

# An afterschool guide to partnering on career and technical education



Afterschool Alliance

The *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V) was signed into law on July 31, 2018. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*, which provides roughly \$1.3 billion annually in Federal funding for career and technical education (CTE) for our nation's youth and adults. The legislation offers new opportunities to connect the work of afterschool and summer programs to state and local CTE initiatives.

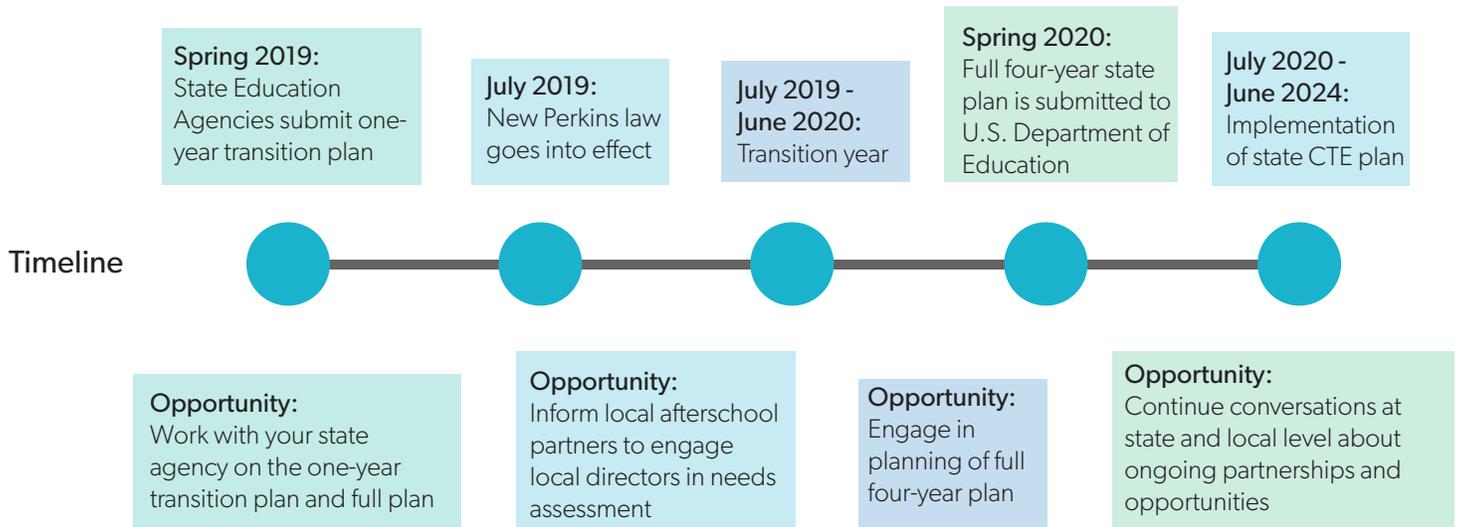
Perkins V is largely based on the structure and content of current law – Perkins IV – but makes some key changes that create opportunities for community partners, including afterschool and summer programs, to engage in the planning and implementation of the revised law. The revised law includes increased alignment to locally identified in-demand, high-needs fields, particularly around science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and computer science fields and bolsters alignment to other federal education laws, including the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), *Higher Education Act* (HEA), and *Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act* (WIOA).

Changes that provide opportunities for the afterschool field to engage include:

- Requiring a comprehensive local needs assessment that includes data-driven decision-making on local spending and involves significant stakeholder consultation.
- Expanding eligible uses of funds to allow for career exposure, exploration, and preparation, and it permits use of funds as early as the middle grades (which includes grades 5-8).

- Explicitly listing partnerships with community-based and youth-serving organizations as eligible uses of local funds.
- A significant focus on employability skills in students (i.e. soft skill development, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, or workforce readiness skills).
- New language around a national evaluation of CTE conducted by the Department of Education which will evaluate the effectiveness of different CTE delivery systems including “voluntary afterschool programs.”
- Support for qualified intermediaries —non profits who build connections between schools, business and community.

This document provides afterschool, informal, and STEM education advocates with specific guidance on how to utilize a number of new updates provided in Perkins V to improve the use of afterschool programming as a core element of strategies to improve workforce/career development programs. Included in this toolkit are references to specific sections of the law that intersect with afterschool programs and provide talking points for advocates to use in connecting with state and local CTE partners.



## INTEGRATING AFTERSCHOOL AND INFORMAL-STEM LEARNING WITH CAREER AND WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### The Opportunity:

The updated Perkins V law will require state and local agencies to undergo a planning process to implement the legislative changes into their CTE efforts. This provides an opportunity for the afterschool field to bring your voice as a community partner to the state and district level to support programs that integrate afterschool and informal-STEM learning with career and workforce education and development.

### Overall- What You Can Do

1. Contribute to the development of your state's CTE plan – find your state CTE director at [careertech.org/state-director-list](https://careertech.org/state-director-list)
2. Support local partners in their efforts to contribute to the development of a local application, especially the comprehensive needs assessment
3. Highlight funding uses under state leadership activities



## Contributing to the development of your state's CTE plan

*Reference to Title I, Part B – State Provisions; Section 122*

Each state agency will now be tasked with creating a transition plan and four-year implementation plan for their state. The updated law now specifies that the state agency must consult with interested community organizations through this process, allowing afterschool stakeholders to engage directly in the state planning process.

The following contents required in state plan are opportunities for afterschool networks and stakeholders to engage in. Talking points to connect afterschool to the required contents are also included.

