

STATE POLICIES IMPACTING CTE

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

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STATE POLICIES IMPACTING CTE 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

IN 2024

40

states

152

policy actions

In 2024, states bolstered their efforts to address labor shortages and meet industry demands, relying increasingly on Career Technical Education (CTE) to bridge workforce gaps.

On the national level, this past year saw significant investments in apprenticeship programs, reflecting a broader trend toward work-based learning as a critical strategy for bridging the skills gap in high-demand sectors.¹ The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) continued to invest in apprenticeships nationwide, awarding a combined \$244 million to 52 grantees across 32 states in the 2024 funding cycle.² Beyond industries such as construction, which have traditionally benefited from apprenticeship opportunities, sectors such as educational services, healthcare, manufacturing, and transportation are increasingly leveraging apprenticeships to fill workforce gaps.³ State policy in 2024 reflected similar trends.

States also increased their efforts to make CTE more accessible and successful for all learners. Access and supports reemerged as one of the top five categories of CTE policies in 2024, with many states enacting policies in this area. Additionally, new funding opportunities such as the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations grants offered by the DOL helped to expand pathways for women to enter and lead in all industries.⁴ Elsewhere, the need for skilled CTE instructors remains a priority as institutions work to recruit and retain educators who can deliver cutting-edge training.⁵

The 2024 report marks the 12th annual review of CTE and career readiness policies from across the United States conducted by Advance CTE and the Association for Career and Technical Education. This report does not describe every policy enacted within each state but instead focuses on policy trends across the nation. Readers looking for a full listing of specific state policies can visit the [Longitudinal State Policy Tracker](#) and filter by year; state; system level; and/or analysis tags such as funding, industry-recognized credentials, or work-based learning.



Key Policy Trends

As in previous years, this analysis categorizes each policy action by topic. In 2024, state policy most frequently addressed the following topics:

| | | |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 1 | Funding | 63 policies enacted |
| 2 | Industry Partnerships/ Work-based Learning | 46 policies enacted |
| 3 | Access & Supports | 37 policies enacted |
| 4 | Data, Reporting and/or Accountability | 32 policies enacted |
| 5 | Industry-Recognized Credentials | 27 policies enacted |

Many policies are categorized under multiple topic areas. A more comprehensive “Methodology” section describing how policies were included and categorized can be found at the end of this report. Top areas that states focused on in 2024 were similar to the previous year, most pertinently funding; industry partnerships and work-based learning; and data, reporting, and/or accountability. Access and supports and industry-recognized credentials reemerged in the top five categories in 2024, displacing governance and graduation requirements.

Over the past 10 years, the top five policy categories addressed by states have been funding; industry partnerships and work-based learning; industry-recognized credentials; dual/concurrent enrollment, articulation, and early college; and data, reporting, and/or accountability. However, since 2019, access and supports has often risen into the top five policy categories, representing an increased focus among states to leverage CTE-related policies to serve a broad array of learners.

Categories of enacted CTE-related policy in 2024

The following table shares the top 10 policy areas affecting CTE in 2024. For a complete listing of all policies and policy categories, please see the [Longitudinal State Policy Tracker](#). A single law or policy may address multiple policy categories.

| Policy Category | # of Policies Enacted | States that Enacted Policies in this Category |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| 1 Funding Policies address significant changes in CTE funding, such as increasing or decreasing allocations, creating a scholarship or grant program, or investing in a pilot program. | 63 | AL, AK, AR, CO, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, MD, MI, MO, NE, NJ, NM, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, VA, WA, WV, WI |
| 2 Industry Partnerships and Work-Based Learning Policies address engaging industry to drive learning through work-based learning or other means. | 46 | AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, ME, MD, MO, NE, NJ, NM, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI |
| 3 Access & Supports Policies address removing barriers for learners to access CTE programs within their states. | 37 | AL, AZ, AR, CA, CO, ID, IL, IN, IA, LA, MD, NE, NJ, NM, OH, OR, RI, UT, VA, WA, WV |
| 4 Data, Reporting, and/or Accountability Policies address data and research activities that support CTE, including the use of labor market information and the inclusion of career readiness indicators within accountability systems. | 32 | AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, IN, IA, KY, LA, OH, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, VA, WA, WI |
| 5 Industry-Recognized Credentials Policies address attainment of credentials recognized by industry, including microcredentials, such as badges, and educational certificates and degrees. | 27 | AL, AZ, CO, FL, IN, KY, LA, ME, MO, NE, NJ, NM, OH, RI, SD, UT, VA, WA, WV, WI |
| 6 Governance Policies address responsibility within the state for CTE, including new committees or task forces and transfers of authority. | 22 | CO, CT, DE, GA, LA, MD, NH, RI, UT, VA, WA, WI |
| 7 Dual/Concurrent Enrollment, Articulation and Early College Policies address postsecondary credit attainment and transfer through dual/concurrent credit attainment, credit transfer agreements, and early college programs. | 22 | CO, DE, IN, LA, MI, MO, OH, OR, TN, UT, VA, WA |
| 8 Career/Academic Counseling Policies address school counselors or career advisers providing guidance such as disseminating college and career information and implementing individual academic and career plans. | 19 | AR, CA, CO, FL, IL, IN, MD, MI, NJ, NM, VA |
| 9 CTE Teacher Certification Policies address preparation, licensing, and credential requirements for CTE instructors and professional development for CTE educators. | 13 | AL, CA, DE, HI, IA, NE, NJ, OH, PA, SD, WA |
| 10 Graduation Requirements Policies address the requirements for graduation from secondary school. | 11 | AL, IN, IA, NM, OH, OR, TN, VA, WA, WV |

SPOTLIGHT ON

Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities



Apprenticeships are becoming a more popular pathway for learners and workers seeking training for high-demand careers in the United States. Between 2008 and 2021, the number of new apprentices increased by 82%.⁶ They have also been successful, with 90% of individuals who complete a registered apprenticeship retaining employment and earning an average annual salary of \$80,000.⁷ Businesses benefit from apprenticeship programs as they can recruit and train a highly skilled workforce, retain skilled workers, and increase profitability.⁸ The federal government has invested heavily in expanding apprenticeship programs through the DOL's Office of Apprenticeships, spearheading programs such as the [American Apprenticeship Initiative](#) and the [Apprenticeship Ambassador Initiative](#).

In 2024, several states worked to expand apprenticeship programs. These policies range from establishing new programs to increasing funding for current programs to incentivizing businesses to hire apprentices.



COLORADO established a [refundable state income tax credit for employers that hire apprentices](#) for at least 6 months within a tax year. Employers participating in registered apprenticeship programs can receive up to \$12,600 per apprentice annually, with a cap of 10 apprentices per employer each year. This credit includes \$6,300 for the first 6 months of employment and \$1,050 for each additional month. A total of \$2 million in grant funding was also provided to employers and entities to start new registered apprenticeship programs or expand existing ones or to increase the participation and geographic distribution of apprenticeship programs, particularly in high-priority, high-demand industries.



UTAH launched a [study to design a framework and system for maximizing efficiencies in the expansion of youth apprenticeship opportunities](#) for learners. The study must be conducted collaboratively by the governor's office, State Board of Education, Department of Workforce Services, Talent Ready Utah, and other entities. The bill also mandated that the study recommend ways to increase youth apprenticeship offerings and employer participation in youth apprenticeships and streamline existing structures. In addition, the study must provide recommendations regarding opportunities to leverage CTE, concurrent enrollment, and stackable credentials in conjunction with youth apprenticeships.



WASHINGTON created the [Native American Apprentice Assistance program](#) to address the specific challenges faced by Native American communities and support their endeavors to pursue postsecondary education in the state. The law awarded assistance to eligible participants (members of a federally recognized Indian tribe) in collaboration with state-registered apprenticeship programs, prioritizing funding for tuition costs and grants for wraparound services. The Office of Student Financial Assistance must submit annual reports that include information about the number of participants and how much assistance they received, among other data.



1

Funding

IN 2024

26
states

63
policy actions

With 63 policies enacted across 26 states, funding emerged as the most common policy category in 2024, rising from the third most common in 2023. Policies in this category reflect any state-level changes (plus or minus at least 5%) to CTE funding, including appropriations to districts and institutions, grant programs for technical education equipment, and scholarships for individuals from economically disadvantaged families to participate in work-based learning opportunities. Uses of federal funding, including funding provided by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V), are not included in this regular annual policy tracking and reporting.



IDAHO transferred **\$20 million to the Career Ready Students Program Fund** to increase the capacity of CTE in Idaho middle and high schools by incentivizing districts to create programs that prepare learners to meet local and regional industry and workforce needs.



KENTUCKY allocated funds to support secondary area technology center renovation projects. A total of \$100 million in funding from fiscal year 2024-25 General Fund appropriations will be used to provide grants of **up to \$10 million to local school districts that have a secondary area technology center**.



WISCONSIN appropriated a maximum of **\$20 million for assisting technical colleges in expanding the state's oral healthcare workforce**. The funding will be used to expand a technical college's existing oral healthcare program that has a capacity limit and a current waiting list or to create a new oral healthcare program after a finding of demonstrated community interest in and need for the program. Eligible expenditures include equipment or facility improvements; instructional supplies, teaching materials, and other resources; and instructor bonuses, under certain conditions.



