



**Supporting Regional Career and Technical Education Initiatives to Expand Student
Access and Success in CTE**

Regional Career Centers

Purpose

By 2029, Oregon is projected to have [52,000 new job opening per year](#) in careers that require mastery of technical skills. But as Oregon looks to prepare for the economy of the remainder of this century, it is starting behind. There are already real shortages today in industries that require skilled workers; in health care for example, [27,000 more skilled workers](#) are needed to meet current demand. These shortages will only be exacerbated as new industries requiring skilled workers continue to expand in the state, and these shortages may hamper Oregon's economies growth and competitiveness in the long-term.

Meanwhile, Oregon underinvests in the career connected learning approaches that will help solve these skill shortages and create a robust Oregonian economy for the 21st century. Measure 98 has advanced funding for CTE in Oregon, but Oregon is one of [just a handful of states](#) that does not provide dedicated, specific CTE funding to all schools. And individual school districts will always face challenges in providing the services students need due to small sizes, difficulties recruiting teachers, and the expenses involved in procuring equipment and materials for courses that teach the most in-demand applied skills.

Regional approaches to funding career and technical education (CTE) have significant promise in efficiently allowing school districts to offer additional career connected learning and services to their students than any individual district would be able to provide them with their existing funding. In Oregon, Education Service Districts (ESDs) are the appropriate mechanism to support school districts in expanding their CTE programming and services to build connections with postsecondary and the workforce and support student pathways into high wage and high demand jobs.

Regional Career Centers (RCC)

The purpose of this proposal is to create Regional Career Centers (RCCs) that are provided in partnership with an education service district to establish regionally appropriate career connected learning opportunities for students. Each of the 19 Education Service Districts in Oregon would become a RCC for their partnering school districts and provide coordinated planning and deployment of funding to meet the CTE needs of school districts in the ESD. ESDs may also form consortia to operate a single RCC across a larger geographic area.

These RCCs are designed to deliver world class CTE opportunities for students from schools that otherwise would not have access, and will equitably expand access to CTE across Oregon. RCCs will ensure that, regardless of whether a student attends a large school in a populous community, or a small

school in a rural area, that they will have access to the career connected learning opportunities that will give them the opportunity to learn advanced career skills. Student access to high quality CTE programming should not be determined by where they live or how well-resourced their school district is, and these RCCs will ensure all Oregon students can take advantage of cutting-edge workforce development opportunities.

Many ESDs and school districts lack the funding necessary to build, remodel, or launch RCCs in their areas. Therefore, the bulk of the funding would be for the development, construction, or remodeling of existing facilities to increase the number and the capacity of RCC for Advanced Career Development opportunities across the state. The goal of a grant-funded approach is to build out that capacity over the next several years to help those organizations rapidly get up to speed to provide the modern, regionally-appropriate career learning opportunities in every area of the state.

This proposal empowers ESDs to tailor their workforce development initiatives to the specific needs of their regions, allowing them to determine the most effective strategies. For instance, some regions may benefit from mobile labs to reach remote areas, while others might find value in sharing services or staff across multiple districts. These initiatives bridge the gap between CTE programs and [local industry needs](#), fostering stronger connections and better preparing students for the workforce.

Proposal for RCC Development, Construction, Remodel, and Operation

Planning

- ESDs would be required, either individually or in consortia with other ESDs, to create an RCC.
- This center's governance would be informed by a CTE alignment council comprising the relevant participating schools in the region, Oregon Workforce Partnerships representatives, representatives of community colleges from within the RCC's geographic area, local and regional industry partners, and representatives of city/county government from the geographic area.
- This council would be required to develop a funding plan, drawing upon the existing local needs assessments conducted as part of the planning process, to address regional CTE needs and identify gaps in funding and services that are not being met by Perkins V.
- The funding plan would be required to demonstrate how the use of funds supports participating students into pathways that lead to high wage and high demand jobs, to include engaging in work-based learning opportunities, the possibility to earn a relevant, industry-recognized credential by high school graduation.
- The funding plan would also be required to demonstrate how students in the participating schools will receive high-quality career navigation and advising services to help students develop their career identity and explore careers and possible pathways.
- The funding plan would also be required to show how the proposed use of funds are appropriate to the needs of the region and its students, and discuss how the Center's services will operate across the geographic span of the area being served.
- These funding plans are subject to approval by the Oregon Department of Education.

Services

Funding provided to RCCs could be used for the following (non-exhaustive) list of activities:

- Establishing a career academy to provide students from multiple school districts with access to a facility that offers specific workforce pathways.
- Purchasing[1] and operating mobile labs that can travel between schools and offer students with access to specific CTE services on site on a set schedule.
- Allowing RCCs to hire teachers or professional staff to travel to the regional high schools and provide instruction.
- Coordinating work-based learning relationships with industry and placement on behalf of the participating schools.
- Partnering with local community colleges to support opportunities for students in the participating high schools to earn college credit through CTE dual enrollment.

Through this proposal, Oregon can make a significant investment in advancing career connected learning in the state to prepare its students for the state's workforce needs of the 21st century. The following four options provide different scaled funding proposals for making Career Connected Learning Centers a reality for all Oregon students:

FUNDING

Approximately \$775 per student

Total Ask: \$156.4 million for the biennium

- **\$7 million** to launch a regional network of CTE centers, with staffing located within ESDs, with an additional 2 FTE at the state level. Those staffing are the regional "hub" coordinators and support staff who convene the alignment councils, prepare the budgets, and develop plans for regional CTE approaches, including, but not limited to the planning and construction of facilities, development of regional, shared programs, and liaising with the Department of Education. The regional network would be also responsible for state-level tasks, including professional development training for administrators in CCL and CTE Pathways, CTE revitalization, instructor/program licensing, and approving programs of study.
- **\$100 million** available for RCCs for the development, construction, and/or remodeling, and/or property acquisition. Grants provided up to \$10M with 10% contribution by RCCs.
- **\$41.4 million** in operations and staffing grants for ESDs with operating RCCs, up to \$2.5M each year of the biennium.
- **\$8 million** to support smaller regional programs in areas of the state where it is unfeasible to develop and construct a facility due to distance between districts or smaller enrollment, which can be used for equipment, smaller remodeling projects, or staffing to provide regional CTE opportunities. Each grant up to \$500,000, with an opportunity for any eligible entity to submit more than one application per round.