

CLIMATE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

State WIOA and Perkins Plans



Coalition for Climate Education Policy

Advancing climate literacy for a just and sustainable future

BACKGROUND

In 2024, your state has an opportunity to craft a unified vision for promoting climate education and workforce development programs to increase economic mobility and strengthen your state's economy. State plans authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, fortified by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), provide powerful policy tools for advancing education, workforce, and youth development goals. **This document sheds light on how to leverage the review processes for these plans and advocate for the integration of climate education and related skills and competencies into your state's plans.**

Even if immediate integration of environmental and climate education priorities is challenging, consider initiating conversations and building partnerships with workforce and CTE professionals in your state to lay the foundation for future collaborations.

THE POWER OF STATE PLANS

The state plan processes for Perkins V and WIOA allow governors and state leaders to forge connections between education and workforce systems. Both WIOA and Perkins encourage planning so that state's priorities inform federal resource allocation. WIOA focuses on high-quality jobs, while Perkins emphasizes careers and technical education. Ideally, these plans work together to ensure optimal use of federal resources in alignment with the state's overarching vision for workforce development.

- **WIOA Plan:** Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act State Plans delineate your state's initiatives in guiding Americans—particularly youth and those facing significant employment barriers—toward high-quality jobs. They also aim to assist employers in recruiting and retaining skilled workers. For detailed insights into planning requirements, priorities, and procedures, take a look at this [memorandum](#).
- **Perkins Plan:** Each state is mandated to craft a vision and set of goals for CTE within their state plan. These plans articulate how CTE systems will adapt to economic, social, and labor market needs. For comprehensive guidance on planning requirements, priorities, and procedures, take a look at this [memorandum](#).

TIMELINES

As the 2024 revision process unfolds, there are numerous public comment periods and feedback submission opportunities. Find more information about this on page 4. All related meetings are open to the public, with information and a calendar of public events readily available through public agencies' websites. You have the opportunity to participate in shaping the future of education and workforce development, and integrating climate education into the fabric of your state's plans.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

When considering what to advocate for in the realm of environmental literacy, **it is crucial to emphasize the integration of workforce development needs.**

The BIL (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) and IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) provisions underscore the necessity for a synchronized approach to workforce training in fields like energy and transportation. In addition, State and Local Climate Mitigation, Adaptation and resilience plans have set goals that communities are trying to reach. With billions of dollars anticipated to support these green infrastructure investments, it will be important for a workforce to be prepared for the jobs of the future. Strong workforce development combined with education helps ensure that infrastructure investments have the workforce to support them, and that those jobs are going to the people and communities who have historically been excluded from decision-making and denied access.

Description	Perkins V	WIOA
Public Comment Period dedicated to obtaining public input through scheduled events.	60 days (January and February)	30 days (January)
Decision & Governor Signing: Key decisions are made at the state workforce meeting before the plans are sent to the governor.	In late February, the governor is provided with a 15-30 day window to review and endorse the plan before its submission.	
Final submission of revised plans.	May 2024	March 2024

WHAT SHOULD I ASK FOR

Throughout this advocacy, themes should revolve around fostering economic and job growth, with special attention given to addressing the needs of youth and other segments currently not engaged in the workforce. This comprehensive approach ensures environmental and climate literacy are considered in tandem with broader economic and social development goals. Advocates engaging with state affiliates can adopt a thematic approach, urging them to advocate for specific initiatives in alignment with broader goals.

Read on to the next page to get more insight into what to ask for.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK FOR

State Reserve Funds: Within Perkins plans, state reserve funds are innovation grants for developing innovative career pathways. The flexibility of reserve funds within Perkins Plans makes them easily accessible for experimentation and new endeavors. For example, Georgia recently unveiled a statewide electric vehicle career pathway, attracting significant investments from private industry players like Rivian. These funds can play an important role in building and trying novel programs of study. Advocates can ask questions about how these funds are being used, and leverage them for environmental and climate education. Is your state using its reserve funds? Can some of those funds be used for green skills/career pathway pilot projects? Can the funds be used to create a program of study? Consider these questions to better understand what you should be asking for.

In addition to state reserve funds, consider the following strategies:

Principles of Infusion: Recommend Principles of Infusion or core sustainability principles such as life cycle analysis, conservation, and material selection be incorporated into curriculums for different subjects. For example, recommend that your state infuse sustainability concepts into the building trades in major high schools. Insulation, heating and cooling, geothermal, solar, and other building design ideas are examples of infusion.

Content: Recommend infusing climate education content into a few CTE career clusters.

[Click here](#) to read more about a U.S. Department of Education project that incorporated green- and sustainability-related knowledge and skills standards into existing career clusters. For this project, they selected six existing career clusters:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Information and Technology
- Manufacturing
- STEM
- Transportation

[Click here](#) to read more about how the state of Delaware is exploring the integration of environmental literacy competencies into CTE.

Dual Certification Programming:

Make recommendations for infusion of climate education at the middle school, high school, and community college level, especially for dual certification programs. If your state doesn't yet have dual certification programs, encourage them to develop programming that infuses climate education principles and concepts.

Model It!: Recommend modeling a climate education initiative in a specific school district.

Recruit Leadership: Recruit diverse leadership and CTE faculty that also can help with this effort.

LEVEL OF DETAIL

The level of detail in crafting state plans can vary widely, allowing states the flexibility to determine the extent of granularity based on their unique needs and priorities. Notably, California's comprehensive 800-page plan reflects a highly detailed approach, while other states have more succinct plans, sometimes under 100 pages. States may choose to be highly prescriptive or leverage alternative policy levers without delving into exhaustive detail in these plans. Although the level of detail may vary, there's always encouragement for state innovation, allowing for diverse approaches that align with unique state goals.

WHO TO CONTACT

To find someone to contact to ask questions about your State Perkins Plan, reach out to your Perkins state director. The contact information can be found at <https://cte.ed.gov/contact/staff-by-state-responsibility>. Find out more about the Delaware CTE initiative here: <https://delawarepathways.org/environmental-literacy/>.

For inquiries related to WIOA, visit <https://aefla.ed.gov/> for contact information and resources. Additionally, to identify the Big Signatory—the individual submitting the WIOA plan—check with the National Association of Workforce Boards, as they might have a list (if available).

Whether engaging in person or online, these contacts serve as pivotal points to address queries, provide input, and actively participate in shaping the trajectory of Perkins and WIOA plans in your state.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

For additional support around State Perkins Plans, consider engaging with the resources provided by organizations such as [Advance CTE](#) and the [Association for CTE](#). In the context of the State WIOA Plan, seek support from the [National Governors Association](#) and the [National Association of Workforce Boards](#). These entities can offer valuable insights, guidance, and collaborative opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of your state plans.



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naaee

North American Association
for Environmental Education