2

Industry Partnerships and Work-Based Learning

IN 2024

29
states

46
policy actions

With 29 states enacting 46 policies related to industry partnerships and work-based learning, this category emerged as the second most common policy category in 2024. This category includes policies that foster partnerships between employers and institutions to foster work-based learning opportunities as the primary strategy to connect learners with businesses and career pathway programs. This category's popularity shows states' continued investment in preparing the workforce to meet industry demands.



COLORADO aligned the state's high school CTE system with its registered apprenticeship system for programs and occupations related to infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, education, and healthcare. By July 1, 2026, the state's apprenticeship agency and CTE division are required to establish at least one state-level advisory board to: 1) create state-approved programs that align with registered apprenticeship programs, 2) align the competencies of high school CTE division programs with registered apprenticeship programs, and 3) educate apprenticeship program sponsors on how to offer credit for previous CTE experience in their program standards.



PENNSYLVANIA announced a \$3.9 million investment in career development for the state's high school learners through pre-apprenticeship opportunities offered by CTE programs that are run by a school district, employer, community nonprofit, or economic development organization, as part of a collaboration between the Department of Labor & Industry and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.



SOUTH CAROLINA increased the tax credit that an employer may receive when employing an apprentice through the U.S. DOL Registered Apprenticeship program between \$1,000 and \$4,000 per apprentice and \$6,000 for a youth apprentice. If the apprentice completes the apprenticeship and remains an employee of the taxpayer, the taxpayer may claim the credit for up to 3 additional taxable years.



3

Access and Supports

IN 2024

21
states

37
policy actions

A total of 21 states enacted 37 policies related to access and supports, the third most common policy category in 2024. This year is the first time that access and supports has emerged in the top five policy categories since 2021, when it ranked second. Policies in this category include incentivizing CTE program alumni to work in underserved neighborhoods, allocating funds to provide transportation to and from work-based learning opportunities, and developing programs to support the educational pathways of learners in the foster care system.



ILLINOIS'S fiscal year 2025 General Funds budget included a \$10.2 million increase for CTE programs to “begin implementation of **a new equity-based funding formula.**” The new formula increases the number of learners served and allows district programs to upgrade technology and equipment to current industry standards.



NEW MEXICO established a **Workforce Pilot Program** that will provide economic support in the form of monetary stipends to residents enrolled in a workforce training pathway. A qualifying workforce training program may include an educational program or other work-based learning experience accredited by a state institution of higher learning that will result in a certification, license, or credential or in specialized qualifications or skills for relevant employment. The monetary stipends will draw from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant funding.



WASHINGTON mandated that each public school that serves learners in 9th through 12th grade provide all learners and their parents or legal guardians with **information about each available dual credit program and any financial assistance available** to reduce dual credit course and exam costs for learners and their families. The information must be provided in the primary language of each legal guardian.



4

Data, Reporting, and/or Accountability

IN 2024

21
states

32
policy actions

In 2024, data, reporting, and/or accountability was the fourth most common policy category, dropping from number 2 in 2023. A total of 21 states enacted 32 policies in this area, including studies commissioned by the legislature, the provision of labor market information, and the collection and reporting of learner outcomes data.



GEORGIA mandated the State Workforce Development Board to **develop, approve, and publish an annual high-demand career list** identifying the jobs most critical to the state's current and future workforce needs. The law also required the state's Office of Student Achievement to work with the State Workforce Development Board to audit the effectiveness of the high-demand career list on learner outcomes. All Georgia state agencies are required to use this common list.



OREGON directed the Department of Education to **develop a plan to collect course completion and grade data** for all public school learners in Grades 6-12. The law also directed the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish a direct admissions program in community colleges and adopt rules to (1) streamline a data-collection method to implement the program and (2) maximize opportunities for underserved learners and first-generation college learners to participate in the program. Finally, the law directed the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to conduct a study to identify existing secondary/postsecondary education, training, apprenticeship, and workforce development programs that prepare Oregonians for careers in the forestry workforce.



SOUTH DAKOTA required the departments, boards, or commissions that administer licensure or certification examinations to **report the number of participants who complete a degree or training program** at a public technical college and the number of those who successfully pass licensure or certification examinations to the Board of Regents.



5

Industry-Recognized Credentials

IN 2024

20
states

27
policy actions

Rounding out the top five policy categories, 20 states enacted 27 policies affecting industry-recognized credentials. Policies in this area are designed to increase or incentivize the attainment of certifications, degrees, or other credentials aligned with labor market information or industry need.



