



Fact Sheet: What Is the Perkins CTE, and How Does It Serve Immigrants?

What is the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act)?

It's the main federal funding source for career and technical education (CTE) programs. The Perkins Act is the primary federal [funding source](#) for high school, college and university CTE programs that are critical for preparing youth and adults, including immigrants, for jobs in local and regional economies. Congress passed the [latest version](#) of the act, Perkins IV, in 2006.

The Perkins Act provides funds under three main programs:

1. Basic State Grants Programs (Title I) through which states [distribute](#) money to high schools, colleges and universities that offer programs that integrate academic and career and technical education.
2. National Programs that [allow](#) certain research organizations to conduct and disseminate national research and information on best practices that improve CTE programs. For example, these funds are currently used to [support](#) the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education and other activities assisting states with implementing key requirements of the Perkins Act.
3. Tech Prep Programs (Title II) that allow educational institutions to [combine](#) at least two years of high school education followed by at least two years of education at a college or university, resulting in an industry-recognized credential, certificate or degree. Since May 2011, the U.S. Department of Education [no longer provides](#) states with funds for tech prep programs.

What is Career Technical Education (CTE)?

They are career preparation programs. CTE programs [prepare](#) workers, including immigrants, to meet employers' needs in a variety of occupations, such as dental assistants, pharmacy technicians, welders, automotive technicians and others. In addition to high-skills jobs, CTE programs also prepare workers for middle-skills jobs, which American companies currently [struggle to fill](#).

What are middle-skills jobs?

They are occupations requiring a higher level of education than a high-school diploma but less than a four-year college degree. Middle-skills jobs currently represent the [biggest portion](#) of the U.S. labor market. Companies in every state have been reporting a

[strong demand](#) for middle-skills workers, and the need is [projected to grow](#). With proper training and education, immigrants can obtain middle-skills jobs and help our economy close the [widening skills gap](#).

How does the Perkins CTE serve immigrants?

It finances programs that help immigrants meet employers' needs. Programs funded by the Perkins CTE help immigrants and other workers [gain work](#) skills. Certificates, licenses and the education [gained](#) from CTE programs allow immigrants and other workers to secure better jobs and fulfill their career potential. Maximizing the contributions of immigrants can help meet employers' needs, strengthening our economy.

Approximately [36 million](#) U.S. workers, including millions of immigrants, would benefit from upskilling by improving their literacy, numeracy and occupational skills through workforce training programs. Immigrants [comprise](#) one-third of adults in the U.S. with low literacy skills and one-quarter of adults with low numeracy skills. Further, foreign-born individuals account for about [87 percent](#) of the 22.8 million people who live in the U.S. and who are considered "limited English proficient." At the same time, about [29 percent](#) of the total foreign-born population age 25 and older have a college degree or higher.

What can immigrants gain from programs funded by the Perkins CTE?

They can gain work certificates, stackable credentials, adult basic skills and English-language education. CTE programs [provide](#) immigrants with an opportunity to earn a certificate or degree and gain work experience through work-based learning. Recent [research](#) shows that U.S. employers generally prefer American experience and training over experience and training abroad. Nearly [2 million](#) immigrants living in the U.S. who earned college degrees from foreign institutions have a low-skills job or can't find work.

CTE programs also allow immigrants and other U.S. workers to gain [stackable credentials](#). These credentials are particularly important for immigrants and other adult workers who face various obstacles, such as family obligations and financial constraints or language barriers, in completing a degree or credential program.

The Perkins CTE funding can also [be used](#) for noncredit CTE programs that do not lead to a degree or certificate but are a valuable tool for improving the skills of our workforce, including immigrants. Further, the funds can provide adult basic skills and English as a second language (ESL) classes, including contextualized ESL courses, integrated into the CTE programs' curricula.

What is the current level of funding under Perkins CTE?

Its about \$1.1 billion. The overall funding appropriated for the Perkins CTE programs have [decreased](#) over time. In fiscal year (FY) 2004, the funding level was \$1.3 billion, while the FY 2017 level was set at \$1.1 billion. The cuts have resulted in the [elimination](#) of funds under Title II, the Tech Prep Programs, which provide grants to secondary schools and certain nonprofits offering a two-year associate's degree or apprenticeship programs. Title I spending has [decreased](#) slightly

over time as well. Additionally, the National Programs saw a big drop in funding, falling from \$11.9 million in FY 2004 to \$7.4 million in FY 2017.

How does the government distribute the Perkins CTE funding?

They base it on state population. The Basic State Grants Program (Title I) are [allotted to states](#) through a formula based on populations in certain age groups and earning certain levels of per-capita income. States are required to distribute at least 85 percent of Title I funds to local education agencies, vocational and technical schools, community colleges and other public or private nonprofit institutions offering CTE programs. Each state may decide how much money will be distributed to recipients at the secondary and postsecondary education levels. Generally, about 64 percent of the funds go to secondary education, and 36 percent go to postsecondary education programs.

What is the future of the Perkins CTE funding?

It's uncertain. The Perkins Act was due for [reauthorization in 2013](#), but Congress has been unable to enact new legislation. However, the act has [continued](#) to be funded each year. In May 2017, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce marked up the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, which would reauthorize the Perkins Act. The bill was later brought to the floor of the House of Representatives and passed on a voice vote without any objections. However, the bill has [stalled](#) in the Senate.

Due to significant funding reductions over the past several years which have limited the support provided to high-quality CTE programs, additional funding and resources for CTE programs are [critical](#). The Perkins Act needs to be reauthorized in order to ensure that CTE programs receive the necessary federal investment to meet the growing needs of businesses and the economy.