



HILL VISIT TALKING POINTS

Keeping It Local

ACTE hopes that most of your time in meetings with your policymakers is focused on demonstrating how CTE works back home. While ACTE can provide a snapshot of what CTE looks like nationally, you are the expert and can share exactly how CTE works in your community and state. When you meet with your Members of Congress, focus on these items:

- How does CTE meet the business community's needs, particularly related to any specific workforce shortages in your area? Discuss any effective industry partnerships you have within your program.
- How are you working with employers to provide work-based learning opportunities to students?
- How does CTE provide pathways for students into further education? Discuss secondary-postsecondary connections, programs of study, career pathways, or initiatives at the postsecondary level like stackable credentials.
- Share any stand-out stories about innovative courses you have offered or inspiring student achievements.
- Paint a picture of how CTE works with specific populations in your community and share data and success stories. How does CTE work for nontraditional or underrepresented students, adults, opportunity youth and others in your program(s)?
- How could you expand or strengthen your CTE programs with more resources? Share about gaps in current programs that could be addressed, waiting lists for enrollment or new programs that you would like to offer but aren't able to due to resource constraints.
- Invite your policymakers to tour your program and see firsthand how your CTE program is working to meet the needs of your students.

Building our Investment in CTE

While funding increased for a few years, that upward trajectory has now flattened out and current funding levels are insufficient for CTE to be able to provide its maximum benefit to students, workers and the economy. Accounting for inflation, the Perkins Basic State Grant program is still **several hundred million dollars below its funding level from over twenty years ago**. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, Perkins funding constituted **under 2% of the total budget of the U.S. Department of Education**.

Congress just passed a minibus for FY 2026 appropriations, which keeps funding at the same levels for the third year in a row. This means no funding increases across the board for Perkins or other education programs for the 2026-27 school year. Now work begins on FY 2027 funding, which is likely to be extremely contentious. We are asking Congress for a meaningful increase to the Perkins Basic State Grant for this fiscal year and beyond. Here are some helpful points related to Perkins funding to use during your meetings:

- Perkins funding serves approximately 12 million secondary, postsecondary and adult CTE students nationwide.
- Perkins funding provides a strong return on investment, as students involved in CTE programs are more engaged, perform better academically and graduate at higher rates.
- CTE prepares students for careers in high-wage emerging fields such as drone piloting and manufacturing, cybersecurity and engineering.
- CTE is critical to preparing construction and infrastructure workers. According to the Brookings Institution, at least 17 million new workers will be needed over the next decade to rebuild the nation's infrastructure.
- CTE is also critical to the manufacturing industry. It is projected that the semiconductor industry will grow by nearly 115,000 jobs by 2030, from approximately 345,000 jobs today to approximately 460,000 jobs by the end of the decade, representing 33% growth. Of these new jobs, approximately 67,000 or 58% risk going unfilled.
- Current funding levels do not go nearly far enough to address community and employer needs that CTE can meet. As Congress begins work on FY 2027, it is important that Congress continues to provide meaningful increases to continue making a significant impact on workforce needs.

Maintain Strong Support for Public Education and Educators

CTE programs are an integral part of the public education system across the United States, both at the secondary and postsecondary levels, and rely on this system to be successful. To ensure all learners have access to high-quality CTE programs as part of their broader education pathway, the federal government must continue to play a key role in supporting the entire public education system, including educators. To meet these needs, we are asking Congress to:

- Ensure the Department of Education is maintained as outlined in current law and is organized and staffed in a robust way to continue to administer all congressionally appropriated programs.
- Provide meaningful oversight to ensure that all congressionally appropriated programs are carried out with fidelity and in a maximally efficient and effective manner.
- Sustain robust funding across the entire education and workforce development continuum to ensure CTE programs and learners have all the support, tools and resources they need to complete their educational journey.
- Improve educator recruitment and retention by making teaching a more financially attractive career and increasing access to high-quality teacher preparation and professional development programs.
- Prioritize the importance of the federal role in education data and research through robust funding and support, and continue to emphasize data collections that assess student longitudinal outcomes across education and workforce pipelines.

Strengthen Workforce Pathways through CTE

As discussions on the reauthorizations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the National Apprenticeship Act (NAA) move forward, we ask that policymakers think strategically about the unique role CTE programs can play in strengthening these programs and building strong pathways. By connecting the education provided through CTE programs to the broader workforce development efforts, we can ensure increased access to high-quality training for both youth and adults. Our legislative priorities in this area include asking Congress to:

- Include CTE stakeholders in WIOA governing bodies and provide dedicated funding for WIOA infrastructure costs to remove the burden from partner programs.

- Increase the availability of workforce services and supports for in-school youth.
- Improve data system capacity and transparency so workforce outcomes of education programs can be measured clearly.
- Balance requirements placed on WIOA-eligible training providers that offer high-quality CTE programs to ensure robust participation in the workforce system.
- Formalize definitions and quality expectations for all apprenticeship activities, including pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs, to provide clarity to education providers.
- Promote CTE programs serving as related technical instruction providers for apprenticeship programs and emphasize strong linkages between youth and pre-apprenticeships and CTE programs.

Thoughtfully Consider How AI Can Support Educators and Learners

As policymakers consider the role of artificial intelligence in education and workforce systems, it is essential that any AI-related legislation be grounded in strong core components to support educators and learners. This includes ensuring learners can gain a foundational understanding of how AI systems work, promoting ethical and responsible use, safeguarding student and workforce data privacy, and allowing for flexibility and adaptability as systems and needs change. Policymakers should:

- Invest in AI literacy initiatives and workforce-aligned skill development to ensure learners are prepared to work with and alongside AI technologies.
- Prioritize professional development opportunities that equip educators with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively integrate AI into the classroom.
- Protect student data privacy and promote the responsible and ethical use of AI technologies in education and workforce systems.
- Ensure any new policies are flexible and adaptable so that educators can design instruction that is most appropriate to students' future goals, even as technology and education systems change.