

Carl D. Perkins
Career and Technical Education
Legislative Report
November 2023



Submitted by:

Office of Commissioner of Higher Education

In consultation with the Office of Public Instruction

On behalf of Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Update
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Montana statute (§§ 20-7-330, MCA) requires that the Montana Board of Regents prepare a biennial report to the legislature on the results of interactions the Regents have had with the superintendent of public instruction, teachers, students, labor organizations, businesses, and institutions or agencies involved in vocational and career and technical education related to Montana’s State Plan for Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement. In Board of Regents Policy 272, the responsibility for those interactions and the subsequent report is delegated to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). In collaboration with its Partnering Agency, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), OCHE is engaged in interactions of this type daily.

This report provides a summary of the Carl D. Perkins grant expenditure highlights in the state of Montana, focusing on the most recently completed 2022-2023 grant cycle.

I. Background

The current legislation (The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, also referred to as Perkins V), which distributes over \$1.3 billion in federal funding to states to support career and technical education at the secondary and postsecondary levels, has several priorities:

- Develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary and postsecondary students enrolled in CTE programs of study;
- Build on the efforts of states and localities to develop challenging academic and technical standards;
- Conduct technical assistance that promotes leadership and professional development to improve the quality of CTE teachers, faculty, administrators and counselors;
- Support partnerships among secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, local workforce investment boards, and business and industry; and
- Provide individuals with the skills to keep the United States competitive.

The Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education is the designated State board to coordinate the development and submission of the state plan for career and technical education as required by The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). The state agencies responsible for career and technical education (CTE) in Montana are the Academic Research, and Student Affairs (ARSA) division of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Division of Career, Technical, and Adult Education of the Office of Public Instruction. Given their close coordination of activities, the State Plan and this report refer to the two agencies as the “Partner Agencies.”

II. Perkins V State Plan

The current Perkins State Plan was approved by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education in April 2020 and is in effect until June 2023.

Montana outlined the following State 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.**

In the state plan, 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. The Partner Agencies 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 also 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.

Highlights of 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.
- Secondary 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.

III. Updates for Postsecondary CTE programs

During the 2022-2023 grant cycle, OCHE continued working on building and expanding relationships between leadership at Montana’s two-year, community and tribal colleges and local and statewide industry partners. Students and Montana’s local economies benefit from these relationships as they lead to increased opportunities in apprenticeships, internships, and other valuable work-based learning experiences for students. It is vital for career and technical education programs to have input from industry and business representatives when building curriculum, updating classroom equipment, providing professional development for faculty, and creating assessments to test the skills learned in the classroom. Every Perkins-funded CTE program in Montana must have a corresponding advisory committee with business and industry representation to be eligible for the grant.

All Perkins recipients must also complete a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment and include the results of the assessment in their local application. The assessment includes:

- An evaluation of performance of the students served by the school, including an evaluation of performance for special populations and each subgroup described in section 1111(h)(1)©(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

- A description of how the CTE programs offered are sufficient in size, scope, and quality to meet the needs of all students; aligned to State, regional, Tribal, or local in-demand industry sectors or occupations as identified by the State workforce development board; and designed to meet local education or economic needs not identified by State or local workforce development boards.
- An evaluation of progress toward implementation of CTE programs and programs of study.
- A description of how the eligible recipient will improve recruitment, retention, and training of CTE teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and career guidance and academic counselors, including individuals in groups underrepresented in such professions.
- A description of progress toward implementation of equal access to high-quality career and technical education courses and programs of study for all students, including strategies to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to, or performance gaps in, the courses and programs for special populations; providing programs that are designed to enable special populations to meet the local levels of performance; and providing activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations in competitive, integrated settings that will lead to self-sufficiency.

In conducting the comprehensive needs assessment, schools must involve a diverse body of stakeholders, including, at a minimum:

- Representatives of career and technical education programs in a local educational agency or educational service agency, including teachers, career guidance and academic counselors, principals and other school leaders, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel and paraprofessionals.
- Representatives of career and technical education programs at postsecondary educational institutions, including faculty and administrators.
- Representatives of the State board or local workforce development boards and a range of local or regional businesses or industries.
- Parents and students.
- Representatives of special populations.
- Representatives of regional or local agencies serving out-of-school youth, homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth (as defined in section 1432 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).
- Representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations in the State, where applicable.

- Any other stakeholders that the eligible agency may require the eligible recipient to consult.

Additionally, schools receiving Perkins funds must also consult with stakeholders on an on-going basis. This may include consultation in order to:

- Provide input on annual updates to the comprehensive needs assessment.
- Ensure programs of study are; responsive to community employment needs; aligned with employment priorities in the State, regional, tribal, or local economy identified by employers, which may include in-demand industry sectors or occupations identified by the local workforce development board; informed by labor market information; designed to meet current, intermediate, or long-term labor market projections; and allow employer input, including input from industry or sector partnerships in the local area, where applicable, into the development and implementation of programs of study to ensure such programs of study align with skills required by local employment opportunities, including activities such as the identification of relevant standards, curriculum, industry-recognized credentials, and current technology and equipment.
- Identify and encourage opportunities for work-based learning.
- Ensure funding under this part is used in a coordinated manner with other local resources.

