

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Governor Wolf's 2015-16 Budget includes several initiatives to reimagine the commonwealth's career and technical education system by creating cross-sector partnerships among business, industry and education.

The need is clear. Today, just 48 percent of Pennsylvanians have a college degree or industry-recognized certification. By 2025, fully 60 percent of good-paying, reliable Pennsylvania jobs will require these credentials. Across the nation, employers report difficulty finding qualified applicants and the need to incur significant training costs for workers who lack necessary skills.

To ensure that the next generation of Pennsylvanians— those in middle school and high school today — are prepared for the jobs of the future, we must begin to close the gap today.

Over the next decade, Pennsylvania will seek to make a college degree or high-value industry-recognized certification available to at least 650,000 additional commonwealth residents. Three new competitive grant programs in the Governor's Budget support this goal and begin a multi-year strategy to transform and modernize career and technical education:

- [Career and Technology Education Innovation Grants](#). The budget provides \$15 million to support the establishment and enhancement of career and technology education programs that prepare students for success in today's high-skill economy, align with workforce needs and link students to employment in high-wage/high-demand fields.
- [Career and Technical Education Equipment Grants](#). The budget provides \$5 million in new funding for CTE Equipment Grants, with priority for applicants that show an in-kind or monetary contribution from employers or other partners. Career and Technology Innovation Grant applicants will also receive priority in the awarding of Career and Technical Education Equipment Grants.
- [Career Counseling Grants](#). The budget provides \$8 million to school districts to offer college and career exploration and counseling in middle and high schools in order to help students learn about and prepare for career and occupational choices. Career and Technology Innovation Grant applicants will receive priority in the awarding of Career Counselor Grants.

Career and Technology Education (CTE) Innovation Grants

CTE Innovation Grants will support expansion of existing high quality, PDE-approved CTE programs, enhancements to these programs that improve linkages to employers or higher education, and the creation of new innovative programs.

Employers, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), labor organizations, institutions of higher education (IHEs), and eligible local education agencies (LEAs) are invited to join together to establish partnerships to prepare students for high-demand occupations that pay a living wage and offer a career ladder for growth opportunities.

The purpose of the CTE Innovation Grants is to:

1. Increase student opportunity to enroll in high-performing CTE programs that lead to high-value industry-recognized certificates, credentials and/or college credits or degrees;

2. Improve alignment between the commonwealth's secondary CTE and post-secondary CTE education systems and workforce needs;
3. Increase student opportunity to gain employment in high-skill, high-wage fields; and
4. Strengthen academic performance through enhanced support systems.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will make applications available in May and, pending approval by the Legislature, funding will be available to applicants to:

1. Invest in established, innovative CTE programs beginning in September 2015 to increase the number of participating students and/or add program elements; or
 2. Engage in a collaborative planning process to develop new programs that adapt state and national models to begin in September 2016. *(For more information about priority national models, please see page 4.)*
- **Eligibility:** The following are eligible to be the lead applicant:
 - PDE-approved Career and Technology Centers (Eligible LEA);
 - School districts with eight or more PDE-approved CTE programs (Eligible LEA);
 - Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs);
 - Chambers of Commerce;
 - Employers;
 - Labor organizations;
 - Apprenticeship programs; and
 - Two- and four-year colleges and universities (IHEs).
 - **Fiscal Agent:** An Eligible LEA must serve as fiscal agent and grant administrator.
 - **Required Partners:** Each grant application must be submitted by a partnership that includes:
 - An Eligible LEA or group of Eligible LEAs;
 - One or more local WIBs;
 - One or more IHEs; and
 - Two or more employers with common-skill needs or an organization that can ensure participation from two or more employers, including an employer umbrella organization (e.g., Advanced Manufacturers' Association, Chambers of Commerce, and Industry Partnerships) and/or labor organization(s).

All applicants must demonstrate active working relationships with Required Partners via a Memorandum of Understanding or similar agreement. If not an Eligible LEA, applicants must provide a letter of support from a partner Eligible LEA indicating its involvement in program development and implementation, as well as grant administration as the Fiscal Agent.

- **Required Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Partners will develop and sign an MOU which will outline the roles and responsibilities of each member. Partner responsibilities will include:
 - Commitment from all partners to align high school and post-secondary coursework with technical skills and workplace competencies as defined by industry;
 - Robust, meaningful and engaging work-based learning opportunities for participating students, including workplace visits, internships, apprenticeships, and mentorships;

- Commitment from all partners to develop a scope and sequence of courses, curricula, and work-based learning programs that ensure all students can earn relevant post-secondary credits and/or industry certification; and
- Articulation language that ensures any post-secondary credits earned in the program are transcribed and transferrable.

