On behalf of the Biden-Harris Administration, thank you to our readers for being wonderful partners in this work. In the coming years, we are confident this Mighty OCTAE team will continue to work passionately on your behalf. Guidance and materials published in the last 4 years will be accessible in the near future at the Education Resources Information Center:

OCTAE Resources.

1. Raise the Bar | Unlocking Career Success

Through the Unlocking Career Success initiative, **OCTAE reimagined how U.S. high schools prepare all students to thrive in future careers.** The initiative blurs the lines between high school, college, and career, providing students with accelerated and innovative opportunities to earn college credits and gain real-world career experiences. Strong futures can be built on the four keys to Unlocking Career Success: dual enrollment, work-based learning, industry recognized credentials, and

career advising and navigation.

- Career-Connected High Schools: In January 2024, the Department announced 19 grant awards totaling $25 million through the Perkins Innovation and Modernization, Career-Connected High Schools (CCHS) grant program. This investment builds the capacity of education and workforce systems to partner with business and industry to develop high-quality career-connected high school programs for more students.

- Unlocking Career Success Playbooks: OCTAE published 26 playbooks with strategic and tactical actions stakeholders can take to develop and expand programs with clear on-ramps to high-quality jobs.

- Unlocking Pathways State Policy Heat Map: OCTAE published an interactive map to recognize how state policies can impact career pathways programs. This tool compiled 20 policies centered on the 4 keys that are essential to cohesive career-connected ecosystems and reflects the number of policies each state has enacted.

2. Adult Education

Over the course of the Biden-Harris Administration, OCTAE made strides to establish new flexibilities and supports that encourage states and local adult education providers to design programs and measure their progress toward achieving meaningful outcomes for adult learners. Among the changes that were introduced were new and revised Measurable Skill Gain types for the passage of high school equivalency tests and enrollment in postsecondary education and training. OCTAE also issued a program memo clarifying that Adult Education and Literacy Act funds can be used for supportive services, such as transportation and childcare, when those services enable learners to participate and persist in adult education programs. OCTAE also continued to build on its system of technical assistance and professional development to adult education providers through Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), [a webinar series](), and a variety of National Activities.

Key Activities:

- **Aligning Non-Credit and Credit**: ED published a [blog]() and hosted a webinar with the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) on exemplars for alignment and strategies to leverage Perkins V.

- **Ability to Benefit (ATB)**: In 2023, [final regulations]() were published on ATB. In 2024, ED published [guidance]() on the ATB state process and eligible career pathways programs.

- **Adult Numeracy Instruction** [2.0]() is an evidence-based, fully online program to support standards-aligned mathematics instruction for adults.

- **[Digital Resilience in the American Workforce]() (DRAW)**: Through DRAW, OCTAE supports states' efforts to implement digital literacy instruction in adult education and literacy programs by preparing practitioners to support learners' use of digital tech.

- **[Advance Integrated Education and Training]() (ADVANCE IET)**: Through ADVANCE IET, OCTAE helps adult education staff plan, design, implement, and evaluate effective IET programs and service approaches responsive to labor market demands.

- **[Standards in Action]():** This initiative provides accessible professional development, helping teachers implement state-adopted content standards for adult education. It will assist states in meeting the WIOA requirement that adult education services shall lead to high school completion and entry into postsecondary education and training or employment.

- **Teaching Skills That Matter in Adult Education (TSTM)**: TSTM trains teachers to integrate skills (e.g., critical thinking) that matter to adult students, using approaches that work across critical topics.

- **Supporting Adult English Learners' Participation in IET**: This project provides resources and technical assistance to adult education state agency staff, local programs, and instructors who serve or are aiming to serve English learners in IELCE programming and are interested in using an immigrant integration approach.

Key Documents for Adult Education: (For the full list of AE guidance, click here)

• 9/6/25 Program Memo 20-2 re: WIOA Negotiations and Sanctions Guidance

• 8/14/24 Program Memo 24-7 re: WIOA Performance Accountability Assessment

• 3/22/24 Program Memo 24-4 re: WIOA's Retention with Same Employer

• 1/31/24 Program Memo 24-3 re: AEFLA funds for childcare and transportation costs

• 10/32/23 Program Memo 24-2 re: Requirements for WIOA State Plans

• 8/11/23 Program Memo 23-3 re: WIOA Core Program Performance Accountability

3. Career and Technical Education

Update! In January of 2025, OCTAE published two open grant programs. Both the Native American Career and Technical Education Program (NACTEP) and Native Hawaiian Career and Technical Education Program (NHTEP) Notice Inviting Applicants are LIVE. For more information on both programs, refer to our website here. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov.