- A strategy for joint planning and alignment between CTE programs, state workforce development systems, and other federal programs, including ESSA, WIOA, and HEA.
- Description of strategies for special populations, including how individuals will be provided with necessary accommodations and instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment.
  - Relevant special populations to afterschool programs include: individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults; individuals preparing for non-traditional fields; and English learners.<sup>1</sup>
- Description of how local CTE programs will promote continuous improvement, expand access to CTE for special populations, and support the alignment of employability skills, and for how each eligible agency will include opportunities for secondary students to participate in early-postsecondary opportunities
- Supports for CTE teacher recruitment and retention, including professional development that provides the skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations.

### Talking Points

- Alignment with ESSA – “Updated federal laws like ESSA and CTE suggest funding streams like 21st CCLC work in coordination with CTE efforts to put the needs of students first. Bringing the afterschool community to the CTE planning table will help the state ensure students have a wide range of quality opportunities toward meaningful careers.”
- Special populations – “Since many afterschool programs are serving students from low-income families, English-language learners, and individuals preparing for non-traditional fields, they should be acknowledged and engaged as partners in CTE efforts to serve these special populations.”
- Develop employability skills – “Afterschool programs provide a ladder of supports that help young people develop the skills that employers are looking for in new hires, including critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and teamwork and collaboration.”
- Professional development – “Classroom teachers and CTE instructors, alongside afterschool and summer educators, should engage in joint professional development opportunities. Bringing afterschool and school day CTE educators together can streamline coordination and build out a robust and diverse workforce of CTE educators throughout a students in and out-of-school experiences.”



## Prepare local partners to contribute to district level CTE efforts

*Reference to Title I, Part C - Local Provisions; Section 134*

### Needs Assessment:

The first opportunity is through a new requirement for local applicants to conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment to identify needs and performance challenges among CTE stakeholders every two years. In this process, local stakeholders are required to be consulted during the needs assessment, providing an opportunity to advocate for afterschool programming to be included as a CTE partner.

- Specifically, local recipients must consult with representatives of special populations and parents and students, among others.<sup>2</sup> Afterschool providers serving special populations, along with parents and students of the program can provide input on effective strategies and programming during this process.
- The assessment itself must also show how the local applicant will align activities to local workforce needs and provide opportunities for special populations. Afterschool stakeholders should come prepared with examples of how their programs are supporting, or can support, the needs of local industries, including in-demand occupations. State workforce development boards identify occupations deemed in-demand which can usually be found on the workforce development board's website.

### Partnering on local CTE efforts:

The second opportunity for afterschool stakeholders is as an eligible recipient of local funds. The updated law specifically includes community-based and youth-serving organizations as partners in local CTE efforts for the first time, providing local afterschool programs with another opportunity to support partner with local CTE directors to CTE programming directly.

- The local uses of funds provision include supports for community-based, youth-serving organizations, work-based learning, STEM activities, and others. The relevant required activities include:
  - Career exploration and career development activities through an organized, systematic framework
  - Support integration of academic skills into CTE programs
  - Provide within CTE the skills necessary to pursue high-skill, in-demand industry sectors or occupations

### Talking points:

- Career exploration – “Innovative afterschool and summer programs introduce students to new interests and a diverse range of occupations, including STEM careers. Afterschool programs providing computer coding or career-themed clubs and mock interviews support the development of employability skills in students.”
- Employability skills – “A strong local economy relies on a skilled workforce equipped with the necessary knowledge and competencies. Afterschool and summer learning programs play an integral role in readying students for their careers by opening their eyes to different opportunities and career pathways, from teaching them about the spectrum of jobs in different fields to connecting them to internships and apprenticeships. Afterschool and summer programs also support students in developing the foundational skills – critical thinking, problem solving, and communication – that employers seek out in employees.”



## Highlight funding uses under state leadership activities

Reference to Title I, Part B – State Provisions; Section 124

The updated Perkins V law maintains the current 10 percent set-aside for State Leadership activities. State afterschool networks have an opportunity to engage with state CTE directors to understand how the state plans to utilize these funds. Allowable state leadership activities that potentially overlap with state afterschool network activities, or other community organizations include:

- Support for preparation for non-traditional fields in current and emerging professions, support for programs for special populations, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high skill, high wage and in-demand occupations
- Perkins V also expands the permissible uses of State Leadership activities, including several related to informal STEM programs:
  - Supporting the integration of employability skills into CTE programs and programs of study
  - Supporting programs and activities that increase access, student engagement, and success in STEM and computer science fields, particularly around hands-on learning activities
  - Establishing and expanding work-based learning opportunities
  - Developing statewide programs of study, which may include curriculum and career exploration, guidance, and advisement activities and resources

### State funding allotment:

Note: Under the Perkins V law states also have the ability to increase the amount of the state allotment dedicated to a “reserve fund,” to be used by eligible agencies to spur innovation or support programs of study or career pathways aligned with state-identified high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations or industries. You may want to ask if and how your state is planning to use these funds.

To receive more information or coordinate an approach around CTE engagement, please reach out the Chris Neitzey, Director of STEM Initiatives at [CNeitzey@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:CNeitzey@afterschoolalliance.org)

You can learn more about Perkins V and career and technical education from Advance CTE at [careertech.org](http://careertech.org)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Other special populations include: individuals with disabilities single parents, including single pregnant women; out-of-workforce individuals; youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and youth with parents on active duty in the armed forces.

<sup>2</sup> Additional stakeholders who must be consulted include Secondary and postsecondary educators state or local workforce development boards; industry and business representatives, and representatives of agencies serving homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth.