders?

Does the state have any braided funding models that support a cohesive career preparation ecosystem?

What policies (including approval, funding and incentives) support alignment between academic and career-focused instruction at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state’s current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

4 = Strongly align

3 = Somewhat align

2 = Minimally align

1 = Do not align



**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

- 4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
- 3 = *Some capacity/commitment*
- 2 = *Minimal capacity/commitment*
- 1 = *No capacity/commitment*

Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

- 4 = *Strong impact*
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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✔ Compare your state’s plans for Perkins V, WIOA, ESSA and other key federal policies to identify the greatest areas of alignment and misalignment.
- ✔ Map the metrics used for state and federal policies to identify where more common definitions and measurement approaches can be used.
- ✔ Convene key stakeholders to define what a “cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem” means in your state.
- ✔ Review existing policies that enable or limit integration of academic and career-focused instruction and credit and non-credit programs.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✔ Launch or expand statewide advisory councils (or the equivalent) focused on supporting the career preparation ecosystem.
- ✔ Develop statewide, measurable goals around key career preparation outcomes, with a focus on equity.
- ✔ Develop a statewide dashboard for all career preparation-related metrics.
- ✔ Anchor postsecondary attainment goals in the broader career preparation ecosystem.
- ✔ Identify one priority area to support through braided funding (e.g., braiding Perkins and WIOA Title I to support work-based learning for in-school youth).

Sample Policies and Resources

- Tennessee: [Drive to 55](#)
- Massachusetts: [Workforce Skills Cabinet](#)
- Rhode Island: [PrepareRI](#)
- [Delaware Pathways](#)
- National Skills Coalition: [Investing in Postsecondary Career Pathways](#) (Braided funding models)
- American Institutes for Research: [Developing a College- and Career-Ready Workforce: An Analysis of ESSA, Perkins V and WIOA](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?



ACTION 2: Ensure that all CTE programs of study are flexible and responsive.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Develop robust state approval processes that fund only programs of study that:
 - Have well-articulated on- and off-ramps,
 - Are anchored in credentials of value,
 - Include opportunities for work-based learning, and
 - Align with high-skill, high-wage and in-demand careers;
- ✓ Align the career preparation ecosystem with talent pipeline strategies;
- ✓ Involve industry as partners to identify and validate credentials of value; and
- ✓ Develop and implement high-quality and equitable work-based learning systems in partnership with industry.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which learners have access to and are completing high-quality, industry-aligned CTE programs of study? Where are there gaps?

Which learners have access to and are completing high-quality, industry-aligned work-based learning experiences? Where are there gaps?

Which learners have access to and are completing industry-aligned credentials of value? Where are there gaps?



Current Policy and Practice

Do your CTE programs of study consistently provide on- and off-ramps for secondary and postsecondary learners? If not, where are the gaps?

What processes, policies or strategies are in place to ensure equitable access to and success in high-quality programs of study across the state at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

What processes, policies or strategies are in place to ensure equitable access to and success in high-quality work-based learning across the state at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

How is your state leveraging federal and state funding to promote quality programs, including transforming, scaling down or defunding programs that are not meeting quality benchmarks?

Does your state have shared definitions or constructs for “high-wage,” “high-skill” or “in-demand” jobs? If so, which agencies or systems used those shared definitions?

Is there a state or regional structure or process in place that regularly convenes K-12, postsecondary education, industry and workforce development to review labor market information and establish priorities for programs of study?

What role do industry partners currently play in reviewing, approving and/or validating CTE programs of study and credentials at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state’s current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

4 = Strongly align

3 = Somewhat align

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1 = Do not align



**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✔ Develop and share an analysis of which learners are enrolling in and completing which CTE programs, programs of study and career pathways, disaggregated by subgroup and special population status.
- ✔ Review your current CTE program of study approval and review policies and processes to identify how well they align with the key elements within this action.
- ✔ Compile all existing sources of labor market information and convene partners to explore ways to streamline the sources.
- ✔ Compile all current lists of credentials allowed or funded within your state and the incentives tied to each of them and convene partners to explore where there are overlaps or gaps.
- ✔ Review all work-based learning allowed or funded within your state and the outcomes tied to each of them and convene partners to explore where there are gaps or areas for improvement.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✔ Require all state and federal funds to support only high-quality CTE programs of study.
- ✔ Update program approval and/or review policies and processes to align with the key elements within this action.
- ✔ Develop shared definitions of “high-skill,” “high-wage” and “in-demand” jobs that are adopted by K-12, postsecondary, workforce development and economic development.
- ✔ Develop a shared list of credentials of value that is adopted by K-12, postsecondary, workforce development and economic development.
- ✔ Provide seed funding to support the seamless alignment of programs of study and career pathways.
- ✔ Leverage a regional Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment process that includes a specific focus on the region’s talent pipeline strategies.
- ✔ Develop or update, in partnership with industry, a shared definition and continuum of work-based learning.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Florida: [Career and Professional Education Act](#)
- Washington: [Core Plus](#)
- Kentucky: [CTE Employer Connector Tool](#)
- Iowa: [Statewide Work-Based Learning Intermediary Network](#)
- Advance CTE: [Raising the Bar: State Strategies for Developing and Approving High-Quality Career Pathways](#)
- ExcelinEd: [Auditing a State Career and Technical Education Program for Quality](#)
- Advance CTE: [Aligning to Opportunity: State Approaches to Setting High Skill, High Wage and In Demand](#)
- Center for Law and Social Policy: [Career Pathways in Career and Technical Education](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?



ACTION 3: Expand data and accountability models that value collaboration, equity and innovation.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Focus K-12 and postsecondary accountability systems and structures on equitable outcomes in priority areas, including career success;
- ✓ Ensure that K-12 and postsecondary accountability systems value competencies and skills, not just seat time;
- ✓ Develop and implement state- and institution-level metrics that measure the full continuum of CTE, from the middle grades through high school and postsecondary and into adult CTE; and
- ✓ Create publicly reported equity indices to better design and evaluate interventions and supports for marginalized learners.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Are you able to reliably collect and report on key outcomes disaggregated by special population status? If not, where are the gaps in data collection or reporting?



Current Policy and Practice

Do you currently collect and/or publicly report metrics that measure the full continuum of CTE, starting in the middle grades through high school and postsecondary and into adult CTE?

What role does equity play in the design of your state’s accountability models, beyond required disaggregation?

How do your current accountability models incentivize or drive equitable, career-focused outcomes at the K-12 level? At the postsecondary level?

How do your current accountability models enable or limit competency-based models at the K-12 level? At the postsecondary level?

How do your current accountability models enable or limit local innovation in the design and delivery of CTE programs of study and learner supports?

How is outcome data shared with key stakeholders, including learners, families, policymakers, practitioners and industry/community partners?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state’s current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

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**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

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CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✔ Complete the [Career Readiness Data Policy Benchmark Tool](#) to conduct a thorough audit of your state's career readiness data policies and practices.
- ✔ Map the metrics used for state and federal policies to identify where common or more aligned definitions can be used.
- ✔ Convene key stakeholders to identify which metrics are the most meaningful and what data they most want or need access to.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✔ Identify key metrics to collect, at a minimum, from middle grades through postsecondary/adult education, with a focus on ensuring that there are multiple measures at each learner level.
- ✔ Develop a statewide dashboard for all career preparation-related metrics.
- ✔ Create appeals processes (i.e., accountability waivers) for districts (or colleges) adopting innovative CTE delivery models.
- ✔ Provide professional development around data literacy for practitioners and other key stakeholders.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Maryland: [Longitudinal Data System Center](#)
- North Dakota: [Data Dashboards](#)
- Kentucky: [Kentucky Center for Statistics and Department of Education Data Partnership](#)
- Third Way: [No More "Sink or Swim": Incorporating Subgroup Accountability into the Higher Education Act](#)
- Advance CTE, Education Strategy Group, and Council of Chief State School Officers: [Making Career Readiness Count 3.0](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?



