

Coordinating Across Perkins V and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The recent passage of the “Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act” (Perkins V) creates an opportunity for states to promote coordination and cooperation between Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and workforce and education systems authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). While there are numerous ways to promote collaboration between CTE and workforce development and adult education systems that inevitably vary by state context, this guide will focus on describing opportunities that could promote coordination across Perkins V and WIOA as states develop and implement plans under Perkins V.

State leaders should consider the opportunities in Perkins V and WIOA to coordinate during state plan development. Five options for improving coordination, which states may consider adopting in whole or in part, are below:

OPTION 1: Coordinating on the Development of a Shared Vision and How to Achieve It

Both Perkins V and WIOA have common language around articulating the state’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and the workforce development activities in the state plan (Perkins V Sec. 122(d) WIOA Sec. 102(b)). Perkins V also indicates that the state plan should include a strategy for coordination across CTE and the state’s workforce development system to achieve this strategic vision (Perkins V Sec. 122(d)(3)). Therefore, State CTE Directors should begin planning work by determining if state workforce leaders have already developed a strategic vision and related goals for their workforce priorities. If a strategic vision for workforce exists, state leaders in CTE and workforce should identify areas for alignment with CTE. Having this foundation, states can think through how those involved in WIOA and Perkins V plan development can work together 1) to develop, refine or revise this strategic vision and 2) analyze the workforce development, adult education and CTE systems to determine how they can work together to accomplish this vision.

State Directors should develop a cohesive state vision for CTE that drives all of their efforts in a coordinated and strategic way. This strategic vision should aim to provide access to and success in high-quality CTE programs for each learner in the state. The chances of achieving that vision are much higher if State Directors and state workforce boards, among others, agree with and support its tenets. WIOA and Perkins V can be useful and impactful levers in promoting a state vision, particularly if state plans are developed with that vision as a guiding document.

OPTION 2: Aligning Stakeholder Engagement Plans

WIOA requires the WIOA state plan to describe how the state's strategy will engage the state's community colleges and area career and technical education schools as partners in the workforce development system, and generally requires assurances that the state has provided opportunities for input into the development of the plan by educational providers and other stakeholders (WIOA Sec. 102(b)); and Perkins V requires consultation with the state workforce board and also requires that the Perkins V state plan be developed in consultation with educational providers and other stakeholders (Perkins V Sec. 122(c)(1)(A)). This can create an opportunity for strategic coordination and consultation.



- **Consider how consultation with shared stakeholders may be accomplished in common ways to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of efforts:** Stakeholder groups that are required to have the opportunity to weigh in during both WIOA and Perkins V state plan development are business representatives, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the general public and individuals with disabilities (Perkins V Sec. 122,

WIOA Sec. 102(b)). Given the partial overlap between the WIOA definition of "individuals with barriers to employment" and the Perkins V definition of "special populations," it is reasonable to infer that consultation with members and representatives of these populations would have value for both WIOA and Perkins V planning processes. In addition, the WIOA state plan requires the Governor to submit the state plan to the relevant federal agencies, and the Governor must have the opportunity to sign off on the Perkins V state plan (WIOA Sec. 102(a), Perkins V Sec. 122(c)(3)). States may wish to consider coordinating with the Governor's office at the outset of the planning process to outline the proposed timelines for both plans and ensure that submission of the WIOA state plan and the opportunity for the Governor's signature on the Perkins V state plan can happen in a timely fashion.

- **Consider aligning timelines for Perkins V and WIOA state plan development and input to allow for more orderly processes:** While both Perkins V and WIOA lay out different requirements for the state plan development process, both require that specific stakeholders are engaged in the development of the plan, both provide opportunities for public comment on the plan, and both plans must be submitted in Spring 2020.ⁱⁱⁱ Given the similarities across these key steps, it may make sense for states to align the timelines (while still meeting the specific requirements in each law) for the state plan development process to allow for coordinated communications and the opportunity to foster relationships and partnerships among stakeholders in the state.

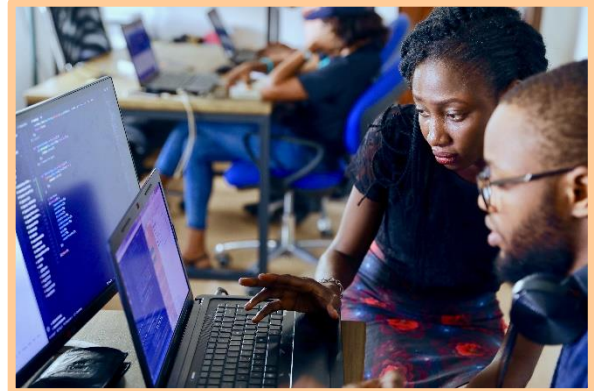
OPTION 3: Aligning Use of Labor Market Information

States will be using and analyzing very similar labor market information in both the Perkins V and WIOA state planning process.