Perkins-receiving campuses continue to host high-impact, student centered events and activities such as the 2nd annual Welding Competition and Transportation & Industry Expo and the Pizza, Pop, and Power Tools event at City College, Pursing the Trades event at Flathead Valley Community College, photonics career exploration at Gallatin College, Great Falls College’s World of Work event, Highlands College’s Trades and Technology Day, and MSU Northern’s TekNoXpo.

Montana’s Perkins-receiving campuses drive career exploration and work-based learning experiences for students in the State. This includes internships built into AAS trades programs at City College, an Experiential Learning Academy at Flathead Valley Community College, and internships for Fire and Emergency students at Helena College.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, Perkins funding was used to purchase or supplement the cost of major equipment vital for training students on technology current with industry, such as an anatomage table for City College, equipment for Information Technology, Carpentry, and HVAC programs at Gallatin College, anatomical models for health science programs at Great Falls College, radiologic technology equipment for Highlands College, Heavy Equipment Operations Simulator and Surgical Technology Operating Table for Missoula College, Plumbing Technology tools for MSU Northern, and equipment for the Dental Assisting program at Salish Kootenai College.

Colleges also used the grant to provide professional development for faculty, staff and teachers including City College faculty attendance at the Fire House Expo, FVCC’s nursing faculty

attendance at the National League for Nursing, attendance at the IMTS Tradeshow for CNC Machining faculty at Gallatin College, sending a Great Falls College program director to the National Conference for Workforce Education, Automotive Hybrid training for Highlands College, NC3 Safety Certification for MSU Northern faculty, and professional development for Highway Construction Training and Medical Assisting faculty at Salish Kootenai College.

Perkins funding was also used to create and/or update existing program curricula across the state including Information Technology and Advanced Manufacturing at Gallatin College, cosmetology at Helena College, the pre-apprenticeship line program at Highlands College, Meat Processing at Miles Community College, Chemical Addiction Program at Missoula College, and Computer Science at UM Western.

Some of the most exciting achievements for the 2022-2023 grant cycle include:

- City College hosted a non-traditional career exploration day for 8th grade girls to explore occupations that historically have been male dominated.
- Flathead Valley Community College established an Executive Director of Workforce position to develop community relations and build CTE programming that aligns with local workforce needs.
- One of Helena College's aviation students received a prestigious Women in Aviation Scholarship, which allowed her and the Executive Director of CTE to travel to the Women in Aviation Conference.

IV. Updates for Secondary CTE Programs

The Office of Public Instruction continues its strong commitment to supporting CTE student leadership development in Montana. The majority of the CTE Specialists also serve as state advisors in their respective career fields, providing direct state leadership to their program-related career and technical student organization (CTSO). OPI also continued to support CTSO's in resources and funding. Staff provide administrative and leadership resources to assist the organizations in competitive event conferences. State leadership teams from the Montana FFA Association, Business Professionals of America (BPA), Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), HOSA, DECA, SkillsUSA, and Technology Student Association (TSA) participated in team-building activities, leadership style activities, situational leadership activities, and career development events.

Middle School Career Exploration

For the 2022-2023 grant cycle, \$50,000 of Perkins Rural Reserve grant funds were used to support career exploration in the middle grades. Schools demonstrated their eligibility by

connecting with secondary programs Montana Career Pathways. Twenty applicants were funded with Rural Reserve and resulted in activities and purchases related to Family Consumer Sciences, Hydroponics, Welding, STEM, Manufacturing, Agriculture Mechanics, and CTE Career Fairs.

V. Financial Update

Allocations for Secondary CTE Programs. OPI has distributed funds on an annual basis for secondary CTE programs to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) according to the following formula, as determined in Perkins law:

- The total amount allocated for distribution through the local application formula for secondary education CTE is \$3,194,483.00 for the July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 grant cycle.
- Of this amount, seventy percent of the available funds were allocated to LEAs based on the census data for school system enrollment for the number of children in poverty aged 5-17 for the previous school year.
- Thirty percent of the available funds were allocated to LEAs based on the AIM enrollment data for the number of children aged 5-17 for the previous school year.

Allocations for Postsecondary CTE Programs. The total amount allocated for distribution through the local application formula for postsecondary education CTE for the most recent completed grant cycle (FY 2023) was \$1,720,106.00. Funding for postsecondary programs is determined in accordance with Perkins law, by dividing the number of Pell grant and Bureau of Indian Affairs program recipients enrolled in the two-year postsecondary institution by the total number of Pell Grant and Bureau of Indian Affairs program recipients in the state. Fourteen of Montana's two-year and community colleges received Perkins funding during 2022-2023, including three tribal colleges and all three community colleges.

VI. Conclusion

The state of Montana continues to engage in activities made possible by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). Through the resources made available from the Act and state and local funding for career and technical education, Montana continues to increase the quality of career and technical education programs and provide more options for students as they prepare for college and their careers.