

Better Together:

How adult education/CTE collaborations benefit workers and business



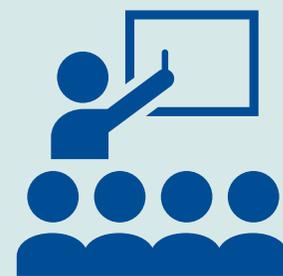
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Across the United States, businesses are facing record-low unemployment rates and a tight labor market, which incentivize them to pursue more creative strategies for finding skilled workers. Meanwhile, more than 36 million U.S. adults of working age have foundational skills gaps in areas such as literacy or numeracy, and two-thirds of these adults are employed.¹ This is a significant population of underutilized workers who could contribute more if they had opportunities to build their skills. States can unleash this talent by investing in powerful upskilling strategies that are proven to equip these workers with the skills that local businesses need.

To ensure the success of upskilling strategies, states should capitalize on the joint expertise of the career and technical education (CTE) and adult education systems and implement policies that improve alignment between those systems. This brief outlines how collaboration between adult education and CTE partners can advance effective programs for workers with foundational skill needs. It provides a case study of one such approach, between adult education and CTE programs at the Socorro Independent School District (ISD) in El Paso, Texas. The report also provides state and federal policy recommendations for strengthening alignment between these two systems and replicating this approach in other communities.

Introduction

Businesses in the U.S. offer a wealth of middle-skill jobs, but there are not enough people whose skills are well matched to those opportunities. National Skills Coalition's analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data finds that approximately 53 percent of all jobs in the United States are at the middle-skill level, requiring more than a high school diploma but not a four-year degree.² However, only 43 percent of U.S. workers are trained at the middle-skill level. Closing this gap will require investing in upskilling for American adults who have foundational skills needs.³



53 PERCENT OF ALL JOBS ARE AT THE MIDDLE-SKILL LEVEL, BUT ONLY **43 PERCENT** OF U.S. WORKERS ARE TRAINED AT THE MIDDLE-SKILL LEVEL.



MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE **36 MILLION U.S. ADULTS** WITH FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS GAPS ARE EMPLOYED.





Regardless of why people have skill gaps, there is a strong economic payoff to helping people build their skills and obtain better employment.

Foundational skills include literacy, numeracy, spoken English, and technology-related skills. Without these skills, it is difficult for people to use their full range of talents and abilities on the job. Workers may lack foundational skills because of an inadequate or interrupted K-12 educational experience, because of undiagnosed or unaddressed learning differences, or due to other barriers. Regardless of why people have skill gaps, there is a strong economic payoff to helping people build their skills and obtain better employment. A report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development calculates that each year of postsecondary education leads to an increased per capita output of between 4 and 7 percent.⁴

An effective model for helping adults build their foundational skills is to combine and contextualize those skills with instruction in technical skills for a particular occupation or industry. This approach is known as integrated education and training (IET). IET is a proven strategy⁵ that contrasts with the traditional, sequential model in which adults must first acquire general reading or math skills, and only then are permitted to access occupational training. IET reflects best practices in adult learning theory, while also allowing providers to design programs that are directly responsive to the needs of local businesses – thus increasing the odds that people will be able to find a job or advance in their careers once they complete the training program.

There are two major federal policies that can help support the acquisition of these key skills: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (commonly known as the Perkins Act). In both cases, these federal investments are an important tool for local communities to use in addressing skill-building issues and supporting business competitiveness.

By improving the alignment of adult education and CTE systems, American communities can expand prospects for adult learners, develop a talent pipeline that is responsive to local business needs, and better leverage the federal resources available through WIOA and Perkins. In the 2018 reauthorization of the Perkins Act, Congress strongly encouraged coordination between WIOA and Perkins state planning processes. In particular, Congress provided states with the option of producing combined state plans, aligned the Perkins planning periods to the same general calendar schedule as WIOA plans, and ensured that a number of common elements and consultation requirements were harmonized with existing WIOA language. The new Perkins law also requires that the state agency responsible for adult education (which oversees WIOA Title II funds) be consulted with respect to the amount and use of funds proposed for adult CTE in state plans.

Congress has also recognized the value of IET in particular by including it as a required activity under Title II when WIOA was reauthorized in 2014. While states and localities can use a variety of mechanisms and partners to fund and implement IET programs, one that has been underutilized is to combine the expertise of adult education and CTE partners. Policymakers and advocates can do more to facilitate partnerships between adult education providers and CTE providers, enabling them to collaborate on effective IET programs in in-demand fields.