Over the Biden-Harris Administration, OCTAE has sought to remove barriers in Career and Technical Education and strengthen career pathways. To support the advancement of cybersecurity education, OCTAE recognizes the nation's leading cybersecurity educators at the elementary and secondary school level through the Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award. To strengthen CTE, OCTAE operates three key Perkins V discretionary grant programs. In addition to NACTEP and

NHTEP, the Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions Program (TCPCTIP) supports tribally controlled postsecondary career and technical institutions.

OCTAE hosted a series of challenge prize competitions to support America's innovators, strengthen CTE, and expand pathways to great jobs. The Career Z Challenge sought creative solutions to expand high-quality work-based learning opportunities. In August 2024, 10 finalists were selected to complete Phase 2 (ending in 2025) and immersed in an accelerator. In the Fall of 2024, the CTE CHIPS Challenge was launched to expand student recruitment, training, and placement strategies in semiconductor fabrication (fab) construction and advanced manufacturing careers that align with the CHIPS and Science Act (CHIPS). Semi-finalists will be announced in February 2025.

Through OCTAE's CTE Momentum initiative, OCTAE annually invites educators and high school students to participate in a challenge focused on a topic of national importance. The Your Place in Space Challenge invited teams to submit designs for a product or service that advances space missions and exploration. The Power Your Future Challenge invited teams to submit action plans that will advance the use of clean energy in their schools and communities. In February 2025, the Department will announce the winning teams.

Key Documents for CTE:

- 1/15/2025 OCTAE DCL re: Supporting Tribal Nations and Promoting Access to Funding with Perkins V Formula Subgrants

- 1/14/2025 OMB-Approved ICR (1830-0029) re: Perkins State Plan

- 1/14/2025 OMB-Approved ICR (1830-0569) re: Perkins CAR

- 12/20/24 OCTAE Program Memo 24-8 re: Perkins V FAQs

- 9/11/24 OCTAE DCL re: Improving CTE Performance Measurement and Data Collection

- 3/27/24 Program Memo 24-5 re: Improving Gender Equity

- 2/28/23 Program Memo 23-1 re: Registered Apprenticeship Programs and CTE

- 3/15/23 Program Memo 23-2 re: Expanding Educator Preparation and Grow Your Own Models

- March 2024 Perkins Web Portal: User Guide for Submitting Perkins V State Plans and Budgets

- 5/6/24 Program Memo 24-6 re: Expanding Correctional Education

- 4/3/23 Program Memo 23-20 re: End of the Public Health Emergency on SNAP benefits.

- 11/23 Program Memo re: Toolkits to Improve Career-Connected Education

- 7/30/23 Program Memo 23-3 re: State Plan Submissions for FY24 Grant Awards

- 2/1/23 Program Memo re: Submission of Perkins V State Plan Revisions and Budgets

- 10/26/23 Program Memo 24-1 re: FY24 Perkins State Plan Policy Memo

- OMB-Approved Guide for the Submission of State Plans

4. Correctional Education

The Biden-Harris Administration has been instrumental to the advancement of correctional education initiatives. We participated in the Alternatives and Reentry Council, working across ED to gather policy recommendations: [report](). In 2023, the Department launched a new [Second Chance Pell experiment]() to allow current participants to continue serving students after July 2023. In July 2023, [Prison Education Programs]() (PEP) were fully implemented by new regulations. While many Second Chance Pell programs are still transitioning to PEP status, there are now 64 approved PEP programs across 21 institutions. Click here for list of approved PEPs. For more information on PEPs, please refer to Federal Student Aid's knowledge center.

OCTAE also launched an [Integrated Education and Training in Corrections]() (IETC) initiative, providing resources and technical assistance to help adult education and corrections staff plan, design, implement, and evaluate effective IET programs and service approaches in correctional facilities through a design camp model outlined in the [IET Design Toolkit]() and [IET in Corrections: Companion Guide Design Toolkit]().

Key Documents for Correctional Education:

- [5/6/24 Program Memo 24-6]() re: Correctional Education Investments

- [9/30/24 Revised Instructions for Applying for Prison Education Programs]()

- [9/12/23 FSA Letter]() re: Helping student loan borrowers manage loans

- [9/2/2024 DCL Gen-24-10]() re: FAFSA verification items for students who are confined or incarcerated

- [3/29/23 DCL Gen-23-05]() re: Eligibility to Receive Pell Grants

- [LINCS Resources]() re: Correctional Education

- [Beyond the Box]()

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