



Montana Career and Technical Education Perkins V State Plan Executive Summary

Why Career and Technical Education? CTE provides options to students that gives learners knowledge and skills they need to prepare for college, careers, and lifelong learning. Nationally, CTE concentrators have higher academic proficiency scores and graduate at a higher rate than their peers. Students taking CTE courses are exposed to hands-on learning in the classroom, work-based learning, and early college credit while they are still in K-12 education. These experiences allow students to gain confidence, earn college credit, and gain valuable real-world work experience prior to entering postsecondary education or the workforce. Postsecondary CTE programs directly respond to changing workforce needs in Montana and consistently engage with members of business and industry to ensure students are learning skills specifically needed in occupations they are pursuing.

Process: Members of the State Plan Advisory Committee were appointed in conformity with the requirements of Montana Law (MCA 20-7-330). Members of the State Plan Advisory Committee are: Mark Branger, Executive Director, Montana Association for Career and Technical Education and CTE Teacher/Administrator, Huntley Project School; Scott Anderson, Principal and Director, Billings Career Center; Tammie Hickey, WIOA Adult Education Program Coordinator, Great Falls School District; Eric Tilleman, FFA/Ag Teacher, Cascade Public Schools, Dan Carter, Public and Government Affairs at Exxon Mobil Billings; and, Dick Brown, CEO, Montana Hospital Association. Other members assisting with the state plan were employees of OCHE, OPI, DLI and the Governor's Office.

The Montana State Plan was developed in consultation with CTE educators, eligible recipients including tribal colleges, parents, students, adult CTE providers, guidance counselors, interested community representatives, and representatives of special populations, business and industry, and labor organizations in the state. Students, business representatives, and CTE teachers were surveyed leading to more than 1,100 responses. We also met with the State workforce development board and with Montana Tribal organizations. More details about Stakeholder Consultation, input from relevant agencies, and public comment can be found on pages 8-11 of the full state plan.

Montana's CTE Vision: Montana's Career and Technical Education programs will create educated, highly skilled, well-rounded individuals who will meet the economic and workforce needs of our state by educating all students to understand the connections between academic subjects in the classroom and the application of that knowledge in the working world and by creating collaborative infrastructure connecting all points of education, workforce, and industry.

Goals: Montana established four (4) goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce.

1. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Office of Public Instruction (the Partner Agencies) will work together and with local eligible agencies to ensure every student in Montana, irrespective of geography, will have access to quality career and technical education.
2. The Partner Agencies will align career and technical education programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels so that students within a CTE pathway will experience seamless transitions when moving from a secondary CTE program to a corresponding postsecondary CTE program.
3. Montana will engage business and industry leaders throughout each grant cycle to ensure the career and technical education programs in the state are effective in preparing a skilled workforce.
4. Montana will expand access to and ensure quality of work-based learning opportunities and early college access to secondary students in Montana, irrespective of geography.

Montana plans to meet these goals in several ways. In order to meet the first goal, the state will explore different delivery systems in order to provide CTE courses in small, rural schools. In some cases, the state partners with the Montana Digital Academy to increase CTE course offerings that are delivered online. Interactive video courses are also being explored as a viable option to expand CTE opportunities.

The Partner Agencies will continue to promote Montana Career Pathways so students are aware of secondary CTE programs and activities, as well as options for postsecondary degrees and credentials that align to their pathway.

The Partner Agencies will reconvene the State Career and Technical Education Advisory Board in early 2020 to assist in meeting the third goal. This board will pass recommendations and guidance to the State Executive Leadership Team (SELT) twice a year so that decisions are made with input and consideration from members of business and industry in Montana.

Highlights from the State Plan:

- Montana strives for strong alignment between CTE and workforce agencies and initiatives through governance structures, joint activities, and the incorporation of labor market information (LMI) within program alignment and decision-making. There is strong coordination and collaboration across OCHE, OPI and the workforce system/WIOA.
- Montana provides a number of supports and resources for career planning and guidance for students. Well-implemented resources at the local level will increase awareness of CTE and related educational and employment opportunities.
- OCHE and OPI are working together to implement and investigate strategies to increase rural access and to help a variety of special populations. In the plan, the partner agencies outline a consortia pilot as a strategy to increase access and pool resources in an effective way. This pilot encourages postsecondary campuses to partner with secondary schools and operate as a single eligible agency for Perkins funds. This allows for significant collaboration and opportunity for schools somewhat close in geographic area to accomplish more with shared resources.
- Schools are now required to offer dual enrollment and work-based learning opportunities to their students, both of which are further incentivized because they are new secondary program quality indicators.
- All schools wishing to receive Perkins funding will complete a new Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), which requires that programs seeking funding must tie their requests to an identifiable need within business and industry. The CLNA includes engagement of stakeholders from education and industry and assessment of labor market information to ensure funded programs lead to high-wage, high-skill and in-demand occupation.
- The Department of Labor and Industry created an LMI dashboard to assist schools and campuses complete the CLNA.

Conclusion: The Perkins V State Plan is a means by which our state formalizes strategic partnerships and direct funding toward ensuring a coordinated and labor-market driven Career and Technical Education System. By creating strong pathways from K-12 through postsecondary education and workforce development, the strategies outlined in this plan will help ensure that Montana students have robust learning opportunities to gain the skills and education necessary to secure careers in high-wage, high-skill and in-demand jobs.