The value proposition: How aligning adult education and CTE benefits businesses, workers, and states

There are clear payoffs from improved alignment between adult education and CTE systems. Such alignment, when it helps to drive implementation of high-quality IET programs, benefits the business bottom line, helps workers meet their career aspirations, and allows states to leverage their resources in a cost-effective way.

For business:

- ◆ **Fostering in-house talent.** Corporate leaders increasingly recognize the value of upskilling to the business bottom line.⁶ Companies benefit from IET as a way to build incumbent workers' skills so that they can promote from within, in recognition of the loyalty and institutional knowledge of their existing employees. Investing in current workers can also reduce business costs related to employee turnover and onboarding of new hires.
- ◆ **Building the talent pipeline.** IET also helps businesses to strengthen the pipeline of new workers coming into their workplaces, making sure that people just entering the workforce are being trained with the skills most relevant to their business needs.
- ◆ **Ensuring that public investments respond to current business needs.** Businesses benefit when public workforce and adult education programs like IET are demand-driven – that is, responsive to the specific needs of local labor markets. Strong relationships with companies can help to ensure that IET models reflect the current needs of local businesses.

Understanding the landscape: Federal investments in adult education and career and technical education

Adult education is an umbrella term generally referring to adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English language acquisition programs. The primary federal investment in adult education is Title II of WIOA, also known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Nationally, WIOA Title II provides approximately \$600 million in funding serving 1.5 million adult learners each year. Funding is distributed through a state's designated agency (typically the state department of education or labor) and then re-granted to a wide variety of entities, such as school districts, community colleges, nonprofit community-based organizations or other eligible adult education providers. In contrast, WIOA Title I provides funding for employment, workforce development, and occupational training services, which are provided through a standardized national infrastructure of state and local Workforce Development Boards and one-stop career centers known as American Job Centers.⁷ Funds are dispensed from the U.S. Department of Labor via formula funding and competitive grants to state labor agencies.

Career and technical education, formerly known as vocational education, encompasses both secondary (high school) and postsecondary programs to prepare youth and adults for a wide range of occupations and industries. CTE is funded at the federal level primarily by the \$1.2 billion Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). Unlike many other federal education and training programs, Perkins funds do not provide direct assistance to individuals, but instead provide grants to states to support activities relating to the development and implementation of CTE programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Funding is disbursed from the U.S. Department of Education to state education agencies, and then to local institutions. Nationally, approximately 40 percent of Perkins funding supports postsecondary CTE programs, while the remainder supports CTE programs at the high school level. However, the specific percentages of this allocation vary by state.



For workers:

- ◆ **Accelerated pathways to career advancement.** IET allows workers to speed up their path to better employment and higher wages, by removing the need to finish a time-consuming foundational skills class before embarking on occupational training.
- ◆ **Ability to acquire in-demand credentials.** IET programs typically allow participants to earn both a secondary credential (if needed) and one or more postsecondary credentials. The latter often consist of industry-recognized credentials that are in demand by local employers, thus ensuring that workers are earning documents of value in the labor market.

For states:

- ◆ **Increased cost effectiveness.** As detailed in the case study section of this brief, using adult education funds to support instructional time and materials, while drawing on CTE funds for classroom space and laboratory

equipment, is a cost-effective solution to the question of how to pay for IET. Local communities' investment in high school CTE facilities and equipment is primarily a fixed cost that is not increased by allowing adult learners to access them in off-hours.⁸

- ◆ **Leveraging of complementary expertise.** Stakeholders in each of the adult education and CTE systems possess relationships and expertise that would be costly and time-consuming for the other partner to acquire. Alignment benefits both systems. For example, adult education providers have deep expertise in effective pedagogy for adult learners. In addition, they often have strong referral and recruitment networks and trusted relationships with community partners. CTE providers have established relationships with industry partners through their employer advisory groups, strong expertise in technical training, and access to the laboratory space and equipment needed for many CTE classes.

How are adult education and CTE set up in Texas?

Adult education

In the Lone Star State, adult education falls under the umbrella of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The state's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program has been housed under TWC since 2013, when it transitioned from the Texas Education Agency. This change was enacted by the legislature in order to improve alignment between the state's workforce and adult education investments. Texas is one of a half-dozen states to have brought its adult education program within the purview of its labor department.⁹

The Texas AEL system receives roughly \$80 million in state and federal funding to serve approximately 90,000 adult learners each year through a network of thirty-four direct grant recipients and over 200 associated service providers. In its 2015-2020 adult education strategic plan,¹⁰ Texas set a career pathways milestone of 20,000 students enrolled in career pathways by 2020. In 2018, two years ahead of schedule, the state surpassed that goal with over 23,000 individuals in career pathways models across the state.

Career and technical education

In Texas, distribution of Perkins funds for career and technical education is overseen by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for postsecondary CTE programs, and by the Texas Education Agency for secondary CTE programs. Approximately \$105 million in federal Perkins funding is allotted across these two agencies each year. Roughly 30 percent of these funds go to postsecondary programs, while the remainder are distributed to high school programs. (This distribution differs slightly from the national picture, where 40 percent of funds goes to postsecondary programs.)

In the academic year 2016-17, more than 1.3 million Texas secondary students participated in CTE programs, while 183,000 Texans participated in postsecondary programs.¹¹





The program's lean design has allowed Community Education to substantially exceed their state target for number of participants in IET programs, serving 184 individuals rather than the grant enrollment target of 76.

Alignment in action: The Socorro Independent School District integrated education and training program

The partnership between the Socorro ISD Community Education program, which is one of Texas' WIOA Title II grantees, and the school district's Perkins-funded Career and Technical Education program illustrates the value of implementing effective integrated education and training models through partnerships between adult education and CTE. Such collaborations are relatively rare nationwide, but they provide a potentially powerful way for policymakers to leverage the expertise and funding of these two systems in support of better outcomes for adult learners and local businesses alike.

The energy and initiative shown by Socorro ISD in establishing this partnership reflects local leaders' willingness to experiment with a new and previously unused approach—and, later, to use their budding partnership as a creative way to accomplish WIOA requirements, implement Texas' IET performance requirements,¹² and meet program enrollment targets. Socorro ISD's program was also made possible by a supportive and relatively flexible state policymaking environment, which allowed for the program to

develop organically without unnecessary constraints, and provided technical support as it grew.

Socorro ISD's Community Education program has an annual budget of \$850,000 and serves 1,100 adult learners. The Community Education program's overall budget includes federal WIOA Title II funds as well as matching state funds and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds designated for adult education. The latter two types of funding are provided under a single grant from TWC. The Community Education program also receives local funding from Socorro ISD.

In 2015, Community Education leadership reached out to their peers in the district's Perkins-funded Career and Technical Education program for high school students. Their idea: Launch a collaborative integrated education and training program model by using the district's high school CTE classrooms, equipment, and teachers to teach *adult* learners during the evenings. CTE leadership was receptive to the proposal, and today the partnership serves a combined 184 adults annually across four IET programs: security services; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); computer repair and maintenance; and a pre-apprenticeship electrician program.¹³