- **Consider coordinating labor market analysis to identify areas for alignment, both in terms of target sectors and target populations:** Through the amendment to Wagner-Peyser in Perkins V, Perkins eligible agencies will now have access to more labor market information

than they did before to use during and after the state plan process (Perkins V Sec. 301). This information includes:

- Statistics on employment;
- Current and projected employment opportunities;
- Wages;
- Benefits (where data is available);
- Skill trends by occupation and industry;
- Number of workers displaced by permanent layoffs and plant closings; and
- Employment and earnings information



- **WIOA state plans must include an analysis of labor market information and related data (WIOA Sec. 102(b)).** This includes an analysis of:
 - Economic conditions in the state;
 - Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
 - The employment needs of employers (including a description of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed in those industries and occupations);
 - Current workforce, employment and unemployment data;
 - Labor market trends; and
 - The educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), in the State.

States should consider how these analyses can be looked at together and could inform both the WIOA and Perkins V state plans – such joint analyses could help in identifying potential roles and responsibilities across systems that could reduce gaps in service or duplication of efforts. States should also keep in mind that labor market alignment may vary, as needed, for different groups. For example, labor market alignment is crucial in developing a job training program for adults, but less so for a career exploration curriculum in the middle grades.

OPTION 4: Planning for the Implementation of the Accountability Systems

The secondary and postsecondary core indicators for performance in Perkins V were informed by the primary indicators for performance in WIOA. While many aspects of performance accountability are set in statute, states can advance alignment by the choices they make when *implementing* these performance measures (choices are often made when state plans are being developed, particularly for Perkins V state plans that must include four years of state performance targets).

- **Consider aligning and/or coordinating performance measures to streamline delivery of CTE and WIOA training programs and avoid duplication;** this is especially important at the postsecondary level where the same institutions often provide education and training under both Perkins V and WIOA:
 - **Attainment of Recognized Postsecondary Credentials:** WIOA and Perkins V, at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, include measures related to the attainment of “recognized postsecondary credentials,” which WIOA defines (and Perkins V references this definition) as, “a credential consisting of an industry-recognized

certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.” (WIOA Sec. 3(53)). While the meanings of degrees, licenses and apprenticeship certificates are fairly clear, there are judgements that states must make to identify certifications and certificates that are recognized by industry. States can align the criteria they use for identifying recognized certifications and certificates for CTE and WIOA, including criteria for industry engagement, thus avoiding duplication of effort and inconsistent lists of qualified credentials.

- **Placement:** WIOA and Perkins V also include measures related to post-program placement, including employment and enrollment in further education or training.^{iii,iv} To measure post-program employment and education, states can choose to use at least some of the same methods for Perkins V and WIOA. States can measure employment by matching student or program participant records with state unemployment insurance wage records, and/or by collecting “supplemental data” that the Department of Labor has identified as permissible for WIOA. States can measure further education by matching student/participant records with higher education administrative records, including records at the National Student Clearinghouse. States may also take advantage of their State Longitudinal Data System for measuring employment and postsecondary education. Using consistent methods such as these will help CTE and workforce systems mean the same thing when they report employment and education outcomes.

Key Terms: Career Pathway and Program of Study

Often these two terms are used interchangeably, but they have specific definitions under federal law: Under Perkins V, **program of study** means a coordinated, nonduplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary levels that incorporates challenging State academic standards; addresses both academic and technical knowledge and skills, including employability skills; is aligned with the needs of industries in the economy of the State, region, Tribal community or local area; progresses in specificity (beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster and leading to more occupation-specific instruction); has multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing and culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential (Perkins V Sec. 3(41)).

Under WIOA, **career pathway** means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training and other services that align with the skill needs of industries; prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options; includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals; includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; organizes education, training and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable; enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster (WIOA Sec. 3(7)).