ACTION 4: Design equitable funding models that direct funding to where it is needed most.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Identify and leverage flexibilities within federal funding streams to better target and braid resources;
- ✓ Incubate, pilot and scale new state K-12 and postsecondary funding formulas that move away from inequitable practices such as relying on property taxes and credit hours as the main drivers of funding; and
- ✓ Remove limitations on any state financial aid for high-quality, short-term CTE programs and expand learner-focused financial aid systems to ensure that each learner can benefit throughout their career progression.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

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What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which districts, institutions and/or programs have higher per-pupil expenditures, and which have the lowest (drawn from ESSA's fiscal transparency requirements at the secondary level and other fiscal data at the postsecondary level)?

Which districts, institutions and/or programs typically receive the most formula funding from federal or state sources in support of CTE programs?

Which districts, institutions and/or programs typically receive the most flexible funding (e.g., competitive funds offered through grant awards, incentive awards) in support of CTE programs?

Which learners, disaggregated by race, gender and special population status and by program enrollment, are leveraging financial aid?



**Current
Policy and
Practice**

What role does equity play in the design of your state's CTE funding formulas at the K-12, postsecondary and workforce development levels?

What outcomes-based funding options does your state offer at the K-12, postsecondary or workforce development levels?

How are flexible pots of funding (e.g., reserve funds, innovation grants) designed to ensure that they reach the institutions and learners who will benefit the most from them?

How do your current funding and accountability models incentivize equitable completion or credential attainment at the K-12 or postsecondary levels?

How equitable is access to financial aid, based on learner demographics and program type?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

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**Capacity
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How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the capacity or commitment in your state to advance this action?	<p>4 = <i>Strong capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>3 = <i>Some capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>2 = <i>Minimal capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>1 = <i>No capacity/commitment</i></p>
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Overall, what is the potential impact of advancing this action in your state?	<p>4 = <i>Strong impact</i></p> <p>3 = <i>Some impact</i></p> <p>2 = <i>Minimal impact</i></p> <p>1 = <i>No impact</i></p>
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What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

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Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Determine how current funding formulas were developed (e.g., through status quo, with input from stakeholders).
- ✓ Review the most recent round of innovation or competitive funds to see which institutions, programs and learners they reached.
- ✓ Convene learners and other stakeholders to identify the greatest financial barriers to equitable outcomes and success.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Pilot outcomes-based funding models at the secondary, postsecondary and/or workforce development levels.
- ✓ Provide support and technical assistance to lower-capacity districts and institutions so they are better positioned to access competitive funding.
- ✓ Expand the U.S. Department of Education's new "maintenance of equity" requirement.
- ✓ Pilot new funding formulas that move away from inequitable practices such as relying on property taxes and credit hours.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Washington: [Student Achievement Initiative Funding Formula](#)
- The Education Trust: [Re-Imagining Outcomes-Based Funding: Using Metrics to Foster Higher Education Equity](#)
- Education Commission of the States: [Policy Snapshot: Outcomes-Based Funding](#)
- Research for Action: [Designing Equitable Promise Programs](#)
- Aurora Institute: [State Funding Strategies to Support Education Innovation](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

2 Each Learner Feels Welcome in, Is Supported by and Has the Means to Succeed in the Career Preparation Ecosystem



It is well past time that our systems, leaders and practitioners identify and dismantle the institutional and systemic barriers that limit access, opportunity and outcomes for some learners. For far too long, a disproportionate number of learners of color, learners from low-income communities, learners with disabilities, English learners, female learners and other historically marginalized populations have been tracked into terminal vocational programs that have denied their full potential and left them with limited opportunity.

Every aspect of our new career preparation ecosystem must be designed with an equity lens to ensure that it is fully flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of each learner throughout the CTE continuum. Meeting this goal will require in-depth work to identify the full scope of institutional barriers and systemic racism in policies and programs, learner-centric programs and interventions, and efforts to build trust with marginalized learners and communities to ensure that their voices and perspectives are brought to the forefront of decisions.

This principle includes the following actions:

1. Fully diagnose and understand the scope of institutional barriers and systemic racism;
2. Recruit, retain and support a diverse and culturally competent workforce;
3. Design CTE programs and interventions on the margin while maintaining a commitment to quality; and
4. Provide meaningful and ongoing mechanisms for elevating the learner voice.

The following sections walk through each of the four actions in this principle and provide a roadmap for state leaders to make the principle actionable.

ACTION 1: Fully diagnose and understand the scope of institutional barriers and systemic racism.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Design and conduct regular state equity audits to assess how CTE is serving learners of color and other marginalized populations, including:
 - Reviews of policies and processes that historically and systemically put barriers in place for certain learners,
 - Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and
 - Action plans for dismantling barriers to access and success;
- ✓ Require local institutions to conduct their own regular equity audits following similar processes and resulting in concrete action plans; and
- ✓ Coordinate equity audits across the broader education and workforce systems.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which districts or institutions have the most significant equity or opportunity gaps for learners in CTE?

Which districts or institutions have the smallest equity or opportunity gaps? What can be learned from them?

Which CTE programs have the most significant equity or opportunity gaps for learners?

Which learner population groups have the most significant equity or opportunity gaps across CTE programs?



**Current
Policy and
Practice**

Has the state conducted an equity audit of state-level policies and processes, for example at the state education agency level? If so, what were the major findings?

What statewide structures (e.g., task forces, advisory committees, cross-departmental teams within a state agency) are in place to consider and advise on addressing equity holistically, across academic and technical domains?

Are equity audits currently being conducted by local districts and postsecondary institutions on a regular basis? What guidelines are in place at the state level to direct this work?

How are federally or state-required civil rights monitoring requirements (e.g., Methods of Administration) leveraged to support district- or institution-wide equity audits?

How has the Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment been leveraged to support district- or institution-wide equity audits?

How does the state provide professional development or technical assistance to locals to support equity audits? Does any of that professional development or technical assistance support district- or institution-wide audits that extend beyond CTE?

**Current
Policy and
Practice**

How does the state provide data to locals to support equity audits? Does any of the data provided support district- or institution-wide audits that extend beyond CTE?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

- 4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
- 3 = *Some capacity/commitment*
- 2 = *Minimal capacity/commitment*
- 1 = *No capacity/commitment*

Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

- 4 = *Strong impact*
- 3 = *Some impact*
- 2 = *Minimal impact*
- 1 = *No impact*



Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Review all existing requirements and processes for federally or state-required civil rights monitoring to identify overlaps and opportunities for alignment (e.g., to ensure that CTE and academics are both fully represented).
- ✓ Review all existing requirements and processes for federally or state-required local needs assessments to identify overlaps and opportunities for alignment and how well they focus on identifying and closing equity gaps.
- ✓ Identify leading districts and institutions to learn more about their processes and policies related to equity audits.
- ✓ Review state-level policies and practices that may be limiting access to or opportunities within CTE (e.g., admissions requirements, lack of translated materials, lack of diversity in the CTE workforce).
- ✓ Review school climate-related tools and assessments to ensure that CTE is represented.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Provide funding to local districts or colleges that want to undertake district- or institution-wide equity audits.
- ✓ Require equity audits for all local recipients of state or federal CTE funding.
- ✓ Leverage Methods of Administration to encourage robust equity plans for local recipients of Perkins funds.
- ✓ Consolidate civil rights monitoring to support a whole-district, -school and -college approach rather than multiple monitoring processes that look at programs in isolation.
- ✓ Consolidate required local needs assessments to support a coherent review of programs, climate and outcomes.
- ✓ Provide professional development or technical assistance to administrators (e.g., superintendents, principals, college presidents) around comprehensive equity audits.
- ✓ Provide professional development and technical assistance to the field around root cause analyses.
- ✓ Develop data dashboards for ease of analysis of equity gaps across race, gender, special population status, and other key demographics in CTE; academics; and other key dimensions of equity access and outcomes.



Sample Policies and Resources

- Wisconsin: [System-Wide Equity Report](#)
- Virginia: [Navigating EdEquityVA Roadmap and Audit Tool](#)
- Oregon: [CTE Equity Dashboards](#)
- Minnesota: [Equity by Design Campus Team Toolkit](#)
- Ohio: [Equity Labs](#)
- Montgomery County, Maryland: [Antiracist Audit](#)
- Washington: [Consolidated Program Review](#)
- Wisconsin: [Six Practical Ways to Maximize System Assessments](#)
- National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity: [Equity in CTE & STEM Root Causes and Strategies](#)
- Community College Research Center: [Unpacking Program Enrollments and Completions With Equity in Mind](#)

CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

ACTION 2: Recruit, retain and support a diverse and culturally competent workforce.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Build recruitment strategies and talent pipeline programs that specifically seek to attract diverse CTE instructors, administrators and leaders who are demographically representative of the learners they teach;
- ✓ Offer pre-service and in-service professional development that addresses trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive and globally competent teaching methods, inclusivity, and classroom-based and work-based management techniques; and
- ✓ Develop supports and training for industry partners providing work-based learning or mentorships to build their cultural competency.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

What percentage of CTE administrators, instructors and support positions represent racial/ethnic diversity, disaggregated by Career Cluster® or program area?

How does the diversity of CTE administrators, instructors and support positions reflect the demographics of learners? What Career Clusters, programs or institutions have the largest gaps?

Which pathways or programs used by CTE instructors and administrators to enter the field (e.g., colleges of education, alternative pathways for industry professionals, grow-your-own programs) provide the most diverse pool, and what can be learned from them?

Current Policy and Practice

What programs or initiatives are underway to recruit more diverse administrator and instructor candidates into CTE? Which have been the most effective?

What programs or initiatives are underway to support and retain diverse CTE administrators and instructors? Which have been the most effective?

How does the state provide professional development or technical assistance to locals to strengthen the cultural competency of CTE instructors, administrators and leaders?

How does the state provide professional development to strengthen the cultural competency of industry partners working with CTE learners?

To what degree does that state have the agency-level capacity to support diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the CTE system?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

- 4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
- 3 = *Some capacity/commitment*
- 2 = *Minimal capacity/commitment*
- 1 = *No capacity/commitment*

Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

- 4 = *Strong impact*
- 3 = *Some impact*
- 2 = *Minimal impact*
- 1 = *No impact*

Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Explore your data to identify where the greatest representational gaps are in CTE instructors, administrators and counselors.
- ✓ Collect and analyze data on the racial/ethnic diversity of maintenance and service positions compared to instructors, administrators and learners.
- ✓ Convene leaders of programs (traditional and alternative) that prepare CTE instructors and current CTE instructors to discuss opportunities for diversifying the pipeline and embedding more cultural competencies within preparation programs.
- ✓ Convene community-based organizations to learn about best practices for strengthening cultural competencies within the classroom and recruiting more diverse candidates into the CTE field.
- ✓ Convene industry associations and intermediaries to discuss how to strengthen professional development around cultural competency for industry partners working with CTE learners.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Launch a statewide initiative to recruit diverse individuals into the CTE workforce.
- ✓ Support affinity groups for instructors, administrators and counselors of like demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender identity or other key dimensions).
- ✓ Establish statewide instructor recruitment and retention goals, with a focus on diversifying the field.
- ✓ Hire or designate state-level staff to support diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels within your system.
- ✓ Provide professional development around cultural competency, trauma-informed practices and inclusivity for instructors, counselors and administrators.
- ✓ Provide professional development around cultural competency, trauma-informed practices and inclusivity for industry partners that are providing work-based learning or mentorships, ideally in partnership with industry associations.
- ✓ Develop more robust data collection and reporting on the diversity of CTE instructors, administrators and counselors as part of broader CTE data dashboards.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Massachusetts: [Influence 100 and InSPIRED Fellowship](#)
- Oklahoma: [Diversity and Inclusion Training Program](#)
- Minnesota: [Office of Equity and Inclusion](#)
- Wisconsin: [Fox Valley Technical College Cultural Support Specialists](#)
- Southern Regional Education Board: [Now Is the Time to Focus on Faculty Diversity](#)
- Center on Great Teachers & Leaders: [21st Century Educators: Developing and Supporting Great Career and Technical Education Teachers](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

ACTION 3: Design CTE programs and interventions on the margin while maintaining a commitment to quality.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Design and provide interventions and services that meet the needs of the learners who have the most barriers to access and success;
- ✓ Develop processes to meaningfully engage currently hidden populations that are often placed on the margins of the education and workforce systems; and
- ✓ Use a human-centered design process to ensure that CTE programs are fully accessible to every learner.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

To what degree do the most marginalized learners (e.g., learners with special population status, justice-connected learners or other historically marginalized populations) have access to high-quality CTE programs of study?

Which learners are completing high-quality CTE programs of study, in particular learners with special population status, justice-connected learners or other historically marginalized populations?

Which learners are experiencing successful post-program placements, in particular learners with special population status, justice-connected learners or other historically marginalized populations?

**Current
Policy and
Practice**

How is equitable access and success attended to within CTE program approval, review and/or funding decisions?

What incentives or motivation exists for districts and colleges to design CTE programs and supports for historically marginalized learners?

How robust are partnerships at the state level between CTE and other divisions/departments that support specific populations of learners (e.g., between CTE state leaders and homeless education coordinators or between the CTE agency and the office of students with disabilities)?

What ongoing efforts are there to meaningfully engage representatives of learners with special population status to provide input into state CTE policies and programs?

How are equity audits or root cause analyses used to inform the development of CTE programs and interventions at the state and local levels?

What interventions or supports are in place for historically marginalized populations to support success in CTE at the state and local levels? Which are the most effective and why?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

4 = *Strongly align*
3 = *Somewhat align*
2 = *Minimally align*
1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

- 4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
- 3 = *Some capacity/commitment*
- 2 = *Minimal capacity/commitment*
- 1 = *No capacity/commitment*

Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

- 4 = *Strong impact*
- 3 = *Some impact*
- 2 = *Minimal impact*
- 1 = *No impact*

Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Develop and share an analysis of which learners are enrolling in and completing which CTE programs, programs of study and career pathways, disaggregated by subgroup and special population status.
- ✓ Review your current CTE program of study approval and review policies and processes to identify how well they attend to equitable access and outcomes.
- ✓ Review your current CTE program of study funding policies to identify how well they attend to equitable access and outcomes.
- ✓ Engage learners and community members to better understand barriers.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Leverage Perkins V State Leadership set-asides and Reserve Funds to provide targeted supports and interventions for historically marginalized populations.
- ✓ Identify where funding can be braided (e.g., Perkins and WIOA Title I) to provide integrated supports and services for CTE learners.
- ✓ Develop strategies to conduct intentional outreach to and engagement of historically marginalized populations.
- ✓ Develop new state-level partnerships with other agencies or departments that support specific historically marginalized populations.
- ✓ Provide professional development on program and curriculum design that addresses all learners' needs.