ARIZONA mandated that any person who **completes a U.S. DOL-approved or state Department of Economic Security-approved apprenticeship program in a construction trade may file for a certificate of completion with the registrar** and any related updates to that certificate, including documentation for completed continuing education courses.



KENTUCKY mandated that **the hours of work experience required to receive an electrician or master electrician license may be partially substituted** by a training course, an associate degree or diploma in electrical technology or a related field, or 2 or more years of teaching electrical technology or a related field.



NEBRASKA required occupational boards to **issue an occupational license or government certification based on a postsecondary credential, private certification, or work experience in another state or in the U.S. military**. The law also allowed individuals to qualify for the occupational license if they can demonstrate apprenticeship registration or the successful completion of an apprenticeship training program under the U.S. DOL.

Systems Affected

This analysis categorizes policies by the systems and learner levels affected: secondary education, postsecondary education, adult education, and/or workforce development. This is the 6th year that policies have been categorized by system. In 2024, states passed 90 policies that affected CTE in secondary education, 58 policies related to postsecondary CTE, and 65 policies related to adult education and/or workforce development. Similar to prior years, this analysis identified more policies affecting the secondary system than any other system.

Given that CTE is at the nexus of the secondary education, postsecondary education, adult education, and workforce development systems, it is not surprising that a single policy may address multiple systems. These policies frequently illustrate how secondary schools and postsecondary institutions partner with each other and with employers and industries to provide high-quality and accessible CTE programs.

IN 2024 STATE PASSED POLICIES

90 secondary education

58 postsecondary education

65 adult education and/or workforce development

Examples of policies that affected multiple systems include the following:



CALIFORNIA enabled county offices of education to apply for grant funding to **operate education-based foster youth programs**. The applicants must provide a plan that includes their collaborative efforts to facilitate transitions to postsecondary education or other CTE programs. The applicants are also required to consult with stakeholders to ensure that all programmatic options are considered for such foster youth, including CTE programs.



VIRGINIA directed the secretary of education to **convene a workgroup to review the current capabilities and future needs of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) and the Virginia Workforce Data Trust** and, based on those findings, develop a work plan for improving the VLDS. The workgroup shall include a representative from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia; the Virginia Office of Education Economics; the secretary of labor; each of the participating agencies in the VLDS system; the chief data officer of the commonwealth; and the chairs of the Senate Committee on Education and Health, the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, the House Committee on Education, and the House Committee on Appropriations or their designees.



WEST VIRGINIA **created the Youth Apprenticeship Program**, which allows any public, private, or home school learner in the 11th or 12th grade or ages 16 years or older the opportunity to enroll in apprenticeship programs. The program shall create a structural linkage between secondary and postsecondary components of the program leading to a high school diploma and postsecondary certification of occupational skills. The law also mandated that school boards apply training hours toward the requirements for certification and/or licensure in the same occupation.



Methodology

The policy activities included in this report and the accompanying policy tracker were compiled through a comprehensive national scan, drawing on information from numerous sources. Policies were identified and cataloged using government websites and media stories and were augmented by compilations such as those prepared by the Education Commission of the States and the National Association of State Budget Officers. Once compiled, the information was distributed to State CTE Directors for review, and any feedback was included in this final report and policy tracker. For the purposes of this report, policy activity was defined to be an action by state policymakers, including the state legislature, the board of education, the state education agency, the higher education authority, the governor's office, or any other state-level agencies, or a ballot initiative approved by voters. Although several national career readiness initiatives, such as the New Skills ready network, were underway across the states, involvement in these initiatives was not included unless it spurred notable state policy change.

To be included in this report, policies must have been passed during the 2024 calendar year, have a statewide impact, and be related to career readiness or CTE within the state. This report is designed to be value neutral. The incorporation of a specific policy or action is for informational purposes only and does not reflect any judgment regarding the quality or strength of that policy. Policies introduced in 2023 and passed in 2024 were included; policies that went into effect in 2024 but were passed in prior years were not included. However, if a state took meaningful action to implement in 2024 a policy passed earlier—for instance, a state board action approving new graduation requirements in 2024 in response to legislation enacted in 2023—that 2024 action was included. Policies were categorized as funding if they authorized new or increased state funding or if they decreased funding to a specific program. Funding policies were not included if they were implemented in 2024 but were authorized in prior years unless those policies repurposed or restructured existing funds in a way that affected CTE and career readiness.

While extensive efforts were made to verify the completeness and accuracy of this report, should discrepancies be noted, we would be happy to correct them at any time.

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STATE POLICIES IMPACTING CTE 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

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