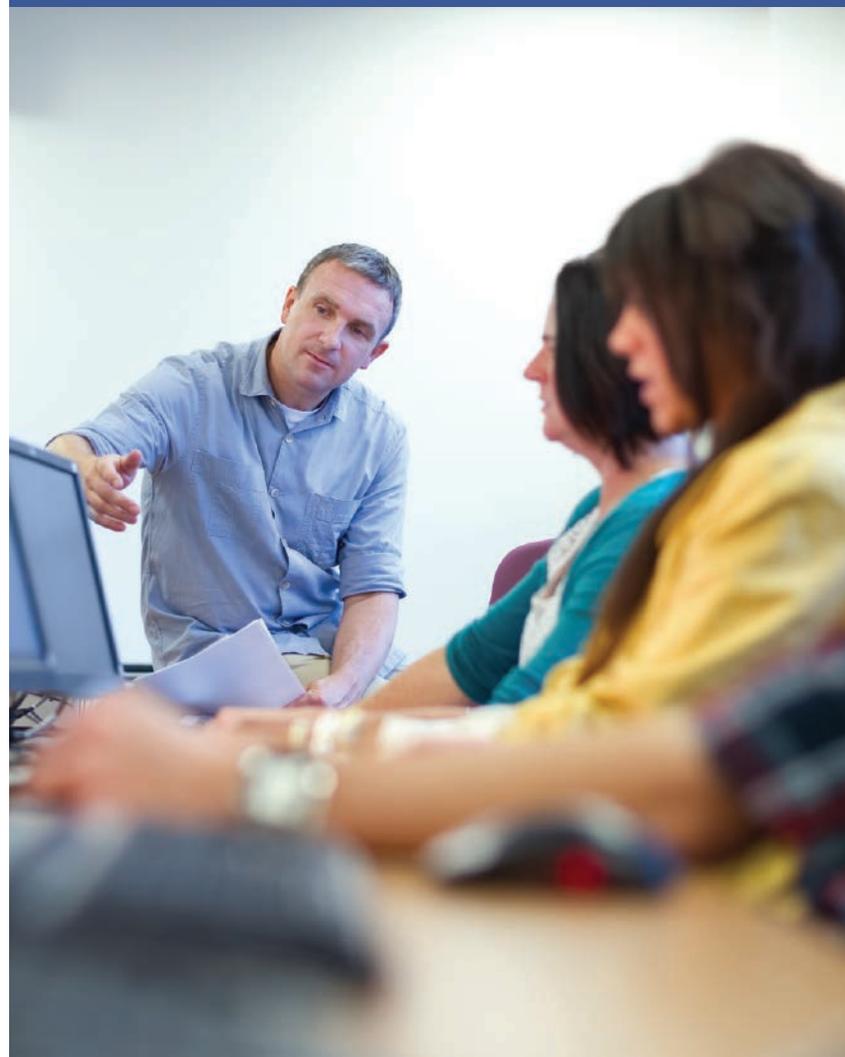
Key aspects of the integrated education and training program

Among the factors identified by Socorro ISD stakeholders as key to the success of such partnerships are:

- ◆ **Strength of institutional and personal relationships.** Program leadership and staff repeatedly stressed the importance of the strong working relationship between CTE and Community Education partners. Maintaining this relationship required frank conversations and coordinated planning among leadership and direct-service staff. Even factors as relatively minor as vocabulary had to be worked out: What adult educators refer to as “basic skills” is called “core content” in the CTE world.
- ◆ **Facilitating the design of demand-driven programs that allow participants to earn industry recognized credentials.** Program leaders emphasized the importance of ensuring that the IET programs being developed were reflective of local industry hiring needs. A key benefit of the collaboration between the adult education and CTE partners was the strength of the CTE connection with local companies. At Socorro ISD, CTE leadership drew on their deep industry knowledge to help inform the selection of occupational areas for IET programs, invited Community Education leaders to join their existing Perkins Act-mandated employer advisory committee meetings, and drew on their CTE instructors' past industry experience to identify the most in-demand credentials for participants to earn.
- ◆ **Demonstrating cost-effectiveness.** The program's lean design has allowed Community Education to substantially exceed their state target for number of participants in IET programs, serving 184 individuals rather than the grant enrollment target of seventy-six. This is possible because laboratory and classroom costs are borne by the high school CTE program, leaving the Community Education program responsible for instructional salaries, materials, and certification and testing fees. While both partners have a good relationship with the local community college, running the IET program solely within the school district also allows greater schedule flexibility and more economical budgeting than contracting with a college would permit.
- ◆ **Recognizing importance of trust.** Both CTE and Community Education leadership stressed the importance of establishing a strong foundation of trust between the partners: Trust that program screening and enrollment processes would ensure that teachers' time would not be wasted by serving uninterested

students, that expensive lab facilities would be safely used, and that any decision-making for the IET program could be worked out through collaborative conversations. CTE leaders explained that they were receptive to the initial partnership proposal because they saw their adult education partners as serving a demographically similar student population – albeit older – and because Community Education leadership reassured them that the only instructors using CTE labs and equipment would be those already on staff to teach at the high school level. Knowing that the Community Education program was also part of ISD was also valuable, as the district's liability insurance covers the IET program. The primary challenge that program leaders faced was reassuring school district administrators and board members of the security of the CTE program's facilities

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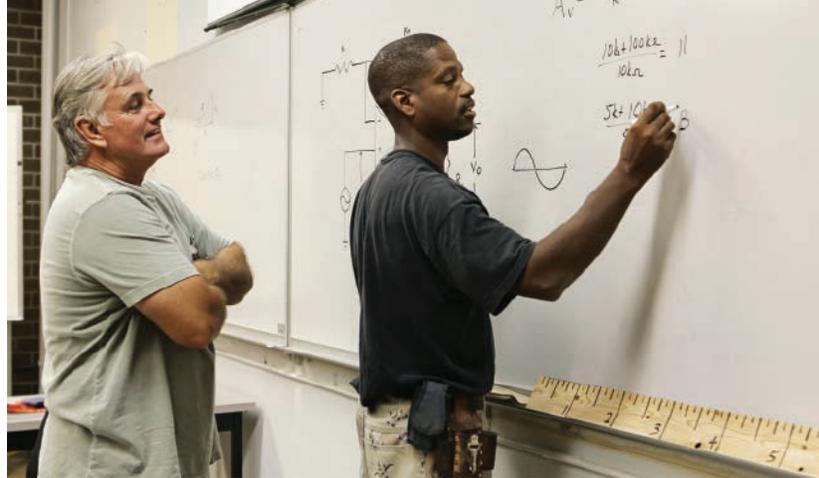
and equipment. By contracting with the district's existing, vetted, and trusted K-12 teachers, the Community Education program was able to overcome these concerns.

- ◆ **Providing supports needed for teachers to flourish.** Program leaders recognized that teachers needed different types of professional development and support. The IET model was new to adult education instructors, who had not previously collaborated with industry-specific instructors. On the CTE side, Socorro ISD's location near the Texas-Mexico border and its heavily bilingual student population meant that instructors were already accustomed to embedding English language proficiency standards into their work, and had benefitted from the professional development already afforded to them through the high school CTE program. In addition, while some CTE instructors accustomed to teaching high school students were initially skeptical of working with adult learners, program staff report that they have become among the program's strongest champions.

Paying for it: Program costs and funding

While TWC allocates approximately \$2,507 per participant for IET programs, in Socorro ISD's case, the efficiencies resulting from the CTE partnership brought the average cost per IET participant down to just \$1,000. The design of the Community Education/CTE partnership is what allows for the relatively minimal program costs: The Community Education program contracts individually with Socorro ISD's high school CTE teachers to pay them for evening instructional time. The Community Education program also pays directly for materials needed – such as pipes or electrical wiring for students to practice on – as well as covering testing and certification fees for adult learners. The Community Education program has also funded some additional one-time costs, such as purchasing textbooks.

In return, the CTE program provides its classroom space and use of equipment free of charge. The district's CTE teachers are simply responsible for appropriately notifying school administration of when the space is to be used, and for providing the technical instruction and appropriate supervision at all times during adult learners' classes. There are no additional insurance liability costs.



Integrated education and training in action: A student success story

Alberto Montes, 24, had held jobs as an Emergency Medical Technician and in a family restaurant business, but with a wife and three children to support, he was always looking for greater opportunity. One day it arrived – in the form of a flyer from his daughter's HeadStart program. "It said you could take an electrician course for free," Montes recalls. "I said, 'Why not?' Although I never in my life imagined being an electrician."

Montes's family was supportive, he says. "My dad pushed me to try it. He's a do-it-yourself kind of man. He said 'You should take advantage of this opportunity!' He even said if I needed supplies for the training he would help to pay for them."

The young father reached out to Socorro ISD and was soon enrolled in the district's IET program for electricians. "They were so friendly and so helpful. It was a total change in my life," he says, emphasizing the quality of the program's instructional staff as well as its non-academic support.

Once Montes completed the Socorro ISD program, he joined the local labor union, known as El Paso JATC. Today, he is in the midst of his first year as an apprentice, and has been employed for four months.

"My next goal is to get my journeyman license. It's a five-year process," Montes says. Already, however, the training has made a difference in his earning power. "When I worked as an EMT I was making \$8.50 an hour," he says. "Right now I'm earning \$9.85," and his wages will rise on a regular schedule as he progresses through the apprenticeship program. Montes receives other benefits too: "I also have medical insurance for me, my wife, and three daughters, and [my employer] is even contributing to my retirement savings."

Combining work with continued education makes for a demanding schedule, but Montes says his daughters—ages 5, 3, and a newborn—help to drive him. "They're my motivation to get up every day," he says with a laugh.



States can strike an effective balance between providing guidance that outlines potential implementation options, while also providing sufficient freedom to spur local creativity

Capitalizing on state resources to support career pathways

Socorro ISD has taken advantage of technical assistance resources provided by TWC in order to develop and strengthen their IET program. Both federal and state adult education policy emphasize the importance of IET programs being embedded in larger career pathways that provide multiple entry and exit points, allowing individuals to earn additional credentials and improve their prospects over time as they move in and out of the labor market.

