

Carl D. Perkins
Career and Technical Education
Legislative Report
October 2020



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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on Behalf of the Montana Board of Regents

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 recent 2019-2020 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 \$1.2 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.” Statewide vision and direction for CTE is overseen by the State Executive Leadership Team (SELT), a group composed of representatives from OCHE, OPI, the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), Montana Department of Labor and Industry (MTDLI), and the Governor’s Office. The SELT provides ongoing review of state activities and

progress in improving CTE programs, making key decisions about the allocations of reserve fund under section 112 and leadership funds under section 124.

II. Perkins V State Plan

In July of 2018, the President signed into law the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, the fifth iteration of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 1984. Perkins has historically played a critical role in helping states advance CTE in secondary and postsecondary education and its footprint is particularly large in Montana education comprising the bulk of CTE funding provided to high schools as well as significant funding to two-year, community, and tribal colleges.

OCHE and OPI appointed representatives to the State Plan Advisory Committee as per statute (§§ 20-7-330, MCA), which began meeting in February 2019 to address various topics related to the state planning process. Members of the State Plan Advisory Committee included educators from secondary, postsecondary, and adult education, representatives from industry, staff from OPI and OCHE, and representation from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) and the Governor's Office. The State Plan Advisory Committee met five times during the course of state plan writing, as well as after the plan was submitted to assist in plan implementation.

Additional stakeholders that were consulted included representatives of secondary and postsecondary CTE programs; parents, students, and community organizations; the state workforce development board (SWIB); representatives of special populations, business and industry, and agencies serving out-of-school youth, homeless children and youth, and at risk youth; representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations; individuals with disabilities; and the Governor. Engagement of these stakeholders included a state-wide CTE survey, Perkins V implementation workshops, CTE Tribal consultation meetings, public hearings, and presentations at convenings of the following organizations: SWIB, the Montana Board of Regents, the Montana Behavioral Initiative, School Administrators of Montana, and the Montana Rural Education Association.

To assist in setting a clear direction for the state planning process, 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 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.
- 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. Impact of COVID-19

Unfortunately, due to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, all of Montana's Perkins-receiving schools and colleges were forced to cancel most expenses and activities related to travel, career exploration, and professional development during the spring. The Partner Agencies were guided by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education within the U.S. Department of Education in flexibilities the Partner Agencies were able to offer to Montana schools. Many high schools and colleges opted to reallocate funds for equipment, software, and technology purchases needed to support distance education and remote instruction. It should be noted that Montana high school and college leadership, support staff, teachers, and faculty went above and beyond in making sure students had access to education and were provided with the supports needed to make it through the spring semester.

IV. Updates for Postsecondary CTE programs

During the 2019-2020 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.

Perkins-receiving campuses continue to host high-impact, student centered events and activities such as corequisite math tutoring for CTE students, Flathead Valley Community College's Experience the Trades, student mentors for Perkins special populations, Great Falls College's College in a Day, Gallatin College's Women in Welding, and several other opportunities offered around the state.

During the 2019-2020 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 a Caterpillar loader/backhoe, a PocketNC Tabletop 5-Axis machining system, MIG 360 MP educational welding machines, simulation manikins for healthcare programs, a respiratory video laryngoscope, anatomical study models, an aviation flight simulator, and other various equipment to support dozens of CTE programs.

Colleges also used the grant to provide professional development for faculty, staff and teachers including American Welding Society training, Ziess training for advanced manufacturing instructors, OSHA safety certification training, and attendance to the following conferences: the Montana Association of Registered Land Surveyors Conference, the National League for Nursing Education Summit, the American Physical Therapy Association's Education Leadership Conference, the Association of Career and Technical Education, the American Association of Community Colleges Workforce Development Conference, and various other professional development and training opportunities.

Perkins was also used to create and/or update existing program curricula across the state including surveying, information technology, hospitality and tourism, cybersecurity, HVAC, medical lab technician, respiratory therapy, and construction technology.

V. Updates for Secondary CTE Programs

A large focus in 2019-2020 was the Perkins V State Plan and implementation for Montana's public schools. Through a series of in-person trainings during the fall of 2019 as well as virtual training, technical calls, and Zoom meetings with schools, OPI CTE Specialists and staff worked to help schools understand and prepare to apply for their 2020-2021 Perkins federal funding.

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 CTSSO's in resources and funding. Staff provides 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.

OPI moved the 'New CTE Professionals Workshop' from in-person to virtual and broke it out resulting in five, 75-minute sessions. This annual professional development opportunity is free and is designed specifically for CTE teachers, administrators, and counselors with less than five years of CTE experience. Topics of training included Perkins funding, state CTE funding, advisory boards, Montana Career Pathways, work-based learning, marketing of CTE programs, and data collection. There were 52 participants registered, with eight OPI staff and seven CTSSO State Directors in attendance. The CTE Specialists also created a free HUB course, "Moving CTE to Online and Remote Learning," to help address our teacher needs. Currently, 61 teachers have registered.

The Career, Technical, and Adult Education unit of the OPI focuses on partnerships with our stakeholders. Through partnerships with our stakeholders, CTE Specialists are able to deliver a

more concise message about state workforce needs and how CTE programs can meet them for Montana. This growing list of stakeholders include The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Department of Labor and Industry, Montana Chamber of Commerce, Reach Higher Montana, Youth Entrepreneurs, Montana Contractors Association, and organizations like the Montana Association of Career and Technical Education.

VI. 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 the Perkins law:

- The total amount allocated for distribution through the local application formula for secondary education CTE is \$2,943,615.00 for the July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 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 year (FY 2020) was \$1,585,023.00. Funding for postsecondary programs is determined 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. Twelve of Montana's two-year and community colleges received Perkins funding during 2019-2020, including two tribal colleges.

VII. 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). 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.