Join a Missouri Webinar

Click any session to register:

Wed, Nov 11 | 2:00 p.m. CT	National Career Kickstart Event (all states)	Register
Tue, Nov 17 | 11:00 a.m. CT	Career Kickstart, Missouri	Register
Tue, Dec 1 | 11:00 a.m. CT	Make Honors Count with AP: Missouri	Register
Tue, Dec 15 | 11:00 a.m. CT	AP Potential: A Free Tool Already at Your Fingertips	Register

See all Missouri webinars on one page

Missouri CTE Pathways Are Strong. These AP Courses Can Make Them Stronger.

Discover how AP Career Kickstart courses align with employer needs, industry demand, and high-skill careers.



Career and technical education (CTE) educators share a common goal: connecting high school students to stable, in-demand careers. College Board created AP Career Kickstart courses to equip students with the skills valued in the fastest-growing fields in the economy, opening paths to college, apprenticeships, the military, or the workforce. See how AP Career Kickstart *gives* students a head start on their futures.

What This Means for Missouri Schools

Approved IRCs for Missouri, 2026-27

AP Cybersecurity, AP Networking (coming in 2027-28), and AP Business with Personal Finance are on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) 2026-27 list of approved industry-recognized credentials (IRCs). A student who earns the credential counts as having earned an IRC, with no added work-based learning hours or completion credential required. For students in a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, the credential has to fall within their program of study, and it can satisfy the IRC requirement for the CTE Certificate.

State-approved career courses

AP Business with Personal Finance and AP Cybersecurity are approved by DESE as CTE courses, effective April 1, 2026. AP Networking is coming in 2027-28.

CTE credit and college credit

Students can earn CTE program credit and college credit in the same course, plus an employer-endorsed credential with a qualifying exam score.

Source: DESE

The Industry Outlook—Now and in the Future

Industries that hire for skills that students develop in AP® Career Kickstart™ courses are expanding quickly and require a steady supply of skilled workers to keep up.

2M+
projected annual openings across all occupations that AP Career Kickstart courses prepare.

645,000+
of those openings are in high-skill, high-wage roles.

4.65M
workers are close to retirement age across the industries most aligned with AP Career Kickstart.

Source: Lightcast Industry Snapshot Reports (Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; Information; Finance & Insurance), Q2 2026.



What Is AP Career Kickstart?

AP Career Kickstart is a new group of AP courses designed to build professional career skills. These courses offer students the opportunity to earn college credit, a stackable employer-endorsed credential, and a versatile skill set that opens doors across many industries. Whatever postsecondary path a student chooses next, the skills travel with them and are valued in nearly every field.

Top Three Industries with the Fastest Job Growth

All three of these industries are expanding steadily through the decade, creating sustained demand for high-skilled workers. Each hires heavily for the skills AP Career Kickstart courses teach, with courses mapping graduates to the fields that need them most.

AP Cybersecurity

KEY SKILLS
Risk Analysis, Threat Detection / Configuration, Security
INDUSTRY
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (2020 – 2030)
9.5M → 11.6M

PROJECTED GROWTH OVER 10 YEARS (2020 – 2030)
+21.7%

AP Networking

KEY SKILLS
Configuration, Troubleshooting, Security, Automation
INDUSTRY
Information

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (2020 – 2030)
2.7M → 3.0M

PROJECTED GROWTH OVER 10 YEARS (2020 – 2030)
+11.7%

AP Business with Personal Finance

KEY SKILLS
Entrepreneurship, Data Analysis, Financial Analysis, Marketing
INDUSTRY
Finance & Insurance

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (2020 – 2030)
6.5M → 7.1M

PROJECTED GROWTH OVER 10 YEARS (2020 – 2030)
+8.7%

Source: Lightcast Industry Snapshot Reports (Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; Information; Finance & Insurance), Q2 2026

A Pathway Toward High-Demand, High-Wage Roles

AP Career Kickstart courses build foundational skills that open the door to a first job in these fields, setting students on a career trajectory toward the high-skill, high-wage roles below. Each role is projected to grow throughout the decade and pay well above the national average.

AP Career Kickstart Course	Key Skills	High-skill, High-wage Job	Median Yearly Income	Projected Growth (2020–2030)
AP Cybersecurity & AP Networking	Risk Analysis, Security	Information Security Analysts	$124,491	+14.83%
AP Cybersecurity	Risk Mitigation, Threat Response	Penetration Testers	$106,480	+6.65%
AP Networking	Configuration, Troubleshooting	Computer Systems Analysts	$103,407	+6.93%
AP Business with Personal Finance	Financial Analysis, Marketing	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	$76,950	+9.28%
AP Business with Personal Finance	Financial Analysis, Data Analysis	Financial and Investment Analysts	$100,931	+5.70%

Source: O*NET Data, Q2 2026

Meet the AP Career Kickstart Courses

AP Career Kickstart courses prepare students for careers in high-demand occupations. These three AP courses bring together the academics and national recognition of AP with the applied, hands-on learning of CTE. They cut across disciplines and can fit into many programs of study, as electives or as new elective offerings, and help students build skills that carry across a wide range of industries.

College Credit

Students with qualifying AP Exam scores can earn credit at colleges and universities. In 2025, **qualifying AP scores** represented

over $4 billion

in potential tuition savings nationwide.

Employer Endorsed Credential

Students who earn a qualifying exam score also earn an employer-endorsed credential, backed by over 400 employers and chambers of commerce. Across all pathways surveyed, over 90% of respondents interested in College Board–developed courses and exams point to industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) and college credit as key reasons for their interest.

For administrators who currently offer courses in the IT pathway, **90% agree** IRCs are important for students; **81% agree** that IT IRCs are valuable to local employers.

More Benefits for More Students

A single AP Career Kickstart course opens doors across multiple pathways: a four-year university, a two-year program, an apprenticeship, the military, or the workforce. With hands-on projects, real-world relevance, and no prerequisite courses required, these AP courses reach students who don't traditionally raise their hand for AP, bringing them its college credit & GPA boost—while giving students already in AP career-connected learning they might not otherwise access.

AP Business with Personal Finance

Build financially smart, business-savvy leaders.

WHAT STUDENTS LEARN:

- **Entrepreneurial thinking:** identifying market opportunities and testing new business and product ideas
- **Financial analysis:** interpreting financial data to assess performance and make informed decisions
- **Marketing & branding:** segmenting markets, designing campaigns, and pitching ideas to investors
- **Professional skills:** decision-making, communication, and collaboration
- **Signature projects:** apply learning through the Business Model Canvas and the Financial Advisor Project

Whether a student is an aspiring business owner or the most popular undergraduate major in the nation—or an entrepreneur ready to launch their first venture, these are skills that transfer into management, marketing, finance, consulting, and nearly every career beyond.

> *"In AP Business with Personal Finance, kids get to start their own businesses. They can be creative, work in teams, and make decisions—skills that are transferable to every single career."*
>
> **Kerri Largo**
> Business Education Teacher & Department Chair, Hoffman Estates High School, Ill.

AP Cybersecurity

Build the skills industry needs to protect the digital world.

WHAT STUDENTS LEARN:

- **Assessing risk:** identifying vulnerabilities and evaluating the likelihood and impact of attacks
- **Mitigating risk:** planning and implementing layered defenses and security controls
- **Detecting attacks:** analyzing data to spot indicators of compromise and attack
- **Professional skills:** problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication
- **Signature challenges:** apply learning through scenario-based, real-world performance tasks

Aligned with the NICE Workforce Framework (the national cybersecurity skills standard set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology), these skills are widely applicable across finance, healthcare, national security, manufacturing, and any field a student pursues.

Employers are struggling to fill their open cybersecurity roles. **26% of related roles remain perpetually unfilled, according to the World Economic Forum.** Over a recent 12-month period, employers posted

514,000+
cybersecurity job listings nationwide.

Source: CyberSeek (NICE, Lightcast, and CompTIA), June 2025

AP Networking

Build the skills industry needs to build and maintain robust networks.

WHAT STUDENTS LEARN:

- **Designing networks:** selecting the hardware, media, and protocols to meet network requirements
- **Configuring networks:** building, connecting, and documenting network components
- **Protecting networks:** identifying vulnerabilities and implementing security controls
- **Professional skills:** troubleshooting, critical thinking, and communication
- **Signature challenges:** apply learning through real-world scenarios and performance tasks

Because networks power the infrastructure of nearly every modern industry, these skills extend into healthcare, aviation, logistics, finance, and government.

Available to offer for the 2027–28 school year.

87%
of hiring managers
say they can't find candidates with the tech skills they need. AP Networking aims to close that gap for early talent.

Sample Career Pathways for AP Career Kickstart Courses

AP Career Kickstart courses don't just kickstart a first job; they start students on a career pathway with room to grow. In every course, a student can enter through an accessible role and advance step by step into higher-skill, higher-paying work.

	AP Cybersecurity	AP Networking	AP Business with Personal Finance
STARTING POINT entry level / median yearly income	Computer User Support Specialist $60,336	Computer Network Support Specialist $73,341	Customer Service Representatives $40,689
MOVES INTO mid-level / median yearly income	Computer Systems Analyst $103,407	Network & Computer Systems Administrator $96,512	Market Research Analysts $76,950
ADVANCES TO higher-skill, higher-paying / median yearly income	Information Security Analyst $124,491	Computer Systems Engineer/Architect $106,480	Marketing Manager $151,819

Source: O*NET Data, Q2 2026

Bring AP Career Kickstart Courses to Your School

The workforce is telling us what it needs. AP Career Kickstart courses help schools address those needs by enhancing career pathways and connecting students to high-skill, high-wage, in-demand careers.

Register for the Missouri Webinar
Tuesday, Nov. 17 | 11:00 a.m. CT

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