

Carl D. Perkins
Career and Technical Education
Legislative Report
December 2021



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 2020-2021 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.”

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 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 continued 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 2020-2021 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 a Dual Enrollment Welding Expo and a High School Career Exploration Day at City College, a Welding Competition at Dawson Community College, providing a Health Sciences and Biotechnology workshop for high school students at Flathead Valley Community College, hosting a CyberSecurity Learning workshop for high school instructors at Gallatin College, Trades Days at Highlands College, and a rural-school targeted College in a Day event for high school students at Great Falls College.

During the 2020-2021 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 nitrogen plastic welder, new rebuild engines for diesel programs, plasma cutters for auto body programs, a Hydraulic Trainer System, Pocket Nurse simulation equipment, conduit raceways and calculations lab equipment, a welding bend tester, equipment for radiological technology, equipment for physical therapy programs, and surgical technology equipment.

Colleges also used the grant to provide professional development for faculty, staff and teachers including a network technology and cyber security training, Montana Association of Career and Technical Education Conference, National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, CTE online training courses for high school teachers, American Welding Society Certified Welding Inspector training, and Society for Technology Education.

Perkins was also used to create and/or update existing program curricula across the state HVAC, IT and cyber security, early childhood education, business management, education, automotive and carpentry apprenticeships, and Virtual Academy high school computer classes.

V. 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 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.

Secondary schools provided many professional learning opportunities and curriculum resources to their teachers and students, in areas such as computer science and cybersecurity, restaurants

and tourism, building a safe culture in agriculture programs, hydroponics growing, youth entrepreneurship, human services, early childhood education, business and marketing, health sciences

The New CTE Professionals Workshop was conducted virtually for 2020 and held over five sessions. The New CTE Professionals Virtual Workshop 2020 sessions were held September 22 and 29 and October 6, 13, and 20. This free, one-day, professional development opportunity was designed specifically for CTE teachers in their first five years in the Montana CTE classroom. Topics of the training included Perkins funding, State CTE funding, CTE advisory boards, professional development organizations, instructional strategies for the CTE classroom, relationship building with school and community, safety and liability in the CTE classroom, work-based learning, CTE and program-area standards and guidelines, and Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). A total of 49 CTE teachers, eight OPI CTE Staff, and six CTSE State Directors attended.

The OPI CTAE Specialists collaborated with OPI staff to create an online OPI Teacher Learning Hub Course for CTE Teachers: Moving CTAE to Online and Remote Learning. This 3-hour course is available on demand focusing on CTE elements and specific resources for each area of CTE.

During FY2021, the Montana Financial Education Coalition worked in partnership to provide professional development options and classroom contests to further the discussion of the importance of financial education for secondary students providing support for Family & Consumer Sciences and Business Education programs.

Secondary leadership dollars were used to support teachers through professional development of new professionals to promote work based learning and post-secondary credits. Other professional development was provided to career and technical education teachers, school administrators and counselors through industry panels, technical assistance calls and visits and content standard revisions. The career and technical standards were revised to include standards starting in kindergarten through twelfth grade. In addition to the CTE Specialists also work closely with reading, math and science instructional coordinators to promote and provide professional development opportunities to all teachers.

50,000 dollars in Rural Reserve money was granted in \$2,000 increments to secondary programs receiving under \$5,000 in Perkins allocations. They must have completed the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment and show how this funding would assist in meeting the needs of the program. These additional funds were able to help our smaller schools update curriculum and equipment needs to better meet the demands of the local workforce needs.

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 \$2,959,279.00 for the July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 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 2021) was \$1,593,458.00. 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. Fourteen of Montana's two-year and community colleges received Perkins funding during 2020-2021, including three tribal colleges and all three community 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.