Sample Policies and Resources

- North Carolina: [Finish Line Grant](#)
- Oklahoma: [CareerTech Skills Center](#)
- Louisiana: [Building Employment Skills for Tomorrow \(BEST\) Pilot Program](#)
- Nebraska: [Strategies for Special Population Success: Practical Tips and Tools for Nebraska Educators](#)
- National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity: [PIPEline to Career Success for Students with Disabilities: Root Causes & Strategies](#)
- Advance CTE: [Engaging Representatives of Learners with Special Population Status Through Perkins V](#)
- Urban Institute: [Racial and Ethnic Equity Gaps in Postsecondary Career and Technical Education](#)
- Advance CTE, Education Strategy Group, and Council of Chief State School Officers: [Making Good on the Promise: Ensuring Equitable Success Through CTE](#)
- National Skills Coalition: [Broadening the Apprenticeship Pipeline](#)

CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

ACTION 4: Provide meaningful and ongoing mechanisms for elevating the learner voice.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Develop and implement a strategy for ensuring that a diverse set of CTE learners provides direct and ongoing input into the design and delivery of CTE programs and experiences through existing spaces (e.g., the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, advisory committees) and new opportunities (e.g., program approval policies, civil rights monitoring);
- ✓ Partner with community organizations and other allies to build trust with learners and families; and
- ✓ Develop the necessary skills to prepare to lead authentic and potentially challenging conversations with learners that will directly affect policies, programs and learner supports.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which learners have access to and have participated in stakeholder engagement efforts, such as the Perkins V state plan development process, Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments or advisory groups?



**Current
Policy and
Practice**

How well do CTE leaders understand the benefits of elevating learner voice?

To what degree does learner voice or input affect state decisions on CTE program design, approval or re-approval?

How does the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment — and other local needs assessment structures — authentically engage learners at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

How does civil rights monitoring (Methods of Administration or otherwise) authentically engage learners?

What requirements are in place for state or local advisory committees or workforce development boards around learner participation and engagement?

What capacity exists for elevating learner voice at the state level? What current structures or processes can you build on?

**Current
Policy and
Practice**

What partnerships exist within your state to effectively and authentically engage learners around CTE policies and programs?

What feedback loops are in place for CTE learners, families and community-based organizations at the state level?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*



**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

- 4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
- 3 = *Some capacity/commitment*
- 2 = *Minimal capacity/commitment*
- 1 = *No capacity/commitment*

Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

- 4 = *Strong impact*
- 3 = *Some impact*
- 2 = *Minimal impact*
- 1 = *No impact*

Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Engage key districts and colleges to share how they did — or did not — engage learners as part of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment process to identify lessons learned.
- ✓ Identify any districts or colleges that have strong learner engagement efforts, such as student advisory committees or ambassador programs.
- ✓ Review existing or upcoming grant opportunities that could include requirements around CTE learner engagement and involvement.
- ✓ Engage community organizations and other allies with strong learner engagement efforts underway to identify collaboration opportunities.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Add learners to existing statewide advisory committees and/or launch a CTE student advisory committee.
- ✓ Launch an ambassador program to foster learner-to-learner engagement.
- ✓ Require learner interviews during Methods of Administration and other civil rights monitoring.
- ✓ Update Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment guidance around how learners can and should be engaged (beyond surveys).
- ✓ Require learner and family input into program approval or review policies (at the state and/or local level) and program of study development.
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive strategy for authentically engaging a diverse set of CTE learners and commit state staff to lead that strategy.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Advance CTE and Association for Career and Technical Education: [With Learners, Not for Learners: A Toolkit for Elevating Learner Voice in CTE](#)
- JFF: [Student Voice Professional Development Module](#)
- Advance CTE, Education Strategy Group, and Council of Chief State School Officers: [Making Good on the Promise: Building Trust to Promote Equity in CTE](#)
- Advance CTE: [Engaging Representatives of Learners with Special Population Status Through Perkins V](#)
- YouthForce NOLA: [Family Engagement Toolkit](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

PRINCIPLE
3

Each Learner Skillfully Navigates Their Own Career Journey



A key element of the career preparation ecosystem is a coordinated set of supports that enables each learner to navigate their career journey skillfully and successfully. At every stage of their careers, learners need access to information and individuals that help them ask the right questions, identify high-quality CTE programs, and access the services and supports for which they qualify.

Truly empowering learners will require a comprehensive, accessible, transparent and connected advisement system. This system must start by engaging young learners as they build occupational identities and span their lifetimes, providing consistent and coordinated support and guidance as they continue to gain skills and progress in their careers.

This principle includes the following actions:

1. Offer integrated PreK-20W advisement systems;
2. Provide transparent and accessible cross-state data on CTE options and outcomes; and
3. Invest the necessary resources to support integrated advisement systems.

The following sections walk through each of the three actions in this principle and provide a roadmap for state leaders to make the principle actionable.

ACTION 1: Offer integrated PreK-20W advisement systems.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Align career advisement and navigational supports at the K-12 level, guided pathways at the postsecondary level, and career services offered through the workforce system to adults so that information flows across levels and learners receive consistent and coordinated supports;
- ✓ Embed meaningful experiential learning opportunities, such as work-based learning and Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), into career advisement systems;
- ✓ Scale early warning and proactive advisement systems at the secondary and postsecondary levels and ensure that they include indicators related to CTE;
- ✓ Connect career advisement to wraparound supports to fully support students; and
- ✓ Ensure that career advisement systems attend to social-emotional learning and reflect trauma-informed principles.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which learners — particularly historically marginalized learners — have access to and participate in robust career advisement systems and services? Where are there gaps?

Which learners — particularly historically marginalized learners — have access to and participate in experiential learning opportunities, such as work-based learning or CTSOs?

At which transition points along the education-workforce continuum are institutions most likely to lose or disengage learners based on transfer, retention and placement rates?

Current Policy and Practice

To what degree are career guidance and advisement systems currently aligned across the K-12, postsecondary and workforce systems?

Does your state have a statewide requirement at the K-12 level for individual career and academic plans? If so, what strategies or supports are in place to ensure fidelity of implementation at the local level?

Does your state have any requirements or incentives for guided pathways at the postsecondary level? If so, what strategies or supports are in place to ensure fidelity of implementation at the institutional level?

How effectively are learners connected to additional support services to help them complete their education?

How is experiential learning, such as work-based learning and CTSOs, embedded within advisement systems at the K-12 and postsecondary levels?

How are career advisement activities integrated with state data systems, including early warning systems?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

4 = *Strongly align*
3 = *Somewhat align*
2 = *Minimally align*
1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
3 = *Some capacity/commitment*
2 = *Minimal capacity/commitment*
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Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

4 = *Strong impact*
3 = *Some impact*
2 = *Minimal impact*
1 = *No impact*

Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Evaluate the implementation of individual career and academic plan requirements or options.
- ✓ Identify any districts or colleges that have effective advisement systems in place.
- ✓ Review alignment among career advisement tools, systems and resources at the K-12, postsecondary and workforce development system levels.
- ✓ Review processes for connecting learners to experiential learning opportunities, such as work-based learning and CTSOs.
- ✓ Review processes for connecting learners to wraparound supports, such as transportation, housing and child care.
- ✓ Convene learners to better understand what supports they are receiving and what additional resources are needed.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Require each PreK-12 student to develop an individual career and academic plan, starting in at least grade 6, and update it regularly.
- ✓ Require the integration of career development standards and activities into CTE programs as a condition of program approval.
- ✓ Update state policies to integrate social-emotional learning and trauma-informed principles into advisement systems.
- ✓ Develop systems to intentionally connect each learner to experiential learning opportunities, such as work-based learning and CTSOs.
- ✓ Offer technical assistance to local providers on best practices for connecting learners to wraparound supports, such as transportation, housing and child care.
- ✓ Offer funding incentives for the development of early warning data systems at the secondary and postsecondary levels.
- ✓ Co-locate one-stop centers funded by WIOA on college campuses to integrate postsecondary and workforce career services.

Sample Policies and Resources

- South Carolina: [Education and Economic Development Act](#)
- Wisconsin: [Academic and Career Planning Process](#)
- Tennessee: [SAILS Program](#)
- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth: [Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans Throughout the Lifespan: A Revised and Updated “ILP How to Guide 2.0”](#)
- Community College Research Center: [Scaling ASAP: How Expanding a Successful Program Supported Broader Institutional Change at Bronx Community College](#)
- Michigan Center for Student Success: [Guided Pathways: The Scale of Adoption in Michigan](#)
- Middle Tennessee State University: [Predictive Analytics](#)
- National League of Cities: [Afterschool and Summer Learning: A City Strategy to Support College and Career Readiness](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

ACTION 2: Provide transparent and accessible cross-state data on CTE options and outcomes.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Update or redesign publicly available data reports to ensure that they are accessible to multiple stakeholders, including learners and their families, and provide easily understood information on the availability, value and outcomes of specific CTE programs, including how those outcomes might vary based on learner demographics; and
- ✓ Improve labor market information systems to provide learners with transparent, reliable and real-time information on available career opportunities, earnings, and how educational decisions will affect access to support services.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Who is visiting websites or other access points and using labor market tools in your state?

Current Policy and Practice

How is labor market information currently provided to learners at the secondary and postsecondary levels? Do all learners have access? Is the information easy to understand and accessible to individuals with disabilities and English learners?

How and where can potential learners find information about CTE programs and outcomes? Do all learners have access? Is the information easy to understand and accessible to individuals with disabilities and English learners?

Does the state currently provide labor market outcome data disaggregated by program of study and student populations?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
3 = *Some capacity/commitment*
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Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Review state websites and other communication tools to evaluate whether data on program outcomes is easy to find, accessible and useful.
- ✓ Review current labor market information systems and dissemination tools to evaluate whether data is easy to find, accessible and useful.
- ✓ Convene key stakeholders, such as learners, families and counselors, to provide feedback on access to and the utility of labor market and program outcomes data.
- ✓ Evaluate current data disaggregation practices to ensure that data is being provided at the appropriate level for learner decisionmaking.
- ✓ Evaluate current processes for matching CTE learner information with post-program outcomes, such as employment and wages, to determine gaps that exist in data systems.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Adopt or enhance policies to link learner data with labor market outcomes and share that information more broadly.
- ✓ Redesign CTE program performance reports published through state communication channels, such as websites and data dashboards, to ensure that they are accessible and useful.
- ✓ Implement requirements related to accessibility and utility for performance reports published by local providers.
- ✓ Invest in improvements in statewide labor market information collection and reporting.
- ✓ Leverage the labor market information system funded under WIOA to improve the flow of information to the local level.
- ✓ Implement requirements for local providers to use and share labor market information with learners.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Washington: [Career Bridge](#)
- Kentucky: [Kentucky Center for Statistics and Department of Education Data Partnership](#)
- Minnesota: [Graduate Employment Outcomes Tool](#)
- Nebraska: [H3 Website](#)
- Advance CTE: [Beyond the Numbers: A Toolkit for Communicating CTE Data](#)
- Workforce Information Advisory Council: [Challenges and Opportunities in Workforce and Labor Market Information](#)
- Advance CTE, Education Strategy Group, and Council of Chief State School Officers: [Putting Labor Market Information in the Right Hands: A Guide](#)
- Advance CTE: [Aligning to Opportunity: State Approaches to Setting High Skill, High Wage and In Demand](#)
- JFF: [From Labor Market Information to Pathways Design: Foundational Information for Intermediaries](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

ACTION 3: Invest the necessary resources to support integrated advisement systems.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Dedicate the necessary resources to increasing the number of counseling professionals;
- ✓ Provide additional training to all individuals working directly with learners on advisement;
- ✓ Adequately invest in data systems related to program outcomes and labor market information;
- ✓ Adequately invest in wraparound supports, such as transportation subsidies, child care and housing, to help students navigate their pathways to success; and
- ✓ Build capacity around data literacy so counselors, instructors and other leaders and practitioners can understand and communicate data to learners and other stakeholders.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

What access do learners — particularly historically marginalized learners — have to counselors or advisers?

**Current
Policy and
Practice**

How is state funding currently braided to support integrated advisement systems?

What resources has the state invested to expand the pool and capacity of counselors and advisers at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

How does the state provide professional development or technical assistance to build the capacity of counseling professionals, including their data literacy?

How does the state provide professional development or technical assistance to build the capacity of administrators, instructors and industry partners to support career development?

What additional investments are needed in state data and labor market information systems to support this work?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

4 = *Strong capacity/commitment*
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Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

4 = *Strong impact*
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2 = *Minimal impact*
1 = *No impact*

Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Review current funding streams supporting career advisement activities for gaps and overlaps.
- ✓ Review existing and potential funding streams to support wraparound supports and services.
- ✓ Conduct a needs assessment related to state data systems to support this work and identify priority action items.
- ✓ Evaluate current professional development for counselors and other stakeholders related to career development and data literacy and identify gaps and opportunities.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Develop or enhance data literacy training programs for counselors, instructors and other leaders and practitioners to help them understand and communicate labor market information and other program outcomes to learners.
- ✓ Develop policies and procedures for braiding existing funding streams to support career advisement systems and resources at the state and local levels.
- ✓ Advocate for more state-level funding to coordinate career advisement systems across the state.
- ✓ Provide incentive funding to local providers to add counseling staff and services.
- ✓ Secure funding to address gaps in current state data systems.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Arkansas: [College and Career Coaches](#)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation: [Connected to Careers: Expanding Employer Leadership in Career Development](#)
- American Institutes for Research: [How ESSA and IDEA Can Support College and Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities](#)
- MDRC: [Advising for Opportunity: Perspectives and Considerations for Supporting Movement Across Workforce and Academic Programs in Community Colleges](#)
- Community College Research Center: [Investing in Student Success at Community Colleges: Lessons from Research on Guided Pathways](#)

CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

4 Each Learner's Skills Are Counted, Valued and Portable



Many learners enter education and training programs with experiences, skills and competencies that have value in the workplace. Yet, our education and workforce systems — and the funding, accreditation and accountability systems that undergird them — still overwhelmingly place a premium on seat time over skills and competencies.

Our career preparation ecosystem must enable and value upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning by recognizing and counting the skills and competencies learners gain throughout their lifetimes. For such a system to take root, we need industry to play its role in prioritizing skills and competencies in hiring practices. We also need trusted systems that translate all competencies into credit to ensure that learners have the greatest opportunity for success, wherever they live.

This principle includes the following actions:

1. Capture and value all learning that occurs, wherever and whenever it occurs;
2. Build and leverage trusted systems to translate competencies and credentials into portable credit; and
3. Expand skills-based hiring practices that value competencies.

The following sections walk through each of the three actions in this principle and provide a roadmap for state leaders to make the principle actionable.

ACTION 1: Capture and value all learning that occurs, wherever and whenever it occurs.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Support, expand and scale competency-based policies and programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels to capture skills attainment wherever and whenever it happens;
- ✓ Give secondary and postsecondary institutions flexibility to design programs that are not beholden to seat time requirements; and
- ✓ Remove silos between academic and CTE instruction at the secondary and postsecondary levels to capture knowledge and skills gained across content areas.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which learners have access to and participate in competency-based programs and career pathways at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

**Current
Policy and
Practice**

What processes, policies or strategies are in place to support competency-based programs across the state at the K-12 and postsecondary levels?

What seat-time equivalency policies or other waiver protocols does your state offer to provide seat time flexibility at the K-12 and postsecondary levels?

How is your state supporting districts, schools and institutions already pursuing competency-based career pathways (e.g., targeted technical assistance, resource development, communities of practice)? How do or can those support efforts align with CTE?

How is your state leveraging federal and state funding to expand competency-based approaches?

What processes, policies or strategies are in place to support integrated academic and CTE credit opportunities across the state at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

How do core academic and CTE educators work together to provide integrated education and training opportunities and credit at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

**Current
Policy and
Practice**

Were any changes made to seat time requirements or competency-based education during the pandemic that could form a foundation of future work? How were these changes received?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

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Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

4 = Strong impact
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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Review current state policies on seat time to determine the challenges and opportunities they present to implementing this action.
- ✓ Convene local administrators and instructors to identify and assess barriers to districts or colleges moving toward competency-based education.
- ✓ Review policies related to the provision of integrated education and training programs in the state, including relevant state legislation or guidance and/or federal policy implementation guidance.
- ✓ Catalog current competency-based programs being offered in the state.
- ✓ Catalog current integrated education and training programs being offered in the state.
- ✓ Examine student performance data and stakeholder feedback from existing programs.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Update high school graduation or degree requirements to enable or incentivize competency-based models.
- ✓ Update state policy to add alternatives to seat time.
- ✓ Update other state policies, such as postsecondary financial aid policies, that affect the ability of institutions to offer competency-based education.
- ✓ Offer innovation grants to programs or institutions willing to pilot test promising models.
- ✓ Provide professional development to administrators and educators on implementation of competency-based and integrated programs.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Vermont: [Flexible Pathways Initiative](#)
- New Hampshire: [Statewide Competency-Based Education](#)
- Washington: [I-BEST](#)
- California Edge Coalition: [Understanding Competency-Based Education, Credit for Prior Learning, and Other Flexible Learning Approaches in California](#)
- iNACOL/Aurora Institute: [Designing for Equity: Leveraging Competency-Based Education to Ensure All Students Succeed](#)
- Achieve: [Competency-Based Policies and Pathways: Lessons from Colorado and Illinois](#)
- American Institutes for Research: [National Survey of Postsecondary Competency-Based Education](#)
- JFF: [Expanding Competency-Based Education for All Learners](#)

CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

ACTION 2: Build and leverage trusted systems to translate competencies and credentials into portable credit.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Consistently provide high-quality, accessible and standardized early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) for every learner;
- ✓ Leverage statewide articulation agreements and other policies to ensure portability of early postsecondary credits;
- ✓ Leverage statewide credit transfer agreements and other policies to ensure portability of postsecondary credits;
- ✓ Expand and standardize credit for prior learning policies and assessments to afford learners consistent and equitable opportunities to earn and be awarded credit; and
- ✓ Embed credentials of value in the credit for prior learning system.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which learners have access to and participate in EPSOs? Do learners from all backgrounds and geographic parts of the state have equitable access to and success in EPSOs? Where do gaps exist?

Which postsecondary learners successfully transfer credit within and across institutions? Where do gaps exist, based on learner demographics, program areas or institutions?

Which learners have access to and participate in credit for prior learning? Is access and success equitable across learner groups — particularly historically marginalized learners — and program areas?

**Current
Policy and
Practice**

How is the state advancing high-quality EPSOs?

How is the state advancing more equitable EPSOs for all learners?

How transferable or portable are early postsecondary credits to the full range of postsecondary institutions in your state through statewide articulation or other means?

How transferable or portable are credits earned in non-degree and degree programs within and across institutions statewide?

What state policies or programs currently support credit for prior learning at the postsecondary level? At the secondary level?

What types of experiences or credentials (e.g., work experience, military service, industry-recognized credentials) are consistently accepted as credit for prior learning? Where are there gaps?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

4 = *Strongly align*
3 = *Somewhat align*
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1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

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Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Catalog the various EPSOs available in your state, and evaluate how and which learners can access such opportunities.
- ✓ Convene stakeholders to identify key barriers to scaling high-quality and accessible EPSOs.
- ✓ Evaluate state and local credit transfer policies related to access and equity concerns.
- ✓ Review current data and research to determine how postsecondary learners are benefitting from credit transfer and articulation agreements and where there are gaps in implementation.
- ✓ Identify current practice around the use of credit for prior learning and prior learning assessments throughout your state.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Adopt policies on EPSOs that address or remove key barriers to equitable access, such as prerequisites.
- ✓ Adopt policies that ensure that credit earned through EPSOs is recognized toward a degree pathway statewide at all postsecondary institutions.
- ✓ Provide incentive funding to districts and colleges to increase enrollment in and completion of EPSOs.
- ✓ Adopt statewide credit transfer agreements between two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions.
- ✓ Provide incentive funding to institutions for joining statewide articulation and credit transfer agreements or for revising curriculum and career pathways to fit new agreements.
- ✓ Develop statewide guidelines or policy around the use of credit for prior learning and prior learning assessments.
- ✓ Provide technical assistance and professional development to postsecondary educators on best practices around implementing credit for prior learning and prior learning assessments.
- ✓ Integrate non-degree credentials into systems for awarding credit for prior learning.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Kansas: [Excel in CTE](#)
- Florida: [Postsecondary Program Approval and Articulation](#)
- Washington: [Direct Transfer Agreements](#)
- Louisiana: [Credit for Prior Learning/Industry-Based Credential Matrix](#)
- Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group: [Intentional Acts of Dual Enrollment: State Strategies for Scaling Early Postsecondary Opportunities in Career Pathways](#)
- College in High School Alliance: [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity & Quality in College in High School Programs](#)
- Aspen Institute and Community College Research Center: [The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students](#)
- California Edge Coalition: [Understanding Competency-Based Education, Credit for Prior Learning, and Other Flexible Learning Approaches in California](#)
- Advance CTE: [Developing Credit for Prior Learning Policies to Support Postsecondary Attainment for Every Learner](#)
- Association of Community College Trustees: [Make It Count: Recognizing Prior Learning for Workforce Development](#)
- Advance CTE and College Board: [College-Level Examination Program and Career and Technical Education](#)

CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

ACTION 3: Expand skills-based hiring practices that value competencies.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Provide each learner with a learning and employment record that captures the learner’s accomplishments, aptitudes, skills and competencies;
- ✓ Develop resources to help educators empower learners to better communicate about their skills and translate their experiences into competencies when seeking a job or additional education and training;
- ✓ Partner with industry to build a shared understanding on the value of skills-based hiring and support their work to develop and implement skills-based hiring practices at scale; and
- ✓ Work with human resource professionals to address technology used to screen applications and ensure that it includes provisions for skills-based hiring.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state’s current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state’s capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

What access do learners — particularly historically marginalized learners — have to learning and employment records?

What percentage of employers offer skills-based hiring? Or what percentage of available jobs are accessible through skills-based hiring structures?

Current Policy and Practice

What efforts are underway to capture and communicate learners' accomplishments, aptitudes, skills and competencies in your state at the secondary level? At the postsecondary level?

How do you currently empower learners to share their skills with potential employers? How could this sharing be accomplished more effectively?

What efforts are already underway in your state to move toward skills-based hiring? What structures or partnerships are in place to discuss and advise on skills-based hiring?

Are there policies already in place related to public-sector jobs that require skills-based hiring? Or that incentivize skills-based hiring in the private sector?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*

**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the **capacity or commitment** in your state to advance this action?

4 = Strong capacity/commitment
3 = Some capacity/commitment
2 = Minimal capacity/commitment
1 = No capacity/commitment

Overall, what is the **potential impact** of advancing this action in your state?

4 = Strong impact
3 = Some impact
2 = Minimal impact
1 = No impact

Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Catalog non-degree credentials offered and recognized by employers in the state, identifying gaps in alignment.
- ✓ Convene the largest employers and employer associations in the state to discuss current skills-based hiring practices with them.
- ✓ Identify systems or tools already in use in the state to capture learners' accomplishments, aptitudes, skills and competencies.
- ✓ Assess options for and barriers to the implementation of a statewide tool for capturing learners' accomplishments, aptitudes, skills and competencies.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Develop or scale a statewide platform to provide a universal learning and employment record.
- ✓ Develop resources that practitioners can use to empower learners to better use the platform and communicate about their skills using the tool when seeking further education or employment.
- ✓ Build materials and tools to share with employers on the benefits of non-degree credentials and skills-based hiring and then implement an outreach initiative to major employers' human resource professionals.
- ✓ Incentivize work within a specific industry to implement a pilot for transitioning to skills-based hiring.
- ✓ Advocate for skills-based hiring policies for public-sector jobs.

Sample Policies and Resources

- [Oklahoma: Skills-Based Practices](#)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation: [Developing and Using Public-Private Data Standards for Employment and Earnings Records](#)
- [TechHire](#)
- Accenture and Harvard Business School: [Dismissed by Degrees: How Degree Inflation Is Undermining U.S. Competitiveness and Hurting America's Middle Class](#)
- American Workforce Policy Advisory Board: [White Paper on Interoperable Learning Records](#)

CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

PRINCIPLE
5

Each Learner Can Access CTE Without Borders



If we are to truly meet learners' needs across the country, we must remove geographic barriers that limit access and opportunities for learners, particularly those in rural communities. Learners are increasingly mobile and not place based, with more learning and work happening remotely across state lines.

Our policies and programs should enable, not limit, mobility and access. States must come together to develop and expand new models of collaboration; invest in cross-state, open-access systems; and agree to common frameworks for defining and delivering CTE.

This principle includes the following actions:

1. Leverage a national framework for connecting education and the workforce;
2. Develop inter-state compacts that support collaboration and remove barriers; and
3. Invest in research and development to ensure that virtual opportunities are quality, equitable and meaningful.

The following sections walk through each of the actions in this principle and provide a roadmap for state leaders to make the principle actionable.



ACTION 1: Leverage a national framework for connecting education and the workforce.

Efforts are currently underway to modernize the National Career Clusters® Framework. Once the updated Framework is released, Advance CTE will provide supports to the field to enable the adoption and implementation of the modernized resource.



ACTION 2: Develop inter-state compacts that support collaboration and remove barriers.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Work with other states to jointly develop regional programs of study, as well as instructional tools such as open educational resources (OER), to reduce redundancies and maximize capacity;
- ✓ Build on current efforts to develop and expand inter-state data sharing agreements and share data on CTE learner outcomes across state borders;
- ✓ Develop teacher licensing reciprocity agreements to make moving from state to state or being shared among institutions in different states easier for instructors;
- ✓ Build models of reciprocity agreements for sharing technology and other key aspects of CTE delivery across states;
- ✓ Develop cross-state frameworks that consistently translate skills and competencies into credit and allow credit to be transferred across states; and
- ✓ Remove barriers and provide flexibility to enable more open access to CTE programs within the state.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

How mobile are learners in your state during their education? How many out-of-state learners access education and training programs in your state? How many in-state learners access education and training programs out of your state?

How mobile are individuals in your state post-program completion? Where are they most likely to move for employment (in or out of state)?



**Current
Policy and
Practice**

What data sharing agreements do you currently have with other states or at the national level? Where are there gaps in your current data sharing? What data are you still missing?

What current or potential opportunities are there to develop reciprocity agreements with other states related to CTE teacher certification?

What current or potential opportunities are there to develop reciprocity agreements with other states to provide open access to institutions or programs for learners across state lines?

Do you currently have any policies on credit transfer that extend across state lines? Are you participating in any national efforts related to standardizing credit transfer?

Have you developed or participated in any regional programs of study that extend across state lines? Are there program areas that might be a good fit for such development?

How does your state participate in the development and use of OER for CTE programs?



**Current
Policy and
Practice**

What policies or flexibilities are in place to enable open access to CTE programs and work-based learning across districts or institutions?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*



**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the capacity or commitment in your state to advance this action?	<p>4 = <i>Strong capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>3 = <i>Some capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>2 = <i>Minimal capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>1 = <i>No capacity/commitment</i></p>
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Overall, what is the potential impact of advancing this action in your state?	<p>4 = <i>Strong impact</i></p> <p>3 = <i>Some impact</i></p> <p>2 = <i>Minimal impact</i></p> <p>1 = <i>No impact</i></p>
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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Collect and review data on learner mobility patterns during and after their program.
- ✓ Review the alignment of current programs of study with those of similar or nearby states.
- ✓ Identify the opportunity to develop new programs of study in emerging industries at a regional level.
- ✓ Review curriculum and materials to identify where OER could be shared or curriculum materials could be more standardized with nearby states.
- ✓ Review cross-state data sharing agreements and their effectiveness; identify areas where new data sharing agreements are needed.
- ✓ Review cross-state teacher certification reciprocity agreements to identify gaps, particularly with bordering states.
- ✓ Review participation in regional or national credit transfer agreements and the potential for expansion.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Pilot the development of new regional programs of study in emerging industries.
- ✓ Align textbook adoption policies with neighboring states to ensure consistency across programs.
- ✓ Identify and join collaboratives to help educators share and use OER.
- ✓ Establish teacher certification reciprocity agreements with bordering states, at minimum, and any other states from which teachers are likely to move.
- ✓ Join national data sharing agreements, such as the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS 2) and develop new cross-state data sharing agreements as needed.
- ✓ Develop sharing agreements related to credit transfer with neighboring states, such as for articulation or credit for prior learning.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: [Interstate Passport®](#)
- Education Commission of the States: [50-State Comparison: Teacher License Reciprocity](#)
- National Center for Higher Education Management Systems: [Cross-State Data Sharing: Potential Benefits and Surmountable Barriers](#)
- National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity: [IM STEM: Using Collective Impact to Broaden Participation in STEM and CTE through a Multi-State Systems Approach](#)
- Rhode Island: [All Course Network](#)
- Nebraska: [Career Clusters Virtual Industry Tours](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?



ACTION 3: Invest in research and development to ensure that virtual opportunities are quality, equitable and meaningful.

Full implementation of this action requires states to:

- ✓ Invest in research and development to build out virtual CTE opportunities, including research and development of:
 - Technology solutions;
 - Instructional design models;
 - OER; and
 - Instructor supports to ensure that virtual experiences are quality and achieve more equitable access.

ASSESS YOUR SYSTEMS

Drawing on input from key stakeholders and cross-agency partners, consider the following questions to assess how your state is currently advancing this action — and where there are gaps in data, practice, policy or political will. Do not worry if you cannot answer all of the questions! If answers are not available, consider how you can integrate data collection and stakeholder engagement to gather insights into your action plans.

After each set of questions, enter your self-rating for the degree to which your state's current policies and practice align with the action, the level of your state's capacity or commitment to advance this action, and the potential impact on your state (and its learners and economy) if you were to advance this action. These self-ratings will populate a heat map at the end of this document.

What Does Your Data Tell You?

Which learners have access to and are completing virtual CTE program offerings?

How do outcomes differ for learners completing virtual CTE programs compared to in-person programs?



Current Policy and Practice

What lessons learned about virtual CTE opportunities during the pandemic can be leveraged to expand access and quality at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

What policies or programs currently exist in your state related to virtual CTE programs or opportunities at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

What work has been recently completed or is currently underway to expand virtual CTE programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

What work has been recently completed or is currently underway to expand virtual work-based learning programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels?

What investments are being made in research and development related to expanding virtual CTE programs?

Based on your responses above, to what degree do your state's current policies and practice **align** with or advance this action?

- 4 = *Strongly align*
- 3 = *Somewhat align*
- 2 = *Minimally align*
- 1 = *Do not align*



**Capacity
for
Change**

To what degree is there interest in this action among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

To what degree is there willingness to take action on this issue among state policymakers? Local practitioners?

How are or can Perkins V, ESSA, WIOA or other federal policies be leveraged to support this action?

How does or can this action align with your planned use of COVID-19 relief or recovery funds?

Which existing initiatives or partnerships are focused on this issue and can be leveraged or tapped to advance the work?

What barriers exist to advancing this action?