OPTION 5: Leveraging the Opportunities Afforded By Some of the Common Activities That Must Be Addressed in Perkins V and WIOA State Plans

This is particularly important in ensuring that efforts are aligned, not duplicated, and funds are allocated strategically to ensure learners have access to the programs and supports they need and can seamlessly transition between pathways and

programs. Under both laws, relevant partnerships, programs and groups will be working to advance their missions. If not coordinated, these efforts could be duplicative or even inadvertently contradict each other's goals. States should work to coordinate and align the following activities:

- **Industry or sector partnerships:** Industry or sector partnerships are strategies that bring together multiple employers connected to a local or regional industry with other stakeholders, including education and training providers, labor organizations and local workforce boards, to focus on the shared goals and human resources needs of that sector. States should consider using processes to identify and leverage sector partnerships across systems, ensuring an efficiency in engaging employers and an aligned response to the identified priorities.
- **Career pathways and programs of study:** Under WIOA, states, local boards and adult education providers all have responsibility for supporting the development and implementation of career pathways. Under Perkins V, states must develop, and local recipients must implement, at least one program of study. As states plan for this, they should consider how the development processes for programs of study and career pathways can be coordinated, and where appropriate, consider guidance or technical assistance to local recipients, workforce boards and adult education providers to facilitate coordination.
- **Strategies for serving special populations/individuals with barriers to employment:** Perkins V requires state plans to articulate how they will improve access to CTE for special populations (Perkins V Sec. 122(d)(9)); WIOA requires state plans to include analysis of individuals with barriers to employment as part of the overview of the state's workforce, as well as the state's strategic vision for workforce services (WIOA Sec. 102(b)). States should consider how to coordinate these efforts to avoid duplication and ensure a seamless delivery of services and programs to learners. States might also consider how to collaborate on examining both their WIOA and Perkins V data to do an assessment of equity gaps (e.g., to identify gaps in service, access and performance) that could inform their coordination on strategies for serving special populations and individuals with barriers to employment.

State Plan Options: Making the Decision on the Type of Plan to Submit

As under Perkins IV, Perkins V provides Perkins eligible agencies with the flexibility to decide whether to develop a separate Perkins V plan or a combined state plan under WIOA (Perkins V Sec. 122(b)). WIOA requires states to, at a minimum, develop a unified state plan that includes the six "core" programs under Titles I-IV (adult, dislocated worker and youth programs under Title I; adult education programs under Title II; employment services under Title III and vocational rehabilitation under Title IV) (WIOA Sec. 102(a)). Alternatively, states may choose to develop a "combined" plan that includes the

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core programs and at least one of a range of other federal programs, which may include Perkins V. While alignment and coordination between WIOA and Perkins V are important, as discussed above, it may or may not be the best decision for states to combine their state plans. Below are some key considerations for states as they make this decision:

- Both WIOA plans and Perkins V plans are four years long and plan cycles will align in 2020, meaning that states will submit Perkins V state plans and WIOA state plans in the spring of 2020 and these plans will run through June 2024. At that point, Perkins V allows eligible agencies to either submit another four-year plan or submit annual revisions to the one initially submitted in 2020.
- Combined plans are intended to offer states an option to consolidate planning submissions for workforce, education and human services programs where the state seeks to better coordinate activities. However, it is not necessary to submit a combined plan in order to carry out shared planning or implementation activities.
- States that submit a combined plan must meet all of the statutory requirements of both Perkins V and WIOA.

About National Skills Coalition

National Skills Coalition is a broad-based coalition of employers, unions, education and training providers, and public officials working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper.

About Advance CTE

Advance CTE: State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work is the longest-standing national non-profit that represents State Directors and state leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult Career Technical Education (CTE) across all 50 states and U.S. territories. Advance CTE was formerly known as the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc).

ⁱ For additional information on the Perkins V state plan process and timeline, see Advance CTE's *Infographic: Perkins V Timeline & State Plan Development Process*: <https://careertech.org/Perkins>

ⁱⁱ For additional information on the WIOA state plan process and timeline, see the U.S. Department of Labor's *Training and Employment Guidance Letter*: https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/tegl_14-15.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ WIOA Title II allows states to report on "transition to postsecondary education" as one type of Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gain.

^{iv} To learn more about how the Perkins V and WIOA indicators align, see Advance CTE's *Perkins Accountability Comparison*: <https://careertech.org/Perkins>

^v The Perkins V definition of special populations and the WIOA definition of an individual with a barrier to employment include some of the same populations, including but not limited to: individuals with disabilities; low-income youth and adults; single parents, including single pregnant women; displaced homemakers; English learners; homeless individuals and youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system (Perkins V Sec. 3(48) and WIOA Sec. 3(24)).