

Illinois' Perkins V State Plan, State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025-2028 CTE Program Size, Scope, and Quality

Size

- Local recipients must implement and offer at least one state-approved CTE program of study in one of the nationally recognized 16 career clusters.
- All programs of study are aligned to state, regional, or local in-demand sectors using labor market information.
- Postsecondary recipients must follow local board policies on class size.
- Secondary recipients: Class and program enrollment minimums and maximums should be justified by the program of study local advisory committee as appropriate to meet industry labor market and economy needs as presented in the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). Ideally, secondary recipients would meet the recommended minimum number of CTE programs of study indicated in the table below. This is not a requirement; however, enrollment irregularities should be addressed in the CLNA and a component of the continuous improvement plan for the LEA.

Size of LEA District (No. of students)	Recommended Minimum Number of CTE Programs of Study
501 – 2,000	Two Programs
2,001-3,000	Three Programs
3,001 – 4,000	Four Programs
4,001 and above	Five Programs

Scope

As defined in Perkins V, a program of study is a “coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level that:

- a. Incorporates challenging state academic standards;
- b. Addresses both academic and technical knowledge and skills, including employability skills;
- c. Is aligned with the needs of industries in the economy of the state, region, tribal community, or local area;
- d. Progresses in specificity;
- e. Has multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and
- f. Culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.”

A program of study provides students with a strong experience in and comprehensive understanding of all aspects of an industry. The scope of a program must be specified through curricular development, evaluation, and revision. Program scope must be defined in consultation with all stakeholders, including business and industry.

Quality

Programs of study must meet the multiple quality criteria. Most criteria should be met at the time of initial application; all criteria must be met no later than the start of Year 3 of the local plan, including specific strategies to address the unmet criterion in Years 1 and 2. ISBE or ICCB ultimately determines the extent to which programs meet the quality and may require accelerated timelines or provide extensions for additional time based on local efforts.

- 1. Development and Engagement:** All programs of study must be developed through close K-12 and postsecondary collaboration, respond to the analysis and findings of the CLNA, and be informed by

external stakeholders, including, but not limited to, business and industry, local workforce boards, adult education providers, and community-based organizations. An advisory committee must meet at least annually to review and support programs of study (and/or to consider multiple programs of study within a cluster or related cluster grouping). The advisory committee must review labor market information; provide input on current industry practices; identify high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations and related competencies within the region; consider long-term industry trends and future of work; and participate in the continuous improvement process described in Criterion 9.

2. **Employer-Informed Competencies and Skills:** The program of study must align instruction and experiences to a progression of employer-informed technical and essential employability competencies that lead to readiness for employment or further education for high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations identified during the engagement process.
3. **Academic Instruction and Supports:** The program of study must include challenging academic instruction and student supports and interventions to facilitate successful student progressions into and through required coursework and avoid remediation to the extent possible. The programs of study instruction must be by a qualified teacher as defined by ISBE or a community college in compliance with ICCB Administrative Rules and accrediting bodies. Dual credit instructors must meet requirements as described in the Dual Credit Quality Act and be in accordance with ICCB administrative rules.
4. **Recruitment and Access:** Districts and colleges must develop a student recruitment and retention plan through the CLNA beginning in SFY 2021 to address equity gaps that are evident as early as middle school, including gaps in program of study access, participation, persistence, and completion. Programs of study must ensure access is equitable and all students are able to receive support to persist and succeed in CTE courses and opportunities.
5. **Instructional Sequence:** Programs of study must provide a non-duplicative, fully articulated sequence of courses from K-12 through postsecondary (including four-year transitions, where appropriate). There must be multiple entry and exit points and stackable credentials must be incorporated.

Middle School and Secondary: The middle school and secondary program of study course sequence must, at minimum:

- Provide guidance and instruction on the concept of career clusters and support for student selection of a cluster of interest prior to a cluster-specific orientation course with related career awareness activities;
- Include an orientation course providing a broad understanding of the specific cluster or cluster grouping that applies to the program of study in which the student is enrolled, and that includes career exploration;
- Include an advanced course developing competencies and skills needed for entry-level employment or further postsecondary education;
- Incorporate credit transfer opportunities (e.g., dual credit, articulation agreement) and/or training for an industry-recognized credential; and
- Include instruction and evaluation in safety as appropriate within the curriculum.

Postsecondary: The postsecondary programs of study course sequence must, at minimum:

- Encompass alignment of content between secondary and postsecondary coursework and curricula and maximize opportunities for dual credit or articulated credit in applicable academic and technical areas;
- Include stackable credentials;
- Specify how the program is structured or articulated to provide educational opportunities for students beyond community college;
- Describe how work-based learning is incorporated into the curricula;
- Describe how employability skills are incorporated into the content of the program; and
- Ensure access and smooth transitions through programming for all students.

6. Work-Based Learning: Programs of study must include a secondary to postsecondary continuum of work-based learning and related authentic learning experiences that includes, at minimum, each of the following:

- Team-based challenges and/or CTSOs; and
- One or more of the following, at both the secondary and postsecondary levels: internships, career-related service learning, paid work experience, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, apprenticeships (i.e., youth, pre-, registered, non-registered, research), student-led enterprise, remote work for a client/employer, school-based enterprise, cooperative work agreement or clinical experience.

7. Instructors: Instructors within programs of study are qualified, collaborate with industry professionals, and engage in applicable professional learning.

8. Facilities and Equipment: Programs of study are offered in appropriate and accessible facilities that use industry standard technology and equipment.

9. Continuous Improvement: The district and college use a continuous improvement process that evaluates and improves the program of study in collaboration with those stakeholders and the local or joint advisory committee.