

Funding a CTE Learning Space

The intent of Career Technical Education is to develop a student's employability skills and set them on a pathway into a fulfilling 21st Century career.

While today's economy offers enormous opportunity, only the well-prepared are likely to succeed in tomorrow's workforce. Business leaders continue to voice concerns about the gap between the skills needed to advance their companies, and those that many workers can offer today. The National Federation of Independent Business reported that 35 percent of small businesses were unable to find qualified applicants to fill job openings in January 2019. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation found a skills-gap of more than 4.4 million job openings.

This trend shows no sign of waning. In fact—according to Georgetown's Center for Education and the Workforce—it is anticipated that by 2020:

- 35% of jobs will require a bachelor's degree or higher
- 30% will require some education beyond high school including associate's degrees
- Only 36% will not require more than a high school diploma

By participating in CTE programs, students are able to find connections between their core academic work and career aspirations: making high school a more relevant, and engaging experience. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, these students graduate at higher rates and are more likely to go on to postsecondary education.

As career fields continue to evolve, there is a growing demand for CTE pathways demanding proper facilities and supporting features to make them

successful. This is one key reason that funding is an integral part of the process to make CTE programs rich and relevant.

Securing Funds for Your CTE Program

CTE programs are typically funded for delivery of career and workforce preparation for high school students and adults, preparation for advanced training, and upgrading of existing skills.

The use of funds is often restricted by law to improving, enhancing, expanding, or modernizing CTE programs. These programs, in turn, should strengthen academic and career technical skills through integration, provide students with experience and an understanding of all aspects of an industry, as well as develop, improve or expand their use of technology.

Many schools use local or existing funds to upgrade their CTE programs. These include:

- School bonds
- Technology funds
- District foundations
- Parent organizations
- Library budgets

These local funds are often associated with new construction, innovation, STEM equipment, facility or infrastructure/technology upgrades. When soliciting funds, be sure to make a strong case for your proposed CTE program. Will your program

increase the readiness and success of students for postsecondary education and careers in priority economic sectors? Will it promote partnerships between education and business and industry? Does it promote and track participation of students in articulated courses? Does your program include professional development and expand internship and work-based opportunities?

First, identify state, federal, public and private sources of funding for your CTE programs. Is there a funding source that you have not accessed in the past that might present an opportunity for your program? What source or strategy could you use to bring additional funding to your program? If you suddenly had unrestricted funds that had to be spent quickly, would you know what to do with them?

Funds should supplement not supplant. You might want to expand the availability of quality CTE courses, programs, technology, pathways, credentials, certificates or degrees. Some funds are created and passed by local boards of trustees, sometimes called “designated” or “committed” funds, that can be changed by the Boards that have passed them. Those collected for materials in CTE programs must be used directly for equipment or materials supplies to students. Classes and/or programs delivered for a “cost-recovery” fee expected to be self-supporting.

Entitlements are funds that are given via a formula without an application, like Pell Grants or fee waivers. Some funds come by formula from the State. The Board has discretion in spending them within guidelines established by the State and/or by the Board itself. Apportionment funds can be spent on anything within your Board’s guidelines.

Additional funding can be used to enroll a number of students in quality CTE courses, programs, and pathways that lead to successful workforce outcomes, or to invest in new or emerging CTE likely to lead to successful workforce outcomes. With

regional collaboratives, districts utilize the regional plan to inform local planning for CTE courses, programs, and pathways.

Some funds may come from the U.S. Department of Education, Department of Labor, or agencies like National Science Foundation (NSF). They also come from states. Recent funding for CTE State Grants for 2019, for example, is expected to be \$1.193 billion. (Explore CTE opportunities and stats in [your state](#)).

Some popular funding methods include:

The Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act is meant to provide an opportunity for every student to meet the standards set in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This Act provides funding for schools which are not performing to this standard. ESSA includes Workforce in 21st CCLC (The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program). A provision in Title IV, part B, the section which designates funds to 21st Century Community Learning Centers to add workforce development/ CTE as an allowable activity.