The MOU must also set forth a governance structure and the partnership’s plan for program leadership and sustainability, as well as meaningful engagement of all partners.

Priority will be provided to partnerships that:

- Include a local Industry Partnership currently receiving funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry and/or a local foundation; and/or
 - Provide students guaranteed status as “first in line” for a job with partner employer(s) and/or labor organization(s) upon successful program completion.
- **Grant Period:** The grant is supported during the 2015-2016 fiscal year.
 - **Scope:** Applicants for funding to support expansion of or enhancements to existing PDE-approved CTE programs that improve linkages to employers or higher education beginning in September 2015 may seek grants up to \$400,000. It is the State’s intent to fund expansion or enhancement of at least one program in each of Pennsylvania’s 23 current Local Workforce Investment Areas.

Applicants for funding to develop new innovative programs may seek planning grants up to \$100,000. These programs are to begin program activities in September 2016. After successful planning, grantees will be eligible to apply for continuation of funding to implement their program plans (dependent on funding availability).

All CTE Innovation Grant applicants must provide a four-year project budget with budget narrative detailing how the partnership will develop, expand, and sustain programming efforts (assuming level funding for program activities of up to \$400,000 per year).

Grant awards are contingent upon availability of funds. Continuation of funding is also contingent upon availability of funds and upon satisfactory reporting and achievement of performance goals.

- **Career Pathways:** Applicants must describe how they will build capacity (through increased student participation and/or new program elements) by achieving the following:
 - A rigorous, relevant and cost-free CTE education focused on the knowledge, skills and credentials students need for high-demand occupations in high-growth industry sectors (defined based on available labor market data—including IT, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, biotech and other STEM areas);
 - Robust, meaningful and engaging work-based learning opportunities for participating students, including workplace visits, internships, apprenticeships, and mentorships;
 - Individualized academic support provided on an as-needed basis by high school and IHE faculty through an extended academic day or year, allowing students to progress and succeed at their own pace; and
 - College credits or high-value industry certification in a related field.

- **Student Outreach:** Applicants must describe how the partners will provide career exploration, information, guidance, advising and mentoring beginning in middle school and continuing through the program to inform students and parents of opportunities and attract participation. Eligible LEAs associated with CTE Innovation Grant applications will receive priority consideration for Career Counseling Grants (*see page 8 for more information*).
- **Professional Development:** Applicants must demonstrate how teachers, instructors and other staff will receive professional development to ensure they are prepared to teach industry-recognized skills, have necessary industry credentials and will align curriculum with high academic standards for all students.
- **Wrap-around Services:** Applicants will demonstrate how they will provide services to strengthen basic academic skills and to offer academic, social, and emotional supports to better ensure student success.
- **Outcomes:** Programs must lead to college credits or high-value industry-recognized certifications or credentials. Priority will be given to applications where students are guaranteed status as “first in line” for a job with the partner employer(s) and/or labor organization(s) upon successful program completion.
- **Accountability:** Successful applicants will need to report annually on key student performance metrics, as available, including students enrolled in specific program activities (work-based learning, apprenticeships, internships, etc.), graduation rate, industry credentials issued, college credits awarded, job placement and other metrics to be determined.
- **Oversight:** PDE will administer the grant program. A cross-agency collaborative consisting of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the Department of Community and Economic Development, and the Governor’s Office will review the grant applications, monitor the programs, and provide guidance and oversight to the initiative.
- **Priority Models:**
 - Early College High Schools (North Carolina)
 - North Carolina New Schools, <http://ncnewschools.org/>
 - Council of State Governments, “Focus On: Early College High Schools”, <http://www.csg.org/>
 - P-TECH (New York)
 - New York State Education Department, <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/scholarships/PTech.htm>
 - Pathways to Prosperity Network (13 states)
 - Jobs for the Future (JFF), Pathways to Prosperity Network, <http://www.jff.org/initiatives/pathways-prosperity-network>
 - Project Lead the Way (50 states)
 - PLTW, <https://www.pltw.org/>

CTE Equipment Grants

The CTE Equipment Grants will support LEAs with PDE-approved CTE programs, and Career and Technical Centers in updating or purchasing new equipment used in the training of students.

The purpose of the grant is to purchase equipment aligned with the needs of employers for use in training students (i.e., hands-on use of the equipment).