To support local adult education providers in developing these pathways, TWC has offered a variety of technical supports, including in-person and web-based training as well as a career pathways peer mentoring program that pairs experts in IET with other providers new to implementing IET models. In 2016, Socorro received initial technical assistance and mentoring from South Texas College, a peer leader and fellow adult education grantee. Since then, program staff have continued to improve connections between Socorro's IET programs and broader career pathways. Those connections vary by specific IET program, but currently include those that:

- 1) align with a higher-level program at a local community college;
- 2) serve as a pre-apprenticeship for a federal Registered Apprenticeship program; and/or

- 3) provide an on-ramp to further training and career opportunities with a local municipal agency.

Measuring it: Program effectiveness and outcomes

The Socorro ISD program is taking advantage of existing federal reporting requirements under WIOA to better capture outcomes for IET program participants. At present, Socorro ISD's CTE teachers collect data on whether adult learners have earned a credential or certification through the IET program, and whether students have been referred to the local WIOA-funded Workforce Solutions centers for additional services.¹⁴

To support the employment objectives of the IET program and associated state and federal performance requirements, program participants are enrolled in TWC's <https://workintexas.jobs/> online data system. This allows participants to be referred for hiring opportunities. In addition, because TWC also implements the WIOA Title III Wagner/Peyser employment services program, data matching with adult education makes it possible to assess individual employment outcomes through the wage-record matching that is required for all WIOA participants.

State policy recommendations

State policymakers and advocates interested in improving upskilling opportunities for adults with foundational skills gaps have a variety of potential levers available to them. The recommendations below focus on how states can facilitate better alignment between adult education and CTE systems, allowing for more effective implementation of proven approaches such as IET.

- ◆ **Ensure full utilization of federal WIOA and Perkins funds, and consider supplementing with state investments.** States should ensure that they are making full use of available federal investments in adult education and CTE to increase alignment and coordination across systems. For example, to the extent permissible under the authorizing legislation, states may wish to encourage or require applicants for competitive funding to demonstrate greater alignment.¹⁵ Or states may consider how state leadership funds available under WIOA may be used to provide technical assistance or other support to local providers in establishing adult education/CTE partnerships. In addition, policymakers should consider making additional investments of state funds to incentivize close partnerships between adult education and CTE partners, including as part of larger state initiatives such as credential attainment goals or workforce development strategies.¹⁶ Finally, states can consider reconfiguring existing investments. In the Socorro ISD example, TWC provided local adult education providers with a higher per-participant allocation for IET programs (\$2,507), compared to traditional adult basic education or English language programs (\$707).
- ◆ **Capitalize on federal policy mandates to bring together key state agency and institutional partners to develop a shared strategic vision.** Both major pieces of federal legislation—WIOA and Perkins—require states to bring together an array of stakeholders to create plans for how their workforce and education strategies will be implemented. Congress has further facilitated alignment by ensuring that the WIOA and Perkins statutes cross-reference each other with regard to planning, and that the timing of states' required four-year plans is aligned across both laws. State policymakers should take advantage of these mandates to bring together the full range of relevant decision makers from across the workforce, postsecondary education, adult education, and human services systems, and use the joint planning process to create a shared vision for addressing the needs of state residents, including adults with foundational skills gaps. Particular areas of consideration should include:

- **Ensure that state Perkins plans incorporate career pathway design and thinking.** The 2018 reauthorization of the Perkins Act incorporates the definition of career pathways that was first codified in 2014 under WIOA. This definition emphasizes the importance of pathways that enable adults to progressively build their skills, entering and exiting training programs at different points as they move in and out of the labor market. States should take advantage of the new Perkins language to encourage adult education, secondary and postsecondary CTE, and workforce partners to plan collaboratively about how both Perkins- and WIOA-funded activities can support career pathways. Such pathways should incorporate WIOA-mandated IET programs as well as apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.
- **Explore opportunities for how TANF and SNAP E&T can support upskilling in collaboration with adult education and CTE partners.** Both Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) programs provide opportunities for states to invest in skill-building for adults with foundational skills gaps.¹⁷ For example, TWC allocates almost \$1 million in TANF funds annually across Texas to support adult education efforts, including IET. States should incorporate these partners into broader WIOA and Perkins Act planning processes, as appropriate, and consider how braiding funds from these sources can support IET and other effective models for helping adults to exit public benefits by moving into good, family supporting jobs.
- ◆ **Provide state policy guidance and technical assistance to spark ideas while allowing flexibility for local innovation.** As the Texas example shows, states can strike an effective balance between providing guidance that outlines potential implementation options, while also providing sufficient freedom to spur local creativity.¹⁸ TWC's supportive yet still relatively non-prescriptive approach—providing local partners with technical assistance and mentoring support, as well as the ability to experiment and iterate—was repeatedly cited as key to providing the Socorro ISD partners with the freedom to design an effective IET model for their community. Specific areas in which state agencies should consider offering guidance and technical assistance include:

- **How adult education partners can pay for IET activities using sources in addition to WIOA Title II.** A perennial question for adult education providers is how to finance the development and implementation of IET models. As the Socorro ISD example demonstrates, well-designed IET collaborations can be very cost-effective. State agencies should issue policy guidance that provides specific, concrete examples of federal and state funding sources that can be used to support IET. Guidance should clearly affirm that relevant federal and state policies permit funding to be used in this way.
- **How alignment between adult education and CTE can ensure demand-driven integrated education and training models.** Demand-driven training responds to the specific needs of the local labor market. There are a variety of ways that training providers can gather input from businesses to ensure that their programs are reflective of local business needs, such as through employer advisory committees, curriculum review, industry instructors, and sector partnerships.¹⁹ CTE programs are already mandated by the Perkins Act to gather such input; states should encourage adult education providers to collaborate with their CTE partners to draw on these employer resources as appropriate to inform the development of IET models. Ideally, Perkins employer advisory groups should include local sector partnerships. Sector partnerships bring together multiple firms in the same industry, as well as education and training providers and other stakeholders, to address skill shortages and develop talent pipelines. The new Perkins law identifies sector partnerships as potential CTE partners at both the state and local level, and allows state leadership funds to be used to support them.
- **How adult education providers can capitalize on opportunities to use K-12 facilities during off-hours to support adult learners and workers.** As the Socorro ISD example shows, school districts that have invested in CTE facilities and equipment for high school students can leverage those investments by making them available to adult learners during non-school hours. States should provide guidance to local partners that affirms the value of such arrangements, and offers a list of key considerations local providers can use in determining the appropriate use of space and equipment, contractual arrangements with teachers, and other factors.



Corporate leaders increasingly recognize the value of upskilling to the business bottom line.

- **How adult education/CTE partnerships can help localities achieve broader goals regarding career pathways.** Socorro ISD benefitted from peer mentoring while developing their IET program model and making connections to broader career pathways. This coaching occurred under the auspices of the TWC's Career Pathways mentoring initiative, which itself built on TWC's pre-WIOA implementation of IET via [Accelerate Texas](#). States should consider how they can use technical assistance to help local adult education/CTE partnerships reinforce broader career pathways efforts and vice versa.

Federal policy and recommendations

- ◆ **Provide guidance on Perkins Act planning.** The reauthorization of the Perkins Act in 2018 marked the first time that Congress required state CTE agencies funded under Perkins to include adult education agencies in their planning process. In addition, the timeline for Perkins planning has been adjusted to coincide with similar planning that states are required to conduct for WIOA. The Departments of Labor and Education should issue joint policy guidance that highlights opportunities for coordinated planning and encourages states to identify areas for shared investments and goal setting. Such guidance should also spell out states' new opportunities and obligations with regard to adult education partners and provide suggestions for how best to engage adult education partners in Perkins planning.
- ◆ **Consider using WIOA Title II national leadership funds to support adult education/CTE collaboration.** A key factor identified by the Socorro ISD adult education and CTE partners was the importance of having time to engage and build relationships with each other. The Department of Education should consider using

WIOA Title II national leadership funds²⁰ to support similar opportunities that bring together adult education and CTE partners for peer learning and mutual engagement, perhaps using a policy academy model.