Title I

Title I provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high percentages of children from low-income families to ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Every year \$14 billion in Title I funds are distributed to schools across the country. Schools with 40% or more of children in poverty can allocate Title I funding through a schoolwide program.

Title II

Some districts have also used Title II funds for teacher preparation and training in STEAM subjects as well as innovative teaching techniques.

Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funding has been used by many districts to focus on the academic and technical achievement of CTE students, particularly in Health Careers. The current funding mission mentions specifically simulation of real work environments. The intent of the Perkins Innovation and Modernization Grant Program is to test new ideas that can help better prepare students for success in the workforce. The law cites the importance of employability skills in career development, expands eligible uses to allow for career exposure, exploration and preparation, requires inclusion of interested community-based partners in the state planning process, and mentions partnerships with community-based partners within the definition of qualified intermediaries.

For more information, visit the [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network \(PCRN\)](#). Here are Instructions for applicants to [Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs](#).

E-rate Rebate

Federal e-rate Universal Service Fund e-rate BEAR (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement) rebates are not limited to infrastructure and can be spent on anything approved by the e-rate coordinator. A district should check with their e-rate coordinator for possible leverage of e-rate rebates.

Investing in Education Fund

The Investing in Education Fund provides competitive grants for schools which show an improvement in student performance. These grants are meant to allow for schools to discover what best encourages student success.

Allied Groups and the Private Sector

An initiative between JP Morgan Chase and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is providing \$100,000 seed grants to 20 states to plan

coordinated CTE systems that integrate needs of employers. A pool of 10 states will then be selected to receive \$2 million to implement their systems.

Other Potential Funding Options Include:

- Private foundations like the James Irvine or Gates Foundations, PG&E, Wells Fargo, and other local businesses.
- Fund for Student Success (FSS)
- Math, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA)
- Fund for Instructional Improvement (FII)
- Employment Training Panel (ETP) Funds
- Industry Driven Regional Consortia (IRDC)
- Mini grants to regions and sectors
- Workforce Partners like WIBs
- Federal Department of Labor (TAACCCT/TechHire)
- National Science Foundation
- Private Foundations like Bill & Melinda Gates
- Corporate Foundations like Bank of America

CTE Funding Overview

Major federal STEM education programs received steady or increased funding in their appropriations for fiscal year 2019. The legislation provided level funding to the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants and 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs and raised the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG) budget to \$1.1 billion.

The Education Innovation and Research (EIR) budget increased to \$130 million, with the legislation specifying that \$60 million go toward “STEM education activities, including computer

science.” The department requested \$180 million for EIR to support the implementation of a presidential directive that calls on it to spend at least \$200 million annually on STEM education through discretionary grant programs, with a particular focus on computer science.

The budget for CTE programs increased 6 percent to \$1.3 billion, with the legislation highlighting that these grants “can support coding programs that can be particularly important in rural and underserved areas that do not have access to coding resources.”

The budget for NSF’s Education and Human Resources Directorate, which supports fellowship programs and research on STEM education pedagogy, increased to \$910 million. The NSF’s primary CTE program, Advanced Technological Education, received \$66 million, providing grants for research about STEM education approaches and the STEM-related workforce in order to develop innovations in mentoring, training and apprenticeships.

The Perkins Basic State Grant program received \$1.31 billion of proposed funding for FY2020. Teacher preparation and development programs were prominently addressed in H.R. 2740. Title II-A, the only federal funding source that is solely reserved for teacher preparation and training programs, received \$2.6 billion. A 2017 Pew study revealed that 2/3rds of all State CTE Directors reported having a CTE teacher shortage in one or more career clusters.

Closing Thoughts

A CTE facility design should be driven by curriculum to meet the educational needs of the chosen pathway. When applying for funding, get started as early as possible. Talk with teachers and industry partners, and visit other facilities offering the same pathway. Demonstrate to your potential funding source the potential impact your CTE space or program will have on enhancing a student’s learning experience.

Resources

- The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Procedures and Standards Handbooks: ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks;
- “Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations”: ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp; and
- IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics: cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES_.Web_.pdf