Applications will be available in May 2015 and funding will be available to applicants that have PDE-approved CTE programs during the 2015-2016 program year.

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be school districts or career and technical centers with PDE-approved CTE programs. Priority will be given to applicants for CTE Innovation Grants.
- **Equipment Requirements:** Each grant applicant must purchase equipment that:
 - Supports hands-on training of students in CTE programs that lead to high-growth, high-demand careers;
 - Meets industry standards;
 - Costs \$3,000 or more per unit; and
 - Is recommended by the Occupational Advisory Committee (OAC).
- **Grant Requirements:** Each grant applicant must demonstrate:
 - How industry standards are related to purchase of the equipment;
 - How the purchased equipment will enable students to gain industry credentials, or be eligible to sit for credentialing exams associated with the program/career field;
 - How the purchased equipment matches recommendations by the OAC, documented by listing each piece of requested equipment and a date that the OAC made its recommendation to purchase the equipment requested;
 - How the program curriculum will be revised to incorporate the skills associated with the purchased equipment; and
 - Engagement of local employer(s), as defined in the CTE Innovation Grants, in the decision regarding the equipment purchase, curriculum revisions and grant application, including whether the program will provide work-based learning opportunities (including apprenticeships) to students.

Each competitive grant will be awarded by PDE on a matching basis (one state dollar for every local dollar). The local match can be supported by either local school funds or contributions from business and industry partners. Federal or state funds may not be used in the local match amount, and discounts by a vendor or manufacturer are not an eligible match. The match must be for the equipment being purchased through this proposed grant.

- **Scope:** Applicants may seek grants up to \$100,000. Grant awards are contingent upon availability of funds.
- **Intended Use of Equipment:** Equipment to be purchased with grant funds must be intended for use primarily in programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials or college credits. A minimum of 25 percent of the students using the equipment must be pursuing such programs of study.

- **Accountability:** Successful applicants will need to report annually on metrics as available including industry credentials issued, college credit awarded, job placement, wages, and other metrics to be determined.
- **Oversight:** PDE will administer the grant program. A cross-agency collaborative consisting of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Governor's Office will review the grant applications, monitor the programs and provide guidance and oversight to the initiative.

Career Counseling Grants

The budget provides \$8 million to LEAs to provide career exploration, information, guidance, advising and mentoring relating to career and occupational choices beginning in middle school.

The purpose of the grant is to offer college and career information and counseling to students in grades 6 to 12 and their parents to consider opportunities in CTE programs and to help develop pathways for students to gain skills and experiences that are aligned with high-demand, high-wage careers.

Applications will be available in May 2015 and funding will be available to eligible applicants during the 2015-2016 program year.

- **Eligibility:** School districts and career and technical centers. Priority will be given to CTE Innovation Grant applicants, as well as to LEAs that have completed or are developing Chapter 339 college and career counseling plans or are participating in such plans.
- **Grant requirements:** Each grant application must describe how the LEA will provide college and career information and counseling to students in grades 6 to 12 and their parents and how they will develop pathways for students to pursue high-skill, high-demand careers. In particular, applicants must detail how counselors and other staff will develop and implement recruitment and retention plans for CTE programs to effectively engage students and parents.

Grant funds must be used to:

- Create dedicated guidance and/or career counselor role(s) to lead efforts related to career exploration, information, guidance, advising, and mentoring for students;
- Advise students and their parents of the available program opportunities and value of available CTE programs; and
- Recruit and retain students in CTE programs.
- **Scope:** Applicants may seek grants up to a maximum of \$100,000. Grant awards are contingent upon availability of funds.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Increase in parent and student awareness of the value of career and technical education programs, especially those leading to high-value credentials and college credits;
 - Increase in the number of eighth grade students planning to enroll in CTE programs;
 - Analysis of gaps in current college and career ready efforts and development of strategy to address those needs through partnerships with key stakeholders and CTE programs; and
 - Development of instructional materials and resources to help students in middle and high school explore career options.
- **Accountability:** Successful applicants will need to report annually on metrics as available, including participation in career exploration activities such as workplace and college visits, internships, mentoring, and job shadowing; enrollment in CTE programs; high school graduation; post-secondary enrollment; college credit awarded; job placement; and other metrics to be determined.
- **Oversight:** PDE will administer the grant program. A cross agency collaborative consisting of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the Department of Community and Economic

Development and the Governor's Office will review the grant applications, monitor the programs and provide guidance and oversight to the initiative.