Based on your responses above, what is the capacity or commitment in your state to advance this action?	<p>4 = <i>Strong capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>3 = <i>Some capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>2 = <i>Minimal capacity/commitment</i></p> <p>1 = <i>No capacity/commitment</i></p>
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Overall, what is the potential impact of advancing this action in your state?	<p>4 = <i>Strong impact</i></p> <p>3 = <i>Some impact</i></p> <p>2 = <i>Minimal impact</i></p> <p>1 = <i>No impact</i></p>
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Based on the self-assessment in the previous section, briefly summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to advancing this action in your state.

What existing policies, initiatives or resources are in place that support or advance this action?

What policies, initiatives or resources may hinder support for or the advancement of this action, or where are you lacking policies, initiatives or resources?

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

Looking ahead, what opportunities exist within your state to advance this action?

What are potential threats to your ability to advance this action? What are the risks of doing this work?

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



CONSIDER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Below are key steps your state can take to begin to advance this action. First is a list of steps focused on auditing your systems and policies and building more buy-in from key partners. Next are suggested policy or programmatic changes that are foundational to sustained implementation of the action, followed by sample state policies and resources for inspiration.

Audit Your Systems

- ✓ Evaluate resources that are currently available to support research and development related to virtual CTE.
- ✓ Conduct a needs assessment to determine the greatest needs and gaps in services, building on lessons learned during the pandemic.

Key Policy and Practice Changes

- ✓ Dedicate state or federal resources to scaling virtual CTE opportunities in the areas of greatest need.
- ✓ Dedicate state or federal resources to evaluating outcomes for both new and existing virtual CTE opportunities.
- ✓ Incentivize local providers to pilot innovative approaches to virtual CTE delivery.
- ✓ Partner with research universities in your state to assist with program evaluation and research.

Sample Policies and Resources

- Urban Institute: [Online Career and Technical Education Programs during the Pandemic and After](#)
- Urban Institute: [Racial and Ethnic Equity Gaps in Postsecondary Career and Technical Education: Considerations for Online Learning](#)
- Advance CTE, Education Strategy Group, and Council of Chief State School Officers: [CTE on the Frontier: Connecting Rural Learners with the World of Work](#)
- New America: [Back to Basics: Quality in Digital Learning](#)



CAPTURE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Please include any major takeaways or reflections from the previous section, as well as any concrete next steps you will take (e.g., data to collect, policies to review, partnerships to be leveraged).

What are your top reflections on how your state is currently supporting this action or could be in the future?

What are some next steps you can take, particularly those that are foundational to building or maintaining momentum?

CTE Without Limits Action Planning

Following is a heat map of the self-ratings you and your team identified for the principle(s) in this tool, with **4 as the highest score for each category and 1 as the lowest**. Use the table to identify your state's greatest strengths and areas for improvement. This heat map can help you identify and prioritize focus areas for your action plan.

 Principle 1: Each learner engages in a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem	DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	CAPACITY & COMMITMENT	POTENTIAL IMPACT
1. Establish shared, statewide goals for a cohesive career preparation ecosystem.			
2. Ensure that all CTE programs of study are flexible and responsive.			
3. Expand data and accountability models that value collaboration, equity and innovation.			
4. Design equitable funding models that direct funding to where it is needed most.			
OVERALL PRINCIPLE 1 RATING			

 Principle 2: Each learner feels welcome in, is supported by and has the means to succeed in the career preparation ecosystem	DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	CAPACITY & COMMITMENT	POTENTIAL IMPACT
1. Fully diagnose and understand the scope of institutional barriers and systemic racism.			
2. Recruit, retain and support a diverse and culturally competent workforce.			
3. Design CTE programs and interventions on the margin while maintaining a commitment to quality.			
4. Provide meaningful and ongoing mechanisms for elevating the learner voice.			
OVERALL PRINCIPLE 2 RATING			

 Principle 3: Each learner skillfully navigates their own career journey	DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	CAPACITY & COMMITMENT	POTENTIAL IMPACT
1. Offer integrated PreK-20W advisement systems.			
2. Provide transparent and accessible cross-state data on CTE options and outcomes.			
3. Invest the necessary resources to support integrated advisement systems.			
OVERALL PRINCIPLE 3 RATING			

 Principle 4: Each learner's skills are counted, valued and portable	DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	CAPACITY & COMMITMENT	POTENTIAL IMPACT
1. Capture and value all learning that occurs, wherever and whenever it occurs.			
2. Build and leverage trusted systems to translate competencies and credentials into portable credit.			
3. Expand skills-based hiring practices that value competencies.			
OVERALL PRINCIPLE 4 RATING			

 Principle 5: Each learner can access CTE without borders	DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT	CAPACITY & COMMITMENT	POTENTIAL IMPACT
1. Leverage a national framework for connecting education and the workforce.			
2. Develop inter-state compacts that support collaboration and remove barriers.			
3. Invest in research and development to ensure that virtual opportunities are quality, equitable and meaningful.			
OVERALL PRINCIPLE 5 RATING			

CTE Without Limits Action Planning

Drawing on the overall assessment of your state's alignment the principles and related actions within *CTE Without Limits*, as well as overall capacity and potential impact, identify at least three goals that will drive your system forward and bring it closer to fully achieving these principles. Consider the SMART framework for goal setting. Goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound.

- ✓ **Specific:** In as much detail as possible, describe the challenge and what you hope to accomplish. Identify those responsible and accountable for executing the goal.
- ✓ **Measurable:** Identify measures of success and how you plan to track progress.
- ✓ **Attainable:** Make sure the goal is realistic. Do you have the skill, will and resources to achieve this goal? If not, what is a more realistic goal? A good SMART goal is both ambitious and attainable.
- ✓ **Relevant:** Is this goal related to your career readiness vision? How will it help you actualize this vision?
- ✓ **Time-Bound:** Set a specific date when the goal will be achieved.

Example of a SMART Goal

Currently, **our state does not have a strategy in place for ensuring that learner voice is leveraged to improve CTE**. When learners are engaged, it is all done locally, and we don't know if all voices are brought to the table. We **will develop a statewide strategy for engaging learners, including hiring a staff member to lead the strategy. We will start by launching a student advisory committee**. The strategy will be finalized and implemented by spring 2022, and this process **will be led by Wanda Perkins**. Our goal is that **a diverse group of CTE learners will be regularly engaged in our statewide efforts by spring 2022 with positive feedback from those engaged**.

Describe the problem

Describe the solution

Identify an owner for the work

Set a specific date when the goal will be achieved

Identify measures of success

LIST THREE SMART GOALS FOR ADVANCING CTE WITHOUT LIMITS

Identify up to three SMART goals that you need to advance *CTE Without Limits* in your state. Describe each goal in the following fields.

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

CTE Without Limits Action Planning

For each goal, identify what you will do immediately, within six months and within the next year to advance that specific goal, including who will own that step and what outcomes you hope to see.

Goal 1

What steps will your state take **immediately** to advance this goal?

Action Step

Individual Owner

Desired Outcomes

1

2

3

What steps will your state take in the **next six months** to advance this goal?

Action Step

Individual Owner

Desired Outcomes

1

2

3

What steps will your state take in the **next year** to advance this goal?

Action Step

Individual Owner

Desired Outcomes

1

2

3

CTE Without Limits Action Planning

Goal 2

What steps will your state take immediately to advance this goal?

Action Step	Individual Owner	Desired Outcomes
1		
2		
3		

What steps will your state take in the next six months to advance this goal?

Action Step	Individual Owner	Desired Outcomes
1		
2		
3		

What steps will your state take in the next year to advance this goal?

Action Step	Individual Owner	Desired Outcomes
1		
2		
3		

CTE Without Limits Action Planning

Goal 3

What steps will your state take **immediately** to advance this goal?

Action Step	Individual Owner	Desired Outcomes
1		
2		
3		

What steps will your state take in the **next six months** to advance this goal?

Action Step	Individual Owner	Desired Outcomes
1		
2		
3		

What steps will your state take in the **next year** to advance this goal?

Action Step	Individual Owner	Desired Outcomes
1		
2		
3		