- ◆ **Fund the Perkins Act at full authorized levels.** When the Perkins Act was reauthorized in 2018, Congress established new authorized spending levels for the legislation. Going forward, annual appropriations should fund the legislation at its full authorized levels, enabling states and localities to carry out their Perkins-funded activities with the resources necessary to do so.
- ◆ **Fund WIOA at full authorized levels.** WIOA is one of the nation's foremost investments in adult education and workforce development. Yet frequent spending cuts over the past fifteen years have cut federal investment in WIOA by approximately 40 percent in current dollars. While Congress has recently begun to reverse this trend with modest increases in WIOA funding for the FY18 and FY19 budget cycles, future appropriations should fund WIOA at its full authorized levels.

Appendix: Texas Workforce Commission policy guidance documents

As described in the case study section of this brief, TWC has issued several policy guidance documents to assist local adult education providers in implementing integrated education and training as required under WIOA. Those documents are included here as examples of how one state has tackled this issue. While none of these documents are specifically focused on the issue of partnerships with CTE providers, together they provide a framework within which the Socorro ISD Community Education and CTE programs were able to develop their collaboration.

- ◆ **AEI 04-16, Chg. 1** - Implementing Integrated Education and Training English Literacy and Civics Education—Update
- ◆ **AEI 01-18, Chg. 1** - Educational Outcomes for Adult Education and Literacy – Update
- ◆ **AEI 04-17** - Implementing and Reporting Workforce Preparation Activities
- ◆ **AEI 03-17** - Implementing and Reporting Workforce

Training under the Integrated Education and Training Approach to Service Delivery

- ◆ **AEI 02-16, Chg. 1** - Implementing the Integrated Education and Training Service Approach—Update

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Endnotes

- 1 *Time for the U.S. to Reskill?* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2013.)
- 2 *United States' Forgotten Middle* (National Skills Coalition, 2017). Viewable at: www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/2017-middle-skills-fact-sheets/file/United-States-MiddleSkills.pdf
- 3 *Time for the U.S. to Reskill?* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2013.)
- 4 *The Well-Being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital*. (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001). Viewable at: www.oecd.org/site/worldforum/33703702.pdf
- 5 The best-known variety of IET is Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model. Research on the impact of I-BEST is available at: www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/basic-education-for-adults/beda-research.aspx
- 6 *The Business Case for Upskilling* (National Skills Coalition, 2017). Viewable at: www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/The-Business-Case-for-Upskilling.pdf
- 7 Individual states often rebrand American Job Centers with state-specific names. Texas, for example, calls them Workforce Solutions centers.
- 8 While not the focus of this brief, the same is of course true for postsecondary CTE facilities.
- 9 View a map from the U.S. Department of Education showing where state adult education agencies are housed: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/factsh/adult-education-basic-grant.pdf>
- 10 View Plan: <https://twc.texas.gov/files/twc/twc-strategic-plan-adult-education-literacy-fy2015-2020.pdf>
- 11 Source: <https://cte.ed.gov/profiles/texas>
- 12 Texas also requires IET to be implemented statewide through the WIOA Sec. 243 Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program, which WIOA requires be implemented in combination with IET.
- 13 The occupations were selected based on information gathered by the CTE program through its employer advisory meetings, and affirmed by consultation with the local Workforce Solutions office about in-demand jobs. An additional consideration was whether participants could complete the training within a sufficiently short time period.
- 14 Workforce Solutions is the local Texas brand for American Job Centers, formerly known as one-stop centers. The Community Education program has recently tightened its relationship with Workforce Solutions by inviting their staff to brief Community Education staff and IET participants on eligibility processes and requirements for services such as on-the-job training and referrals for direct hires.
- 15 WIOA requires states to consider thirteen factors in awarding funds to local adult education providers; among these are the applicant organization's coordination with other local education and training activities and whether it has "strong links" to fellow organizations.
- 16 Forty-one states have now established postsecondary credential attainment goals. See *A Stronger Nation* (Lumina Foundation, 2018), viewable at: <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2018/#page/downloads>
- 17 Learn more about how these programs can support skill-building in *NSC's Arkansas Career Pathway Initiative TANF policy brief* and *Skills-Based SNAP E&T Policy Toolkit*
- 18 See Appendix for links to the relevant policy guidance documents.
- 19 Learn more about how states are implementing sector partnerships in *NSC's Sector Partnership 50-state Scan* and *State Policy Toolkit*.
- 20 As required by WIOA Sec. 242, the Department of Education carries out national leadership activities, including the provision of technical assistance to states on topics such as performance accountability and program quality. The Department also oversees the distribution of national leadership funds (either directly or via contracted providers) to improve program quality and effectiveness.



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